

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

RISE OF POLITICAL ISLAM IN TURKEY

A MASTER'S ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS FOR PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY

GAYANE MKRTCHYAN

YEREVAN, ARMENIA

SEPTEMBER 2011

SIGNATURE PAGE

Faculty Advisor	Ms. Lusine Galajyan	Date
-----------------	---------------------	------

Dean	Dr. Douglas H. Shumavon	Date
------	-------------------------	------

American University of Armenia

September 2011

Acknowledgement

I would like to confess my deepest gratitude to my Faculty Advisor Ms. Lusine Galajyan. Without her constant support I could hardly be that encouraged during the process of study of the topic of my Masters' Essay. In the process of writing this Essay, I profited from her advice, guidance and encouragement. I am very thankful to Ms. Galajyan for her support and remarkable contribution to the study of the issue.

I would like also to express my gratitude to all the faculty members of the School of Political Science and International Affairs of the American University of Armenia for providing me with appropriate knowledge and skills to fulfill this study.

Also I would like to give my special thanks to the previous dean of the School of Political Science and International Affairs Dr. Lusig Danielyan for her great support and encouragement during the two year period study in this university. Her input to my knowledge baggage was enormous and I am thankful to her for the knowledge and experience she provide us with during her teaching hours and out of classes.

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations.....	4
List of Figures.....	5
Abstract.....	6
Introduction and Literature Review.....	7
<i>Hypothesis, Research Questions and Methodology.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Defining Secularism and Political Islam.....</i>	<i>12</i>
Historical Overview.....	14
The Secularization of the Turkish Republic.....	16
<i>The Impact of the Kemalist Revolution on Turkey: Reforms Undertaken by Mustafa Kemal.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Secularism and its Role in Domestic and International Affairs.....</i>	<i>20</i>
Rise of Political Islam in Turkey.....	21
<i>The Rise of Democracy in Turkey and its Impact on Country's Political Islam.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Military Coup d'états.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Islamization of the Turkish society.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Imam Hatip Schools.....</i>	<i>31</i>
Political Islam in Power.....	34
Turkey-EU Relations and Turkey's Aspirations for EU Membership.....	39
<i>Turkey-Europe Relations.....</i>	<i>41</i>
Conclusion.....	44
References.....	48

List of Abbreviations

AKP/JDP	the Justice and Development Party
CHP	the Republican People's Party
DP	Democratic Party
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
FP	the Virtue Party
MG	Milli Gorus (National Outlook)
MGK/NSC	the National Security Council
MNP	the National Order Party
MP	Motherland Party
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSP	the National Salvation Party
RPP	Republican People's Party
SP	the Felicity Party
US	the United States
WP	the Welfare Party

List of Figures

Figure 1: Turks' Primary Identity

Figure 2: European Public Opinion on Whether Turkey Should Be Invited to Join the EU?

Figure 3: European Public Opinion: If Turkey Were to Implement Reforms Desired by Some EU Member States, Should It Be Invited to Join the EU?

Abstract

The main concern of this essay is to study the rise of Political Islam in Turkey and to find out its impact on Turkey's internal political development and its European Union (EU) membership aspirations both currently and during the transformation period. It is still an open topic of discussion for many scholars: some of them argue that rise of Political Islam in Turkey is a negative phenomenon which brings to the distortion of internal state balance as well as to the worsening of Turkey-EU relations, others argue the opposite. I am inclined to the first argument and by this essay I will try to defend the argument.

The essay will give a full description of the two central concepts for this study: secularism and Political Islam. Then it will give some historical overview on the establishment of the new Turkish Republic (since 1920s), elaborating on Turkey's secularization or sometimes called Westernization period, to show the role secularization played in Turkey's modern nation-state building.

The essay will discuss about the rise of Political Islam in Turkey (since 1980s), the way Islamization of the Turkish society is reached, the challenges it brings for Turkey. It will look at the influence of Political Islam on the balance between Turkey's secular and religious forces (between Kemalist elites and new emerging social groups) to find out its impact on Turkey's internal political development. Also it will look at the impact of Political Islam on Turkey's relations with the EU, trying to find out whether it has a negative or positive influence on them.

Introduction and Literature Review

Analyzing the rise of Political Islam in Turkey is both important and interesting for the Armenian because Turkey is a neighboring country to Armenia and every change within Turkey may directly influence our country and the region as a whole. And it is interesting because this phenomenon has not been studied widely and in addition Turkey, except for being a Muslim-majority country, is also a secular democratic state. Turkey as a secular country was established in the first decade since the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. It is a unique case in the sense of successful combination of secularism, democracy and Islam in politics. It is a kind of key test case for the role of Islam in politics and its influence on external and internal policy of the country.

In *Turkey “between East and West”* Metin Heper (2004) shows, that in fact Turkey is neither fully European nor Middle Eastern. According to Heper, “Turkey has been one of those exceptional countries that started to transform its identity from an Eastern to a Western, from the end of the eighteenth century onward, by its own volition” (Heper 2004, 2). Turkish experiment in nation-building is considered a model for countries around the Mediterranean. Once a traditional Muslim country became a more respectable member of the international community turning into a secular state at the same time keeping some of its original characteristics. The main reason for this fundamental change was that the founders of the new Turkish Republic thought that Islam was to be blamed for the backwardness and downfall of the Ottoman Empire and they aimed at creating a new Turkey: secular, modern and Western one.

In *Secularism and Islam: the Building of Modern Turkey* Toprak (2003) explains the process of democratization in Turkey, its achievements and failures. Turkey’s democracy is more than half a century old. From 1923 to 1946 the new republic was ruled by a single party, but in

1946 the first competitive elections were held and since then Turkey has been striving and struggling to strengthen its democracy. However, the process of democratization was interrupted for short periods after the 1960 and 1980 military coup d'états, because of the establishment of military regimes. Also in 1971 and 1997 military interventions ousted democratically elected governments. Nevertheless, democracy in Turkey has become to some extent institutionalized. Since the last military intervention of 1997, Turkey made great efforts to liberalize its political system more, in order to meet standards of European Union (EU), to which Turkey strives to become a member. This membership aspiration is the major driving force behind Turkey's initiatives to reform the government system.

The most important of all coups can be considered the one in 1980, which brought to a new policy toward Islam in Turkey and it was mainly considered to be the cause of rise of Political Islam in Turkey. In his article Ahmadov analyses how this coup changed the state's approach toward religion. These drastic changes appeared because the country was in the break of civil war as there were always violent clashes between leftists and rightists. After the coup there were some major changes made but all these did not stop the violent clashes between the polarized groups. Thus, the military leadership appealed to Islamic institutions, trying to mix Islamic ideas with their nationalistic goals by this trying to create a homogenous society rather than a political Islamic community. Thus, religious courses became compulsory in schools and also new religious schools were opened in order to strengthen the role of religion in the society. These main changes were carried out by Turgut Ozal (liberal and pro-Islamic), the leader of Motherland Party (MP), during whose rule transformation of Turkish periphery was carried out. Ozal had a more liberal economy, which gave opportunity to the periphery to involve them in economic sphere as well. "Ozal introduced the privatization of the mass media, contributed to the

expansion of civil society and the proliferation of non-governmental organizations” (Ahmadov 2008, 21).

Ozal’s liberal policy toward religion opened space for the religious-political movement of Necmettin Erbakan to re-emerge in the political arena this time with his Islamist Welfare Party, which despite its prominence with the public in general lived till the next coup of 1997. The 1997 coup was not a straight seizure of power by the military; it was in the form of recommendations to the government, such as closure of Imam Hatip schools, strict control of religious brotherhoods and restriction on Islamic dress, mainly for women. Though Erbakan signed the recommendations he was forced to resign by the Turkish military. This coup is also called “post-modern” because the government was forced to resign through a campaign led by the military using the media, NGOs and academics as a propaganda tool, and not directly intervening in the political process.

Nowadays, there is a lot of space given to religion-based political discourse, as religion (which is a constitutive element of identity) has always been and continues to be a vital element of conflicts which divides people of different religious groups. Koutroubas, analyzing the interaction between religion and politics, distinguishes three elements as a primary cause for the reemergence of religion as a key player on the political arena. These three elements, which can also be applied to the case of Turkey’s rise of Political Islam, are: 1) regimes’ failure to fight against corruption and guarantee decent socioeconomic conditions for their population, 2) extremely authoritarian nature of the regimes, 3) the feeling of “collective loss of dignity” as a result of marginalization of Muslims from the rest. Later in the analyses we will see how these elements can be applied to the Turkish case (Koutroubas 2003).

