

Audio file

[2024-10-15_ezgibasaran.mp3](#)

Transcript

00:00:02 Michael Willis

Well, good evening everyone. I hope you all can hear me. My name is Michael Willis. I'm one of the fellows at the Middle East Center. And it gives me enormous pleasure to introduce not just the opening lecture of this term, but actually the opening lecture and the first event of the whole academic year here.

00:00:22 Michael Willis

Middle East Center and Anthony and warmly welcome you.

00:00:25 Michael Willis

Or.

00:00:26 Michael Willis

Now those of you who?

00:00:28 Michael Willis

Regularly attend our events, know, but alongside our our weekly Friday seminar, in which we invite speakers in, we organise every Friday and Michaels and Hillary terms to bring in the best and most informed speakers on the Middle East and North Africa. We also run on most Tuesdays.

00:00:47 Michael Willis

An event that really to which we invite authors who are writing and publishing the most important and interesting books about the region, and we invite them to come and talk about their work.

00:01:00 Michael Willis

Now we traditionally invite a mixture of academics and journalists to talk about their new books, and therefore we are particularly privileged. We have our speakers, a knight who is both a distinguished journalist and an accomplished academic.

00:01:17 Michael Willis

To talk about her new book.

00:01:20 Michael Willis

Many of you here will probably be familiar with Ezgi basaran from her work as a journalist from a prominent Turkish daily newspaper, Hurriyet, and then when she went on to work on radical as the not only the editor but the youngest editor, the newspaper has ever had.

00:01:35 Michael Willis

Now her reporting and commentary on Turkish politics, notably on the Kurdish conflict in Turkey, led to.

00:01:42 Michael Willis

First book, certainly in English, entitled Frontline Turkey conflict at the heart of the Middle East, which was published in 2017. Most of us would probably rest on our laurels after that achievement, but then Esque decided that she wanted a new career, which she moved and turned took a turn.

00:02:01 Michael Willis

Into academia in 2017.

00:02:06 Michael Willis

Now on on the completion of a book, she.

00:02:10 Michael Willis

Came here to Saint Anthonys to do the M fiddle and then the D Phil in modern Middle Eastern studies.

00:02:17 Michael Willis

As all best academics who work on the middle.

00:02:19 Michael Willis

East do.

00:02:21 Michael Willis

And the research for her devil thesis formed the basis of her second book, which came out this past summer, which, as you will be speaking about this evening, the new spirit of Islamism, interactions between the AKP and NAFTA.

00:02:36 Michael Willis

And the Muslim Brotherhood.

00:02:39 Michael Willis

Now I will of course be proper to let Eski explain the book, but I really couldn't introduce esque without.

00:02:50 Michael Willis

Saying a little bit more myself as someone who has had the privilege to actually have read the book, it's either really a wonderful piece of research and I can't recommend it highly. If you do read it, it really is an exceptional piece of research, as you will hear, it deals with a topic that is often discussed and people refer to it as if they.

00:03:11 Michael Willis

They know something about it or they know what it is, but very few people actually deal in in, in detail and fully exploit.

00:03:20 Michael Willis

Until, of course, Ezgi Basaran came along.

00:03:23 Michael Willis

And looked at it in detail.

00:03:25 Michael Willis

Like many of the best pieces of academic research, the book grew out of an informed and the PhD thesis. The default thesis grew out of an informed hunch, but the received wisdom on a topic was not telling the whole or even the essential story of at all.

00:03:46 Michael Willis

Esque then applied all her formidable skills as a top journalist to uncover what was really happening.

00:03:53 Michael Willis

In this issue.

00:03:54 Michael Willis

And moreover, tell it in an engaging and accessible way.

00:03:58 Michael Willis

She has then used, fundamentally, often quite surprising, as you'll hear things that she discovered to help reassess the academic understanding on the subject in new and illuminating ways. Saying anymore would trespass on the time you didn't come here to say me talk, you heard you came to hear esky talk.

00:04:18 Michael Willis

So please delighted to introduce Ezgi and her wonderful new book.

00:04:29 Ezgi Başaran

Thank you Michael for this.

00:04:29 Michael Willis

Thanks.

00:04:32 Ezgi Başaran

I mean, you made my.

00:04:33

Day.

00:04:36 Ezgi Başaran

So.

