The concept of laicism (laiklik) became in the 20th century one of the main principles of Kemalism as well as the constitutional system of Turkey. It was based to a large extent on the French model but it evolved significantly after the Second World War being influenced both by the domestic and external factors. In the AKP era it is a very complex phenomenon. It is perceived in a different way by the Turkish social and political actors and has been at the core of the political struggle in Turkey - even more than before the AKP ruling. It leads to difficulties in defining the relationship between state/politics and religion in the contemporary Turkish state and reveals deficits of the conceptual framework to date concerning the phenomenon of secularism. The paper is an attempt to identify the type of secularism we can observe nowadays in Turkey and to propose the conceptual approach going beyond the variations to date. It will be possible thanks to the analysis of the functioning of the secular system in this state in the past and nowadays as well as answering the following questions: How is the Turkish secularism changing? Is the process of change linear? What are differences between the French and Turkish model of laicism nowadays? Should we talk about secularism or rather post-secularism in Turkey taking into consideration the process called by some scholars the “subtle Islamization”? What is the relationship between secularization as well as religious transformation and democratization in Turkey?

The Turkish concept of laicism (Turkish laiklik) became a major principle of Kemalism and simultaneously of the constitutional order in Turkey in the 1930s. It was based, as many other principles of this ideology and systemic solutions on western patterns, i.e. on the French model of the so-called hostile separation of church and state. Its introduction resulted from the transformation taking effect in the Ottoman Empire already in the 19th century, culminating in the period of Atatürk’s reforms – after the Republic of Turkey was
established at the beginning of the 1920s. However, since the very beginning it has been very specific and diverging a little from the French model due to the role of state in the religion related issues. It began to evolve after World War II, subject to modifications affected by many external and internal factors. In this connection already then some researchers began to doubt whether Turkey could be called a secular state.¹

This process was under way during the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi), a formation of Islamic roots, which has been governing on its own since 2002 and although it respects the idea of a secular state, it aims at further modifications which, according to some observers, primarily journalists but also scientists, justifies speaking about the end of a secular state.² This principle became a very complex issue during the AKP rule. It is perceived differently by different socio-political environments (which, by the way, does not differ from a diverse perception of secularity within debates among Turkish intellectuals held for decades now³) and the political fight around it has been in progress in Turkey for a long time - to a larger extent than before 2002.

All this makes it difficult to define the type of relationship, we have to do with, between state/politics and religion during the AKP rule. At the same time, it shows the deficits of theoretical framework useful to explain the problem. The present article is aimed at the attempt to identify the type of these relationships with a simultaneous proposal of a theoretical approach combing Polish, Turkish and western classifications of the types of secular state and the "theories of institutional change" within the new institutionalism. It is a multidisciplinary approach combing concepts of political science and law. Primarily, the author intends to verify the hypothesis that both before the AKP rule and after 2002 we had to do with a secular state in Turkey. However, its shape has been changing as a result of a number of exo- and endogenous socio-political processes and phenomena occurring in Turkey since World War II.

It will be possible thanks to the analysis of functioning of the secular system in Turkey from its beginning till 2015 and answering the following key questions: How has the principle of secular state been changing in Turkey? What are the differences between the French and

Turkish models of a secular state at present? Is it appropriate now to continue speaking about secularism or rather post-secularism in Turkey accounting for the process called by some researchers a "subtle Islamisation"? What is the relationship between secularisation and other important processes taking effect in Turkey, i.e. democratization and religious transformations in this country?

The article consists of three main parts and a summary. The first chapter outlines type classifications of a secular state, useful for further analysis. Next, the author outlines a historical development of Turkish laicism to continue the analysis of its functioning during the AKP rule in the years 2002-2015. The summary, besides the conclusions, presents a brief forecast of the future of the secular state in Turkey.

**Secularism and its types. Conceptualisation**

Before beginning to consider the case of a secular state model in Turkey it is necessary to outline the classifications useful to achieve the research goals posed. The Polish literature as well as Turkish and western scientists working on religious relationships indicate, besides the division into confessional and secular states, the internal classifications within both systems including different sub-types. A secular state is said to contain negative elements (no recognition of one state religion) and positive (primarily, the equality of religious organisations before the law). The separation of church from state is generally accepted, however, the principle is flexible and unclear. In this connection, it is possible to distinguish different models of a secular state.\(^4\)

Within the Polish science, a useful classification for the present analysis is presented for example by Józef Krukowski. He identifies three types of a secular state: American system of the so-called “pure separation”, a model of “hostile separation” (currently – French, historically – also Soviet) and a system of the so-called “coordinated separation” originated in Germany and introduced with modifications in many European countries, also in Poland.\(^5\)

In the first model which developed in the conditions of American religious and cultural pluralism in order to abandon the principle of subordination of church to state authorities in the colonial period a system of pure separation was introduced, which consisted

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in the lack of giving an official character to any religions as well as in prohibition of restrictions of religious practices. The first principle meant the so-called wall in between the state and church, i.e. no state interference in religious issues of churches. Disputes between the state and church are to be settled by the Supreme Court. The protection of religious freedom includes primarily a negative aspect, i.e. protection against compulsion and discrimination – hence for example in public schools religion lessons are not held.

The system of hostile separation in the French version – the most significant in view of the analysed problem – was introduced in France in the period of the French Revolution of 1789-1795 as an opposition against the union between the church and state in the period of absolute monarchy (modifications were made after its reintroduction at the beginning of the 20th century, a long period after its repeal). Unlike the aforementioned Anglo-Saxon model, which may be connected with the term secularism, the term “laicism” (Fr. laicité) is used with regard to it in the literature. Churches do not have legal personality in this system, but they function as private cultural associations. Religion becomes a private issue. It does not mean a strict separation of church from state but privatisation of religion pursued through maximally possible restrictions of expression of religious beliefs by the faithful in the public life. In later French history we can observe further modification of this system – hence mentioning a quasi-concordat system and identifying it with a state being neutral to religious belief.

The system of coordinated separation originated in Germany after World War I, and later adopted by many European countries, means the lack of an official church and ensuring constitutional guarantees of religious freedom as a fundamental human right. The difference between this and two previous models lies in the fact that churches rooted in national cultures have a public legal personality. Every church is an autonomous entity able to make legal norms for itself and make independent decisions about itself on the country territory; the problems between church and state are settled on the basis of bilateral agreements.7

A little more simplified and less legal classification of secular state types, but helpful for the present analysis is presented by political scientists: an American Alfred Stepan and a Turk Ahmet Kuru. The latter identifies two types of secularism: passive and assertive. Both types have no established official religions. The first assumes the neutrality of state in relation to different religions/denominations and allows religion to be seen in the public sphere. Such a system exists in the USA. And the system of assertive secularism means that the state is in favour of a secular worldview in the public sphere, confining the presence of religion to the

7 Ibidem, pp. 26-29.
private sphere. Such a system is functioning in France and also in Turkey at least historically and since the very beginning with modifications (more about it below). The passive system excludes the existence of any doctrine: religious or another one defining what is "good" for the citizens. The assertive model, in turn, treats secularism itself as an official doctrine. From the perspective of the analysed problem it is important to emphasize that in real terms these are ideal models. In practice in every secular state there is a model in between these ideal types, the real shape of which, i.e. the exact placement in the line: passive system – assertive system, is affected by historical traditions and socio-political aspects.  

