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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Soon after my arrival in Turkey in January 2008 for a year's research stay, the country was abuzz about a group of twenty high school students from the city of Kirşehir in central Anatolia that had painted a Turkish flag with their own blood—a broad red field about eighteen inches wide, with a white sickle moon and star at center. The students had presented it to Turkey's top military chief, General Yaşar Büyükanıt, as a gift to commemorate the deaths of twelve soldiers killed in clashes with Kurdish separatist PKK[1] guerrillas two months earlier. The general displayed the flag to journalists and praised the students, pointing out that not only had they made a flag of their blood but had also given him a petition to "please take us immediately as soldiers." "This is the kind of nation we are," he said, visibly moved. "We are a great nation. Truly our martyrs have died for a holy purpose. That holy purpose is to protect the country we live in as one and undivided."[2] The young people, boys and girls, posed with the framed flag for an adoring media, and the right-wing newspaper *Tercüman* distributed promotional copies of the blood-flag to its readers.

Some voices in the media expressed qualms about the potential health risks—the children, after all, had injured themselves, drawing blood from their fingers with pins. A few protested on moral grounds. Psychologist Serdar Değirmencioğlu pointed out that "in countries where militarism is intense, blood is not seen as something to be treated carefully, but something to be spilt."[3] Political scientist Baskın Oran argued that it was dangerous to condition children in primary school to believe that the Turkish nation is based on bloodlines. "We saw the recent attacks by young people directed at Christian priests," he added, drawing a parallel between Turkish blood and Muslim identity.[4] In her column in the centrist newspaper *Radikal*, journalist and writer Perihan Mağden condemned the general's approval of the blood-flag and the "militarist, war-mongering and violent atmosphere" that had inspired the children's act. Another journalist, Ece Temelkuran, wrote in *Milliyet*, "If only this noise, which makes flags out of children and dead children out of flags, would end."[5]

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Public reaction was swift against those critical of the blood-flag.[6] Both Mağden and Temelkuran were attacked in the media, with *Tercüman* calling Mağden a "flag-enemy" whose "ugly words" are remote from a Turkish identity, and accusing Temelkuran of committing a crime. The journalists took *Tercüman* to court for insulting them, and the paper's editor was fined. But by April 2009 Mağden faced at least ten other cases against her in court, mostly insult cases, including one brought by two Turks who made a YouTube video Mağden had criticized that praised the murderer of Armenian-Turkish journalist Hrant Dink.[7]

Dink was assassinated in front of his office in 2007 by a young nationalist who had accused the journalist of insulting Turkish blood in a news article he had written. Dink had been tried in court for that crime in 2005 under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which makes it illegal to insult "Turkishness" (*Türklük*), a concept so vaguely defined in legal terms that it has encouraged hundreds of prosecutions against journalists, authors, publishers, and others. Despite an expert report that Dink had not insulted or denigrated anyone in his article, four months later the court found Dink guilty and sentenced him to six months in jail, suspended. Arguing that his words had been taken out of context, Dink was preparing to appeal his case before the European Court of Human Rights when he was assassinated.[8] Ironically, in the original text, he had been urging the Armenian diaspora to rid themselves of their enmity ("poisoned blood") against the Turks.

For the young killer, Ogün Samast,[9] it was enough that Dink was Armenian and Christian, making him an enemy of Turkishness and the Turkish nation. As Samast was running away he reportedly shouted, "I killed the non-Muslim." His crime was met with some sympathy in nationalist circles. In a photo that police officers had taken with Samast while he was in custody, the suspect is holding a Turkish flag, and on the wall behind them are the words "Our country is sacred—its future cannot be left to chance." In 2008, under pressure from the European Union (EU), the Turkish parliament (Grand National Assembly) reformed Article 301 of the Penal Code, replacing "denigrating Turkishness" with a more specific term, "denigrating the Turkish nation." This does not appreciably change the nature of the crime, however, since the concept of nation, as we shall discuss later, itself is premised upon a racial understanding of Turkishness and Muslim identity. In his introduction to a collection of essays comparing race and ethnic systems around the world, Paul Spickard writes that race in the context of nationalism is always about power. It is "written on the body" as a product of culture, not as a self-evident biological fact.[10]

I relate the incidents of the blood-flag and Hrant Dink's murder in some detail because they exemplify a number of the issues I discuss in this book—the physicality

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of Turkish national identity with its emphasis on blood, purity, boundaries, and honor—and the cultural work that underlies them; the gendered nature of nationalism; its sharply contested profile; the link between being Turkish and being Muslim; a substratum of militarism, hostility, suspicion, and authoritarianism; and a heightened discourse of fear and the polarization of society. This polarization, I suggest, is in part a consequence of the vacuum created by the weakening of the state Kemalist project over recent years and the increasing inability of the state—despite prosecutions under Article 301, and the banning of websites like YouTube—to control the definition of Turkishness and thereby shape the identity of Turkish youth. Kemalist national identity has been challenged by new heterodox forms of nationalism emerging from increasingly powerful and self-confident Muslim networks rooted in economic and political life that privilege Muslim identity and culture over race.[11]

Kemalism refers to the vision of Turkey's founding figure and first president, Mustafa Kemal (later given the honorific Ataturk, meaning Father/Ancestor of the Turks), of a culturally unitary, Westernized, secular society in which state institutions and the military play a special tutelary role as guarantors of Kemalist democracy. The orthodox Kemalist vision of the nation imagines solidarity as unity of blood and race in which being Muslim is considered to be an essential component of having Turkish blood.[12] This vision is accompanied by intense fear of dissolution of racial unity and thereby of national unity. Community is thus a product of a sense of continual threat, and a strong state and military are presented as crucial guarantors of the health and safety of the national family. When asked what being Turkish means, many men across the nation will respond, "*Hepimiz askeriz*." ("We are all soldiers.") These words also appear on banners during national holidays and other occasions. The militarism and emphasis on the masculine nature of national identity that is indicated by this slogan make it difficult for women to define their place as national subjects, an issue to which I will return.