00:04:39 Ezgi Başaran

It is a privilege. This is actually a joint event, so it is a privilege to open this academic year at this joint event for the European Studies Center and the Middle East Center.

00:04:52 Ezgi Başaran

Two institutions that have profoundly shaped my intellectual trajectory.

00:04:57 Ezgi Başaran

During my time with the contemporary Turkey program at the European Studies Center, it was almost a decade ago.

00:05:05 Ezgi Başaran

There was still a flicker of hope that Turkey might anchor itself within the European narrative.

00:05:12 Ezgi Başaran

Today, that hope feels distant for both parties.

00:05:17 Ezgi Başaran

Turkey has changed.

00:05:18 Ezgi Başaran

That so has your.

00:05:20 Ezgi Başaran

It was also within these walls as a student, like Michael said, a student of the Middle East Center that I found not only intellectual guidance.

00:05:31 Ezgi Başaran

But also inspiration the lectures, seminars and panels I attended here in this very room were more than academic exercises. They were formative experiences that helped shape my worldview. I am deeply grateful to the scholars of the Middle East Center.

00:05:49 Ezgi Başaran

Not just for their insights and perspective, but for their generosity and kindness.

00:05:55 Ezgi Başaran

They became trusted friends and mentors at key points.

00:05:58 Ezgi Başaran

Of my life.

00:06:00 Ezgi Başaran

Just as these two centers have been academic homes at different.

00:06:04 Ezgi Başaran

Stages of my life.

00:06:06 Ezgi Başaran

Turkey, my home country, too, has long been defined by its position at the crossroads between Europe and the Middle East.

00:06:15 Ezgi Başaran

Yet today, these crossroads seem increasingly fraught.

00:06:19 Ezgi Başaran

It is a bitter irony.

00:06:22 Ezgi Başaran

That, as we gather here war, war crimes, massacres, and even the specter of genocide raged at the heart of both the Middle East and also Europe. Yet of differently, these strategies, tragedies are received by what we call the Western world.

00:06:42 Ezgi Başaran

The selective outrage, the inconsistency in response, it all reveals something deeply embedded in the West vision of itself in relation to the rest of the world, particularly the Middle East.

00:06:56 Ezgi Başaran

This discrepancy is no accident. It is not incidental, and it strikes at the core of some of the key questions my book grapples with the persistent, insidious force of Orientalism.

00:07:09 Ezgi Başaran

The same patterns of reduction, misrepresentation, and condescended condescension that justify mass murder, colonialism, war crimes continue to unfold.

00:07:20 Ezgi Başaran

Before our eyes.

00:07:22 Ezgi Başaran

And met with little more than a shrug.

00:07:25 Ezgi Başaran

One can only imagine the fragile soul of Edward said. Who was.

00:07:29 Ezgi Başaran

Here.

00:07:30 Ezgi Başaran

Aching with each new cycle of this relentless domination and the cruel production of knowledge that sustains it.

00:07:37 Ezgi Başaran

And whenever we talk about Orientalism, one of the inevitable roads leads us to the question of Islamism.

00:07:45 Ezgi Başaran

In this book, I aim to deep exceptionalist and de orientalized. The framing of Islamism as an ideology.

00:07:52 Ezgi Başaran

The book speaks to A to a long standing debate about the.

00:07:58 Ezgi Başaran

So-called failure.

00:07:59 Ezgi Başaran

Of political Islam. Also, the malleability of Islamism and the rise of post Islam.

00:08:05 Ezgi Başaran

But it is also about something more specific.

00:08:09 Ezgi Başaran

The convergence of Islamist practices with neoliberal logic.

00:08:14 Ezgi Başaran

A convergence that produces a new spirit.

00:08:17 Ezgi Başaran

And new ethos and new practices.

00:08:20 Ezgi Başaran

At the same time, this book is about a political confluence, a point of interaction between three key political movements.

00:08:29 Ezgi Başaran

It focuses on how these entities interact, influence influence one another and shape political outcomes in their respective contexts.

00:08:39 Ezgi Başaran

The focus on Tunisian and later the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and Turkey's ruling AKP was not to compare their strategies or practices but extrapolate the specifics of this political confluence. As both a journalist and an academic, my research has always centered on intersections, those points.

00:09:00 Ezgi Başaran

Where contacts, engagements and convergences occur among actors and agents. I also favor favor indirect paths over straight lines, as they often reveal deeper, more valuable clues for the explanations I see. That is why red than proposing a grand theory.

