

national level of analysis? This question is of particular importance, as Tuğal carries out a comparative analysis on the Islamic transformations in Turkey, Egypt, and Iran (Conclusion). In this comparison, Tuğal refers to the transformations experienced in Sultanbeyli as representative of the transformations in Turkey as a whole. I do not see, however, that he persuasively justifies that what he observed in Sultanbeyli actually represents what is taking place as a nationwide phenomena. True, Tuğal briefly defends his “extended case method” (p.12) as a method emphasizing theory reconstruction over representativeness; however, his comparison would be more persuasive if he were able to establish a link between the particular (Sultanbeyli) and the general

(Turkey), or elaborate his discussion on the “extended case method.”

Overall, Tuğal’s *Passive Revolution* offers a powerful, fresh glance at political Islam. His fieldwork successfully situates personal experiences of Islamic absorption into a larger historical context. Tuğal’s hegemonic approach to the transformation of Islamic politics will lead to further debate in the literature on political Islam. Readers unfamiliar with Gramscian concepts such as hegemony, absorption, and articulation, might struggle to grasp his argument, but the reward is well worth the effort. In short, I strongly believe that *Passive Revolution* deserves close reading.

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Debates on Secularism in Turkey: Secularism and State Policies towards Religion: The United States, France, and Turkey

By *Ahmet T. Kuru*

New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 313 pp., ISBN 9780521741347.

The relationship between the state and religion, or the question of secularism, has always been one of the most hotly debated issues in Turkish politics, even more so since the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) to power in 2002. Professor Ahmet T. Kuru, currently teaching at San Diego State University in the USA, has recently made a rich contribution to this debate. His book, published by the prestigious Cambridge University Press, is entitled *Secularism and State Policies toward Religion: The United States, France, and Turkey* (xvii + 313 pages). As its sub-title indicates, the book is essentially a comparative study of

secularism in the United States, France, and Turkey.

The book starts with a long and rich theoretical discussion of secularism in its historical, ideological, and policy-oriented dimensions, in which he criticizes the modernization theory, the civilizational approach, and the rational-choice theory. The modernization theory predicted the decline of religion’s political role through economic development which, however, does not seem supported by the facts. The civilizational approach posits an inherent distinction between certain religions, and

consequently between state policies toward religion. The typical civilizational argument is to contrast the compatibility of Christianity and secularism, as opposed to the unity of state and religion in Islam and Judaism, often quoting the famous verse of the bible, “render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar’s, and unto God the things which be God’s.” Against this rather simplistic dichotomy, one may argue, of course, that no great religion is a monolith, and that all three monotheistic religions have taken on different forms and interpretations at different times and in different places. Finally, Kuru criticizes the rational-choice theory since “it largely takes individual preferences as given,” and it believes that individuals’ “distinct preferences [are] shaped by their socioeconomic status regardless of their ideologies” (p. 21).

This observation leads Kuru to “unpacking individuals’ preferences through the analysis of their ideologies” (p. 21). Indeed, a major part of the book is devoted to the role of ideologies in shaping their policies toward relations between the state and religion. As he puts it, “the emergence and dominance of ideologies on state-religion relations is a complex process that requires a qualitative analysis of historical trajectory for each case” (p. 22). Particularly important are the ideological struggles during the state-building period that create “a path-dependence concerning state-religion interactions.” Thus, “the marriage between the old monarchy and religious hegemony” during the *ancien régime* is likely to produce an “anticlerical (or antireligious) movement against it, and “the *ancien régime* becomes the basis of polarization between the anticlericals and conservatives” (p. 23). In con-

trast, “in countries where there is no *ancien régime*, the anticlerical movement does not exist or is marginal” (p. 25).

“The existence or absence of an *ancien régime* is a crucial factor” in Kuru’s three cases, the United States, France, and Turkey (p. 27). In the United States, as a result of the absence of an *ancien régime* with no local monarchy and a great diversity of Protestant denominations, “secular groups were not against religion’s public role,” and “religious groups were open to church-state separation.” In contrast, in France and Turkey, the presence of an *ancien régime* based on the alliance of monarchy and a hegemonic religion (Catholicism and Islam) led secular groups to a stand against religion’s public role, while religious groups sought to preserve the establishment of religion. As Kuru states, “in France and Turkey, the *ancien régime* deeply affected the ideological backgrounds of secular and religious movements, as well as their relations. In both countries, religion was an important pillar of the monarchy, which made the republican elite anticlerical; in a sense they opposed religion’s influence over society and polity. Moreover, Catholicism in France and Islam in Turkey were hegemonic religions. Therefore, conservative Catholics and Islamists sought to preserve religious establishments... Severe conflicts between the two was foreseeable. The dominance of assertive secularism, in a nutshell, meant the victory of the secular movement over its religious rival” (pp. 27-30).