In Turkey the overwhelming majority of population is Muslim, but because of more than 80 years of secularism in the country, the religion has become more of a private practice for the Turks. According to Roger (2010), there are many factors that influence the emergence of visible religiosity on Turkey's political arena, such as the weakening of Kemalist legacy (which was mainly the result of 1980 coup – in order to put an end to the violence between right and left, the military fostered moderate Islam as a counterweight to all the left-wing tendencies), expansion of religious schools, the process of democratization (which brought to multi-party politics in the 1950s, bringing to the reemergence of Islamist parties in the politics of Turkey), and rediscovery of old traditional practices, and also large-scale of migration from the countryside's religious people to the modern and urbanized cities of Turkey (the Sufism¹, the tariqat², still had strong followers in the rural areas). Also there is an argument stating that the globalization and modernization of Turkish society are the main causes that created the need for modern Islam.

In *Rise of Political Islam in Turkey* Rabasa (2008) analyses the main developments which brought to the advent and rise of Political Islam in Turkey. According to Rabasa, before the 1950s, the arrival of multiparty democracy, Islamism had no expression in Turkey's political system, which was the exclusive domain of the official Kemalist party, the Republican People's Party (CHP). Until lately Islamic parties in Turkey were considered as extreme movements. However, this notion changed with the success of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in three national elections, which showed the growing strength of the party with Islamic roots.

¹ Sufism - the beliefs and practices of an ascetic, retiring, and mystical sect in Islam (The Free Dictionary by Farlex 2011).

² Tariqat - In Sufism, the spiritual path toward direct knowledge of God. For early Sufi mystics, the term referred to an individual's spiritual path; later it came to mean the path advocated by a particular school or order of Sufis and then of the order itself. Each mystic order claimed a chain of spiritual descent from Muhammad (The Free Dictionary by Farlex 2011).

Though the AKP has Islamist roots, it is not the same as its predecessors - the National Salvation, Welfare and Virtue parties – in terms of its ideology, its market oriented economic program as well as its political goals which appeal to the electorate. Despite its Islamist origins, the AKP government has not followed Islamist agenda as its predecessors did. Instead, the Erdogan government has given priority mainly to Turkey's EU membership, economic stabilization in the country and also some symbolic reforms of the legal system such as: abolition of the death penalty, free broadcasting in Kurdish by the Turkish radio and television corporation (TRT), etc. However, there is a fear of “creeping Islamization” from the secularists' side. One of the Turkish distinctiveness is the lower-level of Islamic politics, where religion is an implicit part of the political discourse, which is a function of Turkey's form of secularism. It is Turkey's constitution that places firm limitations on expression of Political Islam in the republic. By preventing the Islamist influence the secularists try to avoid the erosion of Turkey's highly Westernized way of life. Mainly it is intellectuals, business elites and the secular political classes that are concerned about the rise of Political Islam in Turkey (Rabasa 2008)

Hypothesis, Research Questions and Methodology

The Master's Essay will test the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis #1. Rise of Political Islam has a negative impact on Turkey's internal political development and its EU membership aspirations.

The Essay will also give answers to the following research questions:

Research Question #1. How is the process of Islamization of Turkish society carried out?

Research Question #2. How does the rise of Political Islam influence the Turkish society?

Research Question #3. Does the Political Islam have a negative impact on the balance between Turkey's secular and religious forces (between Kemalist elites and new emerging social groups)?

Research Question #4. How does the Political Islam affect the EU-Turkey relations?

The research is mainly descriptive and explanatory. The methodology will be based on collection of the primary and secondary data from the sources relevant to the topic: content analysis, and analysis of existing statistics.

Defining Secularism and Political Islam

First of all let us define the above mentioned two concepts: Secularism and Political Islam. According to Davison Secularism means modern democracy with separation of religion from the state. Usually this term is used to describe the distinction of the government matters from religious ones. Muslims generally condemn secularism declaring that religious values should not be removed from the public sphere. In many Muslim countries there is a dual system of governance: when the government is secular, but Muslim population can choose to bring its disputes to Sharia courts (with jurisdiction of marriage, divorce, inheritance, guardianship, etc.) (Davison 2003).

In secular regimes sovereignty belongs to the nation and not to a religious body, laws and regulations of the state are not based on religion, the government is neutral toward all other religions, there is freedom of religion and conscience. Thus, when saying secularism we should not understand absence of religion, but rather freedom of individuals to practice their religion in the private and public spheres (Wing 2008).

Secularism in Turkey was dramatic: a kind of political and cultural revolution. In Turkey, the meaning of secularism is not just the separation of state and religion, which is common in

most Western societies. Instead it is separation of state and religion combined with the control of religion by state institutions. One example is the ban against the wearing of headscarves in Turkish public institutions (Roy 2007).

Thus, in Turkey Kemalists made legal and educational reforms to control religion and reduce it to the faith of the individual. The instrument for regulating Islam by the state is called the Diyanet, or Directorate of Religious Affairs, which reports to the Prime Minister. It has the functions of administrating Turkey's mosques and the production of religious knowledge (Rabasa 2008). The Diyanet controls the muftis, religious scholars who mainly have the role of giving legal opinions, and though religion is not allowed to involve itself into politics, in some cases religious opinions inevitably intervene into political affairs both internal (use of the headscarf) and external (it has strong international presence which is aimed at serving religious needs of Turks living abroad) (Adanali 2008).

Unlike Christianity, in Muslim countries Islam does not separate religion from state. And it is worth mentioning that most of Muslims around the world welcome Islam's vital role in their countries' political life. "Political Islam" or in the West sometimes called "Islamic fundamentalism" aims at the conquest of the state power. It is the opposite of liberation theology, thus advocating submission instead of emancipation. The Quran (Muslims' holy book) is the main source from where the political aspects are derived, specifically from the Sunna: Muhammad's sayings and living habits (Carney 2002). The *Hadith* is considered to be the second source for deriving some political aspects after Quran. "The Hadith is a body of literature that interprets the deeds and words of the Prophet Mohammed as passed down through oral tradition" (Khalil 2004, 99). In order to be able to distinguish better the difference between Sunna and Hadith let us define each separately. The Sunna is the oral interpretation of the

Prophet Mohammed's deeds and the Hadith originally drew its material from these Sunnas. Hadith implies the narration of a saying or an act of the Prophet, irrespective of its being authenticated or still disputed. Sunna meaning "clear path" or "trodden path" explains mainly the manner in which God deals with nations. (Khalil 2004). But in case of Turkey Political Islam is somehow different. The reasoning under this statement is that currently in Turkey there is not full control of the state by the religion; rather it is a combination of secularism and Political Islam, which is a unique phenomenon in itself.

Nowadays, there is a constant power conflict between secularist and Islamist elites in Turkey. It is also important to define the meanings of Islamist and Muslim, which sometimes are perceived as the same. Muslim expresses religious identity, whereas Islamist implies a political consciousness and social action. Turkey is one of the cases when one can do detailed analyses of the developments and conflicts between the secularists and Islamists (Göle 1997).

Thus, the definition of these two concepts (secularism and Political Islam) gives an opportunity to better understand them in the context of this paper. It showed that despite the general meaning of these concepts in Turkey's case there are some differences, thus resulting in the possibility of combination of secularism and Political Islam, a unique trend in itself.

Historical Overview

The modern Turkish Republic is the successor of the Ottoman Empire, the rule of which lasted for 600 years. It was a multi-ethnic and multi-religious empire, the founders of which were Muslim Turks. This Ottoman system recognized the multi-religious composition of its population and this brought to the concept of "Millet" or religious communities. In order to

keep peace within the borders of the empire each Millet was subject to its religious law and was given autonomy in its international affairs concerning the community (Toprak 2003).

In the 16th century the Ottoman Empire was a Super Power as it ruled over the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe. As science, technology and industry began to develop in Europe, the Ottomans gradually lost their superiority and this is one of the causes that the Ottomans tried to reverse the decline by going to Westernization path. In the mid 19th Turkey went through large scale of reforms, but all was in vain and by the beginning of 20th century the Ottoman Empire was considered the “sick man of Europe.” At the end of World War I Turkey was defeated and most of its present territory was occupied by Western powers. But the nationalist struggle ended the occupation and in 1923 the Turkish Republic was proclaimed. During this period there were two opinions about the route that Turkey should follow and consequently two camps emerged: Islamists and Westernists. The first camp argued that Turkey must preserve its Islamic views and get stronger by this, whereas the second camp was for modernization, new reforms and changes to reach the establishment of a strong new republic. In the end Westernists won the debate upon the establishment of the new republic (Toprak 2003).

Thus, as a result, a new Turkish republic was established by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (his full name was Mustafa Kemal, and Ataturk – meaning the father of Turks – was given to him by the Turkish people). He is considered a national hero of Turkey, who founded modern Turkish Republic out of ashes of the Ottoman Empire. He created a new nation and a secular state (Ataturk and the Modernization of Turkey 2010).

