THE MYTH OF POLITICAL ISLAM IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates Turkey's political history with its main focus on the formation and evolution of the phenomenon commonly called *political Islam*. Through a careful analysis of the processes underpinning this phenomenon, this study challenges dominant representations of *political Islam* in the country in an attempt to redefine the concept. While the literature commonly presents *political Islam* within a centre vs. the periphery dichotomy, as a movement of the *indigenous faithful* against the *Westernized oppressors*, and suggests a genuine cultural dilemma, this dissertation aims to provide an alternative reading of this very complex phenomenon in modern Turkey.

This study contends that *political Islam* is not a *faith-driven* phenomenon or a new political movement than an unintended outcome of the secular elite decisions and choices. It is a symptom of a failure that originally occurred in the rural segments of the population which have been deprived of their socio-economic and cultural opportunities for short-term political gains. Hence, departing from the debates focusing on moral arguments and reaction to *modernization*, this dissertation proposes an account of the socio-economic and developmental setting that can help to comprehend the formation and evolution of *political Islam* in the country. It stresses the importance of the actual historical context, and the true motives of the *political Islamists*, for a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon.

The Turkish case suggests that *political Islam* is decisively linked to various decision-makings and policy choices by the secular state actors. Following the introduction of the multi-party system, political responses to various emerging challenges

provided a fertile ground where *political Islam* with its anti-secular discourse could find a foothold and advance. At different times, political party rivalry, the perception of a communist threat, and the impact of globalization on the spheres of finance and culture constituted the core elements in the politicization and instrumentalization of religion. In investigating this process, this dissertation also brings the perception of the *political Islam* as a means of democratization, and the concept of *democratization* into question.

Keywords: *Modernity, Competitive Party Politics, Instrumentalist Use of Islam, the Cold War, the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis, the National Cultural Report, Social Engineering, Tarikat Activities, Neo-Liberal Economic Policies, Socio-Economic Downfall*

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Türk siyasi tarihini, "siyasal İslam" diye tabir edilen olgunun oluşum ve gelişimini merkezine alarak araştırmaktadır. Modern Türk siyasetinde bu oluşumun önünü açan ve destekleyen faktörleri yakından irdeleyerek, "siyasal İslam'ın" günümüz literatüründeki kabul görmüş ve yerleşik temsiline meydan okumaktadır. Standart literatür merkez ve çevre arasında bir çatışmayı öne sürer, ve siyasal İslam'ı *inançlı yerli* unsurların *batılılaşmış suni* unsurlara karşı toplumsal bir hareketi olarak görür. Yerleşik literatürü temsil eden bu bakış, siyasal Islam'ı meşru ve kaçınılmaz kültürel bir ikilemin sonucu olarak ifade eder. Bu tez çalışması, esasen oldukça karmaşık olan bu olguya alternatif ve doğru bir yaklaşım getirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Bu tezin öne sürdüğü yaklaşım, sanılanın aksine "siyasal İslam" ın özünde inanç odaklı ve inançla süregelen bir olgu olmadığı, ve yeni bir toplumsal hareketi temsil etmediği, fakat seküler devlet unsurlarının uyguladıkları karar ve politikaların bir yan unsuru ve konjektürel olarak ortaya çıktığıdır. Temel olarak, rekabetçi siyasette avantaj ve kazanç elde etme çabaları sonucu, sosyal-ekonomik ve kültürel fırsatlarından mahrum bırakılan kırsal nüfus içerisinde ortaya çıkan, bir kalkınma başarısızlığının semptomudur. Bu çalışma, kabul görmüş ahlaki ve etik argumanlardan ve modernizasyon karşıtı yaklaşımlardan ayrılarak, "siyasal İslam'ı" sosyal-ekonomik ve kültürel kalkınma penceresinden değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, siyasal İslam'ı anlamak için gerçek tarihsel bağlamı ve siyasal İslamcıların amaç ve söylemlerini anlamanın önemine vurgu yapmaktadır.

Bu çalışma siyasal İslam'ın Türkiye'deki oluşum ve gelişimini, farklı zamanlarda uygulamaya konmuş çeşitli seküler politika ve kararlara bağlamaktadır. Örneğin, çok partili yaşantıya geçişi takiben, farklı dönemlerde değişen tehdit algısına karşı alınan toplumsal ve siyasi önlemler, *siyasal İslam* için verimli bir zemin oluşturmuş ve laiklik karşıtı söylemiyle Türk siyasetinde kendine bir yer bulabilmiştir. Siyasi partiler arasındaki oy kapma rekabeti, "komünist tehlike" algısı, ve globalleşmenin finansal ve kültürel alandaki etkileri dinin bir enstrüman haline geldiği ve siyasallaştığı bu süreçte belirleyici bir rol oynamıştır. Bu süreci incelerken, "siyasal İslam'ı" demokrasiye geçiş için bir araç olarak gören günümüz literatürüde burada sorgulanacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Modernite, Rekabetçi Parti Politikaları, Bir Siyasal Enstrüman Olarak İslam, Soğuk Savaş, Türk-İslam Sentezi, Milli Kültür Raporu, Toplum Mühendisliği, Tarikat Aktiviteleri, Neo-Liberal Ekonomik Politikalar, Sosyal-Ekonomik Kırılma*

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PREFACE

Scholarly writings which have dominated the literature on contemporary Turkish politics and Turkish modernization argue that modern Turkey as a secular republic constitutes a false state where the "real people" are cut off from their cultural roots through an artificial modernization project. Thus, they are rising against the "secular tyrant". Providing a glimpse into this widely held narrative, Esposito (2000) argued the "defeat of secularism" in Turkey in 1995 by suggesting an *indigenous revival* in conjunction with an "Islamic reawakening" which he described as a catalyst for democracy (p. 4). In the process, Esposito depicted Islamists as the chief agents of liberty and pluralism.

Along the same lines with Esposito, Robins (1996) conjured the pre-republican era as the "real Turkey" and the "real people" as opposed to modern Turkey which he characterized as a "denial and repression of the actuality of Turkish culture and society" (p. 71). According to Robins, "the real Turkey was the 'other' against which this official nation was constituting its identity" (p. 71). He further stated that "Kemalist ideology" was an "empty substitution" (p. 69). In the same vein, Yavuz (2003) suggested an ideological quarrel between what he called "Muslim Anatolian civil society" and the "Kemalist state establishment" that he argued gave rise to "political Islam" (p. 46). He described secular reforms and policy initiatives in the early decades as a vicious assault on local culture which he argued Islam historically shaped and characterized.

As staunch critics of *secularization* and *modernization*, adherents of the "Islamic awakening" theory dismissed the idea of secularism in the region and quickly justified

"political Islam" as an organic and faith-driven phenomenon. Essentially, what began as a critique of *progress* and *continual betterment* in the 1970s, and then turned into a new conjecture of *religious awakening* in international relations, morphed into a new discourse of *cultural dilemma* by the end of the 1990s.

Theoretical Questions

Described above, while the conjectural roots of this discourse are not the aim of his study, my primary objective here is to reveal the basic weaknesses of this reading that I argue comprise a misconstrue of historical facts. Moreover, by challenging the core premises of the dominant literature and the antagonism that it inspired in the readings of the contemporary Turkish politics, I argue that an actual critical approach must raise two questions: The first, one must ask whether "political Islam" really represents a *faith-driven notion* as widely held. And the second, one must question whether the alleged "Islamic awakening" represents an "indigenous movement" that stems from a long cultural battle of the two opposing factions. As I will delineate in this study, these are the kind of questions worth asking that demand a close scrutiny and a comprehension of the actual historical context with a crucial developmental perspective, noting a standpoint that the conventional readings have largely overlooked.

In this study I contend that a common weakness in the conformist reading in both ethical and political studies is that their analysis seek to view "political Islam" exclusively through the prism of religiosity. This study further states that the "political Islam" and the "Islamic revival" in reality did not correspond to a faith-driven phenomenon, nor did it occur as an outcome of any social movement or cultural quarrel as discussed. It formed and evolved instead as an unintended outcome of various policy

choices and decision-makings of secular bureaucratic cadres, where in the process, exploitation of religion became a political norm in addressing newly emerging challenges both at domestic and global spheres.

Scope of the Study and Method of Inquiry

In an effort to explore the "political Islam" in the Turkish context, this study will embrace an historical approach and adopt discourse analysis through which it aims to provide detailed insights into key underlying events from the mid-1940s until the end of 1990s. It anticipates that the weight of the "faith" aspect remains rather unimportant to the underlying processes that promote "political Islam". It places a critical emphasis on the course of religious exploitation which deprived the rural masses of their socio-economic, cultural and intellectual opportunities. And it shows, how by the 1990s this has resulted in the persistence of the *socially disadvantaged* and the *excluded* for whom "political Islam" was an expression of a social identity and a means to voice their economical grievances.

Following the introduction and historical chapters, where the current literature on modernization and secularism is criticized, and the early roots of secular thinking in the Turkish context is reviewed, this study will examine the Turkish case in four chapters. The chapter 3 will cover a period from 1939 to 1980. The chapter 4 will look at the 1980s whereas the 1990s will be examined in the following two chapters with each concentrating on different aspects of this very same decade. Hence, the chapter 5 will focus on the socio-economic impact of the ANAP's neo-liberal economic policies on the welfare of the general population. And, the chapter 6 on the other hand will analyze the discourse of political Islam in the image of the Welfare Party.

Chapter 1 provides a detailed critique of the modernization and secularization narratives by various scholars of ethics and Middle Eastern politics, and questions its accuracy and shows how that criticism may have affected the conventional view on modernization and secularism in Turkey. The unease with *modernity* since the 1970s in the field of ethics, joined by "religious revival" theories of the mid-1990s in politics, located the main criticism at the *modern secular state*. Also, the critics argued that secularism fell short of its promise of the *rational self* and *rational thinking*, and by suggesting a cultural dilemma, they defined *political Islam* as the true means of *democratic polity* against the secular regimes that they were rising against.

Chapter 1 asks whether the faculty of rational thinking is really a common attribute of every human being. A notable point presented in this chapter is that, rationality is not a granted quality, but scientific and intellectual development can stimulate *rational thinking* progressively as people begin to question the traditional ways of life and well-established norms. This chapter also questions whether territories where *Islamic reawakening* is argued to occur have ever gone through an actual modernization at the first place. Essentially, this chapter sets a critical basis and introduction to discuss what is to be *modern*. Furthermore, it discusses the essence that one needs to derive from it, and how this shaped modernization efforts in the Turkish context until the introduction of the multi-party system in 1946.

While contemporary critics of Turkish modernization depict *secularization* as a vicious assault to the "local culture", chapter 2 seeks to provide a historical background and challenges the accuracy of this claim. It first brings Mahmut II to our attention whose reign reveals critical insights into the rise of secular thinking in the Turkish context, thus

tracing the actual trend back to the mid-19th century. Particularly, it focuses on Mahmut's attempts to introduce compulsory secular education at the primary and secondary levels, and highlights his establishment of secular higher education. A crucial argument presented here is that the distinction between *worldly* and *religious* was well recognized in this period, and as Charles MacFarlane (1850), James E. DeKay (1831), Mustafa Sami (1840), and Sadık Rıfat's (1837 and 1844) account revealed, the former was endorsed by the Ottoman bureaucratic cadres and intellectual circles marking a tide already in favor of the *secular*.

Chapter 2 also describes the socio-psychological condition and the physical situation of the "faithful indigenous" in the early Republican period based on the assessments of the general masses by Muzafer Sherif, Daniel Lerner, and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Here, the main argument is that the scholarly critique which views Turkish modernization exclusively through the prism of religiosity constitute a misconstrue of facts. Turkish modernization with its secular traits did not lie on the spectrum of theological politics nor it formed in pertain to religion, but it was aimed at achieving the *modern self*.

Chapter 3 investigates key political debates that gradually endowed religion with a political dimension. It critically notes that in the eyes of the general population a perception of Islam as a political notion did not occur until the late 1960s. And, when it became a feature of Turkish politics in the 1970s, it was yet to acquire political competitiveness. This chapter describes how *religious exploitation* became a norm in the pursuit of politics and how this facilitated the legitimization of the traditional social structure in the rural population. It attempts to show how what began as a trickle with the

liberalization in the religious sphere in the 1940s, became a wave with the state efforts to *socially re-engineer* the society by the 1980s.

With regard to the 1940s, this chapter primarily delineates the changes made to the Article 14 in the DP program on 7 January 1946 and the Article 15 in the CHP program on 2 January 1947 to become more competitive. The concern was to not to give the electoral advantage to the other side by losing the support of religious conservatives. Focusing on the 1950s, the instrumentalist use of religion in the form of partisanship and populism will be the object of this chapter. Specifically, a notable emphasis will be placed on Menderes' use of the *freedom of religion and conscious* discourse to evade criticism for his indifference to the extremist voices within the DP cadres. Thus, various dialogues in the DP Konya, Çorum, Aydın, and Samsun city congresses between 1951 and 1952, and the DP's overall political rhetoric and behavior to appeal to the rural masses will form the key aspects of this section. In this section, vital observations by Bernard Lewis, George Harris, Howard Reed, and Behice Boran are also presented which shed light on the individualistic and materialistic outlook of the new post-war elites in contrast with the idealistic mindset of their predecessors.

Shifting focus to the 1960s, Chapter 3 will continue to delineate on the *freedom of religion and conscious* debate, but this time by relying on the rhetorical exchanges between Demirel and İnönü, underlining a period accompanied by the rise of ideological politics. Thus, this section deals with the Cold War conjecture and its consequences given the momentum it brought to the *politicization of Islam* in Turkey. Moreover, looking back at the turmoil and political polarization of the 1970s, a careful analysis of the "Turkish-Islamic Synthesis" (TIS) by the far-right *Intellectual's Hearth* (*Aydınlar Ocağı*)

is presented in this chapter. A particular emphasis is placed on the *Hearth's* diagnosis and the ideological remedy that it proposed to save the Turkish *national culture* in 1973.

Chapter 4 first examines the strategic decision-making that involved the adoption of the TIS as an ideological guideline and its official endorsement in *Milli Kültür: Özel İhtisas Komisyon Raporu* [The National Culture: The Special Commission's Report] (NCR) in 1983. This chapter attempts to show how the NCR placed a crucial emphasis on Islam as a defining cultural value, and accordingly, how it sought to achieve a "model human-being" that it perceived obedient and devoted to the state. Here, a major emphasis is placed on the NCR's criticism of modernization in the late Ottoman era, and its explicit resentment towards the Republican education system. The main argument presented in this section is that numerous policy decisions in the early-1980s resulted in the eradication of the social-democratic faction and further strengthening of the anti-secular elements.

Hence, reports about the scope and impact of various Islamic *tarikat* networks on Turkey's new political landscape, and debates about the Quran courses, illegal Quran courses, the *imam-hatips*, the compulsory religious education and their part in Islamist socialization sets the tone of this chapter. Thus, assessments of the Lieutenant General Nevzat Bölügiray, the head of the Marshal Law Coordination Office on the Islamic *tarikats*; views of Süleyman Yalçın, the second chair of the *Intellectuals' Hearth*; and insights by Ömer Okutan, Neşet Çağatay, Süleyman Hayri Bolay and Mümtazer Türköne, and Hüseyin Atay will be examined. Additionally, President Kenan Evren's directives and statements between 1981 and 1984 will take place in this section.

Focusing on the late-1980s, Chapter 4 will review the Islamist discourse by various writers. A close reading of numerous narratives by Ali Bulaç, İsmet Özel, and Abdurrahman Dilipak showed that political Islam began to advance particularly among the *urban poor* as an expression of a social struggle and resentment that was triggered by the widespread poverty. This section argues that a strong link exists between Turgut Özal's neo-liberal economic policy and the advance of political Islam as a means of a social shout for those originally from the periphery.

Delineating further on the economic emphasis Chapter 4 instigated, Chapter 5 examines the 1990s with a socio-economic focus. It addresses the relationship between the rise of the global market economy and the escalating *Islamic socialization* in the shape of the MÜSİAD. In this regard, a close reading of numerous statements and publications by the MÜSİAD's leading cadres is conducted. The main argument presented in this chapter is that political Islam rises as a language of social disadvantage, and for the "excluded" to claim their place in society. Thus, this section shows that the advance of political Islam pertains to efforts to create a new social identity, a new market and consumer culture along the MÜSİAD's pivotal role as an economic and cultural drive underneath.

Chapter 6 examines the same decade with a specific emphasis on the discourse of political Islam in the shape of the Welfare Party. Following on from the economic assessments that the chapter 5 provided, this chapter examines the weight of the economic deterioration and poverty on the sequence which transformed the Welfare Party into a mass party. It is the main argument of this chapter that while it is highly

overlooked by the conventional reading, it was in fact the socio-economic hardship that remained underneath the RP's rise as a political alternative in the eyes of the electorates.

Critically, by relying on the TÜSES records Chapter 6 emphasizes certain demographic patterns in relation to vote distribution among political parties in the 1994 local and 1995 general elections. It calls attention to voter profile to evaluate the drive beneath the electoral support for the RP. It addresses the relationship between provincialism, poverty and illiteracy, and the advance of political Islam which has long been ruled out as a cultural and moral struggle.

Moreover, while the scholarly readings quickly depict political Islamists as a firm advocate of democracy, Chapter 6 also raises the question of what they have actually got to offer in terms of a democratic polity based on the rhetoric and the discourse of the Welfare Party officials. Speeches by Necmettin Erbakan, Tayyip Erdoğan, Şevki Yılmaz, Hasan Hüseyin Ceylan, and İbrahim Halil Çelik between 1991 and 1997 are presented in this chapter along with important assessments and reports by Uğur Mumcu and Bahriye Üçok in the early 1990s.

This study closes with a seventh chapter where findings for each chapter will be summarized and a more accurate and alternative reading of "political Islam" in Turkey will be drawn as opposed to the conventional reading.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE LITERATURE AND ITS CRITIQUE

1.1 Challenges to the Secularization Narrative

Drawing from the ideas of *modernity*, *reasoning*, and *universalism*, the secularization narrative has become a controversial topic following the 1970s. The purported idea of the "rise of Islamism," and the proposition of "a failure of the modern secular state" further strengthened the contemporary critique of secularization and modernization by numerous scholars of ethics and Middle Eastern politics. Since the mid-1990s, this emerging conjecture has further advanced on a perception which suggested a cultural dilemma. According to this reading, it was an ethical struggle in which the "indigenous faithful" was rising against the "secular tyrant," thus, Islamist activism was a moral religious movement. Adherents of this view perceive secularism exclusively through the prism of religiosity that has also shaped how contemporary readings come to interpret secularism and "political Islam" in Turkey.

Secularism was a triumph of the Renaissance era that following the Protestant reformation put an end to the church's hegemonic status in Europe. In the aftermath of the *wars of religion*, the Peace of Westphalia resolved the sectarian conflict between Christian sects in 1648, and placed *reasoning* as the catalyst for politics. Faith was now a matter of personal preference situated in the private realm as intellectual freedom and knowledge were to determine the course of politics. Since then, *secularism* had remained subject to constant evolution with its advance reaching its peak when European Enlightenment gave rise to the creation of modern nation-states. The main idea beneath

the secularization thesis is that moving away from religious dogmatism makes re-interpretation of life possible to adapt change that comes with scientific innovations and intellectual developments. The most importantly, it allows governance on the basis of rational thinking. As opposed to the recitals of ancient religious doctrines, rational pursuits ultimately foster democratic thinking with core emphasis on political and civil liberties.

The secularization narrative remained mostly unchallenged until the 1970s. The 1970s onwards however, critics began to question its validity. Essentially, political upheavals in post-colonial states, conflicts that the politicized form of Islam raised, and the Iranian revolution of 1979 were critical issues that led to this reconsideration of the narrative. Along this trend scholars also added moral arguments to their criticisms of secularism in regard to its historical role in the justification for cultural assimilation and colonialism. Today, aside from its political core, different aspects of the narrative constitute a subject of multidisciplinary inquiry and appeal to academics from diverse fields. Scholars who specialize in social ethics, studies of culture and rituals, sociology, and anthropology of post-colonialism opposed the secularization narrative due to moral claims that it posits alongside with the ideas of *progress* and *continual betterment* which ultimately link secularism with *modernization* and democratic thought. Critics not only oppose the idea of *modernity*, but also suggest that the absence of democracies outside the cultural context of *Judeo-Christianity* renders the secularization narrative obsolete. Elizabeth Hurd (2008) points out “religious revival” and the pivotal role that it plays in international conflict, and argues that:

> If Westphalia signalled both a dramatic break from the past and a consolidation and "a codification of a new conception of political authority" that was secular and also deeply Christian, then perhaps contemporary international relations is witnessing the gradual emergence of a series of post-secular conceptions of religiopolitical authority. … In some ways, we are back to Europe in 1517. In other ways, we never left (p. 3).

Jacobsen and Pellegrini (2008) describe the secularization thesis as "fundamentally incoherent" (p. 2). Their objection mainly draws upon the binary divisions based on which the narrative advances and the promise of universality despite its European and Protestant heritage. By allowing people to acquire a greater autonomy in their choices, Jakobsen and Pellegrini (2008) argue that secularism in fact renders religion void as a failure. Furthermore, it leads to a false perception that societies which are more advanced are "better" than those who do not satisfy the same norms and remain "behind" (p. 6). The secularization thesis, they contend, sits on a set of theoretical opposites such as *progress* vs. *regression*, *freedom* vs. *repression* and *modernization* vs. *continuation* by suggesting a "moral division" (p. 6). Hence, the secularization narrative is argued to be false because it attempts to set itself apart as an essential for progress whereas religion serves as a connotation for the inert and regression. Jacobsen and Pellegrini (2008) state that "if secularism represents rationality, universality, modernity, freedom, democracy, and peace, then religion (unless thoroughly privatized) can only present a danger to those who cherish these values" (p. 9).

The second criticism questions the narrative's promise for *universalism* and focuses on Talal Asad's discussion. Asad (2003) states that *secularism* is not simply a

cultural outcome of the Protestant reform, but rather a phenomenon born out of constant interventions between the *secular* and the *religious*. Shifting attention to the post-colonial context, Asad's stress on *secularism* suggests an organic process (p. 256). Thus, Jacobsen and Pellegrini (2008) state that secularism and religion are interconnected and they re-make each other. More specifically, drawing from the Egyptian and Indian post-colonial experiences, they argue that secularism shapes differently in correspondence to unique religious context of a given society. Thus, the universality of secularism is not a justifiable claim.

The criticism of *universalism* also draws upon the colonial context of the 18th century where secularism is argued to originally serve a unique political necessity to form an all-encompassing sub-religious category. Calling attention to David Hume's *The Natural History of Religion*, Jakobsen and Pellegrini (2008) note that secularism was emerged as part of a larger political project that sought to achieve a "generic model of religion" on the basis of Protestant Christianity (p. 8). Hence, it was envisioned as an effective instrument for conflict resolution that involved colonial societies which did not exhibit the same norms and value systems. Furthermore, it obligated the assimilation of people of different culture and belief systems into a single practice. Jakobsen and Pellegrini (2008) suggest that *universalism* served to redefine religion to conceptualize a "universal category of human experience" that evolved into an Enlightenment project (p. 7).

Essentially, in the eyes of its critics, its contemporary use as a world discourse despite its actual heritage in Christianity, and its promise for moral progress despite its role in slavery and subjugation account for the incoherence of the secularization

narrative. By pointing out the ties of the secular thought with the Protestant faith and the European Enlightenment, they argue that secularism cannot correspond to a universal notion. Rather, as a flexible and multi-faceted notion, it can only be tailored given the characteristics of any given faith (Jakobsen & Pellegrini, 2008, 7-8).

The narrative takes the heat also due to the conjecture which treats secularism as a decisive component in the processes of *modernization* given its promise of universality and rationality. In this respect, the accuracy of secularism and modernity thesis is challenged particularly in the wake of the Islamic resurgence and ethnic tensions since the 1970s. The controversy further intensified throughout the 1990s when the idea of *religious awakening* set the dominant discourse in the fields of ethics and Middle Eastern politics where the dissidents saw it as an end-result of a failure of *the modern secular state*. Notably, they called for a reconsideration given the political instability in the Third World, ethnic and religious tensions in the post-colonial context, and the Iranian revolution of 1979. Regarding the latter, Jakobsen and Pellegrini (2008) state that "a successful revolution undertaken in the name of religion was not a part of this narratively constructed modern or even postmodern world" (p. 10).

With their ideological link in *political Islam*, the 9/11 attacks casted further doubt upon the secularization and modernization thesis. In the eyes of its critics, it leads to a conclusion that "the easy presumption that secularism is necessarily more rational, more modern, freer, and less dangerous than religion is not sustainable" (Jakobsen & Pellegrini, 2008, p. 11).

Jose Casanova suggests that a *religious revival* occurs today that he argues brings validity of the secularization narrative into question. He states that the separation of religion and state does not necessarily propose a denial of religion in the public sphere because in communal life it persists in moral and political disputes. Moreover, the *privatization* of religion which the secularization narrative puts forward is an invalid argument as *de-privatization* is occurring as a new phenomenon (Casanova, 1994, p. 5). According to Casanova, four developments since the 1970s have contributed to this viewpoint. Islamic revolution in Iran, the rise of the Solidarity movement in Poland, the role Catholicism in the Sandinista revolution, and the public re-emergence of Protestant fundamentalism in America, he argues, indicate a religious revival.

Casanova (1994) stresses that rather than the separation aspect of the narrative, it is the *decline of religion thesis* that he finds problematic. Originated in the Enlightenment critic of religion, the thesis of *religious decline* seems to hold true only in those cases where church insisted to maintain its hegemonic status. In other words, religions which successfully managed to absorb the principle of separation and modified themselves did survive. Hence, the decline of religion was not the case in the latter. Casanova (1994) argues that this explains the continuous decline of religion in Western Europe in contrast to its increasing strength in the United States (p. 3-24).

Casanova notes that today Catholic Church embraces secular norms and accepts the contemporary social dynamics along the separation between the realms of religion and politics. As its hegemonic status has diminished and ecclesiastical practices faded away, he argues, the church disestablishes itself voluntarily. Religious establishments move closer to public where a mutual recognition leads to the adoption of new roles and

harmony between the religious and the secular. Thus, in the public sphere religious establishments shift their focus from state governance to the people and advocate political and civil liberties as the backbone of a democratic order. Given this historic change in the orientation of religious establishments, Casanova argues that *de-privatization* in fact becomes desirable. The Catholic opposition to abortion and opposition to nuclear defence policies, according to Casanova, set examples of the *de-privatized* forms of religion. From this particular perspective, he notes that *religious awakening* is not in conflict with modernity (p. 219-225). He also argues that the essence of the secularization thesis which stresses on the differentiation between the secular and the religious holds true (p. 6).

Elizabeth Hurd (2008) identifies religious fundamentalism and resurgence as two main issues that nowadays come to shape discussions in pertain to international conflict and security. She questions the privatization of religion and the discourse that suggests the differentiation of the political realm from the religious. Hurd traces the roots of secular thought back to the Peace of Westphalia in the 17th century which settled the sectarian conflict among Christians. According to Hurd (2008), contrary to the dominant assumption, shared mainly by liberal and realist theories of international relations, the *privatization* in fact never took place. Moreover, the Westphalia settlement marked the origin of secularism as a product of Christianity.

Hurd (2008) presents *laicism* and what she calls *Judeo-Christian secularism* as two traditions of secularism with their origins in Western historical experiences (p. 5). She suggests that while both traditions embrace a structural differentiation of the religious from the realms of authority and power, they propose different discourses regarding what they consider as public and private. *Laicism,* as the product of the

Enlightenment critique of religion, constitutes a system in which religion plays no role in political affairs. *Judeo-Christian secularism*, on the other hand, underlines ideologically a unique Western notion that forms based on the historical advance of *Euro-American* civilization and culture. From a philosophical standpoint, Kant's *rational religion* in an attempt to resolve the religious sectarianism in Europe heavily influenced both traditions of the secular thought (Hurd, 2008, p. 25-27).

According to Hurd, *laicism* refers to a universal moral order in which *rational religion* is no longer clerical in essence, but corresponds to a moral notion, and it is dictated by not the Christian God, but by individual moral subject. In this respect, given its universal claim and reason that it confers on the moral individual, *laicism* not only avoids religion from the public sphere, but also replaces religious faiths altogether (Hurd, 2008, p. 27). *Judeo-Christian* tradition, on the other hand, constitutes the founding principle of democratic political order in the Western civilizations. From this perspective, *Judeo-Christian* tradition is suggested to form the basis of the separation between church and state which Hurd argues is truly a unique Western phenomenon with its origin in a larger Latin Christendom context.

Hurd argues that *Judeo-Christian* heritage is a necessary condition to create a fertile ground for Western democracy to take root based on a common shared historical, philosophical and religious tradition. In other words, unlike *laicism*, it does not correspond to a universal norm but instead it proposes a culturally fixed notion in Christian faith. Furthermore, it stands as assurance to the separation of church and state through a peaceful coexistence among different sects based on a common shared religious tradition. Hurd points to the former U.S. President George Bush as an

illustrative figure for *Judeo-Christian* tradition given his frequent references to God and heavens in his political speeches. Hurd stresses that Bush is not a *laic*. She concludes that *Judeo-Christian* discourse provides a moral basis for politics that is necessary to pursue (a Christian) God's will. And, it is imperative for the formation and survival of a democratic political order (Hurd, 2008, p. 37-38).

In his article "Islam and Secularization in the Twenty-First Century," John Esposito (2000) challenges the notion that secularism is a necessary condition for the development of modern states. He states that the "Islamic reawakening", which has been taken place for the last two decades, marks a new political trend that renders secularism obsolete (Esposito, 2000, p. 1). According to Esposito, the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the resurgence of Islam in modern Muslim states such as Egypt, Lebanon, Algeria, and Turkey indicate a political movement that brings the separation of religion and state thesis into question. Esposito places a particular emphasis on Turkey where he argues Islamism rises through electoral processes. Thus, today people throughout the Muslim world prefer to live in a socio-political realm that is not secular but Islamic in character. Furthermore, Esposito (2000) suggests that the *Islamic revival* is pushing for democracy and more pluralism, while secular political systems are drifting towards a greater authoritarianism to maintain their privileged status (p. 3-9).

John Keane, in his article "the Limits of Secularism," provides an argument along the similar lines with Esposito's viewpoint. Keane (2000) criticizes the "no secularism no democracy" notion and questions whether secularism is a dogma that hinders democratic pluralism (p. 29). Three self-contradictory discourses, according to Keane, embedded in secular thought that render the concept void. He argues that the first contradiction

emerges in relation to the freedom of religious association. Here, we should bear in mind that the idea of *privatization* sets individuals free in their daily practices and personal preferences as they are encouraged to act by reason. Thus, it provides a setting in which individuals *agree to disagree* on matters that pertain to religion. Keane opposes to this notion on the grounds that it proposes religious indifference which implies that citizens should recognize every sect as moral. The second contradiction that Keane argues concentrates on the psychological need of an individual. Accordingly, a person develops an emotional attachment with the sacred as a remedy for the stress and confusion that he endures during his daily encounters.

According to Keane, by replacing religion, secularism in fact proposes a return to the "sacred" as a means of emotional fulfilment. The final feature of secularism that he claims to be contradictory is its promise for *reason* and *compromise*. Drawing from the French and Turkish historical accounts, he argues that secularism was itself forced upon the populations through political coercion. Therefore, the promise of reason and compromise as a catalyst for political governance is self-contradictory. Keane further notes that the inherent hostility towards Muslim populations in the EU and the United States provides yet another illustration of secular dogmatism which supposedly assures tolerance and compromise. Keane (2000) concludes that given the injustices it produces and the sense of violence and ignorance it inspires, secularism is not a valid doctrine (p. 29-37).

1.2 Critique of the Literature

A strong emphasis on the notion of "Islamic revival", failure of the purported "rational human" to make decisions conducive to a democracy, and linking secularism with the democratic deficiency in the Middle East set the core of the dissenting opinion. However, by challenging these widely held premises, a more fundamental question that bears utmost importance is that: Is it really Islam as a faith-driven notion that is in rise, or, is it an upsurge of largely a developmental issue where certain policy-decisions in the socio-economic and cultural realms undermine the processes of modernization, ultimately giving rise to what scholars today define as the "political Islam"?

Denouncement of secularism in the conventional readings based on a very distinct context where radical forms of Islam takes root is not only biased but also very problematic as it justifies political forms with strong fascist leanings in the name of religion. In other words, conceptualizing the Iranian Revolution of 1979, radical movements led by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria, or even the Welfare Party of Turkey in the 1990s as "Islamic revival" raises serious questions. It can be argued that this line of thought, which remains central to the debates by the critics of the secularization narrative, also turns a blind eye to the trajectories of these movements in regard to their actual implications in the social and political realms. In this instance, critics tend to praise any form of movement with a religious discourse and propaganda as "Islamic awakening" without putting much thought into its attributes. One can argue that this approach serves to falsely glorify a medieval outlook and its outdated norms in the name of political Islam as a legitimate practice in present day.

Another notable weakness of the conventional reading is that it quickly relates polity in the troubled settings of the Middle East with *modernity*. Hence, it depicts violence and democratic deficiency as a failure of secularism which it argues falls short of its core promises of universality, rationality, and peace. However, this approach suffers notably from the absence of a *developmental dimension* as it overlooks the *human dynamic*. In other words, before making such an assessment one should consider carefully what constitutes *modernity* and what it takes to be *modern*.

This study contends that a truly modern state is not viable without engaging with modernity first at the individual level by suggesting a total development of the *self* both in psyche and attitude. Thus, highlighting a common flaw in both ethical and political analysis, the contemporary critique advances almost exclusively on a *religio-political* debate which obscures sociopsychological and physical impoverishment in those settings where *modernity* is argued to fail. Steven B. Smith (2016) points out the defining attributes of the *modern self* and way of life with:

> The desire for autonomy and self-direction, the aspiration to live independently of the dictates of habits, custom, and tradition, to accept moral institutions and practices only if they pass the bar of one's critical intellect, and to accept ultimate responsibility for one's life and actions (p. x).