Just over half of Turkey's population is under age thirty.[13] Young people are increasingly expressing themselves through new media, civic activism, and consumerism, searching for arenas of belonging, of which the nation is but one. While subjective freedom of choice may have expanded with globalization, individualism tends to be framed within a collective logic. Belonging to a group, whether family, community or nation, continues to be essential for social survival, as well as social identity.[14] Muslim networks, especially those surrounding the Islam-rooted Justice and Development Party (AKP, *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*), which has been in power since 2002, and the ubiquitous Fethullah Gülen Islamic movement, are beneficiaries of this search for alternative collectivities. Against Kemalism's message of continual

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embattlement, Islam appeals to youth with its rootedness in networks that promise to help them gain education, skills, and connections needed to succeed economically, and that give meaning to individual lives within a distinctly Muslim brand of national community.

As new forms of nationalism emerge and identities and loyalties become contested, people struggle to maintain the physical and metaphorical boundaries that mark their territories of belonging. But the process of change is far advanced. Turkey is now a vastly different place than it was when I first visited in 1975, a time when Kemalism was embattled by leftist ideas but retained a powerful appeal across classes and generations. That challenge was met by the military with a coup in 1980 that was meant to reset the republic on the Kemalist path but, as I explain in chapter 2, ultimately sowed the seeds of its own diminishment. Today, it is not so much Islam that has challenged the status quo, I suggest, but rather what Islam has become in the postcoup urban, modern, globalized environment where, for many, religious and national identities, like commodities, have become objects of choice and forms of personal expression.

Turkey's Third Republic

Turkey has entered an era of social and political revolution. Indeed, scholars and pundits refer to the period after the 1980 coup as the Third Republic, a time during which something entirely new was being created in Turkish society and politics. (The period after the 1960 coup so transformed Turkey that it is called the Second Republic.) Yet, in a puzzling counterpoint, it seems that Third Republican Turks also are firmly patrolling the boundaries that define their membership in familiar social and political categories, and attributing to others membership in demonized groups. Society appears to be divided into militantly opposed secular and Muslim forces, and this division tends to be valorized by observers who bring to bear preconceived ideas about what secularism and Islam mean.

I define secularism and religion in historically and culturally specific terms. José Casanova has pointed out that while modern secularism posits that religion in the abstract is a transcultural phenomenon against which secularism can set itself, in reality, non-European practices of both religion and secularity are highly culturally specific.[15] Furthermore, secularism is not necessarily modern, nor is religion marginal or superfluous to a modern life. Instead, religion itself can become secularized (individualized, privatized) while the secular sphere becomes sacralized as profane

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images and practices are imbued with attributes of the sacred, and religious meanings and legitimacy are extended to new practices. Turkey's tense confrontations, then, might not be examples of secularism versus religion, as these terms are generally understood, but might better be described as struggles over blasphemy of the sacred, with secularists and the pious fighting over the designation of what is sacred, what is intrinsic to tradition and inviolable, and what lies outside the boundaries of identity sacralized by tradition. Adam Seligman observed that what scholars gloss as religion and secularism, and even identity, are really "traditions of practices" that as nation-states emerged in Europe, were subsumed within national identities. People, he pointed out, do not "do" religion, secularism, or identity, but rather, they follow a tradition of specific practices.[16] This means that traditions (and, thus, what is glossed as religion, secularism, and identity) are open to transformation in practice, as when religion in the modern context becomes a form of self-expression or a touchstone of national identity. Religion may be forced to redefine itself in competition with other faiths and ideologies.[17]

As a result of their encounters with global cosmopolitan secular modernity,[18] Casanova writes, religious traditions are reinterpreted not as accommodations to the West or as fundamentalist reactions, much less in a triumph of modernity over tradition, but as what he calls *aggiornamentos*, practical adjustments of tradition that blur the line between sacred and secular. As an example, Casanova cites the sacralization of the discourse of human rights by the Second Vatican Council, a reinterpretation of tradition that in effect allowed Catholic resources around the world to be mobilized for democratization. He suggests that in countries like Turkey and Indonesia, democratization is unlikely to thrive until political actors are able to "frame" their discourse in a publicly recognizable Islamic idiom, rather than insisting on the privatization of Islam as a precondition to modernity as the Kemalists did, a stance that Casanova argues elicits only antidemocratic responses. In other words, in responding to the challenges of global modernism, Islamic publics may elaborate their normative traditions to generate new forms of public civil Islam that are conducive to democratization. In a sense, the Arab Spring revolutions of 2011 set up a living laboratory to examine the process of Islamic *aggiornamento* as a path to democratization in a variety of political and cultural settings. The experience of Turkey described in this book suggests that reinterpretations of modernity as much as of tradition have led to public interpellations of piety and democratization previously unimagined.

Religion in Turkey has become secularized and the secular sphere sacralized, resulting in a struggle over the definition of what is sacred, accompanied by accusations of blasphemy (phrased as disloyalty to the nation and even treason[19]). Indi-

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vidual choice—the choice to be *şuurlu*, a "consciously" believing Muslim, as opposed to blindly following tradition—has become highly valued as a sign of Muslim modernity. Islamic practice increasingly has come to be expressed as participation in economic networks and through a commodified lifestyle of self-consciously Muslim fashion and leisure. Meanwhile, Kemalist secularism has taken on aspects of the sacred. Turkish blood represents the nation and is surrounded by taboos. In Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's speeches, the earth of Anatolia is sacred "because it is drenched in the blood of those who gave their lives for the country."[20] Busts and statues of Ataturk mark sacred ground and may not be moved or destroyed. It is against the law even to criticize Ataturk. A shadow that resembles his silhouette thrown by one hillside onto another in the remote village of Ardahan every summer draws thousands of viewers and representatives of the army and media.[21]

Turkey is riven by disputes over what is sacred to the nation and where the boundaries of national identity are drawn. While the categories of secular and Islamic have a long history in Turkey, their specific meanings and how they are experienced have developed in response to particular events and societal changes. What they represent today in practice arguably is new. The secularists and pious Muslims of the Third Republic are not the secularists and Muslims of the Second or First Republics, nor do their words and costumes signify what they did in the past.