This was a hard period for those who tried to put the wheels of the society on a new track. The most important change needed to bring the Muslim society to secularization was the secularization of law, particularly the civil law (Berkes, Ahmad 1998).

So, secularization of the country required fundamental changes in the society, which has been under Sharia law for hundreds of years. Thus, Kemal made some radical political, legal, social, cultural and economic reforms adopting European laws and jurisprudence. The other reforms will be elaborated bellow (Frantz 2002).

Thus, this chapter gives some general causes of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire which resulted in the creation of the modern Turkish Republic in the 1923. As seen above, it was not an easy task to overcome, but the founder of the Turkish Republic found the right path to overcome challenges and establish a new Westernized country.

The Secularization of the Turkish Republic

The objective of the Kemalist reforms was the realization of modern and secular Turkish state. Their final goal was to bring Turkey to a level higher than its contemporary civilization, to become a modern and western like society (Kili 1980). Secularism as Turkey's modernization experience began in the 19th century and reached its institutional peak in 1923. Turkish secularism is separation of state and church where religious affairs are regulated by state. In Turkey secularism is considered to be a prerequisite of Westernization. Secularism in Turkey is mainly expressed by the state control of the public sphere; which was extreme from 1923-1946, and comparably soft from 1950-1980s (Göle 1997). This part mainly referred to the objective of secularization in Turkey, which is important for the future analyses of this phenomenon.

The Impact of the Kemalist Revolution on Turkey: Reforms Undertaken by Mustafa Kemal

Before passing to reforms, I would like to show some distinction between “Kemalism in practice” and “Kemalism in theory.” “Kemalism in theory stressed on issues of “reason”,

“science”, “high ethics”, “development”, “integration with Western civilization” etc. However, “Kemalism in practice” meant to unite society through the state by means of an authoritarian, and sometimes totalitarian, politics” (Çaha 2003, 110).

Since 1923, as a result of some political transformations undertaken by the founding father Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, new Turkish Republic was founded. Atatürk attempted to transform Turkey into a modern and secular state close to Western one, and this transformation was considered by many scholars as “revolution from above” as it was the military-bureaucratic elite that imposed its secularist vision on the unwilling traditional society at whole. This process was not negotiated with the people or the opposition, instead the elite imposed this transformation on people using strong state and intimidating the opposition (Rabasa 2008).

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was against the Islamic empire (considering it responsible for corruption, decline and backwardness of the society, which he linked to the power of religion) and in favor of European-style of nation state.

The Kemalist elite wanted to break everything associated with the Ottoman era. In the first decade of the new formed republic the Kemalists undertook a series of reforms that led Turkey to its secular nature. Atatürk introduced a fundamentally new constitution, which was based on European models (Hardy 2010).

Those reforms were considered to be firm steps toward secular democratization of the country. The Republic was declared in 1923. Atatürk changed the capital of Turkey from Istanbul to Ankara. One of the important reforms was the abolition of Caliphate in 1924, which was led by the spiritual head of the Muslim Sunni world. He introduced the unity of education in 1924. He put a ban on women’s veil, and men’s fez in 1925. Religious sects were deprived from conducting their activities since 1925. The next step was introduction of Western calendar in

1925. In 1926 the Swiss civil code was adopted (Adanali 2008). Ataturk removed from the law the polygamy and gave women (in fact, imposed on them) the right to vote and hold public office in 1926. Arabic script was replaced by the Latin alphabet and also education system was secularized in 1928. Islam was written out of constitution in 1928. (Heper 2004).

In 1937 secularism became a principle of the Turkish constitution. In 1934 religious attire was prohibited in public (religious personalities were not allowed to wear religious attire in public but only in their sanctuaries). Muslim weekly holiday of Friday was changed to Sunday. Thus, the state began to control all religious institutions (Bilgin 2008).

Founding fathers of the new republic considered cultural changes of key importance for the modernization of Turkey. These men were influenced by the Enlightenment ideas of science and progress as they had been educated in secular military academies. Mustafa Kemal and his associated considered Islam in Ottoman society and politics as an obstacle to Turkey's modernization, which is the reason why all these series of reforms took place (Bingol 2009).

But it should be noted that these reforms were mostly undertaken in the urban centers and the countryside remained nearly untouched. Thus there were two Turkeys: 1) the urban, secular and modern center and 2) a rural, traditional and religious periphery. It is worth mentioning that religion was not totally eliminated, it was simply banished from the public sphere and controlled by the state. However, in the countryside Islam continued to exist and kept its strong roots in the society despite state control and ban on religious orders (Rabasa 2008).

In a sense, what has occurred over the past several decades, since 1950s, is an attempt by this marginalized periphery to find its political voice and representation. Thus Political Islam was a means to provide that voice. Before the 1950s, the advent of multiparty democracy, Islamism

had no expression in Turkey's political system, which was the exclusive domain of the official Kemalist party, the Republican People's Party (CHP).

This exclusion from the center, mainly the political sphere, became the reason for many Muslims to establish their own informal religious networks and movements. All these activities, especially religious ones, were controlled and oppressed by the state as they were a potential threat to the modernization process of the republic. These suppressions alienated the rural religious population and also hindered the emergence and development of civil society (Rabasa 2008).

Thus "the new republican elite consisted of men and women who might be religious in their personal lives but who refrained from any display of their religious belief as actors in the public sphere" (Rabasa 2008, 75). Openly religious people were not accepted in political and social elite groups; they were marginalized and considered as fanatics or uncivilized people; and these groups later formed the background of Political Islam.

One of the important means which served to carry out transformation of Turkish society was one-party rule. Thus, the majority of the population was outside of politics and continued its traditional lifestyle, with Islam having a great influence on them. Some scholars argue that the rise of Political Islam occurred as an attempt by this marginalized periphery to bring its political voice and representation in the state affairs (Rabasa 2008).

So, this part mainly elaborated the reforms undertaken by Mustafa Kemal, its impact on Turkey and its population. This was considered "revolution from above" as reforms were mainly undertaken without taking into account the opinions of the public. This part introduced also the shortcoming of these reforms (reforms were carried out only in urban areas, leaving the countryside unchanged) which is considered to be one of the main reasons for the re-emergence

of Political Islam in the country. The reason for the above mentioned developments was Turkey's strive for becoming more Western, to regain its previous power before the World War I, and also Kemal Ataturk's views on modernization and creation of a strong Turkish Republic.

Secularism and its Role in Domestic and International Affairs

Though my study mainly concentrates on the role of secularism and Political Islam on Turkey's domestic affairs, it would be interesting to see the role of secularism on Turkey's international affairs so as to arrive to conclusions for its impact on Turkey-EU relations. Secularism is portrayed as a security issue for present day Turkey, which has a positive impact on the state's internal and external politics. It is interesting to find out why secularism is a security issue for Turkey, and also whether it is a security issue only domestically or internationally as well. In my essay I argue that it is an issue that should be placed in both the domestic and the international dimensions.

Secularism can be put in *domestic* affairs in the sense that it was a means for separating the affairs of religion from those of the state, as religion and religious institutions are considered as hindering to the modernization of Turkey. Also secularism had been as a controlling tool for the formation of the new republic, by disciplining the opposition and controlling the process of transformation of Turkey. Some scholars (Davison and Parla) see secularization of Turkey as a unique mix of 'separation' and 'control' designed for 'material advancement' that is the future of the republic as an economically successful sovereign state (Bilgin 2008).

In *international* dimension secularism can be placed in a way, that secularism in Turkey was a kind of a response to international society's ambivalence towards Turkey's difference from the rest. From the *international* dimension *separation*, as a result of secularism, explains

the rationale for the abolishment of the caliphate, an important step in the project of Republican transformation. Scholars in favor of *separation* consider that caliphate had to be abolished as it was a trouble for Turkey's international relations (Bilgin 2008).

This part mainly discusses and proves that secularism positively impacts Turkey's internal and external politics. It is important for this study, because it comes to support the main argument of this paper, which states that the rise of Political Islam has a negative effect on the country's domestic affairs and Turkey's EU membership aspirations, whereas secularism affects positively.