On the other hand, Stepan regards both types, indicated by Kuru, as "separationist" due to different forms of separation of church/religious matters from state, although he notices differences for example between the United States and France or even the latter and Turkey (with regard to the scope of freedom of every religion in the public sphere). However, referring to examples of non-European countries, he points to another model of a secular state, functioning in India, Indonesia or Senegal. He speaks about a respect all, support all model, which at the same time may be included in the passive secularism according to Kuru's classification. He claims that a secular state, for example in Senegal differs from the Turkish or French model as it tolerates a public character of religions – those believed in by the majority of society as well as minorities (all enjoy the freedom of association or religious cult and displaying religious symbols by the believers) and close relations of state with these religions (for example through supporting religious education, also private).

The respect all, support all model will not be discussed in detail in this text as it is hardly useful in the analysed case of Turkey. The main point of reference is Kuru’s concept, which requires a certain modification due to the difficulty in its application with regard to Turkey under the AKP rule.

Historical development of Turkish laicism

In order to analyse the functioning of a secular state under the AKP rule, it is indispensable to outline the process of foundation and historical development of Turkish

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laicism. Its functioning as one of six principles of Kemalism (inspired by the western thought and aimed at an overall modernisation of the Turkish state and society) and, being a constitutional principle since 1937, considerably differs from the model functioning in Turkey in the 21st century.

Declining period of the Ottoman Empire

The beginning of laicism in Turkey goes back to the 19th century. On the one hand, there were some intellectual trends (inspired primarily by ideas born in France), which put forward a postulate of separation of religion from politics. Their representatives include: at first (the 1860s and 70s) intellectuals belonging to Masonic lodges or the society of Young Ottomans, e.g. Mustafa Fazıl, later the environment gathered around the İctihat periodical headed by Abdullah Cevdet, finally – at the beginning of the 20th century – Ziya Gökalp, who, in 1915 in a memorandum addressed to the Committee of Union and Progress called for the secularization of religious courts, schools and foundations.¹⁰

On the other hand, it is worth recalling reforms undertaken in the 19th century and the turn of the 20th, whose aim was to secularize the law, educational system and religious institutions as well as to subordinate the latter to the state institutions. In the classical period of functioning of the Ottoman Empire religion was its essential source of legitimacy alongside with the functioning of the Islamic legal and educational and at the same time bureaucratic system. However, at the moment of weakening of the political, military and economic position of the Empire, Islam began to lose its significance gradually as a factor shaping social and state structures. In order to raise the state after the decline in the 19th century traditional institutions began to be replaced by modern ones based on European solutions. A European educational system was introduced together with outlets subordinated to the Ministry of Education based on a secular programme – at different educational levels (from primary schools, the so-called rüşdiye through secondary – idadi up to administration and law universities – Mektebi Mulkiye and Mektebi Hukuk), in order to prepare appropriate staff indispensable to work in bureaucracy or courts. Traditional educational institutions, for example madrasas were not able to do this. In the period of Tanzimat (1839-1877) and on a larger scale at the beginning of the 20th century the project of institutionalisation of

secularism expanded into further areas – finance, administration and law. New legal codes were adopted (for example a penal code or commercial code) and the related new courts of law operating according to secular principles. The codification of law based of Sharia was often compliant with the European standards (as in the case of civil code in 1876, excluding the family law). Together with an ersatz of constitution in the form of legal act of 1876 some ideas of republicanism or secularism appeared, which later would become the constitutional system basis. At the same time there was (first of all at the beginning of the 20th century) a depletion of authority and competence of religious institutions in favour of secular offices and ministries, with the former being subordinated to them. A gradual depletion of authority of the traditional supreme religious body Şeyh-ül-İslam should be mentioned – first it was excluded from the Council of Ministers and the ministry was changed into an ordinary department, then the jurisdiction of religious courts cases was given to the Ministry of Justice. In the same spirit, religious foundations were subordinated to the Ministry of Finance, and religious schools, whose programme was slowly secularised, began to be supervised by the Ministry of Education.

Period of Atatürk’s rule
Atatürk’s top-down reforms of the 1920s and 30s allowing for the functioning of Kemalist laicism were only an acceleration and radicalisation of the process developed before. They were aimed at the main goal of Kemalism: the modernization of the new country and society in order to achieve the level of development of European countries. It was necessary to break off with those elements of the old order which, according to the authors of

13 Just as a reminder, the reforms included: lifting califate, closing medreses and other religious schools, the unification of the public education and dissolution of the religious courts (1924), the ban on the activity of religious orders, the so-called tarikats as well as the ban on wearing in public fezes and traditional hats (1925), the introduction of the Gregorian calendar, enacting secular codes based on the Swiss code, penal codes following the Italian regulations, commercial ones based on the German and Italian codes (1926), removing from the constitution the regulation about Islam as the state religion and the introduction of the Latin alphabet (1928), adopting the code of criminal action following the German one (1929), granting voting rights to women in local elections (1930), the transformation of Hagia Sophia into the museum, the ban on Mecca pilgrimages and on wearing religious clothes and symbols in public, granting voting rights to women in the parliamentary elections and passing a law on introduction of family names in the European way, the ban on the use of religious and Ottoman titles (1934), announcing Sunday a holiday and setting a holiday calendar as well as the introduction of laicism, besides other kemalist principles, into the constitution (1937). Cf. E.-J. Zürcher, Turkey: A Modern History, I.B. Tauris, London, New York 2004, pp. 186-195.
transformations, contributed to the collapse of the Empire. They included the impact of religion and religious institutions on the state order which made effective operation of its structure impossible (which would be possible only basing them on science and rationalism of modern civilisation). In this context Turkish scientists point to different traditional Ottoman elements which should have been broken off with. For example, Suna Kili indicates a dysfunctional impact of religious elites (Ulama) on the state, and Şerif Mardin emphasizes, from the sociological perspective, the dependence of individuals on community structures, which hampers their development in line with modern science and rational principles. Atatürk’s reforms were not aimed against Islam itself. The literature on the way Mustafa Kemal perceives religion mentions his idea of modernisation and rationalisation of Islam (which finally was not successful) and making it work to serve secularism and building a nation state (the relationship Islam - nationalism will be discussed below), not act against it. It is the Kemalists that in a later period would consider Islam, or better to say Muslim activism, as a matter of principle, to be antimodernist, antinational and creating divisions in the society.

As formulated by Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, it was about the change in the position of Islam in the Republic of Turkey. The aforementioned reforms were aimed at the separation of spiritual from state matters. The inspiration and pattern to follow was the French model of hostile separation. Hakan Yavuz said that the open American approach was far away from the Turkish reality, unlike a more close attitude to religion in the French model. In America the revolution was conducted together with religions, in France and Turkey – against religious institutions and elites. The aforementioned reforms in the period of Atatürk’s rule were clearly aimed at confining religion to the private sphere (faith is connected exclusively with individual’s beliefs) and "cleansing" the public sphere of it, which is characteristic of laicism in France. Thus, according to Kuru’s classification it could be an assertive type of secularism in its fairly radical form (the term "hard" assertive secularism may be used).

