Introduction

The rise of Islamism in the Republic of Turkey has come to be a taken-for-granted phenomenon. This is in large part owing to the near-hegemonic status of what Kandiyoti has described as the master narrative (2012: 515) of secularism. According to this master narrative, Turkish politics is defined by a clash between centre and periphery, as elaborated by Mardin (1973) in his highly influential classical formulation, or put in another but similar manner, a struggle between a sharply distinguished authoritarian secularist Kemalist state and the Muslim majority that makes up society.[1] Within this context, Islamism is perceived largely as a bottom-up reaction to the top-down authoritarian or 'assertive' (Kuru 2009) secularism of the Kemalist regime (e.g. Aktürk 2015; Ayata 1996; Delibaş 2015: 15; Göle 1997; Gülalp 2005; Heper and Toktaş 2003; Kadıoğlu 1996; Kuru 2009; Sunar and Toprak 1983: 427; Taşpınar 2004; Yavuz 1997, 2000, 2009).[2] This perspective tends to regard the secularising reforms adopted particularly since 1924, including the closure of the *medreses* (religious schools), the enactment of a secular civil code (Türk Medeni Kanunu, which basically adopted the Swiss Civil Code), the removal of Islam as a state religion, the replacement of Perso-Arabic script with Latin script, the abolition of the caliphate, and the restriction of the *ulema*'s role as a break from the Islamic Ottoman past. In this vein, the Islamist AKP's success in 2002 has been commonly depicted as a process of democratisation of the 'assertive secularist' Kemalist regime (e.g. Barkey and Çongar 2007; Cizre 2008; Demiralp 2009; Heper 2013; İnsel 2003; Kalaycıoğlu 2007; Kuru 2009: 200; Kuru

[1] According to Mardin (1971, 1973), religion increasingly became identified with the periphery following the creation of the secular Republic, having been placed on the border of both sides during the Ottoman Empire.

[2] The wider literature on secularism and constitutional studies has also treated Turkey as the archetypal example of separatist secularism (Stepan 2011) or a paradigmatic case of conflict between state secularism and popular support for religion (Zucca 2009). Similarly, for Lerner (2013: 629) the 'Turkish constitution represented a revolutionary model of imposed secularism'.

and Stepan 2012; Mecham 2004; Öniş 2009; Özbudun 2006: 547, 554–555; Patton 2007; Sayari 2007; Somer 2007; Taniyici 2003; Yavuz 1997, 2000, 2009).

This is because, the argument goes, 2002 marked the year the Muslim majority society, or 'periphery', represented by the AKP (re)gained its rightful place in the state, or the 'centre', formerly inhabited by secular Kemalist elites. One of the main proponents of this narrative, Hakan Yavuz (1997: 64), argues that 'secularization imposed from above alienated Turkish society from the state. The history of Turkish politics, therefore, is the story of a complex tension between these two worldviews and identities. Over time, the state-centric republican elite and its supporting groups have identified themselves as secularists, commonly known as *laikler* [laicists], and the large masses as "backward Muslims."' However, there are seemingly alternative narratives that admit a degree of continuity with the Ottoman Empire, and particularly the policies of the Young Turks – regarded as forefathers of the 'Kemalist' regime – since 1908. These accounts question the nature of the secularism of the Turkish state by arguing that rather than separating religion and state, the secularist Kemalist regime has tried to control and instrumentalise religion through institutions such as the official religious authority, the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, Diyanet) (Davison 2003; Sakallıoğlu 1996). An extension of this account includes efforts to show how secular state elites created opportunities and the space for Islamist entrepreneurs after the 1980 coup d'état, when the military regime adopted an Islamisation programme (Eligür 2010). Nevertheless, regardless of the different readings of history and the transition from empire to republic underpinning these narratives, in general, both accounts have essentially relied on a dichotomisation of state and society, and consequently narrate Turkish history as a 'struggle between the values of a secular Kemalist state elite and a traditional Muslim society' (Kandiyoti 2012: 515).