Rise of Political Islam in Turkey

One of the prominent scholars Resat Kasaba explains the rise of Political Islam in an interesting way:

During the early decades of the twentieth century, the tired and defeated people of Anatolia were in no position to debate or resist Ataturk's radical message. Some were even enthusiastic in supporting the national leader in his determination to remake the Turkish state. By the 1980s, the situation had changed completely. The Turkish people, few of whom now remembered the early years of the republic, had grown extremely suspicious of, and downright cynical about, the latest incarnations of the promises of 'enlightened and prosperous tomorrows.' Instead of making further sacrifices for a future that kept eluding them, they were starting to inquire about the histories, institutions, beliefs, identities, and cultures from which they had been forcefully separated. This reorientation of the social compass spread to all segments of the society, not only affecting people's political outlook but also influencing the way they dressed, which music they created and listened to, how they built their houses and office buildings, and how they thought about the history of modern Turkey...The nature and contents of these debates and conflicts show that as a monolithic force that tried to mold Turkish society and mentality, Kemalism is losing its grip (1997: 16, 18).

The strength of Political Islam in Turkey has been growing rapidly over the past several decades. Before the 1970, there was no separate religious right, as it was just a section within the mainstream center-right parties. Whereas, in the 1970s, it emerged as a distinct political movement, separate from the other parties, under the leadership of Necmattin Erbakan. Before,

Islamic parties couldn't survive long as they have been closed or banned on several occasions by the Kemalist authorities. Until recently Islamic parties were just fringe movements. However, recently they have reemerged in various guises, proving and showing their durability and ability to attract an important segment of the Turkish electorate (Rabasa 2008).

As a vivid example, which can demonstrate growing strength of Political Islam, can be considered the success of the AKP (a political party with Islamic roots) in the three national elections. Examining the chronological order of the elections we can see that the percentage of votes has been growing for the AKP: in the November 2002 elections, the AKP won 34 percent of the vote, which made it possible to govern on its own. In the July 2007 elections, it gained even more, winning 46.6 percent of the vote, which was more than twice that of the CHP (the party representing the Atatürk secular tradition). In June 2011 elections it gained 49.8 percent of the vote. One can conclude that this is an outstanding achievement for a party which did not exist before August 2001. This fact vividly shows the degree to which the Political Islam has moved out of the political shadows and fringes thus becoming a vital and major actor in Turkish politics. It also proves that Islam in Turkey does not have any negative connotation domestically.

At the same time according to some scholars the causes of the AKP's success in the elections are considered to be: economic growth, stability in domestic and foreign relations, pro-EU policies, voters' preferred reforms, etc (Göl 2009).

Islam in Turkey became national and international concern mainly since the establishment of the AKP. Though the AKP defines itself as a "conservative democratic" party, not as an Islamist party, many secularists do not agree with that. Many Kemalists see AKP as a threat to the secular nature of Turkey, fearing and claiming that it has a hidden Islamic agenda (Göl 2009). As one of the scholars observed; Erdogan perceives Islam as his basic reference:

deriving from it a set of moral principles for communal life. He once stated: “My reference is Islam at a personal level. Politically speaking, my reference is the Constitution and democratic principles” (Heper 2004, 10). Despite the party’s religious roots, the AKP was never against Turkey’s pro-Western policies, instead it promised to continue reforms in order to reach Turkey’s EU membership.

From the above analyses one can conclude that Political Islam has started to re-emerge in Turkey mainly since the 1970s, but we should note that it has gained prominence and success since the establishment of the AKP. The case of the AKP is unique in the sense that it has been the first party that has been winning national elections three times in succession since the establishment of the modern Turkish Republic. It is worth mentioning that, though Political Islam has started to re-emerge in the country since the 1970s, it had its roots in the rise of democracy in Turkey since the 1940s, with the first democratic elections. This will be elaborated in the next part of this study.

The Rise of Democracy in Turkey and its Impact on Country’s Political Islam

Turkey’s sudden turn toward democracy was stimulated mainly by American financial and military support, enlarged under the Truman Doctrine and also Turkey’s desire to be accepted into NATO.

Democratization of the country started with the first competitive elections, which took place in Turkey in 1946 and the same party of the single-party years, Republican People’s Party (RPP) won the elections against the Democratic Party (DP) of the opposition. A change was seen following the 1950 elections, as there was a change of power; Democrats came to power with majority votes (Toprak 2003).

Some scholars consider Turkish case as an excellent example of how international pressure and encouragement plays a great role in the process of democratization of the system. As foreign encouragement played a big role in the 1990s and 2000s in taking a series of measures to consolidate and liberalize the Turkish democratic system for the membership aspirations to the European Union. But despite foreign pressure and encouragement there were other important factors too, that brought to Turkey's democratization process, as Turkey's historical legacy and the internal changes within the system itself. These include the state tradition of self-rule which came from the Ottoman system; the developed bureaucracy, the presence of codified system of law, the closeness to Europe and the emergence of Enlightenment ideas, etc. All these factors played great role in the transition. And thus secularism was one of the major issues of the election campaign in 1959 (Toprak 2003).

Despite all these mentioned above, which bring to the belief that Turkey is a democratic country, Turkey is not fully democratic country as it is shown to the world. The main reason for this is that the democratic system of values (freedom of speech and media; free, fair, frequent and competitive elections; protection of human rights - mainly minority rights, etc.) of Turkey is different from other Western and democratic countries' systems. Also traditional and cultural differences (the Ottoman past of the country, with rooted Islamic religion) make the country different from other democratic states. As we know there is no ideal democracy anywhere as well as in the case of Turkey. But in case of Turkey we can see many violations of democratic principles which would not happen in any country claiming itself as a democratic state. The main violations of democratic principles can be considered the cases of coups and the 2009 incidents of arresting and incarcerating of many innocent citizens of the country, which despite being antidemocratic resembles more of an authoritarian regime.

When the democrats came to power, they started to implement some new changes:

Devout Muslims who wanted to make pilgrimage to Mecca were allowed to make transfer of Turkish liras to foreign exchange; the call to prayer (ezan) was permitted in its original Arabic version, the tombs of holy saints were reopened for visits; the state radio could now broadcast prayers during religious holidays; the budget of the Presidency of Religious Affairs was increased; and a number of religious schools and one program at university level were opened to train religious personnel.” (Rabasa 2008, 89)

All these activities had been banned during the single-party years, while the changes brought to severe debates in Turkey between the two groups: the ones who wanted freedom and greater exercise of their faith and the ones who were against such changes seeing that as a threat to secular foundations of the republic (Toprak 2003).

In 1960s politics in Turkey was mainly about religion, and we can say that politicization of this issue and this division of the electorate into two camps continuous till nowadays. The issue of secularism and its limits bursts out in Turkey from time to time which has direct impact on the life of society. For example, in the late 1970s a coalition government, with an Islamist party involved, put into practice a new regulation which required a liquor permit for the sale of beer. It was on newspapers for weeks and was considered as an assault on the secular state. Another example may be considered the controversy over whether or not to build a mosque on the Istanbul square Taksim, which was considered the center of the city. This issue became “a symbol of the tug-of-war between the ‘Islamists’ and the ‘secularists’ throughout the 1980s” (Rabasa 2008, 98). Similarly the ban on headscarves for female university students remains an unresolved issue, while there were many sit-ins and demonstrations before universities over this issue for many years. Thus, the polarization of the electorate reached its climax, with the Islamic movement gaining strength in the late 1980s and 1990s. Over the years, the composition and the attitude of these two camps has changed greatly: as many have adopted more liberal attitudes

toward Islamist sensibilities. Nowadays, the Islamists are no longer considered as marginal groups in the society, as they have integrated into the centers of political power, economic wealth and intellectual prestige (Toprak 2003).

Thus, we saw that the transition to democracy in Turkey had an important role in terms of the struggle between the secularists and the Islamists. This transition to democracy balanced the religious versus the secular sensibilities of the voter. Thus the power struggle between these two forces was carried out with democratic and peaceful process.

There were several factors which keep Turkey as a secular state in combination with the rise of Political Islam. First factor is the important role of military, which sees itself as the guardian of the secular republic and whenever feeling threat to the secular nature of the country it interferes. But it's worth mentioning that the role of military in politics has been reduced, as it is on the agenda of the recent Turkish government and also the European Union demands some legal changes (in the sense that Turkey should restrict the role of military in Turkish politics by undertaking some reforms) for Turkish membership. The second factor can be considered the role of the judiciary and the legal system. An article in the Constitution which is not subject to change protects the secular nature of the state. Thus, despite some amendments in legislation in recent years giving more freedom of speech and association, there are still some restrictions on the use of religion for political purposes. The third factor can be considered public commitment to the secular Turkish state. According to the results of some surveys, the majority of the population is against the politicization of religion and the giving a role for Islam in state affairs. (Toprak 2003)

Thus, it is useful to look at the democratization process of Turkey in order to understand this quick shift to the rise of Political Islam. Democratization process resulted in the advent of

multiparty system in 1946, which can be considered an important point in the rise of Political Islam in Turkey. With the establishment of multiparty system, the party representing Kemalism, CHP, lost its monopoly on power, and marginalized periphery now became one of the important political constituencies, with its own interests and goals. Thus the CHP, which was the only ruler of the republic for more than two decades, had to adopt its failure and become more tolerant toward Islam (Rabasa 2008). When in 1946 Turkey made the transition to democracy, twenty four political parties emerged making the upcoming elections competitive and challenging for the single party (RPP). However, seven of those new emerging parties got closed within four years. And in 1950 elections the Democrat Party won the elections, the key to success of which can be considered its new economic program and promises to ease the secularization program of the RPP (Toprak 2003).