At the bottom line, it bears out the question whether those states which are argued to go through an "Islamic revival" have ever gone through an actual modernization at the first place.[1]

A further weakness in the conventional reading arises from critics' interpretation of conflict as a failure of the *rational self* which they argue contradicts with the secular promises of rationality, universalism, and peace. This misinterpretation arises from an easy presumption that all humans are inheritably rational beings; hence, they should have embraced secularism. However, one must first question whether faculty of rational thinking is really a common attribute of every human being. A critical assessment would have suggested that rationality is not a granted quality, but scientific and intellectual advancement can stimulate rational thinking progressively as people then begin to question and challenge the traditional ways of thinking and well-established norms. In other words, faculty of rational thinking is not given, but acquired in the right context.[2]

Educational and cultural policies tailored specifically to encourage the faculties of *empathy* and *questioning* play a vital part in the formation of a *modern society* in contrast with *traditional society*. Failure to do so will likely to result in institutional formations which mimic modernized states that in essence do not fully materialize. It is also worth to note that as opposed to rational thinking, superstition is often encouraged by state elites

[1] For a detailed discussion on modernization, see Lipset (March 1959) where he calls attention to the complexity of an authentic modernization that is conducive to democracy.

[2] For instance, Lipset (1959) reveals a positive correlation between an effective wealth distribution and a high level of education, and an increased capacity to make rational choices and rational thinking. Lerner (1964) calls attention to a "psychological barrier" to modernization based on a drastic disparity between the "modern" and "traditional" psyche.

to ensure the status quo and maintain social order.[3] Therefore, as it will be discussed later, a truly all-around modernization is a very complex phenomenon.

With regard to the arguments which place democracy within the ideological framework of the *Judeo-Christian* tradition, the late Ottoman era provides critical insights into a long battle of clashing interests between the Islamic and secular forces. A tug of war between the reformist ruling elite and the Islamic *ulema* as the representative of the traditional establishments addresses frequent misreading in the contemporary critique of Turkish modernization. Starting from the early 1800s, Turkish modernization reveals a genuine success story where secularism took root in a very different setting outside the cultural framework of the *Judeo-Christian* tradition and ultimately gave rise to a democratic order.[4] Thus, it remains rather questionable whether depicting democracy as a unique product of the *Judeo-Christian* tradition constitutes an accurate assessment.

This study contends that the same forces apply as in the case of the Western advancement that secularism remains essential to modernization as a universal notion. It is even more so for societies that exhibit an Islamic cultural heritage. It is worth to note that, by *modernization* it is implied an all-around progress that encapsulates certain social, economic, intellectual, and political indices, and urbanization as an inseparable entirety. In his remarks, Casanova (1994) talks about *religious revival* in the contemporary context. However, this raises the question out whether it corresponds to a

[3] In his assessments, Lerner (1964, p. 133), reveals a continuous interaction between "superstition" and "stability."

[4] For a detailed analysis and historical course of secular development in the Turkish context, see Berkes (1998).

faith-driven phenomenon, or forms of different political expression with a strong socio-economic dimension?

Thus, it is critical to accurately define this well-rehearsed "revival", and equally important to identify its characteristics before lumping trends with religious rhetoric together as a movement of the "indigenous faithful" against the "secular oppressor". As religion persists, does this necessarily indicate an *awakening*? Or, do the movements that the FIS, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Welfare Party, and the revolution of 1979 in Iran represented constitute an "Islamic revival"? It might as well be argued that religion as a faith per se has in fact nothing to do with the formation and rise of these movements.

1.3 Democratic Discourse

The accounts of scholars such as Robert Dahl (1971), Dankwart Rustow (1970), Juan Linz (1978), Larry Diamond, John Booth, Mitchell Seligson, and Oliver Schlumberger provide basic insights into the conditions that foster democratic transitions. Dahl's theory of *mutual security*, Rustow's *decision phase*, and Linz's theory of democratic loyalty highlight the elite-oriented theories. Following a structuralist line, they suggest that democracy can take root in any soil and that the elite decisions and policy choices play a decisive role in the process regardless of the historical and developmental context. Diamond states that:

> After 25 years of weighing the evidence and studying democratic development in more than two dozen countries, I have concluded that there in fact are no

> preconditions for democracy other than a commitment by political elites to implement it.[5]

Gizachew Tiruneh's (2004) "normal democracy" provides a more relevant account to contemporary politics with its focus on the developing countries (p. 469). It portrays *democracy* as a constant progress. Thus, once it is achieved, it continues to evolve based on the economic development, the distribution of income, and the educational level of its citizens that eventually leads to a "normal democracy" (p. 469). Building on the procedural virtues of the concept such as political and civil liberties, and electoral mechanisms, Tiruneh notes that modern-day democracies function on liberal principles. Furthermore, an endorsement of an ethos conducive to the scientific progress and the free-market economy constitutes the main underlying factor underneath the contemporary liberal democracies (p. 477). Essentially, it corresponds to a state of polity where individual liberties and competitiveness allow citizens to determine their lives in accordance with their own personal preferences. Thus, *normal democracy* builds on this liberal notion of politics and draws from the modernization theory with its emphasis on continuous development. Tiruneh's theory entails a total progression and underlines an evolutionary process. He concludes that an economic development that encompasses a high degree of human creativity and skills, capitalism, and a high level of schooling is likely to form a pragmatic political equality in liberal democracies that nowadays does not truly exist (Tiruneh, 2004).

Walt W. Rostow (1990) and Samuel Huntington's (1968) accounts elaborate on the economic and political aspects of modernization theory respectively. The work of

[5] Quoted in Tony (2004, p. 3)

Seymour Martin Lipset (1959), on the other hand, critically reveals the complexity of an authentic *modernization* that is conducive to democracy. His comparative study of numerous Anglo-Saxons, European and Latin American states indicates a strong correlation between economic development and a genuine public support for democratic norms and practices. Essentially, "wealth", "industrialization", "urbanization", and "education" constitute vital components of the economic development complex with a decisive impact on the probability for sustainable democracy (Lipset, 1959, p. 75, 80). Lipset (1959) states that "immature democracies" can endure only if they satisfy the developmental aspects in the long run (p. 72). He also draws attention to historical context. According to Lipset, while strong correlations exist between various economic indices and democracy, unique historical experiences and events can have significant bearings on whether a democracy consolidates or fails in a given country.

Lipset's (1959) analysis establishes a positive correlation between the degree of *industrialization*, *urbanization*, *per capita income*, and *level of education*, and democracy. An effective wealth distribution and a high level of education promote moderate political views and an increased capacity to make rational choices at polls. Particularly, a high level of education correlates with tolerance and rational thinking as opposed to extremism. The study places a primary emphasis on *education* as the most important criterion by far when it comes to differentiate those individual behaviors in support of democratic norms from those associated with extremism. Lipset (1959) notes that "if we cannot say that a 'high' level of education is a sufficient condition for democracy, the available evidence does suggest that it comes close to being a necessary condition in the modern world" (p. 80). The study also shows that *more democratic*

countries are entirely literate while the *more dictatorial* countries at the other end of the spectrum exhibit an average literacy rate of 46% (p. 78).

Lipset (1959) also suggests a strong correlation between the level of wealth and the predominance of "universalistic" norms in state administration. Favoritism and biased selection in bureaucracy are more likely to take effect in a polity through kin ties as country gets poorer. Drawing from various historical experiences, Lipset argues, a social structure which comprises ideologically isolated populations is prone to political extremism. With no factual exchange of ideas and no contact with the outside world, such homogenous social formations enhance radicalism and polarization as opposed to universality of democracy. Building on this, Lipset (1959) states that "a society divided between large impoverished mass and small favored elite would result either in oligarchy or in tyranny" (p. 75).

On the other hand, the findings of Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi's (1997) work reject the economic development as a key underlying factor for democracy. They challenge the modernization theory on the basis that it stresses historical processes and social transformation over the elite decisions which according to Przeworski and Limongi is inaccurate. In contrast, they argue that it is the political elites with their attitudes and initiatives that determine the probability for democracy more than anything regardless of the level of development (Przeworski & Limongi, 1997, pp. 176-177). Their analysis of various cases between 1950 and 1990 identifies no causal connection between economic development and democratic transitions. Yet, it suggests a correlation between economic development and the consolidation of the democratic regime after its

establishment. Thus, a strong link exists between per capita income and the longevity of democracies (Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub, & Limongi, 2000, pp. 78, 97-98, 106, 137).

According to Tiruneh, while Przeworski and Limongi restrict the modernization to the *transition phase*, the theory's relevance to democratic development continues even after the transition period. Tiruneh (2004) states that the modernization theory underlines a complex phenomenon that cannot be reduced to solely economic welfare. Rather, it suggests a total progress in which economic, social and political elements complement each other (Tiruneh, 2004, pp. 480-481). The modernization theory finds a support in the work of David L. Epstein, Robert Bates, Jack Goldstone, Ida Kristensen, and Sharyn O'Halloran (2006). Based on the analysis of 169 countries on three category classifications, their study verifies the accuracy of Lipset's findings.

William Anthony Hay (2005) states that "real democracy means liberal representative government under law, sustained by a political culture that accepts open disagreement and demands accountability" (p. 135). According to Hay, a liberal and representative democracy is the only genuine form that sustains in the contemporary politics where a supportive political culture complements the institutional structure. Hay describes democracy as an outcome of an organic process and suggests that historical context bears important clues about its emergence and durability in different contexts. Hay (2005) notes, it is unlikely that a democracy can consolidate in an unfavorable setting that lacks a supportive political culture (pp. 135-136, 150).

In their work, Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan (1996) state that democracy cannot consolidate unless it completes the *transition period*. Thus, a democratic regime should reach "behavioral", "attitudinal", and "constitutional" maturity before it becomes "the

only game in town" (p. 15). According to Linz and Stepan, democratic consolidation corresponds to a stage when no political group seeks to topple the democratic regime and promote violence for that purpose. A *consolidated democracy* refers to a political phase when citizens' commitment to democratic norms and values only prevails even in the most acute periods of economic and political crisis. Political elites' loyalty to democratic norms and the existing legal order as the only means of conflict resolution highlight a characteristic of a consolidated democracy. The development of a political culture that encompasses the widespread practice of supportive social, institutional, and psychological habits largely determines the longevity of a democratic regime (Linz & Stepan, 1996, pp. 15-16). Essentially, a genuine democratic political culture serves as a safety valve that contains conflict within certain social and behavioral boundaries and prevents the democratic regime from being driven into extremism. Patrick Basham (2004) points out "political trust, social tolerance, a widespread recognition of the importance of basic political rights, and popular support for gender equality" as basic cultural values for democracy (p. 4).

According to Larry Diamond (1994), far from being deterministic, political culture is fairly *plastic*, and subject to dramatic changes in accordance with the regime performance, historical experiences, and political socialization (p. 9). Gabriel Almond (1996) states that changes in political culture determine a regime's proximity to democracy. Moreover, while political culture is subject to changes, the values acquired the earliest such as political identity tend to be the most durable (p. 41-42). Along the same lines, Lucian W. Pye (1985) notes that given the connection between culture and distinct historical contexts, the former tends to be durable and persistent. Thus, value

systems acquired during early socialization prove the most resistant to change (p. 20). The accounts by John A. Booth and Mitchell A. Seligson (1994) on Latin America and Oliver Schlumberger (2000) on the Arab Middle East also indicate the cultural context as a significant factor for the potential political systems that may form and rise in a country. For instance, Schlumberger (2000) notes that "as has been shown in various comparative studies political systems in that neo-patrimonial socio-political relations prevail are extremely `unlikely candidates` for transitions to democracy" (p. 117).

Renske Doorenspleet (2004) investigates various structural factors with regard to their potential impact on the probability of democratic development. He draws attention to *economic development*, *economic growth*, and *geographic diffusion* as the structural factors with decisive effect on the prospects for democracy. His finding suggests that a "peripheral role in the world-system, a low level of economic growth, and a high proportion of democratic neighbors" crucially contribute to transitions to democracy (pp. 309, 329). Ross E. Burkhart and Michael S. Lewis-Beck's (1994) study on 131 countries suggests a strong correlation between the economic development and democracy. Also, their finding demonstrates that closer proximity to the center enhances this correlation regarding democratic development. Essentially, the closer a country to the center the more likely it benefits from the full magnitude of the economic development (Burkhart, 1994, p. 907).

1.4 Political Islam as a Remedy to Democratic Deficiency?

Dale Eickelman (1997) criticizes the essentialist school of thought that depicts Islamism as an obstacle to democratic development. Eickelman's position arises from the binary division which the essentialist arguments such as those of Samuel Huntington and

Arnold Toynbee encourage on the basis of the *West versus Rest* dichotomy. He argues that the essentialist discourse is rather deceiving as it tends to ignore the internal diversity and differences of opinion on vital issues even in conservative societies (pp. 17-18). Concentrating mainly on the Arab context, Eickelman (1997) suggests that the *political Islam* constitutes a world-wide movement in which Islamists are in fact calling for social and political reform and pushing for democratization (p. 20). His argument derives from the assumption that, given its influence on its followers, Islam holds a very unique place among all other world religions. Islam, or what its adherents presume to be Islamic, distinguishes this belief-system from others in its capacity to shape the political identity of its followers. Eickelman (1997) states that Islam exhibits this quality like no other faith does (p. 17).

According to Eickelman, Western terminologies and conceptions of political thought stressing on civil and political liberties encourage a negative correlation between *democracy* and *Islamism* in a rather hostile fashion. He also points to Lipset and Michael Hudson as the representatives of two far ends in their opinions about what constitutes a democratic governance. From Eickelman's viewpoint, Lipset defines democracy as an institutional arrangement based on which politicians compete for vote. In this framework Eickelman argues, democracy can be either present or absent with no middle ground in between. On the other hand, Hudson places a primary emphasis on transitions to a participatory rule. Hudson defines democracy as a process through which a political regime becomes less authoritarian. Hence, democracy does not constitute a truly achievable end, but instead, symbolizes a political progression towards the less arbitrary

and authoritarian. Eickelman (1997) criticizes both argument which he claims draws attention away from culturally specific "authority" and the "just rule" (pp. 18-19).

Eickelman (1997) proposes an alternative approach that stresses on "language of democracy" (p. 19). This approach relies on culturally dictated varying assumptions about what constitutes a correct form of political conduct in a given society. Essentially, rather than pluralism and liberties, a widely held perception of what constitutes *just* remains central to this particular discourse of democracy. He suggests that a form of government that is acceptable in the eyes of the majority of people indicates a democratic regime regardless of its authoritarian and arbitrary rule. According to Eickelman (1997), even the most authoritarian regimes must exhibit some sort of legitimacy in the public eye, and that justifies for a democracy.

Along the same lines with Eickelman, John Voll also focuses on the former colonial states of North Africa and raises two main points. Voll (1997) points to the "crisis of authoritarianism" which he argues are due to *Westernization* in a culturally Islamic setting (p. 1). Considering the rising trend of Islamism in the 1990s, he challenges the validity of *modernization* and criticizes the assumption which suggests a decline in religiosity. Voll argues that it is not the "traditional ancient regimes", but regimes that take Western-style secular models as a trajectory for modernization fail in this particular context (pp. 3-4, 8). Hence, according to Voll, institutional designs based on constitutional parliamentary systems and competitive party politics promote authoritarianism against which *Islamism* rises as an opposition. He further suggests that Islamists are willing to operate within the existing political systems if they are given a chance and that they can promote *democratization*. Yet, this particular *democratization* is

to occur outside the Western lexicon of the concept (Voll, 1997). Essentially, this argument shares the same basis with the readings of some of the contemporary writers that include Augustus Norton, John L. Esposito, Bobby S. Sayyid, and Hakan Yavuz. They associate *Westernization* with authoritarianism and propose the *political Islam* as a remedy for *democratic deficiency*.

In their article *Islam's Democratic Essence*, Voll and John L. Esposito (1994) propose what they call a "theo-democracy" that draws from the principles of the "Unity of God", "Prophethood" and "Caliphate" as the building blocks of an "authentic Islamic democracy". They referred to the teachings of Abul Ala Maududi and Ayatollah Bakir as-Sadr and stress on *the Book of God* and *the practice of His Prophet* as a trajectory for their envisioned concept. In this framework, they suggest that movements such as *an-Nahda* in Tunisia, the *Muslim Brotherhood* in Egypt and Jordan, and the *Jamaat-i Islami* of Pakistan represent a post-modern democratization as an alternative to the Western conceptions of political thought (Voll & Esposito, 1994).

Voll describes democracy as a controversial notion due to the attachment of contesting meanings to the very same concept. Sharing Anthony Arblaster's view on this issue, he defines democracy as a debatable notion that scholars extract different meanings regardless of the actual philosophy underneath. Thus, he argues that a consensus on the definition of democracy is not necessary. Islamic tradition of politics provides a broad discourse for modernization that is not necessarily associated with the Western political thought. According to Voll (1997), Islamism is the solution to the political challenge that derives from the gap between "Westernized" political elites and "indigenous society" (p. 10).

1.5 Critique of the Debate on the Islamist Discourse

The literature above suggests a positive correlation between the “political Islam” and democracy. Yet, one must place a critical emphasis on the outlook and the trajectory of the political Islamists. The boundaries of what the political Islam has got to offer in terms of a democratic understanding still remains to be investigated before any correlation between political Islam and democracy can be established. Essentially, the adherents of Islamism do not provide the underlying reasoning and the factual evidence to support their hypothesis of why political Islamists would favor pluralism and open politics upon coming to power. It can be argued that they are acting so fast in their efforts to associate the political Islam with a democratic polity. It is important to note that such an instrumentalist perception of democracy not only overlook the underlying processes underneath, but also inherently forces a democratic discourse into a setting that is yet to develop into a fertile ground. Hence, it renders the ideological aspect of democracy void and readily treats the “political Islam” as an inherent part of the democratic debate.

Another drawback of this discourse arises from its strong reliance on the “Westernized” versus the “indigenous” dichotomy which ignores internal dynamics in the processes of democratization. It fails to clarify what actually corresponds to the “Westernized” and the “indigenous”. This approach not only ideologically forces what individuals' perception about their own identity should be, but also promotes biased attitudes towards Western civilization in general. Thus, it turns any prospective rational attempt for progress into a cultural dilemma due to the animosity that it inspires against the West. This dichotomy of the “indigenous faithful” vs. the “secular tyrant” found a clear expression in Kevin Robins' (1996) critique of what he called the "Westernized

Turks" in 1996. Following the Islamist Welfare Party's (*Refah Partisi* - RP) claim of 24% of the votes in the 1995 general elections, in reference to the Islamists, Robins (1996) stated that "of course, the real people could never be banished" (p. 71). According to Robins,

> for the Kemalist elite, it seemed as if the principles of modernity could be accommodated only on the basis of the massive prohibition and interdiction of the historical and traditional culture. … What this resulted in was not only disavowal and suppression of historical memory in the collectivity, but also, and even more problematically, denial and repression of the actuality of Turkish culture and society. … The real Turkey was the 'other' against which this official nation was constituting its identity (pp. 68, 71).

Additionally, such formulas as "culturally specific authority", the "just rule", "traditional ancient regimes", and the "language of democracy" in contemporary readings underline an effort in search for a suitable option for the Middle East in general. Yet, what they can offer in terms of civil and political liberties and pluralism is still an issue that requires a close scrutiny.

This study treats democracy as a universal concept that prevails on its own norms and value systems in essence. Far from being authentic to a particular geography or cultural heritage, it corresponds to a distinct political system that is achievable with the endorsement of certain supportive values. Accordingly, a society does not necessarily need to be a part of the Western culture to "Westernize" and develop a genuine democratic political culture. On the other hand, the portrayal of political Islamists as the "pioneers of democracy," this study argues, is largely due to the treatment of democracy

as an instrument rather than a distinct political system. Essentially, this leads to false classification of a wide range of popular movements as "democracy" regardless of their characteristics and political trajectories. In fact, there are so many conflicting definitions of *democracy* today as scholars continue to attach different meanings to this very same concept. It can be argued that one underlying reason for this is that assessments often aim consultative purposes for policymaking and public diplomacy, thus, they involve specifically crafted formulas to serve certain agendas. Very often competing political interests both shape and in some cases surpass academic concerns which lead to numerous definitions that in fact differ radically.

Drawing attention to the Turkish context, for instance, hosted in Washington D. C. by Johns Hopkins University and the Foundation for the Journalists and Authors (*Gazeteci vet Azaria Akif*) of whom Fethullah Gülen was the honorary chairman, *Islam, Democracy, Secularism: The Turkish Experiment* was a crucial gathering on 19-20 April 2004. Known as the *Avant Platform*, the "moderate Islam" was proposed during these meetings to instigate a perception of a "new Turkey" in an effort to turn it into a more suitable and realistic trajectory for other states in the region to follow against radical Islam.[6] Highlighting the role casted for Turkey, Fuller (2008) described the objective of the *Abant* meetings as:

[6] The RAND Corporation's (2007) report noted that in the eyes of the U.S. officials, the strict separation of religion and state in Turkey was not compatible with the envisioned model, thus it was far from an ideal ally in the fight against radical Islam in the new post-Cold War conjecture. Notably, the RAND (2007, p. 125) also called attention the U.S. policymakers' potential reluctance to cooperate with the secular elements in Turkey due to their affiliation with the political left. According to the report, the U.S. officials needed to reach out "liberal Muslims" and "moderate traditionalists" instead, along with the *Sufi tarikat* organizations, and promote "moderate Muslim networks," see (RAND, 2007 p. 74).

> Performing a signal service in setting forth a basic set of principles capable of directing Turkey through the shoals of internal change, religious and secular debate, and reform and democratization. These principles are of direct relevance to debates in other Muslim countries (p. 65).

Notable figures such as John Esposito, John Voll, Elizabeth Hurd, Elizabeth Özdalga, Dale Eickelmen, Francis Fukuyama, Graham Fuller, Hakan Yavuz, Henri Barky, and Jenny White, and two Parliamentarians from the governing AK Party were among the participants. During the meetings, Burhan Kuzu from the AK Party defined democracy and secularism as mere instruments for the "greater aim of happiness" (*Cumhuriyet*, April 21 2004, p. 1).

Essentially, within the framework of the *Greater Middle East Initiative* this tendency also found a voice in President George Bush's statement on 28 January 2004. Bush stated that "Turkey supports this project with its widening scope and aim to spread democratic values" (*Cumhuriyet*, 21 April 2004, p. 8). On 1 April 2004, during his visit to Turkey, the U. S. foreign minister Colin Powel noted that "why not an Islamic Republic and democracy like Turkey" by implying the U.S. agenda to promote the "Turkish model" as remedy for the democratic deficiency in the region (*Cumhuriyet*, 21 April 2004, p. 1,8). Along the same lines, on 21-22 February the Director of Religious Affairs, Ali Bardakoğlu gave a speech, titled, "Moderation in Islam and the Turkish Experience" at the University of Utah. On 3 April, in an interview, Bardakoğlu stated that "the Directory of Religious Affairs encourages the moderate and tolerant Islam, and embraces this concept" (*Cumhuriyet*, 21 April 2004, p. 8).

Particularly, Powel's description of Turkey as an "Islamic Republic", and even more importantly, the AK Party Government's indifference to such remarks quickly became a source of public outrage. Alongside the controversy of the "moderate Islam", Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's redefinition of secularism as "the state's equal distance to different faiths and values" further added to the tension (*Cumhuriyet*, 21 April 2004, p. 8). President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, and the opposition parties, as well as the Chief of General Stuff demonstrated their discomfort. On 19 March, the Deputy Chief of the Turkish General Staff İlker Başbuğu in a press conference noted that "a state cannot exist as secular and Islamic at the same time, either one or the other defines the state" (*Cumhuriyet,* 21 April 2004, p. 8). President Sezer on April 14 defined the *moderate Islam* as "a major step backward from Turkey's perspective, in more lucid terms, a model of (Islamic) reaction" (*Cumhuriyet*, 21 April 2004, p. 8). The vice Chairman of the Republican Populist Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi,*) Onur Öymen stated that "secularism refers to a form of governance not on the basis of religion but according to the rule of positive law. Their aim is to restrict the use of secularism solely with the guarantee of religious practice" (*Cumhuriyet,* 21 April 2004, p. 8).

1.6 Debate on the Secular Development of Turkish Politics

Two contrasting views mainly shape the debate on secularism in Turkey. The first highlights the dominant reading of the post-Cold war conjecture which began in the 1990s. It claims the rise of "political Islam" and argues that secularism is no longer able to sustain itself. Proponents of this theory such as Esposito, Keane, Hurd, Robins, Yavuz, and Norton portray the Turkish state as a product of an artificial *Westernization* under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. These scholars define Turkey's foundation on the basis of

secular principles as an outcome of a coercion. They stress on the *Islamism* of the 1990s as an "indigenous" cultural movement against the "Westernized elites". In this framework, they also referred to political Islamists as pioneers of true democracy and pluralism.

After the Islamist Welfare Party's (*Refah Partisi* - RP) claim of 24% of the votes in the 1995 general elections, Esposito (2000) claimed "the defeat of secularism" in Turkey (p. 4). Along the same lines, Yavuz (2003) called attention to a new trend of Islamism as a popular movement which he argued stemmed from an ideological clash between "Muslim Anatolian civil society" and the "Kemalist state establishment" (p. 46). Moreover, he depicted secularization and initiative reforms of the early decades as a vicious attack on local culture that Islam historically shaped and defined. According to Yavuz (2003), the "Kemalist establishments" rely on the notion of the "Islamist threat" as a pretext to avoid true democracy and maintain their privileged status. In the same vein, Robins (1996) argued that:

> Kemalist ideology was conceived as a national and secular alternative, conforming to the values of the 'civilized' world; a revolution in values, offering western-style identifications in place of what were regarded as the old mystification of Muslim culture. It was an empty substitution, however (p. 69).

Hurd (2008) argues that Turkey's secular principles which were forced upon Turkish society in fact never took an effect. According to Hurd, modern Turkey never imposed strict separation of religion and state but rather differently resituated the role of Islam. Thus, the polity in Turkey refers to a synthesis of unofficial Islamic law and official secular law with ties to Islamic tradition (Hurd, 2008, p. 66-67).

Along the same lines, Norton (1999) defines Atatürk as an anti-democratic figure. He argues that with the onset of the 1990s, developments indicate that if the Islamists are given the chance to participate in competitive politics, they will prove to be accommodative of the idea of power-sharing. Norton (1999) suggested that upon coming to power, the Islamists would favor pluralism and open politics over the *authoritarian* regime that they replace (p. 38).

On the other hand, the assessments of Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1957), Kemal Karpat (1959), Niyazi Berkes (1998), Sina Akşin (2007), Server Tanilli (2008), and Emre Kongar (2012) demonstrate that the secular Turkish Republic was in fact an outcome of a long historical process. Thus, the modernization efforts can be traced back to the early 1800s. An in-depth analysis of their historical accounts indicates that Turkey's secular development underlines a long struggle between the Ottoman bureaucratic elite and the institution of the Islamic *ulema*. Commonly called "Westernization", Turkish reformation in its secular and anti-traditional orientation originally occurred out of necessity. In this respect, it is important to acknowledge that central to the foundation of modern Turkey in 1923, the idea of secularization in the Turkish context was not a new phenomenon that was confined to the modern era. Instead, it was a process that can be traced back to the early 19th century.

This school of thought notes that isolated in the medieval epoch and left far behind of the Western world in the aftermath of the European Enlightenment and the Industrial Age, the Ottoman Empire experienced its economic bankruptcy in 1838 and military bankruptcy a year later. By the mid-1800s, it could hardly survive through diplomatic maneuvers. In this period, through their official encounters with the Western

civilization, Turkish bureaucrats and intellectuals developed a high regard for secularism and rational thinking. Specifically, intellectual foundation laid by Mahmut II (1808-1839), and the graduates of three secular institutions of higher learning fostered the political and intellectual transformation among the bureaucratic and intellectual elite.[7] A historical departure from the medieval past particularly among the elite cadres marked a swift shift from religious-oriented to secular-oriented thinking. This process gradually paved the way for modern Turkey to emerge as a secular republic about a century later.

In his work, Tanilli (2008) reveals that among the 19th century Turkish intellectuals, Ali Suavi (1839-1879), advocated the separation between religion and the state and promoted a secular education and religious practice in Turkish language. Additionally, Abdullah Cevdet (1869-1932), Celal Nuri (1869-1932), and Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924) were only few among many who in their scholarly work openly endorsed a secular state and social order. From a historical standpoint, secularism emerged as a factual remedy for conflict resolution. In this regard, Tanilli states that secularism in Turkey cannot be narrowed down solely to a religion-state separation as it pertains to a much greater notion. The modernization alongside with secularism was an evolutionary step that arguably corresponded to Turkish equivalent of the European Enlightenment (Tanilli, 2008, p. 56-58).

[7] For instance, adoption of the *Lancasterian* school system and its application to the military to promote primary education for soldiers and specialized education for the officer candidates marked the establishment of the first Muslim primary school outside of the religious realm between 1832 and 1834. And, in 1838 a report by the Board of Useful Affairs verified secular education essential for social and scientific development (Berkes, 1998, p. 105). For a detailed account of the modern School of Medicine and the drastic change that it instigated on the cultural outlook of its students see discussion by Charles MacFarlane (1850, pp. 268-271). Also, highlighting the anti-traditionalist and reformist character of the Ottoman bureaucratic elite, Mustafa Sami and Sadık Rıfat's accounts between 1837 and 1839 provide valuable insights into the extent of growing awareness about scientific advancement, cultural aspects of life, and way of thinking in the West. See Berkes (1998, pp, 129-131), and Ahmet H. Tanpınar (1956, p. 89).

In the same vein with Tanilli, Smith (1957) draws a crucial parallel between the Protestant reformers and the founding elites of the modern Turkey as he argues that they both shared "the experience of remaking one's environment" in common that is a decisive element of modern Western civilization (p.180). According to Smith, the Turks faced a fundamental challenge regarding how to relate and adapt their inherited religion to modern way of life and thinking. Moreover, he noted, the Turks were in fact the first Muslims to meet this challenge. And they followed a similar route with that of their Christian counterparts who had already faced and had to deal with the same question. Alike the Protestant reformers, the Turks aimed novelty, not restoration, and looked at the West for methods and technics (Smith, 1957, p. 204). In other words, with regard to the secularization in the Turkish context, the question was not about religion, but being modern or staying mediaeval. Smith (1957) further defined endeavors of the founding cadres as a conceivable "Turkish Reformation" that he noted indeed constituted a "real moment" in Islamic history (pp. 161-163).

Along the same lines with Smith, Mango (2007) portrayed Atatürk as a genuine reformer who believed in modernization as a total process.[8] According to Mango, *civilization* referred to a multifaceted phenomenon that could not be reduced to simple explanations of modernization. And, in the eyes of Atatürk, it was a universal notion, hence he turned to the most developed part of the world as a model. Mango (2007) noted that unlike many of his colleagues who would be satisfied simply by mimicking Western

[8] Elaborating on the underlying strength of the *Kemalist* modernization, Akşin (2007, p. 229) noted that it emphasized internal development over materialistic that combined philosophical, scientific, technological, cultural and artistic development as a whole, and envisioned individuals who can take initiatives free from the restrains of social, political, and religious dogma.

institutions, Atatürk saw *modernization* indistinguishable from its philosophical basis (p. 3).

CHAPTER 2

THE ROOTS OF SECULAR THOUGHT IN THE TURKISH HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND TURKISH MODERNIZATION AT A GLANCE

2.1. Early Signs of the Conflict within the Medieval Order

Commonly called "Westernization," *modernization* as an idea first occurred in the Turkish context in the aftermath of the Treaties of Karlowitz in 1699 and Passarowitz in 1718. As the Ottoman Empire lost Hungary, the central part of present-day Serbia and Banat to Austria, it transpired in the minds of the Ottoman bureaucratic elite to avoid the ultimate downfall. It was first pronounced by the *Sadrazam* Nevşehirli İbrahim Paşa who in 1718 urged *Padişah* Ahmet III that *modernization* was imperative for the survival of the state. Following that, Selim III, and Mahmut II were among other notable *Padişahs* with a distinct anti-traditionalist outlook and reformist qualities.

However, efforts by such reformers would face formidable opposition particularly from the medieval institutions of the Islamic *ulema* and the Janissary (*Yeniçeri*) military corps. Along this course, numerous rebellions in the name of Islam would hinder their endeavours. In this regard, two significant incidents of Islamic reaction included the *Patrona Halil* rebellion that dethroned Ahmet III, and the riot of Kabakçı Mustafa that deposed Selim III. Emre Kongar (2012) notes that from the viewpoint of the Janissary corps and the Islamic *ulema,* modernization constituted a major threat to the traditional power structure. Hence, these rebellions, which called for the *Sharia* and occurred in the name of protecting the "Islamic state", were in fact driven by personal interests in an

attempt to safeguard the social and political privileges and the status that these institutions enjoyed within the traditional order (Kongar, 2012, p. 110). Essentially, modernization was meant to end the monopoly and power that the Janissary and the Islamic *ulema* exerted at the administrative and societal level.

Modernization efforts in the late Ottoman context would result in a failure. However, experiences acquired along the course would cultivate the seeds of a new generation of bureaucrats and intellectuals with a different mindset outside of the traditional state apparatus. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the effects of modernization would remain limited strictly among the elite circles. Also, a vast scale of cultural dualism, which worsened during this period between the bureaucratic elite and the general population, would transcend the Ottoman era and continue to impact the political course long after the foundation of modern Turkey as a secular republic in 1923.