Consequently, largely based on this master narrative, in the early years of the AKP, scholars pointed to the list of reforms introduced by the Islamist government, including a series of laws to align the country with European Union (EU) membership criteria, the reconfiguration of civil-military relations and the opening of dialogue about the Kurdish question, alongside the pro-market economic policies, as testament to the party's democratic orientation. As to the explanation of why an Islamist party was leading this alleged democratisation of politics, many pointed to a dynamic of moderation underpinned by a combination of (i) integration with global capitalism and the rise of a so-called conservative/pious or pious 'Muslim bourgeoisie' acting as a liberalising class force

against what is described as the authoritarian and monopolistic state-dependent traditional bourgeoisie; (ii) political learning and pragmatism catalysed by the 1997 military intervention; (iii) Europeanisation and (iv) electoral participation and the processes of becoming a mass party (e.g. Barkey and Çongar 2007; Cizre 2008; Demiralp 2009; İnsel 2003; Kalaycıoğlu 2007; Mecham 2004; Özbudun 2006: 547, 554–555; Patton 2007; Sayari 2007; Somer 2007; Taniyici 2003; Yavuz 2009; see also Kuru and Stepan 2012). As a result, despite being recognised as a 'culturally conservative movement', the AKP was, at times, accorded a leading or even revolutionary role as an 'initiating force for a normalized regime of democracy' (see Barkey and Çongar 2007; İnsel 2003). The AKP, it was argued, would end the authoritarian 12 September regime enshrined in the 1982 constitutional framework whether it liked it or not, and thereby democratise despite a lack of democrats (İnsel 2003; Patton 2007: 342; Tepe 2005: 71–73). This master narrative therefore rested, often unquestioningly, on a combination of modernisation and historical sociology theories of democratisation in assuming a deterministic positive link between economic development with democratisation and transition theories in its focus on electoral politics and taking for granted that a move away from military tutelage would necessarily involve a transition to democracy.[3]

Following the AKP's strong performance in the 2011 general elections, its third consecutive general election victory since 2002, analyses had begun to point to the increasing electoral hegemony of the AKP, absence of effective opposition, slowing progress on liberal reforms (Turam 2011), and the establishment of a predominant party system (Gümüşçü 2013; Müftüler-Baç and Keyman 2012; Musil 2015), although faith still remained that, overall, the AKP was 'deepening democracy' (Göle 2012). By 2013, with the outbreak of the Gezi Park protests, the direction of politics grew difficult to ignore and the atmosphere grew more pessimistic. Scholars began to highlight Turkey's 'democratic reversal or backslide' after a 'major wave of democratisation' (Öniş 2013), the centralisation of power under a populist leader (Aytaç and Öniş 2014; Kalaycıoğlu 2015) and illiberal democracy. Others pointed to the AKP's drift towards a highly majoritarian conception of democracy and, more recently, have underlined its transition to a

[3] The tenets of both theoretical approaches remain a matter of intense debate and criticism. The basic premise of the transition paradigm in terms of comprising the assumption of a unilinear development and the conception of democratisation as involving a series of set stages has been widely questioned (Carothers 2002), and scholars have found little evidence for a strong link between the emergence of democracy and that of capitalism (e.g. Przeworski et al. 2000).