This part aimed to discuss the democratization process of Turkey, which had a huge and positive impact on the re-emergence of the Political Islam in the country. Throughout this part we have seen Turkey's domestic changes and developments as a result of democratization process in the country, which brought to the rise and strengthening of the Political Islam in Turkey.

Military Coup d'états

All these new policies were regarded as dangerous by many Kemalists and resulted in the several interventions by the Turkish military in 1960, 1971, 1980, 1997 and one last coup attempt in 2007-2009. This part will attempt to answer the third research question, showing that the rise of Political Islam had a negative impact on the balance between the secular and religious forces of the country being mainly expressed through coup d'états.

The coup of 1960 was considered one of the most important of all coups because after that such important reforms as constitutional change and the creation of the National Security Council (MGK) were carried out. MGK was an advisory body which was dominated by the military to ensure that the government's domestic and foreign policies were in harmony with the Kemalist tenets, particularly in regards to secularism. The MGK was a way to institutionalize military's role in the political process and provide means by which the military could express its views to the civilian leadership. Also, the 1961 constitution expanded the scope of associational freedom which brought to the emergence and proliferation of autonomous and religious groups. Thus, as the environment was less-restrictive, there was a good ground for religious forces to form their own political parties, and the National Order Party (MNP) was the first religious party established by Necmettin Erbakan (Sariibrahimoglu 2007).

During the coup of 1971 the Turkish army overthrew the government of the conservative Prime Minister, Suleyman Demirel. It is also called "Coups by Memorandum," as a three-point memorandum was introduced. In this memorandum the commanders of the air, sea and land forces urged the government to take measures to re-establish law and order in the country; otherwise the military was determined to rule the nation directly (Sariibrahimoglu, 2007).

It was in the early 1970s that an explicitly religious party was established called the National Salvation Party (NSP), under Necmettin Erbakan's leadership. It was considered to be a success as the goals of the party were meeting the everyday needs of the electorate, mainly industrialization, promises of cutting down inflation and providing social welfare and economic growth in general. However, the NSP was closed by the military after the 1980 coup and 3 years later when the power was again back to the civilian government, the Welfare Party (WP) was

formed under Erbakan's leadership. As earlier in 1970s under the NSP system the WP also based its strategy on satisfying needs of the electorate (Rabasa 2008).

In 1995 elections the WP came to power in a coalition government and already in 1996 Erbakan became the Prime Minister of Turkey. The Welfare leadership was criticized for its growing discourse on Islam, and soon after Erbakan's radical comments increased public concern, and in the end Erbakan was forced to resign from his post of the Prime Minister in 1997. It was again in a result of military pressure as well as public protests against the use of religion for political gains. The major cause of the defeat of the WP was the failure of its leadership to understand democracy in its consensual nature. It was good in solving the day-to-day problems of the electorate, yet it failed to realize the idea of compromise and consensus in democracy. After this defeat a new party was formed, which was the successor of the WP. Young reformists founded this new party called the Justice and Development Party (JDP), which is now in power after its first victory in 2002 elections (Toprak 2003).

The Justice and Development Party (JDP/AKP) is more careful in issues of polarization as it seems to have drawn lessons from the WP's mistakes. And now JDP positions itself as a conservative democratic party; even though some of the founders of the AKP come from the National Outlook (MG – Milli Gorus), an Islamic organization. "It is argued that the AKP's political ideology seems to belong to a "moderate" type of modernization perspective, which has been evident throughout the twentieth century" (Çaha 2003, 95). In his study the author considers "human rights, civil liberties, de-centralized political structure, constitutional government, secularism and free market economy" as modern political values (Çaha 2003, 96).

When the AKP came to power it started carry out intense reforms in the fields of human and minority rights, the judiciary and the economy. These reforms, initiated and realized by the

AKP government, are the first civilian-initiated reforms (Ahmadov 2008). During these reforms the military lost much of its control over the country: as Turkish Grand National Assembly, headed by the AKP,

introduced a significant reform with regard to civil-military relations, limiting the jurisdiction of military courts over civilians, enabling the auditing of military expenditure and property by the court of auditors, repealing executive powers of the NSC, increasing the time period of regular NSC meetings from once a month to once every two months, and opening the way for appointment of civilian secretariat general for the NSC (Dagi, 2003: 99).

Thus, all the above mentioned changes and developments as a result of democratization of the country brought to the discontent of the Kemalists. They considered it a threat to the secular nature of Turkey and undertook some measure to combat it; namely the coups of 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997. All these had their effect on the policies of the newly emerging AKP, which was more careful on issues that had created problems between the military and its (AKP) predecessors.

Islamization of the Turkish society

In this part I will try to give answers to my research questions 1 and 2. After the coup of 1980, the political and economic setting was for the activities of Islamic groups and Sufi networks. Turgut Ozal pursued Islamization policy of the educational system, print media, and mass communication, which played a crucial role in the public emergence of an Islamic identity in the late 1980s. (Yavuz 1997).

Democratization and economic liberalization gave new opportunities for marginalized Islamic groups to find their voices. After the coup, Muslims were taken into the system to pursue the goals of economic development and eliminate the threat of the left. All these could be carried

out only on the basis of soft Islam. Given this opportunity, Islamists came into the system through the expansion of educational opportunities (involving the Islamic masses, included more graduates from Imam Hatips high schools, where religious education is taught together with modern courses; Quaranic teaching seminars and many other new Islamic private collages), economic activity (new companies owned by Islamist entrepreneurs and by the establishment of an interest-free Islamic banking system), and party politics (Yavuz 1997).

Thus, this new Islamic identity was promoted to the policymaking level as a result of formation of a new elite and a process of democratization. It was carried out by the Motherland Party of Turgut Ozal and the Welfare Party of Erbakan. Also economic liberalization gave opportunity to those from periphery to find their place in the society.

Imam Hatip Schools

“The İmam-Hatip schools were established in the 1950s as vocational schools to produce qualified religious personnel” (Rabasa 2008, 73). During the Ozal Period there was an intense proliferation of Imam-Hatip Islamic schools. But soon the İmam-Hatip schools became a highly controversial issue. It is one of the ways to bring Islam to the political arena, because the AKP government has been placing İmam-Hatip school graduates in government departments and state-owned firms. This practice spurred sharp opposition in secular circles, because this progressive introduction of AKP cadres, and also İmam-Hatip graduates, into the state apparatus can be considered one of the leading ways for change in the secular-religious balance over time, which will bring to Islamization of Turkey’s political system (Rabasa 2008).

Imam Hatip secondary schools initially were designed to produce imams (prayer leaders) and hatips (preachers). But, nowadays, there have been some changes made to this type of

schools – the same curriculum is taught in this school as in other schools with the only difference that religious classes are taught accordingly (Hardy 2010).

Another factor contributing to the strengthening of Political Islam in Turkey was the military itself, which may seem unusual and ironical from the first sight. In the 1970s Turkey was in a brink of civil war, which was mainly the result of right and left-wing violence. Thus, in order to combat leftist ideologies and communism, military tried to strengthen the role of Islam. In fact it was a state controlled Islamization from above: religious education became compulsory in schools, Quranic classes were opened, and all this was carried out under the military's supervision and control. The military hoped to create a more homogenous political community to be able to combat and reduce the appeal of the left-wing ideologies (Rabasa 2008).

Also, another contribution to the strengthening of Islamic groups can be considered the economic and political reforms undertaken by the Prime Minister Turgut Ozal in the mid-1980s. The result of the reforms was the weakening of the state control over the economy, and this in its turn created a new middle class (Anatolian Bourgeoisie) which had strong cultural roots in Islam. This group favored reduction of the state control in the economic and social affairs. The Welfare Party was greatly supported by this group in the 1990s. Muslim groups gained more freedom under Ozal rule as it had a more tolerant approach to religion. These reforms opened greater political space for the Islamists: Islamist groups got permission to access media and newspaper chains, which gave them an opportunity to reach broader political audience (Rabasa 2008).

