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To cite this article: Hülya Arik (2018): Emotional and corporeal formations of secularism: a case study of military bases in Turkey, 1980s-2000s, Social & Cultural Geography, DOI: [10.1080/14649365.2018.1559344](https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2018.1559344)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2018.1559344>



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Published online: 25 Dec 2018.



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Emotional and corporeal formations of secularism: a case study of military bases in Turkey, 1980s-2000s

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ABSTRACT

From the 1980s to the end of 2000s, the Turkish military was actively involved in the construction of Islam as a threat to national security, and in doing so it securitized religious identities in the political arena and in its own ranks. In the process, Turkish military bases became infused with public tensions around religion and secularity and became sites that produced social divisions along these lines on a daily basis. This article explores the uniquely emotional and corporeal the intertwining of secularism and security as was experienced within the mundane social interactions in the daily life of military bases through ethnographic research conducted in 2011. It focuses on the narratives of the daughters and wives of military officers whose bodies were mapped on to the opposite ends of a security paradigm based on a secular/religious dichotomy. Caught in between designations of security and risk, women's bodily and emotional experiences reveal the spatial constructions of secularism and the inherently vague and ambiguous distinctions secularism cultivates as a function of modern power. Looking at the gendered and spatially mediated meanings of secular, religious, security and risk, this article contributes to scholarship in cultural and social geographies of secularism through an analysis of corporeal and emotional experiences.

Formations émotionnelles et corporelles de la laïcité: un cas d'étude des bases militaires en Turquie des années 80 aux années 2000

ABSTRAIT

Des années 80 à la fin des années 2000, l'armée turque a été activement impliquée dans la construction de l'Islam en tant que menace de la sécurité nationale et ce faisant, elle a sécurisé les identités religieuses dans l'arène politique et dans ses propres rangs. Ce faisant, les bases militaires turques se sont imprégnées de tensions publiques autour de la religion et de la laïcité et sont devenues des sites qui produisaient des divisions sociales de cette nature au quotidien. Cet article explore l'enchevêtrement exceptionnellement émotionnel et corporel de la laïcité et de la sécurité telles qu'elles ont été vécues au sein des

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 18 April 2017

Accepted 7 November 2018

KEYWORDS

Secularism; emotions; corporeality; security; Turkish military; emotional geography

MOTS CLÉS

laïcité; émotions; corporalité; sécurité; armée turque; émotionnel; géographie

PALABRAS CLAVE

secularismo; emociones; corporeidad; seguridad; militares turcos; geografía emocional

interactions sociales de tous les jours dans la vie quotidienne des bases militaires, à travers une recherche ethnographique effectuée en 2011. Elle se concentre sur les récits des filles et des épouses d'officiers militaires dont les corps ont été inscrits à chaque extrémité opposée du paradigme de la sécurité fondé sur la dichotomie laïque/religieuse. Coïncées entre les appellations de sécurité et de risque, les expériences corporelles et émotionnelles de ces femmes révèlent les constructions dans l'espace de la laïcité et les distinctions par essence vagues et ambiguës que la laïcité cultive comme un moyen de pouvoir moderne. En examinant les significations médiées à travers le genre et l'espace du laïque, du religieux, de la sécurité et du risque, cet article contribue à la recherche dans le domaine des géographies sociales et culturelles de la laïcité à travers une analyse des expériences corporelles et émotionnelles.

Formaciones emocionales y corporales del secularismo: estudio de caso de bases militares en Turquía, años 1980 y años 2000

RESUMEN

Desde la década de 1980 hasta finales de la década de 2000, el ejército turco participó activamente en la construcción del Islam como una amenaza para la seguridad nacional, y al hacerlo, garantizó identidades religiosas en la arena política y en sus propias filas. En el proceso, las bases militares turcas se infundieron con tensiones públicas en torno a la religión y la secularidad y se convirtieron en sitios que produjeron divisiones sociales a lo largo de estas líneas diariamente. Este artículo explora la combinación emocional y corpórea única del laicismo y la seguridad que se experimentó en las interacciones sociales mundanas en la vida diaria de las bases militares a través de una investigación etnográfica realizada en 2011. Se centra en las narrativas de las hijas y esposas de los oficiales militares cuyos cuerpos fueron mapeados en los extremos opuestos de un paradigma de seguridad basado en una dicotomía secular/religiosa. Atrapadas entre designaciones de seguridad y riesgo, las experiencias corporales y emocionales de las mujeres revelan las construcciones espaciales del secularismo y las distinciones intrínsecamente vagas y ambiguas que el secularismo cultiva como una función del poder moderno. Teniendo en cuenta los conceptos—condicionados por el género y la mediación espacial—secular, religioso, seguridad y riesgo, este artículo contribuye al estudio en las geografías culturales y sociales del secularismo a través de un análisis de experiencias corporales y emocionales.

Introduction

Up until 2010, when this research project was designed, the Turkish political landscape was profoundly shaped by the Turkish military, the self-identified protector of Kemalist secularism. From the 1980s onwards, the military's opposition to the rise of political Islam saturated public political discourse such that public conflicts between people from the opposite ends of a secularist/Islamist divide were commonplace. These clashes were

lived emotionally and corporeally based on divisions that were recognized through cultural markers or lifestyle choices, amongst which the headscarf was key. It was ordinary to hear of incidents where a headscarved woman would be harassed in a cafe, which were then compared to incidents where 'Islamist radicals' would attack lightly dressed women in public or people who do not fast during Ramadan. For decades, such narratives supported mutually exclusive, yet interdependent, positions of Muslim injury and victimhood on one hand, and secular anxiety due to an alarming Islamization of politics and culture, on the other (Kandiyoti, 2012; Yilmaz, 2017).¹

However, far from being incompatible cultural or religious differences, the categories of the Islamists and the secularists were products of the historically specific discursive processes of Turkish secularism, processes that absorbed rather complex sets of social differences to map them onto a dichotomic framework. Particularly from the 1980s to the end of the 2000s, mutual antagonisms between the Western-oriented urban republican elite – spearheaded by the military – and the Islamist political elite, which successfully absorbed the emergent provincial and traditional/Islamic bourgeoisie, further entrenched encampments based on across rural/provincial versus urban-cosmopolitan hierarchies (Demiralp, 2012). While turning 'secular' and Islamic" into tropes that were mobilized strategically by competing political actors to consolidate power, these processes reduced other social differences such as class and regional identity to a self-referential secular/religious divide (Kandiyoti, 2012) and did so in significantly emotional and gendered ways.

