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Role of Religion in Global Politics - The case of France and Turkey

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Abstract:

Despite the fact that a great majority of experts predicted that religion would lose its power and influence, we are currently experiencing a worldwide revival of religious sentiments.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how religion, politics, and security impact identity construction in France and Turkey. This study used critical discourse analysis and thematic narrative analysis to examine how the political elite produces narratives and impacts, citizens, in these two cases. According to the findings, the political elite of both countries exploits religious overtones in their speeches to secure votes, which produces ontological insecurity in individuals, thus, creating uncertainty about their identity. As a consequence, both of these countries are confronted with societal divisiveness as they attempt to balance secularism in their constitution and everyday life.

Keywords: Religion, Ontological security, Secularism, Politics, France, Turkey

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To my family, thank you for your unconditional support and love. I would not be here without you. This is for you!

I want to thank my Anastasia, this life journey would not be the same without you, thank you for being with me every day of this wonderful experience. Thank you for helping me with this thesis.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AKP- Adalet ve Kakinma Partisi (English The Justice and Development Party)

CDA- Critical Discourse Analysis

IR- International Relations

OS- Ontological Security

1. Introduction:

Religion has always played a significant part in politics, to the point where nations have been formed and destroyed in the name of it. It both initiated and ended conflicts. Many experts predicted that following the French Revolution and Enlightenment, religion would lose its impact, and in time, its influence would fade. However, we are witnesses that religion did not weaken, but instead became stronger. Poland, Hungary, Iran, and Venezuela are prime instances of what occurs when religion intertwines with politics.

Until recently, it was widely considered that public life was primarily secular by the scholars. On the one hand, intellectuals could write authoritatively on politics, economics, and social behavior as if religion did not exist. Secularism, on the other hand, appears to have no ideological importance other than the assumed absence or irrelevance of religion (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, *Rethinking Secularism*, 2011, p. 3). However, in recent years, several of these political activists, some with outspokenly religious agendas and others with vocally anti-religious programs, have emerged on the global stage, challenging long-held assumptions about how the terms "secularism" and "religion" function in public life and calling into question a supposedly clear divide between the religious and the secular (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, *Rethinking Secularism*, 2011, p. 3).

For historical reasons mostly related to the formation of bourgeois nationalism and its war against the 'old powers' of the Monarchy and the Church, Western nations have linked religion with the private realm, and politics with the public. Rejecting religious dogmatism and championing individual rights permitted the bourgeoisie to avoid interfering in their economic matters while giving them a voice in politics and eroding aristocracies' supremacy. This is not to say that religion does not influence politics. Indeed, even in nominally secular Western governments, the evidence of the influence of Christianity in public life is clear, from the stated religion of its leaders to the attitude of religious authority on matters ranging from abortion to civil marriage. Equally clear are how religion and politics overlap, consciously or unconsciously, directly, or indirectly in clothing norms, music and movies, education, labor relations (e.g., public holidays and prayer hours), literature, and even public praise (Haynes, 2009, p. 105).

Theories of modernization and secularization that forecasted a decline in the relevance of religion in politics have failed to explain the revival of religion in many political

systems, diverting scholarly focus away from religious politics. Despite the fact that secularization has obviously happened in many nations, there has been a significant resurgence of religion in many regions of the world. Religion's influence on politics has not waned, but rather evolved in complicated ways, while the separation of religion and state has been weakened with increased socioeconomic development across the world (Haynes, 2009, p. 211).

Nowadays, many countries are seeking to find out their identity. Nation-building is a never-ending process in which each nation must constantly adapt to new ideologies, new world systems, market realities, demographic shifts, and so on. However, today's politicians and bureaucrats are inspired by their national background (Dalan, 2008, p. 44). National background is connected to national history and in majority of countries religion played a role in constructing these identities. Concepts of nation and stories of national identity are significant due to their political consequences (Dalan, 2008, p. 46).

1.1. [Aim of the thesis](#)

The main aim of this thesis is to compare two constitutionally secular governments, such as France and Turkey, in an attempt to pinpoint the consequences of involving religion into politics. The focus will be on two religions, Christian Catholicism and Sunni Islam, due to the majority of the citizens of these two countries either recognize historical ties or belong to these two religious groups. Before I start the analysis of the cases of France and Turkey, religious re-emergence in the political sphere is not a new phenomenon. Religious tensions and the influx of religion in politics were present for a long time. The focus will be on the last ten years when the whole situation escalated in both countries.

1.2. [Research questions:](#)

To better analyse and compare the two cases, as well as structure the research, three research questions were taken into consideration:

- 1. How do politics, religion, and security influence identity construction in France and Turkey?**
- 2. What are the similarities and differences between the two approaches?**
- 3. What are the consequences of religious involvement into Turkish and French politics?**

1.3. Disposition:

The section started with an introduction to the thesis, as well as the aim of the thesis and research questions. The first section is followed by the literature review description.

Religion and secularism are two sides of the same coin; they are inseparable. In order to explain what is the role of religion in nowadays politics, the third section consists of theoretical approaches through which this phenomenon will be analyzed. Furthermore, section four contains the epistemological foundation and methodological approaches. Section five includes the analysis of the French case. Moving on to section six which contains the analysis of the second case, Turkey. Section seven contains the explanation of the similarities and differences between the approaches in these two countries. Lastly, the conclusion which answers the main question and the third sub-question.

2. Literature Review:

2.1. Religion and Secularism:

Religion and secularism are two phenomena which troubled scholars for a very long time. The majority of them tried to explain the complicated relationship between these two. Even now religion and secularism are being questioned, but it is not the definition of the terms that is the problem. The assumptions that secularism prevailed over religion is the main concern and problem of scholars. It was believed that with the modernization of society, religion will simply disappear from the political arena. As already mentioned, this field is very well researched and there are number of sources covering this topic. In order to narrow the research, the focus was on the keywords: 'religion', 'secularism', 'politics', 'Turkey', 'France', and 'Ontological security'. These books and articles were critically assessed and used in the thesis.

Clashing opinions from different scholars regarding secularism and religion gave different perspectives to understand these two terms and their relationship.

Bryan Wilson was one of those who believed that it is not age which is secular (describing a cycle of ages), but modern society is secular. According to him there has been a developmental process in social organization, and modern social organization implies secularity (Wilson B. R., 1976, p. 259). He then continued to explain that all the latent

functions of religion such as social control, social cohesion, determination of values and activities would be replaced with social systems (Wilson B. R., 1976, p. 268). Wilson believed that due to rationalization religion will eventually disappear. The problematic aspect of this approach is the focus only on the Western society. In contrast to his opinion, Jose Casanova analyzes the functions that religion may play in the public realm of modern nations in a broad rethinking of the relationship between religion and modernity. He explained how religion came back and that even though Wilson stated that society will replace religion there are still cracks in the wall separating the church and the state, which still allows them to influence each other. One of the setbacks of this source is the focus of these studies are Institutions, not individuals (Casanova, 1994).

In their book "Rethinking Secularism," Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen represented a collection of writings from transdisciplinary prominent theorists and researchers in the domains of history, philosophy, political science, sociology, and anthropology. It provided insight into a new conceptual and theoretical understanding of secularism and the secular, while also describing socio-political developments affecting the link between religion and secularism worldwide. One of the key topics discussed is how the term "secular" should be defined. It explains how secularism and religion influence attitudes in social science and politics. In this book their assumption is that even though it is commonly assumed that public life is secular, in the last decades religious agendas challenged this (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, 2011, p. 3). In addition, in the book it was explained that there are different type of secularism, not just unprecedented one.

The comparative perspective of religion and politics was explained in the book written by Ted Jelen and Clyde Wilcox. This book provides a number of thorough analyses on religion and politics in various nations or locations. Countries with one dominant religious tradition are included, as are those with two or more competing faiths. Religion may play many different roles in national and international politics. History, culture, and external influences in each nation, as well as political institutions and the structure of civil society, determine these responsibilities (Jelen & Wilcox, 2002, p. 312). Religion is a major source of political mobilization in many nations, as well as a potent social division in others. For them religion strengthens the state in certain cases, while in others it provides a place of anxiety. The problem with this source is that authors develop some generalizations from the cases.

Another dimension on this issue was given by the Erin K. Wilson. She claims that secularism's dominance results in an ontological injustice in which both alternative non-secular worldviews and imaginations of alternative non-secular worlds are subjected to secular ontologies (Wilson E. K., 2017). However, the limitation of this research is that it still has to be developed, which brings some results into doubt. The main problem with this research is that it still needs to be elaborated, which calls into question certain conclusions which are made in the article.

2.2. Ontological security

Articles and books by Stuart Croft, Bahar Rumelili, Catarina Kinnvall, and Jennifer Mitzen cover the question of ontological (in)security and identity. Stuart Croft's book emphasized how national identity can contribute to an individual's ontological security, but also how performing rituals and routines connected with that identity can enhance fear in others: that is, understanding how ontological security for some can lead to, or even require, securitization of the identity of others (Stuart, 2012, p. 74).

Catarina Kinnvall explains how religion plays a role in identity construction, by allowing the actors to find an anchor in the sea of insecurities (Kinnvall, 2006). While Rumelili emphasizes how differencing 'us' from 'others' help us to create identity (Rumelili, 2015). One of the problems with these two sources is that it assumes that actors are always in a seek for self-identity.

3. Theoretical framework

When discussing about nation-building and identity, there are several prominent theories that one considers. However, since this thesis is focused on the relationship between religion and politics, and it's results on identity, the theories of secularism, ontological insecurity, and social constructivism were chosen to guide the analysis of the cases.

The field of religion and secularism is very well-researched, however, there are several different views and outlooks that do not always agree with each other. Every

researcher made an impact on this field. Consequently, in this thesis two prominent sociologists were chosen, whose opinions clash with each other. They have clashing stance on secularization theory and religious influence in the world.

3.1. Wilson's and Casanova's view of religion in politics:

“Religion is a set of beliefs in God or some other transcendent power, which entails an acceptable or, in some versions, a “rational” morality. Religion can thus be an aid to social order by inculcating the right principles, but it must avoid becoming a threat to this order by launching a challenge against it.” (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, Rethinking Secularism, 2011, p. 35)

This argument expressed the idea that the development of a logical culture, based on science, had weakened the foundations of belief in the supernatural, mystical, and magical. The Enlightenment era established a rational worldview based on factual facts, scientific comprehension of natural phenomena, and technological command of the cosmos. It was claimed that logic had rendered the Church's fundamental claims untenable in modern societies, wiping out the final traces of irrational dogma in Western Europe. Religion was thought to be weakening as a result of faith loss, eroding habitual churchgoing practices and ceremonial ritual observance, dismembering the social meaning of specific religious identities, and undermining active engagement in faith-based organizations and civic support for religious parties (Norris & Inglehart, 2004, p. 7).

Religions have been especially active in two types of situations; first, where the state has retreated or been unable to fulfill basic education and welfare functions, and second, where the state has suppressed or diminished the legitimacy of more overtly political institutions (Herbert, 2003, p. 4). However, religions have persisted and even expanded their activity in society in democracies with functional governmental institutions, where modernization was associated with religious decline (Herbert, 2003, p. 5). The mobilization of national or ethnic identity on the grounds of religion may be both a source of social conflict and a source of social cohesion. Religious nationalism can result in discrimination against minorities (Herbert, 2003, p. 5)

Religion has been a topic of public discussion, especially after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York, with the fall of the Twin towers. This attack served as

the turning point which gave religion a seat between political and national problems (Pollack, Müller, & Pickel, 2012, p. 3).

3.2. Secularism:

Secularization is a major trend affecting religion in modern industrial societies, and scholars generally believe that this means not only the decline but also the demise of religion (Stark & Bainbridge, 1987, p. 279).

The concept of secularism was first defined by George Holyoke in 1846. Holyoke suggested that "secularism" should simply refer to any social order separate from religion, rather than directly criticizing religious beliefs. More specifically, it is about the belief that human life can be improved by purely mundane means, for which science can provide fully adequate guidance, and morally, it is about the idea of doing good to others (Turner, 2012, p. 129).

Before the eighteenth century, religion was a fundamental ideology that frequently generated political conflict between social groups, as well as the subsequent formation and development of the modern international state system. However, after the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 and the subsequent development of centralized states, first in Western Europe and then via European colonization to the majority of the rest of the world, the political importance of religion declined significantly, both domestically and internationally (Haynes, 2009, p. 1).

