



Uncertainty of Kemalist state and Islamic revivalism in modern Turkey: An analysis

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Abstract

After the decline of Ottoman Sultanate major Islamic socio-political influences were ended officially in the world. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk established an ultra-secular Turkey which was not favour for majority of Turkish Muslims. The Turkish Muslim community were faced identity crisis and political uncertainty. The Muslim community of Turkey struggled to maintain their socio-religious life in the Republic of Turkey. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had controlled Islamic influences in socio-political life of Turkey. The changes from the Sultanate to the republic actually changed the Turkish socio-political life and history. The socio-political crisis of Muslim community quest for appropriate solution for the current crisis. Cultural clash and ideological developments increased in the public life of Turkey. The crisis of Muslim community caused for several intellectual debated in Pro secularist community. Various pro Kemalist groups rethink about concepts of democratization of country its aim is not to discriminate of human rights and religious freedom; it should be considered rights of citizens. The intellectual and ideological contribution Islamic Scholars and politicians like Sayid Nursi, Necmettin Erbakan and Fatehulla Gülen... etc helped the emergence of Muslim society in the Republic of Turkey. This distinguished Islamic Scholars became in mainstream as representatives of Muslim Umma. In the middle of twentieth century Turkish political ground renovated and developed from grass root level. Various opportunities open for pro religious movements to become part of mainstream politics and socio developments in modern Turkey. The AKP (Justice and Development Party (AK Party) introduced a new regime of modern concept of Islam and religious intellectual ideology. They treated religious affairs as a necessary and important matter in human life. They are motivated and guided by democratic conservatism. The Islamic revivalism of Turkey is very different from others, which has a special roots and method. Turkey's new policies are ideologically motivated by Islam and Islamic teachings. In this paper, I'm trying to analyse the development of Islamic influences in the Kemalist secular Turkey.

Keywords: Islamic socio-political influences, ottoman sultanate, modernity and secularism, Islamic identity crisis

Introduction

In the world history, Turkey is one of the oldest inhabited regions with marvellous history and politics regimes. Ottoman caliphate was one of the most powerful empires in the world. The centralized administration and logical strategic planning clear the way for the establishment of powerful empire in the world. Towards twelfth century Turkey favoured by Islam and Muslim empires which built the height of its power under the brilliant leaderships of various Ottoman Sultans including Suleiman the magnificent (1494-1566) its reached height of development and economical power in the world. The conquest of Constantinople was regard as one of the most remarkable and heroic events in the world history. It was one of major goal of Islam and Islamic Khilafath. Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) has declared the hints in the Hadith ^[1] about the conquest of Constantinople by Muslim emperor. In the time of Ottoman Empire, the state considers Islam as a basic religion and main source of moral and ethical values of the kingdom. This reasoned for innumerable growth of religion. Modern sciences, philosophy and various branches of knowledge are developed by credit of Islamic teaching and theories. This phenomenon impacted over the world and

discussed as a very hot subject. European countries were feeling uncomfortable in the development of the Ottoman Empire. Small European territories planned to restart the crusades against Muslims. But Ottomans entered in European continent which open lot of opportunities to conquer other parts of the world. In the end of nineteenth century Ottoman power became very week and decentralized. *Tanzimat* ^[2] helps to solve sultanate's problems but the public affected various disturbances and troubling such as financial and administrating poor situation increased day by day so public searched for new government and new country which provide equality and modernization. In the beginning of the 20th century the Empire faced challenges in defending itself against foreign invasion and occupation. Internal weakness, unemployment, food crisis.... etc. increased in the in the empire. In the same time Arab world was also in the process of modernization and nationality. New nationalist regimes in Turkey abolished the Ottoman's sultanate. The decline of Ottoman Empire is mostly considering the Khilafath in the world which had been continuing after Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon him).

¹ a collection of traditions containing sayings of the prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him)

² The institutional and constitutional reforms of Sultanate in the middle of nineteenth century.

Revolution and Kemal Ataturk

Under leadership of Kemal Ataturk Young Turks transformed as the most powerful revolutionary and nationalist reform party in Turkey. They united and implemented policies to develop the Turkey and decline the ottoman monarchy. Kemal Ataturk united the people through very effective and well-planned ideas as Gandhi united freedom fighters in India. In the beginning of revolution Ataturk implemented various ideas and methods in light of Islamic intellectual method. So, millions of people attracted and joined in the Young Turks. When he appointed as a superior of Turkey he renovated the cultural and social life of Turkey according to European culture. So, Turkey implemented ultra-secularist policies. He ordered to wipe Islamic symbols and cultural signatures from the country. Ataturk set out the process of making modern Turkey by establishing political and cultural institution both to break the Ottoman past and reach in the contemporary level of western civilization. Since 1924 a number of ultra-secular laws legalised in Turkey like planned by Kemal Ataturk. Education was controlled under the monopoly of the state; the Caliphate was abolished and the religious schools (the *madrassa*) were outlawed. The implementation of Swiss civil code and removal of religions laws (*the Sharia*) from the criminal law started a controversial situation in Turkey between the traditional communities.