However, since it was established as the principle of the Turkish constitutional order at the end of 1930s (also directly and indirectly expressed in constitutions of 1961 and 1982\(^9\)) Turkish laicism has differed from its French original. As Harald Schüler rightly stated, in Turkey we had to do not only with the hostile separation of religion from state but also with the subordination of religion to state and first of all with its control, which excludes the idea of the separation proper.\(^{20}\) The Turkish model was not based on the principle of "freedom of religion" or "freedom from religion" but actually on the principle of "control of religion." It is clearly seen in the indicators of Turkish laicism presented at the beginning of the 1970s by the Constitutional Court in one of its rulings. They include: the lack of domination of religion in the state related issues; constitutional guarantees for unlimited freedom of religion without discrimination when religion deals with the spiritual private life of an individual; possibility of imposing restrictions in order to protect public order, security and interest as well as ban on the use and abuse of religion when it goes beyond the spiritual private life of an individual and deals with activities and behaviours affecting social life; state control and supervision, as the upholder of order and public rights, of religious affairs (law and freedom).\(^{21}\)

This control became possible primarily thanks to the Presidency of Religious Affairs (DİB, Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı), founded in 1924 and subordinated to the Prime Minister’s Office. This institution was, as a matter of principle, aimed at coordinating, regulating and managing religious affairs and citizens' needs in this area. However, the idea of its functioning was to promote secularism thanks to spreading modern values and counteracting reactionary tendencies in the society, and consequently retaining a secular state character. This institution transformed into an effective instrument of control, in particular, of Sunni Islam. It was important to make the influence of "true Islam" (the one controlled by DİB) overbalance reactionary tendencies. It was DİB to manage mosques and services held there. There cannot have legally existed organisations to serve these functions independently of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. Here came the difference from France with regard to the dominating religion. In this European country, besides exceptions of some regions, it is the Catholic Church that dealt with the affairs of its religion, on the basis of the Act of 1905, for example it managed the churches built after this date.\(^{22}\) Another control step made by DİB in the 1940s

\(^{21}\) Verfassungsgericht der Türkei: Was ist Laizismus?, CIBEDO-Dokumentation, no. 28, Frankfurt am Main 1986.
\(^{22}\) A. Stepan, “Laicité as an “Ideal Type”…,” op.cit., pp. 96-97.
was opening public schools teaching religious personnel and employing imams as civil servants.23

The reasons behind the disparity between the Turkish and French models of laicism lie in the specific formation of the former. The formation of laicism in Turkey was not an effect of the so-called secular institutionalization, but an expression of aspirations to accomplish an overall vision of the state and social order. According to this vision, religion had to be entirely controlled by the state so that it could not enter the public-state sphere and consequently pose a threat to the process of modernization.24 This "hard" assertive secularism was determined on the one hand by certain historical traditions, mentioned for example by Mardin. Religious diversity in the period of development of the Ottoman Empire (numerous sects, brotherhoods etc.) and fear of further fragmentation made the Ottoman bureaucracy create religious elites and the education system controlled by these elites, with an assumption that both the elites and the system were to be controlled by the state. Ulama acted as state agents controlling the educational, administrative and judicial system.25 On the other hand, there were ideological premises which in the future would become the reason for the dogmatisation of laicism, and consequently, treating it as a peculiar civil religion. There would be political conflicts resulting from it as well as problems connected with following the rules of democracy and human rights, primarily the rights of religious minorities.26 Another difference from France is seen here. While in Turkey religious minorities (Alevis or non-Muslim minorities) have encountered barriers to religious and cultural activities, for example with regard to the ownership of churches (many of them have no legal personality), in France there are no barriers like this except for things – there are restrictions on mosque construction and religious communes considered to be dangerous (e.g. scientologists or Jehovah’s witnesses) are supervised by a special government institution.27 According to Kemalist elites (military and civilian), who guard the principles of Kemalism letting religion into the public sphere would be dangerous due to the idea of the Muslim religion assuming a conservative social and political order compliant with the modernisation objectives. Islam was treated by these

elites as "political religion", which is politically dangerous – left alone may gain access to the public sphere and undermine the assumption of a secular state.\(^\text{28}\)

**The 1940s – 90s**

Already after World War II Turkish laicism began the process of transformation. On the one hand, in late 1940s the process began in a socio-political dimension, which is sometimes mistakenly identified with the "re-Islamisation of Turkey", i.e. in fact the return to the role and position of religion in the period of the Ottoman Empire. Calling this process "re-Islamisation" cannot be well justified. A correct term found in the Turkish language is *liberalisation of laicism Laikliğin liberalleştirilmesi*. It means that Islam, always present in Turkey, was becoming more conspicuous in the public sphere. As a matter of fact, at the end of the 1940s there was a gradual "animation" of the Muslim religion. It did not mean enhanced religiousness, but increased direct significance of Islam.\(^\text{29}\) It may be said then, referring to what Hurd said, that there was another change of the position of Islam in the socio-political life of Turkey.

The process consisted in: the creation of better opportunities to educate imams, re-introduction of religion lessons to schools and extension of institutions of religious education, development of activities of religious institutions, strengthening activities of *tarikats*, operating since the 1920s on the brink of law and Islamic movements and parties of Islamic roots.\(^\text{30}\)

With regard to the education of imams, the development of *İmam-Hatip* schools should be mentioned in the first place. They are supervised by the Ministry of Education, partly on the secondary and high school level, whose 1/3 to half of the syllabus are religious classes (Arabic, History of Islam, studying hadises etc.), the rest consisted of subjects taught in ordinary schools.\(^\text{31}\) The *İmam-Hatip* schools were closed down in the 1930s. In 1951, seven schools of this kind were opened and since then their number has been on the rise all the time. In the 1970-71 school year there were (both secondary and high) 111 schools of this kind, in 1985 the number came up to 715, and in the 1993/1994 school year it reached 835. In the 1970/1971 school year in those schools there were over 49,000 students, in 1984/85 about

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\(^{28}\) Ö. Orhan, *Paradox of Turkish Secularism*, op.cit., pp. 32-33.


\(^{30}\) H. Schüler, *Re-Islamisierung..., op.cit.*, pp. 70–83.

228,000, and in 1993/1994 over 444,000 students, which accounts for about 10% of all students of secondary and high schools.32

One should also mention theological faculties at Turkish universities (Islam theology is lectured there). The first one was set up in Ankara in 1949. After transforming Higher Islamic Institutes (Yüksek İslam Enstitüleri) existing from 1959 to 1982 into theological faculties, there were 8 of them. Till 1994 14 new theological faculties were founded. The graduates most often become teachers or clerks.33

As far as the development of religious education is concerned, in the first place one should mention the reintroduction of religion to schools. It was a gradual process. In 1949, in primary schools religion was introduced on Saturday afternoon for those students whose parents explicitly demanded it. In 1950, the change was that parents who did not want their children to attend the religion lessons had to declare it. It concerned only the 4th and 5th forms. For the rest of pupils attending the religion classes was still voluntary. A similar regulation was introduced in 1956 with reference to the 1st and 2nd forms of secondary schools.34 Voluntary religion teaching was included in the Constitution in 1961. The fundamental law did not introduce the rule on compulsory “Religion and Ethics” lesson in primary and secondary schools (art. 24 of the Constitution) until 1982. Another difference from the French model of laicism is worth mentioning here. While in Turkey there is a legal public education system supervised by the state (also Koranic courses supervised by DİB), in France there is only private religious education (one day a weak is off so that school students could attend religion lessons in religious institutions).35

In Turkey institutions of a religious character have developed their activities on a large scale. First of all, foundations with a long tradition – (vakıf) – charities, mediating in businessmen's philanthropic activities and supporting Islamic social movements or political parties of religious roots. One of the largest institutions of this kind is the Foundation for Religious Affairs (Diyانet İşleri Vakfi), which supports the construction of mosques, Koranic courses and İmam-Hatip schools, publishes Turkish Encyclopaedia of Islam and helps people in difficult material situation. Second, it is worth pointing to the associations (dernek) which are voluntary organisations supervised by the state, for example raising money for building mosques or İmam-Hatip schools. At the beginning of the 1950s the number of association set