Also democratization of the country brought to demographic changes, which in its turn had a great impact on the rise and strengthening of Islam in Turkey. Modernization policies resulted in the large-scale flow of the rural population to the center of the country. These rural migrants brought with them their conservative religious values, customs, habits and beliefs (deep

rooted Islamic religion). The migrants were potential voters for Islamic parties. Also these urban migrants were not economically successful and had no social support, which in its turn brought to the moral principles. And according to some scholars these were the main motives for establishing religiously oriented parties in Turkey (Göle 1997).

Thus the rise of Political Islam gave opportunity to the marginalized to show political involvement in the country after so many years of deprivation from politics. It also greatly influenced the Turkish society in the sense that it created a more religious state. The survey founded by the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV), in which 1,500 interviews were conducted in 23 provinces proves that there is a striking increase in the sense of Muslim identity as a component of Turkishness (see Figure 1). The same survey was carried out in 2001 and only 27% of respondents considered themselves Muslims, whereas in the 2006 survey 44.6% considers its primary identity as Muslims (Rabasa 2008).

Figure 1. Turks' Primary Identity

Primary Identity	Percentage of Respondents
Turk	19.4
Muslim	44.6
Citizen of Turkish Republic	29.9
Kurd	2.7
Alevi	1.1
Other	1.3
No reply	1.0

SOURCE: Ali Çarkoglu and Binnaz Toprak, *Değişen Türkiye’de Din, Toplum ve Siyaset*, Istanbul: TESEV, 2006.

So, in this part the study elaborates mainly on the factors contributing to the rise of Political Islam in Turkey. The most important of which can be considered the emergence of Imam Hatip schools, economic and political reforms undertaken in the mid-1980s by Turgut Ozal, as well as demographic changes (mainly as a result of migration) because of democratization of the country. Thus Turkey becomes a more religious state year by year, the proof of which are the survey results discussed above.

Political Islam in Power

The first independent Islamic political party in Turkey was the National Order Party (MNP) which was established in January 1970. This was one of the several Islamic parties led by Necmettin Erbakan. This party, however, existed for a short period; it was shut down after military coup in 1971, because it was considered to be against secular nature of the Turkish state, trying to put an end to the process of Westernization of the republic. The basic agenda of MNP was to return Turkey to its traditional values, considering secularism and Western model of the state as a mistake and the main source of all ills in Turkish society (Rabasa 2008).

In October 1972 the National Salvation Party (NSP) was founded, which was like its predecessor fusing Islam and Turkish nationalism. This party saw the solution to Turkey's problems in the return to "Muslim way of life." This meant that Turkey should have gone to its roots and go back to Sharia rule, which did not appeal to the great part of Turkish population. And this is the cause why this party also was closed after a military coup in 1980. However, it reemerged in 1983 under a new name: the Welfare Party (RP), as its predecessors, this party also expressed hostility to Westernization process of the country. The foreign policy of the party was

strengthening ties and integrating with Muslim world and cutting its ties to the West. The main goal of this party was political stability and economic development (Gülalp 2001).

Since 1994 Welfare Party became more successive year by year, receiving more and more percent of votes. It was a shock for the secularists, especially the military. It was for the first time since the establishment of Turkish Republic in 1923, that Turkey was run by an Islamist party headed by an Islamist Prime Minister. There were several factors contributing to the strengthening of the Welfare Party: the shift in political agenda (putting stronger emphasis on social issues rather than religious themes); Just Order program (contributed to the support among the urban poor); the party's grassroots network (it worked in poor urban areas by helping residents to find jobs, providing health care and distributing food, etc.). However, Welfare could not address Turkey's domestic problems properly; and instead of reducing social tensions with some policies, Erbakan was further polarizing Turkish society between secularists and Islamists (Rabasa 2008).

All these alarmed the secularists, particularly the military, which, instead of intervening directly as in 1960, 1971 and 1980, used indirect method to oust Erbakan. On February 28, 1997, the National Security Council, dominated by the military, gave a list of recommendations to Erbakan, calling him to curb his anti-secular activities. When Erbakan did not implement the recommendations the military forced him to resign in June 1997 by mobilizing the secular establishment against him. This was termed by some scholars as "silent" or "post-modern" coup (Sariibrahimoglu 2007).

Thus, after so many unsuccessful attempts to move forward the religious agenda, Islamists understood that a direct attempt to push forward the Islamic agenda was not a success, and would always meet a strong opposition from the secularists. And the only way to succeed

was to avoid direct confrontation with the secularists and deemphasize religious agenda. Thus, a group of “reformists”, led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Istanbul’s mayor and his associate Abdullah Gul, argued that the party has to rethink its approach in democracy, human right and relations with the West. So, Virtue Party (FP) came to replace Welfare Party with its new ideas and approaches based on Western political values. The Virtue Party was also shut down by the Constitutional Court in June 2001, splitting into two parties: traditionalist Felicity Party (SP) and modernist AKP. The Felicity was anti-Western opposing Turkey’s membership to EU and arguing that Turkey should intensify its ties with the Muslim world. On the other hand the AKP was willing to cooperate with secularists. Though the AKP has Islamic roots (its leaders being members of Welfare and Virtue parties), it calls itself a conservative democratic party and not an Islamic one (Rabasa 2008).

The leader of AKP, Erdogan declared economic stability and EU membership as party’s main priorities. The problem of economic stability was a vital issue in Turkey during the period of 2002 elections, as in that period Turkey was undergoing economic crisis (the Turkish lira was devaluated by 50%, increase of poverty in the country; all of those bringing to a deep decline in economic growth of the country). Though the AKP had Islamist roots it realized that modernity and integration with Europe will be to the better of the party. Thus the AKP found the way to please the public and military: supporting EU membership policy, putting emphasis on democracy and human rights (Patton 2006).

Despite all these, secularists are concerned that the AKP tries to Islamize the educational system and the judiciary, which are the main pillars of Turkish secularism. There was a big controversy over the question of whether Imam Hatip religious school’s graduates can enter non-religious faculties of the universities (AKP supporters argued that it is a step forward to remove

discrimination). Also an important and controversial topic is wearing headscarves in public universities or official spaces. According to AKP supporters ban on wearing scarves in public spaces is a violation of individual rights as wearing headscarf is a matter of personal choice. But it is a controversial issue most of the secularists see the removal of the ban on scarves as sign of threat to secular nature of the state (Rabasa 2008).

In order to understand how Political Islam influences the internal state of the country it would be worth to see the relations between the AKP and the military. Though AKP and the military show that they coexist within the framework of Turkish democracy there are internal tensions between the two. On the one hand the military tries to prevent any Islamist party from undermining the secular state or the military's role in the state affairs. On the other hand the AKP tries to reduce military's role in political affairs and to create more space for Islam in the public sphere.

The tensions between these two intensified when there was a decision to nominate Gul for presidency. Secularists saw Gul as Islamist who was there to undermine the secular constitution of the Turkish republic. Secularists arranged mass demonstrations in the major cities of Turkey, posted some warnings on Turkish websites declaring that military, as the defender of secularism, will take some explicit actions if necessary. It was a kind of indirect threat of a possible military coup. Also the CHP took this case to the Constitutional Court, trying to write Islam out of Turkish politics. But Turkish voters did not share these ideas and voted for the AKP, seeing it as the most successful ruling party in Turkish history (Sardar 2007).

Thus, Gul's election as President on August 28, 2007, is an important turning point in Turkey's history since its establishment as a secular republic, as it was for the first time in the history of the Turkish Republic, that a non-secularist became a President. This did not end the

tensions between the military and AKP; on the opposite the military expressed deep discontent about this fact, which was articulated in the coup attempt of 2008 discussed above. So, the AKP's victory gives space for the military to rethink its policy before taking any direct actions against the elected party again.

After the 2011 June 12 elections many people: both scholars and policy makers fear that Erdogan will review constitution and undermine role of secularism in the country. Whereas others consider that it is not a threat to secularism but rather it will consolidate Turkish democracy more.

As discussed above the AKP gained 49% of national vote, after the AKP comes the CHP (central left Kemalist party) with 25% of votes and in the third place is MNP (far-right political party) with 13% of votes. Erdogan is the first Prime Minister in the Secular Turkish history that won three general elections in a row, each time receiving more than during the previous elections. The AKP won 326 seats, which is a little less than 330 required to be able to pass new constitutional changes and send it off to a referendum, without the support of other parties in the Parliament (Schleifer 2011).

Thus, this part elaborated how Political Islam came to power: step by step, after many failures and challenges. The first Islamic party in power was MNP, then NSP and RP. All these parties had one common agenda of bringing Turkey back to its traditional Islamic values and roots. But all of them were closed by the military (the guardians of secular Turkish state), as they were against the Westernization of the country, instead seeking more integration with Muslim world. So, after it was clear that pushing of the Islamist agenda forward always failed and will never succeed, the newly emerging party the AKP came with new agenda making the emphasis on the economic stability, democracy and EU membership priorities. In this way the AKP found the

way to please both the public and the military, at the same time, studying the relations between the AKP and the military. This study shows that there are many problems between those two. It is very important to know to better understand the impact of Political Islam in Turkey's domestic affairs.

