

Negotiating Europe: the politics of religion and the prospects for Turkish accession

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If future relations between the Middle East/Islamic world and the west are to be based on a solid foundation, then the fate of the still ongoing Turkish experience may be not just influential, but decisive.¹

Introduction

This article examines the cultural basis of European opposition to Turkish accession to the European Union (EU). Most observers depict the cultural and religious dimensions of the European debate over Turkish accession as a disagreement between those who see Europe as a Christian ‘club’ and those open to a more religiously pluralistic European identity. However, polls suggest that cultural and religiously based doubts about Turkish accession resonate with a much larger proportion of the European population than those who publicly defend the idea of an exclusivist ‘Christian’ Europe. Both secularists *and* Christian exclusivists (‘traditionalists’) express hesitations about Turkish membership:

Opposition to Turkish accession is coming from secular as well as religious quarters in Europe. Some nonreligious Europeans worry that bringing a large Muslim country into the EU could endanger the Continent’s tradition of gender equality and tolerance of alternative lifestyles, for instance. For traditionalists, Turkish accession threatens the very idea of Europe as a Christian civilization.²

Prevailing explanations of European resistance to Turkish accession that rely upon the assumption that opposition is based exclusively upon support for a ‘Christian Europe’ miss a crucial part of the story concerning the cultural and religious basis of this resistance. Cultural and religious opposition to Turkey’s accession is not only about defending the idea of a Christian Europe, though this is a significant consideration. The prospect of Turkish accession has stirred up a more fundamental controversy about European identity and the politics of religion within Europe itself. Turkey has turned toward a different trajectory of secularism that conforms to neither Kemalism (a Turkish version of laicism), nor to the two prevailing trajectories

¹ Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), note 6, p. 7 (emphasis in original).

² Luis Lugo, Director, Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, ‘Does ‘Muslim’ Turkey Belong in “Christian” Europe?’ (Discussion, *The National Press Club*, Washington, DC, 13 January 2005.)

of secularism in Europe: laicism and what I call 'Judeo-Christian' secularism.³ This form of secularism threatens not only the Kemalist establishment in Turkey but European secularists as well. As a result, Turkey's potential accession to the EU has propelled the controversial question of what it means to be both 'secular' and 'European' into the public spotlight. There is a sense of urgency in Europe that the religion/politics question and its relationship to an ever-evolving European identity be resolved before Turkey is admitted to the EU.⁴ The Turkish case is therefore controversial in cultural and religious terms not only because it involves the potential accession of a Muslim-majority country to an arguably, at least historically, Christian Europe, though this is important, but also and more fundamentally because it brings up long dormant dilemmas *internal* to Europe regarding how religion and politics relate to each other.⁵ Turkey's candidacy destabilises the European secular social imaginary.⁶ It involves unfinished business in the social fabric of the core EU members, including what it means to be 'secular' (both in Europe and in Turkey) and how religion, including but not limited to Islam, should relate to European public life. This cultural sticking point is what the debate over Turkish accession is really about, and it is for this reason that it is culturally – in addition to economically and politically – so contentious.

This argument suggests that even if economic and political obstacles to Turkish accession are lifted, even if Turkey is deemed to be in unambiguous conformity with the Copenhagen criteria, European opposition to Turkish membership will persist. This is due to nagging discord within Europe on two counts: (1) how religion relates to European identity; and (2) whether alternative trajectories of secularism such as the current Turkish one which moves *away* from European-inspired Kemalism toward a different variety of secularism can ever be considered fully 'European'. This is a more complex story than the assertion that European cultural and religiously based opposition to Turkey is based on the defence of the concept of a 'Christian' Europe. It also explains why many laicists in Europe have expressed ambivalence and, in some cases, opposition to Turkish accession despite their discomfort with the idea of a 'Christian' Europe.

To complicate matters, Turkish accession to the EU has become the symbolic carrier of domestic European angst about religion, and particularly Islam, and politics.⁷ The powerful foundations and formulations of secularism that structure the debate in Europe and in (Kemalist) Turkey make it difficult to cope with what is often

³ See Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, 'The Political Authority of Secularism in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations*, 10:2 (June 2004): pp. 242–52; and Hurd, 'The International Politics of Secularism: US Foreign Policy and the Islamic Republic of Iran', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 29:2 (2004), p. 116.

⁴ On how the notion of 'Europe' has become embedded in key state and national identities thereby contributing to the establishment of a security community, see Ole Wæver, 'Insecurity, Security and Asecurity in the West European Non-war Community', in Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 69–160. Wæver argues that 'the regional identity 'Europe' clearly has become more important and today plays a key role in self conceptions. Its meaning is not settled once and for all, but of the concepts of state and nation that compete, most are thoroughly Europeanized' (p. 98).

⁵ As Bahar Rumelili argues, 'the EU is implicated in an identity interaction with its Turkish 'other' that makes the European identity more insecure'. Rumelili, 'Constructing Identity and Relating to Difference: Understanding the EU's Mode of Differentiation', *Review of International Studies*, 30 (2004), p. 45.

⁶ Nilüfer Göle, 'Islam in Public', *Public Culture*, 14:1 (2002), p. 183.

⁷ I am grateful to Karen Alter for this phrase.

described as an 'Islamic challenge' to Europe, both internally and externally. Turkish candidacy for the EU makes these stumbling blocks in the European secularist imaginary explicit. It makes it evident that European approaches to religion and to religious minorities within its own borders are not set in stone but must be constantly renegotiated, and that expanding Europe to include Turkey will force another renegotiation of those standards by introducing new forms of secularism on the European horizon.

The concluding section of the article outlines the implications of this argument for IR theory. I argue that religious and secularist beliefs contribute to the creation of national identities and that these identities shape foreign policy and IR in significant ways. This connection between secularism and religion, national identity and international politics is rarely investigated. This article seeks to open up this field of inquiry in IR.