33 H. Schüler, Re-Islamisierung..., op.cit., p. 71.
up for religious purposes started to grow rapidly – in 1950 there were 154 of them, in 1960 more than 5,100, and in 1968 about 10,700 – 28.4% of all associations of this kind.36

Brotherhoods (tarikat) existing before World War II and much younger movements (cemaat) were delegalised in 1925, but they went underground and have survived. They include among others: Nakşibendi, Kadiri, Mevlevi, Rüfai, Cerrahi, Nurcu, Süleymanlı, Işıkçı and Fethullahçı. In 1950 a part of their temples were opened transforming them into museums37, and the brotherhoods and movements began to develop their activities on an increasingly large scale. They dealt with teaching at schools, mosques or private houses. They began to found their own publishing houses, radio and television stations as well as newspapers and magazines.38 On the one hand, orders and religious movements overlap certain state institutions, running, besides schools, hostels for poor students, medical, welfare and child care centres.39 On the other hand, they are present in the state structures. It was particularly clear in the 1980s, when there were a few ministers connected with brotherhood Nakşibendi in the Turgut Özal government, besides the prime minister himself. It was very influential in the parliamentary fraction of the Motherland Party (ANAP, Anavatan Partisi).40

Brotherhoods and religious movements contributed also to a large extent to the development of Islamic sector in the Turkish economy. They run chains of stores, work in the banking and insurance sector, they own concerns which co-operate with companies in the Persian Gulf countries.41 Brotherhoods and Islamic movements took part in the political life, supporting since the 1970s political parties, mainly right and centre right.42

In Turkey also political parties developed their activities within the political Islam. At the end of the 1940s, when the one party system was abolished, there were political parties of religious character founded; but they were soon delegalised or operated without any political success.43 The change took effect at the beginning of the 1960s. The Constitution of 1961 introduced the freedom of association, which gave rise to the foundation of Islamic organizations.44 Then conservative religious parties began to play an important role in the

38 H. Schüler, Re-Islamisierung..., op.cit., p. 81.
40 Ibidem, p. 45.
41 Ibidem, p. 51.
42 H. Schüler, Re-Islamisierung..., op.cit., p. 82.
43 M. Heper, Islam, Polity and Society in Turkey..., op.cit., p. 353.
Turkish political system, although sooner or later they were delegalised. In 1970 the National Order Party (MNP, *Milli Nizam Partisi*) was founded. It was, however, banned by the Constitutional Court in the next year because of using religion for political goals. It started to act again in 1972 as the National Salvation Party (MSP, *Milli Selamet Partisi*) under the same leadership of Necmettin Erbakan. In the parliamentary elections in 1973 it gained 11.8% of votes, and in 1977 – 8.6%. These results enabled MSP to take part in the ruling coalitions between 1973 and 1978.\(^\text{45}\) The National Salvation Party was disbanded with other parties in 1980, but started to act again in 1983 as the Welfare Party (RP, *Refah Partisi*), once more under Erbakan. In the successive elections this party was gaining better and better results. It played in this context a particular role after 1990. In the parliamentary elections in 1991 this party was supported by 16.9% of voters. In the local elections in 1994 it was gained 19% of all votes and won in 28 provinces, among others in Istanbul and Ankara. In December 1995, the Welfare Party won in parliamentary elections, receiving 21.4% of votes.\(^\text{46}\) Between June 1996 and June 1997 Erbakan was the prime minister and the party was the coalition partner of the True Path Party (DYP, *Doğru Yol Partisi*). In January 1998, the Constitutional Court dissolved RP. Its successor was the Virtue Party (FP, *Fazilet Partisi*) under the leadership of Recai Kutan, founded in December 1997. In April 1999, this party won 15.4% of votes and became the third power in the Turkish parliament.\(^\text{47}\) However, it was banned in 2001. Another party of Islamic roots won the election of November 2002 – the Justice and Development Party with 34.3% votes.\(^\text{48}\) This party began to rule on their own in Turkey. Another party founded after delegalising the Virtue Party was the Happiness Party (SP, *Saadet Partisi*), without election successes.\(^\text{49}\)

On the other hand, the transformations of laicism may be discussed from the point of view of implementation of the current law. In this context Rumpf mentions the functioning of the so-called modified laicism\(^\text{50}\) as a result of the transformations. Although the constitution and other legal regulations indicated all the time the *de iure* functioning of the principle of

\(^{45}\) *Ibidem*, p. 125.


laicism in Turkey, some practices began to develop gradually, which allow for the statement that in a sense Islam was actually becoming a state religion.\textsuperscript{51}

The indicators of functioning of official religion include in the Muslim countries: privileges given to Muslim community (collectively or individually) on the political, ideological and socio-economic plane as well as the protection of Islam by the state, which decides about the matters concerning religion through its institutions. In the latter case on the one hand Islam is promoted and supported by state funds, on the other hand the ”clergy” have an impact on legislation, activities of Islamic foundations and religious upbringing and education.\textsuperscript{52}

Turkey shows a lot of examples of the privileged position of Sunni Islam and its followers (at variance with art. 10 sect. 3 of the Constitution, forbidding granting privileges to one group or class). On the one hand, it is manifested in appointing them to state positions, e.g. the president of the Presidium for Religious Affairs (\textit{Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı}, DİB) is always a Sunni.\textsuperscript{53} On the other hand, the state supports Sunni Islam ideologically and first of all materially, and its followers do not have to overcome numerous obstacles in offices, which is connected with giant bureaucratic machinery in Turkey.\textsuperscript{54}

The protection of Sunni Islam in Turkey is effected through three state institutions. The most important one seems to be the above-mentioned Presidium for Religious Affairs. The regulation about it was included in the Constitution of 1961 (art. 154). In the fundamental law of 1982 this institution is mentioned in art. 136. Despite the ideological neutrality stipulated in the Constitution, the Presidium is responsible for issues connected with Islam (though the word \textit{diyanet} used in its name does not mean any particular religion\textsuperscript{55}). Originally monitoring the religious activity of Muslims, DİB transformed itself into the institution that supports Islam. Its tasks include: expressing opinions on religious issues (taking form of the so-called \textit{fetvas}), drawing up, translating and censoring religious works, publishing sample sermons, religious propaganda in the country and abroad, care and pays for ”personnel” of mosques in the country and abroad, care for Koranic courses, training the people conducting them, organizing pilgrimages, first of all to Mecca, setting up and maintaining mosques (the construction is seldom financed directly by the state) and supervising the conversion to Islam.


\textsuperscript{54} Ch. Rumpf, \textit{Laizismus und Religionsfreiheit...}, p. 459.