The issue of secularization has become important in the humanities and social sciences. One of these reasons is that in the modern world social movements found inspiration in religious thought, and were often led by religious leaders (Turner, 2012, p. 127). The idea of secularization proposed a general tendency towards individuals, in which religion was not that important, as a result, different forms of secular institutions got authority to act (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, Rethinking Secularism, 2011, p. 11).

3.2.1. Secularization theory:

“When politics takes an ultimate, sovereign, quasi-divine, quasi-transcendental character, or when secularism adopts the concept of reason and universality while claiming that "religion" is essentially irrational, specific, and intolerant, democratic politics are put at risk (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, Rethinking Secularism, 2011, p. 69).”

Broadly defined, secularization as a theory describes the historical decrease of ecclesiastical institutional power and the authority of the Christian faith over secular institutions, especially nation-states, and secular beliefs (Turner, 2012, p. 133). The reason why Islam is not mentioned is that scholars believed that in Islam, there is no separation between politics and religion (Jocelyne Cesari, Sean McLoughlin, 2005, p. 4).

Between the many types of secularism, this thesis will be using the Political secularism. Political secularism does not share the negative preconceptions about religion, nor does it have to presume any progressive historical process that will leave religion increasingly unimportant. In contrast, political secularism wishes to keep religion inside its own separate religious domain and to retain a secular public democratic arena devoid of religion (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, Rethinking Secularism, 2011, p. 75).

It is based on a division between public and private. Of course, political secularism is impacted by secularism in general (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, Rethinking Secularism, 2011, p. 75). One important distinction is that secularism as a worldview or ideology makes normative assumptions about the value of the religious and the secular, whereas secularism as *realpolitik* is concerned with laws and institutions that govern relationships between religious and secular authorities and domains (Wilson E. K., 2017, p. 1078) . This is the underlying presupposition of any form of secularism as a *realpolitik* theory, and there must be some kind of boundary between "church" and "state," or "religion" and "political" authorities, or "religious" and "political." The key challenge is determining where and how to draw the line.

According to secularization theory, religion has become more detached from secular society, privatized, and essentially irrelevant to public secular problems. In contrast, religious authorities with strong ties to their religion in both Christian and Islamic leading nations are unwilling to accept the role that secularization theories have assigned to them. As a result, it

is claimed that contemporary religion has become increasingly de-privatized and relevant to secular society (Haynes, 2009, p. 246).

Bryan Wilson, a leading advocate of the secularization theory, has been persuasive in speaking of the loss of religion's *"erstwhile function"* in *"maintaining social order"* (Barker, Beckford, & Dobbelaere, 1993, p. 3). Religion, on the contrary, has been a significant structuring factor of the twentieth-century world, which has been disregarded by both strong supporters of the secularization thesis and most of its critics (Barker, Beckford, & Dobbelaere, 1993, p. 4).

"Secularization", Wilson consistently maintains, is *"the process by which religious institutions, actions, and consciousness, lose their social significance"* (Barker, Beckford, & Dobbelaere, 1993, p. 29). For Wilson religion has lost societal relevance and is no longer supported by other subsystems, particularly the state (Barker, Beckford, & Dobbelaere, 1993, p. 3). As a result, it cannot be forced on citizens. Wilson associated secularization with rationality and socialization in our society. The premise that indicate the world is more manageable and calculable, allowing things to be controlled, is central to his work (Barker, Beckford, & Dobbelaere, 1993, pp. 24-25).

Wilson's view on religion got highly criticized, while he insisted that that re-sacralization does not occur. Instead, there is a shift in meaning. Religious ideas and practices, according to Wilson, may continue to exist, but their connection to the rest of social life will be different than in the previous pattern (Barker, Beckford, & Dobbelaere, 1993, p. 38). New religious organizations may develop, but they will lack the economic, political, legal, and cultural 'significance' that their forefather institutions formerly possessed. Persons committed to such organizations may feel just as committed as previous generations did—and may be just as committed—but their relationship to the organization cannot help but change in meaning because the meaning of that organization's relationship to the larger society has changed. Wilson contends that secularization is a one-way street (Barker, Beckford, & Dobbelaere, 1993, p. 38).

3.2.2. Decline of religion according to Wilson:

"Religion in secular society will remain peripheral, relatively weak, providing comfort for men in in the interstices of a soulless social system of which men are the half-willing, half-restless prisoners (Wilson B. R., 1976, p. 276)."

Religion serves a purpose in communities. It employs the same emotive vocabulary, deals with human interactions, and explains and generates precisely those qualitatively distinct contexts that are so difficult to define in objective words. Of course, religion has had a practical purpose for civilizations at times, but the purpose has always been political. Religion has served as a cohesive ideology, offering emotional reinforcement of political identity. The core functions of religion, as well as the place of their activity, remain in the community (Willson, 1976, p. 265).

Personal social interaction that exists within the community always shaped religion. However, in the current world, we no longer live in a community-centered environment. The social experience is of a societally ordered system in which mindful planning replaces accepted customs. We have progressed from the given character of tradition, sanctified by religious legitimation in the past, to the purposeful limitation of processes imposed by our interest in governing the future (Wilson B. R., 1976, p. 265)

According to Wilson's thesis, secularization is the decline of community, secularization is a product of socialization (Wilson B. R., 1976, p. 266). Religion is a relic in the modern world, a memory of what was formerly regarded to be the natural order, the order which was involved in community life. The change that has occurred is not only due to people's loss of faith in the supernatural. It is a creation of a social context in which empirical-rational thinking is required, because the social order itself is no longer infused with mystical meanings and mysteries, but is governed by science (Wilson B. R., 1976, p. 266).

In the past, religion served as a social control agency, a system of taboos, and a means of legitimizing the values that people shared in common, ideals that they viewed as defining their social existence. Religion legitimized collective goals and activities, policies to be obeyed, and wars to be waged. In the modern world, all functions of religion disappear as community is replaced by society (Wilson B. R., 1976, p. 268). All of these were religion's latent functions. Nonetheless, social systems have developed other and more aware processes to accomplish these functions.

3.3. José Casanova:

Jose Casanova: “ The theory of secularization may be the only theory which was able to attain a truly paradigmatic status within modern social science., Indeed (it) intrinsically interwoven with all the theories of the modern world that one cannot discard the theory of secularization without putting into question the entire web, including much of the self-understanding of the social science (Herbert, 2003, p. 5). ”

José Casanova is a scholar who is rethinking secularism. Rethinking secularism, he claims, requires an analytical difference between the secular as a core contemporary epistemic category, secularization as an analytical conception of modern world-historical processes, and secularism as a worldview and ideology. All three concepts are connected, but are used very different in the academic sphere (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, *Rethinking Secularism*, 2011, p. 54).

In the last decades, religion and secularism were the two spheres that draw attention, especially within the social sciences. The thesis which stated the decline and privatization of religion became the main components of the theory of secularization. However, in last fifteen years this theory undergone numerous critiques.

Casanova observes that religion got public in two ways during the 1980s. It entered the public realm and got publicity as a result. Various audience, the mass media, social scientists, professional politicians, and the general public, suddenly began to pay attention to religion. The unexpected public interest emerged from religion's departure from its allocated position in the private domain and forcing itself into the public arena of moral and political contestation. Above all, four seemingly unconnected but nearly concurrently developing phenomena provided religion the type of worldwide prominence that prompted a rethinking of its position and role in the modern world (Casanova, 1994, p. 3). The Islamic revolution in Iran, the rise of the Solidarity movement in Poland, the role of Catholicism in the Sandinista revolution and other political conflicts throughout Latin America, and lastly the public reemergence of Protestant fundamentalism in American politics (Casanova, 1994, p. 3).

The central thesis of Casanova's study is that we are witnessing the de-privatization of religion in the modern world. The original study's fundamental argument is that we are experiencing the de-privatization of religion in the modern world, meaning that religious

traditions refuse to follow what that theories of modernity and secularization have appointed to them (Casanova, 1994, p. 5). There have been social movements that are either religious in nature or in the name of religion questioning the legitimacy and autonomy of major secular spheres, states, and market economies. Consequently, religious institutions and organizations refuse to limit themselves to care and support of individual souls, and they continue to raise questions about the interconnections of private and public morality, as well as to challenge the claims of subsystems, particularly states and markets, to be immune from extraneous normative considerations. One of the outcomes of this continuous dispute is a twofold, interconnected process of re-politicization of the private religious and moral domains as well as re-normativity of the public economic and political spheres (Casanova, 1994, pp. 5-6).

De-privatization of religion is not a new phenomenon. Most religious traditions resisted the process of secularization, including the accompanying processes of privatization and marginalization.

The term "de-privatization" is also intended to symbolize the emergence of new historical phenomena that, at least qualitatively, represent a reversal of what appeared to be secular trends. Religions around the world are embracing the public sphere and the arena of political debate not only to defend their traditional domain, as they have in the past. In addition, they engage in the very struggles to define and set the modern boundaries between private and public spheres, between the system and the life-world, between legality and morality, between individual and society, between family, civil society, and state, and between nations, states, civilizations, and the world system. According to Casanova, essentially, there are two lessons to be drawn from religion in the 1980s. The first is that religions are here to stay, putting one of the Enlightenment's most treasured aspirations to rest (Casanova, 1994, p. 6). The second and more essential lesson is that religions will continue to play important public roles in the continuing building of the contemporary world. This second lesson requires us to reassess the relationship between religion and modernity, as well as the potential roles religions may play in the public realm of modern nations (Casanova, 1994, p. 6).

According to Casanova, there are still a few "old believers," such as Bryan Wilson, who feel that the idea of secularization has enough explanatory power when it comes to explaining current historical processes (Casanova, 1994, p. 11).

3.3.1. Casanova's view of concepts secular and religion:

The distinction between the concept "secular," or its derivation "secularization," and the sociological theory of secularization itself is important because the concept itself is multidimensional (Casanova, 1994, p. 12). After the Protestant Reformation and the following religious conflicts, the term "secularization" was originally used to describe the extensive expropriation and seizure, generally by the state, of monasteries, landholdings, and other assets of the church. Secularization has since evolved to refer to the "transfer" or relocation of individuals, objects, roles, meanings, and so on from their traditional placement in the religious realm to the secular domains. As a result, it has been common to refer to secularization as the acquisition, whether forcibly or by default, of tasks previously held by church organizations by secular entities (Casanova, 1994, pp. 12-13).

Widespread opinion amongst prominent social scientist was that the notion of religion will diminish in the modern world and it will eventually extinct. As a result, the first theories of "modern" religion developed in the 1960s, notably ideas that explore which specifically contemporary forms religion may take in the modern world. By "modern," Casanova refers to religions that are not just conventional relics or remains of a pre-modern past, but are explicitly creations of modernity (Casanova, 1994, p. 26).

Even though, after World War II there has been a significant increase in industrialization, urbanization, and education, most religious traditions in most parts of the world have either grown or maintained their strength (Casanova, 1994, p. 26).

None of the social phenomena is arguably as complex and, as a result, as difficult to categorize as religion. Few dichotomous pairs of relational concepts are as puzzling, multivocal, and prone to discursive contestation as the private/public difference. However, the private/public divide is critical to all concepts of contemporary social order, and religion is inextricably linked with the current historical division of private and public realms (Casanova, 1994, p. 40).

Theorists of secularization have a more difficult time responding to critics who point out that the modern walls of separation between church and state continue to develop all kinds of cracks through which both can penetrate each other, that religious institutions frequently refuse to accept their assigned marginal place in the private sphere, instead of assuming prominent public roles, and that religion and politics continue to form all kinds of symbiotic relations (Casanova, 1994, p. 41).

Religions often serve both social and psychological roles, as well as meeting both communal and individual needs. However, one type may clearly predominate over the other in certain historical times or phases of development in specific cultures and religious traditions (Casanova, 1994, p. 46).

Casanova believes that, on one hand, Islam is a unique historical example of a religion that occurred as a religious community of salvation and a political society at the same time. Islamic community or umma, most of the time, saw itself as both a religious and a political entity, a community of believers and an Islamic country. However, claiming that Islam has no distinct religious and political sectors is inaccurate. Indeed, the history of Islam could be seen as the institutionalization of Muhammad's dual religious and political charisma into dual and differentiated religious and political organizations. (Casanova, 1994, p. 48)

On the other hand, the Christian "church" is just one historical kind of religious and political group that arose from the complicated interaction between the Christian religious community and the Roman imperial state structure (Casanova, 1994, p. 47).