Europe–Turkey relations: 1963–2005

Although Turkey and the EU signed an Association Agreement in 1963, it was not until 1987 that Turkey applied for membership in the EU. In 1989, the European Commission rejected the application on the grounds that the Turkish economy was not sufficiently developed, that Turkish democracy failed to adequately guarantee political and civil rights, that unemployment in Turkey would pose a threat to the EU markets and because the dispute with Greece over Cyprus remained unresolved.⁸ Recognising their common political, economic and security interests, however, the EU and Turkey reached a Customs Agreement that went into effect on 31 December 1995, granting the Turks 'closer economic ties with the EU than any other nonmember country at the time, with the exception of Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland, and opened the Turkish market of 65 million customers to EU companies'.⁹ Relations cooled following the Commission's decision not to grant candidate status to Turkey at the Luxembourg summit in 1997. Angered by this decision, the Turks announced that they would no longer consider the EU as a third-party mediator in Greek–Turkish affairs and in the Cyprus controversy, vetoed the European allies' ESDI plans on agenda-setting in NATO and opted not to purchase military hardware from EU states.¹⁰

Following a thaw in EU–Turkish relations precipitated by Greek–Turkish cooperation following the Turkish earthquake in 1999, in December of that year the European Council in Helsinki reversed course, inviting Turkey to join the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC) candidates with the assumption that Turkey would join the EU if it met the same criteria as the other candidates.¹¹ This

⁸ David M. Wood and Birol A. Yesilada, *The Emerging European Union*, 3rd edn. (New York: Pearson Longman, 2004), p. 124, citing European Commission, *Commission Opinion on Turkey's Request for Accession to the Community*, Sec. (89) 2290 final (Brussels: Official Publications of the European Communities, 18 December 1989).

⁹ Wood and Yesilada, *The Emerging European Union*, p. 124.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

¹¹ Philip Gordon and Omer Taspinar, 'Turkey's European Quest: The EU's Decision on Turkish Accession', (*US–Europe Analysis Series*, Center on the United States and Europe, The Brookings Institution, September 2004).

landmark decision resulted from a compromise in which the EU agreed to lift the Greek veto, and in return Turkey agreed to adapt to the *acquis communautaire* and work cooperatively to solve disputes with Greece.¹² The EU agreed to review Turkish progress by the end of 2004. After 1999, successive Turkish governments began to implement democratising reforms in the areas of civil–military relations, human rights, cultural rights, judicial procedure, economic policy and Cyprus policy.¹³ Although the EU did not name Turkey as part of the official strategy of expansion until 2010 at the Nice summit in December 2000, much to the Turks’ consternation, in February of 2001 the European Council did declare an Accession Partnership with Turkey. In response, the Turkish government prepared its National Program for the Adoption of EU membership in March of that same year.¹⁴ Relations soured again in Copenhagen in 2002 when the European Commission refused to set up a timetable for starting membership accession talks, outlining instead the political and economic conditions that Ankara would have to satisfy before talks would begin.¹⁵ In a reflection of Turkish progress toward satisfying the Copenhagen criteria, however, in December 2004 the EU extended a conditional start-date of October 2005 for the talks.

On 4 October 2005, Turkey officially opened negotiations with the EU on the thirty-one chapters of the *acquis*. As Gordon and Taspinar have observed, however, ‘even if the Council does agree to start accession talks, that process will be long, and would only be completed if and when all EU members – and the EU parliament – were ready to take the revolutionary step of welcoming Turkey into the EU’.¹⁶ To accede to the EU, Turkey will need to be in formal compliance with the ‘Copenhagen criteria’, adopted at the EU summit in Denmark in June 1993, which stipulate that member countries must: (1) be a stable democracy, respecting human rights, the rule of law and the protection of minorities; (2) have a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with the competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; (3) adopt the common rules, standards and policies that make up the body of EU law (*acquis communautaire*).¹⁷ Negotiations are expected to take at least a decade to complete; for budgetary reasons 2014 is the earliest date that Turkey could join the EU, and some analysts suggest that it could be as late as 2020.¹⁸

Although a majority of Turks support joining Europe,¹⁹ there is widespread disagreement in Europe itself regarding the benefits and drawbacks of Turkish

¹² Wood and Yesilada, p. 125. Hasan Kösebalaban attributes this about-face on the part of the Europeans to the rise of social democratic governments in Europe, and particularly in Germany. Hasan Kösebalaban, ‘Turkey’s EU Membership: A Clash of Security Cultures’, *Middle East Policy*, 9:2 (2002), pp. 136–7.

¹³ Gordon and Taspinar, ‘Turkey’s European Quest’, pp. 2–4. On these reforms see also Michael Emerson, ‘Has Turkey Fulfilled the Copenhagen Political Criteria?’, *Centre for European Policy Studies*, Brief no. 48 (April 2004).

¹⁴ Kösebalaban, ‘Turkey’s EU Membership: A Clash of Security Cultures’, p. 137.

¹⁵ Phillips, ‘Turkey’s Dreams of Accession’, p. 94.

¹⁶ Gordon and Taspinar, ‘Turkey’s European Quest’, p. 4.

¹⁷ William Chislett, ‘Turkey’s Membership in the European Union: A Rose or a Thorn?’ Real Institute Elcano de Estudios Internacionales y Estratégicos, (<http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documentos/imprimir/101imp.asp>) (accessed 16 June 2004).

¹⁸ On this process see Erkan Erdogdu, ‘Turkey and Europe: Undivided but not United’, *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 6:2 (2002).

¹⁹ For survey results see Kösebalaban, ‘Turkey’s EU Membership: A Clash of Security Cultures’, p. 138.

accession.²⁰ In both France and Germany, for example, polls taken in February 2004 suggest that nearly 60 per cent of the population opposes Turkish membership in the EU.²¹ ‘Turco-skeptics’ cite a host of reasons for their opposition. Economic concerns are paramount, including fear of a reallocation of scarce resources to Anatolia that would strain EU structural funds, concerns about Turkey’s ability to successfully adapt to European common policies, including the common agricultural policy (CAP)²² and the social market economic model, fear of unwanted immigration of Turks to Europe in search of jobs, and other demographic implications of admitting Turkey – whose population exceeds the populations of all ten of the new states admitted to the EU in 2004 combined.²³

A second line of oppositional arguments cites Turkish domestic political shortcomings including lack of protection of minority rights, limited freedom of expression, including freedom of religion, the constrained independence of the judiciary, problematic civil–military relations and the failure to come to terms with the Armenian genocide in the early twentieth century.²⁴ Turkish relations with the ‘near abroad’, including Turkish policy in Cyprus (depicted as an illegal occupation of EU territory) are a subset of these concerns, as is the issue of how the future borders of Europe would be patrolled should they extend into Asia Minor.

A third category of concern involves the geopolitical wisdom of further EU expansion, in particular in an era when a significant proportion of the population in France – one of the two founding nations of the EU – is questioning the viability of the European project.²⁵ Some argue that if Turkey is admitted, a long list of central Asian states such as Georgia, Armenia, Moldavia, Ukraine, Belarus and perhaps Russia will qualify for consideration for EU membership. Finally, Gordon and Taspinar observe that ‘many Europeans worry about taking in a country that is

²⁰ On disagreements within the European Parliament concerning Turkish accession see Senem Aykin, ‘Views on Turkish Accession from the European Parliament’, Center for European Policy Studies *Turkey in Europe Monitor*, issue 4 (April 2004); and Nathalie Tocci, ‘Turkey and the European Union: Preparing for the December 2004 European Council’, Working Paper, ‘Brainstorming: Developments in EU-Turkey Relations’, Mediterranean Programme Workshop, Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies, European University Institute (7 May 2004).

