CHAPTER I
SECULARIZATION AS A CONCEPT

If we want to find out whether the extended secularization paradigm can provide a plausible explanation for the transformation of Alevi communities regarding their belief system and its effect on the marital issues, first of all, it is crucial to elaborate what secularization as a concept means. For that reason, at the beginning of this chapter, the concept of secularization will be fleshed out. Two fallacies, i.e. the general perception of "secularization = disappearance of religion" (which has been put forward by well-known sociologists of religion like Peter Berger, Grace Davie, Rodney Stark *et al*. and which also finds support in Turkey) and the identification "secularization = laicization" (the two terms are often confused in Turkey by scholars and media) are fairly widespread. Therefore, in this chapter, after discussing secularization as a concept, I will argue how the concept of secularization differs from being irreligious, and also why it would be a mistake to use the concepts of secularization and laicization interchangeably.

WHAT DOES SECULARIZATION MEAN?

According to Evert Van der Zweerde (2014: 132), there are two basic senses of any –ization: *process* and *policy*. Secularization could thus be "an objective process that can be observed, analysed, *etc*."

or "an active policy". In this dissertation, I will explore the term as a process rather than as a policy, since the aim of this study is to examine whether changes in the three elements of modernization have any kind of effect on the secularization process in Alevi communities. However, it should be noted in the beginning of this chapter that, "the concepts of 'secular' (…) are hard to pin down, and far from neutral. Notions in the conceptual field of 'secular' may seem neutral or objective, but they never are: they are always also *polemical* notions" (Van der Zweerde, 2014: 137). Therefore, the concept of secularization in this thesis is not exempt from polemics.

Etymologically, the word secularization goes back to saeculum of Ancient Rome, and the word has been used in different senses since then. First of all, in Ancient Rome and early Christendom, it refers to a long period of time as in a century or age (Bremmer, 2008). The word secular was still used in the first half of the 17th century as an adjective to define "long-lasting". John Donne, a poet from Oxford, used the term in one of his sermons in this way: "If I had a secular glass, a glass that would run an age" (Burnett, 1807; Donne, 1840). This usage corresponds to *secolo* (Italian), *siglo* (Spanish), *segle* (Catalan), *século* (Portuguese) and *siècle* (French) in the Romance languages of today. Jan Bremmer (2008) argues that the term, which had been used to define a period of time equal to an age, underwent important changes in the early Middle Ages. He says that the notion of *saeculum* was defined by Christian theologians "as the world in which we live, a world that is characterized by sin and the rejection of God" (Bremmer, 2008: 432). The contribution of Christian theologians to the concept of *saeculum* in Ancient Rome is rendered by Yehoshua Arieli as follows:

> It is a new era [*nova aetas*] structured on the rejection of the belief in the determining force of transcendence as an actor in history as the idea was formulated in the Bible and in the Augustinian scheme of the two cities. It is a new era that denies the claim of the Church to be the lawgiver and foundation of all values, truth and meaning for man, living in the world, the saeculum, or city of man (1994: 205).

Another usage in the history of the word secular is within canon law for ecclesiastics who abandon monasticism in favour of the "world." However, these "secular" ecclesiastics did not cut off their ties with the Church. Different from the radical ecclesiastics, who shut themselves up in their monastery and lived in seclusion, these men continued to maintain their relations with the world out there. Hence, they attempt to find solutions to the everyday problems of society from a religious perspective and through dialogue with the people (Casanova, 1994: 12-13). Yet another usage, as a noun (*secularisation*) and as a verb (*seculariser*), is found in French in the second half of the 16th century, and refers to "transfers of goods from the possession of the Church into that of the world of the lay people" (Bremmer, 2008: 433), i.e. "the massive expropriation and appropriation, usually by the state, of monasteries, landholdings, and mortmain wealth of the Church after the Protestant Reformation" (Casanova, 1994: 13).

Today there seems to be no agreement among scholars over what secularization is and what it is not. José Casanova argues the following for the concept on the basis of contemporary usage:

> (...) the concept itself is so multidimensional, so ironically reversible in its contradictory connotations, and so loaded with the wide range of meanings it has accumulated through its history. The concept's very range of meanings and contradictions makes it practically non-operational for the dominant modes of empirical scientific analysis (1994: 12).

According to Larry Shiner (1967: 207), one of the characteristics of the contemporary academic world is a profound disagreement in terms of defining and measuring secularization. While the disagreement referred to by Shiner used to be found between sociologists like Bryan Wilson and David Martin in the middle of the 1960s, the debates seem to continue unabated today between scholars such as Steve Bruce and Rodney Stark. In these debates, to which other sociologists of religion also contribute significantly,[7] what secular-

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7   Grace Davie (1994; 2002), Peter L. Berger (1997; 2008), José Casanova (1994;

ization is and whether it defines the relationship between society and religion (especially in West European countries, but also in the USA and other developed countries) are discussed in detail.

In an environment in which scholars tend to consolidate their positions on issues on the basis of their own and sometimes contrasting definitions, the concept of secularization is in a position akin to that of a servant who has more than one master (Shiner, 1967: 207). Therefore, it would seem fairly clear that whenever the word secularization is used, it is important to know first of all what the author means by using the concept.