While contemporary readings treat the dichotomy between the *secular* and the *religious* as a present-day phenomenon, historical accounts indicate that the actual trend can be traced back to the late 18th century. Early distinction between the two was put forward first by Mahmut II who openly questioned the relevance of the traditional state apparatus to changing social conditions in the 1820-30s. Moreover, the territorial breakdown and failure to cope with scientific and technological advances of the modern era made modernization inevitable in the eyes of the bureaucratic elite. Although Mahmut's initiatives bear no direct impact on the foundation of modern Turkey, his reign provided important insights into the rise of secular thinking in the Turkish context. His reforms were anti-traditionalist and progressive in orientation. Aside from their symbolic significance, it was in his era when the notions of secular education, administration and

judiciary flourished and gradually rendered medieval practices void among the bureaucratic elite. Particularly, reforms in the educational sphere paved the way for future pioneers of secular and democratic thought.

While it lacked the decisive outcome of the succeeding periods, Mahmut's policy of modernization laid a crucial scientific and intellectual base. Not only it defined the nature of reforms that followed, but it also ensured their longevity even after his death. In the aftermath, as obstacles to secular thinking had already been challenged, the Ottoman state entered an era of extensive modernization which in the process the state apparatus and customs evolved in a swift pace. In this framework, it is essential to acknowledge that Atatürk who was born in 1881 was also a product of modernization and progress.

Specifically, four factors made modernization inevitable. The first, having exercised a great deal of political authority, the Janissary corps became an obstacle to the pursuits of the Ottoman bureaucratic elite. The second, the *ayans* (local notables) not only began to enjoy a great degree of independence from the central rule, but also became a serious rival that challenged the authority of the *Padişah*. The third, in the aftermath of European Enlightenment and the industrial revolution, advances in modern science and technology fostered a drastic change in the elite perception about the role and function of the state. And finally, the rise of nationalism had far reaching effects on the territorial integrity and the domestic politics as the Ottoman state comprised diverse nationalities and subjects of different religions (Berkes, 1998, p. 89).

Two developments cleared the way before a secular drift began to take its course in thought and practice. The first, *Sened-i Ittifak*, signed between the Ottoman ruling elite

and the *ayans*, marked a notable development that set mutual responsibilities, duties and rights through compromise. Berkes (1998) noted that it was Mahmut`s willingness to officially give up his *God-given* authority to achieve a settlement (p. 92). The *Sened* was similar to the English Magna Carta that took place in 1215 between King John and the barons given its provisions on taxation. After this settlement, the destruction of the Janissary institution in 1826 ended the last physical obstacle to reforms in the administrative, legal and educational realms.

2.2. Departure from the Medieval Past: A Secular Drift at the Administrative Level

The idea of a new Ottoman state where all people were subject to a common law and granted equal rights regardless of their ethnic and religious affiliations was born out of modernization efforts. Berkes (1998) suggested that this notion of equality marked a departure from the medieval Islamic order and allowed Mahmut to envision a different state apparatus on the basis of equal citizenship of his subjects. Drawing from a concept of Ottoman citizenry, this indicated Mahmut's desire to end the *millet* system which would render religious and ethnic divisions within the Ottoman territories void. As Berkes (1998) underlined, this constituted a significant move that was *secular* and *progressive* in orientation (p. 92). In this process, however, the biggest challenge was yet to come. And, it was making people believe that change was imperative and desirable.

The idea of rule of law and equality of citizens before the law regardless of faith, race and status necessitated a new legal system. In this respect, Mahmud took the first initiative by establishing a judiciary outside the realm of the *Sharia*. Berkes (1998) noted that among the existing legal systems, the *Sharia* did not recognize the equality among

the different religious communities. Alike, the *Kanun*, as the historical product of the deep-rooted Turkish-Mongol tradition, also failed to recognize the equality between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. It was not until the introduction of *adalet* (justice), accompanied by the foundation of the *Divan-i Ahkam-i Adliye* (Council of Juridical Enactments,) a new concept of justice system superseding the authority of the other existing legal forms was established. Unlike the *Sharia* and the *Kanun, Adalet* had its legitimacy neither from God nor from *Padişah*. Berkes (1998) described judicial reforms as an attempt to eradicate societal divisions on legal grounds, and a notable step towards the secularization of the administrative structure (p. 94 - 95).

Judiciary reforms marked an ideological departure from the medieval Islamic community towards a new pluralist and secular society. However, frequent foreign interferences with the Ottoman internal affairs and the rise of nationalism obstructed this progress decisively. The *millet* system did no longer refer to an issue of internal politics but an interest of international community. It became central to Western interventions with the Ottoman politics. Essentially, the existence of Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant *millets* within the Ottoman state provided the West and Russia with a pretext to get involved with the Ottoman internal affairs in the name of securing the rights of non-Muslims subjects. Hence, the Near East diplomacy enhanced the longevity of medieval institutions in the Ottoman state. Particularly, the institution of the Islamic *ulema* prevailed as the main beneficiary of foreign interventions whose influence otherwise have already been removed from politics by Mahmut II (Berkes, 1998, p. 96 - 97).

At the administrative level, the most notable reform concentrated on the status and function of the two supreme institutions. Among them, the first was the office of

Sadrazam which in the medieval state apparatus represented the executive branch. Essentially, offices of the chief minister and ministers replaced this institution to function on the basis of the separation of powers. Also, ministries for industrial, commercial, financial and educational affairs were linked to a council, known as the *Meclis-i Umur-u Nafia* (Board of Useful Affairs). The second, a more radical change was directed at the office of the *Seyhul-Islam* which served a consultative role in accordance with the Sharia. Its function was restricted with matters that only pertained to religion. Consequently, for the first time a public law outside the sphere of the *Sharia* was established along with a newly formed council and a penal code to deal with legal matters (Berkes, 1998, p. 98).

2.3. The Quest for Secular Education

Changes at the administrative level demanded new qualified personals with specialized practical skills. At the same time, scientific and technological advances in the West brought the competence and applicability of the teachings in the mosque-schools of the *medrese* system into question. Under the Islamic *ulema*, the *medrese* education with its teachings of God and duties to Islam exhibited no relevance to innovative changes and their impact on the cultural and social life. Elaborating on the quality of *medrese* education, the most prominent female author of Turkish literature, Halide Edib Adıvar (1935) noted that "the *medreses* remained up to the end of the last century (20th) what they were in the 13th century" (Lerner quotes Adıvar, 1964, p. 116).

The authority of the Islamic *ulema* was associated with an environment of cultural and scientific ignorance which under the existing conditions literacy was not necessary, but even discouraged. In his analysis, Daniel Lerner (1964) stated that:

> The Ottoman Imperium comprised not merely a variety of illiterate populations but an anti-literate elite, who regulated the daily round of public life by maintaining exclusive control over key points of contact between individuals and their larger environment (p. 113).

In the same vein, Tanilli (2008) identified absence of a philosophy, a sole reliance on obsessive memorization and a lack of rational basis among the key weaknesses of the *medrese* education (p. 63). Along the same lines, Akşin (2007) noted that the *medrese* education involved having children who spoke no Arabic memorized a hodja's interpretation of the Quran along with the rituals and obligations of Islam (p. 63).

Akşin (2007) suggested that together with the *medrese* education, the Islamic *ulema's* hostile attitude towards the printing-press constituted the main cause of the cultural deficiency and the widespread ignorance among the general population. Highlighting the *ulema's* opposition to the printing-press in 1728, Abdolonyle Ubicini (1818-1884) (1856) noted that:

> On the first rumour of the proposed innovation, alarm arose throughout Constantinople. The Ulema, under the pretence of zeal for the safety of the Sacred doctrines and traditions, but in reality, dreading some attack on their own power, professed to regard the new project as profane. The emanations of human intelligence, they alleged, having been always handed down to prosperity by writing, ought not be subjected to any less careful mode of transmission (Lerner quotes Ubicini, 1964, p. 115).

Lerner noted that the “holiness” of paper on which the word of “God” might be written was the underlying cause of the hostility towards the printed communication.

Encapsulating the dominant climate of ignorance, Lerner (1964) stated that “the illiterate peoples of Islam had long been taught to regard The Word as sacred and to pay reverence even to paper” (p. 114). Having served in Istanbul as ambassador of the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand, Oghier Ghiselin de Busbecq's (1522-1592) account also provided notable insights into practices of the Islamic *ulema* that served as a barrier to scientific and intellectual progress. As early as 1554, de Busbecq (1927) observed that:

> They (Turks) have never been able to bring themselves to print books and set up public clocks. They hold that their scriptures if they were printed; and if they established public clocks, they think that the authority of their *müezzins* and their ancient rites would suffer diminution (Lerner quotes Busbecq, 1964, p. 113).

The first printing press came to Istanbul in 1728 three centuries after its invention in the West. The underlying motive was strategic, and was highly correlated with the declining strength of the military which became evident with the Treaties of Karlowitz, and Pozarevac. Nevşehirli Damat İbrahim Paşa was the main influence beneath its introduction who returned from Europe. He was to serve as the Grand Vezir for the next twelve years. His administrative instigation underlined a period known as the Tulip Era (*Lale Devri*) when pessimism and scepticism dominated the intellectual atmosphere. The printing press would be suspended until its re-establishment under Selim III in 1784. Even then, its use remained strictly for military purposes as no benefit for communal enlightenment was sought, or shaping public opinion and raising awareness of the outside world were aimed at the societal level (Lerner, 1964, p. 115; Webster, 1939, p. 20).

As the *medrese* learning ceased to provide a factual remedy for the state's downfall, Mahmut directed his efforts at the introduction of secular education. However,

in 1824, when he made primary education compulsory, it was also meant the continuation primary education on the basis of religious schooling. Ironically, restricting the institution of the *Şeyhul-Islam* with matters pertaining to religion was meant to place the projected secular public education under the control of the Islamic *ulema*. Traditionally, the concept of schooling in the Ottoman state was strictly a religious matter. Yet, education as a means of progress as opposed to the Islamic teachings of the *medrese* schools was completely a new idea. By the mid-19th century this caused a tug of war between Mahmut II who was desperate to instigate a societal change and the Islamic *ulema* that constantly called for moving away from worldly affairs by focusing on the traditional schooling of the *medrese* education.

Mahmut shifted his attention to adult public education instead, and aimed to adopt secular education through the channel of military. Also, a new educational innovation from England found a ground in Istanbul in 1831. Presented by Joseph Lancaster, this new trend appealed to the Greek and Armenian communities whose members were the first to embrace its secular philosophy despite a firm opposition from the Greek and Armenian Orthodox church. The first Lancasterian school was opened by an American Protestant missionary, William Goodell, in 1831 for Greek boys. Mahmut took on the Lancasterian model and by expanding its content applied it to the military to promote primary education for the soldiers and specialized education for the officer candidates. This initiative which took place between 1832 and 1834 marked the establishment of the first Muslim primary schools outside of the religious realm. Report by the *Board of Useful Affairs* (1838) verified secular primary education's essential role for social and scientific development by stating that:

> All arts and trades are products of science. Religious knowledge serves salvation in the world to come, but science serves perfection of man in this world. Astronomy, for example, serves the progress of navigation and the development of commerce. The mathematical sciences lead to the orderly conduct of warfare as well as military administration. Innumerable new and useful inventions, like the use of steam, came into existence in this manner... It is evident that the acquisition of science and skill comes above all other aims and aspirations of the state. The Ottoman commonwealth had schools and scholars, but they disappeared. Later, military, naval, engineering, and medical schools were opened with great effort, but the students entering these schools lacked even ordinary knowledge for the proper reading of Turkish books. This was because of the defectiveness of the primary schools. In discussing every project for the recovery of agriculture, commerce, and industry, the Board has found that nothing can be done without the acquisition of science and that means of acquiring science and remedying education lie in giving a new order to the schools (quoted in Berkes, 1998, p. 105.)

It is noteworthy that this report not only revealed the modernist outlook of the bureaucratic elite, but also it indicated a clear distinction that they observed between the *secular* and the *religious* as early as 1838. Yet, the office of the *Seyhul-Islam* continued to oppose any form of education other than the *religious* which rendered the envisioned civilian primary education void. Consequently, primary education based on the teachings of Quran continued until the revolution of the *Young Turks* in 1908 (Berkes, 1998, p. 104 -106).

While the efforts to establish a civilian primary education outside the religious realm failed, in the field of higher learning they were a success. The underlying factor for this accomplishment was that no traditional institution could match the new higher education schools neither in quality nor in function. In the meantime, the incompetence of the *medrese* education in the primary and secondary schools became once again evident when the students of the new higher learning proved incapable of following the curriculum. Berkes (1998) stated that awkward situations were common where, for instance, engineering students lacked even the most basic skills in writing and elementary arithmetic (p. 100). And, the Military Academy had its first graduates fourteen years after its foundation in 1848 (Akşin, 2007, p. 26). Proven effectiveness of secular teachings would place the higher education institutions in an advantaged position over the Islamic *medrese* system.

In the controversy over the *secular* vs. the *religious*, the tide began to turn in favour of the *secular* which led to a notable decline in the demand for the *medrese* education. In the aftermath, what constituted "worldly" and "religious" continued to shape the elite perception. Essentially, the "religious" referred to the old and traditional, while the "worldly" stood for change and new. Thus, the gap between the Islamic schooling of the *medrese* education and the secular schooling of the higher education contributed to the cultural dualism at the societal level. Furthermore, while the split between the *secular* and the *religious* continued to widen, unlike the higher education, the primary and secondary schooling under the Islamic *ulema* remained unaffected (Berkes, 1998, p. 109 -110).

2.4 The Impact of Secular Higher Education on Intellectual Life in the 1800s

The foundation of the *School of Engineering* (*Mühendishane*), the *modern School of Medicine* and the *Military Academy* held a special place among Mahmud`s reform initiatives. Considering their unique contribution to the intellectual and cultural life, these institutions constituted a historical benchmark with major impact on politics. Graduates from these three Western-style institutions were the future pioneers of modernization in the Ottoman state. In the *School of Engineering*, Turkish was the teaching language and the text books were in French. Simplification of the Turkish language and the adoption of the Latin alphabet emerged as an idea for the first time in this period among its graduates. With its deep societal roots in the educational life, the *Military Academy* opened in 1834 on a strictly secular basis. Since then, it has been recognized as the forerunner of progress in the Turkish context.

More than any other institution it was the *School of Medicine* that had the most decisive impact on intellectual life.[9] Mahmut opened a State Medical School (*Tibhane-i Amire*) in 1827, and school of surgery, known as the *Cerrahhane* a year later. Bringing these two schools together, *Dar-ul Ulum-u Hikemiye ve Mekteb-i Tibbiye-i Şahane* (Imperial School of Physical and Medical Sciences) was founded in 1838. The language of instruction was French and to be replaced by Turkish in 1866.[10] In the field of medicine, dissection, autopsy, vaccination and quarantine measures were the obstacles

[9] For details see Charles MacFarlane, *Turkey and its Destiny: The Result of Journeys Made in 1847 and 1848 to Examine into the State of That Country* (Philadelphia, 1850), II, 165, 167, 181, 184.

[10] See in Berkes (1998, p. 113) Mahmut's speech in 1838 at the opening ceremony of the Imperial School of Physical and Medical Sciences where he explains the reason why the language of the instruction must be in French temporarily. The speech is particularly notable as it provides a clear insight into Mahmud`s modern outlook.

that had to be overcome as the Islamic *ulema* opposed them for being against Islam. An imperial decree granted autopsy and dissection in 1841 (Berkes, 1998, p. 116).

For the first time, the European history and literature were introduced to Muslims in the modern School of Medicine. MacFarlane's (1850) account revealed the drastic change it instigated in the cultural outlook of its students. When he asked a student whether making an autopsy did not conflict with his religion, student replied by laughing: "Eh! Monsieur ce n'est pas au Galata Serai qu'il faut vernir chercher la religion" (p. 268). After his surprising encounter, Farlane states that "one of the Greek students who was accompanying me enjoyed the Turk's sally very much, and assured me that in this College they all became `philosphes a la Voltaire'" (p. 268). Based on his observation of the college library, Farlane (1850) further noted that:

> Among the books in this medical library there were but too many of that period [French Revolution], or of the philosophismizing period which immediately preceded it, and which in fact created it. It was long since I had seen such as collection of downright materialism. A young Turk, seemingly around twenty years of age, was sitting cross-legged in a corner of the room, reading that manual of atheism, the 'Systeme de la Nature!' Another of the students showed his proficiency in French and philosophy, by quoting passages from Diderot's "Jacques de Fataliste," and from that compound of blasphemy and obscenity, Le Compere Mathieu. "... Cabanes' "Rapport de la Physique et du Morale de l' Homme" occupied a conspicuous place on the shelves (p. 270 – 271).

Besides his successful initiatives in the sphere of the higher education, Mahmut also took the lead to change traditional customs and social practices by setting up a

personal example himself. He opposed long beards and introduced Western attires in order to foster a change in the physical appearance of his subjects. James E. DeKay (1831) observed that:

> The dress of the modern Turkish soldier has partaken of the general change which has occurred within the last ten years, and whatever it may have lost in picturesque effect, it has certainly gained in effectiveness for military duty. ... With the exception of the cap, and the still lingering amplitude of the trowsers, the Turkish soldier could scarcely be distinguished from the regulars of any European nation (p. 225 – 226).

While modernization and the new intellectual climate that it instigated began to materialize, they remained rather limited among a very small group of urban elites that comprised the intellectuals, and the civilian and military bureaucrats. Consequently, this situation further aggravated the widening cultural gap and difference in outlook between the "intellectual" state elite, and the "uneducated" general population. Reflecting on the common consensus among ordinary citizens, Adolphus Slade, a British admiral serving in the Turkish navy, suggested that Mahmut's reforms was driven by "a contempt of their prophet's wisest law" which explained the perception of "the sultan and his ministers as little removed from infidels" in the eyes of the general population (quoted in Berkes, 1998, p. 126). Berkes (1998) noted that in this period the Islamic *ulema* among the medieval institutions became physically more distinguishable and visible at the communal level given that it insisted on the medieval attire and conservative customs (p. 124).

The foundation of the *Tercüme Odası* (translation bureau) in 1821 was another cornerstone that later served as a college of foreign languages. The establishment of a newspaper press in 1831 and the introduction of *Takvim-i Vekayi* (Calendar of Events) constituted a development of utmost importance to future attempts in reforming language and alphabet. Through the channel of periodical press, the idea of *constitutionalism* was born that would take its course in 1876 (Akşin, 2007, p. 32 - 33; Berkes, 1998, p. 127.) Berkes noted that from the early issues of *Takvim-i Vekayi*, a search for new administrative designs and institutions comparable to those of the British House of Commons (*Meşveretgah-ı vükela*) and the House of Lords (*Meşveretgah-ı hanedan*) were notable (p. 127). In 1835, Mahmut would send 150 students from the higher learning institutions to England, France, Prussia and Austria on educational grounds.

Giving valuable insights into the growing awareness of the Western culture, Mustafa Sami's (d. 1855) account, *Avrupa Risalesi* (European Notes) presented an important source. As an intellectual, Sami travelled through numerous Italian cities, Vienna, Prague, Berlin, Frankfurt, Brussels, Antwerp, London, and Paris in 1838, and reflected on his personal observations in his book. He stressed on the scientific progress and its contribution to the overall advancement in Western societies. In 1840, Sami noted that:

> What is the utility of these? The inventions of the Europeans (so many discoveries – which are being improved every day to make everything convenient – those superhuman achievements such as steam navigation, those industries which Muslim countries need so badly for the everyday necessities such as paper, textile, glass and watch-making, and finally those wonderful

> attempts to fly in the air, and to communicate with distant places through wires laid underground) ... From all this it is clear that such a degree of orderliness reached by the Europeans in every work and action, and the indispensability of skill and knowledge in them, are due solely to the diffusion of the sciences and the arts. Men and women alike, everyone reads and writes in Europe. Especially in France, every person, even an ordinary porter or a shepherd, is capable at least of reading a letter sent to him. Nobody in Europe is constrained for matters of religion or sect... All this is due to the progress of science (Berkes quotes Sami, 1998, p. 129 – 130).

Berkes noted that Sami's views and his open criticism soon made him a *kafir* (denier) and *mulhid* (unbeliever) in the eyes of ordinary citizens. After his return from abroad, he worked as a chief-in-editor of *Takvim-i Vekayi* where he particularly used a very simple language in an attempt to reach out to people (p. 130).

Sâdık Rıfat's (1807-56) observations between 1837 and 1839 as a minister and ambassador in Vienna presented yet another remarkable document. His accounts truly demonstrated the anti-traditionalist and reformist character of the Ottoman bureaucratic elite. In this regard, *Avrupa Ahvaline Dair Risale* in 1837 [Essays concerning European Affairs], and *Devlet-i Aliyenin Islah-ı Ahvali* in 1844 [On the Reform of Conditions in the Ottoman State] constituted two important documents in which Rıfat elaborated on his experiences abroad. His observations were not limited to the state administration or issues that concerned the universality of education and literacy. His account was distinguishable given its emphasis on the cultural aspects of life. He evaluated favourably entertainment, hotels, restaurants and music (Berkes, 1998, p. 130 - 131). The "Essays concerning European Affairs" drew attention to a different way of thinking that

distinguished the West from the East. Moreover, he advocated *rational thinking* by setting human rights and human needs as core priorities and main concerns of a true form of government (Berkes, 1998, p. 130 - 131). In 1837, Rıfat stated that:

> There the governments are for the welfare of the citizens – and not the citizens for the sake of the governments. It is because of this that the governments are run according to the rights of the people and according to law (Berkes quotes Rıfat, 1998, p. 131).

2.5 Facts to derive from History: Re-considering the Turkish Modernization in Contemporary Readings

Acknowledging the long battle between the *reformist* and the *traditional* elements in the Ottoman historical context bears crucial hints about the evolution of Turkish polity and its secular development. Modern Turkey as a secular republic was not established overnight. As historical accounts showed, the rise of secular thinking in administration, education, and judiciary had its roots in the 19th century state apparatus. It had long occupied the minds of the Ottoman bureaucratic elite and the intellectuals whose struggle for change put them in a direct confrontation with the medieval institution of the Islamic *ulema*. In light of this tug of war, it is imperative to comprehend that the *secular* vs. *Islamic* dichotomy, and the most critically, the latter's hostility to change are not a modern-day phenomenon.

One must also note that in contrast to the Western world, early modernization efforts in the Turkish context was not driven by a capitalist economic development nor was it born out of a social movement. Socio-economic structure was in fact very different

from that of the industrialized states of the West. As a consequence, its effect took hold strictly within the ruling class, bureaucratic cadres and intellectuals who lived in Istanbul. The general population, on the other hand, remained isolated from the scientific and intellectual trends which in the Western context decisively contributed to the development of social life, ultimately giving rise to a *participant society*.

From a societal standpoint, modernization efforts in the Ottoman context exacerbated the intellectual gap between the ruling class and the general masses. Elaborating on this discrepancy, Kongar (2012) stated that there had never been any actual interaction between these two factions to a degree that no common spoken or written language ever existed between the two (p. 73, 110). In the same vein with Kongar, Lerner (1964) noted that oral communications as the only method of interaction strictly served an administrative purpose for social control. It aimed to prescribe behaviour in the form of loyalty and obedience as opposed to enlightenment and shaping opinion. Hence, the notions of "public opinion" and "participation" did not exist in this structure that led to ignorance and indifference as notable attributes of the general population (p. 113 – 114). Kongar (2012) further stated that while Islam traditionally provided a common cultural bond, in the eyes of the Ottoman bureaucratic elite, its virtue was in constant decline (p. 73).

Overcoming this *intellectual gap* would constitute a critical task of the uttermost importance to the democratic development of Turkish politics long after the foundation of the Republic. A successful transformation of society from the *traditional* to the *modern* was dependent on the formulation of the right policies by taking into account the psychological and socio-cultural despair of the rural Turkey.

2.2 THE IDEA AND THE ESSENCE OF THE TURKISH MODERNIZATION

2.2.1 The Drive and the Rational Behind a Cultural Revolution: A Rejuvenation of the Modern Self

In the conventional ways of telling the story, directed at Turkish modernization, the main criticism suggested that: "they (the founding fathers) detached this nation from its (cultural) roots...; they tried to imprison us within an artificial modernization project"[11]. This view which is perpetuated in the contemporary writings contends that Atatürk as a secular tyrant carried out a "forced-modernization" at the expense of the "faithful indigenous". Delineated in the accounts of academics such as Yavuz, Hurd, and Robins, this view suggests a cultural conflict and describes modern Turkey with its secular state structure as a vicious assault on the local (Islamic) culture.

Fundamentally, it is the compatibility of Atatürk's secular reforms with the social and cultural tendencies of the general masses that critics bring into question. The critics of Turkish modernization contend that Atatürk had no regard for the cultural make-up of the masses based on which he intended to create a modern secular republic. Summarizing this particular viewpoint, A. L. Macfie (1994) stated that:

> His elitist attitudes, it has been suggested, led him to adopt a superficial approach to reform, concerned not with the underlying economic forces which ultimately determine the social order, but with the surface aspects, as expressed in systems of government, structures of law and modes of dress; while his apparent contempt for religion, and the moral code which religion supports, led him to

[11] Erdoğan raised a similar criticism in his speech in the Republican Day on 29 October 2016 (*Cumhuriyet*, October 29, 2016).

> underestimate their significance as bonding agent of the social fabric, particularly in the rural areas (p. 148).

At this point, with regard to the underlying drive and philosophy, it is crucial to note that as opposed to the conventional readings described above, Turkish modernization did not lie on the spectrum of theological politics or form in pertain to religion. Accordingly, scholarly assessments which choose to view it exclusively through the prism of religiosity constitute a misconstrue of facts. In essence, the core objective of Turkish modernization was to make people aware of their own potential to reason and question, and ultimately create a new participant Turkish society. Considering the obstacles in the way of achieving this task, Mango (2010) noted that the envisioned Turkish state was to be built on a very poor, illiterate, and rural society that suggested a very ambitious agenda beyond nation-building (p. 4).

Thinking about the depth of the founding reforms, one should bear in mind that they exhibited several notable features. The first, they were intended to mobilize a mass population that was truly stuck in time. The second, they took highly industrialized Western societies as a model which the process necessitated, in Lerner's (1964) terms, "the production of new Turks" (p. 128). The third, they were to be carried out by the bureaucratic cadres of the former Ottoman state. These cadres constituted the only factual force that prevailed in that period that was capable of pursuing a solid agenda. And finally, it was naturally a top-down movement.

Kongar (2012) noted that the founding reforms which *Kemalism* encapsulated corresponded to a very pragmatic ideology that progressed based on proven results. It was born out of a political necessity and highly influenced by the external factors such

imperialism, communism, and liberalism. From a political standpoint, it occurred as a reaction to the *Padişah* and his close diplomatic circle who signed the Treaty of Sèvres on 10 August 1920 that dictated the partition of the Turkish territories by the Allied powers (p. 109). A. L. Macfie (1994) noted that:

> A survey of Mustafa Kemal's early life and career reveals that surprisingly little evidence to support the contention that he was from the beginning a fervent nationalist... On the contrary, it would appear that until the spring of 1919 at least, he remained a loyal member of the Ottoman elite, fully committed to the defence of the empire. His later adoption of the ideology of nationalism would appear, therefore, to have been pragmatic, dictated, in the period of national struggle, largely by the course of events; and in the period the republic by the need to create an ideological framework, capable of supporting the new state (p. 188).

It needs to be emphasized that the conventional critique turns a blind eye to the actual developmental context which during the Ottoman centuries had already crumbled under deep psychological despair and cultural impoverishment. Ironically, critics misses the gist of the founding reforms that in reality considered "indigenous" customs and practices as something to fight against, not to preserve. In this scheme, a vital aspect of Atatürk's initiatives which the conventional reading persistently overlooks is its engagement with modernization first at the individual level. Thus, a liberation and rejuvenation of the *traditional* obligated "the integral transformation of personality"[12]

[12] Lerner's (1964, p. 128) socio-psychological assessment of the "traditional" is noteworthy as it provides crucial insights into the minds of the mass population which tells us a lot about the underlying trajectory of the Turkish modernization and secularization.

along which the process eventually evolved into a Cultural Revolution. On his remarks about Atatürk's foresight, Lerner (1964) stated that:

> Atatürk aimed at nothing less than reshaping a traditionalized society by transforming the daily deeds and desires of the people - first the new elite, then the ancient mass... In a society whose illiterates exceeded 90% of the population, the job had to be done for the long run and from the very bottom (p. 112).

On 5 October 1925 in his speech at the opening of a Faculty of Law, Atatürk would state that:

> The Turkish Revolution signifies a transformation far broader than the word revolution suggest... It means replacing an age-old political unity based on religion with one based on another tie' that of nationality. This nation has now accepted the principle that the only means of survival for nations in the international struggle for existence lies in the acceptance of the contemporary Western civilization. This nation has also accepted the principle that all of its laws should be based on secular grounds only, on a secular mentality that accepts the rule of continuous change in accordance with the change and development of life's conditions as its law.... (Osman Nuri Ergin quotes Atatürk, 1977, pp. 1501-4).

2.2.2 The "Indigenous": Rural Turkey at a Glance

Various ethnographic and psychological analysis of Anatolian villagers in the early decades of modern Turkey provided a very drastic picture about the psychic and physical conditions of the general masses. For instance, in 1932, in his description of *Alişar* village of Central Anatolia, J. A. Morrison brought attention to an extreme picture

as he could compare the conditions of the villagers with that of the occupants of *Çatal Höyük*, an early Neolithic town in Anatolia. More than anything else, the villagers' perception of their own situation as normal and their indifference towards it was a particular interest of Morrison who stated that:

> The Anatolian peasant is singularly incurious about almost everything that does not directly concern his daily life. To the average peasant, anything that happened more than fifty or sixty years ago is *çok eski* (very old), regardless of whether the event took place one hundred or one thousand years earlier. Asked how old his village is, he will answer with exasperating vagueness not unmixed with satisfaction *çok eski* (Lerner quotes Morrison, 1964, p. 131).

Muzafer Sherif's (1948) study of five Turkish villages in 1944 revealed that the *traditional* had no actual conception of time, space, and distance. Hours as units of time, the names of the days of the week and the calendar months were unknown to the villagers. Also, standardized units of distance such as kilometers had no match in this context where it was the physical effort made to reach a destination determined villagers' sense of distance. And, this was also subject to change given that individual's sex and age. In another instance, Galicia, a province in Poland occurred closer in distance in the minds of the *traditional* than Van province of Turkey. This distorted perception was due to the fact that oldsters who served during WWI reached Galicia by train in a shorter period of time than Van where they had to travel by walk as a means of commute.

Sherif's study showed that physical, social, and psychic mobility was an inseparable whole that correlated with the depth of an individual's perception of life. It determined the boundaries of expectations and ambition through which life acquired a

purpose and meaning according to its proximity and contact to "modern technology" (Sherif, 1948, p. 374 -385).

In the same vein with Sherif, Lerner's in-depth study revealed a very challenging *psychological barrier* to progress. And, beneath the processes of modernization, his profiling of the "indigenous" showed a very drastic disparity between the *modern* and *traditional* psyche. Lerner's assessments of the traditional Turkish context in 1950 showed that *a lack of curiosity* and *unresponsiveness* shaped the psychic trait of Turkish villagers who remained constraint within their customary family-mosque-village routine. In this very confined cultural context, *total rejection* and *ego-defense* followed upon encountering an outside stimulus that was too strong to ignore and deny. Lerner (1964) stated that:

> The Traditional's incapacity to establish connections between himself and the larger world is the key to his perspective. His personality has been socially disciplined to constrict imagination to the familiar time-space dimensions of daily life. Even on the simplest level of generalizing from self to a larger universe, the trained incapacity of the Traditional is evident (pp. 141 – 142).

Lerner noted that exhibiting a cosmopolitan outlook and ability for self-projection into unfamiliar situations were crucial qualities that enabled an individual to imagine herself as part of a larger world outside of her traditional circle. This underlined a particular concern as the rural inhabitants of Anatolia lacked the skill to imagine a life and social-order that was different than theirs. In other words, in the absence of *self-projection*, sentiments of skepticism, ambition, desire, and participation were not a part of the cultural make-up of the *traditional* (Shah, 2011, pp. 97 - 98).

Along with the sentiments of sadness and *dysphoria*, the perception of the traditional revolved around the themes of God, death, and the *cins*, thus, was in no touch with any real concern and aspiration. *Dysphoria* shaped the Anatolian folklore which in return determined the social interaction patterns and belief systems and passed it from one generation to the next with no change. Hence, in the eyes of Anatolian villagers, *change* was undesirable and something to be avoided as it correlated with evil, and infidelity. This changeless personality trait explained *inertia*, *obedience* and *loyalty* as the approved forms of behavior that reinforced the predominant passivity and non-participant ways of life.

Existing on the basis of *superstition* and *stability*, Lerner (1964) described this traditional setting as the "courage culture" based on bravery and heroism as opposed to "ingenuity culture" where intelligence, creativity, and ambition emphasized rational behavior and a participant society (p. 133). In Lerner's terms, "in obeisance to the fatalistic rule of *Kısmet* (fate,) the Traditional lives under the narcosis of resignation" (p. 146). He observed that:

> The whole complex forms a "courage culture," in which absence of curiosity is a primary component ("theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do or die"). The absence of curiosity goes together with the absence of knowledge in a reciprocal; ignorance and immobility are twin growths (Lerner, 1964, p. 133).

Against the backdrop of this bleak picture, the 1920s onwards, modernization efforts ultimately evolved into a Cultural Revolution, aimed at not only establishing a new secular state, but also building a new participant society that could reason and question. And to accomplish that, in the words of Atatürk, removing "the black clouds of

ignorance" remained vital to his project of modernization (Mango quotes Atatürk, 2010, p. 3). Founding fathers, who first founded modern Turkey as a secular republic, and then carried out an all-around modernization, were well-aware of the psychological and social characteristics of its mass population. They also recognized the enormous task that they faced with upon embarking on such an ambitious agenda. The comprehension of the obstacles was evident in Atatürk's speech where he addressed to a commission of teachers in 1922. Atatürk stated that:

> Ideas full of irrational superstition are morbid. Social life dominated by irrational, useless, and harmful beliefs is doomed to paralysis. We must begin by purging minds and society of their very springs. Our pride in political, social, and educational life will be science. Progress is too difficult or even impossible for nations that insist on preserving their traditions and beliefs lacking in rational bases (Berkes quotes from *Atatürk'ün Maarife ait Direktifleri*, 1998, pp. 465-466).