competitive authoritarian regime type (Esen et al. 2016; Kalaycıoğlu 2015; Özbudun 2014). Blame was placed partly on the lack of strong opposition (Müftüler-Baç and Keyman 2012; Öniş 2014; Özbudun 2014), while others pointed to the role of Erdoğan as a leader, arguing that his 'tendency to reduce democracy to elections' had ended the 'Turkish model' (Taşpınar 2014). For some, explanations bordered on the essentialistic in claiming that the AKP and Erdoğan had been captured by the undemocratic 'DNA' of the secular Kemalist regime (Cizre 2017). The more sophisticated proponent of Islamist moderation told from a Gramscian perspective, Tuğal, (2016) argues that Turkey's 'Islamic liberalism' under the AKP had been contingent on the external context, with its downfall precipitated by the contradictions of neoliberalism and by the Arab uprisings since 2011. In short, therefore, explanations of the current state of affairs have simply been that it was the AKP or Erdoğan that had changed, shedding their democratic character over time owing to changing circumstances or their being corrupted by power. The exception to this near-hegemonic approach are the Marxist accounts that have instead underlined authoritarian persistence under the AKP (e.g. Bedirhanoğlu and Yalman 2010).

However, the unfolding events have shown that the commonly held understanding of the rise in Turkey of the AKP, or Islamism more generally, as encompassing a process of democratisation of the Kemalist regime – resting on the master narrative that equates religious expansion with democracy – and its subsequent, largely circumstantial, sidetracking has been a mistaken one. Most clearly underlining this narrative's deficiencies has been the failed coup attempt of 15 July 2016, which the AKP blamed on its former Islamist allies, the Gülenists.[4] Previously, the AKP–Gülenist alliance had been credited with helping to weaken the military's hold on politics and expanding the Islamists' control over the state bureaucracy. However, with growing competition between the two sides, evidenced by the launch of the December 2013 corruption investigations against AKP officials, the AKP government denounced the Gülenists as having established a parallel state and subsequently designated the Gülenists as a terrorist organisation.[5] The eruption since 15 July of a violent struggle within the state between different factions and among Islamists, together with the increasing visibility of the Diyanet (housing the Turkish *ulema*) in the mobilisation of popular opposition to the coup attempt, clearly demonstrates that the binary picture of a clash between a secular

[4] See Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of the Gülenists.
[5] See Chapter 6 for a detailed discussion of the struggle between the AKP and the Gülenists.

Kemalist state and religious society drawn for us by the master narrative is not only simplistic; it has distorted our understanding of reality and the actual practices of politics. Indeed, one can ask, if the Gülenists have been infiltrating the state, and particularly the military, the self-designated guardians of the Republic and secular order since the 1980s, how can we base our analysis of Turkish politics on the understanding of the Turkish state as a highly monolithic secular Kemalist actor? What should we make of the rapidly expanding role of the Diyanet, to date treated as a marginal actor or anomaly within the secular state?

This book, therefore, tackles this disjuncture between theory and the reality that has arisen in the Turkish case by considering the rise of political Islam and the AKP's ascent to power. Accordingly, it answers one case-specific question: What accounts for the political salience and persistence of religious identity over time in the ostensibly secular Turkish Republic, resulting in the rise and success of Islamist politics, particularly under the AKP? This, in turn, relates to a question of broader relevance: What does the Turkish case tell us about why certain contexts prove more conducive to the politicisation of religious identities than others?

The literature on the Turkish case, which has underpinned a misguided perception of the AKP and the rise of Islamism, has reflected gaps in the understanding of the global phenomenon of what has been described as a 'religious resurgence' underway since the 1970s.[6] This has referred to essentially two interrelated but separate phenomena: the rise in religiosity and the emergence and spread of politicised religious movements. Politicised religious movements, including Islamist movements, the focus of this book, have been described by Keddie (1998) as 'religio-political' movements to emphasise their inherently political nature and to distinguish this from conservative religiosity or piety. Importantly, what sets religio-political movements apart from a simple rise in religiosity or purely religious organisations is the focus on gaining power to effect a transformation of government and society to reflect what are proclaimed to be the principles of that particular religious tradition. Religio-political movements, therefore, differ from conservative religiosity or piety in being inherently political and, ultimately, a type of identity politics geared towards political action. In this vein, Islamists, for example, appeal to, mobilise and legitimise their politics with reference to a