Martin (1965) has argued that the concept of secularization was used as an ideology in the 1960s, and that for this reason it should not be used in sociological literature to explain the relationship between religion and society. By contrast, Wilson (1966: 11) argued that secularization did not have an ideological aspect, but was used to express the decline in the impact of religion in Europe and the USA as a mode of thought guiding daily practices. The term itself did not support this transformation in religion-society relation. Peter Berger (1967a: 107), in his early writings, uses the term for "the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols. (…) the decline of religious contents in the arts, in philosophy, in literature (…)." Richard K. Fenn (1969: 112) summarizes what had been said of secularization until 1969 as follows: "expropriation of ecclesiastical property; renunciation of powers; declericalisation of structures; deconfessionalising of social services; desacralization of cultures; the de-ideologising of traditions; the demythologizing of sources (…)." Wilson (1979: 277) also stated that religion, having gradually lost its authority, has been reduced to the same status as any other item to be consumed in a consumer society as well as being marginalized in day-to-day activities. In addition, Thomas Luckmann views as hallmarks of secularization people's endeavour to find solutions

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2003; 2007), Mark Chaves (1994), Karel Dobbelaere (1985; 1999), Jeffrey K. Hadden (1987; 1995) among others.

for the problems they come across in their daily lives without consulting religion or religious figures, the restriction on the control of religion in non-religious areas, the estrangement of any religious belief from being the dominant culture and means of expression within society and the ensuing confinement of religion to the private sphere (Luckmann, 1979: 12; Tschannen, 1991: 398). Frank J. Lechner (1991: 1104) emphasizes the concept of cultural pluralism that emerges with rationalization, the formation of different social strata, and the assumption of social tasks by different groups which previously belonged to religious institutions. Mark Chaves (1994: 750) argues that secularization should not be understood as the decline of religion, but as the declining power of religious authority. Casanova (1994: 19) highlights functionalist differentiation and, just like Lechner, sees social modernization as liberation of the secular sphere (state, economy, art, science) from the religious sphere. Karel Dobbelaere (1999) explains secularization on a social level as the replacement of traditional society with complex, pragmatist and modern society, the loss of the power of religious knowledge in favour of rational knowledge, and the replacement of the religion-moulded traditional jurisdiction by the secular legal order. Bruce (2002: 3), finally, sees secularization as a decline of behaviours and thoughts whose reference point is religion, not to mention breakdown in the previously prevalent power of religion, just as many have already pointed out above, in non-religious spheres – economy, health, education.

These scholars define the term secularization either as a decrease in religion and religious authority or restriction of religion into the private sphere. However, unlike them, there are other prominent scholars who perceive secularization as the complete disappearance of religion, total disengagement of the modern person from religion, or as the equivalent of laicization – a view that is especially prevalent in Turkey. For example, Berger, one of the world's most reputable sociologists of religion, argues the following with respect to the concept of secularization:

> I think what I and most other sociologists of religion wrote in the 1960s about secularization was a mistake. Our underlying argument was that secularization and modernity go hand in hand. With more modernization comes more secularization. It wasn't a crazy theory. There was some evidence for it. But I think it's basically wrong. Most of the World today is certainly not secular. It's very religious. So is the U.S. The one exception to this is Western Europe. One of the most interesting questions in the sociology of religion today is not, How do you explain fundamentalism in Iran? But, Why is Western Europe different? (1997: 974)

Harvey Cox, who is recognized as one of the key theorists of secularization in the 1960s with his book *The Secular City*, later claimed that the theory of secularization had collapsed,[8] because there were religious revivals all around the world (Cox & Swyngedouw, 2000). Stark and Iannaccone, by contrast, accept the following sentences by F. C. Wallace as the anticipated impact of secularization:

> The evolutionary future of religion is extinction. Belief in supranatural beings and supranatural forces that affect nature without obeying nature's laws will erode and become only an interesting historical memory. Belief in supranatural powers is doomed to die out, all over the World, as the result of the increasing adequacy and diffusion of scientific knowledge (1994: 230).

Jeffrey K. Hadden (1987; 1995) states that the concept of secularization ostracizes the sacred, and that various intellectuals since the Enlightenment have wished for the disappearance of religion. Moreover, many have tried to prove that religion belonged to primitive people and would therefore perish completely with modernization. Hadden argues that these hostile sentiments against religion and wishes for non-religious societies have been sacralized as secularization theory. Therefore, Hadden sees secularization as becoming irreligious, and claims that there are totally opposite developments (due to the presence of religious people in modern societies), and the theory of secularization should be seen as an outdated theory.

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8   Cox criticizes the idea that modernization creates problem for religion by looking at modern countries.

Seeing secularization as the total disappearance of religion has been taken up by reputable scholars in Turkey such as Ali Köse and Talip Küçükcan. Köse (2006) defines secularization as the erasion of religion from the earth due to modernization, while Küçükcan (2005) defines it, following the founding fathers of sociology like Claude Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) and Auguste Comte (1798-1857), as the gradual disappearance of religion in industrialized societies. But then he goes on to claim that there is indeed religious revival all around the world, and that there has not been secularization in most parts of the world at the beginning of the 21st century. While a more detailed critique of this understanding (i.e. perceiving secularization as the disappearance of religion) merits being the subject of another dissertation, we will consider this approach critically below when discussing what secularization does not mean.

I stand closer to scholars who define secularization as a process through which the influence of religion on society declines, partly because its final end is not specified in the process of secularization itself. That religion's decline in power and prestige coincides with the modernization process does not mean that they have or would become totally extinct. In this sense, we can say that sociologists of religion such as Stark, Hayden, Davie, and Berger, who define secularization as the extinction of religion due to the modernization process, present a rather crude definition of the term.

At this point, I tend to agree with those who define secularization as a process whereby the power and prestige of religion declines, rather than those who advocate for the disappearance of religion. However, I am also of the opinion that the definitions put forward above are rather religion-centric (with a focus on Christianity) and for that matter also church-centric. We need a concept with a more comprehensive framework rather than reducing a concept with a universal character to a specific religion or to an established institution within that religion. Nonetheless, a decline in the power of religion is certainly associated with secularization, but earthly structures that have been sacralised and gained religion-like characteris-

tics are also within secularization's field of interest. In addition, not only the social power and influence of religions and religion-like structures, but also folk and superstitious beliefs constitute part of the discussions on secularization.

That being said, I define secularization in general terms as follows: *Secularization is the relative decrease in the social prestige and social influence of dominant metaphysical realm*, i.e. *religions, folk religions, religion-like mechanisms and superstitious beliefs, within a defined period of time and in a particular place.*

In this study, the concept *metaphysical realm* is used as an embracing concept and covers the field of reasoning and thinking on the concepts and events based on belief and intuition rather than experiment and observation. For example having attitudes, commitments, believes and approaches with regard to nature without an observable connection to experiences are considered part of the metaphysics (Steup, 2011: 21-22). Since metaphysical realms vary across societies, the word "dominant" is used to point out there is no one way or unique experience of metaphysics.