In 1924, at the anniversary of the War of Independence, Atatürk noted that *change* was desirable and imperative to avoid being exploited by the developed nations. Highlighting his pragmatism, he stated that:

> Surviving in the world of modern civilization depends upon changing ourselves. This is the sole law of any progress in the social, economic and scientific spheres of life. Changing the rules of life in accordance with the times is an absolute necessity. In an age when inventions and the wonders of science are bringing change after change in the conditions of life, nations cannot maintain their existence by age-old rotten mentalities and by tradition-worshipping.

Superstitions and nonsense have to be thrown out of our heads (Berkes quotes from *Türk Yurdu*, 1998, p. 464).

CHAPTER 3

POLITICIZATION OF RELIGION IN THE FACE OF NEW CHALLENGES

3.1 Introduction

This study contends that considering its formation and evolution in the Turkish context, "political Islam" does not lie on the spectrum of *religio-politics*. Instead, it represents a phenomenon that emerges as an unintended outcome of various policy choices calibrated to respond newly rising political trends and threats. In an attempt to detail this process, this chapter focuses on a time period from the mid-1940s to the end of the 1970s. It aims to identify crucial debates and ideological shifts that increasingly endowed religion with a political dimension. It is important to note that in the eyes of the general public, a perception of Islam as a political notion did not occur until the late 1960s. And, when it became a feature of the Turkish political system, it was yet to acquire political competitiveness. Political Islam formally emerged on 26 January 1970 with the establishment of the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi* - MNP) as Turkey's first Islamist party.

In the post-WWII climate, a highly partisan and populist discourse accompanied Turkey's transition to multi-party politics. In this atmosphere, concerns about the threat of communism and policy choices to attract conservative-rural votes constituted two main factors that opened the door for liberalization in the religious sphere. Particularly, the rivalry between the Democratic Party (*Demokrat Parti* - DP) and the Republican Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* - CHP) turned religion into a controversial topic and opened secularism to re-interpretation. By the end of the 1940s, official tolerance to religion

materialized in a series of political concessions to Islamic-traditional circles. In the 1950s, increasing religious activism was evident in the public sphere that took reactionary forms in the countryside. Essentially, what began as "liberalization in the religious sphere" soon turned into a popular means of political chase along with the changing façade of the post-war elites.

Rapid industrialization, rise of ideological parties, changes in the perception of Turkish nationalism, and societal polarization further contributed to the politicization of Islam. From the mid-1960s onwards, seen as an ideological ally against the leftist movements, the official tolerance to various Islamic elements grew to include religious propaganda and *tarikat* activism in direct violation of the Constitution. In this regard, the instrumentalist use of religion as a means of political advantage constituted an issue of major importance for the direction of Turkish politics. Here, it is crucial to acknowledge that this political conjecture, which vote-hunting and the threat of communism shaped, advanced on the exploitation of religion particularly in the traditional settings of the countryside. It deprived the already devastated rural majority of its actual social and cultural interests. As studies by Lerner, Sherif, and Morrison's delineated, by the 1950s the *traditional* still displayed psycho-sociologically and physically a very bleak picture. "Political Islam" would emerge among this culturally alienated and economically impoverished rural population that was indeed the main target of political exploitation of religion, and propaganda.

The critics of Turkish modernization argue that *political Islam* forms as an "indigenous" movement where the "faithful" rises against the "secular tyrant," suggesting a genuine cultural clash. However, the study of Turkey's four decades reveals a different

story that brings the accuracy of this widely held interpretation into question. The findings suggest that the weight of the "faith" aspect remains rather irrelevant to the underlying processes that promote "political Islam." Accordingly, political Islam does not constitute a faith-based movement as some scholars would like argue, but rather, it corresponds to a developmental issue. Crucially, consequences of a profound neglect concerning the socio-economic and cultural conditions of the rural population define this phenomenon that requires a closer scrutiny.

3.2 The 1940s

3.2.1 Undercurrents the WWII Shaped Amidst Turkey's Transition to Competitive Party Politics

Following the foundation of modern Turkey in 1924, closing the gap between the "urban-intellectual" elite and the "rural-uneducated" masses constituted a major concern of senior administration officials who placed a special emphasis on the socio-economic and cultural reconstruction of the latter (Eligür, 2010, p. 49). However, after the death of Atatürk in 1938, this ambitious policymaking would lose its pace and gradually fade out among a new generation of state officials with different concerns and agendas. Beneath this developmental neglect, the economic hardship that the WWII brought between 1939 and 1945, and the political rivalry that Turkey's transition to multi-party politics fostered in 1946 constituted core underlying factors underneath this trend.

With the onset of the WWII, war economy began to define the CHP's political trajectory which resulted in a repressive climate. Bernard Lewis (1951) noted that issues

such as the mobilization of the armed-forces and the widespread fear of foreign espionage obligated the safeguard of the government that accounted for the political repression during the war years (p. 320). In this atmosphere, the CHP came under the control of a group of highly autocratic bureaucrats, raising a criticism within the party cadres. However, debates on liberty and liberalization had to be postponed until the end of the WWII (Karpat, 2008, p. 244). In short, the CHP began to display an image of an "elite organization" which would lead to the economic and cultural alienation of the rural population (Eligür, 2010, p. 49).

Economic difficulties that the WWII created had a direct impact on the rural population. Measures were taken and new regulations were enforced to compensate the sudden rise in the military spending that emerged with the increase of the armed-forces from 250 thousand to 1 million. The toll for the war-economy deteriorated the country's already weak economy and exacerbated the poverty in the agricultural sector. Economic policies such as the National Defense Law in 1940 and the Wealth Tax of 1942 imposed a heavy burden on the rural masses and underlined their alienation from the ruling bureaucratic class. Also, initiatives such as the Land Reform Bill of 1945, the Law for Village Institutes, and Land Giving Policy for Peasants disturbed the landowners who traditionally formed the support base for the CHP. As the measures and taxes resulted in growing dissatisfaction and state repression, the post-war years witnessed the CHP's losing its support among the general population (Bezci, 2010, p. 136; Eligür, 2010, p. 50; Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 26).

After WWII, debates about extending personal liberties and democratization once again surfaced and shaped political discourse. Particularly, discussions over the Land

Reform Bill on 7 June 1945 paved the way for the democratization of Turkey's political system. In the process, a motion addressing the parliamentary control of the government, individual liberties and political opposition was also brought by Adnan Menderes, Fuat Köprülü, Refik Koraltan and the former prime minister Celal Bayar who opposed the Land Reform Bill in the CHP group. The motion was denied on 12 June despite the support of President İsmet İnönü. İnönü had already noted the necessity for moving to multi-party politics in a speech on 19 May 1945 (Sunay, 2010). In his opening speech for the National Assembly on 1 November 1945, İnönü re-emphasized the absence of a political opposition as the most important deficiency of the Turkish political system (Tunaya, 1952, p. 647). In the aftermath, the general election was scheduled for 1947 and Turkey entered to multi-party politics on 7 January 1946 when the opponents of the Land Reform Bill established the Democratic Party (*Demokrat Parti* – DP).

With regard to Turkey's transition to multi-party politics, Meliha Benli Altunışık and Özlem Tür (2005) noted that in the face of mounting dissatisfaction in society, the CHP would not have continued its one-party rule (p. 26). Eventually, the transition to multi-party system was meant to serve as a safety valve against a likely social turmoil after the hardship of the war years (Lewis, 1951, p. 323; Karpat, 2008, p. 245; Bezci, 2010, p. 139). In his assessment William Hale (1994) noted that İnönü, as a devoted democrat, was well aware of the necessity of political opposition that was also the ambition of Atatürk and a crucial component of his modernisation project (p. 89). Additionally, search for Western allies against the Soviet Union also facilitated Turkey's political transition and underlined the external dimension in the process. Particularly, concerns raised by the Soviet demands over the Straits helped to build a political

consensus along the side of western democracies which obligated the democratization of the political system.

Turkey's adhesion to the United Nation on 24 February 1945 was notable in the democratization of the Turkish political system. The CHP initially followed a cautious and well-balanced trajectory between the socialist and democratic faction and the ultra-nationalist and fascist circle in society (Bezci, 2010, p. 137; Bora, 2009, p. 359). Yet, with the defeat of Germany, fascist elements on the right lost their strength and the idea of *Turkism* lost its appeal in Turkish politics. In 1944, the arrest of more than forty ultra-nationalists took place while concerns over the rising Soviet influence hampered the socialist tendencies. Events that began with the arrests of socialists in 1944 progressed with the *Tan* raid in 1945, and continued with the discharge of the left-wing academics at the University of Ankara in 1951. With the end of the WWII, the CHP began to follow Western conjecture, and liberal democracy defined Turkey's political parameters. The transition to multi-party politics occurred with the collaboration of liberal and social democratic elements of Turkish politics (Bezci, 2010, pp. 137-138).

3.2.2 Critical Setbacks in Cultural Rejuvenation and Communal Education: The Village Institutes and People's Chambers in the Crossfire

In 1946, multi-party system emerged at a very early stage, when the consolidation of democracy was still ongoing. Also, the reforms which found a ground among the urban population failed to penetrate the countryside. Devastated by prolonged wars and heavy economic burden, in 1935 rural masses constituted 76.5% of the population and only 19.2% of the total population was literate (Eligür, 2010, p. 48). In the mid-1940s, of 40.000 villages 35.000 had no schools and the remaining consisted of only three

classrooms. Equally critical, because the teachings of these schools were not tailored to address the specific needs of the countryside, they were unable to foster a change in the quality of the rural life (Çizmeli, 2007, p. 463).

In an effort to compensate this bleak picture the establishment of the People's Homes, the People's Chambers and the Village Institutes were a major breakthrough not only for increasing literacy, but also for educating the population about the fundamentals of social and cultural life. Founded on 19 February 1932, the People's Homes remained as urban cultural institutions until 1940 when they extended their scope to address the specifics of the rural population. With the establishment of the Village Institutes in 1940, the People's Homes began to serve as the People's Chambers in the countryside.

These institutions took on a very critical task in the achievement of the *New Turks* along with secular ideas. Tanilli (2008) described their principle objective as to facilitate the enlightenment of the people, modernization of life, and development of a common culture that would embrace the society as a whole. Thus, minimizing the socio-cultural gap between the urban and rural populations constituted an imperative in this enlightenment project (Tanilli, 2008, pp. 127, 159). The People's Homes provided a brand-new gateway for the mobilization of society along the lines of the Kemalist reforms. They aimed to pioneer a socio-cultural and artistic development of the general masses through various tailored programs that included language courses, and classes on sculpture, painting, sowing, typing, and music.[13] Given their critical role in Turkish

[13] Webster (1939, p. 187) notes that the People's Home's nine-fold program included language, literature, and history; fine arts, dramatics, sports (athletics), social assistance, adult classrooms and courses, library and publications, village welfare, and museum and exhibits. Highlighting the People's Homes cultural input, Çizmeli (2007, p. 483) notes that by 1940 the number of conferences held reached to 2,835 which welcome around 1.000.000 audience. Also, its library held 349.093 books that served 2.000.000 readers.

modernization, in 1947 the CHP decided to change the status of these institutions into a charitable trust to prevent their possible closure by another party. This change would not take place until the 1950 elections. Karpat (2008) noted that The People's Homes also served as an organ of the CHP for political propaganda (p. 504).

The Village Institutes were founded in 1940 to train specifically the teachers who would operate in the countryside. Accordingly, female and male received education in the same classrooms and equipped with technical knowledge with regard to the realities of the rural conditions. Graduates from the Village Institutes had the principle mission to develop reading habit among the rural population and educate people in diverse fields such as rural industry, modern agriculture, nutrition, health, hygiene and modern arts. Karpat (2008) stated that given their pivotal task, the graduates from these institutions considered themselves as the representatives of the new regime in fight against ignorance, poverty, and age-old rotten mentalities and traditions (p. 502).

After WWII, electoral concerns, and personal disputes within the CHP cadres began to deteriorate the work of the Village Institutes. In 1946, they were seen as "communist cells" by various interest groups (Çizmeli, 2007, pp. 463, 473; Karpat, 2008, pp. 502-503). Important figures such as Hasan Ali Yücel, the Ministry of Education in 1940, and İsmail Hakkı Tonguç who played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Village Institutes faced false allegations of being socialists (Karpat, 2008, pp. 498, 503; Çizmeli, 2007, p. 281). Underlining this hostility, Karpat (2008) noted that the progressive nature of these institutions conflicted with the religious and mystical outlook of the conservative circles which sought to benefit from the fear of socialism. The conservatives attacked the Village Institutes on the grounds that due to the widespread

poverty, reasoning and analytical approaches that these institutions endorsed could foster a class struggle among the rural population (pp. 502-503). Additionally, education of female and male students in the same classrooms was also an issue. The CHP Maraş representative, Emin Soysal believed that it would cause deterioration in moral values (Karpat, 2008, p. 504).

3.2.3 Competitive Party Politics and Early Concessions in Secularism

After 1946, rivalry between the CHP and the DP shaped Turkey's political discourse with crucial implications on the rural population. Turkish politics became a new ground where outmaneuvering the opponent and vote hunting became the new norm and political parties' primary concern. This trajectory endowed religion with a political dimension, and opened the door for the re-interpretation of secularism. Initiatives of the CHP and the DP at this early stage to attract the conservative rural votes would impact not only to the course of Turkish politics, but also to the social and cultural evolution of the whole Turkish society. Jacob Landau (1974) describes Turkey's transition to multi-party politics as the most crucial decision of the post-Atatürk era (p. 1).

With the introduction of multi-party system, all the opposition against the CHP merged under the roof of the DP. This occurred not due to the DP's party program but rather its position against the CHP. Sharing the same Kemalist tradition, Karpat (1972) noted that in reality, the CHP and the DP were compatible in their political trajectory for modern Turkey and its secular regime (p. 351). Yet, any faction with any kind of grievance against the CHP capitalized on the elections to show its resentment (Lewis, 1951, p. 324-325). Despite the CHP's electoral success on 21 July 1946 in the general elections, the DP's growing popularity proved significant.

Dramatic policy changes in the intra-party politics of the DP and CHP occurred in an effort to become more competitive in the electoral race. In this context, as new concerns pertaining to the "socialist threat" and vote-hunting were on the rise, religion would become a controversial topic with important political implications. Long debates and discussions about religion accompanied this period as both the CHP and the DP raised the question of secularism in favour of liberalization. Beneath this growing emphasis on religion, Bernard Lewis (1952) noted that it must not be taken as a sign of sympathy for the outlook of the Islamic reactionaries. Rather, they were moral and political objectives that obliged political elites to allow some Islamic elements in their political discourse (p. 46). Drawing attention to the link between the 'electoral competition' and 'religious resurge', Lewis (1952) stated that:

> ...the fear of giving the advantage of religious support to the other side led both of the major parties to give at least toleration, often encouragement, to this movement. At the same time both the Republicans and Democrat Parties seem anxious to keep it within bonds (p. 45).

Along with this trend, on 7 January 1946, the Article 14 of the DP program asserted the separation of the state and religion. It stated that the party denied the interpretation of secularism as an objection to religion. It further stated that the party recognized the liberty of religion among the fundamental human rights. The Article 14 stated that:

> Our party understands secularism as state politics' irrelevance to religion and the absence of any religious thought in the preparation and implementation of law, and refuses the wrong notion that perceives secularism as an opposition to

> religion; accepts the liberty of religion just like any other liberties as among the fundamental rights of humanity (Tunaya, 1952, p. 663).

In response to the DP, changes also followed at the CHP's end. As the governing party, the CHP chose to moderate its position towards secularism to appeal to the "religious-traditional circles" (Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 27-28). Following the DP's path, it drew religion into politics one year later in its Seventh General Congress.[14] It adopted a similar rhetoric. On 2 January 1947, after asserting the separation between the state and religion, the Article 15 re-emphasized religion as a matter of conscience that was free from any sort of intervention. The Article 15 on secularism stated that:

> Our party views all laws, principles and practices in state administration, carried out in conformity with the world of modern civilization and principles based on science in regard to the necessities of the world; and religious thoughts, separated from the state and world affairs, and politics as the main condition for the advancement of our nation in every aspect of life. Because the concept of religion is a matter of conscience it is free from all sorts of attacks and interventions. No citizen must be interfered for her practices and rites unless forbidden by law (Tunaya, 1952, p. 586).

In their reinterpretation, as Çizmeli (2007) noted, both the DP and the CHP curbed the actual point of secularism by modifying its focal emphasis with the "fundamental rights" and "freedom of conscience" rhetoric (p. 246). In this framework, the tendency to downplay the actual meaning of secularism was evident that raised questions about the politicization of Islam in this period. As Çizmeli mentioned, the

[14] For details see *CHP Yedinci Kurultayı Tutanağı* [The CHP Seventh Assembly Protocol] (1948, pp. 448-462).

liberty of religion and conscience had already been recognized by the Constitution among the "fundamental rights and liberties," giving no real reason for any amendment on the definition of secularism. He noted that this reinterpretation was problematic given that it downplayed the central objective of secularism that was to assert the separation of the state and religion (p. 246).

Alongside this political initiative of 'religious liberalization', in 1948 the Ministry of Education opened ten-month Quran courses in order to train *imams* and *hatips* (Çizmeli, 2007, p. 434; Tanilli, 2008, p. 122). This initiative was critical given that it opened the door for the reorganization of Islamic *tarikat* network groups which otherwise had remained active underground since their closure in 1925. Particularly, the CHP paved the way for the *Süleymancıs* to extend their activities to the countryside to establish a mass support base.[15] Within this official tolerance to religion, initiatives in 1949 followed the re-opening of the sacred tombs, adding religious courses to the fourth and the fifth classes of the elementary school curriculum as an elective, and founding the faculty of divinity at the University of Ankara (Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 28; Bezci, 2010, p. 141; Eligür, 2010, p. 51; Landau, 1974, p. 172). Religious education in the elementary schools would be one hour a week and upon the written consent of the parents (Çizmeli, 2007, p. 414).

[15] Peköz (2009, pp. 88-89) notes that the *Süleymancıs* emerged as a reaction to what they perceived as a cultural and moral degeneration in the society. With their Islamic-traditional outlook *Süleymancıs* constituted a Sunni branch of the *Nakşibendi tarikatı*. Starting from 1941, they operated underground through the Quran courses they established in İstanbul. In 1949, liberalization in the religious sphere marked a breakthrough for the *Süleymancıs* as it legalized their Quran courses and enabled them to reorganize to address masses in the countryside.

3.2.4 Religious Exploitation in the Changing Façade of the New Post-war Elites

Beneath the political concessions to the religious-conservative circles at this precarious period, laid a profound change in the outlook of Turkey's new post-war elites. In his assessment, Tanilli brings to attention that the first initiative which undermined the secular education came from the CHP. He links this change in the CHP's attitude with the decline in the political weight of the *progressive bourgeoisie element* between 1946 and 1950. Tanilli (2008) states that in Turkey's new climate, where capitalism began to define political parameters, the old bourgeoisie class seemed to complete its historical mission. Moreover, with the electoral competition in place now, the political atmosphere encouraged new bureaucratic cadres to take initiatives that could actually jeopardize the Kemalist reforms (p. 118). This view finds a support in George Harris' (1970) observation according to which a generation of new elites began to make their presence felt in Turkish politics by the end of the WWII. Representing professionals and businessmen from all walks of life, the new elites' individualistic and materialist outlook was not comparable with their predecessors' idealistic way of thinking. In his remarks Harris (1970) noted that:

> Their interests were not those of the older elite. Children of the revolution, they took for granted many of its hard-won gains. They neither shared nor perhaps even understood Kemalist sensitivity over backsliding in reform (pp. 439-440).

The new elites found a body particularly within the political framework of the DP which promised a swift economic development without engaging the old social norms and customs. Unlike the CHP which placed emphasis on social change and cultural modernization, the DP promised in Harris' (1970) words, not to "disturb directly the age-

old pattern of social life in the rural areas" which made the DP an ideal choice in the eyes of the rural population (p. 440). Highlighting the link between the peasantry and the competition for votes, Harris (1970) further stated that:

> And in this situation the engaging, if impractical, lure of being able to enjoy the fruits of Western technology without having to give up comfortable social traditions served as a powerful force forging the Democratic Party into the most successful vote getting machine that Turkey had ever seen (p. 440).

Along the same lines as Harris, according to Howard Reed (1954), "in their search for votes, all parties, but the Democrats in particular, turned to Turkey's oft-forgotten man and his family - the peasant majority of Turkey" (p. 271). In this context of political competition, elaborating on the instrumentalist use of religion, Reed (1954) observes that:

> They began to realize anew that Islam had much more vital and traditional respect and force in village life than they had assumed, and that their would-be peasant supporters cherished it. The politicians naturally promised to meet this desire for more attention to Islam and even began to exploit it for their own political ends (p. 271).

This momentous post-war trend rested underneath the DP's instrumentalist approach to religion which the DP saw as the main facet of the rural culture. Behice Boran's study on the transitional rural settlements in the 1940s provided an insight into how drawing on the social and cultural deprivation of the countryside, the political exploitation of religion found a ground in the DP's discourse. According to Boran (1945), the growing awareness among the peasant population regarding the differences of the

urban and rural lifestyles induced a strong sense of inferiority that the DP capitalized on to turn it into a political advantage. Thus, the DP's stress on religion with its carefully tuned political rhetoric served as a message for the rural masses that their ways were not inferior. This strategy also facilitated the legitimization of the traditional social structure in the rural settlements (Boran, 1945, p. 218-219).

3.2.5 Secularism and Changing Discourse on Religion by the End of the 1940s

Integrated into the Constitution in 1937, *secularism* defined the institutional and political character of the Turkish state by 1946. And, just 23 years after the foundation of modern Turkey, a consensus among the new post-war elites already began to form which seemed to be convinced about the strength of the secular thought among the rural masses. In reality, however, the cultural absorption of the secular principles by the rural population was yet to be observed as it continued to maintain a social structure and traditions that it inherited from the pre-Republican era. Karpat (2008) critically noted that the general social structure with its old customs continued to be in conflict with secular ideals.

As Karpat observed, contrary to the widely held view, the actual danger that Turkey faced in 1946 was not about moving away from Islam, but about failing to have secularism firmly embedded in society's socio-cultural fabric. He stated that reforms found a ground mostly among the urban population which had already been secular in outlook and life-style but left the countryside unaffected (Karpat, 2008, p. 388, 404-405). Along the same lines, in Lewis' (1952) words: "... the secularization of Turkey was never quite as complete as was sometimes believed, and as the Turkish Government of the time would have liked us to believe" (p. 39).

Giving a glimpse of political factionalism in 1946, in the eyes of conservatives, *secularism* was the cause of what they saw a "decline in moral values" among the youth, and a "weakening of family-ties". They believed that religion had a political role against the leftist tendencies which had found a foothold in Turkey during WWII. Conservatives further concluded that positivist and anti-clerical philosophy of the CHP government was ineffective in fighting the communist threat, and therefore, policy changes regarding the role of religion was necessary. Underlining this viewpoint, Baha Pars and Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver within the CHP cadres advocated the inclusion of religious education in school curriculums on 24 December 1946. A more moderate view on the other hand held that liberalization in religious affairs would not harm the Turkish state, while firm proponents of secularism saw it as a diversion from the philosophy that defined modern Turkey (Lewis, 1951, p. 392-394).

Changing discourse on religious affairs in 1946 did not foster any mass movement or triggered a new political conjecture. Nevertheless, 93 incidents were brought to the court in the same year for violating the law that prohibited *tarikat* activism. While these incidents occurred mostly in small villages, recitation of the call to prayer by two members of the *Ticani Tarikatı* in the parliament in 1949 was a notable event and a clear sign of Islamic reaction (Karpat, 2008, pp. 389-400).

By the end of the 1940s, official tolerance to religion fostered a noticeable rise in religious activity in the public sphere that took reactionary forms in the countryside. For instance, it became evident in wearing of religious garb outside mosques in violation of the attire regulations, in pronounced self-assertiveness of religious-traditional circles to intervene in politics, in prevailing use of religious expressions in everyday talk, in

religious periodicals such as the Great East (*Büyük Doğu*) and *Sebil-ür-Reşad,* in printings and retails of ostensible "holy books," in large-scale publishing of works on theology and mysticism, and in increased pace of mosque-building among the rural population.[16]

This religious trend, while exhibited no solid political dimension, held importance with regard to its xenophobic and reactionary character. In 1951 Lewis would observe that integrating some religious elements was possibly healthy to help the general public to find a new equilibrium between the old and the new ways of life after the profound reforms of the past thirty years. Yet, even though the reforms seemed to hold strong and there was no forthcoming danger of Islamic reaction, the continuity of this trend in its ongoing pace and character could put reforms at risk in future (Lewis, 1951, p. 329; Lewis, 1952, p. 45). In the same vein with Lewis, Reed (1954) observed that Turkey's political prospects remained uncertain as the current climate made any accurate projection difficult (p. 277).

Putting the rivalry amongst the two major parties aside, religious-conservative circles also sought to capitalize on Turkey's post-war climate. Newly formed political parties with Islamic elements in their program contributed to this trend of religious reaction in this period. Founded in 1945, the National Development Party (*Milli*

[16] Lewis (1952, pp. 40, 44) calls attention to the growing self-assertiveness of the religious-traditional circles in the second half of the 1940s. He remains especially critical about the form and character of this religious trend which he argues exhibits highly fanatical and xenophobic tendencies with their anti-Western and anti-Christian leanings. Such tendencies find a ground particularly in the discourse of the *Büyük Doğu* and *Sebil-ür-Reşad.* Lewis defines the former as the Turkish equivalent of the *Action Française* and refers to it as "Boulevard Fascism with religious colouring matter". The latter, despite its intellectual elements, lacks a scientific aspect with its vulgar political emphasis and firm dedication to the praise of Islamism. For a similar assessment of rising religious sentiments in the early 1950s, see Reed (1954, pp. 275, 277).

*Kalkınma Partisi***)** followed an Islamic-traditionalist line in the cultural sphere, and proposed Turkey's unification with the Islamic world under the roof of the "Islamic Union – Orient Federation" (*İslam Birliği - Şark Federasyonu***)** project (Avşar & Kaya, 2012, p. 120). Along the same lines, in 1946, the "support for the world Muslims federation" [*dünya Müslümanları birliğini destekleme*] clause of the Social Justice Party (*Sosyal Adalet Partisi*) was notable (Toprak, 1981, p. 75).

Of the 24 political parties that emerged between 1945 and 1950 several placed an emphasis on Islamic themes and traditionalist values. The Purification Protection Party (*Arıtma Koruma Partisi* - ARK), the Islamic Protection Party (*Islam Koruma Partisi* - ISP), the Turkish Conservative Party (*Türk Muhafazakar Partisi* - TMP), the Farmer's and Peasant's Party (*Çiftçi ve Köylü Partisi – ÇKP*), the Land, Real Estate, and Free Enterprise Party (*Toprak, Emlak ve Serbest Teşebbüs Partisi* - TESTP), and the Nation Party (*Millet Partisi* – MP) were significant with their emphasis on Islamic and traditional values.

Founded in June 1946, the ARK dissolved itself in March 1947. With no actual party structure, the ISP lasted only three months and was closed down in September 1946. After its foundation in July 1947, having engaged in no political activity the TMP was shut down in 1953 (Toprak, 1981, p. 75; Yücel, 2006, pp. 31-32; Tunaya, 1952, pp. 708, 710). The MP was formed by dissidents within the DP in July 1948. Despite the liberal-democrat and secular rhetoric of its party program, the MP's populist and traditional tone in moral issues made it the main Islamic party. The party program advocated the elimination of the state control of religious establishments, the introduction of religious courses in the curricula of the primary and secondary schools and divinity

faculties at universities (Toprak, 1981, p. 75; Tunaya, 1952, pp. 719, 733). While attacks on secularism remained unconstitutional, parties with Islamic tendencies sought to rally the rural population against the CHP which they saw as the forerunner of the country's modernization (Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 27).

3.3 The 1950s

3.3.1 Politicization of Religion in the DP's Populist Discourse

In the 1950s, some inconsequential incidents occurred on various occasions that provided important clues with regard to the deep-seated leanings of the conservative circles. In this respect, demonstrations which took place during the funeral of the Nation Party leader, Marshal Fevzi Çakmak, turned into a manifestation of Islamic reaction that confirmed the concerns raised by Lewis and Reed earlier. Crowds arriving to İstanbul for the funeral demanded the stop of all music programs on the radio as a sign of respect. They forcibly shut down cinemas and theatres against the order of the governor. Under the provocation of religious fanatics, the crowd ruined the scheduled official ceremony for being against Islam. *İmams* lifted Marshal's body on their shoulders and conducted a funeral procession as they forced all the stores and businesses on their way to shut down. This incident where religious fanatics took over modern state ceremony constituted a warning sign for the CHP and the DP by calling attention to the danger of Islamic reaction.

Karpat (2008) noted that high ranking officials in both parties embraced secularism and refrained from the instrumentalist use of religion for propaganda

purposes. However, party organizations largely overlooked early warning signs in the countryside where they operated far from the governmental supervision (p. 402). Thus, as vote-hunting turned religious exploitation into a political norm, promises by the opposition parties further fed the dynamics for Islamism and kept reactionary elements alive. Karpat (2008) stated that during the electoral campaigns for the 1950 general elections, such promises included allowing the use of *fes* and opening religious schools (p. 402).

The DP came first in the general elections on 14 May 1950 by claiming 55.2% of the votes. With the DP in power now, the politicization of religion would gain a whole new momentum. Among the DP representatives, statements by Şevki Yazman, Sadri Aksal, Burhanettin Onat, Abdurrahman Boyacıgiller and Talat Öz brought the religious-conservative tone to light within the party circles. While these individuals might not be Islamists in their outlook, as Çizmeli (2007) suggests, their remarks on the issues of the 'Muslim world', 'racism', and 'women in workforce' were highly provocative that served the ideological cause of Islamic reactionaries (pp. 201-202).

On 23/24 February 1951, attacks on Atatürk's statutes in Kırşehir by the *Ticani tarikatı* constituted an overt manifestation of Islamic reaction (Çizmeli, 2007, p. 213; Karpat, 2008, p. 400). The DP would respond the incident by passing "the Law for the Protection of Atatürk" in July 1951 and having arrested Kemal Pilavoğlu, the leader of the *Ticani Tarikatı*. However, the DP's political trajectory exhibited an inconsistent pattern. And highlighting this inconsistency, Menderes' categorization of the Kemalist reforms as the ones that were fully embraced by the general population and those that

were not entirely grasped by the masses was very noteworthy. On 13 June 1950 Menderes stated that:

> We will terminate some of those measures that failed to become part of the nation but instead fold up on the national conscience with the weight of a millstone. Considering those measures that hurt the national conscience, today is it fair to state that 15-20 years later we will still guard them like a warden and maintain them? ("*Adnan Menderes'in Konuşmaları*," 1991, v.2, pp. 64, 67).

Essentially, Menderes' primary aim was to replace Turkish language with Arabic in calls for prayer. In an earlier statement on 5 June 1950, Menderes stated that:

> After so many years have passed, as the measure that was once necessary is no longer needed, still insisting on it constitutes a move against the freedom of conscience. Now, it is time to reconsider it in terms of secularism and the freedom of conscience ("*Adnan Menderes'in Konuşmaları*," 1991, v.2, p. 51).

It is important to acknowledge that the Kemalist reforms which Menderes pointed out as "not fully grasped" and "no longer needed" pertained to electoral concerns to attract the rural conservative votes. Altunışık and Tür (2005) suggested that Menderes' intention was to mediate certain aspects of the *modernization project* which the public saw as alien and elitist. Hence, discussions over *secularism* could help to settle the "religious unease" in the rural population that would also enable to proceed with the envisioned modernization with an even greater support (p. 30). Çizmeli (2007) and Tanilli (2008) on the other hand described this attitude rather as frivolity and find it irresponsible given its ignorance for the socio-economic and cultural impoverishment among the general population (pp. 189-190; p. 126).

Lewis (1951) suggested that although there was no imminent threat to the Kemalist reforms, upon the continuation of the religious revival at its present pace there was a chance that they could be at risk in the future. He noted that the traditional outlook of the rural population was still intact and the merchant class in towns which included the small shopkeepers and artisans tended to be quite fanatical. Moreover, both the rural-conservative and the merchant class had ties with the Islamic *tarikat* network groups which continued to serve as the channel of mystical faith to these masses (pp. 46-47).

The DP's populist discourse was highly controversial in this context as the probable consequences of political concessions to Islamic-traditional circles raised serious questions. The DP's discourse, as Altunışık and Tür (2005) noted, was in fact pushing the boundaries of *moderation* toward *Islamic resurgence* (p. 30). The DP's initiatives included changing the language for the call for prayer and sermons in mosques to Arabic from Turkish on 16 June 1950, lifting the ban on the radio broadcast of the *Quran* on 5 July 1950, and making religious education which had been an elective until then compulsory on 7 October 1950. In this scheme, students could only be exempted by bringing a letter that indicated their parents' disapproval. In 1956, religious education would be extended to cover the first and the second years of the middle schools. Also, the Ministry of Education re-established the *imam-hatip* schools. Initially 7 schools were opened between 1951 and 1952. This figure would reach to 19 in 1959. On 10 June 1959 the Higher Islamic Institute was opened in İstanbul to train educators for the *imam-hatips*.

