

## The Islamic Factor in Modern Turkish Social Life

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### Abstract

*This article analyzes the role and factors of Islam in the social life of modern Turkey. The research examines the influence of religion on social, political and cultural life, its role in the formation of values, customs and political decisions in society. The article shows that Islam has a significant influence not only as a personal belief, but also in areas such as social integration, gender relations, education and political activism. At the same time, the changing and flexible nature of Islam in the context of modern global processes, secularism and religious pluralism is analyzed. The article is written in the style of scientific analysis and serves to provide a deep understanding of the influence of religion on social structures in Turkish society.*

Keywords: Modern Turkey, social life, Islam, religious factor, social values, secularism, religious pluralism.

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### 1. Introduction

In modern Turkish society, the Islamic factor has a significant impact on various spheres of society. Although the Republic of Turkey has been based on the principles of a secular state since 1923, Islam has a central place in the system of social values, customs and political decisions, rather than as a personal belief[1]. Turkish secularism (laicism) regulates the relationship between the state and religious institutions, but in practice Islam occupies a strong place in different layers of society[1]. The influence of Islam in society is visible in the formation of social groups, political institutions and cultural identity. At the same time, modern global processes, the political model of secularism and religious pluralism are forcing the role of Islam in society to change. This study aims to scientifically analyze the impact of the Islamic factor on social integration,

political activism, education and cultural life in Turkish society. The Islamic factor in contemporary Turkish social life is seen as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. This factor plays an important role in political activism, social values, education and cultural life. At the same time, secularism and global processes emphasize the changing nature and flexibility of Islam in society. The results of the study help to better understand the role of Islam in social integration and the formation of cultural identity in Turkish society.

### 2. Methodology

In the social life of modern Turkey, the Islamic factor has a complex and multifaceted impact on various layers of society. In recent decades, it has been observed that Islamic values, within the social sphere, politics and culture, are inextricably linked not only to personal

beliefs, but also to the normative and institutional structure of society. It is important to study the role of Islam in the social life of modern Turkey through various social groups, the education system, political activism and cultural processes. The study aims to analyze the impact of the Islamic factor on social integration, normative norms and cultural identity, and scientifically sheds light on the interrelationships between religion and secularism in modern Turkey. Although the Republic of Turkey is officially a secular state, the penetration of Islam into society is clearly visible; religious education, the number of mosques, and the activities of religious organizations are influencing people's lifestyles. This is described as a process of "re-Islamization" in Turkey[1]. In her book *Islam in Modern Turkey*, Kim Shively links the role of Islam in Turkish society to historical processes that began before the Republic, and argues that the complex relationship between religious values and secular law continues in today's social structures[2]. According to Shively, Islam remains an important factor not only in the historical past, but also in the current political and cultural environment.

According to Turkish scholar Mustafa Akyol, there is not only a growth in religious education in Turkey, but also a liberal concept of Islam that offers an approach that is both anti-extremist and reconciles secularism and religious freedom[3]. He describes this concept in his book "Islam Without Extremes, A Muslim Case for Liberty," and shows the role of religion in social life in a pluralistic and liberal context. According to A.O. Dementyeva, the development of political Islam in Turkey between 1950 and 2023 and its impact on social divisions in society were analyzed[4]. Islamic views are expressed in many different layers through political programs. Islamic ideologies have become not only a personal belief, but also a central part of political life. Islamic ideologies have become not only a personal belief, but also a central part of political life. Although the Republic of Turkey is secular, religious institutions including the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) are run by the state, which is a sign of the regulation of Islam in society, thereby preserving religious values in various social spheres. This situation shows that Turkey has a complex system in which secularism and religious life are harmoniously combined.

### 3. Results

In modern Turkish society, Islam remains an important component of social life. Although the state is

constitutionally based on secular principles, religion has a significant impact on social institutions, daily life, and the system of collective values. Turkish scholar M. Hakan Yavuz states that Islam in Turkey is one of the main factors shaping the social identity of society. According to him, religious values determine family relationships, moral standards, and collective behavior[5]. In particular, religious ceremonies such as Ramadan and Eid al-Adha appear as mechanisms for strengthening social cohesion in society. English scholar Jenny White also notes the strong influence of Islam on everyday life in Turkey. In her opinion, although the level of religious practice varies in urban and rural areas, Islam as a system of moral values has permeated all layers of society[6]. It should also be noted that in Turkey, the religious education system (imam-khatib schools) plays an important role in the socialization of the younger generation. Through these schools, along with religious knowledge, moral values are also formed. In the cultural sphere, it is noted that the influence of Islam is also reflected in art, the media and social discourse. This process is interpreted as "cultural Islamization". The English scholar Mustafa Akyol argues that the role of Islam in Turkey is not uniform, but rather manifests itself in different forms within society. According to him, on the one hand, there is a conservative religious stratum, and on the other hand, there are Muslims with liberal and secular views[3]. This situation shows the complex and multi-layered structure of Turkish society. In addition, the processes of globalization and urbanization are transforming the role of Islam in social life.