The many linkages between religion and socio-political concerns are determined by the intrinsic features of religious and socio-political systems, their various external socio-economical environments, and the types of religious and political activity among its believers. On a broad level, the societal effects of religion are typically examined through the lens of secularization theory. Religious studies have long been interested in secularization as a key element influencing contemporary culture, and nearly all of the founding fathers of social and cultural research contributed to the study of secularization processes in various ways. Therefore one should focus on secularization paradigm, which includes a number of interpretation of secularization (Haynes, 2009, p. 247).

Casanova argues that contemporary religions have grown unprivileged, despite their rising importance in the public arena. It should be emphasized, however, that this assertion does not constitute an absolute rejection of the secularization hypothesis. On the contrary, Casanova sees difference as a vital feature of contemporary society, and he considers divergence between religion and the secular to be the still defensible heart of secularization theory. To claim that distinction must necessarily imply the privatization of religion, he believes, is no longer justifiable (Haynes, 2009, p. 248).

Thus, secularism in the United States, France, Turkey, India, and China, to mention a few typical and distinctive religious-secular borders, reflect not only extremely varied patterns of secular states and religious separation, but also very different religious-secular

boundaries. A government paradigm for religious and socio-religious pluralism regulation and administration (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, Rethinking Secularism, 2011, p. 63).

Secularism, nowadays, represents a contemporary public issue. For instance, France promotes secularism (*laïcité*) as a defining feature of its national character. On one hand this is due to the reaction to Islam and immigration, and on the other hand it is also shaped by a tradition of anticlericalism and nationalist ideology created during the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. French *laïcité* was integrated into Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's Turkey's design but unavoidably changed by its implantation in a very different setting (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, Rethinking Secularism, 2011, p. 9).

Minority religions may be disadvantaged by seemingly neutral regimes that conceal unspoken assumptions about what constitutes valid religious identity. In other words, the secular environment is sometimes organized in such a way that it implicitly promotes one form of religion while explicitly delegitimizing another (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, Rethinking Secularism, 2011, p. 16). This contradiction is significant since most of the world's cultures have developed concepts of citizenship in secular terms. Secularism may appear to be nothing more than a claim of neutrality vis-à-vis religion or religions. However, when it is inscribed into a constitution, it usually reflects events that are not neutral in any way, the rise of a new political party, a revolution, or an interstate conflict. In result, here is always some form of the political framework, and it is necessary to question certain secular regimes what they convey in that political context and how they affect power and recognition distributions (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, Rethinking Secularism, 2011, p. 16). Religion, on the other hand, can serve as a quasi-ethnic secular identity for some individuals. Religious identities are claimed as secular identifiers by persons who do not actively follow the religion and, in certain cases, by those who publicly declare themselves to be atheists (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, Rethinking Secularism, 2011, p. 18).

People who are serious about their religious convictions and activities may be confused about the difference between using a religious label to signify religion as such, on the one hand, and to denote a population, on the other. For example, Muslim perspectives about the relationship of religion to politics are molded not just by religious doctrines but also by the hostility of the foreign ruling elite (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, Rethinking Secularism, 2011, p. 19).

When social identity is endangered as a result of massive cultural transformations such as migration, religion may offer resources for managing such transitions or claiming a new claim to a sense of value. Ethnic religious groups can help people shift from their country to their new identity. The church (or temple, gurdwara, or mosque) provides a supportive community that not only speaks one's language but also has experience with and contacts within the new social and cultural context (Haynes, 2009, p. 154).

3.4. Ontological security:

Ontological security (OS) made its breakthrough in the work of R.D. Laing and Anthony Giddens. This term is defined as '*security as being*,' as opposed to '*security as survival*,' defined by Anthony Giddens (Giddens, 1991, p. 38).

Ontological security consists of four components. First, the ontologically secure individual has a self-identity founded on biographical coherence that can be easily shared with others through the daily routine. Second, self-identity is confined inside what Giddens refers to as a "cocoon" of trust systems based on social tokens and faith in experts. Third, ontological security necessitates that the individual act following his or her sense of self-integrity, always being aware of what is proper and acceptable. Finally, ontological insecurity is something to be feared, and even the most ontologically secure people are afraid of being securitized. In terms of the first part, self-identity is founded on a feeling of biographical consistency, which is easily expressed (Croft, 2012, pp. 229-230).

The survival motive is a broad concept that relates to concerns for the physical survival of a state's citizens, the preservation of its political infrastructure, and the maintaining of authority over its territory (Rumelili, 2015, p. 9). Despite its importance in mainstream IR research, physical security or security as survival is still considered problematic. The origins of survival fears, as well as their significance for political debate and legislation, highlight the importance of survival fears in inspiring diverse forms of politics.

If physical security is a known security concern, ontological security draws our focuses to subjectivity rather than physicality. Ontological security's emphasis is on the

maintenance of biographical continuity by focusing on political subjects. OS looks at security from different perspective and draws attention to other types of security seeking practices thus suggesting that conflicts can be produced for different reasons. The theory also focuses on the connection between uncertainty, anxiety, and the ability to retain a stable sense of self. If actors are more vulnerable to fears and identity crises as a result of globalization, and if these, in turn, make violence more likely, then IR specialists must comprehend the logic. Finally, if agents gain ontological security by their interactions with others, then conflicting connections are not the only place where ontological security dynamics emerge. This security dynamic should play a fundamental role in cooperative connections, possibly generating a social "glue" and improving cooperation's persistence, similarly, ontological uncertainty and anxiety might become new kinds of political resistance and a positive platform for action (Kinnvall & Mitzen, 2017, pp. 4-5).

According to Giddens, the foundation of ontological security is that the development of the subject is burdened with an underlying, ineradicable fear (Kinnvall & Mitzen, 2017, p. 4). Because of all social actors require a solid sense of self in order to assert agency, dealing with that inherent fear is a continual process. Actors are considered ontologically secure when they believe they have a sense of biographical continuity and wholeness that is supported and acknowledged by and through their interactions with others (Kinnvall & Mitzen, 2017, p. 4). In contrast, when the connections and understandings on which actors rely become destabilized, ontological security is jeopardized, and the outcome might be anxiety, stagnation, or violence. As a result, the requirement for a secure identity is critical, both for what it enables – long-term social relationships, and for what its disruption may lead to conflict and violence (Kinnvall & Mitzen, 2017, p. 4).

Ontological security emphasis is on what goes into the stories or narratives we tell ourselves about ourselves and our relationships with others. It is a call to research the cognitive and affective reasons why individuals, communities, and even states feel insecure and anxious, as well as the emotional reactions to these sentiments. Ontological security studies treat individuals as linked not only structurally, but also through their reasoning and perceptions, scripts, schemas, heuristics, and emotional inter-subjectivity, in which they constantly receive and give emotional messages (Kinnvall & Mitzen, 2017, p. 6). Additionally it, describes a state of instability, primarily caused by globalization and neoliberal policies, in which individuals or groups of individuals have lost their sense of

security as well as their ability to sustain a linear narrative and answer questions about doing, acting, and being (Kinnvall & Mitzen, 2017, p. 7).

Theory of ontological security highlights how maintaining habits and routines help to construct a structured framework for existence by creating a feeling of being and its distinction from non-being. For this to work, ontological security as meant here requires both a practical awareness and the everyday routines that replicate and are reproduced by it. *“Everyone develops a framework of ontological security of some kind, based on diverse routines.’ People deal with hazards and their accompanying concerns using emotional and behavioral “formulas” that have become ingrained in their daily behavior and cognition (Croft, 2012, p. 222).”*

Individuals can use the framework of ontological security to answer existential questions such as the nature of existence, the distinction between human life and the external world, the existence of other people and self-identity, and to take existential parameters of activity for granted (Rumelili, 2015, p. 6).

Identity and security challenges are inextricably linked to a wide range of modern issues, including migration, minority rights, and protracted conflicts. According to a primary purpose of critical theories of security, security, threat, danger, and risk are not objective conditions, but rather social creations shaped by dominant discourses. We live in a securitized world that we have created, where troubles and issues are perceived as threats to our lives, requiring emergency and drastic measures. Because migration and minority rights are portrayed as security challenges for the state, they can constitute a danger to dominant groups (Kinnvall, 2006, p. 22). In both France and Turkey, these challenges put their political elite and citizens to the test.

3.4.1. Ontological security of individuals:

Critical identity theories have stressed the significance of identity as a fundamental foundation for social activity, while also drawing attention to the discursive construction of difference. Through de-securitization, securitized topics can be returned to regular politics and redefined as non-threatening. In her study, Rumelili asks, *“How can the Self transition from a securitized to a non-securitized relationship to the Other when its fundamental identity is dependent on its relationship to the Other?”* (Rumelili, 2015, p. 3). Constant repetition of contradictory identity positions discourages political efforts to eliminate the

impression of existential threat. Consequently, the proper theorization of the identity/security nexus requires making assumptions about how processes of securitization/de-securitization and identity construction interact with one another, as well as conceptualizing how different identity constructions enable and limit securitization/de-securitization processes (Rumelili, 2015, p. 3).

The above mentioned conflation, however, does not establish a clear distinction how identity conceptions support and regulate de-securitization. The subject of how altering challenges outside of the security arena might be both an enabling and an imitating element for alternative identity formations is yet unexplored in critical security literature. The majority of the security studies chose to focus only on how security as survival discourses and practices condition and restrict processes of identity creation that might permit de-securitization. Other scholars based their de-securitization tactics on the concept of blurring the distinctions between the Self and Others, and as a result, they overlooked how the Self (ontological security) might impact and restrict ontological security. Ontological security may improve critical security theory by emphasizing the profound link between identity and security while emphasizing that aspirations of ontological and physical security in international relations are distinguished by distinct dynamics, processes, actions, and discourses.

In terms of re-creating identity, strict securitization has been criticized for presuming that the social manufacture of security is solid enough to be viewed as an objective process (Stuart, 2012, p. 86). *“Successful outcome of securitization process is the construction of Radical Otherness. As Kinnvall puts it, ‘The other exists in our minds through imagination even when he or she is not physically present ... This implies that the enemy-other is not only created by the self, but has been a previous part of the self’* (Stuart, 2012, p. 88).”

Ontological security is not a condition that all people experience. And the denial of identity structures to specific groups may be at the foundation of some people's ontological anxiety, or the very least significantly enhance their sense of fear. The securitization of identities is a critical problem for understanding ontological security. Identity securitization leads to subjectivity securitization, which represents the intensified search for the identification of a single, stable identity (Stuart, 2012, p. 73).

According to Rumelili, ontological security is firmly linked with identity, and as such, it necessitates distinction and assumes another (Rumelili, 2015, p. 4). Rumelili emphasizes that identity is formed not through routine, but through activities that communicate difference

and distinction. Because identity lacks a pre-given, objectively recognizable essence, humans establish themselves as beings primarily through discourses and activities that distinguish them from others. According to Rumelili, ontological security is based on the reproduction of a diverse collection of identity markers that distinguish the Self from the Other across various dimensions (Rumelili, 2015, p. 7). Ontological security does not indicate identity vulnerability, but rather continual anxiety about its stability (Rumelili, 2015, p. 9). From the standpoint of ontological security, the securitization of identities is understandable, because it is the constructions of these othering that assist to offer social solidity to the identities that are at the center of the biographical story that ontologically secure persons have (Croft, 2012, p. 228).

Ontological insecurity causes physical insecurity, which diminishes trust and heightens the perception of general threats from the outside world (Rumelili, 2015, p. 22). It fosters an atmosphere conducive to political actors and processes that exploit distrust and uncertainty. As a result, when the freedom to establish a separate Self is called into question, there is a good chance that insecurity at the level of being will be compensated by securitization, by elevating any remaining challenges and differences to concerns of survival (Rumelili, 2015, p. 23). The effectiveness and durability of securitization/de-securitization processes are determined by their capacity to retain the ontological security of the players involved or to build an altered state of ontological security.

Identity preservation is an important part of maintaining ontological security. As a result, when a group's collective identity is threatened by destabilizing forces, some may respond by engaging in securitization procedures to control ontological insecurity (Rumelili, 2015, p. 18). Religion and nationalism are two such reasons that, because of their ability to project an image of security, inclusion, stability, and simple solutions, they are more likely than other identity constructs to provide answers to people in need (Kinnvall, 2006, p. 4).

