



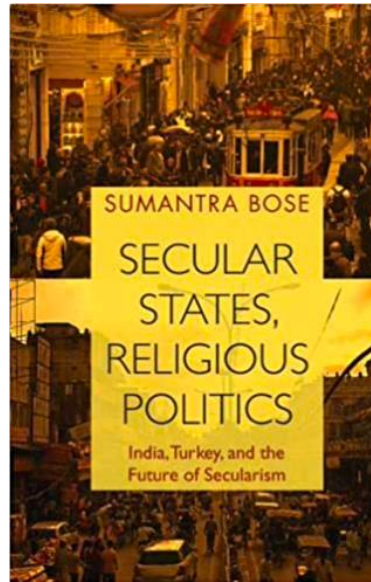
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Secular States, Religious Politics: India, Turkey, and the Future of Secularism

Laik Devletler, Dini Politikalar: Hindistan, Türkiye ve Laikliğin Geleceği



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Sumantra Bose

Sumantra Bose, in 1999, Sumantra Bose started attending the London School of Economics (LSE). He attended high school in India before earning his BA in political science with highest honors from Amherst College in Massachusetts, USA, in 1992. He then attended Columbia University in New York, USA, where he earned his MA, M.Phil, and Ph.D. in political science in 1998. Numerous grants and awards from organizations in the UK and the USA, notably the Social Science Study Council in New York and the Nuffield Foundation in London, have sponsored his research. Bose has served as a visiting professor at Boğaziçi (Bosphorus) University in Istanbul, Turkey, and Wellesley College in the United States. At various universities, including Harvard, Stanford, Princeton, MIT, Columbia, and Oxford and Cambridge in the UK, he has presented invited lectures and seminars.

Secular States, Religious Politics: India, Turkey, and Future of Secularism

In *Secular States, Religious Politics: India, Turkey, and Future of Secularism*, Sumantra Bose tackles two prominent contractionary relation between secular state and religious politics both in India and Turkey as leading secular states from non-Western world. Main paradox behind this study is although secularism is adopted as constituent principle by the founders of India and Turkey and constitutionally remains, rise of anti-secular political parties Sunni-Islamist AKP led by Erdoğan in Turkey and majoritarian -nationalist BJP led by Modi in India lead to paradoxes.

Although there are similarities between foundational basis of both Turkey and India in terms of adopting secularism, applications of authoritarian majoritarian type of nationalism through Kemalism and Hindutva, rise of anti-secular political parties but, motivations and objectives of notions creates differences. In first chapter, he displayed general features of secularism in two states that the idea of separation between church and state called “wall-of-separation principle” does not constitute the basis in both states. Kemalist motivation of secularism is seen as means to reach Western Civilization therefore sharp reforms was made to reach official goal which resulted with authoritarian political and social implications. In contrast to Turkish case, Nehru-led Indian modernization in mid-20th century; secularism emerged through democratic deliberation and debate in the assembly (p.72) therefore it has more indigenous roots and aims to preserve social harmony and mutual tolerance. As motivation effects the application path, Indian experience is more democratic and indigenously rooted than Turkish West- inspired and authoritarian type.

In line with the paradoxes of secular state formation and application in both state, Indian and Turkish political history is examined in terms of religious and national discrimination. Due to unity of nation is accepted another core principle of newly formed state, homogenization and assimilation policies became inescapable by the Kemalist and Hindu nationalist government which bring along otherization and discrimination of minority groups in the country. While Turkish speaking Sunni-Hanafi citizens accepted as appropriate, minority Alevi’s and Kurds are marginalized by the state. On the other hand, Muslims in India is accepted as other in the eyes of state therefore, assimilation of these groups became legitimate in line with the majoritarian understanding of nationalism. In this sense, Kurdish problem and Kashmir problem is in the same ballot in case of secular nationalist governments. Moreover, while Hinduism is officially accepted as effective guarantor of secularism and Hindu nationalism, Islam is legitimately seen as enemy creates anomalies and contradictions. At the end, Bose thinks that disassociation from cultural and national values and minority elite-led top-down modernization are two prominent deficiencies of Turkish secularism which made more authoritarian Turkish experience with comparison to India. To sum up; homogenization,