²¹ Gordon and Taspinar, ‘Turkey’s European Quest’, p. 4. See also Daniel Dombey and Vincent Boland, ‘Brussels says “Yes” to Turkish entry talks’, *The Financial Times*, 7 October 2004, p. 2. *Eurobarometer* survey number 56 suggested that 34 per cent of the EU 15 public supports Turkish membership and 46 per cent opposes it (20 per cent had no opinion). Cited in Wood and Yesilada, *The Emerging European Union*, p. 123.

²² The argument is that the EU could not absorb Turkey’s massive agricultural production into its subsidy programme, which places limits on agricultural outputs to guard against overproduction.

²³ See Ziya Önis, ‘Domestic Politics, International Norms and Challenges to the State: Turkey–EU Relations in the Post-Helsinki Era’, *Turkish Studies*, 4 (2003) and Önis, ‘Political Islam at the Crossroads: From Hegemony to Co-existence’, *Contemporary Politics*, 7 (2001), pp. 281–98.

²⁴ On the Greek Orthodox minority and obstacles to religious freedom in Turkey see Elizabeth H. Prodromou, ‘Turkey between Secularism and Fundamentalism?: The “Muslimhood Model” and the Greek Orthodox Minority’, *The Brandywine Review of Faith and International Affairs*, 3:1 (2005), pp. 11–22.

²⁵ See the debate surrounding the French referendum of 29 May 2005 on the European Constitution.

geographically largely outside Europe²⁶ and situated in a region plagued with conflict, instability, and terrorism'.²⁷

Fourth, critics cite procedural issues within the EU, including governance issues, as a reason to reject Turkey's candidature. According to this argument, if admitted, Turkey would exercise an inordinate amount of voting weight in the EU (particularly the European Council and the European Parliament) due to the structure of the new Constitution, in which political representation and voting weight in EU institutions is determined by population.²⁸ Other critics object to how negotiations by European leaders on the Turkish issue have been conducted, accusing the former of acting undemocratically and without transparency in decision-making procedures involving Turkish candidacy.²⁹

Though each of these factors is significant in its own right, European resistance to Turkish accession is rooted both differently and more deeply than is suggested by an exclusive focus on economic and political considerations within the EU or domestic politics within Turkey. In 2002, former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing observed that Turkey was 'not a European country' and that admitting Turkey to the EU would mean 'the end of Europe'.³⁰ Former West German chancellor and Social Democratic party (SPD) leader Helmut Schmidt suggested that Turkey should be excluded from the EU due to its unsuitable civilisation,³¹ and that by opening the door to EU admission for other Muslim nations Turkey's accession could result 'in the political union degenerating into nothing more than a free trade community'.³² In September 2004, EU internal market chief Frederik (Frits) Bolkestein publicly stated that, 'the American Islam expert Bernard Lewis has said that Europe will be Islamic at the end of this century. I do not know if this is right, or whether it will be at that speed, but if he is right, the liberation of Vienna in 1683 would have been in vain'.³³ Fears of Turkey based on its 'non-European' cultural identity circulate among the population as well. As one reader of *The Economist* wrote in a letter to the Editor in 2002, 'Sir, Turkey clearly does not belong in Europe. Indeed, no Muslim country

²⁶ Of course the definition of 'Europe' is itself at stake in this debate. As Rumelili observes, 'Europe is merely a geographical construct, with no natural or pre-given boundaries; the geographical parameters of Europe have not only shifted throughout the centuries but also within the short history of the European "community" as well'. Rumelili, 'Constructing Identity and Relating to Difference', pp. 39–40.

²⁷ Gordon and Taspinar, 'Turkey's European Quest', p. 5. On the historical definition of 'Europe' see J. G. A. Pocock, 'What do we mean by Europe?', *Wilson Quarterly*, 21:1 (1997). Pocock argues that contemporary Europe 'is a set of arrangements designed to ensure that peoples will not again define themselves as states, and will surrender both the power to make war and the power to control the movements of market forces'.

²⁸ Gordon and Taspinar, 'Turkey's European Quest', pp. 4–5.

²⁹ Corrado Pirzio-Biroli, Head of the Cabinet of former EU Commissioner Franz Fischler, 'Does "Muslim" Turkey Belong in "Christian" Europe?' (Discussion, *The National Press Club*, Washington, DC, 13 January 2005).

³⁰ Interview with *Le Monde*, 8 November 2002. Echoing the original language of the Treaty of Rome, the Maastricht Treaty prescribes that 'any European State may apply to become a Member of the Union'. Article 0 under the Final Provisions (Title VII) of the Maastricht Treaty (7 February 1992).

³¹ Kösebalaban, 'Turkey's EU Membership: A Clash of Security Cultures', p. 146, note 18, citing Helmut Schmidt, *Die Selbstbehauptung Europas, Perspektiven für das 21. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 2000).

³² Cited in Michael S. Teitelbaum and Philip L. Martin, 'Is Turkey Ready for Europe?' *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2003), p. 98.

³³ Cited in Bruno Waterfield, 'Bolkestein: EU faces 'implosion risk over Turkey'', EUPolitix.com, (<http://www.eupolitix.com/EN/News/200409/0c501627-c886-4fc1-95c2-e49c1945898a.htm>) (published 7 September 2004; accessed 16 May 2005).

does. The issue is not one of Turkish reforms failing to meet EU standards but of an incompatible and primitive culture serving as a Trojan horse for the rest of Islam's impoverished masses.³⁴ Journalist Diane Wolff has observed that, 'opposition to Turkey's entry into the EU is based on the fear that Muslims do not want to be part of Europe but to dominate it'.³⁵

These anxieties surrounding Turkish accession have been aggravated by heightened emotions in Europe following a series of recent episodes touching upon politics, religion, violence and the challenges of pluralism in the context of postcoloniality, including the debate over God in the preamble of the EU Constitution (it was not included), the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, the dispute in France regarding the veil and the passage of the anti-headscarf law in 2004, the terrorist attacks of 3/11 in Madrid, the failure of the French state and society to successfully integrate poor and marginalised citizens, many descended from immigrant families from former French colonies, as evidenced by the violence in France in late 2005,³⁶ and the controversy surrounding the publication of cartoons perceived as offensive to Muslims in several European newspapers in early 2006.