I will suggest in this book that much of the tension and anxiety that has come to dominate daily life and discourse in the Third Republic arises from a radical revision of the most basic category of all—what does it mean to be Turkish, to be a member of this nation? Popular answers have been naturalized through decades of Kemalist Republican education: We are a Turkish race, of Turkish blood, of Muslim faith; we are all soldiers; our historical roots lie in Turkic Central Asia; we believe in Ataturk's project of modernization; we are laicist (laicism in Turkey means a secular lifestyle within a system of state-sponsored Sunni Islam). Many of these elements are felt to be under siege as a result of changes occurring in Turkish society. This view occasions fear and, in consequence, intensifies the perceived need for tests of belonging and loyalty.

Community membership these days is often accompanied by an increased search for enemies and monitoring of members' conceptual purity. As an anthropologist, I generally have tried to examine issues from many sides, rather than take a stand about right and wrong. In years past I had the opportunity to think through contentious issues with Turkish friends and colleagues who were willing to examine the causes and consequences of a variety of social and cultural practices and political events. But by the late 2000s, the number of people willing to entertain that middle

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ground had shrunk. Even many of my liberal friends expected me to take a stand—with them or against them. As a result, I lost a friend of thirty years because I had written an article about the headscarf for the Islamic news daily *Zaman*, a theoretical piece that, to my mind, took no sides. But my friend, a fervent Kemalist, claimed that simply by writing for an Islamic newspaper, I had demonstrated that I supported "the Islamists." She has not spoken to me since. One secular colleague at a major Turkish university forbade the discussion of politics at his dinner table because he too had lost a friend to the face-offs that ensued. The most incendiary issue is the headscarf, which acts as a key marker of identity for those who wear it and for those who despise it. A brother and sister, both liberal academics, reportedly argued about whether the headscarf should be allowed on campus (it was banned at the time). Thereafter the siblings shunned each other, the brother not even telling his sister when he contracted a fatal illness.

On the "other" side, several studies have documented intensified "community pressure" around the country to veil, to follow Islamic rules of comportment, and to participate in Islamic networks.[22] Polls show that intolerance has grown toward non-Muslims and generally toward anyone different, and attitudes toward other countries have become more negative, not only toward the United States, but across the board.[23] In such an atmosphere, where people are reaffirming membership in value-laden communities and patrolling for correct principles and behavior within well-worn social and political categories like Islam and secularism, what does it mean to speak of revolutionary change?

The three most dramatic changes that put their mark on the Third Republic—and contributed to its revolutionary transformation—were

1. the 1980 coup that radically reshaped the political landscape;
2. the opening of Turkey's insular, state-led economy to competition in the world market by the first party elected after the coup—the Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi)*, led by the economist Turgut Özal; and
3. the rise of Islamist political parties that showed ever stronger election results through the 1990s.

None of these changes could have been predicted by the military. The Motherland Party had not been the military's favored candidate in the postcoup election. In the early 1980s, the army encouraged Özal's government to allow more freedom for a modest, state-defined form of Turkish Islam to counter the appeal of socialist and communist ideas to Turkey's youth. The government duly incorporated Islam in

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school texts and built more preacher training schools. This "Turkish-Islamic Synthesis" was not without risk, however, as the freedom to discuss Islamic ideas coincided with the deregulation of the media—which allowed an explosion of magazines, newspapers, and radio and television channels devoted to things Islamic—and with the rise of a Muslim political and economic elite.

Small- and medium-sized businesses in the provinces, many owned by pious Muslims, benefited from the economic opening and became so successful that the press named them the Anatolian Tigers. Their wealth created a market for Islam-friendly bourgeois products and lifestyles (an Islamic economic sector) and initiated a Muslim cultural renaissance in fashion, lifestyle, leisure activities, novels, media, and music. To be Muslim within this consumer framework, for the first time in Republican history, could be interpreted as urban and upwardly mobile.

The pious elite's wealth also supported overtly Islamic politicians and their programs throughout the 1980s and 1990s. One beneficiary was the Justice and Development Party (AKP), a moderate offspring of a series of more radically Islamist parties of the 1990s. The AKP won the 2002 elections and has remained in power through three election cycles, increasing its share of the vote to 49.9 percent in 2011. Although led by openly pious Muslim politicians, AKP claims not to be Islamic but, rather, a center-right conservative party that serves a broad and varied constituency across Turkey.

The economic opening vastly expanded the variety of available commodities and lifestyles, the extent and manner in which personal choices could be expressed, and the categories to which one could affiliate. The pious Muslims and politically engaged Islamists of the 1980s were augmented by new Muslim publics—pious political pragmatists;[24] an Islamic bourgeoisie;[25] the self-contained yet global socioeconomic networks of the preacher Fethullah Gülen;[26] a nationalist-racist Islamist fringe; and what the journalist Mustafa Akyol referred to as "free-lance Muslims," young pious Muslims like himself experimenting with religion and lifestyle, and shopping among Islamic forms and communities.[27] To be a "conscious" Muslim means that one is a modern, thinking individual. In our conversations, pious men and women often would point out that although they were born Turkish, they had chosen to be Muslim, making that identity more valuable.

One of the most revolutionary consequences of these changes, I would argue, has been a contestation of the nature of Turkishness and the Turkish nation not seen since the founding of the Republic. What does it mean to be a Turk in the face of this proliferation of identities and onslaught of unorthodox ways of being Turkish? The rise of a pious elite has seriously undermined the social and political leadership that had been enjoyed until then by the secular urban part of the population. Kemalist

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control of the educational system and urban economic and social life had provided and promoted an orthodox national identity. The emblematic citizen was a Turkish Muslim with a secular lifestyle, dedicated to a state-led program of modernization believed to be Ataturk's design. (A common secular nationalist banner at demonstrations reads, "*Ata'nin izindeyiz*" (We step in the footprints of our father/ancestor, that is, Ataturk).