00:09:20 Ezgi Başaran

This research research modestly proposes a different gate to go through in order to understand the goals and aspirations of Islam.

00:09:29 Ezgi Başaran

That is, looking at their relationship with one another at a very rare moment, that is following two revolutions and then three elections, 3 meaning without fear of retaliation from an authoritarian leader where possible.

00:09:44 Ezgi Başaran

Now let me take a step back and explain how this journey unfolded and how the research.

00:09:52 Ezgi Başaran

That underpins this book came to be.

00:09:55 Ezgi Başaran

Since the fall of Mubarak in Egypt and Ben Ali in Tunisia in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings, delegations from the AKP, including AP.

00:10:07 Ezgi Başaran

Advisors to the Prime Minister and the Presidents ministers visited Cairo and Tunis countless times.

00:10:14 Ezgi Başaran

Similarly, representatives from the Muslim Brotherhood ekwan.

00:10:19 Ezgi Başaran

And and Nata visited Istanbul and Ankara, engaging in activities and meetings with government officials again countless times.

00:10:29 Ezgi Başaran

Why?

00:10:30 Ezgi Başaran

What were the?

00:10:31 Ezgi Başaran

Goals of his meetings that were usually kept from the public eye what discussions took place among these Islamist actors after the Arab uprisings.

00:10:41 Ezgi Başaran

These questions intrigued me and became the driving force behind the spur.

00:10:47 Ezgi Başaran

There is usually, like I said, a widespread belief that the enduring ties between Islamist entities can be fully explained by ideology. But this view is rather simplistic and Orientalist.

00:11:01 Ezgi Başaran

This notion suggests that these transnational collection collections aim to create or join a utopian.

00:11:09 Ezgi Başaran

Consequently, it was often asserted in the 2010 that the AKP, the Muslim Brotherhood and NASA, due to their shared ideological background, which is questionable, were attempting to form a, quote UN quote money block in the Middle East.

00:11:28 Ezgi Başaran

Because we knew they were meeting, meeting quite a lot, but we did not really know what they talked about.

00:11:34 Ezgi Başaran

But we saw news outlets pushing this narrative suggesting that the transnational dialogue among these groups was about, quote, restoring the era of Islamic rule.

00:11:46 Ezgi Başaran

Critics of Erdogan in Turkey accused him of being a an offshoot of Ekwan and al Qaeda.

00:11:54 Ezgi Başaran

Whereas pro government news outlets praised him for the same reason as the promoter of the Umma.

00:12:00 Ezgi Başaran

Some prominent scholars of Islamism, I don't want to name names said that the growing connections between the Muslim Brotherhood and the AKP were part of a quote. Neo Ottoman leadership claim over the Middle East. Others claim that that Muslim Brotherhood Salafis and former Islamic fighters.

00:12:22 Ezgi Başaran

Convened under the auspices of ARDON'S AKP, aiming to create quote, brotherhood and a brotherhood empire.

00:12:30 Ezgi Başaran

Vote as you can see, most of these approaches, academic or journalistic, to this interplay suggested the existence of a panic Islamist agenda.

00:12:40 Ezgi Başaran

So my research aimed to dig deeper.

00:12:44 Ezgi Başaran

Throughout this journey I conducted over 70 interviews with the top level figures. The key figures from ANATA, each one and the AKP. These individuals were not selected randomly, they were carefully chosen based on their direct involvement.

00:13:01 Ezgi Başaran

Or deep knowledge of the interactions between these movements.

00:13:05 Ezgi Başaran

Between 2011 and 13, the interviews carried out between 2018 and 21 in cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, Tunis and London, and what emerged from these interviews, was not a set of ideals or actions.

00:13:25 Ezgi Başaran

Dictated by Islam, but something unexpected.

00:13:29 Ezgi Başaran

A recurring theme of success.

00:13:33 Ezgi Başaran

In every single conversation, without exception, the notion of and longing for success.

00:13:40 Ezgi Başaran

Surface naturally and became a central focus of the study study without any deliberate prompting on my part.

00:13:49 Ezgi Başaran

The yuan in Egypt and NAFTA were keen on understanding and learning what made the AKP successful.

00:13:58 Ezgi Başaran

Or in other words, the Turkish model success successful.