Because of its visibility, the Islamic headscarf was at the center of these discursive processes and came to be perceived as the measure of the power of Islamist politics. Parallel to the headscarf bans that were already effective in public education and employment, the military identified the headscarf as a risk and further incentivized politicization and stigmatization of women's bodies as markers of competing discourses (Çınar, 2005).² The undesirability and 'dangerousness' of the Islamic headscarf was central to the military's political interventions as well as the internal security procedures and purges it undertook to prevent its ranks from 'Islamist infiltrations' in the time frame between the 1980s to the end of 2000s (Arik, 2016). These security regulations often imposed clear cut divisions between 'secular' and 'religious', as well as 'properly religious' and 'radical', in social, cultural, corporeal and emotional realms and across everyday and official spaces. Although designed as community spaces that are open to the officer's cadres and their families – providing them with lodgings, schools, hospitals and other social facilities – military bases were entrenched with highly divisive securitization processes. Mirroring the public tensions, the headscarf controversies in military bases constructed women's bodies as the medium through which the emotional and corporeal formations and fallibilities of secularism were revealed.

In this article, I examine the emotional and corporeal entanglements of Turkish secularism through the social divisions it has generated with a closer focus on the secularist security discourse of the Turkish military. I analyze the findings of an ethnographic study I conducted in 2011 of several Turkish military bases, which included extensive in-depth interviews with women in military families and participant observations. These interviews focused on women's experiences of military life from the 1980s to the end of the 2000s – the peak time of the military's securitization of Islam within its own structure and constituency. These women, the wives and daughters of military

officers, reflect on official and social processes that labeled them either as 'Islamist' or 'secularist'. Building on my earlier study on the gendered construction of security and risk in the Turkish military (Arik, 2016, 2018), I examine the lived emotional and corporeal experiences of the highly antagonistic space of the military base and a securitization process that reduced rather complex sets of cultural and corporeal differences to a sharp Islamist/secularist divide. By analyzing the narratives of women whose bodies were under focus of a secularist security agenda, I demonstrate how the mobilization of a secularist/Islamist binary was performed in everyday life in materializing these distinctions, and how the contradictions and ambiguities of secularism were revealed.

The main conceptual framework of this article combines social and cultural geography with feminist geographies of the body, analyzing the construction of social difference through emotions and space. I draw on studies that aim to understand how our notions of self and belonging, and social proximity to each other, are configured and lived through emotional and embodied practices (Anderson & Smith, 2001; Johansen, 2015; Nayak, 2010). In examining women's emotional and corporeal experiences of the military base, I incorporate a post-structuralist approach that takes secularism as a discursive tool of state power (Mahmood, 2015; Scott, 2018), and demands secularism be examined in everyday life as a cultural practice that is conversant with political discourses, rather than simply a political term (Verkaaik & Spronk, 2011). I take secularism's denial of emotions and corporeality as a main departure point in putting emotions back into politics. This way I aim to disentangle the power relations that shape women's intimate experiences and difficulties in inhabiting secularist and Islamist identity categories. In locating the significance of emotions, I draw on Sara Ahmed's studies on performativity of emotions and her conceptualization of 'strange encounters' in the making of identity and difference in everyday life (2000, 2004b, 2004a). Through this the objective of this article is to foreground the inherent ambiguity and instability of secularism's seemingly rigid structure (Agrama, 2010).

This research aims to contribute to geographies of emotions and gender by demonstrating the centrality of emotional and bodily experiences in construction of space through political discourses. Adjoining secularism studies, it demonstrates the spatiality and corporeality of secularism's discursive capacity through the lived experience of secularist and Islamists politics. The vagueness and instability of secularism's concepts, which only gain concreteness as a function of state power to maintain a unitarian Sunni Muslim Turkish identity emerge as key findings. I discuss how social interactions and encounters on the military base contributed to a cyclical construction of mutual perceptions and regulation of bodies in space. In doing so I also throw light on the emotional and corporeal formations of a rather blunt secularist/religious divide that has gained overriding currency in understanding social dynamics of contemporary Turkish society. I show in this research that the ambiguities and contradictions that secularism produces emerge not as a failure but as its central function in the service of state sovereignty.³

Turkish secularism: a convoluted history

Understanding the social divisions in Turkish society requires an assessment of the vernaculars of Turkish secularism as a political principle and a cultural practice since its introduction in the early days of the Turkish republic. Adapted from French *laïcité*,

Turkish secularism, *laiklik*, was introduced as the structural separation of religion from the state apparatus and a broader framework of cultural reforms to transform a 'backward looking' rural society into a modern nation that is attuned to Western political and cultural modalities (Göle, 2002; Saktanber, 2002). Yet, similar to the underlying normativity of Christianity in Western secularism, Turkish secularism was infused with Sunni Islam as a common system of value. After the abolishment of the Islamic Caliphate and Sharia law in 1924, the Directorate of Religious Affairs was founded to maintain control over public religion within the hegemonic framework of Sunni Islam as the legitimate source of public morality, cementing Turkish national identity in a way that is compatible with Western modernity (Azak, 2010; Davison, 2003; Dressler, 2011).

Parallel to institutional regulations in education, law and governance, *laiklik* also aimed to transform cultural practices, everyday life and subjectivities (Kandiyoti, 1996).⁴ Women's suffrage rights and gender equality in civil law were introduced to 'emancipate' women from the 'confines' of the Islamic patriarchal regime and make them socially and politically active in the public sphere (Çınar, 2005; Saktanber, 2002). Particularly, nation-wide campaigns for the abandonment of the Islamic veil along with an encouragement of European forms of dress, manners, behavior, and daily customs placed women's bodies under the limelight more strongly, reaching into the very intimate spheres of the society (Cindoğlu & Zencirci, 2008).⁵ However, despite the strong connection between Western secularism and gender equality, the republican discourse was infused with sexist traditional gender norms that were often associated with Islam (Akkoç, 2004; Özçetin, 2009; Sirman, 2004). While women were encouraged to adopt European dress and comportment, traditional norms around sexual modesty and chastity were integral to both legal and cultural reforms (Arat, 1997, p. 61). Demanding a 'delicate balance' between a modern European outlook and sexual modesty, Turkish secularism constructed women's bodies as sites for competing political claims to protect sexual morality (Arik, 2016).

