

acquired a strong religious component, but now considers the religion of Islam as the most important element of Turkish identity. In today's Turkey, secularism has lost the attribute of regarding religion as a marginally important guide in life or mode of life. It is instead equated with Westernization. These concepts are in confusion and only a matter of interpretation, but, more importantly, in practice they are a source of social intolerance. The laws and regulations in effect in Turkey can defend those who humiliate and disgrace women who wear a headscarf,¹⁵ "because the suppression of the rights of religious citizens is carried out by the state and due to 'laws and regulations'."¹⁶ But at the same time, there are numerous incidents of harassing seculars and forcing them to practice religion. In fact, the formulation of some scholars, that "there are two Turkeys, not one," indeed two Turkeys in conflict with each other, is true. Independent Turkish scholars believe that by heaping so much importance on religion in the make-up of Turkish identity and by dividing Turkish citizens into two distinct categories of Muslim and non-Muslim, the

¹⁵ The headscarf and the right to wear it have become symbols of religious freedom in Turkey. There is a massive campaign against the law prohibiting women from wearing a headscarf in public places, and it is anticipated that the law will be abolished.

¹⁶ Mustafa Akyol, "Eastern Kemalists Do Not Understand Turkey, Too" (Eastern here meaning the locals in Turkey), *Turkish Daily News* (December 13, 2007). Akyol was responding to an article by Orhan Kemal Cengiz, "Western Kemalists Do Not Understand Turkey," in the December 8 issue of the paper. The sum of these two articles is a representation of the diversity and many times the contradictions among views and interpretations of the concepts on the basis of which the country is ruled.