[6] Critics of secularisation theories have questioned the 'myth of past piety', arguing that there is nothing unique or exceptional about religious resurgence (Stark 1999). However, equally problematic is the assumption of the depiction of resurgence which seems to suggest that it was a natural development.

reinterpreted, homogenised Islam and its symbolic universe and idioms (Keddie 1998: 697; White 2002: 6). Such movements pursue Islamisation (the precise content of which can be highly varied between different groups and over time) through the state and civil society networks such as Islamic charities, including by expansion of religious education and adoption of conservative social policies (e.g. restrictions on alcohol and on women). Likewise, the Hindutva movement in India has promoted policies such as Hindu prayers in schools and has attempted to enforce religious norms and morality codes. Crucially, both movements recognise only members of their respective religious communities, either Muslim or Hindu, as the rightful rulers and owners of the state.

A key impact the rise of religio-politics has had on the literature since the 1970s is triggering a reassessment of modernisation theory and the assumptions that economic development and bourgeoisification bring, in the long run, secularisation of society.[7] In turn, this rethinking has produced, broadly, two main strands of analysis of religio-politics: the culturalist and functionalist/reaction-based approaches. The initial response to the conundrum posed by the rise of religio-politics was to point to its geographic concentration in predominantly Muslim majority countries and blame non-Western cultures for being unable to adjust to the secular nation-state and modernity. Rather than admitting a failure of the secularisation thesis, analysts pointed to 'Islamic exceptionalism' and the alleged (but mistaken assumption of) lack of separation between state and religion. These essentialist or culturalist arguments have been extensively contested as being orientalist and challenged for presenting religions and cultures as being highly segmented, discrete and closed systems (Halliday 1995; Said 2001, 2003; Zubaida 2011). Religio-politics is not confined to Muslim majority or non-Western contexts, and the emphasis on the autonomous influence of religious traditions on political action is also problematic. Doctrine may be important, but how individuals subjectively interpret and act on it will be influenced by existing political-economic power structures (Halliday 2000: 134). Despite the discrediting of these types of explanations, derivatives of the culturalist approach can be observed in the multiple modernities school, which, in seeking to discredit orientalist conceptions of Muslim politics, has sought to emphasise that despite cultural distinctions, there is no inherent incompatibility between non-Christian traditions and modernity. A key proponent of this perspective in the Turkish case, Göle argues,

[7] For an overview of the debate, see Calhoun et al. (2011), Casanova (1994), Fox (2004), Gorski and Altınordu (2008), Martin (2007), Stark (1999) and Stark and Bainbridge (1980).

for instance, that Islamist movements present a 'counter-cultural model of modernity, and a new paradigm for self-definition that has led to the formation of Islamist counter-elites' (1997; see also Çınar 2005). Yet, as Zubaida has pointed out, multiple modernities arguments are open to the same charges of essentialism in 'describ[ing] and implicitly justif[ying] the ideological projects of identity politics – defined as "alternative", presumably, to Western modernity, which is assumed to have some uniformity deriving from a Western essence' (2011: 4). In short, these approaches also reduced complex socio-political and economic struggles to culture and ideology alone.

The second and most prevalent approaches within the literature are functionalist explanations – that is, those that describe religio-politics as a reaction or as the articulations of grievances. These are also a response to the problems of modernisation theory and culturalist approaches. According to these accounts, the rise of Islamism was not a reflection of the fact that Muslims could not be secular but, rather, was because Muslims were reacting to actual or perceived social, economic, political or identity-related crises generated by modernisation or 'post-modernity' and also colonial domination. Analysts have identified a whole host of variables related to modernisation, including secularisation, capitalism, neoliberalism, economic crisis, migration, increasing rights of women, education, urbanisation, cultural homogenisation, population growth, corruption and disaffection with established institutionalised religious bodies, as contributing to the rise of religio-politics (e.g. Antoun and Hegland 1987; Bruce 2003; Ehteshami 2004; Göle 2000; Gülalp 2005; Haynes 1995; Juergensmeyer 1993, 2011; Keddie 1998; Kepel 1994; Madan 1987; Nandy 1988; Sahliyeh 1990: vii; Tehranian 2007; Tibi 2001; Tuğal 2007: 11–12; Voll 1987). In this vein, Juergensmeyer, among others, argues that religio-politics is an ideology of protest against the secular states of religious societies and is driven by the failure of secular nationalism and ideologies in the face of multifaceted crises of modernity (1993, 2011). This tendency to view religio-politics as a grass-roots or bottom-up phenomenon has, in turn, underpinned analyses that have portrayed these movements as potential democratisers.