The AKP and its pious supporters, in contrast, have developed and implemented an unorthodox alternative definition of Turkishness and the nation that imagines Turkey not as a nation embattled within its present political borders but as a flexibly bounded Turkey that is the self-confident successor to the Ottomans in a rediscovered (and reinvented) past. The new Turkish identity, which I call Muslim nationalism, is that of a pious Muslim Turk whose subjectivity and vision for the future is shaped by an imperial Ottoman past overlaid onto a republican state framework, but divorced from the Kemalist state project. In other words, everything from lifestyle to public and foreign policy are up for reinterpretation, not necessarily according to Islamic principles (although Islamic ethics and imagery may play a role), much less Islamic law (in which few Turks have any expertise[28]), but according to a distinctively Turkish postimperial sensibility. In this vision, Ataturk's footprints are an anachronism.

Instead of commemorating the 1923 founding of the Turkish nation, the new Turks pay public tribute to historical events like the 1453 Ottoman Muslim conquest of Christian Byzantium. This event is reenacted by municipalities and visually depicted in public places; the date is celebrated with festivities. Istanbul's new central Metro station in Taksim, at the epicenter of Turkish secular culture and nightlife, is decorated with enormous tile murals depicting various aspects of the conquest. In 2009 the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality opened the Panorama 1453 History Museum at a cost of 1.2 million dollars, where visitors can "relive" the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 3-D. "You can be a soldier in Sultan Mehmed II's army," the brochure promises.[29] Several years ago, the AKP government introduced a new public holiday, Holy Birth Week (April 14–20), to celebrate the Prophet Muhammad's birthday. Many see this as a countercelebration to the Kemalist-themed National Sovereignty and Children's Day (April 23).[30] In May 2012, the government overhauled national rituals, eliminating official stadium events of costumed and choreographed youth, ten-story banners of Ataturk, and military displays. The secularist newspaper *Milliyet* reported that heavily veiled, lower-class Islamists were flocking to the World War I Gallipoli memorial as an alternative to paying tribute at Ataturk's tomb in Ankara. There, the outraged reporter wrote, they prayed for the Turkish martyrs and picnicked on the graves of foreigners. A "know-nothing" tour guide related that "a cloud descended from the sky and the enemy was lost into that

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Figure 1.1. Taksim subway station tile mural depicting the Turkish conquest of Byzantine Constantinople in 1453.

cloud." Saints smashed the enemy's bullets. Gallipoli was presented as a jihad against the heathen; Ataturk, the heroic frontline commander at Gallipoli, wasn't even mentioned.[31]

At one level, Turkish society appears to be divided into secular and Muslim positions whose proponents are circling the wagons and demanding ideological and behavioral purity from their members. But neither term—secular or Muslim—does justice to the variety of possible positions and their sometimes surprising combinations. For instance, to an outside observer who assumes Islam is anti-West, it would appear counterintuitive that it is the Islam-rooted AKP, the Muslim bourgeoisie, and other Muslim publics, such as the Gülenists, that are enthusiastic developers of a globalized economy and that support political liberalization, international political alliances, and in many cases EU membership. Hard-line secularists, however, including some in the military, oppose these same things in favor of an isolationist, globally unplugged "Turkey for the Turks." These secularists feel deeply their loss of influence and fear the spread of Islamic conservatism and ethnic separatism that might result from more liberal laws and uncontrolled freedom of speech and reli-

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gion. Globalization and EU membership would erode the final vestiges of state control over what they believe to be divisive religious and ethnic identities, spelling an end to Turkey as a coherent and unitary nation—"one and undivided," as General Büyükanıt put it.

These attitudes don't map neatly onto AKP membership or Kemalism. A 2007 survey examined some new categories of political identity that had recently gained currency.[32] Forty-four percent of Turks defined themselves as "new right" or "modern rightist," meaning prodemocracy and pro-West. The majority (66 percent) of AKP supporters chose this category. The rest said they were "traditional rightists," skeptical of democracy and the West, a category shared by a quarter of the survey population. Another quarter of the population identified with "traditional left," also skeptical of democracy and the West, but for different reasons. In other words, while half the population is skeptical of democracy and the West, a majority of AKP supporters are pro-West.

Rather than understanding secular and Muslim nationalisms as yet another set of binary categories, I see them as shorthand for relatively distinct patterns of self-identification as national subjects based on certain forms of knowledge about what it means to be a Turk.[33] This knowledge can be acquired in many ways, from school or the media, by way of authority figures or neighborhood chat. In some ways, which I discuss in chapter 7, secular and Muslim understandings of national subjectivity converge. The unique qualities of Muslim nationalism, however—particularly its unorthodox definition of the nation and its boundaries—are important for understanding a number of issues in Turkey, including the increase in social and political tension and the AKP government's unprecedented political and economic adventurism inside and outside the country. Some pundits have mistakenly glossed this as Turkey's turning to the East and away from the West because of the Islamic sympathies of its government. They fail to understand that the new Turks are motivated not by Islam but by postimperial political and economic ambitions that extend far beyond the Muslim Middle East.

Ottomanism and Its Discontents

Under the AKP, Turkey became an active, independent international player, engaging in diplomacy with countries as far afield as Brazil and Venezuela, as well as countries outside the comfort zone of previous Kemalist governments. These governments tended to be suspicious of Muslim states as potentially threatening secularism,

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and of European states, especially Greece, as potential enemies wishing to undermine Turkey's integrity, possibly with the help of Turkey's Christian and Kurdish minorities. The mutilation of Ottoman territory before and after World War I by European powers has been neither forgotten nor forgiven. By contrast, since coming to power in 2002 the AKP government has lifted visa requirements to dozens of countries—many in the Middle East and North Africa—and forged strong ties with regional states like Russia and Iran, including those with whom it has had problematic relations in the past, like Greece and Armenia. Turkey has been opening new embassies in sub-Saharan Africa and building schools, signing trade deals, and leading relief efforts there. The AKP's willingness to consider a Cyprus settlement, treating it as a subject of international negotiation, flies in the face of decades of Kemalist insistence that any solution that "gives up" Cypriot territory would be dishonorable and would expose the island's ethnic Turks to danger.