Circulating within this charged environment, it is tempting to ascribe culturally and religiously based hesitations about Turkish accession to support for a 'Christian' Europe in the face of a potential 'threat' from a Muslim-majority state or civilisation. However, like the violence in the French *cités*,³⁷ the story is more complex than is suggested by this 'clash of civilisations' framework. Cultural and religious opposition to Turkey is not simply about defending the idea of a Christian Europe from an outside threat. This opposition is the cultural and political manifestation of the unsettled nature of the relation between religion, politics and European identity. It attests to the presence of unresolved issues concerning the politics of religion *within* Europe itself. By challenging prevailing notions of what it means to be 'secular' and 'European', Turkey's candidacy propels a series of difficult questions into the public spotlight and contributes to a sense of urgency among Europeans that they be settled before Turkey is admitted to the Union. The contestation and refiguration of dominant forms of European secularism – both inside and outside Europe – is at the heart of the debate over Turkish accession.

The next two sections fill in the content of this 'domestic' cultural opposition to Turkish accession. I do so by charting the influence of two competing discourses in Europe on the subject of religion and politics – Judeo-Christian secularism and laicism – upon the debate over Turkish accession to the EU. Drawing on Bahar Rumelili's recent argument in this Journal concerning two different dimensions of European identity – exclusive and inclusive – I explain how these two trajectories of

³⁴ Karl Kettler, Letter to the Editor, *The Economist*, 21 December 2002, p. 12.

³⁵ Diane Wolff, 'Encounter with Islam', *Orlando Sentinel*, 13 February 2005).

³⁶ On the postcolonial cultural and historical context of the recent events in France see Paul Silverstein and Chantal Tetreault, 'Urban Violence in France', *Middle East Report Online*, November 2005: http://www.merip.org/mero/interventions/silverstein_tetreault_interv.htm (accessed 28 November 2005) and on Muslims in Europe more generally see the special issue on the subject of *Hagar: Studies in Culture, Polity and Identities*, 6:1 (2005).

³⁷ As Silverstein and Tetreault argue, 'the rage expressed by young men from the *cités* does not spring from anti-imperialist Arab nationalism or some sort of anti-Western jihadism . . . but rather from lifetimes of rampant unemployment, school failure, police harassment and everyday discrimination that tends to treat the youths as the *racaille* of Sarkozy's insult – regardless of race, ethnicity or religion'. *Ibid.*

secularism have conditioned Europe–Turkey relations.³⁸ I conclude that only when Europe acknowledges the historical particularism of its own forms of secularisation, as well as the possibility of legitimate alternatives to them, will Turkish integration into the EU be successful. The challenge to Kemalism, a Turkish form of secularism that shares the laicist approach to religion and politics, is not a ‘religious’ threat to ‘secular’ democracy that should be suppressed at almost any cost, as laicists argue. It is also not a retreat to archaic Muslim forms of political order, as Judeo–Christian secularists suggest. It is an alternative trajectory of secularisation that is part of a logical protest against the Kemalist attempt to monopolise what would otherwise be an ongoing, public debate over what it means to be a ‘secular’ Muslim-majority state. This ‘third way’ of secularism is an attempt to legitimate Turkish public order as both modern and Ottoman, as both secular and Islamic, thereby distinguishing itself from *both* Kemalism and the forms of secularism that emerged within Latin Christendom. This suggests that it is only when the EU redefines itself such that the inclusion of Turkey no longer threatens both exclusivist and inclusivist dimensions of the cultural and religious foundations of *European* identity will full Turkish integration become a possibility.

Judeo–Christian secularism and Turkish accession

Charles Taylor defines a social imaginary as ‘the ways in which people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations’.³⁹ Laicism and Judeo–Christian secularism are important components of the European social imaginary. Together with the economic and political factors discussed above, these two strands of secularist political discourse contribute in significant ways to a climate of scepticism in Europe regarding Turkish accession.

Building on Alev Çinar’s definition, I approach secularism as a series of interlinked political projects that continually seek to ‘transform and reinstitute a sociopolitical order on the basis of a set of constitutive norms and principles’.⁴⁰

³⁸ As Lynch has shown in her study of attitudes to religious pluralism in theological discourse, there are many subtle variations in and alternatives to the categories ‘exclusivism’ and ‘inclusivism.’ She describes four such attitudes: exclusivism (my belief is superior and the only truth); inclusivism (my belief is right but yours may contain partial truths); pluralism (truth is multiple, other beliefs are equal to my own); and syncretism (it is possible and inevitable to merge aspects of different belief systems). Applying this framework to my argument, Judeo-Christian secularist approaches to European identity would be categorised as exclusivist, while their laicist counterparts would be generally inclusivist, with an occasional sprinkling of pluralism and syncretism. Cecelia Lynch, ‘Dogma, Praxis, and Religious Perspectives on Multiculturalism’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 29:3 (2000), pp. 741–59.

³⁹ Charles Taylor, ‘Modern Social Imaginaries’, *Public Culture*, 14:1 (2002), p. 106.

⁴⁰ Alev Çinar, *Modernity, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), p. 9. Secularist ideologies also can be situated in what Halliday has described as a ‘triple, explanatory context’: (1) socialisation, or why and how particular ideas are transmitted and adjusted over time and by different groups of leaders; (2) comparison, looking at how ideas in one setting are similar to and/or differ from those in another set of circumstances; and (3) historical context, examining the social and historical sources and appeals of particular sets of beliefs. Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 227–8.

Judeo-Christian secularism, then, is a form of political authority and a political project in which Judeo-Christian religion and modern secular politics commingle in a particular way, each strengthening the other. Secularisation, in this view, is the realisation of a Western religious tradition. Religion is part of the moral basis of Western civilisation.⁴¹ A significant implication of this authoritative discourse is that the secularist separation of religion from politics, and the democratic settlement of which it is a part, is perceived as a unique Western achievement that is superior to its non-Western rivals.⁴² If Judeo-Christianity is the foundation of secular democracy, and the separation of church and state is a unique achievement that evolved out of Christianity, then the potential for secularisation is tied to a particular cultural identity, civilisational history and geographic location.⁴³ Civilisational differences in the designation of the 'secular' and the 'religious' are fixed rather than fleeting. They cannot be transcended. This exclusivist approach to the cultural boundaries of democracy is the hallmark of Judeo-Christian secularism.⁴⁴