These two different historical trajectories have predictably produced two different concepts or understandings of secularism, “assertive secularism” and “passive secularism” as Kuru calls them. Obviously,

there have been other scholars who have distinguished these two types of secularism by using different labels, such as secularism based on a “religious common ground” versus secularism as a “political ethic independent of religion” (Charles Taylor), or “negative secularism” versus “positive secularism” (Wilfred McClay), or “*laïcité de combat*” versus “*laïcité plurielle*” as they are called in France. Briefly, “assertive secularism requires the state to play an ‘assertive’ role to exclude religion from the public sphere and confine it to the private domain. Passive secularism demands that the state play a ‘passive’ role by allowing the public visibility of religion. Assertive secularism is a ‘comprehensive doctrine,’ whereas passive secularism mainly prioritizes state neutrality toward such doctrines” (p.11). Obviously, these two are dichotomous or “ideal” types and important variations can be observed within each of them. Thus, Kuru rightly argues that “even the dominance of assertive or passive secularism is a matter of degree.” While both France and Turkey are in his assertive secularism category, they “still differ from each other with regard to the levels of the exclusion of religion from the public sphere. Certain policies, such as the ban on private religious education and the prohibition on wearing headscarves at universities and private schools, indicates that the Turkish state has a more exclusionary attitude toward religion than does the French state” (p. 32).

Passive secularism, characterized by state neutrality toward all religious and other faith-based groups and the absence of discrimination on the basis of religious beliefs, is now the dominant model in liberal democracies. Even some countries which

had followed assertive secularist policies at some stages of their historical development (for example, Mexico, Spain, Portugal, and to some extent even France) have more recently moved toward passive secularism (pp. 24-25). Therefore, it is difficult to understand at first sight the irritation of certain ultra-secularist circles in Turkey when this distinction came to the attention of the media in recent weeks. Or perhaps, it is not so surprising, given the absence of serious, rational, sober, and objective discussion on secularism in Turkey. This issue continues to be the deepest source of political polarization which precludes any such discussion. Therefore, works like Ahmet Kuru’s are most welcome.

The book, following the introduction, which I have analyzed in some detail, is divided into three parts dealing, respectively, with the United States, France, and Turkey. Each part gives a rich and detailed account of state-religion relations and their historical developments in each of the three countries with reference to the theoretical distinction between assertive secularism and passive secularism. The part on Turkey offers a detailed analysis of the emergence of assertive secularism (1826-1997), and the Islamic challenge against it (1997-2008), covering the current controversies between assertive and passive secularists, such as the compulsory religious education, state funding of private schools, the headscarf ban, the Imam-Hatip schools, and Qur’an courses. Kuru concludes that “policies in Turkey have been even more restrictive than those in France due to the combination of the assertive secularist ideology and the semi-authoritarian military and judiciary in Turkey. The Kemalists have

defended the existing dominance of assertive secularism... The conservatives, however, have defended passive secularism as an alternative” (p. 198).

Professor Kuru’s book is, no doubt, a major contribution to the international literature on the subject, as well as being

a much-needed scholarly contribution to the current debates in Turkey, which often presents a picture of a dialogue of the deaf. I hope that the book will be translated into Turkish as soon as possible and read widely by all members of the interested public.

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Labour Migration from Turkey to Western Europe, 1960-1974, A Multidisciplinary Analysis

By *Ahmet Akgündüz*

Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008, 221 pp., ISBN: 9780754673903.

Labour Migration from Turkey to Western Europe is a detailed multidisciplinary study of the labor migration from Turkey to the West during the official recruitment period between 1960 and 1974. The book endeavors to that make use of all available sources in four languages and draws on both historiography and social science research in the field. The 221-page book consists of six chapters. Following the introduction, it first looks at the causes of migration pressure in chapter two. Chapters three and four subsequently analyze the push and pull processes. Chapter three is titled “The Migration Process: Aspects Related to the Sending Country” and the chapter four is “The Migration Process: Aspects Related to the Receiving Country”. Before the conclusion, the book devotes 35 pages to analyzing the migrants and their characteristics in chapter five. It has also an extensive bibliography listing primary as well as secondary sources in four languages, which will be useful for other researchers in the field.

The book is an attempt to tackle misperceptions and erroneous assessments of the studies, especially of the 1960s and 1970s, that stemmed from either a lack of available hard evidence or a narrowness of methodology. Thus, this book critically evaluates assessments of the previous research. How the Turkish labor migration came onto the demand side’s agenda and how it developed are evaluated by taking into the account major variables in the process. Country-to-country variations in the sectors where foreign workers were employed are also given due attention.

In chapter two, the book addresses causes of migration pressure—the push factors—in the light of a critical discussion of the previous studies on the subject. The chapter details economic and industrial growth rates, wages, and distribution of income during the migration period. By evaluating the characteristics of the labor market, the forms of unemployment, registered job seekers, unfilled job vacancies, and real wages, the chapter argues that the