00:14:03 Ezgi Başaran

This model back then had been promoted by various actors, including the Foreign Ministers of of United Kingdom and the former President of the United States. Western policymakers think tanks, Turkish soft power entities, Arab intellectuals, Islamist organizations.

00:14:23 Ezgi Başaran

And academics, that was such that was the.

00:14:26

And.

00:14:27 Ezgi Başaran

And hard to believe, but let's remember that back in 2011, Turkey was still seen as the preferred Muslim power by the West because of its NATO membership. Ongoing EU accession process and strong ties with European markets.

00:14:44 Ezgi Başaran

In other words, the AKP, with its Islamist background, was regarded as a European actor that had successfully implemented a market friendly economic program.

00:14:56 Ezgi Başaran

Muslim enough to be considered authentic but very pro market.

00:15:03 Ezgi Başaran

So this made the Atps model and AKP highly attractive for each one in Egypt and Tunisia and Nata, their thinking was along these lines. If they could be perceived as adopting similar policies or actually implement a strategy like the AKP's.

00:15:22 Ezgi Başaran

They too would be recognized as legitimate political actors capable of governing effectively. This is really important for them.

00:15:31 Ezgi Başaran

And you know, and that was a benchmark of success.

00:15:36 Ezgi Başaran

In this, in that historical context, I see the pursuit of success as an effort to blend Islamist practices with neoliberal rationality.

00:15:47 Ezgi Başaran

A accordion term neoliberal rationality is about any behavior that can be systematically adjusted in response to changing circumstances. So the goal was to provide another, and each one with tactics and frameworks that could help them adapt and succeed.

00:16:07 Ezgi Başaran

Look before going into the tactics that AKP provided, I would like to underline that there is no denying the transnational aspect of Muslim politics.

00:16:19 Ezgi Başaran

But that doesn't mean a unified Muslim cultural entity or a dominant transnational Islamic set here is forming every time they interact. We need to look at politics and policy making in a way that goes beyond the Cold War era.

00:16:37 Ezgi Başaran

My research this book shows that the interactions between these Islamist groups didn't represent a global Islamist political project like those imagined in the 1980s.

00:16:50 Ezgi Başaran

Contemporary Islamists, unlike their predecessors, have a symbolic understanding of global Muslim solidarity.

00:16:58 Ezgi Başaran

And similarly, what some pundits call the goal of building a brotherhood empire or an Imani block is simply can be understood through realist international relations theory as a interest based relationship, because, for example, between 2011 and 13 exchanges between.

00:17:16

She has been.

00:17:18 Ezgi Başaran

The AKP and these North African parties seem beneficial for everyone involved. If one, and not, they would gain valuable technocratic knowledge from an Islamist party.

00:17:30 Ezgi Başaran

And AKP would extend its economic and geostrategic support in the region, using soft power to create more opportunities for economic investment.

00:17:42 Ezgi Başaran

Now the idea of Islamist interconnectedness has often been exaggerated, as this pan Islamic solidarity, which is seen as a threat.

00:17:50 Ezgi Başaran

Especially in the West.

00:17:53 Ezgi Başaran

And but the truth is, the dynamics of Islamist movements, actors and parties are quite complex, with each having different goals and very importantly, Islamists are also deeply rooted in their local context, with nationalism often playing a big role alongside their core beliefs in today's.

00:18:13 Ezgi Başaran

Islam is thinking being part of the global Muslim community or alma often just means dealing with similar challenges faced by Muslims in different countries.

00:18:24 Ezgi Başaran

And.

00:18:26 Ezgi Başaran

Nowadays, with the war looming in the Middle East, we just don't see that solidarity solidarity at all, do we? Among the Muslims or Islamists?

00:18:37 Ezgi Başaran

In the Middle East or around the world. So let's now turn to the tactics the AKP provided to the one and and NAFTA between 2011 and 13.

00:18:48 Ezgi Başaran

Through my research I identified 4 categories that defined the tactics. One category is crisis evasion.

00:18:59 Ezgi Başaran

In crisis.

00:19:00 Ezgi Başaran

Management. The other is legitimization.

00:19:04 Ezgi Başaran

3 is maintained, I mean reaching power, which means winning elections and the the 4th 1 is maintaining power, so having alliances that would consolidate your power.

00:19:20 Ezgi Başaran

One of the so I could not go all obviously all of them.