Judeo-Christian secularism has significant implications for the debate over Turkish accession. In *Vers un Islam européen*, for example, Olivier Roy argues that, 'Turkey will be rejected from the European Union not because the Turkish state fails to satisfy the EU's demands to democratise, which would be a good reason, but because Turkish society is not "European", meaning that it does not share the fund of Christianity that serves as the foundation of laicism itself'.⁴⁵ In other words, Turkey will not be admitted to the EU because although it is secular in some sense, key decision-makers in Europe and the majority of the European public do not believe it to be sufficiently secular in the 'European' sense. This is because Turkey does not share the common cultural and religious ground that serves to anchor European forms of secularism, and, by extension, European democracy. Samuel Huntington expressed this idea succinctly in *The Clash of Civilizations*: 'Where does Europe end? Where Western Christianity ends and Islam and Orthodoxy begins'.⁴⁶ The Judeo-Christian secular formula for 'Europe' relies upon the assumption that full secular democracy can *only* be fully realised in societies possessing a (Judeo)-Christian heritage. In this view, the 'Judeo-Christian foundation' of European secularism and democracy, and of Europe itself, is the only foundation possible. A 2005 BBC poll in the UK confirmed the popular resonance of the connection between 'Europe' and Christianity. The poll found that nearly 75 per cent of respondents believed the UK should retain Christian values – including including 69 per cent of Jews, and nearly 50 per cent of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. Even among those

⁴¹ Charles Taylor, 'Walls of Separation: A Metaphor Which Has Outlived its Time', Keynote Address, Conference on Theology, Faith & Politics, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL (13 May 2005).

⁴² Hurd, 'The Political Authority of Secularism in International Relations', p. 247.

⁴³ See, for example, Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). For a critique see Adam Sabra, 'What is Wrong with "What went Wrong"?' , *Middle East Report Online*, August 2003: (http://www.merip.org/mero/interventions/sabra_interv.html) (accessed 16 May 2005).

⁴⁴ On the cultural boundaries of democracy see Alfred Stepan, 'The World's Religious Systems and Democracy: Crafting the "Twin Tolerations"', *Journal of Democracy*, 11 (October 2000), pp. 37–57.

⁴⁵ 'On rejettera la candidature turque à l'Union européenne moins parce que l'Etat turc ne satisfait pas les exigences démocratiques, ce qui serait une bonne raison, que parce que la société turque n'est pas (européenne), c'est-à-dire ne partage pas le fonds de christianisme qui fonde sa laïcité même'. Olivier Roy, *Vers un Islam européen* (Paris: Editions Esprit, 1999), p. 10 (translation mine).

⁴⁶ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 158.

individuals who claimed to have no faith, 44 per cent agreed that the UK should retain a 'Christian ethos'.⁴⁷

Turkish EU candidacy consolidates these tacit and sometimes conflicting assumptions regarding Christian values and Christian heritage and their relevance to European identity and propels them into the public spotlight.⁴⁸ The presumed connection between Christian values and European forms of democracy contributes to an aversion to Turkish Islamic identity and scepticism about Turkey's potential as a non-Christian-majority secular democratic member of the EU. In this view, Turkey is inherently different from Europe due to the existence of an exclusive European identity based on geography, culture and religion.⁴⁹ European identity is conceived in bounded, fixed and exclusive terms, 'embodying a conception of difference that is based on inherent characteristics'.⁵⁰ This contrasts with a more inclusive version of European identity emphasising the possibility of a state *becoming* European by gradually acquiring a series of inclusive and (arguably) universal characteristics such as respect for liberty, human rights and secular democracy.⁵¹

As an example of the influence of Judeo-Christian secularism upon European approaches to Turkey, consider the Judeo-Christian secularist response to the challenge to Kemalism in Turkey. From this perspective, this challenge confirms that secularisation and democratisation are unique to the (Judeo-Christian) West. Judeo-Christian secularists see resistance to Kemalism as proof of the futility of 'liberal' attempts to incorporate a Muslim-majority society into a democratic, secular (and Judeo-Christian) European Union. From this perspective Turkey is and always will be unable to conform to the Copenhagen criteria due to its cultural and religious commitments, and is therefore unfit to become fully 'European'. Distinctions between religious and political authority are historically absent not only from Turkey but from the 'Islamic world' in general, and are unthinkable due to the nature of Islam itself. In this view, Muslim-majority civilisations simply do not enjoy indigenous forms of secularism and insist upon rejecting the secularism imported from the West.⁵² For Judeo-Christian secularists, secularism is ultimately incompatible with Islam and unlikely to be realised in Turkey or any other Muslim-majority society.

This opposition to Turkish accession on exclusivist cultural and religious grounds also carries within it a position on the identity of the EU and the subordinate place of religious, and particularly Muslim, minorities within that identity. By positing a unique set of connections between Judeo-Christianity, European identity and the potential for successful democratisation, Judeo-Christian secularists advocate a particular idea and identity of 'Europe' as exclusively Judeo-Christian. The divide between religious identities becomes one among many fixed markers of civilisational difference. This carries implications not only for Europe's external relations but also

⁴⁷ 'Britons back Christian society', BBC News World Edition: (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4434096.stm) (accessed 29 November 2005).

⁴⁸ See Nilüfer Göle, 'Negotiating Europeanism and Republicanism: The Turkish Question in France', Paper presentation, *Cultures of Democracy* conference, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois (21 April 2005).

⁴⁹ Rumelili, 'Constructing Identity and Relating to Difference', p. 44.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Sociologist of religion David Martin has suggested that, 'the relative lack of the religious/secular distinction within Islam has serious consequences'. Martin, 'Religion, Secularity, Secularism and European Integration', Paper presented at a workshop on *Secularization and Religion*, Erfurt, Germany, 17 July 2003).

for non-Judeo-Christian Europeans, with the latter easily portrayed as 'suspect citizens' and 'potential enemies within'.⁵³ The consequences of these divisions are evident in contemporary European politics.

Laicism and Turkish accession

Laicism is the second form of secularism contributing to a climate of scepticism in Europe regarding Turkish accession. Laicism refers to the attempt to purge religion from politics and is associated with intensive state control of religious institutions and expression.⁵⁴ The laicist model, particularly in France, is distinct from the American secular 'separation of church and state'.⁵⁵ Laicists support a vigorous role for the state in the regulation of religion and are wary of religious infringements in public space. They are sceptical about the democratic potential of any relationship between religion and politics that diverges from strict separationism as defined by the state. They view any increase in or reconfiguration of the public role of religion as an undesirable infringement upon would-be secular public life, a compromise of state authority and, in the French and Turkish cases in particular, a threat to national identity.⁵⁶ Rigorous state regulation of public religious expression and institutions are the result and any attempt to reconfigure the secular/religious divide away from a strictly regulative model is perceived as a threat to laicism. Andrew Davison, for example, defines Turkish Kemalism as 'a structure of power in which Islam was separated from areas of governance in some respects within an overall and overarching integrated relationship of state control'.⁵⁷

In contrast to their Judeo-Christian secular counterparts, who insist upon the fixed and exclusive nature of European identity, laicists believe that the exclusion of Turkey from Europe on cultural and religious grounds *per se* is unjustified. Laicism therefore leads to a different set of conclusions regarding European identity and its relationship to Turkish accession. Laicists adopt an inclusivist version of European identity and, as Rumelili argues, 'construct Turkey as different from Europe solely in terms of acquired characteristics'.⁵⁸ According to this argument, if Turkey conforms to European (laicist) norms regarding religion and politics, among other considerations, it should be admitted to the EU. The problem is not that Turkey is constitutionally and culturally incapable of complying with European standards, but

⁵³ Silverstein and Tetreault, 'Urban Violence in France'.