Underneath the DP's initiatives, a crucial motivation was to make an appeal to the Islamic *tarikat* networks which the DP considered essential to secure the rural conservative votes. Accordingly, it brought the Islamic *tarikats* back to the political scene

in 1951 that had been outlawed on 30 November 1925. They were originally banned as a major obstacle in the way of creating the envisioned *New Turks* who could act with a free will and conscious (Çarkoğlu & Kalaycıoğlu, 2009, p. 8; Eligür, 2010, pp. 52, 57; Manaz, 2008, pp. 164-165). The *Nakşibendis* and the *Nurcus* were the two widespread Islamic *tarikat* networks that channeled the rural votes to the DP in exchange for the DP's attitudes toward religion and secularism. Thus, the DP was particularly careful to tune its political trajectory and rhetoric to assure the electoral support of the *Nakşibendis* and the *Nurcus*[17]. In exchange for the party's religion-oriented initiatives, Said Nursi overtly mobilized his followers to vote for the DP (Margulies & Yıldızoğlu, 1997, p. 147; Mardin, 1989, pp. 40, 98). Moreover, he supported the DP's policy on the Korean War by sending one of his close associates, Bayrak Yüksel, to join the troops. Known by its heavily Nurcu population, Menderes was welcome and praised in Afyon's Emirdağ district as:

> The front for credo and faith. It is the government that ornamented the country with Arabic ezan. Islamism that has been under oppression for fifty years is saved, thanks to the DP (Quoted in Peköz, 2009, p. 207).

3.3.2 Radical Voices within the DP Cadres, and the "Freedom of Conscience" Rhetoric

[17] 25 years after his abandonment of political activism, with the DP in power now, Said Nursi found a new appeal to pursue his interests in 1950. Ideologically, he associated Turkey's secular regime with a moral decline. He exhibited a mystic worldview and emphasized the 'inner-self' which he reflected in his work, *Risale-i Nur* (Treatise on the Divine Light). *Risale-i Nur* was composed of Nursi's writings based on his dreams and visions. It was widely accepted as a new interpretation of Quran that inspired the *Nurcu* movement. In 1956, the court came to a verdict that it exhibited no intent of violence. This verdict opened the door for the distribution of *Risale-i Nur* across the country (Özdalga, 2010, pp. 80-81; Manaz, 2008, p. 194; Eligür, 2010, p. 58).

The DP's initiatives gave rise to a consequential Islamic reaction in the countryside within its own cadres. In this regard, Konya, Aydın and Çorum city congresses were noteworthy given some of the DP representatives' very explicit anti-secular rhetoric. In March 1951 for instance, during the Konya DP Congress a decision was made in favour of polygamy, the use of *fes* instead of modern hat, the replacement of modern Turkish alphabet with Arabic, the destruction of Republican symbols and statues, and prohibiting women to go out without wearing an Islamic dress (Karpat, 2008, p. 403).

Another instance occurred in April 1951 during the Aydın Congress. Demands by the DP representatives included incorporating "Islam" into the Constitution as the state's official religion, banning women from workforce, donating men with privileges over women on the issues pertaining to marriage and divorce, and limiting female education with the level of elementary schooling (*Vatan*, 1951). In 1952, during the Çorum DP Congress a request was accepted which demanded the prohibition of balls and woman pictures, and the discharge of female state officials (*Cumhuriyet*, 1952).

On 3 October 1952 the DP Samsun representative Hasan Fehmi Ustaoğlu's article in *Büyük Cihad* journal would follow the same reactionary course. In the article which he titled as *Milletin Atatürk inkilabına medyun bulunduğu iddiası asla doğru değildir* [The claim that the nation owns Atatürk's reforms is certainly not true] Ustaoğlu argued that the independence war was fought for Islam under the leadership of the *ulema* and that the reforms were nonsense and harmful (Çizmeli, 2007, p. 205).

As the DP's city congresses revealed, the increasing assertiveness of the conservative cadres became a source of discomfort within the party itself in the early 1950s. Adding further up to the building criticism, an attempt on the *Vatan* writer A.

Emin Yalman's life on 22 November 1952 in Malatya marked the event that finally compelled the DP to take some measures against this rising trend of the Islamic radicalism. Owned by the N. Fazıl Kısakürek, the Islamist media, *Büyük Doğu,* was beneath the assassination attempt on Emin Yalman who was known as a dedicated secular and big supporter of the DP. In the aftermath of this incident, the arrest of Fazıl Kısakürek took place and *Büyük Doğu* was shut down on 25 December 1952.

The DP Samsun representative Fehmi Ustaoğlu was discharged from the party on 10 December 1952. Also, the DP forbade the use of any anti-secular language in its city congresses and warned its representatives against the submission of proposals that were reactionary in character including the advocacy of Arabic alphabet, polygamy and inequality between men and women (Çizmeli, 2007, p. 205). Furthermore, following the arrest of the *Ticani* leader Kemal Pilavoğlu in 1952, the arrest of seventeen *Nakşibendi* leaders took place in Mardin on 3 February 1954 (Reed, 1954, p. 275).

Karpat noted that the initial pace of the reactionary course diminished by 1954 with no permanent damage was done to the secular state apparatus. Moreover, the understanding of *faith* as a personal matter tended to replace political disputes on secularism and religion (Karpat, 2008, p. 353). In his remarks, Reed (1954) called attention to the dynamism of the Islamic radicalism which had already appeared in sufficient number of incidents, and worried both the CHP and the DP. He noted that the elusiveness of Turkey's current climate made any accurate projection for future difficult. He further underlined that *conservatism* and *Islamic reaction* found no ground in the political sphere where economic concerns more than anything played a decisive role in

the electoral choice of the general society in the 1954 general elections (Reed, 1954, pp. 277, 281-282).

While the sentiments of Islamic reaction were becoming more and more pronounced in the rural Anatolia, Menderes' determination to overlook and downplay them as minor incidents remains noteworthy. Particularly, his handling of reactionary elements within the rhetorical terrain of "freedom of religion and conscience" deserves a particular attention. This rhetoric would eventually become an everyday statement that Menderes frequently uttered to evade political criticisms that arose from his indifference to Islamist calls within the party circles. His attitude not only kept radicalism sentiment alive but also ultimately legitimized them by encouraging further demands in that direction.

Furthermore, Menderes' strong reluctance to explicitly denounce such incidents, and even in his condemnation speech, his relentless stress on the premise of "freedom of religion and conscience" reflected the DP's populist discourse. Menderes' ignorance received wide criticisms. In return, he dismissed them as void denunciations with no basis. Menderes accused his critics for escalating political tension for no reason. For instance, in the aftermath of the DP Konya Congress on 17 March 1951, Menderes responded his critics by stating that:

> ...Continuing to suppress freedom of religion and conscience with no doubt constitutes an act that has no place in the discipline of freedom. While there is no legitimate evidence, causing excitement in the country by claiming that "there is a (religious) reaction" constitutes another way of bringing religion into politics. ...By taking a citizen's words as a reference and aiming to evoke excitement by

> shouting out "there is a (religious) reaction in the country" is also considered at least as a sentimental pressure towards freedom of conscience unless some other (concealed) political interests are sought... ("*Adnan Menderes'in Konuşmaları*," 1991, v.2, p. 288).

Menderes' reluctance to clearly condemn Islamist circles became especially evident in his remarks following the assassination attempt on Emin Yalman. On 6 December 1952, in his denunciation of the incident, Menderes would once again place a primary emphasis on the "freedom of religion and conscience" discourse. He began his speech by stating that:

> Turkish nation is Muslim and will remain Muslim. In this country no one has the right to undermine one's freedom of conscience. Perception of secularism as an opposition to religion is not compatible with our government's understanding of freedom of conscience ("*Adnan Menderes'in Konuşmaları*," 1991, v.2, p. 282).

With regard to Menderes' persistent use of the "freedom of conscience" eloquence, Çizmeli (2007) calls attention to an inconsistency when it comes to Menderes' attitude towards the political left. Menderes' understanding of "freedom of conscience" did not include the political left which in his point of view was the "spy of foreign forces" that aimed to undermine the country. Hence, in 1951 when amendments were made on the Article 141 and 142 of the Turkish penal code to strengthen the law against communism, Menderes rejected a similar proposal that was requested to address the potential Islamists elements on the right (Çizmeli, 2007, pp. 220-221). In the eyes of

Menderes, such a precaution was unnecessary because there was no danger of Islamic reaction in the country.[18]

3.3.3 The DP's Political Trajectory

The DP's initiatives also involved an attack on the CHP's political existence that in the eyes of the DP constituted a barrier to its own political interests. It aimed to control the bureaucratic circles that it inherited from the CHP. Here, it is important note that Turkish modernization advanced its course on the collaborative work of the state elites with the ruling cadres who co-existed and functioned in harmony. Yet, alongside with the competitive party politics, the DP's trajectory would mark a dramatic break in this conjecture as the party was willing to challenge the bureaucratic establishments which it perceived as obstacles to its own pursuits (Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 30).

In this regard, the closure of the *People's Homes*, the *People's Chambers*, and the *Village Institutes* was significant with devastating implications for public education. In 1951, the closure of the People's Homes and People's Chambers took place. These institutions quickly came under the DP's attack due to their close links with the CHP. Tanilli (2008) noted that in 1950, of 20.936.590 people only 7.200.00 were literate which made 34.6% of the general population (p. 126). Nevertheless, the DP closed down 478 People's Homes and 4322 People's Chambers for the violation of property rights, and transferred their assets to the treasury (Tunaya, 1952, p. 566).

The Village Institutes became the DP's target given that they formed a political support base the CHP. Firstly, coeducation was ended as female students were brought

[18] See Menderes' speech in *Adnan Menderes'in Konuşmaları, Demeçleri, Makaleleri,* 1991, v.2, p. 450.

together in Kızılçullu and Beşikdüzü Village Institutes. They were later to be transferred to Bolu Girls Teacher School (Çizmeli, 2007, p. 464). Secondly, in 1953, the Village Institutes were re-assigned to different tasks outside the scope of their original objective. Their program was combined with those of ordinary teacher schools. And finally, in 1954, they were turned into ordinary teacher schools entirely, and shut down (Çizmeli, 2007, p. 464; Karpat, 2008, p. 504; Tanilli, 2008, p. 160).

Eligür (2010) noted that the closure of these institutions stalled the enlightenment process (p. 58). On the closure of the People's Homes, Karpat (2008) stated that it ended a vital revolution that was committed to the social development of the society (p. 505). Tanilli (2008) referred to the closures as the first and the most devastating breaking in the communal education (p. 106). In 1953, the DP also seized all of the CHP's property including the party newspaper, *Ulus,* which was essential to carry out party activities (Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 30).

The DP won the national elections in 1954 and 1957. Yet, its increased dictatorial leanings became a source of major concern throughout the decade. Rapid economic development of the early 1950s began to take its toll after 1954 with the rising inflation rates and mounting budget deficit, causing a significant deterioration in living standards. In the face of mounting criticism, the DP began to adopt a highly repressive policy towards the press and the CHP.[19] While the DP managed to win the 1957 elections by claiming 47.7% of votes through a last-minute amendment to the electoral law, the CHP increased the number of its deputies from 31 in 1954 to 178 which reflected a sharp

[19] Rustow (1979, p. 89) notes that in the late 1950s the DP's political repression increased as economic deterioration and acute hardship that it caused became more and more pronounced paving the way for the coup of 1960.

decline in the DP's popular vote (Karpat, 2008, p. 356). Karpat notes that the support for the CHP came from the former the DP voters who were worried about the DP's increasingly autocratic tone.

In the aftermath of the 1957 elections, the DP found itself in a very fragile and tense situation, accompanied by a deep suspicion towards the intelligentsia, and the civilian and military bureaucracy as the supporters of the CHP (pp. 355-356). Consequently, by the end of the 1950s, the DP's ban on the CHP to organize mass meetings, its utilization of the military to enforce it, and establishment of an Inquiry Committee to investigate allegedly "subversive" activities of the CHP constituted notable initiatives that raised serious questions about the DP's political direction (Harris, 1970, p. 452; Karpat, 2008, p. 356). Harris (1970) notes that such hostility fostered a growing antipathy towards the DP to an extend that it was widely believed that the DP was in fact aiming to shut down the CHP (pp. 450, 452). Reflecting the political tension, on 18 April 1960 in his address to Menderes, the CHP leader İnönü warned that “if you persevere on this course, even I will not be able to save you” (Quoted in Harris, 1970, p, 447). According to Eligür (2010), the DP interpreted its electoral wins as a sign of public consent to take over the state (p. 58).

Shifting attention to conservative formations in the 1950s, the MP received only 4.6% of the votes in the 1950 general elections as the leading Islamic party. It was banned in 1953 on the grounds that it made instrumental use of religion for electoral gain. It returned to the political scene as the Republican Nation Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Millet Partisi* - CMP). In the general elections of 1954 and 1957 it received 5.3% and 6.5% of the votes respectively (Eligür, 2010, pp. 55-56). Known by its conservative religious

lines, the Peasants Party (*Çiftçi Partisi* - ÇP) was another formation that was established on 19 May 1952. It received 0,56% of the votes in the 1954 general elections (Karpat, 2008, p. 562; Türsan, 2004, p. 110). It merged with the CMP and formed the Republican Peasants Nation Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi* - CKMP) in 1957. The CKMP represented conservative countryside with its conservative nationalist tone (Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 33). Founded in 1951, the Islamic Democratic Party (*İslamcı Demokrat Parti* – İDP) was another political formation, recognized mainly by its anti-Jewish propaganda. Reflecting its political ideology, it adopted a rallying slogan that stated "the sun of welfare and happiness will rise when we take the Koran into our hands. Believers unite and form your own regime". The İDP lasted less than six months (Türsan, 2004, p. 115; Yeşilada, 2002, pp. 63-64).

It is critical to note that while reforms remained mostly limited to urban places, and religion was still vigorous beneath the surface, a perception of religion as a political notion did not occur among the general population by the end of the 1950s. Consequently, political parties with their sole emphasis on Islam did not get much support as social and economic interests proved to be the main concern of the general electorate (Reed, 1954, p. 282; Binnaz, 1981, p. 76; Eligür, 2010, pp. 52, 55).

3.4 The 1960s

3.4.1 Politicizing Religion in the Face of Ideological Politics and Polarization

On 27 May 1960, a military intervention took place that banned the DP. Turkey returned to multi-party politics on October 1961. In the 1961 general elections, the CHP gained 36.7% of the votes and formed four different coalition governments that stayed in

power until 1965. In religious affairs it took initiatives that resembled those of the former DP. In a similar fashion, the CHP placed an emphasis on mosque-building and opening new *imam-hatip* schools. Yet, it differed from the DP based on the distinction that it made between "enlightened" and "reactionary" Islam. Eligür (2010) mentions that various policies were adopted by the CHP in order to promote and uphold the former by emphasizing training progressive and secular *imams* (p. 60). They included the publication of the Quran in Turkish language and making changes in the curricula of the *imam-hatips* by incorporating courses on sociology, economics and law (p. 60).

Initiatives to promote "enlightened Islam" also had a safety aspect considering the impact of the Cold War which began to take its part in Turkish politics. Thus, the concept was envisioned as a precaution to avoid political polarization and extremism that was likely to ascend with the rise of radical Islamism in response to the rise of the political left. In Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu`s words "enlightened Islam was regarded as the best bulwark against communism and religious fanaticism" (Quoted in Eligür, 2010, p. 61). This political course was accompanied by the increased Islamic *tarikat* activism which found its expression in the *Nakşibendi* and *Nurcu's* support for the Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi* - AP).

The AP succeeded the DP in February 1961 and adopted a similar discourse in relation to political exploitation of religion. Following the coalition governments led by the CHP in 1961, 1962, 1963 and 1965, the AP came to power in the aftermath of the 1965 general elections by claiming 52.9% of the votes. Under Süleyman Demirel, the AP became a new venue for the Islamic-traditional circles at the centre-right. In this regard, exploitation of religion for electoral advantage continued and found its new expression in

Demirel's 1965 campaign slogan: "We are right of centre and on the path of Allah". Reflecting Turkey's increasingly partisan political climate, the CHP's Party Congress Report on 4 October 1966 stated that:

> In this environment where as a consequence of the provocations of the (AP) government Nurcus, Süleymancıs, and Nakşibendis undermine the social structure and provoke alevi-sünni conflict into two camps, the excellence and value of the secular principle that Atatürk provided the young Turkish Republic now occur more evident and certain. The scheme shows that in Turkey regime once again became a disputable subject, and that it requires protection, ...and the struggle that we gave for many years for democratic governance is once again starting (*Cumhuriyet*, 5 October 1966).

The next day, in his speech Demirel pointed out the issue of *freedom of religion and conscience,* and implied that viewing it through a prism of religious reaction constitutes a political repression. On 5 October 1966 Demirel stated that:

> Viewing Turkish nation in a yearning of a theocratic state or believing that it may move into a situation that desires a theocratic state is a complete fault. We see that defeatist propagandas are being made from time to time that disquiets the society. The freedom of religion and conscience that the secular Turkish state provides is for all of our citizens. We have always stood against, and we will continue to stand against treating the freedom of religion and conscience as an instrument of repression or exploitation by any means and under any circumstances. The freedom of religion and conscience under no circumstances can be an issue of fear. Turkish nation with its progressive thinking will always

> disappoint those who seek an advantage from repression or exploitation of the freedom of religion and conscience (*Cumhuriyet*, 6 October 1966).

At the CHP Ankara Congress on 8 October 1966, İnönü stated that "the problem of (religious) reaction exists big and organized" (*Cumhuriyet*, 9 October 1966). Ironically, the same day, associated with the Higher Islamic Institute, at a conference on "Religious Affairs and Secularism in Turkey" hostility to secularism was clearly voiced by the speakers who participated to the event. Highlighting the Islamist discourse, Nizamettin Nazif Tepedenlioğlu suggested that "secularism kills Islamic faith" (*Cumhuriyet*, 9 October 1966). The most notable incident in pertain to radical Islam was yet to occur on 16 February 1969 when a group of more than 10 thousand leftist university students gathered to protest the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the İstanbul harbor. They were attacked by a group of well-organized religious-conservatives who chanted the slogans of "Muslim Turkey", and "Jihad" (*Cumhuriyet*, 17 February 1969). Known as *Kanlı Pazar* (Bloody Sunday), this incident took place in the Taksim square after the morning prayer, and resulted in two deaths and more than 200 wounded. Giving a glimpse of the political polarization, and criticizing inconclusive political disputes on religion, the next day *Cumhuriyet* reported the incident as: "Here it is the end result of the calls for Jihad" (*Cumhuriyet*, 17 February 1966).

The AP's emphasis on religious themes translated into mosque-building and opening a record number of *imam-hatips* and Quran courses and aimed to attract the electoral support of the *Nakşibendis* (Jenkins, 2003, p. 48). The party won the general elections on 12 October 1969 by claiming 46.6% of the votes. The strategic alliance in this period between the AP and the *Nakşibendis* allowed the penetration of the latter into

the state bureaucracy. In this regard, Mehmet Zahit Kotku, a leading figure in the *Nakşibendi tarikatı* and the founder of the *İskender Paşa* congregation, stood as a critical figure in relation to the formation of political Islam in Turkey. Under his leadership, the *Nakşibendis* attempted to infiltrate into the State Planning Organization and the Ministries of Education and Internal Affairs (Kramer, 2001, p. 64).

The *Nurcus* support did not derive solely from the AP's specifically designed policies as it was also spiritually driven. Yeşilada (2002) notes that the AP found a great deal of support from the *Nurcus* whose founder Said-i Nursi envisioned birth of a child named Süleyman (p. 64). Based on Nursi's prophecy, this child someday was to assume the political leadership. In the eyes of the *Nurcus,* this leader was Süleyman Demirel who succeeded the leader of the former DP, Adnan Menderes, as the new prime minister.[20]

The AP came to power with its promise to address the concerns of all social classes and interest groups. And, its main priority was rapid industrialization and economic growth. Hence, it placed a special emphasis on nationalism as a discourse through which mobilization of different social classes could be accomplished. In the meantime, inspired by developments in the West and social democracy, on 8 October 1965 İnönü described the CHP's position as the "left of the centre" (*ortanın solu*). The AP capitalized on this initiative by pointing the direction of the CHP as the "left of the centre, road to Moscow" (*ortanın solu, Moskova yolu*) which hinted the rise of ideology-oriented politics. From the mid-1960s onwards, Turkish politics began to acquire a more ideological outlook. As political parties now began to re-explore their political existence

[20] See *Cumhuriyet*, 9 October 1966 for the *Nurcus'* electoral support for the AP during the 1965 general elections.

in ideological terms, political extremism and societal polarization raised new concerns (Altunışık & Tür, 2005, pp. 34-35; Ahmad, 2007, pp. 314-315).

Turkey was witnessing a process of modernization associated with industrialization and rapid urbanization. And, following this change in the conjecture, material and cultural issues replaced previous disputes over the *freedom of conscious*, and *instrumentalist use of religion* which had long defined the rivalry between the AP and the CHP, marking a shift both in focus and trajectory. Karpat (1972) noted that in 1965, 31% of the population was urban and literacy reached to 48%. Economic development with an annual growth rate at 7% and increasing standards of living nevertheless became a target of the leftist university students who viewed this change as "the stooges of Western capitalism and imperialism" (p. 366). Students' militant activism developed into urban terrorism after 1968. While this leftist current was a minority, mounting social polarization that it promoted through boycotts and demonstrations proved sufficient to bring down the already weakened AP in 1971 (Mango, 1980). Encapsulating the climate of the late 1960s, Karpat (1972) observed that:

> The party vacillated between a firm conviction that in a liberal democratic regime all liberties should be freely exercised and the fear that certain groups may abuse this freedom to promote their own anti-democratic ends. The ultimate hope seems to rest in a self-binding sense of civic responsibility (p. 365).

By the end of the 1960s, the inadequacy of Turkish political system to satisfy newly rising expectations became evident. Karpat (1972) noted that political parties could not assess accurately the necessities that this social transformation obligated, and thus, they failed to amend their programs to meet emerging interests (p. 367). This inability to

address contemporary demands underlined a new quest for a different trajectory which until that time had largely been shaped by the competing discourses of the AP and the CHP. Yet, the adoption of the liberal 1961 Constitution constituted a benchmark by setting the ground for different political formations and ideologically marginal groups to rise in Turkey.

Escalating political tension between the far ends of the ideological spectrum highlighted the post-1961 period. And, the foundation of the Marxist Turkish Workers' Party (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi* – TİP) in February 1961 highly contributed to this trend which compelled other political parties to search and adjust their outlook in Turkey's changing political landscape (Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 36). Also, radical groups that had been dormant until 1961 now would organize within a party-framework and form their own organizational networks. Particularly, on the far-left, various interpretations of Marxism; on the far-right, Pan-Turkism; and on the Islamist side, movements occurring in the Middle East would set new political parameters for socialists, ultranationalists, and Islamists, respectively. Consequently, a highly divided society found its expression in the emerging two confronting political camps (Eligür, 2010, p. 61).

The United States' Cold War strategy highly contributed to the changing flow in Turkish politics. The U.S. Cold War initiative to contain the Soviet invasion was based on the establishment of a *green crescent* of Muslim states around Central Asia (Çarkoğlu & Kalaycıoğlu, 2009, p. 9). This strategy with its consequences at the global level also had its mark in Turkish politics. The U.S. strategy re-conceptualized Islam by endowing it with a new political dimension to serve as a bulwark against the threat of communism. In the aftermath, Islam, which had served largely as a means of electoral gain until the

mid-1960s, now would also be regarded as a safeguard against communism (Eligür, 2010, pp. 62-63). This particular endorsement of Islam bestowed the politicization of religion in Turkey with a new momentum.

In Turkey's ideologically redefined political terrain, religious-traditional circles began to assert themselves directly by forming the nationalist-conservative wing of the AP. The AP was a merger of various business interests and diverse political factions that originally lacked an ideological unity. Essentially, members from the former DP and military high command, extreme-right ideology of the former Nation Party, and conservative religious outlook of the Peasant Party would set the trajectory for the AP. The AP gained the electoral competitiveness of the former DP with the accession of Süleyman Demirel to the party leadership in 1964. Türsan (2004) notes that the party remained highly factional along personal rivalries and ideological clashes despite Demirel's evident leadership. Demirel became the leader of the party by defeating Saadettin Bilgiç, the leader of the nationalist-Islamist faction with 1072 votes that he gained against his opponent's 552 (Türsan, 2004, pp. 110-111). In the Third General Convention in November 1966, led by Osman Turan, Islamists' attempt to get rid of the liberal wing failed and Demirel was re-elected as the chair with 1,239 votes that he gained against 175. In the second half of the 1960s, the AP's economic policies served the interests of big business owners and rich industrialists over the Anatolian petty bourgeoisie. Islamists regarded it as a political opportunity and took the cause of the latter to establish an electoral support base for the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi* - MNP) that they would establish on 26 January 1970 (Eligür, 2010, p. 66).

The *Nakşibendis* played a decisive role in the formulation of Turkey's first Islamic party by defining its ideological, organizational and financial support base. Kotku was central to the formation of a far-right Islamic group under Necmettin Erbakan. In this context, the *Nakşibendis* were the force beneath Erbakan's entry to politics and the formation of "political Islam". By the late 1960s, Erbakan was the secretary general of the Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Yeşilada, 2002, p. 66). His election as the chairman of the Union in 1968 fostered a political confrontation within the AP that resulted in Islamists' direct involvement with politics. Essentially, the confrontation occurred when Demirel ordered Erbakan's removal from the office due to some irregularities in his election. In the meantime, Erbakan was also disliked by the big business owners due to his take on the cause of the Anatolian petty bourgeoisie. Having the support of the Islamist cadres, Erbakan responded to Demirel by declaring his parliamentary candidacy from the AP for the 1969 general elections. Demirel's veto of Erbakan's candidacy led the Islamists to search for other routes to pursue their agenda outside of the AP. Erbakan ran as an independent candidate from Konya, a province in central Anatolia, and was elected to parliament. He joined with the ranks of Ahmet Tevfik Paksu, Hasan Aksay, and Arif Hikmet Güner from the Islamist faction of the AP. Together with Süleyman Arif Emre from the New Turkey Party; and Professor Nevzat Yalçıntaş, chair of the Intellectuals' Hearth, they initiated the Islamist movement in a party framework (Yeşilada, 2002, pp. 64-65).

In this ideologically defined political climate, the *Nakşibendis* which had found a breathing space in the 1950s now took on a pivotal role in the formation of the "political Islam". In the meantime, among the other conservative formations, the CKMP won 14%

of the votes in the 1961 general elections (Eligür, 2010, pp. 56-63). It adopted pan-Turkism in 1969 and continued its activities as the Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* – MHP) in the aftermath of the ultranationalist take-over under Alparslan Türkeş. It would develop into a fascist organization with its ideological lines similar to those of the Nazi party (Altunışık & Tür, 2005, pp. 36-37; Türsan, 2004, p. 119).

Throughout the 1960s, the ideology of "Turkish nationalism" evolved in conjunction with the Cold War conjecture which grew strong suspicion towards the political left. Thus, the ideology acquired a religious dimension that at the time was perceived as an effective strategy against the Communist threat. A significant change in the reading of Turkish nationalism yet occurred when ultranationalists, already searching for a political ally, integrated a *Sunni Islam* element into their ideology (Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 37; Eligür, 2010, p. 64). *Turkism* was born as a secular ideology. And originally, it regarded Islam as one of the elements of Turkish nationalism among others with no particular emphasis. As Eligür (2010) noted, Turkish nationalism kept a distance from Islamism as it did from communism (p. 64).

By the late 1960s, the reading of *Turkish nationalism* was about to change as incorporating *Islamism* as a new component would mark a sharp deviation from the original doctrine (Çarkoğlu & Kalaycıoğlu, 2009, p. 10). According to Tanıl Bora (2009), adding an Islamic dimension to *Turkism* was a strategic move to turn the elitist conception of Turkish nationalism into a popular movement against the radical left (pp. 128-129). In the same vein, Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu (2009) further note that with this change, the MHP actually sought a political advantage as the party's electoral results would otherwise never exceed a few percent throughout the 1960s. The MHP's original

discourse which solely drew upon ethnic nationalism simply did not have much appeal to the electorate (p. 10).

3.5 The 1970s

3.5.1 The “Turkish-Islamic Synthesis” and the "National Culture"

Initiatives to counter the leftists had decisive consequences with regard to the politicization of religion and for the religious-conservative circles which capitalised on the rising social upheaval. The clash between the political left and the political right turned into an armed struggle in the 1970s when the former resorted to terrorism to pursue its socialist aims. Along this line, the lack of intra-party coherence within the ranks of the TİP, and a radical trade union movement marked the left-wing mobilization. The foundation of the “Revolutionary Workers” Organization and the emergence of urban guerrilla groups further contributed to this formation on the left. The Turkish Communist Party-Marxist/Leninist which composed the Turkish Labour Peasant Liberation escalated urban-terror, while the centre-right responded through the organizations that it established such as the “Society for the Struggle against Communism”. Such organizations found support from Islamic circles given their anti-leftist stance. The turmoil was yet to escalate and turn into anarchy when ultranationalist groups united under Alparslan Türkeş to counter the political-left (Eligür, 2010, pp. 63-64; Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 36).

The confrontation between this right-left divide created a highly polarized society with the rise of leftist armed guerrilla organizations on one side and ultranationalist

groups on the other. This polarization between the opposing political camps manifested itself by the late 1970s in urban-terrorism. It was also evident in the state bureaucracy, labor unions, university campuses and student organizations, and the civil police that in political terms were highly divided between the right and the left. The emergence of sectarian and ethnic clashes along the cleavages of Turkish-Kurdish and Sünni-Alevi also contributed to this turmoil (Mango, 1980, p. 262; Eligür, 2010, pp. 85-86). Social polarization that began with the radicalization of university students and differences of opinion at the TİP ranks about how to proceed set the political course which brought the country at the brink of a civil war by the end of the 1970s. In this climate, *political Islam* would be tolerated and treated as an ideological ally against the political left.

In the ideological turmoil of the 1970s, the idea of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis (*Türk İslam Sentezi* - TİS) emerged in 1973 as the blend of Turkish nationalism and Sunni Islam by an ultranationalist organization, known as the Intellectuals' Hearth. Founded in the late 1960s in response to the rise of the radical left-wing groups, it sought to present a remedy for the problems facing Turkish society which it argued was due to moral deficiency among younger generations. Its position on the issues of culture, nation, and religion while had no scientific or academic basis aimed for political activism (*Cumhuriyet*, 20 April 1987).

In the framework of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis, the Hearth produced an ideology for the political right that proposed the collaboration of the Islamists and nationalists under the same roof. Its objective was to achieve citizens' attachment to the state by restoring their loyalty to what it considered were the core cultural values of the

Turkish nation. In this process, the Hearth regarded Sunni Islam as the core of Turkish national culture based on which the society must be tuned.

From an ideological standpoint, the Hearth held highly totalitarian views and exhibited very strong xenophobic tendencies. It denied any norm and ideology that it saw incompatible with its perception of being a Turkish national. In this regard, humanism in particular was the main target which the Hearth argued was beneath the social turmoil of the 1970s. In the eyes of the Hearth, humanism was the weapon of western imperialism to destroy culture and value systems of other nations. Thus, it undermined the core of Turkish national culture, and from the 1940s onward paved the way for the emergence of the leftist currents. Within this framework, any individual who did not embrace the Hearth's outlook was a humanist who under the influence of western imperialism set the stage for the downfall of Turkish national culture.

Liberals, social-democrats, secular republicans, and human-rights activists from the perspective of the Hearth were all humanists, responsible for Turkey's political upheaval. From a religious standpoint, this category also included atheists, people from other faiths, people who held religion responsible for the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and progressive intellectuals (*Cumhuriyet*, 19 April 1987). Reflecting the Hearth's ideological outlook, its first chair İbrahim Kafesoğlu (1970) stated that:

> Those who call Turkish nationalists racist are unfair. Atatürk himself was the biggest nationalist. Even the most primitive cultures resist change. A conservative society trusts only those who can express their tendencies. We are against that attitude of mind which saves Greek and Roman remains with Turks' money and effort. The movement of humanist rendering is pointless. Renaissance

> and humanism are rooted in Christianity, and (they are) materialists. That is why Turkish youth is in chaos. A whole new rearrangement of cultural books is necessary (p. 7).

The Hearth was critical of the independence of universities and media organs which it saw as a threat to the unity of the state. It held that political peace could be achieved through the integration of the military and the government. On the issue of political regime, it viewed the endorsement of the "national culture" as the basis of legitimacy for democracy. Thus, an elected government could be considered legitimate only if it endorsed compatible views with the envisioned "national culture". Along with this notion of governance, social and political pluralism were rather perceived unnecessary as the source of potentially dangerous ideas that could threaten national unity. Individual rights constituted a direct contradiction with the Hearth's political outlook.

According to the Hearth, “the ideas of social rights and the social-state lead to citizens' demand from the state and the development of their discourse. This undermines the projected national balance” (*Cumhuriyet*, 19 April 1987). The Hearth argued that the rapid Westernization cut off Turkish society from its cultural roots. In result, accompanied by a sense of alienation, society became more and more receptive to foreign ideologies that endorsed materialism over morality. Subsequently, the leftist movement emerged as the result of this particular interest of Turkish youth in alien ideologies which eventually brought anarchy to the country (Ergin, Bolak, & Süleyman, 1988, p. 23). According to the adherents of the Hearth, Turkish national culture was under attack from internal and external forces.

The essence of national culture, the adherents argued, corresponded to an unchanging notion that distinguished civilizations from one another. And, the essence of Turkish national culture was composed of cultural values inherited from Central Asia and Islam which perfectly fit the Turks' way of life. Within this theoretical framework, Western culture was depicted as an obstacle to Turkey's cultural development. Thus, already deteriorated, Turkish national culture needed to be re-established and protected by the state. In this process, issues such as human rights and individual liberties did not constitute a concern as they could be sacrificed for a bigger cause that was the welfare of the state (*Cumhuriyet*, 20 April 1987).