militaristic and centralized type policies of secular nationalist character of both state lead to rise of anti-secular political trends in both state after 1990s; they relatively are: AKP as successor of National Outlook Movement (Political Islamic tradition in Turkey) and Hindu nationalist party BJP in India. Political parties under the leadership of Erdoğan since 2002, Modi in India since 2014 lead to transform counties into more anti-secular political environment. Although AKP as a successor of National Outlook tradition does not adopt political Islamic identity especially in its first term, political attempts regarding guarantying religious freedom, stressing on religious education especially opening new Imam- Hatip Schools accused of Islamization of state.

Bose has stated common structural features of two populist parties which enabled him making evaluation of future of secularism. Firstly, two leaders are considered as populist and developmentalist in terms of giving emphasis of socio-economic progress and development. And he makes similarities between Kemalist legacy and Hindu nationalism. In line the populism, leader-centric power easy to form personal cults. Especially due to the high charisma and ultimate personal power of Erdoğan, Bose describe contemporary Turkish political environment as neo-sultanic regime.

His assessments regarding to future of secularism in both India and Turkey is associated with political culture of related states. He thinks that democracy cannot within anti-secular environment in India. Although future of Indian secularism is indetermined, he is more optimistic about future of secularism because of several differences between Turkey. Firstly because of India in terms of its historical multi-ethnic linguistic nature of India which make majoritarian policy to implement harder in comparison to Turkey. Secondly, depending on decisive role of formation process of secularism in both states give chances India due to relatively flexible and moderate process with across to Turkey's rigidly implemented and centralized policies. And lastly, as linked with the political culture; he asserts that Indian political culture and democratic tradition is stronger than Turkey's in terms of institutional and judicial structure. In opposition to Indian case, he is pessimistic about future of secularism in Turkey due to authoritarian character of state from the beginning. He thinks that; secular authoritarian political regime replaced with anti-secular authoritarian regime because of transformation of elites in Turkey. Especially reforms under the name of breaking military tutelage and democratization, civilian has yielded to civilian supremacy and ceased to be the arbiter of polity, however coercive and repressive characteristic has not changed (p.233). Therefore, it is unlikely possible to get rid of leader-centric and authoritarian character of Turkish political culture.

The literature on secularism both in India and Turkey is vast, many pieces deal with issues around secularism however, handling secularism based contemporary paradoxes of two secular, non-Western states with their different geographic, demographic, cultural and political features and experiences resulted with unique and inspiring comparative study. Using "structured, focused comparison method" in social and political cases make audience to easily grasp dynamics of discussion. It enriches our vision by stressing focus paradox of secularism and state policies whether characteristic and political history of sample cases are different. And conclusion argument in terms of transition of actors does not change the political culture of politics unless manner of state does not transformed is very valuable to have approach several transformations around the world. Scholars and policymakers who engage in these topics will benefit from this book.

Although his contribution is significant and seminal, there are some points in terms of Turkish future of secularism that stand out. Firstly, the issue of generalization through evaluating Turkish political history from beginning till now with authoritarian character. Although military coup which accelerated democratic deficit has occurred short after 24 January decision was taken, especially 1980s reflections of economic liberalism into social and political life, victimized, suppressed social groups started to occur. Besides internal factor, EU membership process as external factor forced Turkey to make reforms in favor of democracy. Although most of these developments was made to specific purpose of state rather ideally democratization but, at the end efforts pave the way some changes therefore these should not be underestimated. And, Turkey has multiethnic and religious historical perspective in as much as India which can be considered as part of political culture. Moreover, emergence of anti-secular AKP as representative of suppressed group of society against the authoritarian and rigid implication of Kemalist regime is consensually accepted. So, Turkish people experience and witness the result of empowerment formerly suppressed group which lead to take lesson not giving credence to potential candidate who make victimization-based propaganda. Lastly, sociological features such as independent, critical, individualistic, less value-centered of upcoming young generation as candidate voters' preference might be in favor of tangible attempts toward democracy.

Keywords: Secular States, Religious Politics: India, Turkey, and the Future of Secularism

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