Here, the phenomenon called *religion* has been used, in the first place, as a paradigm in its entirety based on metaphysical references and having an influence on daily practices, ethical values, aesthetical perceptions, ontological (existential) problems, the perceptions about social norms of the communities in which they are practised as in monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, *etc*.). I think Durkheim's definition will be helpful at this point. "A religion" says Durkheim (1912/2008: 46), "is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and surrounded by prohibitions - beliefs and practices that unite its adherents in a single moral community." Such an entity, being an ethical system presenting proper and correct conduct modes, can also function as a social control mechanism, and contributes to the maintenance of the social order, thereby encouraging those attitudes and conducts that are socially acceptable (Atay, 2012: 25).

The concept of *folk religion* is used to mean "the totality of all those views and practices of religion that exist among the people apart from and alongside the strictly theological and liturgical forms of the official religion" (Yoder, 1974: 14).

The notion of *religion-like mechanisms*, on the other hand, has exclusively been used in this thesis to indicate the structures emerging as a result of the sacralisation, deification and sublimation of the secular domain. The religion-like structures are those that emerge as a consequence of the belief that a political leader, a singer, a fashion icon, a nation, a community, a football player, even a particular location possesses supranatural characteristics or powers and the consequential glorification, deification and sacralisation of such entities. For example, some world leaders may be deified, sublimed, ascribing to them a superhuman character. People have sometimes seen such leaders even as more dignified than prophets, ascribing to them the character of a semi-prophet. Everything they say is passed from one generation to another over decades or centuries, like the verses of a holy book. Their influence is not limited to the period in which they live, but their ideas offer solutions to problems in a timeless manner. Furthermore, laws are enacted to protect them from criticisms; and quite often, it becomes impossible to criticise them because of social sanctions. A divine characteristic is attributed to their arguments and they gain a transcendental characteristic.

A *superstitious belief* is "defined as a strong conviction based on the erroneous perception of a cause-effect association between two independent events" (Joukhador, J., Blaszczynski, A. & Maccallum, F., 2004: 171) and inconsistent with the known laws of nature (Kramer & Block, 2008). The term superstitious has a pejorative meaning in daily usage and presupposes that there is a true belief (generally the dominant religious belief) and other beliefs apart from this true belief are considered false, irrational, and incompatible with truth. However, it should be stressed that in this thesis the term is not used in this pejorative meaning but just to describe a belief or practice that is not in harmony with orthodox religious

understanding as it arises from holy scriptures and that is not explained with the laws of nature. Therefore, for lack of a better term, despite its weaknesses, the term superstitious is used in this study without its pejorative meaning.

The phrases *relative* and *a defined period of time and particular place* in the definition are used in order to prevent an absolute understanding. In other words, they are used to indicate the weaker social power of religions, folk religions, religion-like mechanisms and superstitious beliefs "in comparison to the past" in a "particular place" rather than indicating an absolute value or level. We can say, for this reason, that even a rather faithful community may undergo a "secularization" process or may become more secular compared to the olden days. In the same way, it can also be said that a quite religious individual may also be secularised in comparison to former times or may become part of a more secular life. To sum up, to decide whether any person or community becomes more secular or not, a reference point (time and place) is needed.

The crucial point of this definition is that it will help us explain the relationship between different forms of the "sacred" and human beings in various parts of the world. For, as the above definition states, secularization denotes the decrease in the social impact not only of religion, but also of secular "things" that are religion-like, sacralized, deified or exalted into a supranatural realm.

In short, if religion is able to penetrate social life and to influence daily activities more than it did in the past, then it is argued that this society has become less secular. By the same token, if a society distances itself from religion compared to what was the case in the past due to some new dynamics, and if religion, folk religions or religion-like things are mentioned less often and have less influence in daily life, then it can be stated that this society is becoming more secular.

WHAT DOES SECULARIZATION NOT MEAN?

Up until now, we have examined some definitions which for the most part express what secularization is. However, in order to better express the concept of secularization and to demonstrate the fallacy of the mainstream perception, I find it necessary to explain what the concept of secularization is not.

Secularization does not Equal Becoming Irreligious

It has been stated that certain scholars writing on secularization in English as well as Turkish academia see secularization as "becoming irreligious," and interpret the presence of various religious people in today's modern world as an absence of secularization. However, secularization does not mean becoming irreligious or faithless. In a secularized society, as defined in this study, individuals can still have religious faith and can still perform religious rituals. Sociologists of religion who perceive secularization as becoming irreligious have often put forward a very crude interpretation of secularization and a highly simplistic perception of religion.

It could be claimed that changing one's belief system in favour of another religion is not a sign of secularization, since the individual is still said to be under the influence of another religion. However, secularization should not be confused with atheism or deism. What is important as far as secularization is concerned is the softening up of a religion up to a point where it becomes an entity that can be preferred or rejected. If a religion, which is supposed to be carried from birth to death, turns into something that is selectable, this is called secularization (Bruce, 1998: 229).

The process of secularization may result in many people distancing themselves from religion or losing their faith altogether. Bruce (2002; 2011a) remarks that these two processes are interrelated in that the decline in the social importance of religion may also lead to a drop in the number of people interested in religion. Nevertheless, the two processes are not identical, and this standpoint does not

necessarily suggest that the final point of secularization is becoming irreligious or that religion will vanish. It is not easy, or even possible, to make such a direct correlation in the light of the current presence of religion in secular societies.