The ideology of the TİS drew upon Kafesoğlu's argument that proposed the compatibility of the Turks' pre-Islamic value systems in Central Asia with Islam. This perspective suggested that systems based on the Western concepts of political thoughts and ideologies were unsuitable for the Turks. Accordingly, an imitation of the West which had caused the collapse of the Ottoman Empire was also beneath the political turmoil of the 1970s (Kafesoğlu, 1996). From the Hearth's viewpoint, Turkish nationalism was a composition of "Turkishness" and Sunni Islam which served equally as the two indispensable components in the formation of Turkish culture (Kafesoğlu, 1996).

By the 1970s, the Hearth had already experimented with various theories with each presenting a different interpretation of Turkish national history with their distinct configurations of the nationalist and religious elements. Having its origins in Peyami Safa's the *East-West Synthesis,* the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis held that "in the notion of culture, religion constituted the indispensable core, and religion was the essence of culture, while culture constituted the form of the religion" (*DTP, Milli Kültür: Özel*

İhtisas Komisyon Raporu, 1983, p. 514). Bozkurt Güvenç (2008) notes that from the viewpoint of the TIS, "Turkish culture started with Islam" (p. 46). In the 1970s, this particular interpretation of Turkish nationalism which embedded ethnic Turkishness in Islam began to dominate the Hearth's political outlook. Lapidot observed that the Hearth came to regard Sunni Islam as the basis of the ideological framework of Turkish society that had to materialize on social, cultural, political and economic grounds (pp. 68-69).

The Hearth's political ideology cultivated through the TIS. Yet, the ideals that the TIS upheld were rather ambiguous. Their inaccuracy was a target of wide criticisms on philosophical, historical and political grounds. From a political standpoint, Trapper notes that the TIS envisioned a society where religion served as a control mechanism to maintain order. The state was authoritarian, but not Islamic. Religion must be kept outside the sphere of politics, yet must be taught in schools (Tapper, 1991, p. 11). The idea of the TIS did not find support in every nationalist faction. In fact, its definition of Turkish national culture was a source of discomfort mainly due to its ignorance of other cultural heritages and accumulations that contributed to the composition of Turkish cultural history. The TIS would be targeted for its focus on religion as the sole defining element of Turkish nationalism. Also, in efforts to justify its discourse, the TIS' remarks on humanism and Renaissance were incompatible with the actual philosophical thought, and thus, involved factual errors (Çizmeli, 2007, pp. 337-338). Throughout the 1970s, the Hearth would adopt a more radical tone and its trajectory would lean more towards religion.

The Hearth's ideology with its central emphasis on Islam differed from that of the Islamists given its strong regard for ethnic Turkish identity. Galip Tamur and Şevket

Kazan reveal the difference between the ideologies of the Hearth and the Islamists. Representing the view of the Hearth, Tamur states that based on "the idea of the TIS, one cannot separate ethnic Turkishness from Islam. There has to be a Muslim Turk. Think like a Turk, live like Islam" (Quoted in Eligür, 2010, p. 100). On the Islamist side, Kazan resents "the TIS for taking Turkishness first and Muslimness afterwards", and states that "Islam is just used in the TIS" (Quoted in Eligür, 2010, p. 100). Eligür (2010) notes that the Islamist notion of nationalism is notable given its rejection of ethnic identity. It found its expression in the National View Movement and referred to Islam as an authority transcending the nationalistic divisions (pp. 99-100). In the end, the ideological distinction between the Hearth and the Islamists continued to remain given the different emphasis they placed on Turkishness and Islam. Yet, as Bora and Can (2000) pointed out, what the Hearth and the Islamists held in common was that they both represented an ideology that conflicted with the founding secular philosophy and liberal outlook of modern Turkey (pp. 160-161).

3.5.2 "Political Islam" in the Shape of the NOP and NSP

On 26 October 1970, the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi* – MNP) was founded with the directives of the *Nakşibendi* leader Kotku (Manaz, 2008, p. 256). It was a political coalition of the *Nakşibendis* and the *Nurcus*, and its decision-making body included figures from the both circles. On the *Nakşibendi* side, Erbakan, Aksay, and on the Nurcu side, Paksu were important figures. A desire to bring back the pre-Republican political structure, and hostility to the political-left shaped the MNP's political discourse (Yeşilada, 2002, p. 65). Beneath the MNP's fascination with the Ottoman past, *Nakşibendis* played a decisive role (Türsan, 2004, pp. 116-117). This influence found an

expression in the *National View Movement* that determined the MNP's ideological outlook (Manaz, 2008).

The National View Movement referred to a "project of political Islam" that proposed a new national culture, education system and social justice based on Islam. In the words of Şevket Kazan, the vice-chair of the Islamic Felicity Party, *political Islam* signified "returning to our core/identity and not imitating the West" (Quoted in Eligür, 2010, p. 66). Thus, the MNP denied the secular character of the Turkish Republic and presented an alternative regime based on the political structure and institutions of the Ottoman state. With this anti-secular outlook, the MNP viewed other political parties on both side of the ideological spectrum as the "imitators of the West".

Türsan (2004) suggests that the MNP expressed a version of *Pan-Islamic* ideology that was a blend of xenophobic political attitudes and Islamic faith. Slogans and chants in Arabic language during the MNP's first congress on August 2, 1970 illustrated this political rhetoric. Furthermore, the MNP denied any political formation that did not share its ideology (pp. 116-117). Dominated by the rivalry of centre-parties, the MNP's discourse was mostly disregarded in Turkey's political sphere or taken as a joke by the media. The party's political appeal remained limited with culturally alienated and economically impoverished rural population (Eligür, 2010, p. 67).

As the Cold War began to take its toll, the polarization that occurred between the right and the left factions of the military resulted in the second military intervention on 12 March 1971. In the aftermath, although the Constitutional Court closed down the MNP due to its extremist views, the party leadership was never brought to court. Moreover, the National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi* – MSP) was allowed to succeed the MNP

on 11 October 1972 with the same Islamist lines of its predecessor (Sarıbay, 1985). In the aftermath of the 1971 coup, this tolerance for the MSP despite its Islamist agenda highlighted the state's political endorsement of Islam in the face of the socialist threat. Following the MNP's closure, Erbakan initially left for Switzerland but returned in 1972 upon the Court's dismissal of his case. Erbakan carried on with his electoral campaign abroad in support of the MSP. His electoral campaign emphasized outlawing the interest rates and replacing the Latin alphabet with the Islamic script (Türsan, 2004, p. 117). Erbakan became the MSP's chair after the 1973 general elections.

As Eligür (2010) points out, having targeted the radical left as the main enemy, the military was willing to tolerate Islamic activism to counterbalance the leftist movement regardless of its political trajectory (p. 68). This highlighted the military's part in the processes of politicization of Islam in the early 1970s. Alongside the Cold War strategy which relied on the promotion of an Islamic ideology, the *Nakşibendis* began to find a firm grip in Turkey's political landscape. Under Kotku's leadership relations between the *Nakşibendi tarikatı* and state bureaucracy reached to a level that was beyond a traditional *tarikat* activism. Peköz (2009) observed that through its ties within the bureaucratic circles, the *İskender Paşa* congregation carried out the Islamization of the state based on two approaches. First, it developed extensive network groups within the high echelon of the state bureaucracy by primarily targeting the State Planning Organization and the Ministry of Education. Second, it intended to interact with the rising religious-conservative trend in the country that manifested itself with the establishment of the MSP (Peköz, 2009, p. 81).

The MSP continued the MNP's political work. An anti-secular and anti-Western tone continued to define the MSP's political discourse. Peköz (2009) notes that the MSP's party program reflected the Ottoman Islamic tradition similar to Kotku's worldview (p. 83). In the eyes of the MSP, the centre-left CHP and the centre-right AP were representing infidel ideologies with their materialist outlook, and therefore, they were destined to fold. Moreover, with its distinct emphasis on morality, the *National View* was a superior ideology and the only option to save Turkey (Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 38).

In the early 1970s, the National View organization was formed in Switzerland to provide the MSP with a political support base. Targeting the immigrant Turkish population in Western Europe, it aimed to raise a generation of supporters in line with the party ideology. Accordingly, with its branches extending in 252 cities, it served on the basis of an educational centre where more than 14,000 students were taught the Islamic teachings of the *Nakşibendi tarikatı*. The theme of the education emphasized an attack on the secular character of the Turkish political system (Yeşilada, 2002, p. 73). Additionally, the European National View Organization was founded by Erbakan in 1976 to channel the financial support of Turkish migrant workers to the party (Eligür, 2010, p. 69). The MSP was critical with Turkey's efforts to become a part of the European Economic Community, which in the eyes of Erbakan, constituted "a product of a new crusade mentality" (Margulies & Yıldızoğlu, 1997, p 148).

After 1976, the MSP sharpened its Islamic rhetoric and radical tone (Manaz, 2008, p. 259). On 6 September 1980 the "Saving Jerusalem" gathering in Konya was a manifestation of Islamist tendencies and hatred towards the secular state. Demonstrators

overtly called for the establishment of a new state based on the Sharia law. The slogans such as “the Constitution is the Quran”, “Secularism is atheism”, “Sovereignty belongs to Allah”, “Infidel state will be destroyed”, “One Caliphate one state”, “We are ready for jihad”, “Tell us to shoot we will shoot tell us to die we will die”, and “Sharia or death” reflected the Islamist ideology that found its political expressions in the MSP. Demonstrators’ refusal to sing the national anthem and call for rebellion were among the notable features of the event (*Cumhuriyet*, 7 September 1980; Eligür, 2010, pp. 87-88; Manaz, 2008, pp. 259-260). Eligür (2010) notes that in September 1980, similar demonstrations also took place in the cities of Bonn and Munich with radical themes such as “The Great Jihad March”, “Muslim Turkey – Islam is the only way”, and “Today Iran – Tomorrow Turkey” (p. 88).

The MSP achieved a notable electoral success in the 1973 general elections by claiming 11.8 % of the votes which placed it at fourth place. The two major parties the CHP and the AP received 33.2% and 29.8% of the votes respectively. Like its predecessor, the MSP attracted votes from the impoverished provinces of central and eastern Anatolia (Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 40; Margulies & Yıldızoğlu, 1997, p. 148). Despite its limited base of electoral support, the MSP’s part in various coalition governments initiated a change in the cultural profile of the political elite in Turkey. In their remarks, Altunışık and Tür (2005) note that with the MSP's participation in political coalitions the *monolithic* façade of the elite culture began to fade. A *counter-elite* began to form by representing the cultural orientation and conservative mind-set of the masses from the countryside (p. 38).

Transformation in the elite culture materialized through the MSP's taking part in different coalition governments between 1973 and 1978. Even though the MSP did not have the power to make a substantial impact on the course of Turkish politics, its participation in various coalition governments with the CHP and the AP opened the door for the Islamization of the state bureaucracy. Yeşilada (2002) states that serving as a coalition partner enabled Erbakan to create a network of activist groups (p. 67). Moreover, as Altunışık and Tür note, Erbakan's position in the government also facilitated the Islamist infiltration into crucial bureaucratic positions such as the ministries of interior and education (p. 40). Between 1974 and 1978, the MSP's participation in three different coalition governments marked the first major Islamists infiltration into the state bureaucracy. On 7 February 1974, the MSP initially took part in a coalition government with the CHP that lasted nine months. In 1975 and 1977, known as the Nationalist Front, it participated in two AP-led coalition governments.

After the 1973 elections, chronic disputes among political parties paved the way for the CHP to form a coalition with the MSP as a last resort on 7 February 1974. It was a short-lived coalition that ended with the resignation of the CHP leader Bülent Ecevit on 18 September 1974 (Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 40). Fundamental differences in the political philosophy and the outlook of these parties brought an eventual end to this coalition government. Underlining these differences, in his speech at the Intellectual's Hearth in 1976, Erbakan stated that:

> As you know, the MSP is a political party that represents the National View outlook. Thus, given the nature, it is not possible to share compatible views with a leftist stance on any given subject. That is because philosophies are different

> from a fundamental standpoint. Therefore, not only on the issues of Cyprus and industry, but on all issues, there are differences (Quoted in Yorgancılar, 2012, p. 284).

Erbakan's statement revealed that the MSP's decision to join the CHP in a coalition in spite of all the odds was in fact a strategic one. As Yorgancılar (2012) highlights, the MSP capitalised on the CHP's desperation to find a coalition partner to take the *National View* outlook to power which would not have happened under normal circumstances (p. 284). Emphasizing on the actual political gap between the CHP and MSP further, Erbakan would state that "even writing a line of sentence in the same way was not possible" (Yorgancılar, 2012, p. 284). Erbakan's coalition with the CHP in 1974 caused an internal split between the *Nakşibendi* and *Nurcu* sects which had been in competition for the MSP's control. Political weight of the *Nakşibendis* triggered the *Nurcus'* abandonment of the party (Yeşilada, 2002, p. 67).

Although short-lived, the MSP highly benefitted from this coalition given that it provided the MSP with much needed political legitimacy and experience. With this opportunity, the MSP asserted itself as a legitimate feature of Turkish political system. Also, until 1975 while Erbakan held the office of deputy prime minister, of the twenty-five ministries the MSP received seven that included key offices of the Ministry of Justice, Interior and Religious affairs (Yorgancılar, 2012, p. 263; Gözaydın, 2009, p. 42; Eligür, 2010, pp. 70-71).

On 12 April 1975 the MSP participated in the AP-led Nationalist Front government with two other small parties which lasted until June 1977. In the general elections on 5 June 1977 the CHP came first by claiming 41.3% of the votes. However,

having failed to secure vote of confidence in the parliament, the AP formed the second Nationalist Front government on 21 July 1977 that lasted five months. The defection of eleven parliamentarians to the CHP brought the downfall of this coalition government in December 1977 (Yorgancılar, 2012; Mango, 1980). In 1976, sixteen parliamentarians from the *Nurcu* faction deserted the MSP in favour of the AP (Yorgancılar, 2012). As a result, the MSP's vote percentage dropped from 11.8 in 1973 to 8.6 in the aftermath of the 1977 general elections (Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 40; Manaz, 2008, p. 259). Drawing its support from the *Nakşibendi tarikatı*, the MSP remained active under Erbakan until 1980 when the third military intervention took place on 12 September.

CHAPTER 4

THE 1980s: INTEGRATING ISLAMISM IN TURKISH POLITICS AND ITS SOCIETAL CONSEQUENCES

4.1 The adoption of the "Turkish-Islamic Synthesis" as an Ideological Guideline

By the end of the 1970s Turkey was at the brink of a civil war. In the face of the government's helplessness to overcome the turmoil, on 12 September 1980 the third military coup took place under the leadership of General Evren, the chief of the General Staff. Encapsulating the social upheaval, Eligür (2010) notes that in the summer of 1980 more than twenty political assassinations took place (pp. 85-87). In September 1980, forty-nine different extreme leftist groups took part in the violence. At the ultranationalist side, with no official ties to the MHP, groups associated with the "idealist youth organization" (*ülkücü gençlik teşkilatı*) carried out urban terrorism (Özbudun, 2000, pp. 27-28). As Yeşilada (2002) points out, it is crucial to note that at the ranks of the MSP, represented by the Raiders organization, the Islamist-minded actors stayed out of this violence that occurred mainly between the extreme leftist groups and the *ülkücüs* (pp. 66-67).

In the aftermath of the 1980 coup, composed by both civilian and military bureaucrats, a cabinet would govern the country until the return to multi-party politics in November 1983. In this three-year period headed by Kenan Evren, the main decision-making rested in the National Security Council (NSC). It is noteworthy that the 1980 coup was never intended to remove the Islamist movement which in reality did not even truly exist at the time. Rather, it was aimed primarily against the leftist elements in the

country. The coup eradicated the leftists and weakened the strength of the ultranationalists. The coup government's repression of the *ülkücüs* who had been perceived and used as an effective counterforce against communism since the 1970s came with a shock that resulted in the joining of some *ülkücüs* the ranks of Islamists. In the eyes of the military, Islamists never constituted a political concern. In an interview that he gave in 1990 about Islamic organizations in 1982, Nevzat Bölügiray, who was the Lieutenant General at the time and served as the head of the Marshal Law Coordination Office within the General Stuff, stated that:

> Certainly, there was information, but today they are increasingly extensive, it was not like this at that time. They were at the phase of organization, not terror. However, today we see that they have entered the terror phase. ... In our time, they were not active. Then, what did we deal with? The *Süleymancıs* and the *Nurcus*. They were busy complaining from each other. They were complaining about the Directorate of Religious Affair (DRA). Yet, as I said, apart from the *Süleymancıs* and the *Nurcus*, the rest was in the process of organizing. Islamic terror organizations were yet to surface at that time (*Cumhuriyet*, 20 March 1990).

Bölügiray's remarks of the political milieu of the early 1980s confirm Islamists' successful avoidance of taking part in the social upheaval that occurred between the leftists and ultranationalists. Also, as Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu (2009) mention, in accordance with the Cold War conjecture which considered the threat of communism as the uttermost concern, the tolerance for Islamists elements in Turkey remained

compatible with the U.S. Cold War strategy.[21] It obliged the spread of "political Islam" as a barrier to Soviet expansion toward the south (p. 9). As a result, the military-backed government made a strategic use of Islam to carry out a complete restructuring of Turkey's socio-cultural dynamics as a safeguard against ideological extremism and anarchy. Particularly, this strategic tolerance perceived *Sunni Islam* as an effective means to achieve political stability in the face of the Marxist-Leninist currents in Turkey.

A crucial aspect of the 1980-1983 periods was the adoption of the "Turkish-Islamic Synthesis" as an ideological guideline in the decision-makings process. In 1982, the ideology of the TIS acquired an official dimension with the military-backed government's decision to implement it as the state's *cultural policy*. Essentially, a new political ground was envisioned based on which social order could be reinstated and the state could be safeguarded against possible reoccurrences of political extremism and violence. It foresaw a new Turkish society in which religion served as a means of communal solidarity and national integrity. Within this framework, it regarded Sunni Islam as a bonding element that was vital to achieve this objective.

The TIS was to set the ideological basis for policy choices particularly in the spheres of culture, education and religion. And, political initiatives were to accompany this process to recalibrate new institutional and philosophical parameters, accordingly. Below, it will be discussed that the coup government's main objective was to raise a "compatible youth" that internalized the idea of the TIS, and therefore, was devoted to

[2121] As Ertuğrul Kürkçü (1996, p. 5) put it, known as the *green belt* strategy, in the aftermath of the revolution in Iran and the Soviet's intervention in Afghanistan, the idea was to form an ideological barrier to the Soviet's expansion in the south. In 1983, projected as a *protective Islamic belt*, this strategy composed of an alliance of US-backed Muslim states. In 1985 in his remarks, Reagan's first secretary of state, Alexander Haig, would point out Turkey, Pakistan, Egypt, and Israel as partners in this "strategic consensus" against the Soviet threat, see Kürkçü (1996, p. 5).

the state. At this point, suffice to say that the TIS was to provide the moral values, which in the viewpoint of the National Security Council, were essential to create the model of an *ideal citizen* with a conservative outlook. According to Toprak (1990), this process marked a "cultural engineering" that was originally proposed by the Intellectual's Hearth (pp.10-11).

This new post-1980 discourse found its political expression in the National Cultural Report (NCR). The NCR was prepared by the National Culture Special Working Commission whose members had strong affiliation with the Intellectuals' Hearth.[22] Endorsed by the State Planning Organization, the NCR reflected the ideology of the TIS and became the official state policy on 18 October 1982 (Eligür, 2010, p. 105). It constituted the basis of the Fifth Five-Year Development Plan Special Working Commission Report in October 1983. On 20 June 1986, another report, titled "Analysis about Applicable Methods and Responsibilities with Respect to Cultural Facts and Culture Politics" was approved by Atatürk Higher Institute of Culture, Language and History with its proposition that verified TIS' outlook (Güvenç, Şaylan, Tekeli, & Turan, 1987; Arcayürek, 2008, p. 226). In 1986, underlining this recognition that the TIS received from the state, Süleyman Yalçın, the second chair of the Hearth, stated that:

> Yes, it is true that our thesis of Turkish-Islamic synthesis has been welcome and highly respected at the state level after 1980. That is because this is a phenomenon that came into being through reason and science. Also, Atatürk Higher Commission's approval of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis delighted us. Why is this happening? They look around and as they cannot find any other

[22] Eligür (2010, p. 102) notes that 80% of the 1982 Constitution was directly taken from the Hearth's proposal.

> escape route they come back to this idea (of Turkish-Islamic synthesis) (Quoted in Güvenç et al., 1987).

In their review of the NCR, Güvenç et al., draw attention to five main arguments that summarized its underlying ideological outlook. The first, Turkey was under the attack of Western imperialism both from inside and outside that aimed to destabilize Turkish national culture. Disregard for the core national values during the country's course of Westernization, together with the rapid urbanization, caused the downfall of Turkish national culture. Consequently, the ideological upheaval of the 1970s was the manifestation of this decline in moral and cultural values. As a remedy, a new arrangement in the cultural sphere was imperative which the state would be in charge of its implementation.

The second, *national culture* consisted of an essence that was historical and static in character. It displayed a quality that served as a means of communal solidarity in a society, while at the same time setting different societies apart from each other. Culture constituted the basis of Turkish nationalism, and therefore, Turkish culture must demonstrate a national character. National solidarity could only be assured if this particular notion of national culture was embraced, and then passed to coming generations.

The third, core values that Turks inherited from Central Asia and Islam constituted two central features of the *national culture*. Islam defined Turks' existence and national identity. Accordingly, Islam must define the processes of "nationalization". The fourth, Western culture could only serve as an obstacle to Turkey's progress towards modern civilization. Hence, it would be enough to borrow its technical innovations.

And finally, Turkish national culture which had already been deteriorated necessitated a new arrangement under the state's supervision. In the processes of cultural renovation and protection, democratic issues such as human rights and individual liberties did not constitute a concern as they could be sacrificed for a bigger cause that was the welfare of the state (Güvenç et al., 1987).

As described above, with its totalitarian tone the NCR held a crucial place given the cultural restructuring that it envisioned for Turkish society. In an effort to recalibrate social and cultural dynamics, the NCR aimed to make *conservative mind-set* a dominant feature of the general public. Within this framework, derived from the TIS, policy-choices would undermine liberal politics in Turkey that had been in effect since the 1961 Constitution. In this regard, Altunışık and Tür (2005) define the 1980 coup as a crucial turning point in Turkey's political history (p. 42). In her analysis, Lapidot (1997) calls attention to the instrumentalist use of Islam outside of its theological context as a mechanism of social control. She notes that although the generals were cautious with political Islam, they saw no problem in endorsing the TIS (p. 68).

As Sencer Ayata (1993) points out however, this strategy to counterweight the leftist ideology was puzzling to both secular intellectuals and Islamic fundamentalists, thus, pleasing neither faction (p. 64). It oversaw a cooperation with Islamic circles while at the same time preventing this pursuit from turning into a fundamentalist movement. Highlighting the irony behind this policy, Lapidot (1997) stated that it was actually the Turkish military that introduced Islam into Turkish politics as the official state ideology (p. 68). Along the same lines, Muharrem Tünay calls attention to the scale of the change

that the military's decision-making instigated in Turkey's political dynamics. About the military's political trajectory Tünay (1993) states that:

> This was the grand strategy of the military regime, despite all its rhetoric about the maintenance and further development of the secular Kemalist ideology, to counterbalance the revolutionary left forces by providing support to Islamic movements. Of course, this operation was not overt but carried out insidiously with the idea that a right-wing social force, outside the boundaries of the state, had to be activated to provide security for conservative forces in the long run (p. 20).

The military's pursuit diminished not only radical leftist groups, but also the social-democratic faction in Turkish politics, opening the door to new formations primarily to emerge on the political-right. Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu (2009) mention that the strategy which eliminated the political-left and dramatically weakened the ultranationalists provided Islamists with a political opportunity to fill the vacuum left behind particularly by the elimination of social-democratic elements (p. 8). Unaware of the potential implications of its strategy, Tünay (1993) argues, the Turkish armed forces turned the political landscape into a fertile ground for Islamic fundamentalist forces to operate, thus, created even more acute threat to the very existence of the secular Turkish state (p. 20). Richard Tapper (1991) argues that during the 1980-1983 period the state actually went through a cultural restructuring in line with the Hearth's ideological propositions. Thus, a conservative state ideology based on a static notion of "national culture", and removal of Western influences would be enforced as an alternative to Kemalist outlook which the Hearth argued corrupted the minds of Turkish youth (p. 10).

As described above, formulated by the Hearth, a new version of Turkish national history with its heavy emphasis on Islamic themes was to be adopted to achieve a conservative national conscience and identity as a means of retaining socio-political order (Lapidot, 1997, p. 68-69). This endeavor of the military against the potential recurrences of ideological clashes and anarchy involved the abandonment of the traditional notion of secularism in favor of the TIS. According to Tapper (1991), the military's policy exhibited a diverted mind-set from the Kemalist Republicanism based on the way it envisioned to carry out the state's secular principles which he noted welcomed by Islamic circles (p. 10). With regard to the military's attitude towards secularism, Eligür (2010) noted that this strengthened Islamists' hand to carry out Islamization of the entire society (p. 95). In the same vein, Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu (2009) state that the TIS would appeal to the masses by leaving the founding Kemalist doctrine as the outlook of a small social group of intellectuals, university students and educated urban class (p. 10).

4.2 The National Cultural Report (NCR) of 1982: A Case of Social Engineering

4.2.1 The NCR's Proposition

As a key component of "the Fifth Five-Year Development Plan Special Working Commission Report", the NCR was as an attempt to diagnose the causes of the social turmoil of the 1970s, and it aimed to present an antidote against 'all odds'. The NCR perceived the world in a state of ideological warfare in which Turkish national culture was amongst the targets, thus under a cultural invasion. Hence, in this war, the integrity

of the state could only be safeguarded by setting new ideological boundaries and ultimately achieving a model human-being who was *obedient* and *devoted* to the state.

At the heart of the NCR's assessment, a strong xenophobic tendency and a misconstrue and exaggeration of the past shaped the main discourse. These sentiments were evident particularly in the denial of ancient civilizations and cultures that pre-settled in Anatolia and contributed to the actual composition of Turkish national culture. Highlighting the extent of this attitude, the NCR was critical of archaeological studies of Hittite, Roma and Byzantine cultures and the efforts by the state for the repair and maintenance of their historical remains. From the viewpoint of the NCR, emphasis to validate old Anatolian cultures and civilizations conflicted with the state's interest and posed a threat to the national identity. It was suggested that such efforts would only deteriorate Turkish national culture, thus, a real emphasis must have been placed on Turkish-Islamic elements, instead.

Along the same lines, the NCR also perceived the endorsement of historic figures and places such as Saint Nicholas and Ephesus (Efes) and summer festivals in the cities of Fethiye, Side, and Efes in Western Anatolia as harmful activities that it argued aimed to encourage Christian faith and revive Roman-Byzantine culture. Moreover, it held that the tourists who visited Turkey should have left the country with the impressions that they acquired through their experience of the "Turkish national culture." (*T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı (DTP), Milli Kültür: Özel İhtisas Raporu*, 1983, pp. 458, 491).

In short, a *lack of national conscience* at the administrative level, and disregard for Turkish history and culture among the bureaucratic cadres, the NCR concluded,

explained what it saw an interest in foreign cultures and harmful activities. Subsequently, social turmoil of the 1970s occurred as a result of declining morality among Turkish youth that was alienated from its own cultural history. In order to end this deterioration, the state had an obligation to revive the national culture, and make it a dominant identity to accomplish solidarity among its citizens. Notably, the NCR also argued that in this process hostility towards Ottoman history would result in wrong diagnosis of the contemporary issues (*Milli Kültür*, 1983, pp. 490, 492).

Another significant point was the NCR's view of Turkish society as a homogeneous structure. Associated with industrialization and rapid urbanization, the NCR considered changes that occurred in the social and cultural realms as the cause of what it perceived a *moral break-down* in society. Thus, controlling the course of these changes became a primary concern which the NCR argued obligated an extensive *cultural restructuring*. And, it placed a central emphasis on religion which from the NCR's viewpoint constituted a defining cultural value (*Milli Kültür*, 1983, pp. 502, 505, 518).

Elaborating on the *religion-culture link*, the NCR characterized humans as morally weak who needed guidance in their struggle for survival against the complexities of the outside world. Accordingly, religion would endow individuals with certain behavioural virtues such as *acceptance, obedience, solidarity, and surrender*, and enable them to find the inner peace and manage their interactions with the outside world (*Milli Kültür*, 1983, p. 513). It held that given its subject matter, religion shared a common feature with culture on the basis that it promoted goodness for humans. Along this viewpoint, the NCR stated that "religion constituted the core of culture, (and) culture

referred to a form of religion" (*Milli Kültür*, 1983, p. 514). And, at the heart of culture, religion not only gave an actual meaning to life, but also "served as cement that bounded individuals and societies each other" (*Milli Kültür*, 1983, p. 515).

The NCR argued that material nature of humans necessitated formulation of culture to address specifically this moral deficiency in individuals. Moreover, only with this particular notion of culture "raising an optimist, obedient, hopeful, and reasonable generation could be possible" (*Milli Kültür*, 1983, p. 515). In its quest for the national culture, the NCR endorsed the Hearth's viewpoint which suggested that Turkish nation owned its existence to Islam. The NCR (1983) stated that:

> In the existence and longevity of Turkish nation, Islam played an uttermost role. Because, for instance, some Turks who adopted Christianity could not even conserve their existence. ... Unless religion is thought and enforced, its consequences in society are now better understood based on the incidents that occurred way back in the past and recent history (p. 516).

4.2.2 The NCR's View of the Republican Education System

Notably, the NCR brought the issue of anarchy down to the Republican education system and what it saw as a *betrayal of the intelligentsia and the enlightened*. It suggested that these elements were particularly responsible for raising a generation that was ignorant to its own cultural roots and customs. Thus, a moral collapse and social break-down followed that manifested itself through the anarchist movements of the 1960s and the '70s. The NCR argued that the 18th century onwards, religion had been the target of the intelligentsia who the NCR concluded was also beneath the Ottoman decline. Along with the *Tanzimat* reforms, it was suggested that the intelligentsia deteriorated

religion and lost its touch with the general public. Western philosophies were adopted as a remedy to overcome this cultural gap between *the enlightened* and *the general public*.

According to the NCR, Turkish intelligentsia continued to disregard religion and failed to obtain the desired outcome. The growing unease continued to heighten during the Republican era as wrong interpretations of secularism, the NCR disputed, allowed no space for religion. And, it ultimately caused Turkish society's inability to deal with the complexities of everyday life particularly in the aftermath of industrialization and rapid urbanization. Cut off from its historical roots and deprived of its core cultural essence, a growing sense of alienation the NCR suggested, exposed Turkish youth to harmful Western philosophies that at the end brought the country at the brink of a civil war. Furthermore, it divided the society into two clashing political camps as *the right* and *the left* (*Milli Kültür*, 1983, p. 520-521).

In the discourse described above, the *philosophy of positivism* and the sociological views that it inspired took much of the heat as the main factors underneath the difficulties facing Turkey. Hence, it remained highly critical of philosophers such as Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, Ernest Renan, Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, and Sigmund Freud whose works were argued to represent destructive ideas and philosophies. These philosophers were regarded responsible for what the NCR concluded as a "moral collapse" both in Western societies and Turkey (*Milli Kültür*, 1983, p. 536-541).

More specifically, having been taught in the official curricula for the past five decades, the NCR argued that *sociological positivism* by Durkheim paved the way for cultural deterioration in Turkey by establishing itself almost as a religion (*Milli Kültür*, 1983, p. 537). According to this view, the *Republican education system* with its

pragmatic and positivist thought deprived Turkish youth of moral behavior and historical and national conscience, and set the basis for anarchy in the country.[23] The NCR's justification for this conclusion deserved a particular attention. It argued that enlightened people were more prone to violence and commit crime while people with no education proved to be "obedient" and "loyal" to the state.[24] The NCR (1983) stated that:

> Illiterate people commit less crime and show more respect to the state, law and authority. On the other hand, enlightened people who receive their education in the state's official schools commit more crime and involve in acts against the state and law. This picture is natural given that our education system places no value on morality. Thus, our education system deprived citizens of sentiments of submission to authority and religious discipline, embedded in our family values, customs and faith. As a result, this bleak situation emerged (p. 543).

As a remedy, the NCR aimed to create the "model human-being" (*Milli Kültür*, 1983, p. 544). By enforcing "moral education" and reviving Turkish-Islamic sentiments, it proposed to instigate a national and historical conscience among the general public (*Milli Kültür*, 1983, p. 544). Süleyman Yalçın, chair of the Hearth, described this cultural endeavor as "returning to the past, (and) following a 1000-year-old historical path"

[23] The NCR stated that numerous ground-breaking studies by Western philosophers with their advocacy of pragmatism and positivism were translated into Turkish and published by the state to be taught in schools. In 1928, *Akl-ı Selim* by Jean Meslier, and in 1935, *Kâinatın Muammaları* by Ernest Heackel were among those books that according to NCR caused the failure of the Republican education system to raise loyal citizens. See *Milli Kültür Raporu* (1983, p. 541). Also, in 1945, *Nutuklar ve Konferanslar, Bilimin Geleceği, İsa'nın Hayatı, and Havariler* by Ernest Renan, in 1951, *Pozitivizmin İlmihali* by Auguste Comte were among other works that in the viewpoint of the NCR instigated a decline in moral and cultural values of Turkish society. See *Milli Kültür Raporu* (1983, pp. 536, 538).

[24] In an effort to validate its argument, the NCR indicated that in 1965 the number of literate prisoners was 46,323 while this figure remained 35,377 for illiterate inmates. In 1969, against 42,802 literate prisoners there were only 18,712 illiterate inmates, which the NCR argued, indicated that illiterate people were more obedient to the state. Thus, the education that was provided in the institutions of the Republican system was raising a youth that the NCR concluded was rebel and disloyal to the state. See *Milli Kültür Raporu* (1983, p. 543).