A more recent permutation of these arguments includes accounts that seek to historically contextualise secularism as a specific political project that demarcates religion as an autonomous sphere in the nation-state by emphasising 'multiple competing secularisms' (Casanova 2011; Martin 2007; Stepan 2011; Van der Veer 2011). These reflect efforts to take into account different institutional patterns of religion–state relations, differentiating between the experiences of Western Europe, where established churches are common, along with French laicism and US secularism as a

'wall of separation', as opposed to Turkish laicism, which incorporates religious authority within the state (Fox 2008; Stepan 2011). In particular, Kuru distinguishes between passive (inclusive) and assertive (exclusionary) secularism, in which states are friendly or hostile, respectively, towards religion depending on the particular configuration of relations and the perceptions of political elites towards religion during the process of nation-state formation (2009: 22–23; Kuru and Stepan 2012: 5). However, Kuru (2007, 2009) also understands the politicisation of religion as a reaction to the 'assertive secularism' of the state. Yet, cases such as Malaysia and India suggest that religio-politics could flourish in less restrictive environments. In India, the state arguably adopts a less assertive secularism that is considered to comprise a 'principled distance' (Bhargava 2011) of the state from religion, which has involved maintaining personal religious laws. This suggests that politicisation is not solely a reaction to authoritarian secularism.

Overall, the broad approaches outlined here have generated important insights into the different political and socio-economic contexts that religio-political movements have thrived in, as well as the responses and strategies of actors within them. The fact that religio-politics arose as an important phenomenon around the 1970s in both Muslim and other contexts across the globe underlines the importance of universal structural factors such as modernisation (including capitalist development and secularisation) together with democratisation, economic deprivation and Cold War anti-communism. There is, nevertheless, a growing criticism of approaches that treat religio-politics purely as a reaction to colonialism or to modernisation and its effects (Cesari 2014; Eligür 2010; Gill 2001). Since these factors have impacted contexts that have not developed religio-politics, these variables alone do not provide answers as to why some settings proved more conducive to the emergence of religio-political movements than did others. Gill notes that modernisation has been utilised as the variable to explain both secularisation in some parts of the world, such as Western Europe, and the rise of religio-politics and religiosity in others (2001). This reasoning becomes tautological because whether communities secularise or turn to religio-politics is based on whether these movements are already present in that community, and thus, the 'dependent variable is linked to the definition of the independent variable' (Gill 2001: 126). That said, the contention here is not that structural factors such as modernisation or the experience of colonialism did not generate important grievances that subsequently produced religio-political mobilisation. Nor is the importance of factors such as the instrumentalisation of religion by political actors, grass-roots mobilisation, the role of contingent events such as

economic crises, or the ideological or emotional commitment of actors or their resistance to phenomena such as modernity denied. Rather, this book underlines the gap in our knowledge that has resulted from our analytical frameworks. And, as the literature drawing on social movement theory has also demonstrated, grievance alone is not a sufficient condition for the mobilisation of actors (Eligür 2010). The literature has left unanswered the question of why some contexts have been more amenable to the transformation of this reaction into the rise of religio-politics than have others. Turkey represents a good case study to test the reaction thesis, being an ostensibly secular state and a relatively more open political system as compared to many other more authoritarian Muslim majority contexts, which typically incorporate Islamic law within their constitutions and where all political avenues and identity claims outside religion are restricted.