The architect of Turkey's foreign policy, Ahmet Davutoğlu, denies that Turkey wishes to re-create the Ottoman Empire, an idea that would not sit well with other regional nations, but he is clearly inspired by this history. "Reintegration is the most important issue for us," he said, referring to Turkey's policies in the Middle East. "The foundation for it is in our history and geography." He wishes "to bring back the golden era, which produced many important civilizations."[34] The desire to change society in order to recapture a golden era thought to have existed in the past resonates at many levels, from AKP's postimperial ambitions to the longing of ordinary people for a "golden age" of communal solidarity and cosmopolitan civility in which moral values coexist with affluence. Turkey's Ottoman past, long ignored under the Kemalist regime, now romanticized and consumed uncritically, has become a touchstone for these desires.

The Ottoman model, for instance, has provided Muslim nationalists with a rationale for integrating Jews and Christians within the nation. Under the Ottoman *millet* system, non-Muslim religious communities were assigned places within the Ottoman system that allowed them semi-independence in daily affairs, but not equality with Muslim subjects of the empire. AKP politicians often refer to the millet model when discussing outreach to Christian communities. They do so largely ahistorically, without acknowledging the supremacy inherent in the historic system.

Furthermore, the Ottoman model does not provide a framework for encompassing Turkey's other minorities, like Kurds and Alevis.[35] The Ottoman state tried a number of different strategies to co-opt or control Kurds and Alevis, whom they saw as potentially rebellious subjects, with only intermittent success.[36] It is not surprising, then, that today's Muslim nationalists lack an ideological framework for incor-

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porating these groups into the nation.[37] This lack of direction has led to inconsistent policies and false starts.

For instance, the AKP initially attempted to appeal to the Kurds as fellow Muslims and, as did previous governments, focused on developing the largely Kurdish southeast region economically. Kurds make up about 20 percent of the population, with a majority living in the impoverished east and southeast regions bordering Iran, Iraq, and Syria. The mountainous area also provides a haven for the PKK, which has been engaged in an armed struggle with the Turkish state since 1984 over Kurdish autonomy and greater political and cultural rights for the country's Kurds. The PKK continues to draw fighters from the local population, which has been brutalized by poverty, years of warfare, extrajudicial killings of Kurdish notables by rogue elements of the Turkish military, and curtailment of their rights by an unsympathetic state. The PKK goes through periods of quiescence, then steps up attacks against security forces and civilians that draw a violent response in a seemingly endless cycle of reprisals that have taken more than forty thousand lives. Kurdish political parties participate in elections, but they are widely seen as the political arm of the PKK and are routinely closed down by the courts.[38]

In 2009 the AKP government began to take steps toward what it called a "democratic opening," restoring Kurdish language rights, permitting a Kurdish television station, allowing politicians to campaign in Kurdish, offering a more generous amnesty for PKK rebels, and returning village names that had been Turkified to their original Kurdish. Although many voters in the southeast supported the AKP initially, it soon became clear that the human rights situation did not improve as a result of the AKP's brotherly embrace, and voters returned their support to Kurdish parties. Kurdish politicians, journalists, and protesters, including children, continued to be arrested and given extensive jail terms for supporting the PKK, not infrequently for holding a poster, throwing a rock, or writing a news article. That December, the Democratic Society Party (DTP, *Demokratik Toplum Partisi*), whose Kurdish deputies were seated in parliament, was closed down by the Constitutional Court for threatening the state's unity. As reflected in both the Islamic and secular media, there was little public support from the start for the government's "democratic opening." Somer and Liaras attribute these cynical and defensive reactions, particularly of the elites, to a belief that ethnic pluralism is backed by external powers and that its political expression causes disunity and weakness. The public is unable to differentiate between demands for regional and cultural autonomy and separatism.[39]

At the same time, the PKK stepped up its deadly attacks on Turkish soldiers, police, and civilians, causing an outpouring of anti-PKK nationalist fervor that swung

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easily into anti-Kurdish feeling. After the PKK killed twenty-four soldiers early in October 2011, the military opened a massive offensive against PKK members in Turkey and their bases over the border in Iraq. While the streets and media convulsed with nationalist outrage, calling the concessions of the "democratic opening" "treason," it is notable that inside the parliament building in Ankara a committee quietly began its work to design a new liberal constitution that is expected, among other things, to guarantee ethnic rights.

The Alevi are a heterodox religious community that combines elements of Shi'i Islam and pre-Islamic religious practices. The Turkish census does not record religious affiliation, so estimates of the Alevi population range widely from between 15 percent to 25 percent of the population, with considerable overlap with the Kurdish population. Alevis tend to have a more secular, liberal lifestyle than their Sunni neighbors.[40] Women play a central role in religious ritual, which involves music and dance and takes place in an assembly house (*cemevi*) rather than a mosque. Alevis suffered centuries of oppression under the Ottomans, who accused them of not being truly Muslim and suspected them of colluding with the Shi'i Persians against the empire. Alevi Kurds were victims of the early republic's Turkification policies and were massacred by the thousands in Dersim in 1937–39. In the 1970s, Alevis became associated with socialist and other leftist movements, while the political right was dominated by Sunni Muslims. An explosive mix of sectarian cleavages, class polarization, and political violence led to communal massacres of Alevis in five major cities in 1977 and 1978, setting the stage for the 1980 coup.[41]

Today, some Alevi communities have reinvented themselves around cultural foundations; others have revived Alevi rituals and spirituality. Alevis have petitioned to have their *cemevleri* officially recognized by the state as houses of worship (at present they have the status of cultural centers), which would bring them tax benefits and government assistance. Although the AKP has reached out to the Alevis, attending ritual events and listening to their demands, official recognition has not been extended. Alevis themselves remain conflicted about state recognition, and the issue is mired in questions about the status of other non-Muslim houses of worship.[42] However, another Alevi demand, that the state school curriculum incorporate the study of Alevism as well as the Sunni faith, was implemented in October 2010 in the context of teaching pluralism of religion.

The AKP also has pushed the EU accession process forward. Responding to the requirements for membership, Turkey has revamped many of its laws and institutions. A parliamentary commission has been established to draw up a more liberal

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constitution based on individual human rights (that would, in effect, no longer allow the state to limit religious and ethnic expression, for instance, by banning headscarves at universities or use of the Kurdish language).[43] The AKP also has passed laws improving women's rights that have long been sought by women's groups.