Religious community and Turkish Modernity

Distinguished modernisation process has been implemented in modern Turkey. The adoption of Latin alphabets was all realized the aim of establishing the secularization and modernity, thereby removing religious believes and symbols from the process of modern state building and its consolidation. The separation between state and religion increased in Turkish state basically it was total removal of religion from state. The Ottoman Empire was still in existence, with its heritage of religious, cultural, dynastic authority. The dynasty was abolished by the Ankara Government, but its traditions and cultural symbols remained among people. Ataturk's political reforms involved a number of fundamental institutional changes in the state which caused the end of these traditions. The secular-Kemalist country is not following complete anti-Islamic agenda nut they introduced limited version of Islam. In fact, Kemalist state's support for Islam was controlled under the Directorate for Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*) which asserted religious equality and free rights for religious activities in the personal life; he was controlled Turkish democracy from religious circle.

Religion and religious controversial matters, particularly Islam, has become one of the most difficult and dilemmatic subject between intellectuals and scholars. Let us focus our attention on the Muslim intelligentsia at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. Turkish intellectual platform reversed about religion and religious space in public life. Various methods and ideas remarked by Islamic intellectuals and scholars.

In the world History there is several modernization and religious revivalism happened in Middle East and south Asia by influences of distinguished scholars like Shaheed Hassan Al Banna, Muhammed Abdu, Shaheed Sayyid Qutub, Ali

Shariethi, Abul A'la Maududi, Imam Khumaini and many others. Religious revivalism of Turkey was exposed by method of Islam in the concept of modernization, secularism and politics. Turkish Islamic scholars are very modern and their representations are very appreciated by international intellectuals. Gülen movement, Nursi and Naqshbandhi Silsila are very active in grass root level of Turkey. They are representing Islam as a final solution for problematic condition of the current situations.

Islamic revivalism after 1950s

Republic of Turkey Socially and politically changed and developed in the post Kemalist regime. Cultural clash and ideological developments situated in public life. The identity crisis of Turkish Muslims caused to variable clash in the country. Some Muslims supported Kemalist ideology and others were ignored. However, the Islamic trends and culture reversed in the Turkey with powerful ideological support. In fact, there has been an increasing of dialogue about religion and politics in academic world and public discourse in the pro Kemalist regime. Especially After the revolution of Iran under Aythulla Khumaini West Asian countries earn the religious political ideology. The concept of secularism and modernity redefine by Islamic scholars and utilize for growing the mileage of political Islam. Obviously, Muslim brotherhood, Al Nahda such as the Muslim parties born in the West Asia. This parties represented modern concept of political Islam and rereading of Sharia law. This ideology transformed number of social systems in the world.

E. Fuat Keyman (Modernity, Secularism and Islam the Case of Turkey) indicates that "the interconnection between politics and religion has become much more delicate in Turkey since the 1990s, as a result of the rise of Islam politically, economically and culturally. The formation of Turkish modernity has radically changed as Islamic identity claims become more (1) *politicized*, giving rise to political Islam realized through political parties, the most recent example being the success of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in the 3 November 2002 national election and its formation of a single-party majority government; (2) *economically grounded*, as Islam has begun to function as a powerful network based upon trust relations" among small and medium economic enterprises, establishing a very powerful economic actor, that is, the Independent Business and Industrialist Organization (the MUSIAD), which aims to promote a morally loaded economic modernization, founded upon a combination of free market and traditional religious values; and (3) *culturally loaded recognition demands*, as in the case of the headscarf affair and religious sects. Moreover, as Islamic identity claims have become more and more pluralized and multi-dimensional, they have also begun to operate mainly as group-based demands for religious rights and freedoms within the domain of Turkish modernity. In other words, Islamic identity claims and their plural and multi-dimensional nature do not constitute an anti-modern discourse about religious self, but rather a politics of identity operating within modernity and demanding recognition. Today, it is not possible to think of Turkish modernity without reference to Islam. Nor is it possible to think of Turkish secularism as uncontested. In fact, the changing nature of Turkish modernity

has been marked, to a large extent, by the crisis of Turkish secularism.” Since 1980s Turkish peoples witnessed a religious political scenario, which open distinguished scope of political developments, human rights and religious freedom. Turkish case of development of Islamic trends and culture is very different from other West Asian countries. They implemented Islamic trends in the society by modern methods and with keeping secular face of Turkey. After the second world war the resurgence of Islam in Turkey increased by formation of various political parties.

Turkish transition to democratic multi-party system helps to united for political parties and social groups which considering religious aspects in public life. The vital role and power of Islamic ideology has immensely expanded and changed from grass root level since 1980s, especially in the 1990s. Various pro Kemalist groups rethink about concepts of democratization of country its aim is not to discriminate of human rights and religious freedom; it should be considered rights of citizens. The intellectual and ideological contribution of Sayid Nursi, Fethulla Gülen and Necmettin Erbakan... etc helps the emergence of society in the proper way. This distinguished Islamic Scholars become in mainstream as representatives of Muslim Umma.