This text argues, however, that there is a more fundamental problem with the conceptual framework that has resulted in a gap in the understanding of why religio-political movements have emerged and become more successful in some contexts than others. It has been pointed out by Calhoun et al., among others, that 'many of us are unconsciously affected ... [by] a grand narrative involving secularism in the spread of modernization' (2011: 16). Indeed, while in general, modernisation theory has been rejected and heavily criticised, our analytical framework has nevertheless often remained epistemologically rooted in the secularisation/modernisation paradigm (Vertigans 2003). In Kandiyoti's words, 'The dead hand of the modernization paradigm ... is clearly evident in these accounts' (2012: 516). In the literature, this has meant that the notion of a secular state sharply demarcated against a religious society has been taken for granted in many analyses. More recently, Cesari (2014: 276) has also critiqued prevalent explanations of the politicisation of Islam as operating on a dichotomy of state and religion, and this work draws on these new approaches.

One consequence of this is that the secular state, considered to be exogenous (having presumably originated outside religious society), is treated as a monolithic, autonomous and unitary actor. This has resulted in a frequent tendency to neglect the role of state institutions in structuring politics, regarding them essentially as dependent variables and autonomous discrete units (i.e. church and state) that are transformed by actors. Different institutional actors and factions within the state that may have political visions allied with religio-politics are simply ignored. However, as this book will show, contrary to conventional wisdom, the Diyanet, which houses the Turkish *ulema*, despite being commonly regarded as a marginal actor within the state that is utilised by the secular

elites to control religion, has, in fact, played an important role in the Islamisation of public spaces and in delimiting the boundaries of the nation. Where attention is paid to the role of institutions, it has chiefly been within studies of religio-politics that adopt rational choice or supply-side perspectives. A criticism of these approaches is that they tend to be Western-centric (particularly the United States) and that they assume a high degree of flexibility in the adoption of religion, neglecting the ways it can act as an ethnic marker. Purely instrumentalist accounts have a difficult time accounting for why religiosity or religious identities may persist despite adversity or for the intensity of those emotions. They are also less concerned with the reasons that they have become prevalent in the first place.

Additionally, even where the importance of states is acknowledged, it has typically been in the context of characterising accommodative policies towards religion as its instrumentalisation by secular elites for electoral gain, legitimacy or fighting communism. For instance, both Hibbard (2010) and Eligür (2010) have identified gaps in the reaction thesis and have drawn attention to the role of the state in supporting religio-political mobilisation. While acknowledging the importance of factors such as grass-roots mobilisation, Hibbard (2010: xi–xii) nevertheless adopts a top-down approach, arguing that the changing strategies of (secular) state elites towards 'illiberal religion' to bolster their populist legitimacy is an important factor in bolstering (illiberal) religio-politics. A closer look at both Muslim majority Turkey and Hindu majority India suggests that accommodative policies of states regarding the demands of religio-politics have often preceded these movements becoming significant political actors or electorally successful, which begs the question of why these state elites chose religion.

In the Turkish case, it has been argued that the 1980 military coup was a turning point in which the secular Turkish state adopted an Islamisation programme – the Turkish–Islamic Synthesis (Türk-İslam Sentezi, TIS) – to absorb and head off an Islamist challenge and fight against communism. However, despite indications of the greater salience of religion and religiosity in Turkey following the move to multi-partism in 1950, this did not translate into a popular mass Islamist movement or electoral success, with votes for the Islamist National Salvation Party (Millî Selâmet Partisi, MSP) peaking at 11.8 per cent in the 1973 parliamentary elections. A fluid and enmeshed relationship, collaboration and cooperation between the Islamist, conservative and rightist actors within and outside the state before and after 1980 also suggest that the description of a fundamental clash between the two sides is misleading. Similarly, in India, the 'secular' Indian National Congress's adoption