The absence or presence of religious belief for that matter is not the primary parameter for measuring secularization's pervasive impact. The real issue here is the estrangement of religion from being a positive (as exemplified by an authentic religious life) or negative (as exemplified by certain militant atheists) reference point in society. Max Weber's concept of being *religiously unmusical* (Weber, 2009: 324) will help us in this context: "It is true that I am absolutely unmusical religiously and have no need or ability to erect any psychic edifices of a religious character within me. But a thorough self-examination has told me that I am neither antireligious nor irreligious." In terms of secularization, even if the decline in the social impact of religion may result in an increase in the number of atheists or agnostics, what needs to be emphasized is not being irreligious, but becoming indifferent to religion. Because, secularization questions the ways in which religion penetrates society's fabric, sometimes certain religious people can even act in a more secular way than certain atheists. Some atheists, even if they do not believe in a higher power or creator, can act in a less secular manner because of their connection to religion. We can collate these theoretical arguments in Table A1 in the context of the cafés at *Nişantaşı*, a very popular district for *white Turks* (elite Turks) in İstanbul.[9]

9   The reaction against the conservative AKP government, especially between 2007-2009, focused on headscarfed women in the streets. At the beginning of 2008, the political discussions which emerged because of the law that allowed the wearing of a headscarf at universities started to position themselves over the issue. The most caricaturized forms of these discussions were the reactions to the visibility of the headscarf in places where they were not previously visible. The journalist Ayşe Arman, from the Hürriyet daily, spent time in the famous Nişantaşı cafés such as House Café and Beymen Brasserie while wearing a headscarf and wrote her impressions in order to examine the claims about the laic-neighbourhood's pressures against the headscarfed women in the cafés of Nişantaşı (Arman, 2009, July 12). In addition to this, these discussions have continued until recently. At the beginning of 2013, the wellknown theatre actress Gülriz Sururi

Table A1. A café (previously frequented only by those who had a secular lifestyle) and secular way of action.

Person	Faith & ideology	The act of going to a Nişantaşı café which is "now" frequented also by those wearing a headscarf	Is this action secular?
First Woman (No headscarf)	Militant Kemalist[10] or Militant Atheist[11]	She does not go to this café anymore, because she does not feel comfortable going to a café where there are people wearing a headscarf.	No
Second Woman (Headscarfed)	Moderate Muslim[12]	She goes to this café because she loves very much the caramel macchiato that is served there.	Yes
Third Woman (Headscarfed)	Radical Muslim[13]	She goes to this café even though it is not to her taste. She thinks that by going there she is taking revenge upon those who had despised her for years.	No

said the following in an interview: "Look, people can veil themselves according to their free will. I accept that. But where were they ten/twelve years ago? They have come out systematically. They were commanded to sit in the cafés of Nişantaşı, so they did. They spread everywhere, to the most unexpected restaurants, the most unexpected cafés, cinemas, theatres" (Sururi, 2013, February 19).

10 In this study, a militant Kemalist has been defined as an individual claiming to be a Kemalist who expects that everyone she/he coexists, or must coexist, in the public sphere should conduct in compliance with her/his own ideology.

11 The notion of militant atheism has been used in this study for situations where the reaction given against seemingly religious people in particular has an influence on the daily life of an individual.

12 In this study, the term of moderate Muslim has been used to refer to the individuals the religions of whom play no crucial role in their daily life activities.

13 The notion of radical Muslim has been used in this study to characterise the individuals whose religious beliefs have a radical and constant influence on their daily life activities.

From this table, we can see that sometimes a religious person can act more "secularly" than an atheist person. This is because secularization is not about becoming irreligious, but is rather about the social contexts where religion is less and less taken as a positive or negative reference point. In this example, the daily behaviour of the First Woman (to go or not to go to a café she used to frequent) is influenced by her relationship with religion. Although she does not have any religious faith or does not have much connection with religion in her daily life, her reaction towards religion, religious people or religious symbols provides direction for her daily life. At times, her negative relationship to religion or religious people restrains her from doing the things she likes (such as going to her favourite café). The Third Woman, who is a radical Muslim, wants to go to that café from where she had been excluded for years because of her outfit, this time only because of the rejection she had to endure in the past, even though she does not care much about the menu of the café. Just like the First Woman, the Third Woman also decides to go to that café due to her relationship with religion. Even if one of them goes to the café and the other does not, both of them act on the basis of their relationship with religion as a reference point. Whether the action is positive or negative does not change the fact that the action arises from their relationship with religion. However, the Second Woman, who also wears a headscarf just like the Third Woman, goes to that café mainly to have *caramel macchiato*. She has this coffee not on the basis of her relationship with religion, but according to her taste, irrespective of religion or religious discussion, and she prefers a place where she can, but must not wear a headscarf. When we juxtapose these three people – in the context of one and the same café – we can state that the Second Woman, who is a moderate Muslim, acts more secularly than both the First Woman, who is an atheist, and the Third Woman, who is a radical Muslim.

Therefore, it should be stressed once more that secularization is not to be equated with becoming irreligious. On the contrary, peo-

ple do not have to lose their faith when they become secular. They can still regularly go to churches, mosques, synagogues or other sacred places of their faith, baptize their children, sacrifice animals, go on *Hajj*, celebrate Thanksgiving Day in crowded and appropriate places, perform prayers, fast, and carry out all their religious duties and rituals. When it comes to secularization, how the individual cares about religion positively or negatively in matters such as premarital relations, abortion, sexual orientation, birth control, education, health, divorce, euthanasia, having premarital or extramarital children, choice of work and friends, marriage between people of different religions or denominations, choice of city or neighbourhood to live in, understanding of vacation, *etc*. seems more important than how often s/he prays or the faith s/he adheres to. Certainly, changes in the frequency of religious rituals or changes in the number of people who have a faith are also important in discussions on secularization. However, the concept of secularization in this thesis focuses on how religion, religious-like structures, folk beliefs and superstitious practices are reflected in societal life. Therefore, it is crucial to emphasize the difference between a faith, which has lost its power to influence people's daily practices after having been reduced to certain rituals during specific times of the year, and other forms of faith which still hold the power to regulate societal life in terms of discussions on secularization. For that reason, the secularization concept in this thesis is not related to the number of believers, but to the functions of faith in daily practices.