The outcome of 2011 elections in Turkey can be considered a sign of the strengthening of the Political Islam in the country. The current government promises to review the current constitution and reduce the role of secularism in the country. This will give them a chance to operate freely in the country and strengthen the roots of Political Islam even more.

Turkey-EU Relations and its Aspirations for EU Membership

It is important to examine EU-Turkey relations to understand how Political Islam affects these relations and also Turkey's aspirations for EU membership negatively, and by this answering the forth research question addressed by this paper. So, examining Turkey's relations with the EU, the research revealed that Political Islam does really have a negative influence on Turkey-EU relations and its aspirations for the EU membership.

Proponents of Turkey's membership to the EU argue that Turkey is an important geopolitical player in the region because of its strategic location and control of the Bosphorus. It is one of the reasons that make Turkey important for the EU. Also, Turkey is of special importance to the Europe as it has a strategic geographic location perceived from the economic and military perspectives: with large economy and the second largest military force of NATO. Thus, accepting Turkey into its Community will enhance the EU position of the global geostrategic player; given Turkey's geographic location combined with its economic, political, cultural ties in region, with wide natural resources of Black and Caspian Seas (Yesilada 2002).

In 1959 Turkey applied for associate membership in the European Economic Community (EEC), as a result of which Ankara Agreement was signed in 1963. The aim of this agreement was to integrate Turkey into a customs union with the EEC at the same time acknowledging the final goal of Turkey's EU membership.

Since the 1980s, with Turgut Ozal as the leader of the country, Turkey began its more pluralistic and open policy towards the outside world. Ozal restarted Turkey's EU accession aspiration and the ongoing process, as it was considered critical for the further economic and democratic development of the country. In 1987 Turkey applied for formal membership into the European Community. Turkey was in unfavorable environment to start the EU accession talks as it had many domestic and external problems. To become an EU member country, Turkey had to meet the basic conditions well known as Copenhagen Criteria. Firstly, on the political level Turkey must create stable institutions that secure democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and respect for minorities. Secondly, Turkey should create a functioning market economy. And thirdly, Turkey must adopt EU laws: *acquis communautaire*. This third criterion will make Turkey to reform the country drastically, in order to be able to adopt, implement and enforce the EU's values and legislation. Thus, Turkey started series of reforms to meet EU standards, which led to the democratization and liberalization of the country. Since 2005, the EU started Turkey's accession negotiations. (Alessandri 2010).

The AKP played a great role in starting the EU accession negotiation process, because of different reasons. The AKP has chosen Turkey's Western orientation path and has made strong ties to the West. An important pillar of AKP's foreign policy is EU membership. But it is worth mentioning that the AKP strives to broaden and deepen Turkey's ties in other area like the Middle East, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Balkans as well. Turkey's strategic location and

control of the Bosphorus give Turkey a chance to play an important geopolitical role and become an important ally for the EU. According to the doctrine of Strategic Depth³ Turkey should balance its ties to the West by gaining alliances which will contribute to the increase of Turkey's power both regionally and globally.

Turkey's membership to the EU has been postponed because of different issue: the Cyprus conflict (normalizing bilateral relations with Cyprus by recognizing Republic of Cyprus by Turkey, opening of ports and airports to Cyprus), the Kurdish issue (giving Kurds living in the territory of Turkey basic political, cultural and linguistic rights), as well as the Armenian Genocide issue (recognition of Armenian Genocide carried out by Ottoman Turks during the World War I, in 1915). Finally there is another important issue, such as the issue of the Islam as a religion of the country and accordingly the Rise of Political Islam in the last decades. This will be elaborated in the next part.

Turkey-Europe Relations

As discussed above the AKP tries to get EU membership, and at EU' summit in Brussels in 2004 it agreed to open accession negotiations with Turkey, which formally began in October 2005. However, since then, EU-Turkey relations have slowed down because of delay of internal reform process in Turkey. One of the main reform objects is considered to be the strengthening of human and minority rights, especially the Kurdish right, as they comprise a big portion of the population and have their demands. These reforms are not being carried out fully as they may have negative impact on the country: strengthening and emergence of Kurdish independent state

³ This concept has been developed by a Turkish academic Ahmet Davutoglu. "The core idea of the doctrine of Strategic Depth is that a nation's value in international relations depends on its geostrategic location" (Rabasa 2008, 47).

within Turkish borders. Also the problems of Cyprus issue and Armenian Genocide as mentioned above, have their negative impact on Turkey's EU membership aspirations.

It is also important to mention that popular support within Europe for further enlargement has declined: in France and Germany opposition to Turkish membership has increased (see figure 2). The numbers show that the opposition to Turkish membership remains strong among the EU members even if Turkey carries out the required reforms (see figure 3). Opposition mainly clings to the idea that Turkey is not culturally a part of Europe, referring mainly to religious and cultural grounds. Despite these hardships, the AKP is still committed to EU membership trying to get relations with the EU back on track (Rabasa 2008).

Figure 2. European Public Opinion on Whether Turkey Should Be Invited to Join the EU?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Germany	20%	70%	10%
Spain	25%	45%	30%
Italy	30%	55%	15%
France	15%	75%	10%
Great Britain	22%	48%	30%

SOURCE: Harris Interactive, survey carried out May 31– June 12, 2007, with 6,169 respondents: Great Britain, 1,025; Germany, 1,014; France, 1,012; Italy, 1,090; Spain, 1,010; United States, 1,018, at <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/allnewsbydate.asp?NewsID=1228> (as of March 21, 2008). RAND MG726-5.1

Figure 3. European Public Opinion: If Turkey Were to Implement Reforms Desired by Some EU Member States, Should It Be Invited to Join the EU?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Germany	35	50	15
Spain	35	35	30
Italy	30	55	15
France	20	65	15
Great Britain	20	45	35

SOURCE: Harris Interactive, survey carried out May 31– June 12, 2007, with 4,526 respondents: Great Britain, 769; Germany, 839; France, 751; Italy, 726; Spain, 786; United States, 655, at <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/allnewsbydate.asp?NewsID=1228> (as of March 21, 2008). RAND MG726-5.2

As discussed above we can see that culture and religion has an important role in Turkey-EU relations as the most important obstacle for Turkey’s membership is still considered to be the difference in culture and religion. The EU grumbles over “Turkey’s cultural Otherness and the huge cultural gap that allegedly separates this Muslim state from Christian Europe” (Jung 2007, 2). It comes to prove the concept termed by some scholars, that Europe is a “Christian club,” which questions whether the predominantly Muslim country should join the EU because of its different (not European) culture.

Conclusion

The nature of Political Islam in Turkey differs from other Muslim countries, as Turkey has a long history of trying to combine Islam and Westernization, it brought to unique phenomenon: moderate and pluralistic Islam, which cannot be found elsewhere in the Middle East.

In order to find answers to the study's research questions and to defend the hypothesis, this paper examined the rise of Political Islam in Turkey and tried to find out its negative impact on Turkey's domestic affairs as well as its relations to the EU. For this first of all the two concepts have been described and observed in details, in order to give the clear understanding of what the problem is about.

The chapter on the Secularization of the Turkish Republic describes the secularization process of the Turkish society by political, economic and social transformations; which was given a name "revolution from above." We examined all the reforms in chronological order and saw their role and impact on the transformation of the empire into a modern state. The paper also revealed some of the problems as well, due to the limitations in transformation: it was limited to the urban area and the countryside, which mainly was untouched and later it created problem like the emergence of radical religious groups, the main cause of the rise of Political Islam in the country.

The rise of Political Islam in Turkey has begun to strengthen since the last few decades, which is more vividly expressed in the success of the AKP in the three national elections. And as discussed above many secularists see the AKP as a threat to secular nature of the country cause of its Islamic roots and suspicion of it having a hidden Islamic agenda.

The study has examined also the rise of democracy in the country, which had its great impact on the re-emergence of Political Islam. Many factors were elaborated which resulted in the democratization of the Turkish society: external pressure, as well as internal changes within the system itself. As a result of democratization of the country we saw how many social and political views changed to more modern ones, thus giving more freedom and liberty to the society, which in its turn results in the formation of religious groups striving for power.

Thus, we have seen that the rise of Political Islam in Turkey is mainly a result of democratization and socioeconomic transformation of the Turkish society over the past several years. This fact can be considered the main reason and explanation to why Islam and democracy are compatible and can coexist together: a party with Islamic roots operating within the framework of a secular democracy. But we should be careful not to go to extremes and portray Turkey as a good model of democracy because in reality it is not the case. Turkey strives and announces that it has chosen the road of democracy but not in all cases it behaves as a democratic state. Though for many years Turkey is trying to come closer to European standards it is still far from it and the roots of imperialism are still deeply rooted in the nature of this country.