⁵⁴ On the origins of laicism and its implications for IR, see Hurd, 'The Political Authority of Secularism in International Relations', pp. 242–6.

⁵⁵ As Andrew Davison has shown, 'secularism' and 'laicism' should not be conflated: '*secularism and laicism* are not two different words for the same institutional arrangement, but rather two distinct, complex, varied, contested, and dynamic possibilities in the range of nontheocratic politics'. For Davison Turkey is laicist rather than secularist because the Kemalists did not seek to separate religion from the state and pursue a nonreligious state inasmuch as they sought to use the state to control, regulate and mix Islam and politics in a particular way. Davison, 'Turkey, a "Secular" State? The Challenge of Description', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102:2/3 (2003), p. 333.

⁵⁶ An example is the French debate in late 2003 and early 2004 over the findings of the Stasi Commission and the passage of legislation restricting religious expression in public spaces. See John R. Bowen, 'Muslims and Citizens', *Boston Review* (February/March 2004).

⁵⁷ Davison, 'Turkey, a "Secular" State?', p. 344. See also Fred Halliday, 'Turkey 1998: Secularism in Question', in *Nation and Religion in the Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000), p. 183.

⁵⁸ Rumelili, 'Constructing Identity and Relating to Difference', p. 44.

rather that it has not *yet* satisfactorily achieved a particular level of (political, economic, and/or religio-political) development, such that ‘if and when Turkey develops economic and political institutions in line with European values and standards, it will rightfully become a member of the EU, despite what others may claim to be its inherent differences’.⁵⁹

For laicists committed to the fact that Turkey will progress incrementally through a series of stages of development, culminating in its full ‘Europeanisation’, there is a sense that contemporary Turkey is not ‘anti-Europe’, but merely ‘less Europe’, to borrow Ole Wæver’s useful formulation. As Wæver argues, ‘the dominant trend in European security rhetoric is that the Other is Europe’s own past (fragmentation), and those further away from the centre are not defined as anti-Europe, only less Europe. Europe has no clear border – it fades away as you move out over the Russian plains.’⁶⁰ Laicists equate Europe’s past experiences with Turkey’s present ‘struggles’ with secularisation.

As is the case with their Judeo-Christian secularist counterparts, however, laicists fear that this ‘struggle’, and specifically the current challenge to the Kemalist settlement in Turkey, may be sufficient to derail Turkish progress toward ‘modernisation’ and ‘Europeanisation’. While in recent decades organised religion has declined in Europe,⁶¹ Turkey is experiencing a revival of public religion that challenges European universalist norms regarding the (laicist) division between religion and politics upon which Kemalism was modelled.⁶² For some, this challenge is enough to question Turkey’s qualification for EU membership. Kemalism, from this perspective, represents a laudable attempt to bring Turkey into a modern, laicist and European ‘present’. The revival of public religion – seen as a challenge to Kemalism – suggests that Turkey has not come far enough along the continuum of development. In this view, Turkey has not yet realised the progression out of a religious (Islamic) past into a laicist (European) present, and is at risk of ‘back-sliding’ toward archaic practices regarding the public presence of religion and its formal control of the state. This fear is expressed in regretful terms as the ‘loss of Atatürk’s legacy’⁶³ and manifests in a concern about the intentions of the current governing party, Justice and Development (AKP):

Despite the AKP’s continued popularity, some are skeptical of Erdogan’s real intentions. Pointing to his more radical beginnings and recent AKP positions on women’s rights and

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Wæver, ‘Insecurity, Security and Asecurity’, p. 100.

⁶¹ On commonalities and differences between European countries *vis-à-vis* the decline of individual and collective religious belief and expression, see Hugh McLeod and Werner Ustorff, *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe: 1750–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); René Rémond, *Religion and Society in Modern Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), and Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

⁶² See M. Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Jenny White, *Islamic Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2002); and Soner Cagaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

⁶³ For an example of the argument that ‘much of Atatürk’s legacy risks being lost’ in contemporary Turkey, see Robert L. Pollack, ‘The Sick Man of Europe – Again’, *The Wall Street Journal*, 16 February 2005, p. A14.

education, critics charge that the prime minister's commitment to secularism and liberalisation is only superficial.⁶⁴

For laicists, a post-Kemalist (assumed to be 'Islamist') Turkey is unfit to become fully European because it risks violating laicist norms that are among the founding principles of European democracy. Resistance to Kemalism, expressed in 'Islamic' terms, appears as a threat to the laicist strictly separationist public/private divide and concept and practice of religious freedom.⁶⁵

For laicists, unlike for Judeo-Christian secularists, the shortcomings involved in the presence of Islam in Turkish politics are not irremediable but can be overcome through the importation of Western-style democracy and the secularisation of politics and society. In this instance European identity is conceived in more inclusive terms, based on a series of acquired characteristics rather than a series of fixed cultural and civilisational traits. For laicists the solution to Turkey's potential 'back-sliding' into 'pre-Atatürk' approaches to religion and politics is a renewed commitment to Turkish state secularism, or Kemalism. Laicists therefore find themselves uncomfortably supporting the heavy-handed approach of the Turkish state and military *vis-à-vis* the regulation of public religion, and wary of attempts to challenge the Kemalist establishment. They view religious individuals and groups that are active in the public sphere as threats to democratic order, and consider state suppression of such groups legitimate and even warranted. As Kösebalaban points out, 'while the European governments and human-rights organisations including the European Court of Human Rights have been very sensitive to Kurdish human rights, they have maintained a persistent indifference to political problems like the headscarf issue and the closure of Islamic-leaning political parties'.⁶⁶ This makes for strange bedfellows, as laicists who otherwise support human rights and religious freedom find themselves unhappily aligned politically with the repressive and interventionist Turkish army. This state of affairs was reflected in American support for the Army's ouster of Welfare Party (RP) in 1997. As Erhard Franz argues, 'the USA, who had feared that Turkey under Erbakan would drift into the anti-American Islamic camp, views the Turkish military as the guarantor of the country's loyalty to the Western alliance'.⁶⁷

A June 2004 decision by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) is an example of European support for the laicist attempt to exclude religion from the public sphere in Turkey. The ECHR concluding that Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights had *not* been violated by the Turkish refusal to allow Leyla Sahin, a Turkish medical student, to wear a headscarf while pursuing her studies at the University of Istanbul. This decision reflects and reinforces the ECHR's commitment to a laicist understanding of the proper relationship between 'religious' expression and democratic public space and discourse. The political potency of these

⁶⁴ David L. Phillips, 'Turkey's Dreams of Accession', *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2004), p. 89. Phillips adds: 'although the US government officially supports Erdogan, some Pentagon officials are uneasy about his Islamic orientation. They believe that the Turkish armed forces are far more reliable than the AKP in fighting terrorism' (p. 97).