Secularization does not Equal Laicization

The concept of secularization is discussed frequently in academic studies and even in daily life, especially in countries where Germanic languages (English, German, Dutch, *etc*.) are spoken. However, when it comes to Turkey, the concept has not received the attention that it deserves due to historical and etymological reasons. Turkish scholars and media have preferred to use the terms derived from the

Greek word *laïkós* meaning "from the people" and the Latin word *laicus* meaning "not related to religious affairs" (Küçük, 2011: 46), namely, terms such as laic, laicism or laicization to describe what secular, secularism and secularization mean, respectively. It would be very common in Turkey for two people to vehemently argue on certain topics related to religion and society without using - even once - the terms derived from *saeculum*. And that is because the terms derived from *laïkós* have already been used to express all those ideas related to the issues of religion-society-state. Therefore, for the sake of this dissertation, the ambiguity and confusion regarding these terms should first be clarified by highlighting the key differences between them. In doing so, the following thus contributes to the discussions on these issues by liberating them from the "laicization – Islamisation" dichotomy prevalent in Turkey.

In contrast to the concept of secularization that aims to define an objective process between religion and all other entities, laicization is an active policy, implemented in France and Turkey, which projects the relation between the state and religion. In its broadest sense, laicization denotes the separation of the state from religion, the state being equidistant to all religious groups, and religious groups not being allowed to have a voice in education, health, security, law, or economy, all of which are under state supervision. It also signifies the state not looking after the interests of certain religious groups when taking decisions on internal and external affairs, people not being suspended from state institutions or promoted on the basis of their religious beliefs; in short, the state is irreligious.

Even if this can be considered a definition of laicization, it is not enough to merely provide a definition when it comes to laicization since the practices of it differ throughout history. Because of the 1789 French Revolution and the 1923 Kemalist Revolution, laicization has been held to mean not only the separation of state from religion as defined above, but also the struggle of the state to establish hegemony over religious institutions. The Turkish word

laiklik comes from the French word *laïcité*. After the French Revolution, one key purpose of the revolutionaries was to make people worship not the Church, but the State. The primary objective was to eliminate the Church or at least hinder its progress so as to always remain under the hegemony of the State. Soon after the revolution, many priests and nuns were shot, hung, or mutilated with axes if they were believed to have been collaborators of the previous regime (Souvay, 1923: 489). The ecclesiastics who refused to pledge loyalty to the new regime were threatened with death and the revolution's laws replaced the laws of the Church (Brunner, 1991: 76). In brief, the French revolutionaries separated religious affairs from those of the state and aimed their revolution at eliminating the Church by replacing it with the state.

Inspired by the French system of thought and state structure, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the politically active intellectuals of the young Turkish Republic adopted the French style for their new state. Like the French Jacobins, they wanted to redesign society through a highly centralized structure. Just as the Jacobins had managed to eliminate the Church from the state affairs under the concept of *laïcité*, Atatürk also wished, in the name of *laiklik*, to remove all religious symbols from social life and render everything religious under state control. Until he died in 1938, Atatürk continued to either change the Islamic symbols or eliminate/nationalize them so as to liken Turkish society to contemporary (Western) secular societies. He wanted to found not only a laic state, but also to create a secular society. He passed radical laws both to laicize the state and to prevent religion from penetrating Turkish life (the policy of secularizing).

In 1922, the Ankara Government[14] abolished the sultanate, which was probably the first step by the young Republic on its way

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14 In 1922, there were two governments in the territory then known as Turkey. The Ankara Government was established by Atatürk and his friends. The *Istanbul Government*, on the other hand, was set up by the supporters of the old

towards laicization. In 1924, the caliphate and the old ministry of religious affairs (Şeriye ve Evkaf Vekaleti) were abolished. A laic system of education was introduced with the removal of any distinction between *madrasah* (Islamic religious school) and school. The contents of the courses were cleansed of anything that smacked of religion. In 1925, monasteries, *zawiyahs* (Islamic religious schools), and shrines were closed down. A year later, the Swiss Civil Code and German Commercial Law formed the backbone of the new Republic's laws which were free of religion. The French revolutionaries had lengthened the days in a week from 7 to 10, so that people could not pray on Sundays and even banned the word "Sunday". Maybe not in that level and extent, but Atatürk also changed the weekend holiday from Friday to Sunday.

In 1928, the provision "Religion of the State is Islam" was deleted from the Constitution. Arguably, the most far-reaching move towards laicization of the state occurred in November of the same year. Atatürk changed the alphabet from Arabic to Latin and almost the whole nation had to learn the new written language from scratch overnight. In 1932, Arabic and Persian words were removed from the glossary under the name of purifying the Turkish language (Stirling, 1958: 399-403). According to Nilüfer Göle (1997: 50), all these efforts were aimed at estranging Turkish society from the Qur'ān and other religious sources in Arabic. In 1933, all religious educational institutions were closed down and religious education in primary schools was forbidden (Stirling, 1958: 396). Women, who previously had been given the right only to vote in local elections, received in 1934 the right to vote and be elected in the general elections.

And finally, in 1937 *laiklik* was formally added to the Constitution. Thus, the process which started with the abolition of sultanate and caliphate[15] was officially completed with the formal adoption

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regime.

15 The modernization process of Turkey cannot be thought of independently

of *laiklik* into the Constitution after ground-breaking decisions had been made in the fields of education, law, commerce and politics. Just as the French revolutionaries had founded a new republic by eradicating all traces of the old regime and by implementing *laïcité*, the Turkish revolutionaries removed religion from public domains and restricted it to private homes, degrading it to a point at which they could easily control it. Unlike the way the term is defined in the dictionaries, in both cases the exact situation is not like separation of two entities, but that one of them goes under the control of the other.