\textsuperscript{55} D. Shankland, \textit{Islam and Society in Turkey}, p. 29.
The clergymen of the Presidium are treated and paid like civil servants – they obviously have influence on the issues within DİB competence. The Presidium is connected with the Turkish Religious Foundation (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, TDV), which finances DİB’s undertakings, among others the network of religious bookshops offering publications of over 350 publishers, Executive Committee for Religious Affairs (Din İşleri Yüksek Kurulu) elected by imams and theologians, publishing fetvas, and the First Religious Council (1. Din Şurası) promoting the Turkish Islam in other Islamic countries.56

The remaining two Islam-supporting institutions are the Ministry of National Education (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, MEB) and the Management for Foundations (Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü, VGM). The former is responsible for appointing positions in schools, manuals’ contents and curricula. The Religion and Ethics manual entitled "Religious Culture and Ethical Knowledge" contains information on different religions, but it is the Sunni Islam that is privileged – in the book there are expressions like "perfect religion – Islam". The latter institution deals with supervising foundations, also religious.57

The aforementioned transformations of principles of laicism in the 1940s-80s, i.e. its gradual "liberalisation" with regard to the socio-political life and the "modification" in terms of practical implementation of legal regulations made some authors doubt if in Turkey the principles of a secular state are still in effect. For example, at the beginning of the 1980s, when these transformations were very conspicuous Binnaz Toprak spoke about the functioning of semi-secularism in Turkey.58 It would indicate only a partial implementation of laicism in this state. However, making use of Kuru's classification, it may be stated that transformations with regard to the principles of a secular state in Turkey did not lead to a partial abolishment of this principle, but to a slow shift in the line of assertive secularism – passive secularism in the direction of the latter. It meant that assertive secularism in Turkey achieved a moderate status, i.e. it acquired a form of "soft" assertive secularism, allowing for the presence of Islam in the public sphere. However, as the political history of Turkey of this period shows, it worked within certain confines, and going beyond them gave rise to the intervention of Kemalist elites. The best example is the aforementioned operation and delegalisation of parties of Islamic roots since the 1970s.

This argument may be better understood when the reasons behind the transformations of Turkish laicism after World War II are discussed. Let me refer here to the so-called gradual

56 U. Spuler-Stegemann, Türkei“, op.cit., pp. 239-244.  
57 Ibidem, pp. 239–240 and 244.  
theory of institutional change, which we have to do with in the analysed case. According to it, both external (exogenous) factors in relation to a specific institution or principle and internal (endogenous) factors related directly to a specific institution or principle may generate their change. Paul Sabatier points to exogenous factors, which are relatively stable as well as dynamic factors which are subject to fluctuations. The first group includes: basic attributes of the area, natural resources distribution, cultural values and social structures as well as legal structures. According to him, the dynamic elements include: socio-economic conditions and technology, ruling coalitions, political decisions and impact of other political (sub)systems.59 James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen point to two kinds of endogenous factors – distribution mechanisms affecting political institutions as well as unclarity and ambiguity of institutional principles. In this connection, a change may be a function of the shift of resources (including political influences) or a change of coalition and difference between the institutional principle and its interpretation.60 The functioning of factors (determinants) may give rise to the exchange of old principles for the new ones or functioning of the old ones, but then their impact or function may change or the old principles go together with the new ones.61

With regard to Turkey and the change of laicism after World War II, three groups of reasons may be identified, in the case of which the aforementioned change generating factors are to be seen, connected with: problems of Atatürk's reforms effectiveness, democratization process and the relation between religion and extremely important Turkish nationalism.

According to Bernard Lewis there is no doubt at all that as a result of modernisation reforms in the 19th and 20th centuries in many areas of Turkish political life an irreversible "Europeisation revolution"62 took place. It also refers to the principle of laicism. These reforms could not eradicate Islam from the awareness of Turks, for whom it is a very strong component of identity. In the Ottoman Empire the priority was given to the sense of belonging to Muslim community – umma. For a Muslim, a co-believer was a brother irrespective of the country of origin, language or race. Islam was an important component of Turkish identity also in the time of the 1st Republic and after World War II. Lord Kinross

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claimed that “God is always managing the minds and spirits and runs the lives of the majority of Turks and will go on doing it.”

Besides, many scholars working on Atatürk's reforms indicate that the reforms implemented by him were superficial and dealt really with elites. Secularisation is a very good example of this thesis. Different groups of people accepted to a different degree top-down imposed decisions about the secular state – some accepted them fully, others connected old traditions with laicism (hence in many homes Atatürk's portrait was placed next to religious symbols), and the remaining rejected the secular state. The first group included secular elites living in large towns, while the remaining were average Turkish citizens, in particular rural inhabitants. For the latter the role of religion did not change. It should be emphasized here that besides high Islam connected with ulama (learned to write), affected by Atatürk's reforms (state control and supervision), in Turkey also low Islam functioned (and it still does): mystical with the aforementioned religious brotherhoods. This folk and non-dogmatic Islam always played a big role in rural areas. After the implementation of Atatürk's reforms villages and small towns retained, despite the ban on the activity of tarikats, the traditions and customs connected with them. It should be noted that in the case of secularization, the problem is that it deals, as a matter of principle, with the separation of religion from state, not necessarily from the society. Urban elites were under its influence, but they were in a great majority groups closely connected with the state structures.

Thus, the transformations of laicism after World War II resulted from the deficits of Turkish society secularisation. They could not be fully successful due to the socio-cultural determinants in Turkey, i.e. one of the static exogenous factors indicated by Sabatier. This element is connected with another aspect which contributed to the modification of the principle of laicism. An essential role of Islam in the Turkish society (at least in its major part) was soon used by Turkish politicians in a peculiar "renegotiation" of laicism. It was not possible in a one-party system, when the Republican People's Party (CHP, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) dominated, the party including Kemalist elites. However, at the end of the 1940s political pluralism and multipartite system were introduced, which allowed for relatively free election competition. At that time, a new party – the Democratic Party (DP, Demokrat Parti) began to address the conservative electorate and their religious beliefs. Then, the subsequent

67 E. S. Hurd, Politics of Secularism..., op.cit., p. 67.
governments of this and next parties allowed Islam (all the time subject to state control) to play a bigger role in the public life to win this electorate. So, another element contributing to the modification of the principle of a secular state was a gradual democratisation of Turkey and the resulting political activities (decisions), i.e. dynamic factors indicated by Sabatier. In the 1960s in order to "renegotiate" laicism the references were made to the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the constitution. The best example was the consent to found political parties of Islamic roots based on the guaranteed freedom of association in the Constitution of 1961. It would be more conspicuous in the 1980s, when the emphasis was laid on the necessity of respecting religious freedom in connection with the tendency for expressing separate identities by different communities (Kurds, Alevi, Islamists etc.).

With regard to the 1980s, the third important element contributing to the modification of laicism in Turkey should be mentioned. It confirms an important feature of Turkish laicism: flexibility of application depending on the current determinants (so in fact also the aforementioned possibility of renegotiation). To cite Mahoney and Thelen again, these determinants are: exogenous factors generating change and the flexibility of application – an important endogenous factor, though not mentioned by these authors. It refers to the relationship between Islam and Turkish nationalism (milletçilik), another key principle, besides laicism, of Kemalism and Turkish constitutional system. It has already been mentioned that Islam has remained an important component of Turkish identity. In the 1930s also nationalism began to play its role in this area. Referring, (naturally only indirectly) to the Pan-Islamist traditions from the turn of the 20th century Kemalist elites, though they guarded the principles of Kemalism, they allowed for compromise situations with regard to laicism, accounting in a sense for long-term factors (the aforementioned role of Islam in the Turkish society), but first of all the current determinants, i.e. the change generating factors. It is the latter that made laicism, at least in some periods of time, applicable in a flexible way. In this context, Özgüç Orhan calls it an "ambiguous compromise" of the Turkish political system.