It is normal for people to try to develop a threatened self-identity when they are feeling vulnerable and anxious. Any collective identity that can provide such security is a potential attraction. It is an emotional war in which world leaders and other influential individuals seek to unite people around simple causes rather than complex ones. Some of these problems appear to have a larger uniting appeal than others. Religion and nationalism generate extraordinarily powerful tales and beliefs because of their potential to give a picture of security, stability, and simple answers (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 742).

Individual ontological security is built on a foundation provided by the conviction that the story being told is true. Ontological security is a person's basic sense of safety in the world, which includes basic trust in others. Developing such trust is critical to maintaining feelings of mental well-being and avoiding worry (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 746).

People tend to return to a mythical past to combat modernization. In other words, adopting constructed symbols and cultural concepts is a response to the destabilizing consequences of shifting patterns of global mobility and migration. It is an effort to recreate a lost sense of security (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 745).

Chosen trauma plays an important role in this. It is utilized as a mental remembrance of a tragedy that happen to a group's ancestors that comprises knowledge, imagined expectations, emotional sentiments, and barriers against inappropriate ideas. It is useful as a notion for understanding how sentiments of "old hate" are generated and perpetuated. In times of increasing ontological uneasiness and existential worry, selected traumas-chosen "glories" give reassuring tales. A previously chosen trauma is frequently utilized to interpret fresh traumas. It brings with it tremendous sentiments of shame, revenge, and anger, which activate many unconscious defense mechanisms in an attempt to undo these events and feelings (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 755).

Both chosen traumas and chosen glories are inseparably connected to images of the nation and religion. To build the nation, nationalism must establish that the concept it seeks to build has always existed. Religious and cultural rituals, as well as ritualistic observances of anniversaries, might help to prolong trauma and contribute to the ongoing demonization of the other while sacralizing the self (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 756). Many of the characteristics of religion are shared by those of nationalism, and religion and nationalism are frequently intermingled. The role of religion in the study of nationalist movements is sometimes overlooked or ignored by the scholars. This is due to religion being opposed to the ideals of enlistment, which are rationalism, universalism, secularism, and materialism. By doing so it, ignores the parallels between the individual self of the Enlightenment tradition, as manifested in nationalism, and the foundations of religious identity (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 758). In comparison to other discursive identity constructs, both national and religious identities, assert a monolithic and abstract identity, that is, one stable identity that responds to the desire for securitized subjectivity. Religion, like the nation, is characterized by a discursive, often essentialist vision of its domain as an organic whole, as an entity whose different characteristics or dimensions are intimately linked.

Institutionalized religion is territorially defined in the same way as the nation is since it refers to delimited institutions such as churches, organizations, or political parties. Religion, like nationalism, in this form, provides existential solutions to people's aspirations for security by essentializing the object and offering an image, unity, and wholeness. Religion addresses questions about existence, itself, the external universe and human life, the existence of "the other," and what self-identity is. In offering answers to these questions, they also establish a concept of "truth," meaning that individuals who do not conform to such a concept are automatically excluded.

Religion, particularly in its monotheistic form, consequently serves as a basis for the development of hatred toward individuals who do not share these ideas (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 759).

3.5. Social constructivism:

Social constructivism, in the next part, will be referred to as constructivism, emphasizes the importance of ideas, identity, and interaction in the international system. It reveals how the human world is not essentially given and natural, but that it is constructed through the actions of the actors themselves (Agius, 2013, p. 71). People act towards objects, including other actors, based on the assumption that the objects have for them, which is equivalent to people's subjective mental representations of objects determining their actions. Such a stance would indeed insinuate the need to ground one's account of some sphere of social life in how actors comprehend themselves and their situations (Jackson, 2011, p. 134).

Constructivism analyzes how the world is made and remade through action, and how world political structures not only constrain but also shape the identities, interests, and practices of world political actors. It also examines how these actors unintentionally or purposefully reproduce these structures, and how human activity is responsible for both stability and change in global affairs (Barnett, 2014, p. 155). In addition it generates numerous unique insights, such as different ways of thinking about power, the significance of norms in understanding the development and fall of world systems, and the involvement of transnational movements and other non-state players in the internationalization of global politics (Barnett, 2014, p. 155).

The social environment in which we encounter ourselves defines and creates who we are as social beings. We are social beings who are members of many social groupings. Human agency simultaneously generates, reproduces, and transforms culture throughout our everyday behaviors. Furthermore, social constructivism claims that there are features of structures and actors that cannot be collapsed into each other, claiming a sometimes difficult ontological middle ground between individualism and structuralism (Risse, 2009, p. 146). The power of this constructivist stance is that we can modify our world constructs and therefore create new options for our activity, even though this process is frequently complex and demanding (Burr, 2015, p. 22).

Constructivism is divided into three major ontological perspectives. First, normative or ideational structures are as significant, this means that ideas take center stage and are privileged. The second is that identity is important, identities provide actors with interests. Those interests provide information about how players behave and the aims they seek. Without an identity, actors cannot perform (Agius, 2013, p. 71). Constructivists think that by concentrating on how interests are acquired and developed, we get a clearer sense of identity and social interactions. Identity is not given; it is formed via interaction. Third actors and structures mutually constitute one another. This focus on how actors change the environment and how the world forms actors implies that human connections are intrinsically social and that we create and are influenced by the society in which we live (Agius, 2013, p. 71). Important component of the constructivist aim is to demonstrate how identity and interests are not set in time and place but are subject to change and revision. The identities and interests of governments, or any other type of actor, fluctuate through time and space (Agius, 2013, p. 72).

Consequently, identity is crucial in constructivist research because it tells us who the actors are, what their preferences and interests are, and how those preferences may shape their behaviors (Agius, 2013, p. 74). Shared knowledge is vital in the construction of identities because it establishes shared understanding among people, groups, states, and the system of states. Collective meanings and shared knowledge shape how we interpret and respond to the world. The majority of constructivism focuses on culture. Constructivism considers culture as a system of practices that provide meaning to collective experiences and behaviors (Agius, 2013, p. 76).

The constructivist emphasis on the mutual constitutiveness of agency and structures is significant. The reason behind this is that social constructivists define institutions as social structures that influence actors and their behavior (Risse, 2009, p. 147).

Many social norms do not only control behavior but also shape actors' identities by defining who 'we' are as members of a social community (Risse, 2009, p. 148). Norms are the social expectations about the appropriate behavior for a specific identity, which are produced by shared knowledge and practices. They are important in the construction of identity, norms to which we attach or choose to conform are part of how we identify ourselves.

The distinguishing element of social constructivist methods is an emphasis on communicative and discursive processes. We must take words, language, and communicative expressions carefully if we want to analyze and explain social behavior. Agents make sense of the world and provide meaning to their actions through discursive practices (Risse, 2009, p. 149). The use of language is essentially social. We are socialized into it, and in the process, we learn not only words but also how to act in the world, what it means to promise, threaten, and lie, and the types of contexts in which these speech acts are appropriate or meaningful, or even what it means to generate hypotheses, vote, or launch a missile. Language is an important aspect of behaving in the real world. We could not begin to interact with one another, give meaning to things or activities in the world, conceive separate ideas, or express feelings if we did not have language (Fierke, 2013, p. 197). A consistent constructivist approach to language transfers the emphasis to the subjects of analysis' production of meaning, norms, and rules as articulated in language. It is also less concerned with individual intentions, as stated by traditional constructivists, and more concerned with the intention represented in social activity (Fierke, 2013, p. 197).

3.6. Limitations of the theory

I required diverse theoretical frameworks to investigate and draw conclusions on issues like this one. Every theoretical approach has its role in explain the thesis.

The secularization theory was used to explain the link between religion and secularism. This theory was used because both countries undergo the change from religious

state to a more secular one. One of the disadvantages of these theories, as previously stated, is that it is more focused on Western countries.

The theory of ontological security enables me to examine the influence of religion and politics on individual identity. It explains how religion and emphasis on the 'other' make differences in the society, which creates anxiety and insecurity. Furthermore, it helps me to comprehend the consequences which emerge from the created anxiety. The theory assumes that people are in seek for identity, and the state is the one who formulates it. OS's shortcoming is that it does not clearly distinguish who produces identity.

Moreover, institutions, according to social constructivists, are social structures that impact people and their behavior. This approach is used to explain how identity is influenced by the institutions in these two countries.

4. Methodology

The next section will show my position as a researcher, as well as the data sampling, data analysis, ethical consideration and research design of the thesis.

4.1 Epistemological foundation

The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate how politics, religion, and security influence and impact identities in France and Turkey. To achieve that, this thesis will follow discursive constructivist ontology from an interpretivist perspective.

Interpretivism represents a branch of epistemology whose main idea is that the researcher is part of the research, thus interpreting the data, and as such can never be completely objective and removed from the analysis (Gray, 2004, p. 20).

Interpretive research is a research paradigm based on the assumption that social reality is not singular or objective, but rather influenced by the social experiences and social contexts (ontology) (Pelz, 2021). Therefore, it is best studied within its socio-historic context by resolving the subjective interpretations of its various participants (epistemology). Interpretative researchers believe that social reality is integrated inside and impossible to separate from its social surroundings, they "interpret" reality through a "sense-making" process rather than a hypothesis testing procedure (Pelz, 2021).

Taking an interpretative position is more than just revealing how members of a social group understand the world around them. The social scientist will almost definitely try to fit the elicited interpretations into a social scientific framework. The researchers are offering an interpretation of other people's understandings, resulting in a double interpretation. There is a third level of interpretation going on because the researcher's interpretations must be further understood in terms of disciplinary concepts, theories, and literature. (Bryman, 2012, p. 31).

4.2. Research design

In order to answer my research questions, this study will conduct qualitative compare study, which will use critical discourse analysis and narrative analysis to analyze the collected data.

A comparative design of research is the analysis of two opposing scenarios using identical methodologies. It embodies comparison logic in that it indicates that we may better comprehend social phenomena when they are compared to two or more meaningfully contrasting events or circumstances (Bryman, 2012, p. 72). This study implies that we may better comprehend social occurrences when we compare them to two or more genuinely contrasting examples or circumstances. This approach allows to seek explanations for similarities and differences, and to understand social reality in different national context.

The data of the research will be collected from books, journals, newspapers, and official government websites to get a clear picture of the issue.

The reason why these two cases were chosen, Turkey and France, is that even though both are considered constitutionally secular, in my opinion, religion managed to get back into the political sphere and influence the security-identity nexus in the country, causing ontological insecurity to the citizens. Furthermore, both of these countries in the last decade had a struggling relationship between religion and secularism which sparked many issues and crises. Additionally, France and Turkey are countries that have a long history of cooperation. Needless to say, the French Republic served as a model for the Turkish Republic.

4.3. Methodological choices:

For this research's methodological approach, critical discourse analysis and thematic narrative analysis were chosen. Critical discourse analysis was taken into consideration in regard to Fairclough's approach which further specifies and gives an outline for a more specific analysis.

4.3.1. Critical discourse analysis:

Discourse is defined as an interlinked set of texts and the activities of their production, distribution, and reception that give rise to an object. In other words, discourses create and make a social reality, and social interactions cannot be completely understood without reference to the discourses that provide them meaning (Bryman, 2012, p. 536).

Discourse analysis concentrates on how discourse generates versions of the world, society, events, and inner psychological worlds. This way of analyzing portrays language as constructing or shaping the social reality, it is not only a way of understanding that world, as most quantitative and qualitative research approaches do (Bryman, 2008, p. 526). When people talk or write, they have an underlying cause and aim, and, discourse analysis is preoccupied with the approaches individuals use to achieve different kinds of effects.

Over the last century, discourse has taken on a wide range of meanings, ranging from natural language, speech, and writing everything that works as a carrier of signification, including social and political behaviors, to discourse as an ontological horizon. Discourse analysts study the meaning of structures, expressions, themes, routine ways of communicating, and rhetorical devices used in the construction of reality.

Critical Discourse Analysis- Fairclough's approach

It is argued in critical discourse analysis that discursive practices contribute to the establishment and reproduction of unequal power relations between social groups, such as socioeconomic classes, men and women, ethnic minorities, and the majority. These are referred to as ideological impacts (Jørgenson & Phillips, 2011, p. 4).