Another problem concerning the definition of the concept is etymological in nature. The Germanic languages (English, German, Dutch, Danish, *etc.*) do not use laicism to express the separation between state and religion. In these languages, the term that expresses this division is *secularism* rather than laicism. But in the dictionaries, the word *laïcité* is translated into English as secularism, German as *Säkularismus,* Danish and Norwegian as *sekularisme* and Dutch as *secularisme* although these two terms (laicism and secularism) refers to different things. If a person who speaks one of the Germanic languages uses the word laicism, s/he is primarily referring to the relation between state and religion in France or Turkey in particular. Because, as opposed to secularism which merely implies the separation of state and religion, religious institutions or religion itself has been controlled in the public sphere under the name of laicism.[16]

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from the modernization process of the Ottoman Empire, that is, from the reforms which took place in the 18th and 19th centuries. Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the roots of the new country, which Atatürk tried to build by modelling it on the West, were based on the military reforms of the 18th and 19th centuries, in the Imperial Edict of Gülhane in 1839, in the Royal Edict of Reform in 1856, and in the other regulatory laws on education, jurisdiction and the economy (Berkes, 2006).

16 Those Germanic languages do have the words derived from "laïkos": lay in English, Laie in German, leek in Dutch. However, instead of using it for a specific political move like in France and Turkey, they are used with the general meaning of non-ordained or, more generally, non-initiated.

While the state is not supposed to favour or disfavour religious positions in the so-called laic countries, the case is strikingly different when it comes to Turkish laicism. For example, Sunni Islam is taught in the public schools of Turkey as a requirement. Students, be they Alevi or atheist, have to take that course and learn how to pray like Sunni people. Besides, all mosques belong to the Turkish state and all the costs of mosques are paid for by the state. The sermons given each Friday in mosques are sent to all mosques from one centre, The Directorate of Religious Affairs, located in the capital city, Ankara. Therefore, it is not abnormal to learn that the contents of the sermons are directly linked to the government's interests (Gürpınar & Kenar, 2016).

In light of these different structures, it would not seem appropriate to use laicism and secularism or secularization and laicization interchangeably. For example, the regime of the United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden (until 2000) and Norway, where the head of state is also the head of an established state church or religion, is not one of laicism, but of secularism. These are not laic, because the state does have a religion, even if it is only a figurative one. However, secularism is the political principle that the state is relatively equidistant to all groups of faith, which means that religion has no word in the state of affairs. The fact that these countries have secular judicial systems does not mean that they are therefore laic.

To overcome this etymological difference and confusion, Manoranjan Mohanty (1989) uses the concepts of "hegemonic secularism" and "democratic secularism". Ahmet Kuru (2007), on the other hand, uses the concepts "assertive secularism" and "passive secularism" to explain the different structures. In this case, we can say that according to Kuru and Mohanty, assertive/hegemonic secularism has been experienced in Turkey and France whereas other non-laic West European countries have been experiencing passive/democratic secularism. In the same vein, Van der Zweerde (personal communication, May 23, 2014) uses Catholaicité, New Englaicité

and Muslaicité to stress that what is being experienced in France, the USA and Turkey with regard to state-religion affairs is not one and the same thing and depends on the religious tradition in place.

In this case, if we can summarize the difference between secularization and laicization (as it has been implemented in Turkey and France), it will be the following:

> Secularization is the process of gaining independence from religion (...) without having an aggressive and antagonistic attitude against religion, on the other hand, laicization is the process where a direct hostile attitude is assumed against religion in an effort to eliminate all the rituals, realms, individuals and public conducts having religious character and substitute them with pure earthly and non-religious factors. As a stern attitude is taken against religion and religious institutions in the laicization process, this process will necessarily be accompanied by oppression, totalitarian inclinations, assimilation and projects of social liquidation (Duran, 1997: 13).

In other words, while the defenders of laicization in Turkey try to alienate religion from various aspects of social life, theorists of secularization do not seem to have such an objective. While laicization has pillars such as transforming and changing society, forbidding and enforcing things, theorists of secularization do not expect anything from either society or state. Laicization expresses the transformation desired at the state level, whereas secularization refers to the overall transformation mostly as an objective process. While laicization is the active policy of a politico-judicial principle, Wilson (1966), by contrast, stated that secularization is not an ideology and does not have as objective either to applaud or condemn the transformation of the relationship between religion and society. I think that the following summary by Hasan Yücel Başdemir of Turkish laicization is instructive:

> The implementation of Turkish-type laicism as a project of enlightenment and modernization has revealed another problem in terms of the freedom of religion. Laicism has been implemented as a lifestyle which has encompassed all the domains of life and which is alternative to the religious life. Laicism, which is fundamentally a *legal* and *political* thought and value (...) (2011: 148).

In brief, secularization is not something that can be imposed upon society, as is the case with laicization in Turkey and France. On the contrary, it is a process that has its own internal dynamics and emerges by itself. Now, it is necessary to look at examples of how these two concepts, which do have different meanings, are used in the Turkish media and academic world to mean the same thing.

Two Concepts Used Interchangeably

It should normally be taken for granted that the concepts derived from the word *laïkos* may be used far more frequently than the concepts derived from the word *saeculum* in a country where the principle of laicïty has been used to build a new system and then adopted in its constitution. However, the main problem in Turkey is not which concept is used more or used less, but that one of the concepts may be used to encompass the other. There are two pillars of such misuse: media and – parallel to it – academia. Turkish columnists, newspaper editors and some scholars have used the words laic, laicism, laicization instead of secular, secularism, and secularization for quite some time now, either because they think that the vast masses will not understand it, or because they are not themselves familiar with the concept. I think that it is no coincidence that there are still people asking, "Do you mean laicization?" whenever I try to explain what secularization is.