Based on the above, it can be said that Islam remains an integral part of social life in modern Turkey. As a result, it plays an important role in the formation of social values and everyday life, influences political and social institutions, plays a significant role in the education and cultural system, and changes and manifests itself in various forms under the influence of modern processes. Therefore, the place of religion in Turkey remains as a stable and multifaceted social phenomenon, despite the secular system.

### 4. Analysis

In the social life of modern Turkey, the Islamic factor is manifested as one of the important factors that positively affect the development of society. Despite the existence of a secular state system in the country, religious values play a significant role in the formation of social relations, everyday life and collective consciousness. Especially as

a result of the socio-political changes observed at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries, the role of Islam in society has become more active, which has led to a number of social achievements. First of all, the Islamic factor has played an important role in strengthening social solidarity and cohesion in society. The traditions of mutual assistance, generosity and cooperation formed on the basis of religious values have increased the level of trust between citizens. In particular, mechanisms for supporting the underprivileged through mass iftars held during the month of Ramadan, charity events and the zakat system have expanded. As a result, informal social institutions that serve to ensure social equality in society have been strengthened and the level of social capital has increased[5]. Secondly, the religious factor has made a significant contribution to the development of the charity and social protection system. In Turkey, the activities of religiously motivated foundations, foundations and non-governmental organizations have expanded, and they have taken an important place in the fields of education, healthcare and social services. Support has been provided to the needy segments of the population through free kitchens, student dormitories, scholarship programs and various social projects. This process has formed an important mechanism that complements state social policy and has served to reduce social inequality[6]. Thirdly, significant positive results have also been observed in the education system. The expansion of the activities of religious educational institutions, in particular imam-khatib schools, has made it possible to educate the younger generation not only on the basis of religious knowledge, but also on the basis of moral and spiritual values. The systematic development of religious education has served to increase the level of religious literacy in society, prevent radical views and strengthen social stability[7]. Fourthly, the Islamic factor has also stimulated increased political and civic activity. Social movements and political discourse based on religious values helped to involve broad segments of the population in political processes. As a result, social groups that had previously been less involved in political life began to take an active civic position. This led to the deepening of democratic processes and an increase in the level of representation in society[4].

Fifth, the Islamic factor has become important in strengthening cultural identity. In the context of globalization, the combination of national and religious values has served to preserve the identity of society. Through religious traditions, rituals and cultural values,

the process of historical memory and self-awareness in society has intensified. This has had a positive impact on the formation of national-religious identity, especially among young people[3]. The Islamic factor has also made a significant contribution to the improvement of social morality and the spiritual environment. The strengthening of values such as honesty, justice, mutual respect and responsibility in society has become an important factor in ensuring social order and stability. This has led to the stabilization of social relations and the formation of a positive atmosphere in society[6].

In general, in modern Turkish social life, the Islamic factor is manifested as an effective factor in achieving important achievements such as strengthening social solidarity, developing a charitable system, improving education and culture, increasing political activity, and strengthening social morality. In this regard, it is considered not only a religious phenomenon, but also a complex social resource that has a positive impact on the development of society.

## 5. Conclusion

In the social life of modern Turkey, the Islamic factor is manifested as a complex and multifaceted social phenomenon, which has a significant impact on various layers and institutions of society. Research shows that, despite the existence of a secular state system, Islam remains an important factor in the formation of social values, moral norms and everyday life in society. This means that a unique balance has been formed between religion and secularism in Turkey. Based on the analysis, it was determined that the Islamic factor plays an important role in strengthening social solidarity, developing systems of charity and mutual assistance, and strengthening social responsibility in society. Social practices based on religious values create an atmosphere of cooperation and trust between citizens, ensuring social stability. At the same time, the continuous transmission of moral values through religious institutions and the education system helps to strengthen the spiritual foundations of society.

In addition, the influence of the Islamic factor on political and cultural processes is also significantly manifested. It plays an important role in increasing civic engagement, expanding the participation of social groups in political processes, and strengthening national and cultural identity. Especially in the context of globalization, religious values are becoming a means of

preserving the identity of society and ensuring cultural continuity. At the same time, the development of the Islamic factor in modern Turkey is not one-sided, but is formed as a result of complex interaction between different social groups and views. The need to maintain a balance between secularism and religiosity, religious pluralism, and the demands of modernity are constantly transforming the role of Islam in society.

In general, Islam is manifested in the social life of modern Turkey not only as a form of religious belief, but also as an important factor shaping social integration, spiritual stability, and cultural identity. Therefore, a deep scientific analysis of its place in society is of great theoretical and practical importance in understanding the model of social development of Turkey.

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