Fairclough, whose approach will be used in the analysis, defines critical discourse analysis as "*an approach that seeks to investigate systematically often oblique relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices, events, and texts and broader social and cultural structures, relations, and processes*" (Jørgenson & Phillips, 2011, p. 4). Furthermore, it investigates how such behaviors, events, and texts emerge from and are ideologically molded by power relations and power conflicts (Jørgenson & Phillips, 2011, p. 4). According to Fairclough, critical discourse analysis is 'critical' in the sense that it seeks to show the role of discursive practice in the protection of the social reality, notably asymmetrical power relations. Its goal is to contribute to social transformation by promoting more equitable power relations in communication processes and society as a whole (Jørgenson & Phillips, 2011, p. 4).

The distinction between Fairclough's approach and others is that speech is understood as both constitutive and constituted. His method is based on the idea that speech is an essential type of social practice that both reproduces and alters knowledge, identities, and social interactions, including power relations, while also being affected by other social practices and institutions. Thus, discourse is dialectically related to other social aspects (Jørgenson & Phillips, 2011, p. 5).

He defines social structure as social relations in society as a whole as well as specific institutions, and it includes both discursive and non-discursive features. A physical practice such as bridge construction, for example, is essentially non-discursive, whereas activities such as journalism and public relations are predominantly discursive (Jørgenson & Phillips, 2011, p. 6). He developed critical discourse analysis (CDA). As a way to embrace a 'critical' conceptual framework and question the distinction between macro-, meso-, and micro-levels of discursive engagement (Oswick, 2012, p. 475). In his three-dimensional model, Fairclough makes a difference between discursive practice, text and social practice, as three levels that can be analytically separated (Jørgenson & Phillips, 2011, p. 24).

For the analysis of the data, I will use Fairclough proposed tools: "*interactional control - the relationship between speakers, including the question of who sets the conversational agenda; ethos - how identities are constructed through language and aspects of the body; metaphors wording and grammar* (Jørgenson & Phillips, 2011, p. 7)."

Critical Discourse Analysis:

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) focuses on the actual everyday conversation in institutional, media, political, or other contexts, rather than on sample sentences or sample texts generated in linguists' imaginations. It considers both written and spoken 'discourse' to be a type of social activity. It implies a dialectical link between specific discursive actions and the situations, institutions, and social structures in which they are embedded; situational, institutional, and social settings form and impact discourse, and discourses, in turn, alter social and political reality. In other words, a speech both creates and is created by social activity (Wodak, de Cillia, & Liebhart, 1999, p. 8). CDA highlights language's position as a power resource linked to ideology and socio-cultural transformation. It is especially influenced by Foucault's theories and approaches, who pursued to uncover the representational characteristics of discipline as a vehicle for the exercise of power through the construction of disciplinary practices (Bryman, 2008, p. 536).

Social actors create objects of knowledge, circumstances, and social roles, as well as identities and interpersonal relationships between various social groupings and individuals who engage with them, through discourses. Discursive actions are also socially formative in many ways. Firstly, they are significantly accountable for the emergence, development, and building of specific social circumstances. Secondly, they can aid in the restoration, legitimization, or relativization of a social status quo. Thirdly, discursive activities are used to preserve and reproduce the status quo. Finally, discursive activity has the potential to modify, demolish, or even destroy the status quo (Wodak, de Cillia, & Liebhart, 1999, p. 8).

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The goal of is to identify ideologically infused and frequently hidden institutions of power, political control, and domination, as well as techniques of discriminatory inclusion

and exclusion in language usage. CDA, as an emancipatory, socially critical methodology, stands in solidarity with people who face political and social injustice. In other words, it is therefore to interfere discursively in certain social and political actions (Wodak, de Cillia, & Liebhart, 1999, p. 8).

4.3.2. Narrative analysis:

In general, the narrative is the everyday activity of storytelling in which the teller/speaker employs the essential story structure and organize events and, or experiences to bring onward what is considered relevant and meaningful for the teller and the listener. Thus, narrative research is the study of the tales that people tell to make sense of their lives (Lewis, 2014, p. 161). There are several ways to narrate an experience. It is the analyst's responsibility to investigate what is being done by the specific choices made by the speaker.

Narratives have a social justice potential, allowing historically marginalized and silent peoples to tell their experiences and others to listen and respond. "*We discover significance in our tales; we are our narratives, and our stories define who we are* (Lewis, 2014, p. 164)." Narratives have an essential part in the formation of human experience and identity (Maitlis, 2012, p. 492). They are viewed as the primary mechanism through which people build, describe, and comprehend their experiences. Thus, the narrative is more than just a means of reporting reality; it is also a means of socially building reality, defining what the links are, were, or could be between events, feelings, ideas, and actions (Maitlis, 2012, p. 492). The social construction of reality through a story, as with other ways, is confined by the social structures and cultures in which individuals live, as well as the material resources and abilities at their disposal. A narrative must be recognized as legitimate and significant by both the narrator and the audience in order to have force as an instrument of social construction (Maitlis, 2012, p. 493).

Social life is a story in and of itself, and the narrative is an ontological condition of social life. The narratives influence behavior and humans form identities by locating or being located within a range of conspired stories. People make sense of what has happened and is happening to them by attempting to organize or integrate these happenings within one or more narratives. They are guided to act in certain ways based on projections, expectations, and memories derived from a various but ultimately limited repertoire of available social, public, and cultural narratives (R.Somers, 1994, pp. 613-614).

Thematic narrative analysis

Thematic analysis is probably the most common type of narrative analysis, concentrating on the content of a tale rather than how it is expressed. A thematic analysis seeks to discover major themes within a story or if dealing with a collection of stories, themes that are shared by all stories in the collection (Maitlis, 2012, p. 494).

When a researcher wants to understand the material transmitted in a story, and especially when they want to emphasize the essential content pieces that give the narrative its force, thematic analysis is a valuable approach. Thematic analyses are frequently used to investigate basic dimensions around which meanings are built, for instance asking questions of "How do members construct their organizational identity?" Thematic analyses might be theory-driven or inductively developed (Maitlis, 2012, p. 496).

To summarize, theme analysis provides a strong and adaptable method for investigating important aspects in narratives generated by people and groups, as well as those circulating in the discourse of larger institutional sectors. Such studies give valuable insights into how organizational members' narratives are changed by the environments in which they are disseminated, as well as how these narratives cause changes in the dominant cultural and social discourses. (Maitlis, 2012, p. 496)

4.4. Data collection:

This thesis primary data were the speeches of political actors taken by the official sites of both Turkey's and France's governments. Secondary sources for the analysis as well as the theory were derived from various journals, books and articles.

4.4.1. Secondary data:

The analysis of the discursive construction of national identity will serve to expose manipulative strategies in politics and the media directed at linguistic harmonization or discriminatory exclusion of human beings, as well as to raise awareness of rhetorical strategies used to impose certain political ideology, values, and goals. This research will use different sources which include political speeches, newspaper articles, journal articles, and books. These will give an insight into how French and Turkish identity gets constructed in terms of the public sphere. Also, this will give insight into narratives that are used.

4.4.2. Primary data:

In the first section of the study, the religion-secularism-identity problem will be analyzed through theoretical approaches which are mentioned in the theory section. Moving on to the second section of the thesis, which will include my interpretation of the presidents of France and Turkey's speeches, debates in parliament, media appearances, and policy papers.

The primary data chosen for this thesis are speeches by;

- President Emmanuel Macron,
- Marin Le Pen, far-right politician president of National Front
- President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and
- Ismail Kahraman. a member of the Turkish Parliament,

Because I have no knowledge of French or Turkish, the translation of the speeches in English will be taken from the official websites of both Turkey and France. In addition, the media and online newspaper outlets will be used to gather information.

These remarks were chosen because of the social context in which they were presented. As I have stated, the religion-security-identity nexus has existed in these two countries for a very long period. These remarks were delivered at important junctures in both countries, which shook the foundations of secularism.

Secondary data will be derived from various books, papers, journals, and websites. This will provide me with a comprehensive perception of the social setting and historical context, allowing me to better understand and evaluate the speeches.

4.5. Relevance of methods

The purpose of CDA is dual; to reveal the link between language methods, forms, and structures and specific linguistic practice, and to make clear the reciprocal relationship between discursive activity and political and institutional frameworks (Wodak, de Cillia, & Liebhart, 1999, p. 9). The concept "subject" is frequently related to a structural emphasis on subjection, positioning, and placement in speech. This includes both a concern with the portrayal of specific social groups and how, for example, specific genres build up specific discourse positions for people. The concepts of 'identity' and self,' on the other hand, tend to be associated with an interactional focus on people constructing their individual or collective

identities in discourse. The struggle to find identities is one of the most widespread themes. The purpose of CDA in this context is partly descriptive and partly normative, in the sense that it may contribute to societal battles surrounding identity and difference by recognizing unrealized potentials (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 96).

One of the reasons why CDA was chosen for this thesis, is that it allows me to get deeper into the matter, not to analyze just the speech, but also the underlying messages that are produced through it. Additionally, this allows me to understand the social context and how these created narratives influence citizens in these two countries. Since CDA creates narratives, a method to analyse them was needed, therefore, thematic narrative analysis was chosen in an attempt to understand the underpinnings and construction of narratives.

4.6. Ethical considerations:

CDA takes a stand that any text can be understood in a variety of ways – a text does not uniquely determine a meaning, though there is a limit to what a text can mean: different interpretations of the text result from different combinations of the text's properties and the interpreter's properties social positioning, knowledge, values, and so on (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 67). Analysis of understandings is a component of CDA's analysis. I am aware that many CDA studies have been incomplete in terms of the framework above and have not incorporated understanding analysis. However, CDA does not support a certain interpretation of a document, albeit it may urge a specific explanation (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 67).

The researcher must recognize the possibility that the results will be exploited as a resource in social engineering. According to Fairclough, this type of application of the data is a sign of the 'technologisation of discourse,' in which discourse research is used to transform discursive practices as well as teach individuals to utilize new forms of discursive practice (Jørgenson & Phillips, 2011, p. 24).

One of the ethical concerns regarding this thesis is my interpretation. Taking into account that my conclusion and assumptions are the product of data obtained solely through books, articles, and newspapers and not by interviews or other methods, my conclusion might be under the influence of the scientists whose research I read.

In addition, due to my focus only to documents and not other methods for analysis there is a possibility that I will not provide needed data regarding the ontological insecurity of the citizens, regarding the influence of security, religion and politics on their identity.

4.7. Validity and Reliability:

Data collected from this research is gathered from academic sources. Fairclough expanded the concept of text to embrace any example of language in use. Text linguistic analysis tasks include sign systems and knowledge, identities, relationships, and connections (Jamani, 2014, p. 805).

Using a typology of language functions generated from SFL—detailed descriptions and examples of such analyses, the researcher can examine the text for distinct language functions related to the social environment. This type of analysis incorporates linguistic interpretations and gives an additional point of convergence to confirm the validity of text interpretations.

4.8. Limitations:

Interpretation is a complicated, layered process, and some distinctions must be made within it - first, between understanding and explanation, which are both components of interpretation. According to CDA, any text may be interpreted in several ways — a text does not uniquely define a meaning, however, there is a limit to what a text can imply. Diverse interpretations of the text emerge from different combinations of the text's qualities and the interpreter's attributes (social positioning, knowledge, values, etc.).

To analyze the data, and then explain it in Fairclough's terminology, critique and criticize the ideologies, an in-depth study of the data's socio-historical context, all theories circling the social issue under study, and, of course, a knowledge of such theories is necessary. For someone who does not have a previous experience with CDA and narrative analysis, this can be a limitation, because it demands critical thinking.

Due to the language barrier, I could only rely on information in English. The remarks were professionally translated and displayed on the official websites, but, I assume that if I knew Turkish or French, I would have a better comprehension of the data, especially given how important language is to CDA.

In addition, I was unable to conduct interviews with people who could have provided me with their opinions on the statements, allowing me to have a deeper understanding of the situation. In this case, I was the one interpreting the speeches and their influence.

5. French Republic

The Constitution of France defines France's political system as a semi-presidential republic. There is a separation of powers, which includes the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The President is both the head of state and the executive. Executive authority is wielded by the President and the administration. The French government is made up of the Prime Minister and his cabinet. The President appoints the Prime Minister, who reports to Parliament (<https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/france.htm#Countryprofile>).