Although based on a European model, secularism in Turkey took a unique form and function. As Mahmood (2015) argues, rather than the organizing framework of given concepts of 'public, private, political, religious', secularism needs to be taken as the discursive operation of power that refashions the very meanings and boundaries of these concepts to suffuse them with content in the appearance of neutrality (Mahmood, 2015, p. 3). Secularism creates a truth regime through a rigid and normative distinction between the concepts of secular and religious, which are constructed in historically and culturally specific ways and for particular political needs (Asad, 2003; Connolly, 2000; Hirschkind, 2011; Scott, 2018). Likewise, Turkish secularism gained a life of its own by integrating Western political modalities with a normative 'enlightened' version of Sunni Islam to secure a hegemonic Turkish national identity and state sovereignty. It constitutes a distinct epistemic framework that creates a vernacular secular/religious divide and mobilizes a set of moral values, sensibilities, dispositions and gender norms that are infused with a particular understanding of Sunni Islam to organize society (Göle, 2010). Here, the concept of secular came about not as the opposite of religion or a neutral background from which religion emerged (Mahmood, 2015), but a vague and unstable concept that is 'suffused with affects, sensibilities, and anxieties that mobilize and are mobilized by power' (Agrama, 2010, p. 500).

A militarized secularism and its adversaries

Secularization in Turkey is an inherently paradoxical project that has contributed to the salience of religion in social life rather than its decline, creating its own rival by trying to redefine and confine religion socio-spatially (Kadioğlu, 2005; Mahmood, 2015). Islamism emerged in the 1970s as a grassroots identity movement that evolved into an institutional form through Islamist political parties. Building on a popular discontent with the top-down secularization reforms as well as the class hierarchies dominated by the Western urban elite, Islamist political parties gave new forms of expression and public visibility to culturally disenfranchised and economically impoverished segments of society (Göle, 2002; Güllalp, 2001). This was a ground-up transformation that was successfully absorbed and orchestrated by Islamist political parties, which were supported by a newly emerging Islamic middle-class that prospered as a result of the neoliberal structural adjustment policies from the 1980s onwards and started changing the urban public space (Kömeçoğlu, 2006; Seçkinelgin, 2006). Although it was a rather common sartorial practice in rural regions, the headscarf gained visibility and a problematic status in urban space with the mass internal (rural to urban) migration of the 1950s onwards. Early as the 1960s, and more so with the 'Dress and Appearance Regulation' of 1982, the headscarf was defined a symbol of 'obscurantist reactionism' and therefore was a subject of controversy that challenged the secular gender regime (Olson, 1985). For decades, headscarf bans in higher education and public employment created grievances and polarizations between what has come to be 'secularist' and 'Islamist' encampments in sexually and corporeally specific ways. (Dağtaş, 2016; Gökarıksel, 2009).

The Turkish military was actively involved in politics through coup d'états and memorandums since the transition to an electoral parliamentary regime in 1945 (Esen & Gümüştü, 2017). However, from 1980 to the end of 2000s the Turkish military was preoccupied with safeguarding secularism from the increasing power of Islamist political parties as well as the widening cultural influence of political Islam (Cizre-Sakallioğlu & Çınar, 2003). The coup of 28 February 1997 was the climax of a tightening military rein over Islamist politics. With this intervention, the military instigated yet another constitutional lawsuit to close down an Islamist political party and officially defined political Islam a threat to national security. Also called the 'February 28th process', this military intervention characterized an era of broadband securitization of religious identities in politics and public space, processes that often pivoted around the Islamic headscarf (Cindoğlu & Zencirci, 2008; Gürbey, 2009; Kaplan, 2002).⁶ In its internal structure, the military enforced entrance regulations on the headscarf and purged 'religious and reactionary' military officers who were often identified through religious embodiment of women in their families (Arik, 2016, 2018).⁷

What we currently have in Turkish political idiom as the blunt-yet-functional distinction between secularists and Islamists is the product of this era when the military deepened political polarizations with an aggressive security agenda. The military's actions were especially coopted into an anti-secularist agenda that funneled public support for Islamist political parties and this continues to be a strong historical reference and a rhetorical tool for the current AKP regime. Furthermore, the heavy military presence in politics also prepared the conditions for alliances between similarly chastised groups to secure power and stability, such as the one between the AKP and the

Gülen Movement (GM). The GM – an internationally networked grassroots religious organization under the leadership of Fethullah Gülen – had been an integral part of AKP's political maneuvers to curb the military's power over civilian politics, which initially took place under the pretext of democratization in line with EU access regulations (Berksoy, 2013; Çalıřkan, 2017; Gözaydın, 2009). In the same direction, later in 2010 the AKP government passed a constitutional amendment that took power from the High Military Council and opened the routes to an appeal process that would reverse the securitization processes examined in this research (Ordudan atılanlara iade-i itibar müjdesi, 2010). This was also combined with the Sledgehammer court case [2010–14] that removed more than 300 high-ranking officers and opened the military's upper ranks to infiltration by Gülenist officers who were then supporting the AKP. This was the trajectory of events that led to the July 2016 coup attempt and the currently obscure status of the Turkish military under the influence of the AKP.⁸ While the Turkish political landscape continues to evolve into new forms under Erdoğan's rule in the aftermath of 2018 general elections, the empirical material analyzed in this article remains a crucial part of history that needs to be understood in making sense of the current cultural and social dynamics.

Emotions, bodies and space

With a claim to offer a political sphere and a model of subjectivity that is devoid of religious, emotional and bodily influences, Turkish secularism entrenched women's bodies between competing claims to power and visibility, and it cultivated emotional and corporeal discordances in the social texture with continued effects. Understanding this requires situating bodies at the center of our perceptions of reality, knowledge, politics, ethics and aesthetics (Alcoff, 1996; Gatens, 1997; Grosz, 1994), and taking emotions and bodily experiences as 'culturally embedded and socially patterned' forms of knowledge that shape norms and shared meanings of society and space (Anderson & Smith, 2001; Nayak, 2010; Johansen, 2015, p. 49). Paying attention to the often ignored bodily and emotional registers reveals not only that identities emerge through discursive constructions of bodily differentiations, but also that our notions of self, belonging, and space are configured emotionally (Ahmed, 2000; Nayak, 2010).

The conflict between Islamist and secularist discourses in Turkey has been an inherently spatial one where women's bodies have been markers of power and hegemony. Destabilizing the resilience of the secular/religious dichotomy has been one of the key achievements of recent scholarship on the corporeal geographies of religion and gender. These studies critique the reduction of the headscarf to a symbol of Islam and the ever-shifting meanings and moral ambivalence of this bodily practice as well as the transgressiveness of women's bodies in violating the clear demarcations of Islamic and secular in urban space (Gökarıksel, 2009, 2012; Gökarıksel & Secor, 2012; Turam, 2013). However, despite the focus on corporeality, this scholarship does not critically engage with emotions as substantive to construction of space and subjectivity. Recognizing 'the inherently emotional nature of embodiment', emotional geography directs attention to the ways in which 'we feel – as well as think – through "the body"' (Davidson & Milligan, 2004, p. 523). Concerned with the 'spatiality and temporality of emotions, with the way they coalesce around and within certain places,' research in emotional geography reveals the circular

nature of our attempts to understand emotion or make sense of space (Bondi, Davidson, & Smith, 2007, p. 3). These studies deal with 'not just the emotions and feelings that women experience in particular places/spaces' but also how emotions frame and delineate sexed and gendered experiences of space (Pile, 2010, p. 7).