It is important to point out, however, that liberal impulses regarding minorities and women have been almost continually contradicted in practice. Over the past few years, for example, local municipalities have attempted to dispossess Christian monasteries of their ancestral lands; AKP officials, the military, and the media have stoked a fear of missionaries, creating a hostile climate in which a number of Christians have been murdered; there have been violent community riots, sometimes supported by local officials, against Kurdish and Roma citizens; women's legal rights have been diluted by judges and officials acting out normative, rather than legal, standards; and AKP officials have expressed open hostility toward gay, lesbian, and transgendered citizens and their organizations. How can this discrepancy between liberal impulse and illiberal practice be explained? Secularists would say that the AKP is showing its true face, that it was forced to carry out liberal reforms to appease the Europeans and gain the support of liberal Turks who wish to join the European Union. Now that the party has a wide power base in the electorate and is essentially unopposed, they argue, it no longer needs to curry favor with outsiders and can reveal its true motive, which is to undermine democracy and replace it with shari'a law.

I would suggest a different explanation, for it is not only pious AKP supporters that are full of contradictions. In a society characterized by powerful group identities and norms, belief in the desirability of individual liberty almost inevitably collides with collective norms. This does not mean that people give up all individuality and personal goals but, rather, that daily life operates at several levels at once. A typical response in my conversations about identity with pious Turks was the following. They chose to be Muslim, and because it is a consciously chosen identity, being Muslim is superior to being Turkish, an identity into which a person is born. Yet, the same speaker might well deny choice to his or her daughter who wishes to unveil in order to train for a profession. Similarly, a secular young woman might profess a belief in human rights and desire that Turkey join the European Union yet be intolerant of women wearing headscarves, of Jews, or of the open expression of Kurdish ethnicity. While choice and liberal individualism may be valued, shared beliefs and practices that are markers of group membership are lines that cannot be crossed except at risk of losing group membership, being exiled from your family, no longer being invited to dine with friends, and being marked as a person without honor.[44]

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Individual Liberties and Collective Logic

Whether secular or pious, Turks must continually negotiate between individual liberties that allow innovation, and a collective logic that demands that they demonstrate group loyalty and adherence to community values. It is a logic that cannot be denied without threat of losing the support of constituents and community. In other words, individual strategies must fit a cultural logic. Such alignment, I suggest, is considered honorable, Turkish, and patriotic. Individual strategic action without a normative frame is seen to be dishonorable, impure, non-Turkish, and a threat to the morals and unity of society. In the coming chapters, I will discuss how these issues affect the constitution of the national subject. Here I would like to make the point that contradictory practices and discourses in Turkish politics and daily life result in part from the dissonance between practical, cognitive decisions made in the best interests of the nation or oneself (or one's party) and the pull of conservative collective norms that require that every individual put his or her group first. Judges and police officers may have a grasp of the law on the books but also a duty to uphold the ethics of their communities, even if these contradict one another. Thus, judges and prosecutors admit to placing the welfare of the state above the law,[45] and police regularly return battered wives to their husbands because that is the culturally appropriate thing to do, although the law requires police to protect women, even from their families.

Turks have always pursued their personal choices and motivations within powerful collective frameworks provided by family, community, and nation. In my first book, set in Istanbul's squatter areas in the mid-1980s, I discussed how categories of people—mothers and fathers, mothers-in-law, sons and daughters-in-law—used different strategies to obtain access to or control of the resources and labor of others, and how family relations acted as a template for everyday business dealings.[46] In the 1990s, I examined the way in which Turkey's Islamist movement mobilized people to support a political party by setting political relations within the framework of neighborliness, which contained elements of the mutual obligation that characterized family ties. Personal motivations created contradictions within the Islamist movement but also served strategically to paper them over. Female activists, for instance, seemed to have quite different motivations for participating than male activists. When I pointed out to some of the women that their male colleagues had told me they were interested in changing the law so they could take more than one wife,

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the female activists, who were much more interested in gaining an education and careers, dismissed this by saying, "That's just their personal opinion. It has nothing to do with the party."[47] In other words, individual goals were represented strategically as being either aligned with or deviant from movement norms.

The coexistence of subjective freedom and the demands of the collectivity lead to sometimes surprising and contradictory discourses and practices that cross social divisions. For example, it is not uncommon for people to claim to be simultaneously liberal (*liberal*) and conservative (*muhafazakâr*). In other words, they believe in a general framework of individual civil liberties and yet live (and demand that others live) according to a collectivist logic that denies certain rights. This is as true for well-meaning secularists who believe that veiling oppresses women, and therefore support the ban that keeps covered women from attending universities, as for pious Muslims who try to ban alcohol consumption "for the good of society." Others point out proudly that all Turkish citizens, regardless of ethnic origin, can succeed in Turkish society—as long as they participate as Turks, rather than Kurds. These same people, whether secular or pious, are likely to support education for girls and at the same time believe that mothers should stay at home with their children. There is room for individual self-development, but within the limits of a communally defined moral world.

People, in other words, can simultaneously be global liberals and local chauvinists. They can be true to type, loyal group members, yet in the pragmatic negotiations of everyday life exhibit unlikely similarities with the "other" type, whether defined socially or politically. Such code-switching between individual rights and community demands is aptly demonstrated by the AKP in its contradictory discourses supporting universalist principles of human rights while at the same time curtailing freedom of speech and openly opposing lifestyles that do not conform to a conservative worldview. Secularists point to these contradictions as an example of AKP's duplicity and a sign of the AKP's hidden intention to turn Turkey into an Islamic state, but at base they express the dual nature of political and social life as open to innovation while being communally limited. Secularists exhibit similar contradictions between a freewheeling Westernized lifestyle and limited communal tolerance for difference, as when they demonize the expression of nonorthodox ideas and identity markers (for instance, wearing a headscarf, refusing to drink alcohol, or speaking Kurdish). The effect is heightened by a majoritarian understanding of democracy in which the electoral winners, having obtained a majority, get to determine what is allowed and what is banned in social life according to the norms of their communi-

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ties, with no room for tolerance of nonconforming practices (whether alcohol consumption or veiling).[48]

In practice national subjectivity is highly situational. It is the product of individual motives, the position and perspective of the actor, the intended audience, and the multiple frameworks (civilized, modern, conservative, Kemalist, secular, Muslim, liberal, and so on, as these are defined locally) within which an individual is situated while projecting his or her identity at any given moment. As Fredrik Barth demonstrated in his work on Balinese identity, the definition of a culture must proceed from the individual's understanding and expression of cultural categories, which are always strategic.[49] Consequently, this book does not aim to develop a coherent definition of "Turks" or Turkishness but, rather, presents sketches of competing and overlapping cultures of Turkishness and other forms of national subjectivity.