(Quoted in Güvenç et al., 1987, p. 8). In his argument, Yalçın stated that in the foundation of the Great Seljuk, Anatolian Seljuk and the Ottoman Empire, Islamic faith constituted a common defining element. And, during the efforts to establish modern Turkey as a secular republic the notions of national conscience, Islamic faith, and piety of homeland contributed to the formation of this distinct national profile that came to be known as "Turk" (Güvenç et al., 1987).

According to Yalçın, in the Turkish-Islamic history of the past 1200 years there emerged a common sentiment that defined Turkish national culture. And, any philosophy that was inconsistent with this historical tradition needed to be kept outside of Turkey's cultural policy (Güvenç et al., 1987, p. 8). Thus, the envisioned "model human-being" was to be created within the framework of this conservative outlook. With this interpretation, the NCR regarded religion no longer as a *matter of conscience*, but rather as a *political notion* that was to be imposed to ensure citizens' submission to the state against destructive foreign influences. The NCR concluded that "the understanding of religion as a matter of conscience with no implications on individual behavior and communal life is not accurate" (*Milli Kültür*, 1983, p. 543).

The NCR's aim to make religion a defining component of the cultural life was evident in its perception of the "ideal family structure." The NCR proposed the *Turkish-Islamic family* model as the expression of true national culture and values (*Milli Kültür*, 1983, p. 552). Accordingly, the *Turkish-Islamic family* that had been dominant in Anatolia for centuries needed to be grasped as a means of raising loyal generations. The NCR saw religious and moral education uttermost importance to the sentiments of love and loyalty. And, family was the initial stage in this scheme where a child received those

sentiments. According to the NCR, Turkish-Islamic values promoted qualities of diligence, honesty and love of country. Furthermore, the absence of religious education in family hampered moral and psychological development of children in Turkey (*Milli Kültür*, 1983, pp. 552-554).

Regarding the NCR's propositions, Eligür (2010) calls attention to the rearrangement of secondary school textbooks with a new nationalistic emphasis. And, the use of old Ottoman rhetoric, she points out, occurred in line with the Hearth's discourse of "returning to the cultural roots" (p. 117). One should note that such endeavors were advanced in order to accomplish the perpetuated *moral agenda*. This tendency further materialized with the state televisions' ban on a list of words in its broadcasts. Toprak (1990) suggests that such efforts to enforce a conservative mind-set were in reality an attempt to undermine the modern character of the arts and literature in Turkey (p. 12). Pointing out the state's use of religion in *pedagogical terms*, Eligür (2010) states that:

> Since Islam was defined as the essence of the Turkish culture, the promotion of the national culture required that the state should plan religious and moral life in Turkey. This was regarded as essential not only for the intrinsic value of religious and moral teaching as a transmitter of culture, but also for the pedagogical value of such teaching in shaping the mind. It was the state's duty to create a culture that put man's spiritual needs at its centre, thus guiding him to be obedient to authority (p. 117).

4.3 Mandatory Religious Education and Concerns over the Illegal Quran Courses

Another crucial issue that deserves attention is the changing status of religious education from optional to mandatory. During the efforts to draft the new 1982

Constitution religious education became a controversial topic. In 1981 and 1982, a series of seminars and debates were conducted, and reports were presented on the status of the *imam-hatips*, Quran courses, and religious education by various organizations.[25] Among them, established by the Ministry of National Education, the Religious Education Working Group's report to the National Security Council on 6 February 1981 drew a particular attention to the situation of the *imam-hatips.* Essentially, the exceptional growth in the number of these institutions inconsistent with the actual demand was a source of major concern. Initially, on 29 December 1975, an amendment on the *National Education Law* allowed the *imam-hatip* graduates to enroll any university faculty. The *imam-hatips* were originally established as vocational schools in order to raise enlightened religious functionaries. However, it was noted that a big majority of the students who graduated from the *imam-hatips* were most likely to seek careers outside the intended religious sphere.[26]

[25] With their focus on religious education, many debates took place in 1981. The Religious Education Working Group on 6 February, the Higher Islamic Institutes on 7 May, the Religious Education Counselling Commission on 28 May, the Ankara University Divinity Faculty on 23-25 May, and the Intellectuals' Hearth on 9-10 May conducted panels that reflected the discourse and concerns surrounding religious education. Essentially, reports presented in these meetings played a decisive role in the coup government's decision to make religious education compulsory in 1982.

[26] In 1989, only 10% of the *imam-hatip* graduates would actually seek jobs in the DRA (Eligür, 2010, p. 126). The late 1980s also would witness a steady decline in the *imam-hatip* graduates' interests in universities' theology departments. In 1986, only 18.31% of the *imam-hatip* graduates would choose to attend the divinity faculties at universities, and this figure was only to further drop to 9.84% in 1988. See Süleyman Hayri Bolay and Türköne (1995, p. 128). On the other hand, in 1987, 40% of the student-body that formed the political science department of Ankara University was composed of the *imam-hatip* graduates. This figure was only to escalate to 60% in 1992. See Salt (1995, p. 19). By the late 1980s, while the figure for the yearly actual demand for *imams* indicated 2,288, graduation of 51,345 students per year from the *imam-hatips* clearly underlined a political concern (Eligür, 2010, p. 125). In his assessments, Nurettin Koç (2006) reveals that between 1951 and 1981 374 *imam-hatip* schools were opened. More importantly, it is worthy to note %904.6 increase in the number of the *imam-hatips* between 1973/1974 and 1977/1978. Koç's study indicates that the quality and the content of the teachings in these institutions have always been a major concern as well that has been raised and confirmed repetitively in the reports of the Ministry of Education since the late 1950s. Particularly, Islamic ideology that they imposed and their compatibility with Turkey's secular dynamics had always been in question. However, in

The Ministry's report urged to amend the *Article 32* of the *National Education Law of 1973* which recognized the *imam-hatips* as secondary education institutions that enabled them to prepare their students to enter divinity faculties of universities. Irritated by the Ministry's negative assessments, a committee of five academics representing the *Higher Islamic Institutes* offered its own report directly to General Evren on 7 May 1981. This report advocated mandatory religious education, preserving the status of *imam-hatips*, transforming the Higher Islamic Institutes into divinity faculties, and allowing female students to wear headscarf in religious institutions. It is important to note that the report's justification for its proposal was in line with the Intellectual's Hearth's discourse. In 1981, it stated that:

> One should not forget that the neglect of religious education and malpractice in this field are the underlying causes of the social upheaval that resulted in serious unrest in the country. Emptiness that occurred in the faith and thoughts of our youth can be cured by the internalization of the teachings of our religion and the love of country and nation. In our opinion, this is the most effective measure against anarchy and terror that today devastate and threaten our country (Ayhan quotes from *EK IV: Yüksek İslam Enstitüsü Temsilcileri Tarafından 1981'de "Din Eğitimi"yle İlgili Hazırlanan ve İlgili Makamlara Sunulan Rapor*, 1999, p. 560).

Hüseyin Atay, the Dean of the Ankara University Divinity Faculty, was a notable figure with his reports in the support of compulsory religious education during *Türkiye 1.*

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competitive party politics governments rather overlooked this problem. Furthermore, political exploitation of the *imam-hatips* throughout the 1970s accounted for the immense growth of these institutions that were originally established as vocational schools. See Koç, (2006, pp. 228-229, and 236-242).

Eğitim Semineri that he conducted on 23-25 April 1981. His efforts played a decisive role in shaping the view of the military on the matter. The issues of the *loyalty to the state, national unity, anarchy* and *citizenship* constituted the main theme of his report that he submitted to the National Security Council in November 1980. He pointed the *lack of religious knowledge* among youth as the underlying factor beneath the supposed *lack of loyalty to the state*. He emphasized that compulsory religious education would have solved this problem, and it was compatible with the principles of secularism. Initially, the Ministry of Education's Commission disapproved Atay's recommendations on the ground that making religious education mandatory in public schools would constitute a contradiction with the state's secular norms. Yet, after submitting a second report, approved by the Ministry of Education, Atay's discourse determined the Ministry's verdict on the matter in May 1981 (Eligür, 2010, pp. 103-104).

The *Religious Education Counselling Commission* was formed on 28 May 1981 along the directives of General Evren to open the Ministry's verdict into discussion. At this stage, Atay again made a very appealing argument by addressing every single political issue that could have potentially worried the military-backed government at that time. He depicted mandatory religious education as a panacea which the military could rely on to ensure the unity of the state. According to Atay, mandatory religious education was to avoid the ideological polarization and sectarian clashes by creating a sense of communal unity in society. It would put an end to anarchy and terrorist activities. Moreover, youth would learn their religion from secular individuals which the process would eradicate the influence of anti-regime forces on younger generations. Mandatory religious education would cut the attendance to the *imam-hatip* schools. Atay's argument

further stated that the lack of mandatory religious education also explained the lack of spoken Turkish language in the eastern provinces. It made historical references to the Unity of Education Law (1924) to justify his points. Eligür (2010) suggests that Atay's argument was a misconstrue of the facts as it did not hold true. Also, it involved a discourse that ignored sectarian differences among religious sects in society (p. 104).

İbrahim Ağah Çubukçu and Neda Armaner were the two members in the committee who opposed the Ministry of Education's report by calling attention to the issue of social diversity. Their discussion pointed the Alevi and non-Muslim citizens in the country. Even more importantly, they challenged the report on the grounds that making religious education compulsory would not bring any positive outcome, but instead, would promote Islamic fundamentalism as a new challenge directly to the very existence of the state. At this point, the *imam-hatip* schools provided a clear demonstration where the compulsory religion education was creating an anti-secular youth.[27] Çubukçu and Armaner argued that a crucial emphasis instead must be placed on educating the teachers of the religion courses to ensure that their teachings would not sow the seeds of an anti-system movement against the secular state (Eligür, 2010, pp. 104-105).

[27] The *imam-hatips* served as a crucial means in the mobilization of the political Islam. By spreading Islamist sentiments, they aimed to create a society that was receptive to Islamic ideas. See Sencer Ayata (1996) on the decisive impact of classroom interactions, emphasis on a common religious identity, and the exchange of ideas among the *imam-hatip* students in this process. Also, the intellectual composition of the student-body in the *imam-hatip* schools underlined another notable dynamic that suggested these institutions' role in the politicization of Islam in Turkey. A very big majority of the *imam-hatip* students came from economically impoverished and culturally inward-looking families with a very limited opinion range. A vast majority of the parents received only an elementary level of education. More than half of the students in these schools read only Islamic or nationalist journals while one-third of the student-body did not read at all. See Ruşen Çakır, İrfan Bozan, and Balkan Talu (2004, pp. 78-79).

Nevertheless, the Commission approved the Ministry of Education's report. The Commission's decision was in favor of making religious education mandatory in public schools starting from the elementary level up to the last year of the high school. Additionally, in line with the Higher Islamic Institute's view, the *imam-hatips* preserved their status as secondary education institutions. With that being in effect, their graduates would continue to enter any faculty in universities. Finally, under the Directorate of Religious Affairs, a new division was established specifically to deal with Marxism and the Kurdish separatist movement, the PKK (Eligür, 2010, p. 105). This meeting was important as that it helped to shape consensus on religious education, and it largely influenced the debates that would take place in the Consultative Assembly.

The constitutional committee of the Consultative Assembly prepared its draft of the new Constitution on 17 July 1982 and proposed it on 4 August. During the debates that lasted until 23 September, the Article 24 on *Freedom of Religion and Conscience* constituted a controversial topic as the original draft preserved the status of religious education as optional (Ayhan, 1999, p. 275). Yet, during the debates, the Article 24 would be amended in favour of mandatory religious education. In the final draft, the section of the Article 24 on religious education stated that:

> Education and instruction in religion and ethics shall be conducted under State supervision and control. Instruction in religious culture and moral education shall be compulsory in the curricula of primary and secondary schools. Other religious education and instruction shall be subject to the individual's own desire, and the request of their legal representatives in the case of minors (Akad & Dinçkol, 1998, p. 110).

Throughout the debates, decisive influence of the TIS on academics and bureaucratic elites proved noteworthy. Essentially, the reasoning alongside the ideals advocated by the TIS would be used to justify mandatory religious education. Views exhibited by Nurettin Ayanoğlu, Doğan Gürbüz, Nedim Bilgiç, and Fuat Yılmaz were notable in that respect, verifying the TIS' dominant role in determining Turkey's new social and cultural parameters (Ayhan, 1999, pp. 276-284).

Apart from those concerns which questioned the ideological appropriateness of the military's policy choice and its compatibility with Turkey's secular dynamics, there was also a question of consistency. Under General Evren, the military's political strategy involved a critical ambiguity which was illustrated through contradictory initiatives and conflicting policies. Contradictions were evident particularly in the legal sphere. For instance, *Article 24* of the 1982 Constitution made religious education mandatory in primary and secondary schools under state supervision, while the *Introduction* and *Article 2* emphasized the secular character of the Turkish state, verifying the state's neutrality in religious affairs (Akad & Dinçkol, 1998, pp. 1 and 5). The official explanation for *Article 2* defined secularism as "a state-understanding that aims to preserve religion outside of the political sphere" (Akad & Dinçkol, 1998, p. 11).

Described above, this ambiguity was largely due to the military's decision-making which aimed to achieve two goals that in the given context was in fact very contradictory. Essentially, religion was to serve against the *threat of communism* which the strategy involved the adoption of the TIS and tolerance to Islamist elements. Yet, on the other hand, religion was also envisioned as a means to reinforce the state's secular principles against Islamism. In fact, the official explanation for *Article 24* highlighted the state's

precaution against religious exploitation and abuse (Akad & Dinçkol, 1998, p. 110). In this respect, the military projected that mandatory religious education would facilitate the latter by promoting science and positivism among the general public. As public schools now became the principle provider of religious knowledge, it would serve to the enlightenment of the youth against both ideological corruption and Islamism. Crucially, it was also suggested that this would make the illegal Quran courses, long known for their anti-secular teachings and affiliation with Islamic *tarikats*, obsolete by cutting their attendance.

Koç's assessment on Quran courses is noteworthy. He notes that more than 20.000 *illegal Quran courses* were opened in 1961 which at that time already tripled the number of the legal Quran courses. By 1968, the question would focus on the quality of the individuals who the Directorate of Religious Affairs appointed as "instructor" to teach Quran. In 1962, of more than 60.000 religion instructors, 370 had higher education, 417 had high school education, 1298 had secondary school education, and 3106 only received primary education while 55.000 did not receive any schooling at all (Koç, 2006, pp. 246-247). Content of their teachings and anti-secular sentiments that they spread highlighted yet another major issue that concerned particularly the illegal Quran courses. In this regard, the *Quran Courses Oath* (*Kuran Kursları Andı*) explicitly revealed the ideological mission and political agenda that these courses carried out in reality.[28]

Regarding the illegal Quran courses and Islamic *tarikat* activism, the apprehension described above was also raised by Evren in 1982.[29] Nevertheless, the

[28] Regarding the *Quran Courses Oath*, see Nurettin Koç (2006, p. 249).

[29] See Evren's emphasis on mandatory religious education in public schools as a precaution to radical Islam in *T. C. Devlet Başkanı Orgeneral Kenan Evren'in Söylev ve Demeçleri (12 Eylül 1981 - 12 Eylül 1982)*

military continued to overlook Islamist elements, particularly the *tarikats* formations that it recognized as a strong precaution against the *communist threat*.

4.4 *Tarikat* Activism in the Post-1980 State

The legitimization of the TIS and the tolerance to Islamist actors during the 1980-1983 period provided *tarikat* networks with a fertile ground to embark on the Islamization of Turkish society from below. As Eligür (2010) points out, *tarikat* networks never really opposed the 1980 coup as it cleared the political path from the leftist and ultranationalist elements (p. 93). Essentially, the perception of Islam as a political ally in fight against the left set the stage for the mobilization of Islamists. Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu (2009) note that this understanding very quickly brought the general society under the influence of Islamic organizations, *tarikat* network groups, and associations that were officially illegal (p. 10).

Already by the late 1980s, signs of political Islam became notable in the country, and concerns over the threat of reactionary Islam were pronounced by growing number of journalists and academics. Highlighting the increasing prevalence of the threat of political Islam, Sakallıoğlu (1996) distinguishes the post 1980 coup era as “a stark contrast” from the pre-1980 era of the Turkish political history (p. 231). Along the same lines, emphasizing on the profound impact of the coup government on Turkish politics, Salt (1995) states that "it presaged significant changes of direction which have had far-

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[The Turkish Republic Head of the State General Kenan Evren's Statements (September 12, 1981 - September 12, 1982)] (1982, p. 57); Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [Ministry of Education], *Cumhurbaşkanı Kenan Evren'in Milli Eğitime Ait Direktifleri ve Sözleri* [President Kenan Evren's Directives and Statements On National Education] (1984, p. 55).

reaching consequences. The exponential growth of Muslim sentiment was the underlying end result of this phenomenon" (p. 16).

On 26 June 1983, German TV ARD in *Weltspiegel*, by elaborating on the post-coup political climate, stated that:

> After Atatürk for the first time a deviation was made that allowed Islamic movement on a limited scale. Evren is searching for some sort of coalition with Islamic fundamentalists. Yet, this endeavor can turn into a boomerang (quoted in *Cumhuriyet*, 21 March 1990).

Ironically, a few years later President Evren himself drew attention to the threat of radical Islam. In a speech that he gave on 8 January 1987, he underlined efforts by the Islamic *tarikats* to infiltrate the armed forces through students that they trained in the youth hostels and dormitories. Evren stated that:

> They (*Süleymancı tarikatı*) are building youth hostels today. Why are they doing this? Are they doing this for the service of this country? No. 10 - 15 years later these kids will penetrate into the positions of influence in the ranks of the military. And if they can conquer the military, they can lead the country to the regime they want. Now I am asking you, is this a venture of faith? If you ask them, they claim to raise valuable human-beings who are loyal to their religion and country. ... In Turkey there is Islamic reaction. ... Tolerating Islamic reaction is as dangerous as communism (*Cumhuriyet*, 9 January 1987).

Highlighting further the newly emerging concerns about Islamic fundamentalism, another notable incident yet occurred on 16 January 1987 in Istanbul when an Islamic demonstration took place. Writing for *Observer*, in his article "Turkey rocked by march

of Islam", Kenneth Mackenzie encapsulated growing unease in the aftermath. Based on his observations, Mackenzie commented that "Turkey ... is facing the most serious threat from Islamic forces since the inception of the modern republic sixty-three years ago" (*Observer*, 18 January 1987).

Following the return to multi-party politics in 1983, a significant change occurred in Turkey's political discourse in correlation with the rising trend of Islamism. Critically, a new bureaucratic class with Islamic credentials emerged, and formed what Yavuz (2003) defines as "organic elite" (p. 79). According to Yavuz (2003), this new bureaucratic class represented a more accurate picture of the masses on social and cultural grounds (p. 79). Göle (1994) points out this political transformation:

> From the modernizing elites of the earlier decades that took as their basic mission the secularization of Turkish politics and the transmission of Western values to that polity and society, to the technocratic elites of the 1980s who defined their goals less in terms of educating the people than of synthesizing Islamic values and pragmatic rationality (p. 213).

Feroz Ahmad (1988) explains the dramatic rise of political Islamism as a consequence of the coup regime's political pursuit. His assessment on the socio-cultural profile of the new political elites is noteworthy. Ahmad (1988) states that:

> The NSC (National Security Council) achieved this by eliminating politics for three years, by closing down parties and banning hundreds of established politicians from political activity. This left a vacuum that the generals hoped would be filled by 'new politicians' who would somehow be a different breed from the old. That is precisely what happened. But the new men were different

> only because they were without political experience, more poorly educated, and generally speaking, men - though not women - of a lower quality than the ones they were replacing (p. 763).

According to Ahmad, the NSC's policy was in fact a pursuit of political Islam. Although strengthening secularism was an objective of uttermost importance to the NSC, this concern proved to remain rather in rhetoric as no substantial effort was made in that direction. As Ahmad (1988) mentions, the NSC's efforts to depoliticize Turkish society was an ideological mission that ironically resulted in the strengthening of anti-secular forces in the country (p. 762).

From a different perspective, Zürcher (1995) correlates seculars and positivists' loss of their monopoly over the country's intellectual sphere after 1983 with the mass migration from the countryside to the cities (p. 416). Along the same lines as Zürcher, Ahmad (1988) notes that untouched by secular reforms, millions from the periphery migrated to the outskirts of major cities where they continued to practice an *Ottoman-Islamic* culture (p. 758). Critically, these masses also began to impose their own social and cultural conjecture on Turkish politics, highlighting a crucial aspect in the spread of Islamic sentiments from below. Elaborating on this phenomenon, Ahmad (1988) states that "by the very weight of numbers the peasants began to transform the political and cultural landscape of secular Turkey" (p. 758).

In his analysis, however, Zürcher describes this social transformation as a “successful modernization” that the coup regime initiated, and 1983 onwards, the ANAP government under Özal further carried out (p. 416). Here, it is important to note that the rise of the periphery into high bureaucratic echelons, while could be interpreted as "a

successful case of modernization", did not occur as an outcome of any socio-economic progress. As Ahmad accurately pointed out in 1988, having been untouched by modern education, bleak social and cultural conditions in the countryside in reality highlighted a very serious problem in Turkey that pertained to a *developmental neglect*. And, consequences of this neglect were just beginning to surface in the 1980s as a new generation of state elites from the periphery began to fill in the political vacuum caused by eradication of the social democratic segment by the 1980 coup.

Essentially, 1983 onwards, prominent figures such as the leader of the centre-right ANAP and the prime minister Turgut Özal; the True Path Party (TPP) leader Süleyman Demirel; the leader of the Islamist Welfare Party (WP) Necmettin Erbakan; and the former Chief of Stuff, and 1983 onwards the President of the Turkish Republic Kenan Evren all shared a common provincial background. Elaborating on this transformation in the bureaucratic cadres, Ahmad (1988) states that "they all seem Western in appearance but they are much more at home in indigenous popular culture" (p. 764). Concentrating particularly on Özal and his core associates whom Ahmad (1988) defines as "cultural Islamists", he further stresses that despite their provincial backgrounds, their ideological tendencies must not be mistaken with those of the bureaucrats within the Islamist faction of ANAP (p. 766).

Islamic *tarikats* constituted crucial players in Turkey's new political landscape given their growing political influence. In this respect, the *Nakşibendi*, *Süleymancı*, *Işıkcılar*, *Kadiri*, *Halveti-Cerrahis*, *Fethullahçı*, *Nurcu*, and *Rufai tarikats* were notable.[30] Sakallıoğlu (1996) notes that particularly the Nakşibendi tarikatı, and the Naşibendi

[30] See Lapidot (1997, p. 67); Ayata (1996, p, 67); Margulies and Yıldızoğlu (1988, p. 16).

lodges such as the *Süleymancı* and *Nurcu* obtained a "semi-legal status" during the ANAP years that highlighted the scale of influence that *tarikats* began to exercise in Turkish politics (p. 243).[31] Lapidot (1996) states that having affiliations with the *tarikats* was now recognized as the most decisive aspect of the electoral politics in Turkey (p. 67).

In the same vein with Lapidot, Yeşilada (2002) calls attention particularly the block votes provided by the *İskender Paşa* congregation to the ANAP, and the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi* - RP). From a technical standpoint, the interaction between the two sides operated on the basis of a mutual interest that provided the congregation with a considerable political influence. Essentially, the congregation obtained a crucial position that enabled it to manipulate party politics in return for the block votes that its followers provided for that political party. This trade-off occurred in electoral politics in the form of the congregation's giving a list of names that it wished to be included in the party roster as candidate. Yeşilada (2002) further notes that both Özal and Erbakan received such requests in return for the electoral support that their parties received from the *Nakşibendis* (p. 72).

Very critically, in the post-1980 state, Islamists managed to infiltrate into the top echelons of the civilian bureaucracy and held posts of major political influence specifically along the activism of the *Nakşibendi tarikatı*. This phenomenon, which proved significant first with the National Salvation Party (MSP) between 1974 and 1978, reached an alarming level 1983 onwards during the ANAP years under Özal who was a

[31] Other Islamic congregations within the *Nakşibendi* network with notable political influence include *Menzil, İsmail Ağa, Kıbrısı, Erenköy,* and *Çarşamba.* With an estimate of 1.5 million followers, *Menzil* constitutes the largest congregation among them that is active in the eastern provinces of Turkey. Led by Mahmut Hoca, İsmail Ağa claims 1 million followers, residing mainly in Fatih and *Çarşamba* districts of Istanbul. With regard to the dress code that is being applied in these districts, the resemblance in social ambiance with Tehran is noticeable (Yeşilada, 2002, p. 73).

well-known figure with strong affiliation with the *Nakşidendis*. His utilization of the *tarikat* networks, mosque associations and kinship ties, Yavuz (2003) argues, brought the traditional Turkish society in line with a modern-urban society (p. 75). Bülent Arınç, the former Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi* – RP) parliamentarian, and the former Vice-Prime Minister from the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* – AKP) described Özal's pursuit in the 1980s as the destruction of the established bureaucratic-oligarchy through the appointment of "conscious Muslims" into the posts of influence (Eligür, 2010, p. 121).

Ayata (1993) verifies that the *tarikat* formations which originally served as an electoral support base for the centre-right became an actual player on their own during the ANAP years (p. 63). More specifically, Ayata (1996) notes that the *Nakşibendis* came to be known as the "single most important lobbying group" in Turkish politics in this period (p. 44). In this regard, the *Ministry of Education*, and the *Directorate of Religious Affairs* were notable posts where the *Nakşibendis* exercised a main influence. Yavuz (2003) states that Vehbi Dinçer, the *Minister of Education* from the ANAP, who carried out a new curriculum with the re-interpretation of Turkish national culture and history, was a *Nakşibendi* (p. 75). Also, it is noteworthy that approved by the *Ministry of Education*, %78 of all books taught in primary, middle, and high schools belonged to Islamist circles or the *tarikat* networks, thus, came from *tarikat*-owned publishing houses such as *Yeni Asya*, *Dergah*, *Damla*, and *Beyan.* Peköz (2009) states that having been published on behalf of the *Ministry of Education*, %62 of all school books came from these publishing houses (p. 195).

Özal's first Cabinet particularly consisted of many high profile ANAP bureaucrats who were very much affiliated with various *tarikat* networks. Among them, Peköz (2009) notes that vice Prime Minister Mehmet Keçeciler and Eyüp Aşık were affiliates of the *Nakşibendis*; Eymen Toptaş had connections with the Kadiri *tarikatı*, and Ekrem Pakdemirli and Abdülkadir Aksu were associated with the *Fethullahçıs* (p. 209). Regarding the rise of political Islam, a distinction was often attempted between what Sakallıoğlu (1996) calls "the moderate traditionalists" and "the radicals" (pp. 243-244). However, as Lapidot (1997) mentions, this division remains rather irrelevant and reflects an inaccurate picture, considering the ultimate goal of political Islamists (65).

While a range of diversity in the scope of methods and interpretation might be identified among different Islamic circles, a vital credential that they all shared in common was their aim to remove what they perceived as "Western influence," and re-establish the state based on the sharia (Lapidot, 1997, pp. 65-66; Sakallıoğlu, 1996, p. 244). In the same vein, Ayata states that for the *Nakşibendi* lodges *self-reform* and *orthopraxy* underline the principle mechanisms in the socio-cultural re-structuring of society. According to Ayata (1996), "the renewal of Islamic faith and lifestyle is, at the same time, an identity-formation process that entails a strong rejection of Western values, culture, and institutions" (p. 49).

Strong anti-western and anti-secular sentiments, different views on Islamic life-style, and methods to make it a defining feature of the daily life were evident in the publications of mainstream *tarikats* that emerged rapidly 1980 onwards. Periodicals published by the *Nakşibendi tarikatı* included *Rıbat* that began in 1981, *Islam* in 1983, *Kadın ve Aile* (Woman and Family) in 1985, *Mektup* (Letter) in 1985, *İlim ve İnsan*

(Science and Man), *İnsan ve Kainat* (Men and Universe), and an independent journal with ties to the *Nakşibendis*, *Girişim*.[32] Kadiri *tarikatı* published the journals of *Öğüt* (Counsel) and *İcmal* (Synopsis).[33] A political faction of the Nurcu *tarikatı* with a more radical discourse, the *Fethullahcıs* published *Köprü* (Bridge), a spin-off from *Köprü, Bizim Aile* (Our Family), *Sızıntı* (Infiltration), *Zafer* (Victory), and *Sur* (Ramparts).[34] While these journals were often emphasized to serve for educational purposes, Ayata (1996) notes that this assumption remained rather naive as there underneath laid a decisive political agenda to spread radical Islam in society (p. 50).

Another noteworthy aspect focuses on unofficial Quran courses and mosques that bring our attention to the activism of the *Süleymancı tarikatı*. Essentially, even though the Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*) was the supervising agency on the paper, in reality, it exercised a very little control over Quran courses and mosques as they largely remained under the influence of Islamic *tarikats*. During the ANAP years between 1983 and 1991, Türsan (2004) points out the construction of 15,000 mosques and the establishment of more than 2000 Quran courses with the Directorate of Religious Affairs having its budget raised between 1986 and 1990 from 59.4 to 950.8 billion Turkish liras (p. 228).

[32] See Margulies and Yıldızoğlu (1988, p. 16). About the Islamic discourse of *Kadın ve Aile,* and *Mektup* see Acar (1991, pp. 283-290 and 294-301); for the discourse of *İslam* and *Girişim* see Ayşe Güneş-Ayata (1991, pp. 256-277); for an evaluation of *Rıbat* see Ayata (1991, pp. 225-239).
[33] About the discourse of *İcmal* see Ayata (1991, pp. 239-249).
[34] See Margulies and Yıldızoğlu (1991, p. 16); for the contextual analysis of *Bizim Aile* see Acar (1991, pp. 290-294).

Quran courses also remained outside the inspection of the Ministry of Education.[35] Based on the figures from the *Diyanet,* Eligür (2010) states that between 1983 and 1990 every year 135 Quran courses on average were established, and their number increased from 2610 in 1980 to 4998 in 1990 (p. 125). However, in his speech on the Tenth National Education Council, Neşet Çağatay (1981) revealed the actual number of Quran courses as approximately 100.000 in 1980 alone, highlighting the *Diyanet's* turning a blind eye to the unofficial courses (p. 302). In his remarks, Ahmad (1988) described the situation by stating that "in the past decade the expansion of religious education has been on such a scale that it is said to overtaken secular education" (p. 765).

Financial aids and free accommodations provided by the *Süleymancı* and *Fethullahcı tarikats* highlighted a controversial issue surrounding the Quran courses (Ayata, 1996, pp. 49-50; Sakallıoğlu, 1996, p. 244). The former was recognized particularly by accommodating students in isolated dormitories, cut off from the rest of the larger society where it exercised strict Islamic norms. Essentially, *Süleymancılık* functioned on the basis of the Quran courses that it established and operated across the country and Europe. It developed into socio-religious movement and became a crucial means in the spread of the Islamic fundamentalist ideas (Peköz, 2009, pp. 87-89; Aydın, 2011, p. 310). 1966 onwards, it continued its activities as *Kuran Kursları Kurma, Koruma ve Yaşatma Dernekleri Federasyonu* (the Federation of Charities to Establish, Protect, and Sustain Quran Courses). In the aftermath of the 1971 coup, it was renamed as *Kuran Kursları ve Diğer Okullar Öğrencilerine Yardım Dernekleri Federasyonu* (the Federation of Aid Foundations for Quran Courses and Other Schools Students) which

[35] See Koç (2006, p. 254) about the *Diyanet* and the Quran courses operating free from any sort of actual administrative monitoring.

helped to extend the *Süleymancıs'* scope of activities beyond Quran courses. Having its attention shifted to high school and university students now, this facilitated the Islamist mobilization of children with provincial background who resided in the pensions, operated by the *Süleymancıs* (Peköz, 2009, p. 91; *Cumhuriyet*, 20 March 1990; Aydın, 2011, p. 312). After the 1980 coup, the "Quran Courses" rhetoric was dropped and the foundation was reformulated as "Sewing, Embroidery, Typing, Accounting, Apiculture, and Carpet Courses". Consequently, students from all age groups including pre-school children began to attend these "courses" where in reality, the aim was the spread of Islamism through peer interactions (*Cumhuriyet*, 20 March 1990; Koç, 2006, pp. 255-256).

Wider attendance to these communities described above, was promoted by Tayyar Altınkulaç, the head of the *Diyanet* who in 1984 pointed his desire to run Quran courses as actual schools (Koç, 2006, p. 255). Eligür (2010) noted that between 1984 and 1990 the number of students who received education at Quran courses was almost one million. Known as *Kaçak Faaliyet Gösteren Kurslarla İlgili İnceleme Raporu* [The Investigation Report on Unofficial Courses], a Ministry report underlined the rising political concerns regarding the *Süleymancı* activism in the country. This report reflected on the findings of Fahri Görgülü who in 1979 as the Ministry of Interior Undersecretary headed a commission to investigate unofficial Quran courses. Görgülü stated that:

> In our country there are separatist forces that continue their activities in the appearance of providing religious education. This activism is organized. And, because it relies on the exploitation of faith and sentimental reaction, it is getting increasingly prevalent at the societal level. It is welcomed particularly among

> those segments of the population that are culturally isolated and helpless against religious exploitation. Unless this trend is averted, an Islamic reaction against the state is imminent in the future. Hatred against the state and violence towards society are imposed on children at early age in charity foundations that claim to serve as an aid association such as the *Aid Association for School Students*, and the *Pensions Opened for the Mid and High School Students*, and in many foundations that operate as sewing, apiculture, carpet courses. Students who attend these institutions are taught that one day the state will be destroyed (Quoted in Koç, 2006, p. 256).