My research draws particularly on Sara Ahmed's analysis of everyday emotional and bodily interactions in the making of difference and identity (2000, 2004a, 2004b.). Ahmed defines emotions as relationships and forms of orientations towards certain objects or identities that are constitutive of the making of the divisions between 'us' and 'others'. She conceptualizes emotions as performances the iteration of which produces the "boundary, fixity and surface of our identities (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 12). Therefore 'emotions are not "in" either the individual or the social' but they are the processes of the construction of the individual and the social as if they are objects (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 10). Accordingly, encounters of bodies that are marked racially or ethnically different are not simply meetings in the present, but they reopen past encounters, which involve conflicts and power asymmetries that reproduce social distinctions and hierarchies (Ahmed, 2000, p. 8). Involving face-to-face meetings and elements of eye contact, or lack thereof, daily encounters take place in a visual economy of recognition and they constitute astute mechanisms of social and spatial inclusions and exclusions (Ahmed, 2000).

Bringing into conversation scholarship on gender and space with emotional geography as well as critical secularism studies, this research aims to examine, first, the socio-spatial construction and securitization of religion at the merger of secularism and security and, secondly, the role emotions play in the construction of female subjectivity within the sometimes-non-contradictory discourses of secularism and religion. I focus on the unattended intimate bodily and emotional experiences of women as per their religious and secular identities while inhabiting a divided political landscape. In doing so, I examine the fears and anxieties that secularism mobilizes in shaping bodily encounters of seemingly opposing identities and in the construction of religion both in and out of place. Women's bodies constitute the centerpiece of this research, not just as objects of conflicting political discourses, but as sites for the active production and reproduction of discursive differences across a secular/religious divide on a daily basis.

Methodology and research design

This research emerged through my own experiences growing up on military bases through the 1980s – 90s as the daughter of a now retired non-commissioned navy officer. In my experiences I observed how the social and spatial aspects of polarization across a secularist/religious divide unfolded. Coming from a secularist-identified household, my understanding of the place and significance of religion in social life was largely shaped by the norms espoused by the Turkish military, the norms that I challenge with this research. I started this ethnography with the awareness of social and political divisions across Islamists and secularists that exhaustively defined the bodies and the spatial-social dynamics on the military base. Therefore the research design to reach out to individuals who were either self-identified or labeled as 'Islamist' or 'secularist' was not based on preconceived categorizations, but the wider politics around how their religious views or embodiment relate to the state (Turam, 2008). Rather than adopting

these categories as given (secularist/religious) I explored the role of secularism in articulating and constructing identity differences in everyday life and giving concreteness to emotional and spatial processes of differentiation and othering.

I undertook ethnographic research in military bases and conducted 50 in-depth interviews with wives and daughters of commissioned and non-commissioned officers (CO and NCO) in 2011 in Istanbul and Muğla in Turkey. My interviewees were from the families of then-current and retired military personnel, as well as those who were expelled or forced to resign from the military for being 'Islamist'. Participant observations in military spaces, which include residences, schools, hospitals, restaurants and various other forms of social spaces, also constitute a crucial part of the ethnographic data. My social location at the very heart of the military community enabled me to conveniently reach out to the currently active and retired military families in Muğla and Istanbul⁹ and also to civil associations like TESUD (Turkish Retired Officers' Association) and TEMAD (Turkish Retired Non-Commissioned Officers' Association). My access to the military officers who were coded as 'Islamist' and were expelled by the military or forced to retire was provided through ASDER (Association of Justice Defenders), a civil association founded by expelled officers in Istanbul.

Mapping an emotional divide

There is a psychological war. You live in it constantly. Even though they do not tell you "do this, do that" you feel the pressure. Constantly you feel the weight, the gaze directed upon on you. Your actions are being examined, the way you walk... You get the feeling like that. For example, when I first went to Balıkesir, I was just a young girl; did not know anything. They used to tease out lots of things from whatever I say. I did not even know what to talk about (Güngör, 45, wife of expelled CO, 21 June 2011).

Güngör, wife of an air force officer who was expelled from the military as an 'Islamist', made these observations in response to my question, 'how did it feel like to live on a military base?' Now a lawyer working for the City of Istanbul, Güngör previously lived on several military bases and she went through various security measures due to her headscarf that was coded as 'unfitting' and risky. The feelings of sadness and resentment that were evident in Güngör's words were products of the social exclusion and objectification experienced by women like her who embodied and practiced religion publicly.

On the other hand, a sense of pride and entitlement dominated the narratives of those who adopted a European style of dress and identified as 'secular'. While still adhering to Islamic norms of sexual modesty and morality, these women adopted a Western dress code and with claims to significance of gender equality and public visibility (Çınar, 2008). Their confidence, entitlement and pride were also significantly tied to nationalism and patriotism. Even when not expressed directly, the sense of propriety in one's own embodiment, which in that discursive framework overlapped with the security discourse of the military, often came out in my interviews with 'secularist' military wives. However, this was more clearly reflected in one of Melek's (44) experiences as someone who was constantly confronted with prejudice due to her religious embodiment and had her husband forced to retire from the military.

One day one of those [secularist] women said, “My family is very rich; we own farms and stuff but I have a mission in this military. We are staying here just because of *that mission*. Otherwise we do not need this salary to live on.” They are both *Alevi* and from a leftist background you know. It is just to not leave the place to right-wingers and Islamists. She designed such a mission for herself. Can you believe that? (14 April 2011)

This encounter made Melek realize that protecting secularism was constructed as a patriotic duty that not only left her out but also targeted her. As reflected in this experience, being ‘secularist’ came with a sense of entitlement as these women envisioned their bodies and identities as tools of support for the secularist mission of the military. By ‘sacrificing’ their own careers and bodies for their husband’s ‘sacred duty’, these women served the military to safeguard secularism and become compatriots in policing the boundaries of the nation. This left Melek, and those like her, outside such a mission and eventually with feelings of disappointment and frustration since she also identified as a nationalist and a patriot. Embedded in this narrative is also the multiple layers of sectarian and ethnic differentiations that were mapped on an Islamist/secularist divide. On multiple occasions participants indicated belonging to marginalized sectarian or ethnic group across Sunni/Alevi (Shia) and Turkish/Kurdish fault lines, which they had to underplay or hide to be able to survive within the military. Melek’s narrative in this case reflects her awareness of these nuances and the rather commonly accepted positioning of Alevi (which is the common form of Shia Islam in Turkey) identities into the secularist bloc due to their divergence from most Sunni traditions and the assumed compatibility of assimilated (or invisibilized) Alevi traditions with secularism (Dressler, 2011).¹⁰

Another participant, Suna (36), who is a headscarved woman and wife of an expelled CO, also said that she was constantly excluded from social functions as she did not ‘fit in’. She mentioned several occasions when she was asked to join social events organized by other officers’ wives, yet she had to make excuses each time and said ‘how could I be part of a group or join a community who does not accept me as I am’. (17 April 2011) Following the critical scholarship on gender and militarism, Dağtaş (2016) suggests that being a military wife in Turkey assumes adherence to a militarist nationalism and a subjectivity that is aligned with secular state ideology. Therefore, grievances by ‘Islamist’ women who are left out of such a mission by design is a crucial point of tension that reflects not only the gender of militarist nationalism but also broader frames of conflict between secularist and religious discourses in their competing claims to nationalism (Kadioğlu & Keyman, 2011).