Being Turkish, like being Balinese, is a form of knowledge acquired and filtered through socialization, education, and other life experiences. Such knowledge is rarely unitary but has layers of shared meanings and expected characteristics, sometimes of a contradictory nature. These can be implemented, consciously or unconsciously, by the individual to fit the social context.[50] Nationalism, like religion, has affective, as well as communal and cognitive dimensions. Certain sources of knowledge are considered more acceptable than others, and certain criteria of validity apply, what Barth calls touchstones for truth. These too will vary, appealing to emotion, reason, or the authority of a text, group, or leadership figure. Nationalism, like religion, draws on stylized performances and key metaphors to scale its message and values up from the individual to the larger public. All cultural descriptions, in other words, are positioned evaluations and, at the same time, political assertions. As such, they are ideally studied when expressed as discourse in particular settings.

It is important to point out, as Barth does, that although individuals project identities that are motivated and strategic, these are recognizable to others within the same national framework. In Bali, a Hindu farmer might have little in common with a Muslim urban professional, but both will claim to be Balinese. The debates about Turkishness, however fierce, take place between individuals—and sometimes family members or friends—who would all claim to be members of the Turkish nation. As much as Turks might reject nonconforming cultural assertions of Turkishness, they nevertheless recognize one another as acting within a national framework, even if that acknowledgment elicits shame or aversion. Turkish national culture, the sociologist Ferhat Kentel once told me, is like a balloon with lots of bulges. When you inflate it, the bulges disappear.

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Conclusion

To all appearances, Turkey's Third Republic is caught in a fierce battle between secularist and Muslim sectors of the population. Although each side invokes traditional categories of political and social difference, the outcome has been revolutionary in its transformation of Turkish society. This transformation is not easily read from the categorical labels, since liberal and conservative impulses and actions do not map neatly onto what is expected of a "secular" or "Muslim" government or population. Furthermore, each "side" is rife with contradictions. What is clear is that since the 1980s a new self-consciously Muslim elite has not only mounted a powerful political and economic challenge to the traditional secular elite but has developed an alternative, nonorthodox definition of the nation and the national subject based on a post-Ottoman, rather than Republican, model.

Muslim nationalism, I suggest, is largely based on a cultural Turkism, rather than blood-based Turkish ethnicity, and imagines the nation as having more flexible Ottoman imperial boundaries, rather than historically embattled Republican borders. This view creates quite a different understanding of Turkish national interests and allows Muslim nationalists the freedom to open borders to Arab states, make alliances globally, and pursue economic interests without concern for the ethnic identity of its interlocutors or the role they played in Republican history (with former enemies Greece and Armenia, for instance). Not surprisingly, such actions have occasioned great tension and a backlash from Kemalist secularists, who have consolidated forces with the military. Hundreds of officers and members of civil society have been arrested over the past three years in what has come to be known as the Ergenekon trial, accused of fomenting national chaos through assassinations and other means in order to pave the way for a coup against the AKP government.

Both secularists and "conscious" Muslims share a belief that to be Turkish means to be Muslim, and that Turkish Islam is the better form of Islam. Both desire to be modern, and each faction in its own way wishes to connect to the West. Both emphasize cultural and ideological purity. I will suggest as well that the association of sexual purity with national boundaries makes it difficult for women to imagine a place for themselves within the nation, as mothers of martyrs or as citizens perhaps, but not as national subjects. Indeed, *nationalist*—whether secular or Muslim—is a masculine term with which few women are able or willing to affiliate.

An important aspect of the term *Muslim nationalism*, then, is that it describes primarily a male experience of the relation between religious subjectivity and the

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state. Women may share many of the characteristics and ideas described previously, but their experience of Islamic modernity does not weld their identity to the nation-state. If the interface between nation and women is powerfully shaped by cultural discourses about their sex, in other ways, the distance between women's experience and nationalist expectations means that their ideas can afford to be less predictable and leave room for an appreciation of pluralism and debate.

Turkey arguably is becoming more socially conservative, and its traditional emphasis on maintaining group solidarity remains intact, although the constitution of such "groups" and networks has in some cases changed dramatically. This is true especially among the young, who are creating new roles within what appear on the surface to be traditional social and political frameworks. Surprisingly, Turkish society also may be becoming more liberal, as bourgeois expectations and practices and global connections transform daily life for "conscious" Muslims and others. One cannot say, however, that Turkey is becoming more democratic, as long as electoral success does not bring with it tolerance of nonconforming practices and identities. It may well be modern Muslim women who hold the most promising key to greater pluralism and tolerance, although they have been kept far from any door to national leadership.

Road Map

This discussion is largely based on research carried out in Turkey in 2008 that included participant observation as well as formal interviews and countless informal encounters. I spoke with individuals of both sexes—young and old, pious and secular, educated and working class, villagers and city dwellers, and of different faiths. Many of the people I spoke with I have come to know over the years as a result of repeated visits in the service of various research projects. Some have aging family photos in which I appear, noticeably younger. It is this trust and familiarity that I rely on to allow me some modicum of depth and insight into people's explanations of who they are. I am immensely grateful for their thoughtful answers and discussions among themselves to which I have been privy. Unless the speakers are public persons and have permitted me to use their names, I have used pseudonyms to protect their privacy. I was disappointed not to have been able to speak with right-wing nationalist youth. Despite introductions, in this polarized climate I was unable to overcome their suspicions. Although the method was less satisfactory, of necessity I relied on survey data to flesh out their views.