Some scholars consider the tensions in Turkey as a struggle for power between newly emerging social sector (periphery) and the secularized elite (center), rather than a struggle between the Islamists and secularists. That is, forces that have been excluded from politics since the establishment of the Turkish republic now could be involved in politics with the democratization of the Turkish society.

Concerning the AKP, despite having Islamic roots, it has great political and social support due to its widespread social networks and efficient party machine and ties to local

constituencies. The AKP conducts free-market economic policies which attracts the attention and support of many secular businessmen in larger cities. Also the AKP has a more tolerant policy toward minorities which enables it to gain support of many Armenians, Kurds and Alevis in Turkey. The AKP has gained widespread public support because it has undergone great ideological transformation discarding the anti-Western rhetoric, which was characteristic to its predecessors (the National Salvation and Welfare parties). It is mainly seen in the moves taken by the party: reforms designed to bring Turkey closer to Western type of state in compliance with EU norms and regulations.

As a conclusion I would like to summarize that the AKP has chosen a Western or EU-oriented path. Concerning its domestic policies, we can say that this path will bring to more freedom of expression in religious matters, but at the same time no attempts are made to introduce Islamic legislation. The AKP also makes some efforts to reduce military's role in politics. It seeks to give more rights to religious minorities by loosening restrictions on them. Also religious school graduates continue to expand in the government bureaucracy, especially in interior and education ministries, whereas in foreign and defense ministries their presence is expanding more slowly because of Kemalists' dominance in these fields. The AKP government tries to open space for Islam in the public sphere by continuous efforts to import Islamic morality conceptions into the public policy (such as restriction on the sale of alcohol, removal of the ban on wearing scarves in universities, etc.). Though the military does not have the power it used to have years ago, still any government that crosses the lines of acceptable role of religion in politics risks provoking intervention by the military. It is important to mention that public-opinion polls show that there is little support for an Islamic state, and a large amount of Turks, including religious Turks, surprisingly support the secular state.

In foreign policy, as mentioned above, the AKP has chosen EU-oriented path but at the same time it tries to enlarge its ties to the Middle East. We can see that, though opposition in some EU countries is strong to Turkish membership, anyway its accession negotiations continue. But together with this it expands its ties to neighboring Muslim countries, which makes many to think about the hidden agenda of Islamization of Turkey by the AKP government. But this development is not very likely as it would lead to some major problems: greater political polarization provoking a military coup; there would be little public support for Islamist state as many Turks are for secular state and oppose Sharia law; giving up the idea of EU membership would harm the AKP's prestige and authority.

Thus we have seen that the achievements of moderate Islamists (AKP) in Turkey are quite noteworthy, concerning the short period of its existence. It can be said that Political Islam gains new perspectives after the significant experience of Islamists in Turkey. And it brings to a new understanding of such a phenomenon as compatibility of Islam and democracy. Rise of Political Islam has always been a reason for internal clashes, military takeovers thus affecting the Turkish society negatively. But we saw that after the AKP's moderate Political Islam it had changed greatly, gaining more trust and support from the Turkish people.

As a conclusion I would like to note that my hypothesis was supported. According to the hypothesis I drew forward, Rise of Political Islam has a negative impact on Turkey's internal political development and its EU membership aspirations. We saw clearly that Political Islam has many negative impacts on the society as a whole, on the balance between the secularists and Islamists (mainly occurring in the form of coups) and also in some cases examining Turkey's relations with other countries we found that Political Islam hinders to the stable development of its foreign relations.

References

- Adanali, Ahmet Hadi. (2008) "The Presidency of Religious Affairs and the Principle of Secularism in Turkey." *The Muslim World*, Vol. 98
- Ahmadov, Ramin. (2008) "Counter Transformations in the Center and Periphery of Turkish Society and the Rise of the Justice and Development Party." *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 7, No. 2 & 3.
- Alessandri, Emiliano. (2010) "The New Turkish Foreign Policy and the Future of Turkey-EU Relations." *Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)*.
- "Ataturk and the Modernization of Turkey" (2010) Available at <http://www.turizm.net/turkey/history/ataturk.html>
- Berkes, Niyazi; Ahmad, Feroz. (1998) "The Development of Secularism in Turkey." Routledge, New York. Available at <http://books.google.com/books?id=WyMtqrfg9IYC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>
- Bilgin, Pinar. (2008) "The Security of Secularism? The Case of Turkey." *Security Dialogue*, Vol.39, No.6.
- Bingol, Yilmaz. (2009) "Language, Identity and Politics in Turkey: Nationalist Discourse on Creating a Common Turkic Language." *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*. Vol.8, No.2.
- Çaha, Ömer. (2003) "Turkish Election of November 2002 and the Rise of "Moderate" Political Islam." *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relation*, Vol.2, No.1.
- Carney, Abd al-Hakeem. (2002) "Analysing Political Islam: The Need for a New Taxonomy."
- Dagi, D.I. (2003). *Human Rights and Democratization: Turkish Politics in the European Context*. *South European and Black Sea Studies*, 1(3).
- Davison, Andrew. (2003) "Turkey, a 'Secular' State? The Challenge of Description." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102:2/3.
- Frantz, Douglas (2002) "Turkey, well along road to secularism, fears detour to Islamism," *The New York Times*. Available at http://www.susmitkumar.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=98&Itemid=127
- Göl, Ayla. (2009) "The Identity of Turkey: Muslim and secular." *Third World Quarterly*. Vol.30, No.4.

- Göle, Nilüfer. (1997) "Secularism and Islamism in Turkey: The Making of Elites and Counter-Elites." *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 1.
- Gülalp, Haldun. (2001) "Globalization and Political Islam: The Social Bases of Turkey's Welfare Party." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3.
- Hardy, Roger. (2010) "The Muslim revolt: a journey through political Islam." Columbia University Press. New York Chichester, West Sussex.
- Heper, Metin. (2004) "Turkey 'between East and West.'" Institute of European Studies. University of California, Berkeley.
- Jung, Dietrich. (2007) "Turkey's Future: EU Members or 'Islamist Rogue State?'" Danish Institute for International studies.
- Kasaba, Resat. (1997) "Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities." *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Khalil, Mohamed Ibrahim. (2004) "Islam and the Challenges of Modernity." *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*.
- Kili, Suna. (1980) "Kemalism in Contemporary Turkey." *International Political Science Review* Vol.1, No. 3.
- Koutroubas, Theodoros. (2003) "Secularisation, Inter-Religious Dialogue and Democratisation in the Southern Mediterranean." Working Paper No. 4 of the CEPS Middle East and Euro-Med Project.
- Patton, J.Marcie. (2006) "The Economic Policies of Turkey's AKP Government: Rabbits from a Hat?" *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 60, No. 3.
- Rabasa, Angel Larrabee, F. Stephen. (2008) "Rise of Political Islam in Turkey." Rand Corporation. Santa Monica, CA, USA.
- Roy, Oliver. (2007) "Secularism Confronts Islam." Columbia University Press. New York Chichester, West Sussex.
- Sardar, Ziauddin. (2007) "Turkey: Message to the Military." *New Statesman*.
- Sariibrahimoglu, L. (2007) "Chronology of Turkish military coups: From the 1961 young officers coup to the 2007 e-memo." *Today's Zaman*. ANKARA. (Webpage: http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=109959).

- Schleifer, Yigal (2011) "Turkish Elections 2011: the Post-Mortem." Istanbul Calling. News About Turkey. Available at <http://istanbulcalling.blogspot.com/2011/06/turkish-elections-2011-post-mortem.html>
- The Free Dictionary by Farlex. (2011)
(Webpage: <http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Tariqat>).
- The Free Dictionary by Farlex. (2011) (Webpage: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Sufism>).
- "The Possibilities and Limits of Turkey's Soft Power in the Middle east." Insight Turkey. Vol.10, No.2.
- Toprak, Binnaz. (2003) "Secularism and Islam: The Building of Modern Turkey." Macalester International Vol. 15
- Wing, Adrien Katherine; Varol, O. Ozan. (2008) "Is Secularism Possible in a Majority-Muslim Country?: The Turkish Example." Texas International Law Journal, Vol. 42:1.
- Yavuz, M. Hakan (1997) "Political Islam and the Welfare (Refah) Party in Turkey." Comparative Politics, Vol. 30, No. 1.
- Yesilada, Birol. (2002) "Turkey's Candidacy for EU Membership." Middle East Journal, Vol. 56, No. 1.