Necmettin Erbakan and Political parties

Necmettin Erbakan was the Prime Minister of Turkey from 1996 until 1997. He was Turkey's first Islamist Prime Minister. Erbakan's political religious concept was very controversial subject in that time. Various intellectuals and scholars criticize and some others support the ideology of Necmettin Erbakan. He tried to apply Islamic ideology in modern concept to reshape the country but even he succeeded in their military courted his power and government by law of secularism. The multi-party system has been helped to rearrange Turkish democracy and Turkish intellectual sector. In the beginning of twentieth century a series of economic and political shocks led to new election in 2002 bringing into power the religiously conservative Justice and Development Party (AK Party) of former mayor of Istanbul, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The relation between state and religion become controversial in Turkish politics.

Islamic Scholars and Contributions

After the decline of Ottoman Sultanate lost the Islamic scholars step down by the republic of Turkey. There are few Muslim scholars who lead the community in different method to make up the religious freedom and duties. The contribution of Sayyid Nursi helped the Turkish Muslims to live in Islamic teachings. His Islamic activism was mainly concentrated on spiritual life of Muslims rather than as a political ideology. He played a vital role in the revival of Islam in Turkey and now several millions of followers are in worldwide. His literatures are still famous in the world, Risale Nur...etc. which helps the intellectual support for Turkish Muslims. Fathehulla Gülen and his movement is one of most contemporary movement in Turkey. It concerns itself with forms of action, content and meanings that are qualitatively different from the tradition of struggle frequently seen in European societies. The Gülen Movement recognizes the need for a new and inclusive synthesis arising from the past but based upon universal

values and modern realities. The Movement therefore emphasizes a different array of factors, including values, such as equality, freedom, dignity, altruism, good life, ecology and morality, needs and issues which the socio-political structure fails to implement. The Gülen Movement originated in 1970s' Turkey as a faith-inspired initiative to improve educational opportunities for a local community; since then, it has grown into a transnational educational, inter-cultural and interfaith movement. It is estimated that participants number in several millions. The Gülen Movement has securely established respected institutions (of different kinds, but mostly schools) on every continent. Fethullah Gülen holds religion to be far above politics; he sees it as a source of morality and ethics, which are relevant to, not in conflict with, responsible politics. He does not want religion to become a tool of politics because when politics fails and goes awry people may blame religion. He does not want political aspirations to blemish religion or their potential for corruption to degrade it^[3].

There are several issues between The Gülen Movement and the AKP government. The issues caused for distinguished political crisis and dilemma.

AKP and Religious Politics

In the post-Kemalist Turkey, Islamic religious ideology was re-established in social life. Islamic trends and culture became mainstream subject. After Kemal Ataturk Islam and Islamic ideology gets a new space in Turkish people. They reshape the concepts of secularism and modernity. The installation of Islamic intellectuals and principles by AKP in Turkish politics are very controversial. The AKP interconnected state and religion in modern and conservative method. In this study I will attempt to provide a critical and historical analysis and developments of the relationship between the religion and state in secular Turkey and impact on world. After the jasmine revolution various Arab countries are considering Turkey as a role model of Islamic politics in modern world through secular and democratic figure.

The charismatic personality of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had immensely increased the mileage of Turkish politics in the world from his first day of political life. AKP's various policies and strategy develop Turkey and become one of the most economical and powerful countries in the world. Various political concept of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan became very controversial topic in the world, which celebrated by various Medias and academicians as an “Islamisation of Turkey” but AKP deal the crisis very maturely and punctually.

The implementation of religious freedom was very controversial in the mainstream, especially freedom for wearing Hijab. But Turkey was one of role model for all countries as freedom for religious and cultural activities for citizens. However, the political improvements of Turkey misunderstand. Obviously Recep Tayyip Erdoğan called as an “Islamist”. From last 10 years of his political life he nothing use about Islam or Islamisation but he interfered in the Middle East issues and Muslim's crisis. The foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu visit Myanmar for giving aid and support to Muslim minority who massacred by Buddhists. The inter connection between politics and religion has become

³ fgulen.com

more delicate in turkey and world even they are following their secular concepts. The AKP introduced a new regime of modern concept of Islam and religious intellectual ideology. They treated religious affairs as a necessary and important matter in human life but they are not introducing religion in public directly. In depth, AKP is using Islamic intellectuals and theories for developing the country. They are motivated and guided by democratic conservatism.

The Islamic revivalism of Turkey is very different from others, which has a special roots and method. Turkey's new policies are ideologically motivated by Islam and Islamic teachings. The Kemalist secular parties were promoting complete implementation of Western ideology in Turkey and not providing any room for religious values and teachings in the state affairs. But, the Islamic politicians used the religious idioms, practices and culture with the progressive European ideas in Turkey. The intellectuals contributed modern ideas in Islamic basic concept to adopt pluralistic concept in Turkey which accelerated Islam and its important in the Republic of Turkey.

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