Regardless, these expressions by the participants reflected the depth of an emotional divide that materialized across the complex matrix of power relations in the social landscape, and found expression through the dominant framework of a secular/religious dichotomy. The Turkish military’s security discourse provided an overarching framework to categorize individuals as risky or not (by examining their practice of religion and testing their capacity to participate in mixed-gender social spaces or to consume alcohol), and prepared the grounds for deepening of socio-spatial and emotional segmentations within the military community (Arik, 2016, 2018). Although largely compatible in terms of nationalist patriotism and even in practice of religion, women were categorized as Islamist or secularist based on the nuances in their public expressions of piety – an emotional fault line that drew the contours of the military base and has continued currency in contemporary Turkey.

Corporeality of the secular/religious divide

The rigidity that the secular/religious dichotomy holds in liberal secularism is most effectively challenged through women's emotional and bodily experiences of these categories. The anecdotes and confessions of the military wives, who either consciously adopt or get pushed into these severely polarized identity categories, involve accounts of personal dilemmas and contradictions that reveal the instability and fuzziness of secularism's rigid distinctions. I talked to women in order to understand how they define their own embodiment beyond a simple affiliation with politics or an identity category.

Gülseren (61), who I met through the association of the Retired Military Officers, was the wife of a retired CO. While she identified as a devout Muslim, like many other 'secularist' identified military wives, she did not wear a headscarf. As we chatted in a cafe, she asked me to pause when she heard the *ezan* the call for prayer, moved her lips and recited prayers in silence. Afterwards, she explained to me that from time to time she holds Quran reading gatherings in her house and that she also tries to do her daily prayers at home, but in a seated position because of her back problem. Further into our conversation I asked about her ideas on the headscarf and Islamic notions of modesty. She said:

I do not believe that covering is a religious duty. If a person commits a sin, he/she does it with the eye. Then you must cover your eyes. You can't do wrong with your hair. But, while you are praying it [covering one's hair] is okay. Praying has its rules; of course, we will cover then. We all cover. But apart from that... I am not a person who dresses revealingly anyways. (11 May 2011)

As I also suggest in earlier research (2016), Gülseren's statement exemplifies the 'secularist' notion of Islamic piety, which was pervasive in the military community and the republican secularist discourses: a commitment to a 'true and authentic' version of Islam. While she accepts the necessity of sexual modesty in public, which she argues is the 'true' moral purpose of the wearing a headscarf, she refuses the public visibility that comes with the headscarf, which fixates sexual morality on the woman's body.¹¹ Turkish secularism also puts emphasis on sexual modesty, yet produces the norm that that modesty can simply be achieved by dressing modestly in a Western style, and without a headscarf (Arik, 2016). However, Gülseren waived the same rationality when it came to wearing a headscarf during prayers, which takes place in private or woman-only spaces. By saying '[p]rayering has its rules', Gülseren situated wearing the headscarf during prayers within the realm of the 'true' and 'uncontested' aspects of Islam, which are deemed 'not political' as they take place in the private sphere. Her contrasting views on wearing headscarves in public and private do not necessarily indicate an internal dilemma or a personal contradiction; they point rather at the spatiality of the category of 'secular' and the challenges faced in drawing boundaries at the scale of the female body.

A similar challenge to the salience of secular/religious divide came from the narratives of pious women who wear headscarves. Ayşen (48) is the wife of a CO who was forced to retire on the grounds of being an Islamist and in the process experienced various forms of pressure from the military officials and the community. Ayşen wore a headscarf and a loose-fitting topcoat, a style that she found compatible with the teachings of Islam and her understanding of sexual modesty and piety that was shaped through her upbringing in a small town in central Anatolia. While Ayşen fit in the military's typology of 'the

dangerous Islamist', our conversation about the practice of wearing chador revealed certain elements of her identity that challenge that category. The chador is a full-body-length semicircle of black fabric, which is open on the front but envelopes over the entire body except for the face. Unlike the headscarf and topcoat combination, the chador is much looser and hides the curves of the body. It is usually worn in solid black color, which has also been the source of its negative associations with 'backwardness'. Even though a few women in Ayşen's community and family did wear the chador, she personally found it a little 'too much' and 'unnecessary':

My mom used to wear it in our hometown. But you know as part of tradition... [I]t was not for religious purposes. They used to take it off when they were hot. But I was never sympathetic towards chador. My husband suggested that I should wear it too, but I was like "Eww...Never!" There is no such concept in Quran. It just tells you to wear a loose dress. It says put your scarf around and over your shoulders... It never defines completely. The purpose is to cover the curves of the body. (5 May 2011)

While explaining her views and preferences on veiling, like Gülseren, Ayşen too referred to the religious texts and the *actual* purpose of the practice, which she agreed is sexual modesty. Ayşen made a case for her preference to wear a headscarf and a topcoat by referring to her own understanding of the religious texts, her personal history, the places she grew up in and the neighborhoods she lived in. Her sartorial practice of choice served the 'actual' purpose of sexual modesty, which, in her opinion rendered the chador 'excessive' and even 'ugly'.

An important detail in Ayşen's reflections on the chador is the centrality of the urban/rural and traditional/modern divide that underlie the politicization of the headscarf in contemporary Turkish politics. While it was primarily associated with rural regions and the lifestyle of the peasantry who were largely unaffected by republican cultural reforms, the headscarf started gaining visibility in urban regions following the mass rural-to-urban internal migration from the 1950s onwards (Göle, 2000; Özçetin, 2009). Yet instead of being abandoned with upward social mobility and access to secular education, the headscarf evolved into more fashionable styles through processes that further identified this sartorial practice with religious discourse and normalized its compatibility with the urban middle-class lifestyle and the new Islamic consumer culture (Gökarksel & Secor, 2012). The headscarf was politicized in this socio-cultural conjuncture across a rural/urban fault line and the class hierarchies between the Western-oriented urban elite and the rural and traditional segments of society, including the impoverished rural-to-urban migrant working classes. Each Gülseren and Ayşen's understanding of what is properly urban and modern is shaped through this modernization discourse. Such construction of the headscarf as an identifier of class status corresponded to not wearing a headscarf in the experience of many like Gülseren, it amounted to adoption of a more 'stylish' and modern form of veiling for those like Ayşen along with rejection of traditional and rural practices like the chador.