For example, journalist Mustafa Armağan (1997, September 26) opts for the title, "The Legend of Secularization (Laicization)" for his article in which he criticizes the secularization thesis. Armağan considers it more appropriate to use "laicization" in parentheses, probably so as not to scare off people from using an unknown word, secularization. Nuray Mert (2009, March 29) uses the title, "Do They Get Laicized as They Prosper?" for her column in *Hürriyet* with a discussion on the estrangement of prospering conservatives from religion. The content of the article exhibits a certain conceptual confusion because of the writer's bias against the word secularization. Özdemir İnce (2012, March 4), in his column in *Hürriyet*, uses

expressions such as "the social culture is laicized" or "the laicization of the individual." However, social culture can be secularized, but not laicized. Moreover, contrary to what İnce implies, individuals cannot be laicized. They can defend a laic state system, but by that fact cannot be considered laic. If we want to express the notion that individuals are living a life away from religion, it would seem more appropriate to say that they have been secularized, but not laicized.

In addition to the columnists, the editorial preferences of newspapers do not favour the word "secularization" either. If one searches how often big daily newspapers use the terms, the outcomes are very interesting. Table A2 demonstrates how often these terms have been used in a period of more than ten years by four top newspapers in Turkey. There are two main reasons why I have chosen these four newspapers. First, these four newspapers address quite large audiences, i.e. millions of people from different segments of society. The second is that due to the technical infrastructure they possess, research into the past is possible for Zaman, Hürriyet and Sabah until 1997, and Milliyet until 2001. This finding is related to concepts that render the claims above more concrete.

Table A2. Frequency of Usage of the Concepts "Laic-Laicism-Laicization" and "Secular-Secularism-Secularization" by Four Mass Newspapers

Newspaper	Time Scale	Laic-Laicism-Laicization	Secular-Secularism-Secularization
Zaman	October 1997 – September 2015	26.166 times	1.844 times
Hürriyet	July 1997 - September 2015	19.336 times	507 times
Milliyet	January 2001 – September 2015	12.180 times	325 times
Sabah	January 1997 - September 2015	2.950 times	444 times

Even if it can be agreed that the concepts derived from the word *laikós* have dominated the Turkish agenda (due to historical processes) more than the concepts derived from the word *saeculum*, where the frequency is 26.166 to 1.844 (*Zaman*) or 19.336 to 507 (*Hürriyet*), we need a different dynamic from that of Turkish political history or the mere existence of a word in the constitution in order to explain these figures. The reason for the apparent lack of enthusiasm in Turkish society for the word secularization is really not the indifference of Turkish public opinion concerning this issue. On the contrary, discussions on matters such as "becoming conservative," "Malaysianization," or "Iranianization," which have ranked among the most important issues of the Turkish agenda for so many years, do in fact address the realm of secularization. Even in these discussions, words such as laic, laicism, and laicization have been wrongly used instead of secular, secularism or secularization. For example, laicization of the social order is talked about in Hürriyet (2003, December 20) in this way: "(…) it has been understood that the social order will not laicize before schools are laicized." Laicization is also mentioned in Milliyet (2004, February 17): "Especially in Islamic societies which are in the midst of laicization process (…)." However, neither the laicization of social order nor the laicization of society is a meaningful expression. Laicization is not related to society but a concept related to the state.

Even if the academic world uses the concepts secularization - laicization interchangeably less often than the media, it is quite possible to still come across many wrong examples in Turkish academia. For example, although Anthony Giddens uses the word "secularization" as the subtitle in his famous book *Sociology,* the word was translated into Turkish as "laicization" and currently many universities still use that book for all freshmen. In the book Şerif Mardin'e Armağan (Companion to Şerif Mardin), Bahattin Akşit, who is one of the more notable sociologists in Turkey, writes:

> Casanova (1994) who questions and reformulates the laicization thesis in terms of the historical process (...). (...) to research the relationship between Islam and laicization. According to Casanova (1994) our evaluation rests on three separate moments when we say that a country or a society is laicized: differentiation, retreatment to the private sphere and the decrease in religiosity (...) (2005: 68).

> [*Laikleşme kuramını Protestanlığın dışındaki Katolikliğin geçirdiği tarihsel süreçler açısından sorgulayan ve yeniden formüle eden Casanova (1994) İslamiyet'in laikleşme ile olan ilişkisini araştırmamızı (...). Casanova'ya göre (1994), bir ülkenin veya toplumun laikleşmiş olduğunu söylediğimiz zaman üç farklı boyutta değerlendirme yapıyoruz: farklılaşma, özel alana çekilme ve dinselliğin azalması (...).*]

However, the statements made by Casanova in the book *Public Religions in Modern World* (1994) differ from those cited by Akşit. Casanova talks about secularization, not laicization, and discusses in his book the fundamental argument of the secularization theory. While Casanova (1994: 19) uses the subheading *Three Separate Moments of the Theory of Secularization*,[17] Akşit (2005: 68) translates this as "the three separate moments of laicization [*laikleşmenin üç farklı boyutu*]." While it is "the theory of secularization" which is prevalent throughout Casanova's book, Akşit adapts it to his article in terms of laicization. Yet another professor, Bünyamin Duran, uses laicization and secularization interchangeably in his early writings, and sees secularization as part of a project such as saving, purifying, liberating someone from something:

> Laicization (secularization) can be defined as the process of liberation of the human mind and thought – in general – from the control of religion and metaphysics. It is the purification and liberation of all the branches of social life, of politics, culture and science from religion-based values (1995: 29-30).

> [*Laikleşme (sekülerleşme); insan aklı ve düşüncesinin-genel olarak-dini ve metafizik denetimden kurtarılması süreci olarak tanımlanabilir.*

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17 In his book, José Casanova, after a statement on "the core and central thesis of the theory of secularization," explains the three dimensions that Akşit talks about.

Toplumsal hayatın tüm branşlarının; siyasetin, kültürün, bilimin dine dayanan değerlerden arındırılması ve bağımsızlaştırılması olayıdır.]