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I make no attempt in this present study to be representative, but I wish to discuss certain discursive patterns that emerged from my conversations. I define as "Muslim" those who responded to my questions about their identity (*kimlik*) by volunteering Muslim before Turk, and "secularists" as those who made a point of placing a Muslim identity second to Turkishness, however they defined it. Other scholars have examined this difference between Turk-first and Muslim-first self-attribution. Most recently, in 2010, concerned about social "othering" of people of different origins in Turkey, the Educators Labor Union (*Eğitim Bir-Sen*) commissioned a national study of Turkish identity. Among other things, respondents were asked how they presented themselves in terms of cultural identity. Fifty-three percent chose Turk, and 33 percent chose Muslim.[51] In another 2010 study, in which respondents were given more choices, they selected the following as their "most important identity": Turkish citizen, 36 percent; Turkish *millet/ulus* (nation, people, tribe), 29 percent; devout Muslim who obeys Islamic precepts, 18 percent; modern (*çağdaş*) Muslim with laic mindset and lifestyle, 9 percent; ethnic, 5 percent; regional, 1 percent.[52] When respondents in a different study were asked whether they were modern Muslims using the term *modern*, instead of *çağdaş*, which is associated with Kemalism, 63 percent chose that over "traditional Muslim".[53] In a 1998 national study of Turkish youth, respondents who chose to identify themselves as religious-traditional nearly always chose Turkish-national as the second point of reference, and vice versa.[54] What is clear from the many surveys on identity is that being Turkish and being Muslim are primary, overlapping expressions of belonging. What is not clear is what it means to be Muslim or a Muslim Turk or a Turkish national subject.

In surveys respondents are generally asked to select from a list of prepared choices. In contrast, I did not specify answers but simply asked people who they were and how they presented themselves to others, then asked them to elaborate upon their relation to the nation and national culture. It is interesting that, despite not being prompted, most men began with either Muslim or Turkish as their primary form of self-identification, and with Turkish or Muslim second. Women and some liberals were an exception to this, and this is part of the story I wish to tell here. Since the Muslim-first and Turkish-first identity division was so powerful and seemed also to predict how people related to the nation and national culture, I framed the larger discussion in this book in those terms. I took the liberty of substituting "secular" for "Turkish," as in "secular nationalism," since that more clearly reflected the complex of meanings associated with "Turkish" in this context. My conversational partners generally marked their choice of a "Turkish" identity by making a point of placing Muslim second, sometimes deliberately highlighting their secular lifestyle.

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This is not an attempt to reduce the present social conflict to secular versus Muslim (although these are powerful constituent elements) but, rather, to try to understand *de novo*, with as few preexisting expectations as possible, how people with different characteristics and positions in society perceive of themselves as part of a nation. That is, what forms of knowledge make up their national subjectivity, under what circumstances, and why? And, finally, what can we understand about the present social tensions—which are expressed in discourses about Turkishness—by grasping what this means to people in practice? This method displaces a wide variety of indigenous differentiations of national and nationalist identity but has the benefit of encouraging people to describe what they know about who they are in relation to the world without reproducing preexisting nationalist categories. This approach was designed to allow people to loosely position themselves along a continuum of self-defined values. I hoped in this way to capture the strategic and potentially contradictory aspects of national subjectivity.

Chapter 2 takes a look at the relation between Islam and the nation in Turkish history. I focus particularly on social and political developments since the 1980s—the rise and decline of Islamism as a political movement, its replacement by a new generation of Muslim democrats and pious modernists, and the development of what I call Muslim nationalism. These are discussed in part as outcomes of macro-political factors, such as the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the EU's lukewarm response to Turkey's membership bid, but also within the context of Turkish national culture.

Chapter 3 examines secular nationalism. Approaching nationalisms as forms of knowledge embedded in discourses, I begin the chapter with a deconstruction of my conversations with prominent and powerful nationalists. I also ask where and how nationalist forms are produced and reproduced in society. This topic entails discussion of schoolbooks, rituals, and military service, which act as criteria of validity, and structure reception of particular "truths." Media, advertisements, cinema, popular culture, and word of mouth also play a role, and are discussed here and in the following chapters.

Chapter 4 examines two key emblems of fear—the missionary and the headscarf—as axes of Turkey's social and political polarization.

Chapter 5 discusses the role of boundaries and purity in reproducing Turkish identity. I begin with conceptions of "the enemy" and the often violent attempts to "unmix" the population. Fears of boundary penetration and loss of the nation are kept at bay through purity rituals and taboos. I examine objects that are perceived to be "out of place" (like the headscarf), the purification of space through placement of images, rehearsal of in-group/out-group membership in festivals, food preferences,

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and notions of the purity of blood, custom, language, religion, and music. I also examine entanglement and hybrid (*melez*) forms within society and the expression of these forms within national identity(ies) and political ideology. Liberalism, for instance, can be considered an ideological form of hybridity that, by its very nature of accepting boundary crossing, engages the defenses of the militarist nation.

Chapter 6 takes up the gendered aspect of nationalism and the nation. Two tropes of national identity are soldier and mother of soldier. The link between masculinity and the nation is summed up by the phrases "We are all soldiers" or "Turks are born soldiers," two common male refrains heard throughout Turkish society. The discourse of nationalism uses the same language and imagery as that of sexual purity or honor, that is, the shame brought about by penetration of sexual boundaries. The effect of such discourses, I suggest, is that men and women position themselves differently in the national imaginary.

In Chapter 7, I discuss the dual and contradictory nature of Turkish social and political life as it accommodates individual choice and motivations while validating the primacy of family and community in determining ethics and norms. The collision of individual liberties with the collective logic of Turkish society is played out on a national scale in the contradictory policies and practices of Muslim nationalists and Kemalist secularists. The final chapter examines the concept of Muslim nationalism in relation to the interplay of religion and nationalism in other countries. For instance, Turkey has been widely touted as a model for Arab countries building democratic systems after the Arab Spring. What lessons can be drawn from this analysis of Muslim nationalism about the future course of the Arab Spring?