⁶⁵ Hurd, 'The International Politics of Secularism', p. 119. Other Europeans express concern with the implications of the Kemalist model for democratisation and in particular religious freedom in Turkey.

⁶⁶ Kösebalaban, 'Turkey's EU Membership: A Clash of Security Cultures', p. 138.

⁶⁷ Erhard Franz, 'Secularism and Islamism in Turkey', in Kai Hafez (ed.), *The Islamic World and the West: An Introduction to Political Cultures and International Relations* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), p. 173.

beliefs, also exemplified in recent French legislation restricting public religious expression, suggests that it is unlikely that Turks who have an alternative understanding of the proper relationship between religious expression and public space, perhaps – though not necessarily – indebted to Islamic tradition, will be accepted, at least in the near-term, as ‘European’.

Europe, Turkey and multiple secular modernities

Most observers of Europe–Turkey relations assume that Turkey needs to demonstrate its cultural, political and economic fitness to participate in European institutions and society, and that Europe will in time render judgment in accordance with its own criteria. This assumption is reflected in the Negotiating Framework of October 2005, which states that, ‘in all areas of the *acquis*, Turkey must bring its institutions, management capacity and administrative and judicial systems up to Union standards, both at national and regional level, with a view to implementing the *acquis* effectively’.⁶⁸ Fabrizio Barbaso, Director General for Enlargement at the EU Commission, confirmed this expectation by insisting that Turkey conform to pre-existing European standards: ‘the process of modernization of the Turkish political system and its adaptation to the EU standards is underway . . . the further development of EU–Turkey relations . . . will depend on Turkey’s capacity to demonstrate that it fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria, not only in legal provisions, but also in practice.’⁶⁹

The argument developed in this article challenges the assumption that Turkish compliance with the Copenhagen criteria will be sufficient to ensure a smooth incorporation of Turkey into Europe. As Göle suggests, the encounter between Turkey and Europe is a two-way street that transforms both Turkish politics *and* the European project itself.⁷⁰ As I have shown, Turkish candidacy challenges and may even change European concepts and practices of secularism. Before admitting Turkey to the EU, Europe will press Turkey to accept a variety of European legal, financial and political institutions, standards and practices. Yet, paradoxically, in the domain of religion and politics Turkish integration into the EU will be successful only insofar as Europeans revisit their own assumptions about politics, religion and the moral foundations of democratisation.

In short, Turkish candidacy obligates Europeans to reconsider what it means to be a ‘secular European’. Up to the present, this involved subscribing to laicism or Judeo–Christian secularism, or some combination thereof. Turkish candidacy changes and challenges the ‘taken-for-grantedness’ of the equation between European identity and these particular forms of secularism. It does so by introducing alternative trajectories of secularisation that draw upon non-Judeo–Christian traditions and proposing that they be accepted as equally ‘European’. How Europe responds to this challenge remains to be seen. As long as Brussels continues to insist

⁶⁸ (http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/docs/pdf/st20002_en05_TR_framedoc.pdf), accessed 21 November 2005.

⁶⁹ Fabrizio Barbaso, ‘Turkey–EU Relations in the perspective of the December European Council’, Ankara, Middle East Technical University, 25 May 2004.

⁷⁰ Göle, ‘Negotiating Europeanism’.

upon the 'one-way street' nature of the relationship between Turkey and the EU it will remain impossible, or at least very difficult, for Turkey to fulfil the demands placed upon it to 'modernise' along the lines of the European model as far as religion and politics are concerned. Turkey cannot be expected to follow either a Judeo-Christian secularist model of secularisation or a laicist trajectory of secularisation, both of which evolved over the course of centuries out of a set of disputes within Latin Christendom.

Rather than impose either of these ill-fitting and arguably outdated secularist settlements upon the Turks and insisting that they adhere to them to qualify for EU membership, successful negotiations will require that Europe both acknowledge alternative cultural and religious formulations and foundations of secularism, and revisit its own collective assumptions about the relationship between religion, politics and European identity. Within Europe, this means coming to terms with the multiple and diverse civilisational sources and varieties of secularism. It means acknowledging that the role of religion in European collective identity is far from settled and may well remain so.⁷¹ Between Europe and Turkey, it requires an acknowledgment of the complexity of the challenge to Kemalism: such challenges are neither simply 'religious' threats to 'secular' democracy, as laicist inclusivists suggest, nor are they a predictable retreat to archaic 'Muslim' forms of political order, as Judeo-Christian secularist exclusivists argue. Instead, these developments are part of a legitimate protest against the Kemalist attempt to monopolise what should be an ongoing, public debate over what it means to be a 'secular' Muslim-majority state. Jenny White has argued convincingly that democratic politics requires a continuing struggle over how the 'sacred' and the 'secular' are defined and practiced.⁷² Challenges to Kemalism are part of this struggle insofar as they posit a rival Turkish public order that reconfigures the Kemalist settlement between secularism and Islamism, thereby forging a new model that is distinctive *both* from prevailing European modes of secularism and from Kemalism. As Hakan Yavuz has shown, the platform of Turkish 'Islamist' parties did not amount to 'an explicit program of Islamic revival but rather the reconstruction of Ottoman-Turkish norms and associations to challenge the alienating aspects of the Kemalist project'.⁷³

Charles Taylor observes that, 'we need to speak of *multiple* modernities, the plural reflecting the fact that non-Western cultures have modernised in their own ways and cannot be properly understood if we try to grasp them in a general theory that was originally designed with the Western case in mind.'⁷⁴ Modern variations of Turkish Islamism, rather than simply a threat to secular democracy or a revival of 'religion' in public life, are an example of how different forms of 'secularism' emerge in different cultural and political circumstances. As Göle has argued, 'although the cultural program of modernity has a great capacity to influence and circulate, the

⁷¹ It may be best that it remain so. As Ole Wæver has suggested, 'maybe Europe is not even that much of a we, but a way, a how, where there is more and more of a European flavor to being French, German, and so on . . . "Europe" should be seen neither as a project replacing the nation/state nor as irrelevant. It is an additional layer of identification.' Wæver, 'Insecurity, Security, and Asecurity', p. 94.