About three-fifths of the French people belong to the Roman Catholic Church. Reflecting the presence of immigrants from North Africa, Algeria and Morocco, France has one of Europe's largest Muslim populations; an estimated 5 000 000 Muslims (Shennan, 2022).

According to the country's official website;

“France is an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic, guaranteeing that all citizens regardless of their origin, race or religion are treated as equals before the law and respecting all religious beliefs” states the Constitution of 1958. The “freedom to practice religion” has been recognised since 1905 when the loi sur la séparation de l'Église et de l'État (Law on the Separation of the Church and State) came into effect. Far from being a weapon against religion, this text returned all religions to the private sector and established state secularism in the public sphere. The French State does not favour any one religion and guarantees their peaceful co-existence in respect of the laws and principles of the Republic. (<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/>).”

5.1. Evolution of secularism in France:

The contemporary French Republic was formed in the late nineteenth century, following extensive efforts by republicans against royalist and authoritarian groups sponsored

by the Catholic church. French Revolution in 1789 represents an important event in French history. It ended monarchy and France was no longer considered the “Eldest Daughter of the Church” (<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/>). The new French state’s foundation was on the grounds of Human rights and the concept of secularism.

The French concept of *laïcité* originated from unchurching struggles and fights against clerical authority, that raged during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These gave secularism a more strident shape and positioned it as a constituent of social struggle and freedom. In general, such secularizing movements did not fight state churches, but rather new church-state alliances formed in the aftermath of 1648. As Casanova stated this was the key to what has made Europe distinctively secular (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, *Rethinking Secularism*, 2011, p. 15).

In France, where the Roman Catholic Church had been reconstituted by the conditions of the 1802 Concordat and its accompanying Organic Articles, Catholicism was acknowledged not as a state religion, but as the faith of the vast majority of the French people (Haynes, 2009, p. 179). When the church and the state were formally separated in 1905, the religious issues were resolved. The state was proclaimed religiously neutral, and citizens were free to believe and follow any religion or none at all. This became known as *laïcité* in French. France embraced secularism (*laïcité*) as a characterizing feature of its national identity and in 1946, secularism became a part of constitution (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, *Rethinking Secularism*, 2011, p. 9).

5.1.1. Shaking the grounds of secularist principles:

The large-scale migration from North Africa during decolonization in the 1960s, as well as the emergence of new generations of French-born Muslims, brought *laïcité* back into the spotlight. In 1989, debates erupted about whether Muslim females should be permitted to wear headscarves in public schools. Politicians from both the right and left piled on, and the situation quickly deteriorated. The lay principle's bounds were pushed to their breaking point, with the focus mostly on religious symbols: what they were, where they may be worn or shown, and by whom. In 2004, new legislation prohibiting the wearing of visible religious symbols in public schools was enacted, and in 2010, legislation prohibiting the wearing of face coverings in public places was enacted (Kelly, 2020). Although the lay principle applies

to all religions, the debate around it has become increasingly focused on Muslim practices (Kelly, 2020).

Tensions were created by anti-immigrant right-wing movements, which were aggravated by terrorist acts carried out by followers of al-Qaida, the Islamic State, and other extremist groups. The assassination of journalists at Charlie Hebdo and the murder of Jewish hostages at a supermarket triggered massive protests in January 2015. In November of that year, 130 people were killed in a series of assaults, including one at Paris' Bataclan music theater. Many different types of attacks have occurred since then, most famously the murder of Paty and three Christian worshippers in Nice in October 2020. (Kelly, 2020).

These attacks have heightened many people's sense of vulnerability in France. At the same time, French Muslims are being pressured by their fellow citizens to distance themselves from the radicals or accept the guilt by association with them. As a result of this, Muslim's status in the country is in jeopardy (Kelly, 2020). The theory that most politicians would refer to in light of the terrorist attacks would Huntington's theory of clash of civilization in order to describe cultural differences, particularly religious differences between citizens.

In addition, the 1905 law which forbids government financing of new religious buildings has a loophole, which allows the government to pay maintenance costs for religious monuments built before 1905. Needless to say, the vast majority of these monuments are Catholic churches (Mayanthi, *The Conversation*, 2015). Laws that were adopted later allowed the state to subsidize private religious schools, most of them Catholic, some of them Jewish. There are also other signs of religious presence in the education system, like a public-school calendar organized around Catholic holy days and public-school cafeterias that serve fish on Fridays (a catholic tradition).

When Muslim French citizens request the same accommodations as other religious communities in France, such as state-funded Muslim schools or a school calendar with Muslim holy days, they are reminded that France is a secular country where adequate citizenship necessitates separating religion from public life (Mayanthi, 2015). Those requests paradoxically become the foundation for both right-wing French Catholics and left-wing French secularists to dispute Muslims' eligibility as proper French citizens.

What is at risk in these arguments is not just the secular state, but also a broader framework of rights and obligations, and, ultimately, the French Republic's fundamental identity. As a result, rather than being the foundation of a religious settlement, *laïcité* has

increasingly become a statement of French identity. It is now a key element for le Vivre-ensemble: how French people may coexist (Kelly, 2020).

The unchurching battles gave rise to a militant *lacidé*. Today, we find reflections of this in European fears over claimed "Islamization." These frequently strike an unnoticed chord among populists and intellectuals alike. They are often addressed incorrectly in terms of the contradiction between Enlightenment reason and unenlightened ways of religion, but this conceals their distinctive history (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, *Rethinking Secularism*, 2011, p. 16).

Nationalism entails devotion to an authority that, as Max Weber noted, has a monopoly on the "legal use of physical force" in a specific community. Giddens defines nationalism as a "culture sense of sovereignty," indicating that being conscious of being subject to authority, and authority armed with the power of life and death, gives nationalism its strength. Secular nationalism thus entails both a devotion to a spirit of social order and an act of subjection to an ordering agency (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, 2011, p. 195).

Situations of societal conflict give conditions for religious authority to condone acts of violence. This is particularly true in confrontations involving concerns of identity, loyalty, and communal cohesion. Religious identities may play a role in mobilization, secession, and the formation of new governments (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, 2011, p. 196). *Lacidé*, on the other hand, is not ideologically neutral for Muslims but is employed by the state to deny them recognition as a religious group and to incorporate them into religious values. During the scarf controversy, then-Minister of Education Lionel Jospin, a Protestant, mentioned that " *Lacidé must not appear to be another form of fundamentalism.*" (Jelen & Wilcox, 2002, p. 180). As in the past, the state's dedication to "separation of religion and state" has not only intensified but also promoted, the politicization of religious issues. The secularist philosophy of the state makes it difficult for religious communities, whether Catholic, Jewish, or Muslim, to maintain their distinct religious and cultural identities (Jelen & Wilcox, 2002, p. 180).

5.2. [Speeches of French political actors:](#)

Emanuel Macron's speech on 2nd October 2020 was given in the city of Les Mureaux. The location is significant due to the city being a battleground for Republicans and because it is

mostly inhabited by Muslims. President Macron gave an hour-long speech regarding on the fight against separatism and a set of law he intent to pass:

‘The problem isn’t laïcité [secularism]. As I’ve said on several occasions, laïcité in the French Republic means the freedom to believe or not believe, the possibility of practicing one’s religion as long as law and order is ensured. Laïcité means the neutrality of the State; in no way does it mean the removal of religion from society and the public arena. A united France is cemented by laïcité. If spirituality is a matter for the individual, laïcité concerns us all.

What we must tackle is Islamist separatism... The problem is this ideology, which claims that its own laws are superior to the Republic’s.’ (Macron, 2020)

The speech soon became the center of attention and was quickly subjected to criticism. At the time, French society was dealing with a lack of cohesion. For years France was shaken by several terrorist attacks. Macron proposed new law, with some of them being characterized as disturbing from the Muslim citizens. During his speech, he chose his words carefully, referring to Islamist separatism as a political issue rather than a religious one, emphasizing that secularism is not the problem. Caution with words lead to confusion. The term "separatism" in French has a negative connotation. Historically, the term has been applied to attempts in France to organize religious, territorial, or ethnic minorities (Khemilat , 2021). Muslims in France do not want an independent state, which separatism means. In addition, during the speech, there was no clear definition of what Islamist separatism represents. This speech caused concern among Muslim people, who were already dealing with anti-Muslim sentiment following the terrorist attacks. Even though, secularism is the law for all religion, in this speech there was only one religion mentioned.

Furthermore, a specific sentence from the speech was taken out of context and was printed and reproduced in major newspapers and media without referring to the entirety of the speech.

“Islam is a religion that is currently experiencing a crisis all over the world.”.

This criticism of Islam was badly received, and it stigmatized the whole community.

Moving on to Marin Le Pen, a famous right-wing politician. The following statement was taken from the presidential debate held on national television.

“We must beat back Islamism and to do that, I think we need to ban the veil in public areas.”

In which president Macron answered;

‘You will cause religious war’

in which she continued;

“What you’re saying is terribly serious, because you are implying people would refuse to abide by the law.” (France 24, 2022).

In this debate, where she was very combative, Le Pen, once again stigmatized one group’s religious marks. This is not the first time she adopted such attitude. In 2017 when she was at another election rally she mentioned;

“The principles we fight for are engraved in our national motto: liberty, equality, fraternity. That stems from the principles of secularization resulting from a Christian heritage.” (Green , 2017).

While religion isn’t necessarily driving French policy debates or voting behavior, Le Pen’s campaign illustrates how nominal religious values can be used as an argument for closed borders and a stronger national identity. In her statements, she is very vocal and aggressive, criticizing migration, economy, and religious issues. One can notice that her religious invocations are there only to further construct a strong narrative of the ‘other’ who is endangering the state. Unfortunately, religion, particularly Islam, and the disintegration myth that secularism is in jeopardy have appeared regularly in presidential elections in both the fringe and mainstream of French politics.

5.3. Ontological security in the case of France:

At the moment, French secularism (*laïcité*) is confronted with a significant challenge of how to incorporate French Muslims into the existing religious sphere that the State has carefully regulated. This legally defined religious area includes Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism, as well as their established legal structures inside the secular State (Arslan & Açımuş, 2021, p. 148)

As Muslims wish for equal rights and the French population fears terrorism, the French government has attempted to better incorporate Islam into its all-religious regulatory structure. The Constitution and the 1905 statute that enforces the neutrality principle as a milestone of French secularism, lays the foundations for this plan in concept. Following the state of emergency proclaimed in response to the terrorist attacks on Charlie Hebdo and Bataclan in 2015, and the Senate Report on Muslim groups and worship in 2016, President Macron presented the highly controversial ‘Projet de Réforme’ in 2017. This reform project was driven by a pressing need to address the security issues highlighted by terrorist acts and to limit foreign influence on Muslim groups. It presented numerous ambiguous ideas, including changing the 1905 statute, certifying worship venues that satisfy specific legal standards, publicly subsidizing worship associations, and boosting financial transparency monitoring of all religious institutions. Even before it was fully revealed, the Project sparked a public debate: secularists were concerned that by amending the 1905 law, the State would abandon its secularist principles and shift toward a more multiculturalist direction; and religious organizations were concerned that the State would increase its control over their activities (Arslan & Açımuş, 2021, p. 148).

A series of events, ranging from the legalization of homosexual marriage to the most recent wave of Islamist terror strikes, has many conservative voters looking to the country's Christian tradition as a safeguard (Meichtry & Rocca, 2017). This poses an actual and theoretical challenge to France's audience: political policies and discourses rarely stay constant, especially when dealing with the same problem, in this case, Islam in France. As a result, it is critical to recognize and comprehend what is different this time around to comprehend how religion plays a vital part in French politics (Downing , 2002). This was well used by the France political elite which used this situation to create stories about other, in this case Muslim community, as a threat to secularism.

Some political commentators and politicians are using *laïcité*, notably against Muslims, to force them to remove prominent symbols of their faith, causing the Muslim community existential anxiety. This contradicts the notion of secularism as defined in the country's constitution - the legal definition requires religious neutrality of the state, not people, as long as they do not disrupt public order. In modern France, the interpretation of secularism that all citizens of the republic should be the same is impossible to realize - the difference between communities and people is evident in society (Beswick , 2020).