The occurrence of certain determinants – primarily exogenous factors with the flexibility of laicism as an endogenous factor – resulted, according to the assumptions of the so-called theory of gradual institutional change, in the modification of assumptions of laicism and/or functions of institutions related to it. The best example was the harmony in different periods of the Turkish post-war history between Islam and nationalism as elements of Turkish identity.

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69 Ö. Orhan, Paradox of Turkish Secularism..., op.cit., p. 41.
identity, or rather making use of the former by *milliyetçilik*. It was so in the 1950s and then first of all in the 1980s, when the so-called Turkish-Islam synthesis could be observed. In both cases there were certain determinants: first fight against communism, then against extreme left wing and counteracting the development of political Islam, which justified entering Turkish politics by religion. At the same time, the basic assumptions of laicism remained unchanged and were accepted by the major political actors – primarily the state control of religious affairs.

The result of all these determinants – endogenous and exogenous factors – was not departing from the principle of laicism in Turkey before the AKP rule, but its modification and change in the functions of institutions connected with laicism. The best example was in this case DİB, with the change of the function of control of religion to the support of Sunni Islam in connection with its role in the socio-political life.

**Secularism during the AKP rule**

After gaining power by AKP in 2002 the process of laicism was continued; a characteristic phenomenon at the end of the 1990s and at the beginning of the 20th century was the diversification of approaches to a secular state reflecting socio-political transformations in the 1980s and 90s and appearance of environments of different worldviews and identities. The direction in which laicism evolved resulted from the comparison of these approaches (represented primarily by the followers of assertive and passive secularism) and disputes about the role of secularism, similarly to the whole political situation in Turkey. The first approach (connected with assertive secularism) was still represented by Kemalist elites (CHP, army, representatives of the judiciary and state administration). The so-called militant secularists (*laikçiler*) denied Islam’s impact on Turkish identity unlike secularism, which they treated as the Turkish philosophy of life, adopted in order to achieve the level of European countries and as a modernization process. Islam unlike Christianity was according to them a political religion (they did not differentiate Islam as faith from Islam as ideology), hence it was necessary to cleanse the public sphere from any influence of Islam. But they treated the control of religious institutions and education unwillingly, regarding it as an indispensable requirement to protect laicism against political religion. Already before AKP gained power, the rulings of the Constitutional Court on wearing the Islamic headscarves by female students

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70 It indicates that the modification of laicism was not a linear process – after a period of clear entering the public sphere by religion in connection with closer ties between nationalism and Islam there were return shifts towards assertive secularism.

71 Ö. Orhan, *Paradox of Turkish Secularism..., op.cit.*, pp. 36-41.
at universities or decision about dissolving the Welfare Party and later the Virtue Party indicated the departure from the initial understanding of laicism as the control of religion towards perceiving it as freedom (of the state as well as a homogenous nation) from religion – an element insignificant in the modern development of society. As remarked before, laicism was becoming a peculiar "civil religion" with dogmas excluding all sort of flexibility, which in practice meant separation from the changing social determinants.

The second approach (similar to the idea of passive secularism, though reserving the role of state in religious matters) was represented by centre right parties and parties involved in political Islam in Turkey. Their representatives treated secularism as a process, not project and were in favour of flexible attitude to the relation of religion and politics, possible to modify depending of the social needs within the democratic dialogue (the postulate of a more democratic perception of secularism – in the spirit of religious freedom – is crucial for this approach). According to this stance, Islam is an element of Turkish identity and morality. Due to this, it should play a key role in the society, not in the state. Muslim morality and social bonds are favourable for the social order and economic development. Besides, the state should guarantee religious education in public schools and promote religious morality, and DİB should continue being active depending of the needs of the country.

The third approach was shared by a smaller group of libertarian circles (the Association for Liberal Thinking in Turkey) and a numerous community of Alevis traditionally supporting the CHP. They were in favour of the full separation of religion from politics. They emphasized more the freedom of politics than the religious freedom (like the second group). They accepted the exclusion of state from religious affairs, but Alevis supported making religion free of politics and the dominating Sunni understanding of Islam.72

Since 2002 the Justice and Development Party has shared the second of the approaches to secularism (close, but not identical with passive secularism), implementing it in a different scope in each ruling period – through specific political initiatives and activities depending on numerous determinants (factors generating or hampering the change of the laicism principle). In 2002 the AKP declared that secularism was a prerequisite for democracy to function and at the same time a phenomenon subject to democratic negotiation if it is related to the practical shape (according to the second of the presented approaches). However, according to this party it refers to the relation state-religion/church (hence emphasis that state should not function on the basis of religious laws), not to the society, which cannot be secular.

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72 About the three approaches to secularism in Turkey cited from: M. H. Yavuz, Secularism and Muslim Democracy..., op.cit., pp. 153-159.
For AKP religion means a personal piety, but simultaneously social values, which should not be forgotten also in the public sphere. But religious values should not become political.\textsuperscript{73} Such a point of view did not mean though that it is impossible to manifest religious values in the public sphere or even in the political life. The AKP programme said still in the second decade of the 21st century that "generally, secularism is a principle which allows people of all religions and faiths to practise their religions comfortably, express their religious convictions and live according to them."\textsuperscript{74} Since the beginning AKP has emphasized the necessity for free promotion of religious and moral values by the society and life according to ethical principles. But according to its politicians the manifestation of religious beliefs may go further – it may be connected for example with the presence of religious symbols in the public sphere (first of all the Islamic headscarves worn by women – students, members of parliament, office clerks in the workplaces or schools) and religion in public schools.\textsuperscript{75} These postulates were connected with the necessity of ensuring religious freedom (the idea of laicism) in such issues as for example equal rights for students in schools of a strong religious profile (\textit{Imam-Hatip}) or development of Koranic courses. Religious freedom is possible, according to AKP, through the modification of laicism, i.e. making beliefs of citizens free from state control (and as it was completed later – transferring them to local communities, families etc.). Thus, laicism was not negated; what is more, the Justice and Development Party emphasized the significance of this principle in the political system of Turkey, but its stance may indicate that it was not an uncritical approach.\textsuperscript{76}

The period of 2002-2008 was the time when these AKP convictions about a secular state were present in the declarative sphere, but they translated into concrete activities and political initiatives in a slightly limited scope and usually were written into the context of democratization and ensuring religious freedom. It was like this first of all with regard to legal changes aimed at affirmative action in favor of graduates from \textit{Imam-Hatip} schools and secular schools about university access (2004 and 2005); thus, the change of legislation of 1999 creating the situation of inequality. The same refers to wearing the Islamic headscarves by women in public institutions – AKP adopted constitutional amendments (Art. 10 and 42) emphasizing the necessity for equal access to education and equality before the law in public


\textsuperscript{76} J. Pupcenoks, \textit{Democratic Islamization…, op.cit.}, pp. 283-84.
services (2007). Before, wearing the Islamic headscarves had been impossible on the basis of the Constitutional Court rulings. However, in the first case the amendments were vetoed by President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, connected with Kemalist elites, and at the next attempt – the State Council, in the second case the constitutional amendments were considered unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court. The situation was similar to the attempt to lengthen the Koranic courses from three to five days a week, which was considered unconstitutional by the State Council in February 2005 (the Constitutional Court shared this opinion later). There was a slightly different character, a little against the official AKP stance on religion based law making, of an unsuccessful attempt of 2004 to introduce punishment for adultery into the penal code (the AKP abandoned the change after the protests of the opposition and the EU). There is a question to be asked though, whether the AKP wanted really to introduce the new regulations or it was only a pragmatic step aimed at the strengthening of the conservative electorate.  