In addition, while both Gülseren and Ayşen identified as pious Muslims and used similar lines of reasoning to explain their embodiment, they inhabited opposite ends of the Islamist/secularist spectrum and had very different experiences in the military. Ayşen and Gülseren were both concerned about their sexual modesty, but they differed in the practice of sexual modesty and where they drew a *line* in defining their sexual privacy in relation to the public/private divide – a line that determined whether they wore a headscarf or not. The headscarf, as Çınar (2008) argues, redraws the boundaries of

the private on the body by disrupting secularist norms that maintain that the hair and neck are open to public gaze. While Gülseren wore a headscarf in private and dressed in modest and modern outfits in public, Ayşen went out into public with her religiously dressed body. Their differentiation as 'Islamist' or 'secularist' is thereby determined by whether their understanding of sexual privacy matched with the particular spatial norms endorsed by Turkish secularism.

These examples attest to 'secular power': secularism's discursive capacity to separate the secular from religious (Agrama, 2010; Hirschkind, 2011; Scott, 2007). Secular power is a discursive tool that maps the secular/religious dichotomy by re-inscribing a public/private divide on women's bodies. The instability and ambiguity we experience in trying to differentiate the secular from the religious at the level of corporeality therefore emerges as a condition of the exercise of secular power and not its limit (Agrama, 2010). Embedded in similar yet different regimes of sexual morality, both Ayşen and Gülseren justified their choices based on what they believe was enough to fulfil religious teachings and how they drew the line between public and private spaces on their bodies. The secularist versus Islamist differentiation was based on how they decided to perform sexual modesty, which was determined spatially.

Vagueness and instabilities of secularism

Differentiated practices of women's sexuality and modesty reveal both the instability and vagueness of the secular/religious dichotomy socially and spatially. An anecdote from a family vacation at a military holiday resort in May 2011 near Muğla demonstrates how the conceptual ambiguities and instabilities of secularism unfolded in everyday life. This was an alumni gathering for navy school graduates, some of whom were my father's friends. Half way through my weeklong stay, one of my father's friends sadly passed away due to a heart attack. As the usual practice following a funeral, women (all of them officers' wives) made plans to hold a Quran reading gathering, which did not end up taking place. The conflicting views I heard about why the reading did not take place reflected on how the conceptual ambiguities of secularism operate and create contradictions.

When I first inquired, Meltem (47, wife of a retired NCO) said they thought of having a gathering, but then concerns were raised about being 'misunderstood'; they were afraid of being mistaken for 'Islamists' if they carried out a public religious gathering in a military space (12 May 2011). As I knew through my own experiences and my research, holding a religious gathering at home was not an unusual practice for women who identify, or get classified, as secularist. However, in this military resort, the residences were little hotel rooms and did not have large living rooms, so it was not possible to have a woman-only and indoors private gathering. The only venue that was large enough was the restaurant, which had to be booked and arranged specifically for this occasion. Meltem said that, in the end, they grew concerned and decided not to hold the gathering after all since it required the appropriation of a military space for religious purposes, and that given the security agenda of the military they rather not do that.

However, when I talked to Nurgül (57, wife of retired NCO) to confirm what I heard from Meltem, she gave a different account:

The more pious ones amongst us said no because these spaces [the restaurant] are open air. In theory, men should not be able to hear women's voice [especially in the context of a Quran reading]. Those places are all surrounded by soldiers who work as waiters, and they would hear us. Because of that we decided to hold smaller gatherings with groups of two or three and read the Quran in our hotel rooms. (12 May 2011)

These conflicting narratives reveal the degree to which the vagueness and ambiguity of the secular/religious dichotomy gave room for diverse explanations and contradictory claims. This experience complicates the presumed rigidity of the category of the 'secularist' by revealing the internal conflicts and dilemmas of secular subjectivity. At the same time, it provides another example of the ways in which secularist logic defined and foregrounded the 'actual purpose' of a religious practice. Resonating with 'secularist' women's previous accounts for not wearing headscarf in public space, the decision to hold a religious gathering of smaller groups and in private spaces was also taken as a valid substitute for a large-scale communal ritual in public.

This incident also reveals how the vagueness and ambiguity of secularism left these women confused about what is and is not 'appropriate' religious activity for the military. This state of confusion emerged from the ambiguity of the secular/religious divide and its contextual interpretations on the basis of sexual morality. Women's fears and anxieties around the military's security discourse guided their actions and led them to take precautions regarding how they navigate the military space. In line with Agrama (2010), the ambiguity and instability of secularism emerges as the intended consequence in the exercise of secular power and not its problem or failure. As mobilized by the Turkish military's security discourse, secularism actively blurs the secular/religious dichotomy, and redefines a distinction each and every time to control the mobility of bodies in space as a function of state sovereignty.

Emotional and corporeal geographies of the base

From the 1980s to the early 2000s, the military's broad social surveillance mechanisms in everyday life mobilized fears and anxieties against the backdrop of the inherent vagueness and instability of secularism. Drawing on Sara Ahmed's theory on the performativity of emotions that construct the fixity and boundary of our identities, I examine the everyday spaces of the military base, analyzing how the space was constructed through emotional intensities that emanate from the daily encounters of the 'secularists' and 'Islamists'. Like Ahmed I take the emotional tensions, the fears and anxieties of interacting with the 'other', as well as the sense of pride in one's position and entitlement, as constitutive in the making of the 'secularist' and 'Islamist'.

In implicit and untold ways, an anxiety towards each 'other' and mutual feelings of negative judgment defined women's experiences and drew boundaries across space. This was reflected in my conversations with women who identified as 'secularist' in their statements about the 'Islamists': 'we do not know what is going on when they all come together,' said one, 'our next-door neighbors are chador-wearing women, they used to have gatherings, who knows what they are doing'. The 'Islamist' as the 'other' was encapsulated as the unknown – something to be feared and judged. On the other hand, Nesrin (50, wife of force-retired CO), who was labeled as 'Islamist' and was forced to remove her headscarf, expressed how being suspected left an imprint on her experience of the military base.