The novelty of this point in time is that, contrary to the dis-integration myth (that secularism is threatened from below), recent policies implemented by President Macron and supported by those like Le Pen who is running against him, are increased regulation of Islam and non-governmental organizations, which threatens secularism and *laïcité* from above. This is because a state that takes pride in its independence from religion and religious issues is more prepared to jeopardize its neutrality to become engaged in the affairs of religious organizations, particularly Islam (Downing , 2002). Many people, from far-right xenophobes to left-wing defenders of Enlightenment principles, are concerned that new religious groups are teaching anti-French beliefs and advocating a violent interpretation of Islam. Many French are concerned that minority populations will not completely integrate or conform to a Republican, secular ideal. Public institutions must once again ensure individuals integrate into a secular society, in an uncanny echo of the colonial mission *civilisatrice*, or civilizing mission—the theoretical reason for France's violent and unresolved history (Piser, 2018).

The universal promise of equality has been limited in scope. The "republican model" of unity-in-difference conceals an ethnic-nationalist commitment to racial and social uniformity. Instead of enforcing state neutrality in religious matters, *laïcité* has become a method of legitimizing state discrimination against those who do not conform to the "republican model" – a model that denies the possibility of investigating discrimination based on attributions of racial, religious, sexual, or other forms of difference. Furthermore, the invocation of free speech applies only to individuals who refrain from criticizing "the republic's principles" (Scott, 2020). Indeed, race and religion are combined in the term "Muslim," which is used to define a community of North and West African heritage whose members were formerly referred to as immigrants and outsiders, or with ethnic designations (e.g. Arabs).

Forming a community, in sociological terms, implies gathering with others because of a sense of belonging or shared common interests. It has the potential to be beneficial to

society. However, the term "separatism" in French has a wholly negative connotation. Historically, the term "separatist" has been applied to attempts in France to organize religious, territorial, or ethnic minorities (Khemilat , 2021).

Many studies have found that unfavorable opinions of Islam and social discrimination towards immigrants in French society alienate some French Muslims and have a role in uprisings. Islam is seen as the greatest threat to the country's secular paradigm in the last century (Alicino , 2016, p. 68).

6. Republic of Turkey

Many scientists believe that Turkey is struggling to find its identity, simply due to its geopolitical location between Europe and the Middle East. Nonetheless, Turkey has pursued a deliberate program of westernization since the establishment of the Republic. Westernization and modernization were synonymous for Atatürk and the Republicans (Dalan, 2008, p. 61)

6.1. Ottoman empire and Islam:

Before Turkey there was the Ottoman Empire, which began as a tiny state formed by a Muslim Turkish tribe and ultimately expanded into a multiethnic, multireligious entity stretching from Vienna to Yemen. The empire lasted approximately six centuries, from the early fourteenth century to the end of World War I in the early twentieth century. The Ottoman Empire was a Sunni Islamic state and Sharia (Islamic law) formed the foundation of its legal system (Akyol, 2019).

Islam was a legal system that aimed to organize all aspects of life, including political, social, civic, and cultural aspects (Oğuz, 2012, p. 192). When Turkey won the War of Liberation (1919-1922), its primary military leader, Mustafa Kemal, became a national hero. A year later, he declared the Turkish Republic and served as its undisputed president until he died in 1938, adopting the surname "Atatürk," or "Father of Turks". According to the Turkish constitution, the term "Turk" refers to all citizens of the Republic of Turkey, without regard to race or religion; ethnic minorities have no official status.

More than 90% of the population is Muslim but Turkey is considered a secular state (Yapp , 2022). Islam was abolished as the official state religion in a 1928 constitutional change, and the state has conflicted with religion on several occasions since then (Yapp , 2022).

6.2. Secularism and Kemalism:

The Atatürk era was characterized by a single-party system ruled by Atatürk's People's Republican Party, or CHP. It was more than just an authoritarian administration that outlawed opposition; it was also a revolutionary party that sought to reshape society. Atatürk's ideological framework, dubbed "Kemalism," was founded on two pillars: Turkish nationalism and secularism (Akyol, 2019).

In contrast to the multiethnic Ottoman Empire, nationalism envisioned a nation-state founded for Turks. Secularism suggested that Islam would be prohibited from playing any important public role in this new, contemporary, Western-oriented nation. The caliphate, which had symbolized Muslim political authority since the Prophet Mohammed, was abolished in 1924, a year after the republic was declared. The "Ministry of Sharia" was abolished, and Sufi groups and traditional madrasas (Islamic schools) were prohibited, leaving little evidence of organized religion in existence, while mosques were placed under government supervision. For government officials, the Ottoman fez was outlawed, and the European-style brimmed hat was mandated by law. The Islamic calendar was replaced by the Gregorian calendar, and the Arabic alphabet was replaced by the Latin alphabet. The idea was to get everyone to embrace "contemporary" (i.e. Western) culture. Finally, the principle of "laiklik" (taken from the French "laïcité") was embedded in the Turkish Constitution as a basic element of the Turkish Republic, among other "Atatürk principles." (Akyol, 2019). Religion in these changes was seen as an obstacle to progress, the inability to modernize. (Akyol, 2019)

Between Kemalism's two fundamental pillars, nationalism and secularism, the first one has acquired virtually universal support in Turkish society—with the significant exception of the Kurds, Turkey's biggest ethnic minority. It is an assimilationist nationalism in which all ethnic groups in the country are referred to as "Turks," except legally recognized non-Muslim minorities such as Christians and Jews, even though not all of those ethnic groups self-identify as Turks. However, the impact of Kemalist secularism has been

relatively restricted. Certain segments of Turkish society, mostly the urban people, welcomed the Kemalist cultural revolution and self-appointed themselves as to its defenders, ensuring the Kemalist revolution's survival generation after generation. The military, as well as other critical sections of Turkey's bureaucracy, such as the judiciary, became their stronghold (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & VanAntwerpen, 2011, p. 178). Kemalist secularism was difficult to accept for any devout Muslim who was committed to practicing his religion and manifesting it in society. It was associated with humiliating prohibitions as well as ongoing harassment of Islamic communities and their opinion leaders. As a result, destroying the secular system and installing an Islamic government in its place became a sort of utopian ideal for Islamists.

With the removal of Islam as the official state religion from the Constitution there was a distinct separation of state and religion. Loyalty to the country surpassed loyalty to God. Other regulations were gradually enacted, transforming the people's religio-cultural behaviors. These included the adoption of surnames and the prohibition of religious attire in public (Dalan, 2008, p. 59). For 80 years, Kemalism has propagated a nationalist homogenizing narrative based on the national rebuilding of a Turkey detached from its Ottoman heritage and reconstructed according to a secular plan (Ihsan, 2012, p. 5). Detaching the Turkish people from their Ottoman roots, on the other hand, has proven ineffective, and Kemalism has only succeeded in marginalizing and victimizing all ethnic, religious, and political minority groups that did not fit the Kemalists' desired citizens (Ihsan, 2012, p. 5).

More than eight decades of suppression and denial of Ottoman history and society's varied structure allowed a hostile counter-narrative to form.

6.3. [Secularism and AKP](#)

In the late 1990s, Turkey was tested. The spread of religious beliefs and practices followed the establishment of contemporary Turkish culture. Unsurprisingly, the issue of Turkish identity was highlighted, as many Turks already supported Islamic beliefs. The irony was that the Kemalist modernity paradigm was dominant, implying that secularism was deeply rooted in Turkish society (Oğuz, 2012, p. 194). However, in the 1980s, a new threat to Turkish democracy emerged: political Islam, which found its expression in the furthest reaches of both politics and civil life. Two political parties the Welfare and the Virtue Party were the representatives of the political Islam in Turkey, growing number of members

represented the problem for the Turkey (Oğuz, 2012, p. 198). Erdogan, now president of Turkey, was a member of the Welfare Party. After his four-month imprisonment for reading a religious poem, Erdogan established the Justice Development Party (AKP) in 2001 (AK Parti, n.d.).

The AKP's concept of secularism and the division between state and community has gone through three stages which are development, accommodation, and disruption. These are the periods of liberalism from 2002 to 2007, 'soft' Islamization as a result of the close alliance between the Gülen Movement and the AKP (2008–2013); and the de-institutionalization of the state and the creation of Erdoganism as a kind of Islamist autocracy (2013-present). Erdogan was encouraged by his association with the Gülenists. Erdogan was enraged when the Gülenists requested to share greater power with the AKP in the 2011 national elections, and the two allies turned against one other (Yavuz & Öztürk, Turkish secularism and Islam under the reign of Erdogan, 2019, p. 72). During this period Turkey adopted a new macro ideology platform known as neo-Ottomanism. As the Ottoman empire's successor, Turkey must redefine the Ottoman empire's comprehensive spiritual, cultural, and political heritage in order to engage in the transfer of power and influence and to become a prominent participant in the global international players (Tanaskovic, 2015).

6.4. Speeches from Turkish political actors:

Erdogan's speeches are frequently carried live on various media stations on every occasion he attends. His voice may be heard in cafés, households, and government offices around the country. Erdogan's habit is to target individuals that his supporters despise, whether it's the US, European leaders, or the liberal elite. He addresses his supporters as if he is their father, brother, or the man next door. "He's one of us," followers frequently explain and he expresses himself in everyday language, avoiding formalities, just like them (Gali, 2018). While every contemporary Turkish leader has attempted to distance himself from the Ottoman Empire and Islam in order to create a more "western," "secular," and "modern" face for the republic, Erdogan is the first one to openly embrace the Ottoman history and the empire's Islamic roots.

The following section is an excerpt of the speech given by Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the 3rd National Cultural Council (March 3rd 2017):

“We should rediscover and rebuild our national and cultural values, which reflect the native Turkish culture and arts, against cultural alienation and imperialism through a universal perspective.

Culture is not just about a book, music, or architecture but is a lifestyle that includes all these things.... However, we have a difference. We are a very different nation in terms of civilizational and historical past as well as of the state tradition. As the descendants of glorious ancestors who changed the age and opened an era, we have the power, the will and the possibility to build a new and great future for ourselves. Here, we chant ‘great, powerful Turkey’” (Erdoğan, 2017).

His speech expresses his nostalgia for the Ottoman approach in handling cultural and religious variety in this region, which was founded on the concept of mediating between diverse races, civilizations, and religions. Such public comments by the president appear to match very well the sentiments of his supporters, who have been experiencing a type of nostalgic deprivation because of Western, modernist, and Kemalist involvement in the Ottoman past. Erdogan's statements can be seen as an indicator of his Ottoman nostalgia since he is said to be referring to the divergence in the Ottoman Empire's attire code in line with religious variations as part of the Ottoman millet system (Hussein , 2018).

Erdogan's notion of civilization is fundamentally opposed to previous understandings of civilization in Turkish politics. The Kemalist elite considered that the progress of Western civilization, and hence European culture, was primarily dependent on material and scientific growth. This is why Islamists thought that Islam had to be preserved during the Ottoman Empire's demise and the establishment of the Turkish nation-state. According to Kemalist mythology, Turkish ancestry, Islamic faith, and European civilization are the primary components of Turkish national identity. In contrast to the Kemalist approach, Erdogan's definition of civilization is primarily made up of Islamic religion, which surpasses ethnic and material components given to Western and European civilization. In the following excerpt, taken from his speech in Istanbul on March 3, 2017, he emphasizes the ontological necessity of keeping inside the bounds of civilization, that is, within the confines of the Islamic religion.

Erdogan's view of civilization has a significant religious-cultural bias toward Islam, and he attempts to separate Turkey's belt of civilization from European civilization.

Since 2014, Erdogan has adopted a new pattern in which he uses the dates 2023, 2053, and 2071 in his speeches, referring to historical occurrences that served as key moments in Turkish nation mythology. The year 2023 relates to the 100th anniversary of the Turkish Republic's establishment in 1923, while 2053 refers to the 600 years from the occupation of Constantinople in 1453. Lastly, 2071 is connected with the 1000th anniversary of victory of Seljuk Turks against the Byzantines. To replace the Kemalist, laicist, and militarist narrative with a more neo-Ottoman, Islamist, and conservative one, the AKP leadership has undermined the Kemalist state's celebrations of secular and republican days (Hussein , 2018).

Rather than Turkish nationalism, these commemorations emphasize the nation of Islam and the Ottoman imperial past. The development of alternative national historiography is an attempt to reform Turkish statehood as established by the Kemalist elite, which adopted a secularist and militarist past. Rather than Turkish nationalism, these commemorations emphasize the nation of Islam and the Ottoman imperial past. The development of alternative national historiography is an attempt to reform Turkish statehood as established by the Kemalist elite, which adopted a secularist and militarist past.