These AKP activities, a little limited in scope, were connected with certain internal and external determinants. During the AKP first term Kemalist elites, followers of assertive secularism, retained a strong position in the country. Till 2007 Sezer was the president of Turkey; in this period a crucial role was played also by the army and secular elites in the judiciary. Political influences were divided and there were entities able to veto the ruling AKP activities in the area of laicism that were reaching too far (it is worth remembering that this is the factor which according to Mahoney and Thelen effectively hampers changes). It was reflected by the aforementioned cases of the AKP initiatives. In 2007 it was expressed by the army emphasizing publicly its further readiness to defend the principles of laicism in response to AKP activities, which were contradictory to laicism according to Kemalist elites, and later by the Constitutional Court which adjudicated on the AKP dissolution in connection with the violation of the principle of laicism (which actually did not take effect). Contrary to appearances, AKP is a pragmatic party and it was aware of the fact that it could not allow for too much compromise on the use of the principle of laicism. The historical experience with the Welfare Party was a restraint - Erbakan's policy met with a strong opposition not only of Kemalist elites but also a large part of the society. AKP wanted to avoid an accusation of Islamisation and creating a sort of confessional state. All AKP activities suggesting such a

direction (even if not intentional) would mean a suicide for this party – if not through the judiciary, then through the reaction of electorate during the next election. Among other things, demonstrations of millions of followers of a secular state (2007) and slightly earlier an opinion poll indicating a small support for the building of a state based on Sharia – about 10% (2006) raised awareness of the AKP activities limitations.80

Besides, AKP wanted to gain an international recognition after beginning to rule, which excluded the violation of the principle of secular state. And it continued a very good period of relationships with the EU. It is them that made it impossible to include aspirations to modify laicism in democratizing activities. Hence, such a strong emphasis on religious freedom as an indispensable indicator of laicism. This party expected the EU pre-accession period and possible accession later to legitimise AKP activities aimed at the modification of laicism – through placing them in the context of reforms adjusting Turkey to the EU membership. These expectations became vain after the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights, for example Leyla Şahin v. Turkey of 2004, in which the Court did not share the AKP opinion that religious freedom was violated and gave the right to state to retain the ban on wearing the Islamic headscarves by female students in connection with the protection of the constitutional principle of secular state.81

Socio-political determinants began to change in 2007-2008, and together with this process there was an increased scope of AKP activities whose results reflected further modification of Turkish laicism. First, the layout of political powers in Turkey changed, which minimised the significance of entities able to block AKP attempts aimed at further modification of laicism. In 2007, after the political crisis caused by the confrontation between AKP and Kemalist elites, Abdullah Gül, supported by the Justice and Development Party, became the president. In 2007 the process of decreasing of the role of the army in the political system began – primarily through court trials in the case of Ergenekon or Balyö̝z. Simultaneously, the most prominent military positions with regard to the participation in the decision making process in the country (chief of the general staff, commanders of armed forces and military police) were taken by people who were more conciliatory in relation to AKP. The process of subordinating the army to civilian authorities developed dynamically after an unsuccessful coup d'état in July 2016. In the case of the judicial system, the reforms of 2010 and the following years caused a bigger impact of executive authorities in the first

80 B. Toprak, A. Çarkoğlu, Değişen Türkiye’de Din Toplum ve Siyaset, TESEV, İstanbul 2006, p. 75.
place and to a certain extent also the parliament on the courts of law – just to mention the nominations in the supreme judicial institutions.\textsuperscript{82} The lowering of the age required to hold positions in the administration or the judicial system was an important step.\textsuperscript{83} Besides, since 2007 a strong support for AKP has been noted in the subsequent elections (2007 – 46.7\%, 2011 – 49.8\%, 2015 in the repeated election – 49.5\%\textsuperscript{84}) as well as a general growth in the significance of conservative elites (in the economic area of the so-called Anatolian Tigers) at the expense of Kemalist elites.\textsuperscript{85}

Furthermore, there has been a decline in the significance of other elements restricting AKP activities in the area of further modification of laicism. On the one hand, a certain phenomenon connected with the Turkish society should be indicated. The conservatism and religiousness of Turks have increased (but not support for the confessional state), which is indicated for example in the research conducted by Hakan Yılmaz in 2006 and 2012.\textsuperscript{86} On the other hand, the transformations in Turkey, including systemic reforms, stopped being the main function of the pre-accession process after 2005 - due to a considerably lower pace of accession negotiations and increasingly distant prospects for the EU membership.\textsuperscript{87} AKP lost hope to implement the plan of modification of laicism through the accession to the Union, being disappointed with the aforementioned rulings of the European Court of Human Rights.

Due to the above mentioned determinants, since 2007 there has been a process of further modification of laicism through getting more and more religious issues into a broadly understood public sphere. As remarked at the beginning of the article, some authors write about a "subtle Islamisation" in Turkey, which is an indirect process of Islamisation of a limited scope, i.e. including "educational reforms, inclusion of Muslim elites in government institutions and creating a more Islam friendly public space."\textsuperscript{88} It is connected with a gradual removal of barriers for those who want to express their religiousness in the public space, not a legal codification of Muslim religious practices. Thus, AKP policy after 2007 does no lead to the creation of a confessional state based on Sharia, but is subject to further evolution of the

\textsuperscript{83} J. Pupcenoks, \textit{Democratic Islamization in Pakistan and Turkey...}, op.cit., p. 283.
\textsuperscript{84} Data: Milletvekili Genel Seçim Arşivi, T.C. Yüksek Seçim Kurulu, www.jsk.gov.tr (9.02.2016)
\textsuperscript{87} See more for example A. Szymański, \textit{EU Pre-accession Process of Turkey: Determinants and Prospects}, “Przegląd Politologiczny”, vol. XX, no. 1, 2015, pp. 7-20.
\textsuperscript{88} J. Pupcenoks, \textit{Democratic Islamization in Pakistan and Turkey...}, op.cit., p. 287.
Turkish secularism giving increasingly moderate character to its initial radical assertive type (strengthening of "soft" assertive secularism).

With regard to further entering of the public space by Islam in Turkey after 2007, the discussion may refer to the earlier areas in which the significance of religion is still conspicuous as well as the appearance of new areas. Three main areas should be mentioned in the first place: education, economy and social affairs (social policy).

In the field of education the government intensified its activities aimed at the affirmative action in relation to the graduates from İmam-Hatip schools and secular schools and their access to universities. It was successful thanks to the aforementioned new determinants in 2009 through lifting the indicator which limited the access of the former to universities. Besides, the AKP government introduced additional facultative religion classes into secondary education at the turn of the second decade of the 20th century as well as changes in school books "Religious Culture and Morality," introducing religious elements (including information that for example washing hands before prayer increases the number of red blood cells). Another process to be seen was the exchange of university rectors – frequently people with secular worldview for religious conservative scholars. In 2012 Act no. 6287 introduced a 12-year long compulsory education (instead of an 8-year long period) in the system 4+4+4. Secular circles in Turkey regarded the change of the act as another step towards Islamisation of primary education due to more facultative classes – for example for children at the age of 6-8 in 2012 new subjects included Koran, Life of Prophet Muhammad or Rudiments of Religion. In 2012 and the following years there were proposals of next changes in the field of education indicating the growing presence of religion and its principles in this area – first the politicians' postulate of ban on sharing halls of residence or even private flats by male and female students, later a ministerial proposal of the change in legislation, for example in order to increase the number of religion classes in schools.