Nesrin and others like her said that the intelligence officers and their wives collaborated to monitor the private homes of the suspected officers to investigate minute details about their lifestyle, such as house decorations, food, books and TV programs. Conceptualized as secular risk governance (Arik, 2018), these surveillance mechanisms mobilized self-disciplinary practices by those who were investigated and forced them to become more transparent to avoid judgments and accusations. Nesrin said, 'We [the "Islamists"] had to open up our houses and our lives as much as possible to convince them that we are not doing anything suspicious or wrong' (12 May 2011).

The persistence of this suspicion and mistrust shaped the 'Islamist' women's perception of military spaces in significant ways. Mükerrerem (46) is the wife of a CO who was expelled from the army due to allegations of being an 'Islamist'. When she lived on the military base, she had to go to the military hospital to get her daily injections. She said that even though they had female nurses during the day, in the night shift she had to get her injections from a male nurse. Regardless of intentionality, her impression was that 'they [the secularists] never paid attention to our sensitivities as religious people' (16 August 2011). This example evidenced the extent to which emotional registers shaped the way people sensed and understood their environment, which in Mükerrerem's case was over-determined by feelings of resentment for being excluded from the social spaces due to her religious outfit. In line with Ahmed's (2004b) argument on the performativity of emotions in shaping the surfaces of bodies and constructing spaces, Mükerrerem's experience of space was shaped by the emotional registers of secularism, which exacerbated the secular/religious divide that she already lived. The ambiguity of the military's regulations cultivated a culture of anxiety that shaped how people perceived each other and the space in which they lived.

The daily encounters on the military base were also embedded in the emotional and corporeal (and therefore ambiguous) constructions of the secular/religious divide as shaped by fears and anxieties. Nesrin's story (50, wife of force-retired CO) sets an example:

They [secularist military wives] provoke each other. We were at a gathering. There is this woman whose head is covered. I do not know her... She was the wife of a non-commissioned officer. Those colonels' wives, immediately, went to the wife of the general, saying things like "she is covered [wearing an Islamic headscarf], like this and that...". They kept on saying provocative things. Then a friend came, and said, "I know that woman. She has cancer. She is receiving chemotherapy. That's why her hair is falling out... That's why she is covering." Upon hearing that, the general's wife held back. If that friend did not come over to explain the situation, that woman's life would have been ruined. (12 May 2011)

As exemplified in this quotation, corporeally constructed notions of security and risk, along with the ambiguities of a secular and religious divide, permeated the social spaces and interactions within the military community. Such ambiguity fostered anxieties that effected the way individuals saw each other and constructed the space along social hierarchies. Feelings of pride and confidence of one's political position shaped the 'secularist' women's experience by providing a sense of entitlement to navigate secularism's ambiguities. In the case of the 'Islamist' women, however, such hierarchy translated into a state of being gazed upon and objectified, and led to an overwhelming sense of insecurity in their experience of the military base. Güngör's (45, wife of expelled CO) experience of the gaze and the disrespect she felt are clearly conveyed in her experience at a tea party organized by the wife of the highest-ranking officer:

When you go there the gaze pushes you to the side. You can never come to the fore. When the wife of the general sees you, she sends a message “She can take off her headscarf here. It is all women here.” But she does not think of the soldiers who wait. She does not consider them as men? They just think like that. “Take off your headscarf, your topcoat, relax.” (21 June 2011)

While mirroring particular elements of the official security procedures and pressures, Güngör’s account also demonstrated the pervasiveness of peer pressure. Similar to the emotions she conveyed earlier, Güngör characterized the emotional intensity of living in the military as a psychological struggle. Like many others, she had to guard herself from the gaze and judgment that surrounded her body and her religious embodiment that was defined as a threat to the military. Such moments of encounter between ‘Islamist’ and ‘secularist’ women become more intelligible through Ahmed’s (2000) conceptualization of ‘strange encounters’. Encounters of bodies marked as different by secularism reopened a milieu of political conflicts that are historically and culturally specific to modern Turkey. In these daily encounters, women’s bodies and the distinctions between them did not stand for themselves, but for the sexually and corporeally configured conflicts between secularist and religious discourses. Minute details such as the lack of eye contact that turned into a gaze created a visual economy through which socio-spatial mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion played out.

Religion out of place

Emotions are constitutive of power relations that regulate bodies and spaces in tandem with the desires of secularism, which constructs the religious body as a form of transgression. In the case of the Turkish military base too, emotions gave direction to feelings of anxiety that shaped how people self-identified, the mood and tone of their daily interactions, that constructed bodies and identities in and out of place. Cresswell’s (1996) term ‘out of place’ is suitable here as a metaphor to further inquire into the normative architecture of secularism that allocates ‘secular’ and ‘religious’ to distinct socio-spatial locations. This became clear in my visit to a military base where I interviewed Nalan (34), wife of an on-duty CO, who dressed in a ‘modern style’ and also identified as a pious person who does not perform religious duties regularly. When we talked about the entrance regulations in the military, she gave an example of her own sister who wears a headscarf:

Nalan: They [headscarved women in general] can enter [the military base]. They can even come here [the cafeteria], though I did not see any in the guest hall. I do not know about that. But I have some experience with that. My mother is covered, so is my sister. For me it is not a problem. Wear it if you want and don’t if you do not want... I find the distinction they [the military] make unnecessary. What they call the turban [another term for the ‘political’ headscarf] is the style that young women wear to just look more pretty, more modern actually.

Author: Have you brought your sister here [to cafeteria and the restaurant]?

Nalan: Well, to be honest, I have never brought my sister here. She came to my house. But... in case something happens when we are here you know? Not because I am embarrassed of her or anything but because I don’t want anything bad to happen to her. (16 March 2011)

Nalan’s perspective was that of an insider who was familiar with the experience of pious women who also wear headscarves. Having lived in military spaces and observed the

securitization of religious identities therein, Nalan knew and acted according to the secularist sensibilities that governed the military base. A taken-for-granted notion of spatial and bodily calibration emerged in her explanations and her ability to smoothly navigate the military base. The term 'calibration' is important for giving a sense of an almost technical fine-tuning of spaces and bodies to arrange the ways in which bodies were permitted to be dressed, to behave and to move. The acceptability of religiously dressed bodies in and around domestic spaces, such as the lodgings, and not in formal or social spaces, such as the cafeterias or a guest hall, showed how space was governed gradually and in relation to power. That a headscarf wearing woman was accepted as long as she remained in and around domestic/private spaces within the military base demonstrated the ambiguities of secularism in configuring risks and how secular risk governance operated to not necessarily eliminate religion but to govern its visibility and mobility (Arik, 2018).