00:19:24 Ezgi Başaran

Go through all of them, but I would like to talk about one of the most crucial tactics.

00:19:29 Ezgi Başaran

And that was the cultivation of a new bourgeois, who closely tied to the political party.

00:19:35 Ezgi Başaran

In this case, this form of clientelism, which had been successfully used by the AKP, contributed its consolidation of power, also winning its elections back-to-back and navigating political crisis.

00:19:50 Ezgi Başaran

Likewise, the AKP argued that the new business elites in Tunisia and Egypt, through entrepreneurship, investment and job creation, could boost the economy while extended soft power by via economic diplomacy.

00:20:06 Ezgi Başaran

This vision LED AKP affiliated businessmen to help establish 2 business associations, one in Cairo and other in Tunis.

00:20:15 Ezgi Başaran

Modeled after the Akpos own Musiad, roughly the conservative businessmen association of Turkey.

00:20:23 Ezgi Başaran

But Co dependent on the AKP.

00:20:27 Ezgi Başaran

And these two new associations operated for, for, for for some time under the under the AKP's influence.

00:20:37 Ezgi Başaran

So this alignment of economic interest would allow Ennahda and the Muslim Brotherhood to establish a strong base and provide both financial and social backing. That was just thinking. And one of the core tactics, like I said in the AKP's prescription of such.

00:20:57 Ezgi Başaran

In this context, success is.

00:20:59 Ezgi Başaran

Tied to a managerial approach where Islamists movements prioritize effective governments and the practical aspects.

00:21:08 Ezgi Başaran

Of running a state.

00:21:10 Ezgi Başaran

This includes adopting modern management techniques, hence why I refer to these.

00:21:17 Ezgi Başaran

To them, these three entities as the CEO of Islam.

00:21:23 Ezgi Başaran

And ensuring efficient public services.

00:21:27 Ezgi Başaran

So this the concept of Islamism comes relevant here.

00:21:35 Ezgi Başaran

And we should talk about them. Scholars Oliviera and Asif Boyett have argued that since the mid 1990's the goals and approaches of Islamist politicians have significantly shifted.

00:21:47 Ezgi Başaran

And it was due to their internal, you know, shortcomings or their contradictions.

00:21:56 Ezgi Başaran

This in turn led them to adopt more pragmatic approaches and bias and said they began reinventing themselves and moving away from some of the core principles. So transformation of Islamist aspiration is not a new debate. What I bring.

00:22:15 Ezgi Başaran

To this debate of post Islamism is that the shifts within the Islamist politics pushed by the impasses of the Islamist project of the 1970s and 80s is closely linked to the spread of neoliberalism and its molds.

00:22:30 Ezgi Başaran

The molds that describe and legitimize actors as normal, or the only viable versions of their previous iterations.

00:22:40 Ezgi Başaran

So there is a.

00:22:43 Ezgi Başaran

Wyatts and rulers Postulations are mainly based on the transformations of the political cannon that Islamists used, such as democracy and human rights and individual choice.

00:22:56 Ezgi Başaran

I disagree with that in this interplay. I saw that those concepts like Muslim or conservative democracy or the Turkish medals were only used as legitimizing frames. But the main transformation was led by the by market forces.

00:23:15 Ezgi Başaran

Market forces and managerialism, that is focusing on effective governance and efficient state management.

00:23:22 Ezgi Başaran

And this is a divergent in the transformation of how Islamists movements function.

00:23:31 Ezgi Başaran

So I argue that in this light, a new spirit of Islamism began to emerge starting from late 1990s and continues to evolve to Arab uprising and driven by the pressure of neoliberalism and their internal crisis within and their internal crisis.

00:23:50 Ezgi Başaran

The Islamist repertoire of metaphors, symbols, narratives, and rituals from which they draw.

00:23:59 Ezgi Başaran

To define themselves to represent their rivals and their allies, and to identify the problems and the solutions they proposed were seemingly inadequate to tackle the crisis ahead. Hence the attempt to learn from the experience of the AKP.

00:24:15 Ezgi Başaran

The fact that ichwan and Anata Ewan is the oldest Islamist, you know entity in the world and not the is also I mean the founder of another is one of the most important living Islamist thinkers.

00:24:32 Ezgi Başaran

The world. But if one and not the sort of assistance from the AKP and AKP, whose Islamic credentials are questioned by both of these entities.