With regard to economic issues, in the period of AKP rule the growth in trade with Middle East countries, including the Persian Gulf and the rise in investment from these countries was a favourable development. It led to the growing significance of Islamic business. The activities of the Turkish government in the banking sector led to the replacement of supervisory councils members by new people from the Islamic banking sector and the development of the latter (with a big influence of the Persian Gulf countries). Due to

90 See more Ö. Tür, Economic Relations with the Middle East under the AKP-Trade, Business Community and Reintegration with Neighboring Zones, “Turkish Studies”, vol. 12, no. 4, 2011, pp. 589-602.
these processes Islam became more clearly present in the economic sphere. The situation was quite similar in the textile industry with regard to the Muslim attire and swimming suits as well as in the religious press. However, the best known example of religion getting into the economic sphere, and for a part of society the imposition of a conservative style of living, is the problem of selling and drinking alcohol. In the first several years of AKP rule moderate steps were undertaken, presently also in other countries, including European. For example, allowing the local authorities, through legal changes, to impose bans on drinking alcohol in public places, or rise in taxes on alcohol – activities explained in terms of care about citizens' health and not because of religious principles. At the same time, in practice the ban was imposed on selling alcohol in many catering outlets and state institutions. In the next years further stricter measures were imposed, including a big rise in tax on alcohol in 2011 (hence a well known Istanbul basketball club Efes Pilsen had to change its name for Anadolu Efes S.K.), and in 2013 the ban on alcohol promotion in any form. In 2013 substantial restrictions were introduced in retail sales of alcohol – through licences valid from 6.00 till 22.00 and ban on selling alcohol in places like halls of residence, hospitals, sport clubs educational institutions and filling stations. Besides, the law valid in 2013 made restrictions of granting new licences for selling alcohol, form example restrictions in relation to location (at least 100 metres away from schools or mosques). Later, there were also plans to change waiters' training – the point about the skill of serving alcohol was to be crossed out.91

Wearing Muslim head covers by women became an issue in the social affairs area after 2007. First, it was primarily about female students at universities, but later other public places were included. After 2008, when the Constitutional Court rescinded the aforementioned constitutional changes, wearing Islamic headscarves on campuses became officially permissible and most university authorities accepted this possibility. However, in 2013 the AKP government lifted the ban on wearing headscarves also in civil service. Although this change did not include judges, prosecutors, policemen and military personnel, wearing headscarves became permissible for female MPs in the parliament. Thus, Turkey became more liberal in this area than France, in which the ban is not binding only for private educational institutions.92

It should be added that the "subtle Islamisation" became conspicuous after 2007 in the social policy through: delegation of rights connected with social matters and benefits to...
voluntary religious associations, emphasizing by the government members the significance of a three generation family structure (and having at least three children), and also supporting charitable activities through a growing number of religious associations. AKP politicians more than once expressed their opinions on the position of women of the society, who should fulfil themselves primarily in the family and marriage. However, the activities of the Justice and Development Party exceeded the declarations. These views affected a negative stance on the abortion issue. In 2011 the law in this area failed to be changed, but the legislation of a lower order as well as politicians’ pressure have led to the situation that hospitals, in particular public hospitals, do not provide abortion services or they do, for example without the participation of an anesthesiologist.93

Conclusions

The main aim of this article is an attempt to answer the question of how to identify the relations between religion and politics in the contemporary Turkey. The conducted analysis positively verifies the hypothesis that before the rule of the Justice and Development Party as well as after 2002 we still have to do in Turkey with a secular state and not confessional state or post-secularism meaning a definite departure from secularism. But its shape is changing as a result of a number of processes and socio-political phenomena occurring in Turkey after World War II, which make this change possible, made to varying degrees in different periods. The Republic of Turkey after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire followed the French model of the so-called hostile separation in the establishment and strengthening of laicism as the principle of constitutional order. However, from the very beginning there were differences due to the crucial problem in Turkey of control of religious affairs by the state exercised in order to protect laicism. It was a radical assertive model ("militant"), which can otherwise be called "hard", with no possibility of entering the public sphere by religion. After World War II there was a gradual evolution of the Turkish secularism as a result of processes like "Islam liberalisation", i.e. the rise in its significance in the public sphere as well as changes in the implementation of current legal regulations leading to the functioning of Islam to a certain extent as, in fact, a state religion. As a result, the 1940-90s saw assertive secularism become more moderate in character, in other words – the development of "soft" assertive secularism (allowing for the presence of Islam in the public sphere), so a slow shift in the line assertive secularism – passive secularism towards the latter without losing the idea of the assertive

93 A. Kaya, Islamization of Turkey under the AKP Rule..., op.cit., pp. 58-62.
model. The categories of "hard" and "soft" assertive secularism, though not sharp enough, are an indispensable extension of Kuru's framework in order to indicate the dynamics and bigger complexity of basic models found in Turkey.

Such a transformation was possible thanks to the occurrence of factors which according to the "theory of gradual institutional change" allow for the change of institutions and principles. With regard to exogenous factors it refers to more static elements – the role of Islam in the Turkish society as well as dynamic factors – progress in the democratisation process and frequent close relationships of nationalism with Islam, i.e. its ability to adapt to the changing present conditions, which resulted for example in the change of functions of the institutions connected with laicism, like for example DİB.

However, at the same time the basic assumptions of laicism remained unchanged and were accepted by all main political actors – first of all the control of religious affairs by the state. It resulted from the fact that the evolution of the Turkish secularism occurred in certain confines, the trespassing of which caused the intervention of Kemalist elites. It was the crucial influence exerted by these elites on the political life that was a factor limiting a change possible within a secular state model. It did not fundamentally change till 2007. After gaining power by AKP in 2002 there was a slow evolution of laicism and subsequent attempts to include Islam in different spheres of public life. They were often hampered by Kemalist elites though. Besides the remaining political influences of these elites, the factors hampering a fundamental change of secularism included the public feeling and external issues – the need for external legitimacy to AKP activities and the Union pre-accession process.

An essential change in these conditions after 2007 caused the intensification of AKP activities in favour of strengthening the role of religion in the public sphere in areas in which it had been present before as well as its appearance in the new areas of this sphere. But even this so-called subtle Islamisation does not lead to the creation of a confessional state based of Sharia, but is subject to further evolution of the Turkish secularism and giving increasingly moderate character to its initial radical assertive type (i.e. strengthening of "soft" assertive secularism), without losing the idea of this model. A subtle Islamisation means an indirect process of Islamisation of a limited scope, and its aim is not a broad codification of religious principles, which is crucial in a confessional state.

In an attempt to forecast the development of the situation, assuming that in the nearest dozen years AKP are still ruling, it should not be expected that Turkey may shift to the post-secular period and transform into a confessional state. The further development of "subtle Islamisation" is – with the limitation of internal vetoing entities - probable, but there will still
be some factors hampering the fundamental transformation of the Turkish secularism. AKP experienced a certain evolution within political Islam, also based on the experiences of its predecessors, in particular the Welfare Party. This makes it guide to a large extent by pragmatism in political activity, taking into account the prospect of the next election at the least. Therefore, it is very important to monitor the public feeling in Turkey. The society is more religious and conservative, which enables AKP a "subtle Islamisation" in different areas of the public sphere, but a decisive majority of citizens are against building a confessional state. The ruling party is well aware of it. It is similar with regard to the continued existence of external vetoing entities – in the Turkish international environment.

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