Conclusion

In this article I explored secularism as a social and cultural practice that is lived corporeally and emotionally. I examined this through the integration of secularism into the security discourses of the Turkish military and the securitization of religious identities on military bases. Women's experiences of the heightened and securitized environment of the military revealed the emotional formations of the secularist/Islamist divide. These narratives show how the social hierarchies that distinguish the Westernized urban elite from the disenfranchised rural and traditional communities are reduced to a secular/religious dichotomy through the security agenda of the Turkish military.

Mirroring the tensions in public debates through the 1980s – 2000s, the Islamic headscarf constituted the epicenter of military's security regulations and social surveillance mechanisms and constructed the military base as a divided emotional landscape. Women fell either in the category of the 'proper' military wives, who felt proud and entitled, or they were the 'Islamists', who felt resentful for being seen as dangerous, 'backward and oppressed'. Their experiences demonstrated the overwhelming precedence of a secularist agenda that collapsed the social complexity of this community and other divisions across ethnic and sectarian lines into a secularist/Islamist divide. Caught in-between conflicting political discourses that ascribed alternate meanings to their bodily representations, women expressed contrasting emotions and bodily experiences, which drew the contours of the divided emotional geography of the military base.

I argue in this research that examining secularism through its emotional and corporeal subtleties takes secularism outside of political and institutional frames of reference and brings it into everyday life where the fluidity and ambiguity of secular/religious is revealed. Particularly women's negotiations of wearing and not wearing headscarves, showcased how secularism's distinctions were based on differential understandings of one's sexual privacy and morality. Nuances around women's views on headscarf or chador revealed the embeddedness of religious and secularist discourses in the historically specific experience of the traditional-rural and modern-urban divisions as well as class fault lines in Turkey. The conflicting narratives about the cancellation of the religious gathering following the funeral particularly showed that secular-identified women also negotiated their practice of Islam in an environment of heightened

surveillance. It was the emotional registers of secularism and the fears and anxieties regarding socio-spatial regulation of religion that guided women in navigating the military base in cases of uncertainty.

This research takes emotions and corporeality as forms of experience and relationships that draw the socio-spatial contours of difference, identity and subjectivity. Women's everyday experiences show that the fears and anxieties mobilized by a security discourse gave direction to the mood of women's daily interactions, and their perception of the environment and each other. Following Sara Ahmed, I argue that an economy of emotions shaped the surfaces of bodies on the military base to endow meanings and value to each other (2004a, 2004b). Emotions emerged as central to women's navigation of the military base and in the construction of the base as a space of conflict. The daily encounters between the 'Islamist' and 'secularist' women and the emotions involved in their interactions reproduced differences and mobilized further polarizations towards the opposite ends of a political spectrum. Encounters on the base took place not only in the actual moment, but within an emotionally resonant historical trajectory, which gave content and direction to people's experiences, mobilities and defined distribution of bodies in space. Such design mobilized secular anxiety in reaction to religion that is 'out of place' and demanded a calibration of bodies in response to the demands of the secular gender regime. The distinction between private and public or secular and religious emerged based on proximity to military authority in temporally and contextually specific ways.

Secularism is a political modality that is central to the liberal democracies of Western Europe and North America as well as Western-oriented state formations like Turkey. In contributing to scholarship in social and cultural geography, I show with this research the corporeality and spatiality of secularism's concepts and how secularism functions as an extension of modern power and through an epistemic distinction it creates between religion and secularity. Socially constructed as they are, these distinctions are also inherently ambiguous and vague. Secularism's discursive processes both designate concrete and distinct spatiality to the concepts of secular and religious and simultaneously blur these very distinctions in temporally and contextually specific ways. Through a continuous process of redefining what is secular and what is religious in the daily life of the military base and women's bodies, secular power creates distinctions between public and private spaces whose borders emerge as permeable and fluid based on time, space, and political significance. I show in this research that in the particular era I study, the state power as embodied by the military drew borders, constructed and allocated secular and religious strategically to carve out subjectivities and spaces that were congruent with the vision of secular Western modernity. In doing so, it contributed to the entrenchment of secularist/Islamist divide that continues to shape contemporary Turkish society.

Notes

1. The heightened level of aggression across secularist/Islamist encampment in 2010 was also due to constitutional referendum that the AKP passed to drastically alter the trajectory of civil-military relations. Details are explained later in this article.
2. The military opposed several attempts by the AKP to remove the ban on headscarf and it at the same time actively protested representation of headscarf in the higher institutional ranks of the state (Cindoğlu & Zencirci, 2008).

3. Secular Bodyscapes: Corporeal and Emotional Intersections of Secularism and Security in the Turkish Military, submitted to the Department of Geography at York University, Toronto (Arik, 2015).
4. The Swiss Civil Code and the Italian Penal Codes were introduced in 1926 along with the introduction of five-year compulsory national and secular coeducation (Azak, 2010; Davison, 2003; Özdalga, 1997).
5. Introduction of Western music, melody and ballroom dancing were also among efforts to shape individuals' religious attachments and to create a particular body-politic (Kocak, 2010; Yumul, 2010).
6. Despite the anti-Islamist discourse, Turkish militarism was far from anti-religious. The concept of martyrdom has been central to Turkish militarism and the construction of compulsory military service as a religious and patriotic duty (Gürbey, 2009). Likewise, the military supported the proliferation of *Imam-Hatip* schools in the aftermath of a military coup in 1980 to consolidate national unity through Sunni Islam and to counterbalance growing leftist and ethnic movements (Tomboş & Aygenç, 2017).
7. Although debated, figures ranged between 745 and 1650 (Tank, 2005), reached up to 5000 when officers who were forced to resign or retire were included, as argued by ASDER (ASDER, Derneğimizin Kuruluşu, n.d.)
8. Following the collapse of AKP-Gülen coalition around 2012–14, the Gülen supporting officers allegedly orchestrated a coup attempt to topple Erdoğan's government in July 2016.
9. Muğla hosts the largest navy base in Turkey and has a large number of military personnel and families. Istanbul on the other hand is the place where significant military headquarters are stationed and it is where civilian associations established by former or retired military personnel are situated.
10. It needs to be noted that the Turkish military has historically policed Armenian, Kurdish or Alevi identities as well as Leftists (as remnant of Cold War era security paradigm shaped against the 'communist' threat), and structurally prevented those individuals from either going into the military as personnel or entering the upper ranks of the military.
11. In addition, Gülseren puts responsibility on men who look at women in a 'improper' way, which is an interpretation that is expressed commonly by pious women who wear the headscarf and at the same time refer to men's responsibility to protect the sexual and moral order.

Acknowledgments

This article is written with support from the project "Spaces of Resistance. A Study of Gender and Sexualities in Times of Transformation", funded by Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation..

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

This work was supported by the Knut och Alice Wallenbergs Stiftelse [2015.0180].

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