Moving on to Ismail Kahraman, a Turkish Parliament member, and AKP Party member who gave a speech during the discussion on revising the Turkish Republic's Constitution. Kahraman was speaking at a gathering of Islamic academics and authors in Istanbul. As the leader of parliament, it is Kahraman's responsibility to design a new Turkish constitution.

“We are a Muslim country and so we should have a religious constitution,”

Lamenting that the name Allah is not mentioned even once in the country's founding charter.

“Secularism would not have a place in a new constitution,” our constitution should not avoid the concept of religious institution, it should discuss religion” (Gopalakrishnan, 2016).

The Turkish constitution has prohibited the establishment of a state religion since the 1920s. According to secularists, this allowed Turkey to be welcomed by the West and is an

unbreakable foundation of national identity. This speech sparked riots in Turkish society and a political debate (Gopalakrishnan, 2016). The most sensitive division in Turkish society is the one between secularism and Islamism. However, once AKP came into power, the balance shifted. Even though this statement was criticized by the opposition, the AK Party distanced itself from this statement. Kahraman later stated that this was his opinion. The same week prime minister Davoutogly stated that secularism will be part of the Constitution. This speech sparked riots and polarization in society. One of the problematic parts of this speech is that he emphasized that Turkey is a Muslim country, and the vast majority of the citizens recognize themselves as part of the Muslim community, however not everyone is a practicing believer, and there are ‘Kemalists’ who strongly believe in secularism. Believers can now consider that constitution must represent their religious identity, while for the secularist this would be a sign that government wants to ‘erase them’. Stating this he influenced every segment of the society.

Amongst the Turkish political elite, there are a lot of speeches regarding Islam, secularism, and Turkish identity. During their speeches, they are very passionate about these topics which as results make a division and insecurity in society.

6.5. Ontological insecurity in the case of Turkey:

Mustafa Kemal pursued secularism in an effort to both Westernize and modernize the country. By rejecting Islam's history, Ataturk built Turkey as a "torn country," a society that was Muslim in faith, tradition, customs, and institutions but with a political elite committed to modernizing, Westernizing, and integrating Turkey into the West (Huntington, 1996, p. 174). Kemalism includes the difficult and unpleasant process of removing a centuries-old culture and replacing it with a completely new culture brought from another civilization." A third option is to try to integrate modernization with the preservation of the society's indigenous culture's basic values, customs, and institutions. Individually, modernization causes feelings of alienation and deprivation as old relationships and social interactions are disrupted, resulting in identity crises to which religion gives a response. (Huntington, 1996, p. 179).

This degradation in Turkey's secular character has contributed to growing internal tensions, rising worries about personal liberties, notably women's rights, and a concerning

deterioration in Turkey's relations with the West. Erdogan's political journey has taken him from Islamist to reformist to Islamist again. Internationally, Erdogan's more Islamist and anti-Western tone has resulted in tighter connections with Hamas and the wider Muslim Brotherhood, as well as a goal of promoting a Turkish brand of Islam to counter Iran and Saudi Arabia's dominance (Zuidema- Blomfield , 2018).

In 2007 Turkey changed the course of its politics. The European Union froze accession talks with Turkey. The political elite decided to change the course of the official state politics. As a result, not only Turkey's historic pro-Western foreign policy, but even Turkish secularism, was under threat. The courts examine secularism legislation, such as the turban (a specific headscarf regarded by the courts as a sign of political Islam) and imamhatip schools (vocational religious schools established to train Muslim religious leaders, which are now providing an alternative track to Turkey's universal secular education system by enrolling and graduating far more students than Turkey requires religious leaders).

In Turkey today, there is no easy way to separate Islam from secularism or vice versa. Islamic markings serve as crucial boundary markers, clarifying what it means to be a Turk. Being Turkish now means being more characterized by Islamic beliefs and rituals. As a result, AK Party is not afraid to use Islam to strengthen the boundaries of Turkish identity (Yavuz & Öztürk , Turkish secularism and Islam under the regin of Erdogan , 2019, p. 2).

The AKP uses religion not just to appeal to conservative people, but also to establish the state's intellectual hegemony. Some state that Islam is utilized as a tool by the AKP administration to reinforce the dominance of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's regime (Yavuz & Öztürk , 2019, p. 7).

The AKP government's aggressive efforts to impose Islamic morality and a corresponding manner of life have deepened Turkish society's deep divisions. Turkey now is more divided than ever before: Islamic vs secular, Turkish versus Kurdish, and Sunni versus Alevi. Fear is the only thing that holds civilization together — fear of each other and fear of the abyss. Erdogan has mastered controlling these fears while solidifying his power (Yavuz H. M., 2019, p. 74). Consequently, Turkey suffers with a damaged Islamo-Turkish identity that is unsatisfied and burdened by a deep sense of hatred. The Republican secular identity has struggled to follow the story. The current identity of Turkish society is fragile since it has been challenged by Kurdish nationalism and has grown fractured, with no indication of progress. Traditionalist Turks find comfort in the imagined glories of Ottoman glory, believing that restoring Ottoman greatness will restore their security (Yavuz M. H., 2020).

Furthermore, various newly made mainstream films and TV shows set in the early and late Ottoman periods have played a pivotal role in reconstructing Islam for the public to comprehend Turks' past and contemporary culture. Both the state as an institution and nationalism as a unified idea of identity are sacralized as religious entities in this new version of Turkish Islam. In addition, the return of Islam in Turkey does not imply the end of secularism, but rather the secularization of Islam for the purposes of culture and memory, notably in reinvigorating the Turks' Ottoman glories (Yavuz H. M., 2019, p. 74).

In his speeches and political campaigns Erdogan always evoke memories on the Ottoman era. But, to comprehend Erdogan's political purpose and outlook, we must first define which Ottoman sultan Erdogan aspires to be. Selim I is the empire's ninth sultan. During his reign, the Ottoman Empire expanded from a powerful regional power to a massive worldwide empire. This sultan from half a millennium ago meets Erdogan's demands now. It is a historical example of strongman politics, which resulted in regional conflicts, the slaughter of religious minorities, and the monopolization of world economic resources. In addition to his ambitions to dominate natural gas deposits around Turkey, Erdogan's overseas military actions in Libya, Syria, and Yemen are examples of this. He has targeted Turkey's Shiite population, Kurds, academics, Christians, journalists, women, and leftists at home. Erdogan cultivates his Sunni religion to place Islam at the heart of Turkey's domestic agenda, with church conversions being the most visible current manifestation of this (Mikhail, 2020).

The most obvious way of distancing themselves from Kemalism was turning Hagia Sophia to mosque, after 80-years museum status. This decision divided Turkish society. For many Erdogan followers, Hagia Sophia is more than just a mosque; it is a symbol of Turkey's re-Islamization or a counter-revolution against Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's heritage (Kuru, 2020). This enraged the supporters of Ataturk, which claimed that AKP wants to overthrow Ataturks legacy. For Turkey's already marginalized Christian population, the conversion of Hagia Sophia has multiple significance. Being a non-Muslim in Turkey was always difficult. However, the secular nature of the state has recently weakened, making life even more difficult for Christian residents (Kuru, 2020).

7. Similarities and differences in France and Turkey approach

Turkey's westernization began with military changes, modeled after France, and aided by French experts. Both countries began their nation-building efforts with revolutionary ideologies and single political organizations. After establishing national identities, improving civilian education, and establishing a common language, both countries were able to transition to multi-party systems with more democratic public involvement. However, it appears that both France and Turkey are transitioning from a more leftist cycle with a focus on social concerns to a stronger central authority and more rightist tendencies (Dalan, 2008, p. 62).

Both France and Turkey are now battling to maintain national unity and strengthen their identities. The remarks of political leaders construct a narrative about who is a threat to national unity. Although both nations' constitutions are secular, political elites have begun to use religious connotations in public. Politicians' occasional religious remarks in France, which are largely aimed at calming frightened swing voters who could provide a crucial margin of victory, stand out in a country where many people, particularly on the left, condemn any mention of religion in politics as illegitimate populist manipulation. Similarly, political elite in Turkey uses the same religious connotations to win the hearts and votes of the citizens of Anatolia's hinterland. With the exception of the Kurdish southeast, President Erdogan symbolizes political stability, religious freedom, and more than a decade of economic prosperity for the majority of Turkey's rural voters (Kabouche , 2018).

While the similarities are significant and many, the differences are less in number, but not in importance. While France is attempting with its constitution to avoid religious remarks and symbols, it has proved to be more sensitive towards religious matters. If that is an attempt of politicians gaining more votes or not, is debatable, but through the speeches, one can notice caution with words especially when addressing a specific religious group. Whereas, in Turkey, Erdogan feels free to characterize, endorse, utilize, and sometimes encourage his favorable religious symbols.

8. Conclusion

Collective identity is already fully established by the time the person discovers it, and it becomes the unseen basis on which his/her identity is based. Even if, from the outside,

every culture is mixed and evolving, for the people of the community that it describes, it is a solid and unique entity, the foundation of their collective identity. As a result, every change that impacts culture is perceived as an attack on their own integrity (Todorov, 2010, p. 57).

In France, as it was presented in the previous section politicians in their speeches have the religious conations, emphasizing ‘otherness’ and constant reminding of terrorist attacks, evoke trauma among the citizens. Increased religious plurality, fear of religious terrorism, the need for minority identity recognition, and, most importantly, the urgent process of immigration are all leaving their imprint on today's legal systems. These tendencies, particularly in France, are leading to religion being one of the key criteria that, for example, divide "old" from "new" immigrants. This is especially true of one religion: Islam. It is not by chance that many immigrants who were previously identified as "Arabs" are now referred to as "Muslims," demonstrating that Islam has become one of the most popular modes of thinking about migration and a symbol of the challenges confronting the French legal order within changing religious geography (Alicino , 2016, p. 65).

As already mentioned the strict separation of religious views and public life, known as *laïcité*, is a foundation of French national identity. Narratives created through political debates and speeches by the political elite create a depiction of a free French public space that is under attack from Islamists seeking to impose illiberal beliefs on others, notably women and girls. The specific threat is presented by global and national Islamist movements aiming to impose their values on an unwilling French population. This narrative suggests that resorting to *laïcité*, civic secularism that predicts Islamists' illiberal demands, is essential to protect against this situation (Lizzote , 2019, p. 1).

The religious notion in the speeches and using secularism to foster anti-Muslim sentiment results in the polarization of French society. Citizens can speak French or live in the country for three generations; however, they can still be stigmatized as ‘other’. Consequently, in France there is a rise in right-wing parties and extremist, such as ‘Generation Identity’; (generation Identitaire). Over the past ten years this group has re-shaped far right activism targeting immigrants as a threat to the French society.

Instead of preserving the secular constitution, the government has publicly endorsed a shift toward a Sunni identity for Turkey and has used a variety of means to spread the view among the wider society that to be Turkish is to be Sunni Muslim. This degradation in Turkey's secular character has contributed to growing internal tensions, rising worries about

personal liberties, particularly women's rights, and a concerning deterioration in Turkey's relations with the West.

Erdogan's political journey has taken him from Islamist to reformist to Islamist again. Internationally, Erdogan's more Islamist and anti-Western tone has resulted in tighter connections with Hamas and the wider Muslim Brotherhood, as well as a goal of promoting a Turkish brand of Islam to counter Iran and Saudi Arabia's dominance. The growth of Turkish ultranationalism has contributed to an increase in prejudice and hate speech directed at individuals who do not practice Sunni Islam. This kind of incitement may be found in a range of settings, including education, the workplace, the media, and religious activity, as well as day-to-day administrative activities.

The government's and president's continued affiliation with the Ottoman empire, which has a century-long history of atrocities against Greeks, Assyrians, and Armenians, who are minorities in the country today, puts them even more vulnerable position.

The consequences of the religious involvement into the politics can be devastating for the citizen of the country. Emphasizing one religion over the other, or in this case creating narratives of threat can end up not only in crisis of identity, but in the deep division of the society which can end in violence clashes.

8.1. Recommendations:

It would be interesting for future studies to draw a connection between secularism and populism in both countries especially during future elections, as well as religious remarks in the political arena. Additionally, for a study regarding identity and religion, it would be beneficial for the researcher to conduct interviews with the citizens and explore their side of the story, something that I, sadly did not have access to.

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