⁷² White, 'Turkey's New "Muslimhood"', p. 9.

⁷³ Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, p. 212.

⁷⁴ Taylor, 'Modern Social Imaginaries', p. 91. On the concept of multiple modernities, see also S. N. Eisenstadt, 'The Reconstruction of Religious Arenas in the Framework of 'Multiple Modernities'', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 29:3 (2000), pp. 591-611.

encounter between the two cultural codes leads not to a simple logic of emulation or rejection but to improvisations in social practices and cultural meanings'.⁷⁵ Turkish Islamism is such an improvisation. Rather than a pre- or anti-modern attempt to resuscitate a pristine Islamic past, Turkish Islamism is part of an attempt to reformulate 'the borders and the meanings of the secular public sphere' itself, serving as a 'destabilizing force' in secular (including secular European) social imaginaries.⁷⁶ As Çınar concludes, 'in Turkey Islamism has advanced an alternative nationalist project that is equally modernisationist to that of secularism and hence has produced what can be referred to as Islamic modernism'.⁷⁷ This challenge to Kemalism, to cite Talip Kucukcan, involves no less than 'the reconfiguration of religion and politics in the public sphere'.⁷⁸

Secularism, this argument suggests, is a contingent and contested social construction. As Yavuz argues, it is 'a terrain of contestation rather than a fixed ideological or behavioral understanding across time and space'.⁷⁹ Different foundations and formulations of secularism exist both within Europe and outside it. Multiple forms of secularism exist in both Christian and Muslim-majority societies. As I have shown, Turkish candidacy for the EU is politically inflammatory in part because it makes the historical contingencies of these different forms of secularism explicit. As Çınar argues, 'Islamist interventions served to reveal that secularism is neither natural nor a fact of public life, but indeed another forged and partial principle that is quite negotiable and contestable'.⁸⁰ Although some varieties of secularism did emerge out of Christianity, Europeans hold no monopoly on the separation of civil and religious authorities, mundane and metaphysical spaces, or sacred and secular institutions. Turkey fails to conform to European 'secular' standards only if Europeans define those standards *à priori* in terms of their political and religious history, and not their present or future.

The Negotiating Framework of October 2005 stipulates that, 'negotiations will be based on Turkey's own merits and the pace will depend on Turkey's progress in meeting the requirements for membership'. A significant choice for Europe in the next decade is whether to recognise the differing historical trajectories of secularism both in Europe and in Turkey, or to impose its own historical secularist expectations upon new and aspiring 'Europeans'. My argument suggests that for Turkish integration into the EU to succeed, negotiations must encompass not only Turkish progress in meeting European standards, but also a re-evaluation of those standards to acknowledge and incorporate alternative approaches to the politics of religion. As Asad concludes, 'if Europe cannot be articulated in terms of complex space and complex time that allow for multiple ways of life (and not merely multiple identities) to flourish, it may be fated to be no more than the common market of an imperial civilisation, always anxious about (Muslim) exiles within its gates and (Muslim) barbarians beyond'.⁸¹

⁷⁵ Göle, 'Islam in Public', p. 175.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 173, 183.

⁷⁷ Çınar, *Modernity, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey*, p. 171.

⁷⁸ Talip Kucukcan, 'State, Islam, and Religious Liberty in Modern Turkey: Reconfiguration of Religion in the Public Sphere', *BYU Law Review*, 2 (2003), p. 493.

⁷⁹ Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, p. 267.

⁸⁰ Çınar, *Modernity, Islam and Secularism in Turkey*, p. 173.

⁸¹ Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 180.

Conclusion: implications for IR theory

In closing I will briefly discuss the implications of this argument for IR theory. Religious and secularist beliefs contribute to the creation of what Peter van der Veer has described as 'public spheres of political interaction central to the formation of national identities'.⁸² Yet connections between secularism and religion, national and supranational identities and international relations are rarely investigated. One objective of this article has been to open up this field of inquiry in the discipline of International Relations.

I have shown that secularism and religion are implicated in, and partially constitutive of, European identity. European responses to the possibility of Turkish accession illustrate the political salience of negotiations between 'domestic' political culture, supranational identity and international politics.⁸³ 'Domestic' secularist norms contribute to the construction of European identities and interests. As Kowert and Legro argue, these norms 'interact powerfully with conceptions of identity', working to shape both the identities of actors and the rules for enacting those identities.⁸⁴ This approach complements the literature in IR focused on other processes through which domestic concerns shape foreign policy. It allows us to go beyond generic references to cultural or religious difference as fixed causal factors in international relations and to examine the consequences of specific authoritative systems of belief – in this case two variations of secularism – for attempts at multilateral cooperation and community-formation. This is important because, as the Turkey–EU case shows, there are outcomes in IR that cannot be explained without accounting for the political authority exercised by multi-dimensional cultural and religious norms with their origins in 'domestic' political culture.

To conclude, the question is not *whether* political culture, secularism and religion matter in IR, but *how* they matter. Most IR scholarship either sidelines cultural and religious issues completely and misses an important part of the story, or defaults to a paradigm in which a 'Western' defence of secular democracy is counterpoised to some other group or civilisation's defence of ideology, tradition and/or authoritarianism. The merit of the latter approach, represented in the work of Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis, is that it acknowledges the significance of political culture to international politics. The disadvantage is that it is accompanied by a series of problematic assumptions about religion and politics, such as the belief that unlike other parts of the world the West has outgrown the need to rely upon religion or

⁸² Peter van der Veer, 'The Moral State', in Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehmann (eds.), *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 39.

⁸³ For an alternative approach to the interface between the domestic and the international that explains the collapse of overseas empires in terms of institutional factors within the metropolitan countries, see Hendrik Spruyt, *Ending Empire: Contested Sovereignty and Territorial Partition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

⁸⁴ See Paul Kowert and Jeffrey Legro, 'Norms, Identity, and their Limits: A Theoretical Reprise', in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 466.

tradition to order its political affairs.⁸⁵ This article has shown that this is not the case. Authoritative cultural and religious systems of belief and the practices they engender are powerful determinants of modern domestic politics and influential contributors to contemporary international politics both in the West and outside it. Recognising how these forms of power operate allows a better understanding of crucial empirical puzzles in IR, including but not limited to the politics of EU enlargement.

⁸⁵ This view is expressed in Huntington's observation that, 'modern Western man, being unable for the most part to assign a dominant and central place to religion in his own affairs, found himself unable to conceive that any other peoples in any other place could have done so, and was therefore impelled to devise other explanations of what seemed to him only superficial phenomena'. Samuel Huntington, 'The Return of Islam', *Commentary*, 61:1 (January 1976), p. 40.