00:24:45 Ezgi Başaran

What does it say? I mean, I think it demonstrates that there are decades old practices as movements and ideals could not provide them with the tools and practices necessary to write a success story. When.

00:24:58 Ezgi Başaran

They happen to be in government, then when they actually win the elections and assume office.

00:25:06 Ezgi Başaran

They desired to write a success story as Islamists, but the methods they sought to employ were not found in Islamist texts or even in Etihad.

00:25:17 Ezgi Başaran

Furthermore, I believe that the absence of Islamist concepts to find preemptive solutions to the challenges ahead is structural rather than attempt to conceal a covert intention to islamize the state.

00:25:32 Ezgi Başaran

The endeavors of the Muslim Brotherhood and, and not to be perceived as legitimate, quote UN quote normal actors resulted in them becoming political actors in, in a neoliberal mold with the state viewed as a mere machine.

00:25:48 Ezgi Başaran

In actually in a Hopsin sense.

00:25:51 Ezgi Başaran

So with this shift in priorities, success and governance and gaining economic power, Trump's traditional activities like Dawa preaching.

00:26:00 Ezgi Başaran

Which all of the interview led me to realize that.

00:26:05 Ezgi Başaran

I mean, especially on the side of and not and if one they claim that TV radio programs and especially smartphone apps are enough to do the data.

00:26:22 Ezgi Başaran

And so this leads us to a broader conclusion.

00:26:26 Ezgi Başaran

Islamists entities react to opportunities for power and success in the same way as any other contemporary political party on the ideological spectrum. There is nothing exceptional about their aspirations or methods. When opportunities of power arise while Islamism.

00:26:46 Ezgi Başaran

Remains rooted in Islamic principles. The commitment to these principles has become more and more flexible.

00:26:54 Ezgi Başaran

The main point is not that Islam is a core goal of islamizing this state and society has disappeared, but that it has become less prominent in today's context.

00:27:04 Michael Willis

Is.

00:27:06 Ezgi Başaran

Ideological concepts change due to power dynamics and conventions, so it's not surprising that the structure of Islamism has shifted, with core concepts being up secured and peripheral ones greed.

00:27:20 Ezgi Başaran

In this sense, I think Islamism has not collapsed. It has just evolved. Its adaptability will continue to shape its future as it interacts with state structures, other states, but also, more importantly, with other Islamist movements, like in the case of Michael and response to political opportunities.

00:27:40 Ezgi Başaran

Thank you.

00:27:52

Thank you.

00:27:54

Typing.

00:27:54 Michael Willis

Thank you, Ashley, for a a wonderful. Would you like to answer questions from here or the letter would give us a for a wonderful expedition of of the the really key key ideas of your book and and putting it so concisely and looking it through. But you did it. You did it beautifully. As somebody who's read the book, it really encapsulates.

00:27:59

No, sure.

00:28:06 Ezgi Başaran

Yeah, it was so hard to find what to what.

00:28:08 Ezgi Başaran

To tell him what that.

00:28:13 Michael Willis

It perfectly.

00:28:15 Ezgi Başaran

He has not only been.

00:28:16 Ezgi Başaran

Book he guided the book because my supervisor.

00:28:19 Michael Willis

But I I can take no credit, it was all her ideas, all her thing. I just I help. I help with a few suggestions. A couple of places. But it was what was really impressive. You seen from this book is as I said, some of the best research is when it looks at something that people assumed to be already known. But.

00:28:37 Michael Willis

This is all about the global Omar. It's these international networks and breaks it down to be something.

00:28:44 Michael Willis

Something much more prosaic in many ways much more basic than AD exceptionalism. And when you look at the Islamist parties, they look much more like other political parties. And I think that's part of a whole broad trend we're seeing. But that does raise, raise the question, I suppose if you turn it the other way around, which you begin to deal with the end is.

00:29:04 Michael Willis

What?

00:29:06 Michael Willis

Remains with the Islamist of these parties, particularly NAFTA, in Tunisia. This has been asked again is you become so changed you become so open, you become so flexible. What holds them together?

00:29:19 Michael Willis

And also why did there must be something is missed there, for example turning the whole question.

00:29:25 Michael Willis

Their way around.

00:29:26

Mm-hmm.

00:29:26 Michael Willis

Russia Kenosha in Tunisia. The Mohammed Morsi, my brothers.