In addition, "secularism", as an ideology, is also confused with secularization in Turkey. The book entitled *Secularism on Trial* (*Sekülerizm Sorgulanıyor*), edited by Prof. Ali Köse and published in 2002, contained articles criticizing the theory of secularization, such that the title should indeed have been *Secularization on Trial*. This book, which focused on West-oriented literature, includes important articles by well-known scholars who have criticized the theory of secularization over the past 30 years, such as Peter Berger, Rodney Stark, Grace Davie and Harvey Cox. Unlike secularization, secularism, however, denotes an ideology which affirms a structure distant from religion at the level of both the state and the individual.

As can be understood from these examples, the scholars and journalists in Turkey have used laicization and secularization to mean the same thing many times for some understandable reasons. However, I think that these two concepts should not be used interchangeably, because they do have very different meanings. As will be seen below, states which are not laic may have societies which follow secular lifestyles, just as there are laic states which have highly religious societies.

Laic States with Religious Societies or vice versa

Laicization, in its broadest sense, only refers to the relation between religion and state, whereas secularization is also used to define the relation between religion and society. Therefore, a laic state may have non-secular societies, while non-laic states may have societies with a secular lifestyle. The founding fathers of the United States, such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin, all of them faithfully religious, separated religion from state affairs when the newly formed nation was being set up, grounding it upon the principle of "freedom of religion" (İmga, 2010). However, even though in the USA the state does not adopt a positive or negative

position towards any particular faith, the level of religious sensibility in American society is very high because of the peculiar dynamics within American society.[18] The ratio of church-going is much higher in the USA than in European countries even if all have a similar level of modernity.[19]

In addition, although the Islamic Republic of Iran has been governed by *shari'a* law since 1979, a considerable proportion of Iranian society has a secular lifestyle. The research carried out by Abdolmohammad Kazemipur and Ali Rezaei (2003: 357) shows that Iranian society has not become as religious as its state. Iranian women cannot take off headscarves in public places and Iranians cannot drink alcohol outside because of state law. However, in realms where the state does not interfere – especially inside the homes – they follow a secular lifestyle. The Iranian house parties (since they do not have the opportunity to have parties anywhere else) are places where women wear clothes with cleavages, where all kinds of alcohol are consumed, and where women and men are free from the religious laws imposed upon them by the state (Farid, 2013; Maxfux, 2013). The present religious regime seems to have a society which adheres to a more secular lifestyle day by day (Lotfi, Kabiri & Ghasemlou, 2013). The fact that the state is not laic and that it is governed

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18 There are important works written about the USA and Europe which have pursued different processes of secularization despite having the similar degrees of modernity. I think that it is not a coincidence that, while different from Europe, the USA did not go through the Protestant reform and did not experience the absolute monarchy, and as a country of emigration is therefore more religious. For related sources, see: Berger, Davie & Fokas, 2008; Casanova, 2003; 2007).

19 "American church membership rates have risen throughout the past two centuries—from 17% at the time of the Revolution to more than 60% in the 1990s." (Frejka & Westoff, 2008: 12). On the contrary, church membership rates in United Kingdom decreased from 27% at the beginning of the 20th century to 10% in the 2000s (Bruce, 2002: 67). In addition to this, while 12 % of American women between 18-44 years old go to church more than a week this ratio decreases to 3 % for European women. While 21 % of American women go to church once in a week, again, this percentage also decreased to 12 % for European women (Frejka & Westoff, 2008: 27).

by *shari'a* law does not make many Iranians more religious; it only makes them look more religious in the public domain.

Turkey is an interesting case in this respect as well. Although Turkish society experienced an exclusionary/hegemonic laicism throughout the 20th century, it has not been able to isolate itself from religion as much as the state wished. Atatürk and the governing elite thought that they could secularize Turkish society by abolishing the sultanate and dynasty, by changing the hats and clothings of the people, by closing down the monasteries, the *zawiyahs* and the shrines, and by changing the alphabet. But while it is possible to make the state laic with a law that is made part of the constitution, diminishing the presence of religion within society is not as easy as laicizing the state. If societies could be secularized by means of changes to the law, it should also be possible to divest oneself of this secularity with a single law. The secularization of society is not something that can be realized simply through the law or with a certain project. For this reason, we should state that although Turkey has tried to establish itself as a laic state and the laws enacted by the governing elites in the 1930s have caused people to practice their religion for a long time in places where the state cannot see it, this is just the opposite of what happened and is happening in Iran.

I do not for a moment wish to claim that there is not any interaction between laicism and secularization or between laicization and secularism. Certainly, Iran becoming a religious state has caused a group within Iranian society to become more religious, while the exclusionary laicism in Turkey has led to a group there becoming secularized. However, neither Iran was able to make its people more religious by using force, nor was Turkey able to estrange its people from religion, as the Kemalist elites had wanted, with top-down laws. The reason why these states have failed in their projects is that for secularization to take place, much more is needed than the power of the law.

Conclusion

There is no consensus within the social sciences with regard to the definition of secularization. For that reason, the academics who work on the concept of secularization need to clarify their understanding of secularization with their readers at the beginning of their studies. In addition, there is no consensus in the academic world on how secularization would be measured. Therefore, specifying the social dynamics that would be assigned priority in measuring secularization would prevent many misunderstandings. Since the following sections of the thesis are based on the secularization concept, what secularization is and what it is not had to be explained to the reader in detail.

Secularization, as far as it is defined in this study, is not only a concept used to explain the relationship between religion and society. Secularization means the decrease in social prestige, power and visibility of the metaphysical realm within a specific society at a certain period of time. The concept of metaphysics used here is not just religious but also encompasses (together with religion) folk beliefs, religion-like mechanisms and superstitions. Additionally, secularization should not be used as being synonymous with separation of state and religion or becoming irreligious. If secularization is defined as such, the frequency of prayers, the rates of going to church or changes in the number of believers will not be primal in measuring secularization because how metaphysics reflect itself on daily practices might be different in different societies or belief systems. From this point of view, the thing expressed here is not that change in religious rituals or in the number of believers is not important in measuring secularization. However, it should be emphasized one more time that the common feature of secularized societies is that the metaphysical realm now touches daily life practices less than in the past.