00:29:31 Michael Willis

If they're looking for success, why didn't they go to Singapore or South Korea or Malaysia, or even the Gulf? Why did they go to Turkey? Is it some? There must be something Islamist about the impression or or is it just the particular?

00:29:47 Michael Willis

And Google.

00:29:47 Ezgi Başaran

I I asked them. I didn't. Actually, I didn't use the Singapore as a is a is a good example. I asked them as why, why? Why didn't you go to?

00:30:02 Ezgi Başaran

You know German SPD or, you know, Italians or anything?

00:30:07 Ezgi Başaran

And of course, they said, because AKP is is our brother, because Adam is our brother. Because Aaron is a good Muslim. But when you push them a bit further, you realize they they reckon that AKP has not. Many is not ideological.

00:30:28 Ezgi Başaran

At all because.

00:30:30 Ezgi Başaran

They keep his mother movement, me leggers the welfare party. That was their initial. That was their initial contact, and the rift happened between the Welfare Party and the AKP because of how they see the core elements of Islamism with the AKP.

00:30:50 Ezgi Başaran

It's more a pragmatic.

00:30:53 Ezgi Başaran

Party, where where the ideology is, it comes in handy when you need to, you know, leverage some domestic issue. But so they know they know that AKP is not an ideology. They don't really consider AKP as Islamist. They they underline that.

00:31:13 Michael Willis

Which is very interesting.

00:31:14 Ezgi Başaran

But they keep saying that it was also.

00:31:19 Ezgi Başaran

AKP, who wanted to come to us and so there was. It was a good example. It was liked by the West, and Aaron was our brother and they were willing to.

00:31:31 Ezgi Başaran

Help.

00:31:32 Ezgi Başaran

Both financially and as a mentorship, I I mean.

00:31:36 Ezgi Başaran

The the amount.

00:31:37 Ezgi Başaran

Of information that I gathered from those interviews at one point, I was shocked that actually AKP had done almost all admin work for their, you know, election offices.

00:31:53 Ezgi Başaran

All branding all. I mean this was something AKP wanted so much. What was it? They wanted to have other success stories.

00:32:06 Ezgi Başaran

You know.

00:32:06 Michael Willis

Why?

00:32:08 Ezgi Başaran

Because just to say that Islamists can govern.

00:32:11 Michael Willis

Oh, so they see themselves as Islamists? Or is it a is it Turkish projection? Is it Erdogan? Because then that's the question you can see why NAFTA and Brotherhood are interested, but what? What is an AKP if it's not really about ideology?

00:32:12 Ezgi Başaran

Normal.

00:32:17 Ezgi Başaran

It's more than.

00:32:19 Ezgi Başaran

It's. Yeah, it's.

00:32:21 Ezgi Başaran

It's.

00:32:25 Ezgi Başaran

When it comes to Erdogan and the AKP.

00:32:27 Ezgi Başaran

There has to be money.

00:32:31 Ezgi Başaran

There has to be money, so obviously it's more about more economic investments and you know in the book I talk about how intricate all those, you know, meetings are and how I mean.

00:32:44 Ezgi Başaran

The plans are.

00:32:46 Ezgi Başaran

But other than that.

00:32:49 Ezgi Başaran

Everyone goes to Cairo just before meeting Juan and says that secularism is good.

00:32:57 Ezgi Başaran

Just, you know, just embrace secularism. I am a Muslim, he says. I am a Muslim, but I lead a, you know, country that is secular. So please don't be afraid of. So he wants he want to succeed, to keep and maintain power. It's partly because it will be beneficial because when there, there is.

00:33:18 Ezgi Başaran

Morsi in power. You know, the Turkish intelligence has done.

00:33:23 Ezgi Başaran

Things in Cairo that you know past three decades couldn't manage, so it was obviously a like minded you know.

00:33:33 Michael Willis

Quick pro quo.

00:33:34 Ezgi Başaran

Pro but it it also means that let's show the West because I don't have that. Let's show.

00:33:41 Ezgi Başaran

The West that we can do it.

00:33:44 Ezgi Başaran

That Islamists are, so they they put us in all in in the terrorism basket. We're not. We're able we we provide good services to people we have we know the economy.

00:33:57

You know, to the economy.

00:34:00 Ezgi Başaran

Yeah. So that was the main thing.

00:34:02 Michael Willis

Fascinating. Thank you.