Concerns about the activism of the *Süleymancıs* and the *Nurcus* were also emphasized in a *directive draft* which the Lieutenant General Nevzat Bölügiray prepared and presented to the NSC in 1982. Defining these *tarikats* as potential threats to the State, the draft proposed the confiscation of their properties and bringing student dormitories under the Ministry of Education. Yet, the coup government's reluctance to take the proposed action still remains a question mark today that Bölügiray later expressed his surprise with the NSC's indifference. Essentially, upon a possible shut-down of the *tarikat* affiliated student dormitories, economic inability of the Ministry of Education to accommodate 60.000 students, and the coup government's aim to maintain close ties with the Islamist circles are often noted as potential answers to this question (*Cumhuriyet*, 20 March 1990).

In his assessment in 1988, Ahmed described the rising trend of Islamism as more of a cultural phenomenon than a political movement with an objective of establishing a state based on the Sharia. He noted that only 7% of those who identified themselves as Islamists indicated an actual desire for an Islamic state. And, this segment included the

illiterate and the semi-literate faction of the general population (Ahmad, 1988, pp. 752-753). Ahmad's observation raises important questions about the character of this new conservative political discourse that came to dominate Turkish politics with its Islamist features.

On the other hand, Altunışık and Tür (2005) argue, the discourse that began with the initiation of the TİS would develop its own dynamics, reaching a level where it would actually give rise to an alternative political system (p. 43). 1983 onwards, during the ANAP years, this rising trend of Islamism would not only continue but also gain a momentum within the state bureaucracy. And, a notable change in the discourse of the right political spectrum would gradually occur in the shape of ANAP, defining a new conservative political conjecture.

4.5 Islamism as a Catalyst for Political Reconciliation: Rise of the 'New Right'

After the return to civilian rule in 1983, a change in the perception of the right-wing politics occurred with very significant implications on the character of the center-right party politics. The Motherland Party's (*Anavatan Partisi* – ANAP) coming to power marked the onset of a new right-wing politics with different traits from the right spectrum of the pre-coup era. *The new right* was envisioned in an attempt to address all conflicting aspects of the mainstream ideologies which arguably accounted for the anarchic quality of the pre-1980 Turkish politics. According to Tünay (1993), it sought to accomplish a compact and rather an "organic ideology" of which different segments of the general population with diverse interests could affiliate themselves (p. 21). Thus, it would serve as a means of a communal harmony on the basis of a much more enhanced political ground and ideological reconciliation.

Tünay (1993) points to a "hegemonic crisis" a phenomenon that was rooted in Turkey's transition to semi-industrial society in the 1960s, which by 1980, had already resulted in millions' migration to industrial zones in the outskirts of cities. This transition that marked a historical break in the traditional means of economic productivity also raised troubling issues due to widespread social discontent and social behaviour with implications on political orientation. In the aftermath of the 1980 coup, *the new right* emerged as a result of the quest to establish a new hegemony to overcome this prolonged problem once and for all. Tünay (1993) stated that:

> A crucial cause of the failure to sustain hegemony, or the creation of a new hegemony, was the ideological feebleness of the bourgeoisie, which could not find relevant ideological elements to unite the interests of subordinate groups around a national-popular program, let alone those of factions of capital. Industrial capital seemed to be the most energetic and leading section, yet a smooth transformation of merchant capital to industrial capital could not be accomplished (p. 18).

It is worth to note that according to Tünay's assessment, *Islamism* emerged as a reaction to the deteriorating income distribution in pertain to capitalism. Here, an important point is that Islamism constituted neither a political force nor it represented a political opposition to the bourgeoisie, or did it refer to an ideological bond among the general public. The 1971 coup did not seek to establish any sort of hegemony as it limited its pursuit to fighting the leftist terrorism. And, when the 1980 coup took place, the coup government sought to trigger a social transformation with no actual guiding ideology in mind. Moreover, having the liberal 1961 Constitution already dismissed, Tünay (1993)

argued it started a search for a new hegemony. Yet, as he continued: “Like all Caesarist solutions, it was bound to lead up eventually to either a historically reactionary or a progressive movement, that is, giving support to either conservative or popular forces” (p. 19).

In efforts to facilitate an enhanced political ground and reconciliation, the idea of the ‘conservation of Turkish cultural heritage’ set the basis of the trajectory that ANAP envisioned for the country. This discourse exhibited a compatible outlook with the TIS with regard to the traditions and norms that it argued defined Turkish national culture. Eligür (2010) reveals that from Özal's point of view, adapting to Western science and technology was crucial. Yet, this should not have prevented Turks from living and thinking like a "Turk" (p. 122). In this context, the emphasized *cultural outlook* which was claimed to be national, and that therefore was to be conserved, in reality corresponded to a political construction, derived from the ideology of the TIS. And, the norm that was stressed as “living and thinking like a Turk" implied socially and politically the expected behaviour from citizens to sustain this conservative outlook. Hence, it was to determine the cultural parameters of what Tünay elaborated as a new hegemony.

This ideology that defined the right political spectrum after 1983 was came to be known as *conservative nationalism* with its sole opposition to the radical left (Tünay, 1993, p. 21). Underpinning a decisive character of this new ideological system and its role in the rise of radical Islam after 1983, Tünay (1993) states that:

> The bias shown in favour of religion and nationalism, as expressed in the party program, in congress reports, and by the new right leaders, attempted to mobilize

> different sections of society around a one nation hegemonic project, particularly with the power of Islam (p. 22).

An ultra-liberal outlook in the sphere of economics and a conservative "strong state" attitude in politics underlined the defining attributes of this envisioned "one nation hegemony." Hence, this would "consolidate social unity and solidarity and thereby eliminate the conflicts of opposing ideologies" (Birtek & Toprak, 1993, p. 195). It supported economic initiatives to promote rapid growth and combat inflation with very limited state intervention. Critically, it recognized wide income dispersion, socio-economic inequality, and unequal distribution of wealth as a state of normality that occurred at the expense of the welfare of particularly the unemployed and semiskilled workers. In his assessment, Tünay calls attention to a paradox that was inherited in ANAP's economic policy. Essentially, its claim to form a social harmony under an expansive hegemony remained rather in theory. In reality, it was to create a massive dispersion in society and lead to increasing poverty with the inflation rate indicating above 80% in 1988 (Tünay, 1993, pp. 22-24).

4.6 Social Dynamics Beneath the Islamist Ascent: Poverty and the Quest for an Identity

Boosted by ANAP’s neo-liberal economic policy, steady increase in poverty contributed to the spread of Islamism and the Islamist anti-system tendencies that found a ground in the writings of the newly rising Islamist intellectuals such as Ali Bulaç, İsmet Özel, and Abdurrahman Dilipak. Highly disturbed by the economic downfall, these writers were calling for a new socio-political order based on Sharia as a remedy for social injustice and escalating poverty. Michael Meeker’s account of the works from these

prominent Islamists is very noteworthy as it reveals crucial highlights and themes of the Islamist discourse, hence, providing a valuable insight into what was actually beneath this movement and what drove it.

Despite the perpetuated religious rhetoric and strong emphasis on Islamism, the *quest for an identity,* and the *class conflict* constituted the core debate in the Islamist narratives. Societal transformation fostered by the influx of millions from periphery to metropolitan areas as a consequence of the semi-industrialization and rapid urbanization set the main theme in this context. Critically, immigrants' failure to adapt to their new settings and inability to take a genuine part in the urban social and cultural life underlined the focal point of the Islamist narratives for which they advocated the Islamization of life as a cure in Turkey. In their quest for identity and struggle for a place in urban society, they emphasized "religious revelation", "religious conviction", and the "fear of God" as the panacea against what they perceived as the "flaw of Western society". This outlook denied urban culture that humanism and secularism defined and reason and scientific knowledge shaped which it concluded reflected on the "ills of Western society".

Narratives by Islamist writers in reality unmasked a complex issue that underlined Turkey's endemic developmental problem and a historical neglect which often surfaced through socio-economic differences alongside the urban-rural cultural discrepancy. Meeker (1991) calls attention to a shift from *Gemeinschaft* society to *Gesellschaft* society, and accurately notes that this phenomenon that began in the post-1960s cannot be simply explained as a rural-urban migration (p. 195). As the former designated a communal life based on a primordial and patronage social order that blood and kinship ties regulated, shift to an urban society, a *Gesellschaft,* bear drastic social consequences

for those from periphery as their provincial identity stays no longer valid. As Meeker points out, in the eyes of Islamist intellectuals, the *problem of identity* was a result of this social transition from the Islamic *Gemeinschaft* to Western *Gesellschaft* of which Islamists saw the latter as artificial and unsuitable for a Muslim community (p. 196).

Born in the south-eastern province of Mardin, Ali Bulaç contributed to numerous periodicals that included *İlim ve Sanat*, *Düşünce*, and *Hareket*, and journals such as *Milli Gazete*, *Zaman*, and *Yeni Devir* (Meeker, 1991, p. 197). Bulaç (1987) wrote his first book, *Çağdaş Kavramlar ve Düzenlemeler* (Concepts and Orders of Our Times) in his early twenties where he stressed *class conflict* and *capitalism* as the main sources of social distress in the 1980s, and depicted Islam as a cure. In *İslam Dünyasında Düşünce Sorunları* (Intellectual Issues in the Islamic World) Bulaç (1985) argued the notion of the "fear of God" to be a distinctive feature of a Muslim that distinguished him from the followers of other faiths.

As Meeker's study (1991) revealed, concepts with strong connotation to *human progress* and *enlightenment* such as science, humanism, democracy, secularism, modernity, morality, art, liberty, and civilization according to Bulaç were false notions presenting a challenge to divine authority and causing a psychological confusion and chaos at a global scale (pp. 200, 202). From the viewpoint of Bulaç, in contrast with such modernist notions, Islam could actually serve as a means of returning to "cultural authenticity" and "justice" in an effort to address contemporary issues.

In the same vein with Bulaç, born in 1940 in the south-eastern province of Maraş, Rasim Özderen advocated the construction of an Islamic community. He notably stressed on a necessity to reinstate the self-esteem of Muslims against their bleak image in the

eyes of *the educated-urban* as ignorant and backward. More specifically, Özderen suggested the Islamization of Turkish society as a remedy for *aşağılık duygusu* (inferiority complex) that he argued the believers experienced after their encounter with the urban life-style. Furthermore, he stated that this could only be accomplished through the recognition of the distinctiveness of the Islamic outlook. Essentially, Özderen pointed to a sentiment of the "fear of God" as a unique feature of Islam that he suggested was absent in Western societies. Hence, according to Özderen, this particular neglect accounted for what he argued a lack of morality in the West. As a result, in the absence of such religious conviction, science and rationality served as a catalyst for savagery and horror in the Western world. And, with no recognition of a divine authority, *humanism* caused cruelty and barbarism.

Born in the province of Kayseri in central Anatolia in 1944, İsmet Özel was another notable figure who was originally known as a successful Marxist poet the 1960s onwards. From the late 1970s to the early 1980s he wrote for the daily newspaper *Yeni Devir* where he suggested a new social order based on the Islamic tradition. Composed of a collection of his essays, in *Üç Mesele: Teknik, Medeniyet, Yabancılaşma* (Three Problems: Technique, Civilization, Alienation) Özel (1978) argued that achieving a communal order in concert with Islamic ideals should be the principle goal for the believers that eventually would instigate an Islamic way of thinking.

In his analysis of Özel's work, Meeker (1991) states that Özel's remarks carried an imprint of a distressed man who saw Islam as an option in the aftermath of what he saw the collapse of all feasible ideological alternatives since the 1960s in the country (p. 211). Özel pointed alienation, civilization, and technique as three features that he

suggested shaped Western society. Thus, "alienation" denoted the mindset of a Western man whose ignorance to divine revelation paved the way for the Western humanism by centring man at the heart of political and socio-cultural life. According to Özel (1978), humanism led to a sense of alienation and exploitation against which an Islamic society constituted an ideal moral community with no class conflict or power hierarchy as a feasible option to the *false modernity*.

4.7 Party Formation and Political Trajectory: *ANAP* in Relation to Islamic Socialization

While positioned at the centre-right, ANAP's dominant coalition adopted a trajectory along the same lines with the ideology of the TIS. As Türsan notes, ANAP not only reflected the discourse of the TIS, but it also highly contributed to the new conservative make-up of the right political spectrum. In other words, it transmitted the religious traditional outlook into the state bureaucracy. Representing the party's conservative right-wing, the *Holly Alliance* took vital part in this process (Türsan, 2004, p. 200). It played a crucial role in the consolidation of conservative politics in the post-1983 state, and defined the tone of the new political right with respect to its weight within ANAP.

Despite ANAP's claim to represent four distinct ideologies[36], Özal's efforts to keep the party united would actually strengthen this particular right-wing faction. It was a

[36] Calling it the "1983 spirit", ANAP aimed to distance itself from the political tendencies of the 1960s and the 70s (Türsan, 2004, p. 200). Therefore, its electoral strategy was built on a successful display of a new political identity that presumably favored compromise as opposed to confrontation of the pre-1980 coup era when polarization and anarchy had dominated the political scene. See Ergüder (1991, p. 153). Thus, Özal emphasized that ANAP exhibited four different ideological trends. See Ergüder (1991, p. 153); Eligür (2010, p. 119); Kalaycıoğlu (2002, p. 45). The ideological spectrum of the party included the democratic

political coalition of ideologically two extreme trends from the pre-1980 era. Loyalists from the political Islamist National Salvation Party (NSP) and the ultranationalist National Action Party (NAP) returned to politics in 1983 at the ranks of ANAP by forming its conservative wing (Eligür, 2010, p. 119). Yeşilada (1988) noted that Özal adopted the TIS in order to maintain this rather fragile coalition between the NSP and NAP sympathizers within ANAP whose political outlook otherwise were traditionally at odds. Özal's adoption of the TIS came hardly as a surprise considering his early affiliation with the former NSP as a candidate from İzmir in 1977.

Yeşilada (1988) states that while Özal's embracement of the TIS remained discreet, his cabinet was becoming increasingly associated with the right-wing bureaucrats with strong affiliations with the *Intellectual's Hearth* (pp. 345-372). Additionally, Özal's personal ties with the *Nakşibendi tarikatı* highly contributed to the formation of ANAP's right-wing. According to Ayata (1996), the *Nakşibendi* link played a decisive role in determining at least three or four ministers in the Özal Cabinet (p. 45). Notable figures such as Yıldırım Aktürk, Adnan Kahveci, Hüsnü Doğan, Hasan Celal Güzel, Ekrem Pakdemirli, Saffet Arıkan, Abdülkadir Aksu, Mehmet Keçeciler, Abdülbahri Koşar, Galip Demirel, and Vecdi Gönül were among the parliamentarians who formed this right-wing coalition, known as the "Holly Alliance" (Eligür, 2010, p.

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left and the liberal right at the centre, and the Islamists and the nationalists at the far right which together made ANAP an appealing political choice for the mass public. Essentially, ANAP served as a gateway for distinct political camps that given the military's political scrutiny had no place to go but join the party as the only resort (Eligür, 2010, p. 119; Altunışık and Tür, 2005, p. 46). Having their activities banned and parties shut, political camps from both the right and the left spectrum merged under ANAP's roof. The 1983 elections were pseudo-competitive where in the absence of pre-coup parties and their leaders only the Nationalist Democracy Party (*Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi* - MDP), the Populist Party (*Halkçı Parti* - HP), and ANAP took place. Given the political ties of the MDP and the HP with the military, Özal was able to portray ANAP as the only genuine democratic choice (Türsan, 2004, p. 200). ANAP was a blend of ideologically conflicting political factions and different camps from the pre-1980 coup period.

121). Keçeciler who served under the former NSP led this coalition in ANAP (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002, p. 46).

1983 onwards, as the extensive growth in the numbers of Quran courses, *imam-hatip* schools, and mosque-building[37] indicated, Ahmad (1988) noted that Özal's political trajectory was truly reactionary (p. 765). Also, the "'Islamization of education" as Ahmed put it, became a notable concern in this decade.[38] On the primacy of this outlook, Mehmet Bedri Gülteking (1987) pronounced the very same concern, stating that "today religious ideology is striving to broaden the area of its sovereignty, pushing to the very edges and corners of science" (p. 234). In the same vein, Salt (1995) pointed out Özal as the most crucial figure beneath the rise of political Islam in the 1980s. He stated that "if the growth of Islamic feeling in the 1980s carries the imprint of any one person in particular, it is the late Turgut Özal" (p. 17). Salt called attention to the growing number of Islamic journals such as *Zaman* and *Türkiye* and the rise of new Islamist intellectuals such as Ali Bulaç, İsmet Özel, and Abdurrahman Dilipak (p. 19).[39]

The introduction of Islamic banking highlighted another crucial aspect in pertain to the rising Islamist sentiments. In this framework, *Faisal Finance of Turkey*, the *Al Baraka Group*, and the *Islamic Development Bank* were the main Islamic financial institutions that operated in Turkey with privileges and exemptions in order to channel Saudi capital. Additionally, notable Islamic banks that opened a branch in Turkey included *Bank Mellat* from Iran, *Saudi American Bank*, *Bank of Bahrain*, *Habib Bank*

[37] In addition to the figures noted earlier for the Quran courses and the *imam-hatip* schools, Ahmad (1988, p. 765) noted that in 1988 the number of mosques had already superseded the number of schools in Turkey as the official figures for mosques were 60,161 while the figures remained 58,455 for the latter.
[38] Ahmad (1988, p. 766) points out the dichotomy that rational knowledge on one hand, and superficial teachings of religion on the other caused in the school curriculum.
[39] See Göle (1997, pp. 53, and 56).

from Pakistan, and *Kuwait B. C. S.* (Ataman, 2001, p. 371). Salt (1995) stated that Islamic financial institutions which began to operate in the post-1980 coup period were also entitled certain degree of Turkish ownership. For instance, *Faisal Finance* acquired 10%, *Al Baraka Türk* 20%, and *Kuwait Finans* 30% of ownership (p. 20).

Faisal Finance of Turkey had ties with the *Dar al-Maal al-Islami*, a giant umbrella organization of Saudi origin that represented fifty-five Islamic banks around the globe. The *Al Baraka Türk Private Finance House* operated on the basis of an alliance between Saudi and Turkish shareholders among whom Korkut Özal, the brother of Turgut Özal, was a notable figure. Also, with ties to the pan-Islamic *Rabıta,* the Saudi-based "Rabıtat al- 'Alam al-Islami" (World Islamic League), the *Islamic Development Bank* stated its goal "to enhance the individual or collective social and economic development of the Islamic countries in accordance with the principles of Sharia" (quoted in Yeşilada, 1993, p. 187). Yeşilada (1993) accurately noted that although Turkey did not officially recognize the by-laws of the *Islamic Development Bank*, its affiliation and membership with this "Sharia-influenced" organization remained very controversial considering the secular character of Turkey's political and social structure (p. 187).

At this point, a crucial aspect that one needs to acknowledge is that while Islamic banks were principally financial institutions, their agenda involved a much broader context that focused on *Islamic socialization*. They carried out a socio-cultural mission as a means of spreading Islamic values in the region. About the role of Islamic banking, in *Islam and Contemporary Society*, Salem Azzam (1982) stated that:

> It does not view economic development as separate from social development for to do so would be to put greater concerns on returns to the individual than society

> as a whole. Thus, the Islamic bank should be as much a social bank as an economic or financial bank (p. 13).

Despite his *Nakşibendi* credentials and cultural conservatism, Özal remained a controversial figure who very often displayed a vague outlook if not contradictory. Ramazan Gözen noted that his worldview carried an amalgam of both Western and Islamic value systems. According to Gözen (2003):

> He was neither fully an Islamic nor secular, but embraced the value systems of both; he was neither fully a traditionalist nor modernist, yet he represented both; ... (and) he was neither an Eastern nor Western, but adopted the attributes of both culture (pp. 312-313).

Gözen further suggested that a blend of dichotomies which shaped Özal's character also determined his political outlook, explaining his controversial style (p. 313). Muhittin Ataman (2003) stated that Özal's perception of Islam exhibited traces of Western liberalism which in result took up a *non-religious* form (p. 358). Also, liberalism did not constitute an obstacle to holding conservative values. Ataman argued that Özal's conservative outlook was far beyond what traditional conservatism would suggest (p. 358). In his assessment Mustafa Erdoğan (2003) depicted Özal principally as a liberal figure despite his political discourse with strong conservative affinity (p. 18).

Nevertheless, toward the late 1980s, political liberalism evidently defined Özal's pursuits which also sharpened the power struggle between the liberal faction and the Holly Alliance within ANAP. An important evidence which revealed Özal's different outlook from that of the Holly Alliance was that his support for Turkey's integration with the European Community (EC). Özal stated that: "Turkey's importance for the West

cannot be limited with the geostrategic and military cooperation; Turkey at the same time also shares the Western ideals" (Dağı, 2003, p. 264). According to İhsan Dağı (2003), Özal was a notable figure with his devotion to liberal democracy and a Western-oriented foreign policy which he saw essential for Turkey's technological and cultural development. As a consequence, Turkey applied for the full membership to the EC on 14 April 1987 (pp. 265-266).

4.8 Acknowledgement of Politicized Islam as an Actual Threat

In the second half of the 1980s, Özal also began to distance himself the conservative wing of his party. Ahmad (1988) stated that in many occasions he was embarrassed by the statements of his own ministers such as Vehbi Dinçer and Mehmet Keçeciler (p. 767). According to Ahmad, Özal tolerated such reactionary figures in order to establish a monopoly over the Islamist votes in the elections. In fact, in the 29 November 1987 general elections the Islamist Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi* - RP) failed to pass the 10% threshold to claim parliamentary seats as ANAP successfully split the Islamist votes (p. 767).

It is worth to mention that despite its victory in the early elections on 29 November 1987, ANAP's downfall had already taken its course with an increasing pace. Essentially, the return of the banned pre-coup leaders such as Süleyman Demirel, Bülent Ecevit, Alpaslan Türkeş, and Necmettin Erbakan to political arena in 1987 constituted a major challenge to the integrity of ANAP. A referendum on 6 September 1987 resulted in favor of lifting the ban despite Özal's campaign to keep it. Thus, as Turkey's political landscape changed, ANAP began to struggle to hold on to its "four strands" claim, and the power struggle among its ideological factions reached to surface alongside a new

identity crisis. Consequently, no longer ANAP could successfully display its pluralist identity. Having its social democrat faction already lost to the CHP and the DSP, the internal conflict among the liberals led by Yılmaz, pre-fascists led by Sıvgın, and the Islamists under Keçeciler would further hinder ANAP's strength.

With regard to Turkey's changing political landscape, the Social Democratic Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Parti – SDP*) and the True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi – DYP*) that were founded in 1984 challenged ANAP in the local elections of 25 March and received 22% and 13% of the votes respectively. In 1985, the SDP united with the HP and formed the Social Democrat Populist Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti – SHP*) under Erdal İnönü. The same year, the Democratic Left Party *(Demokratik Sol Parti – DSP*) was founded by Rahşan Ecevit, the wife of banned Bülent Ecevit who was the chairman of the former Republican Populist Party. Following the referendum, with the changes Özal made to the electoral law, ANAP continued to maintain its majority in the parliament by claiming 36% of the vote in 1987. Led by İnönü, the CHP received 25% and the DYP under Demirel gained 19% of the vote. While this result marked a decline from 45% in ANAP's vote since 1983, the party nevertheless claimed a higher percentage of parliamentary seats. However, the 26 March 1989 local elections confirmed ANAP's diminishing power as it came the third with 22% of the vote. Türsan (2004) argued that ANAP's early image as a democratic political option in reality was a delusion, caused by the political conditions of the pre-1983 elections (p. 201). And the "four strands" which implied ANAP's pluralist political base was in Kalaycıoğlu's (2002) terms a myth (p. 52).

On the other hand, initially recognized as a marginal party, the RP's electoral results followed a steady increase throughout the 1980s. It did not participate in the 1983 general elections due to the coup government's political restrictions. Yet, it gained 4.4% of the votes in the municipal elections on 25 March 1984. This figured reached to 5.7% in the 1986 municipal elections. With the return of Erbakan as the chairman, the RP increased its vote to 7.2% in the 29 November 1987 general elections, and 9.8% in the 26 March 1989 municipal elections (Gülalp, 2001, p. 433; Öniş, 1997, p. 743).

Already in 1987, growing awareness over the rising trend of radical Islam was evident in public life that led the state to take caution towards Islamist elements. Both Evren and Özal expressed deep concerns about the threat of Islamic reaction. Emphasizing on this growing anti-system political tendency, Evren ordered a change in school curriculums as a long-term precaution to ensure a secular youth (*Cumhuriyet*, 9, 10 January 1987). Corresponding to changes in the political climate, Özal chose mainly close friends and liberal figures to form his second Cabinet in December 1987. While religiously conservative figures such as Mehmet Keçeciler and Vehbi Dinçer lost their posts, the new Cabinet included eleven new bureaucrats, known by their liberal and moderate views such as Mesut Yılmaz, Ekrem Pakdemirli, İmren Aykut, Adnan Kahveci, and Yusuf Bozkurt Özal. Also, Kaya Erdem, a close friend of Özal and a liberal, replaced Mehmet Keçeciler as new vice Prime Minister (*Cumhuriyet*, 22 December 1987).

As politicized Islam was on the rise, the revival of the Kemalist doctrine also began to take its course towards the end of the 1980s. And, as Akşin (2007) pointed out, the abandonment of political conservatism in favor of a new liberal outlook marked the end of the TIS' role in Turkish politics (pp. 291-292). However, it is important to note

that as the state now recognized "political Islam" as an eminent threat, the Islamists had already gained a notable foothold in every aspect of life that included politics, economy, media, and education. Zürcher (2008) observed that with the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the political-left was no longer regarded as a threat to the Turkish state (p. 414). Furthermore, given their momentum in the Arab world and the Central Asia, Islamic movements marked the rise of a new political concern.

The threat of Islamic fundamentalism was to replace the threat of communism in the Turkish context in the 1990 onwards.[40] And, Özal's acknowledgement of this newly emerging concern, and thus, his alienation from the *Holly Alliance* marked the onset of a new political consciousness by the end of 1980s. The ultimate downfall of the *Holly Alliance* occurred with the leader of the liberal faction, Mesut Yılmaz's election as ANAP's new chairman in 1991.

[40] Known by their strong commitment to secular ideals, a series of assassinations of journalists and scholars in 1991 validated this conjecture. Among them, Islamic scholar Turan Dursun, an academic of law and politician Muammer Aksoy, journalist Çetin Emeç, and a retired academic of theology Bahriye Üçok lost their lives. Also, writing for *Cumhuriyet,* Turkey's leading investigative journalist Uğur Mumcu was assassinated in 1993. Mumcu was a very notable figure as he revealed Rabıta's link with Turkey in 1987. See Lapidot (1997, p. 69); Mumcu (1987).

CHAPTER 5

THE POLITICAL ISLAM IN THE 1990s: GLOBAL MARKET ECONOMY AND TURKEY'S CHANGING CULTURAL REALM

5.1 Introduction: Islamism as a New Means of Social Expression and a New Reference Point in Propaganda

The historical course which led to the maturity of "political Islam" in the Turkish context was a complex one that could not be reduced to a single phenomenon alone. In this regard, the globalization of the world economy, the processes of neo-liberal economic restructuring and the cultural globalization constituted decisive elements that amplified Islamist socialization in Turkey throughout the 1990s.[41] Crucially, they instigated a trend with strong religious leanings which in the shape of the RP continued to determine the Islamist discourse. As a consequence, the political context which traditionally revolved around the left-right dichotomy no longer represented an accurate picture.

Additionally, the global market economy which now emerged as a strong determinant of economic activity also accounted for the dramatic weakening of the state apparatus. Thus, transnational institutions and local organizations as the new dominant players in the financial sector overshadowed the traditional state mechanism by crossing all national barriers.[42] In result, the state's declining capacity to provide services to its citizens together with the diminishing appeal of the political left presented an opportunity

[41] See Öniş (1997, p. 745).
[42] Discussions on the impact of the global economy on nation-states can be found in Hobsbawm (1994), and Wallerstein (1995).

for those movements that were once considered marginal. They included religious fundamentalism as an alternative for effective governance.[43]

Rural segments of Turkish society and the urban poor most benefitted from this phenomenon which summarized an irony beneath the impact of globalization on the cultural realm. On the one hand, it promoted harmony by bringing people closer to each other on the basis of individualism and consumerism, and emphasized liberal democratic values. On the other hand, the cultural pluralism and diversity that it raised reinforced customary practices that fostered a political conjecture based on one's expression of her individual identity. Gülalp (2001) identifies *sub-national* such as ethnicity, and *supra-national* such as religion as two broad categories that shaped identity politics (p. 435). This process was of uttermost importance to politics with 'social identity' and 'culture', thus, became a new reference point in policy-making and propaganda.

With the onset of the 1990s, the growing electoral support for the RP corresponded to this notion that derived from a common Islamic identity as a new means of self-expression. In this context, it was precisely the poor segments of the general population, and the professionals who exhibited a modernist outlook but nevertheless failed to integrate with the urban life-style that found their social expressions within this Islamic framework which served as a venue to compensate their sense of being 'excluded'. In the outskirts of metropolitan cities where rural immigrants mostly settled, aid packages in the forms of money, food and jobs by the RP municipalities became a new means to strengthen Islamism as a communal identity. It is noteworthy and crucially important that while the aid campaigns decisively contributed to the RP's electoral

[43] See Öniş and Türem (2002, pp. 440-441), and Gill (1992, pp. 269-283).

success in the 1994 municipal elections, as Gülalp (2001) states, a big majority of the electorates who voted for the RP in reality did not even know about the RP's party program (p. 442). Gülalp (2001) accurately points that the "Welfare used class-related issues as a vehicle to promote a project of change in life-style and to establish its own version of an 'Islamic' society" (p. 438).

In the face of declining strength of social democracy and the centre-right politics, the RP was able to present itself as a radical alternative by filling the political vacuum. With its new social-democratic tone and egalitarian rhetoric, the RP could easily appeal to the 'excluded' masses of different backgrounds and interests who saw a chance to re-claim their place in society under the roof of an Islamic identity (Öniş, 1997, p. 748).

It is critically important that beyond the points of moral arguments, in the Turkish context Islamism corresponded to rather a complex notion in which material well-being and access to socio-economic welfare proved decisive in shaping one's Islamic identity. Hence, the trend of Islamism in this period did not simply occurred as a matter of faith, but as Öniş (1997) argues, it was largely linked to the outcomes of the global market economy and the neoliberal restructuring of the economic sphere that together determined the Islamic socialization in the country (p. 749). Also, the rise of cultural traditionalism alongside a class of new Islamic bourgeoisie born out of this global conjecture and enhanced the Islamization process by calling for a return to 'cultural authenticity.'

The economic transformation of the ANAP years caused a severe deterioration in socio-economic conditions, as a result of which, the 'disadvantaged' turned to marginal

formations as a remedy. Henceforth, political Islam became a “language of social disadvantage” that was commonly felt among the newly emerging entrepreneurs, and new immigrants in urban centres (Buğra, 2002, p. 189). Underneath of all, the ANAP's economic policy was based on “economic laws which excluded welfare, income distribution, employment policies and recognised overtly the necessity of inequality” (Türsan, 2004, p. 199). The state did not withdraw from economics, but rather, it changed its pattern of interaction. Clientelist relations remained, but unlike the pre-1980 era when the rents were distributed according to an impersonalized criterion, it continued on a personalized basis (Gülalp, 2001, p. 438). This shift in Eligür's (2010) terms exacerbated the “malfunctioning state”, and was beneath the massive corruption scandals (p. 136). Elaborating on the issue, Keyman and Koyuncu (2005) draw attention to “clientelist and corruption-producing mode” of the state apparatus as a defining character of Turkish politics with negative implications on the social sphere (p. 107). Heper and Keyman (1998) observed that:

> In recent years politics in Turkey has been conducted almost completely with a view not only to narrow party interests but also to sheer material interests and that the resources at the disposal of governments have been seen by both politicians and bureaucrats as nothing more than booty to be distributed among themselves (p. 270).

In the context of political corruption and the bleak economic picture the RP could present itself as the cleanest option. In fact, the RP would launch a new political campaign in 1990 with the "Just Order" (*Adil Düzen*) party slogan. While the political aim remained to impose an Islamic culture, the accomplishment of this agenda was

dependent on the successful framing of the deteriorating economic conditions and social grievances. Hence, the RP focused its efforts on the exploitation of social agitation and poverty (Eligür, 2010, p. 136; Gülalp, 2001, p. 439). This discourse proved particularly useful in the RP's transformation from a marginal party into a mass party by the mid-1990s.

5.2 Changing Mode of Economic Production and the Rise of Islamic Bourgeoisie

Parallel to the changing global conjecture, the emergence of subcontracted production as a means of money accumulation was a crucial factor in the rise of a new Islamic business sector. This process contributed to the consolidation of the RP as a legitimate part of Turkish politics particularly in the eyes of the urban poor. With the rise of flexible forms of production through small and mid-scale manufacturing, working-class politics in its traditional meaning became obsolete. Rather, operating on the basis of patriarchal and paternalistic modes of labour, subcontracted production channelled the voice of *the disadvantaged* which in the face of fading trade-union organizations and secure employment, now became a prime target for the RP.[44] Subcontracted production was widespread particularly in organized industrial districts in the immigrant

[44] Elaborating on changes that globalization inflicted in the economic context, Gülalp (2001, pp. 436-437) points out a transition from *Fordism* to *post-Fordism*. It highlighted a phenomenon with drastic consequences on the means of economic activity which in result fostered *flexible specialization* as a new concept of production. Essentially, the process gave rise to more flexible forms such as petty entrepreneurship and self-employment. The same discussion can be found in Buğra (1998, p. 522). Also see Buğra (2002, p. 191) for a discussion on key aspects of flexible production.

neighbourhoods of Istanbul and inner towns of Anatolia.[45] Specialized on the export-oriented small and medium-size entrepreneurship, these units formed an informal economy and financial backbone of the RP.

Conditions that paved the way for Islamic bourgeoisie was first set in the political context of the 1980s with the integration of Islam into financial sector. The *Sufi* organizations, particularly the *Nakşibendi* and *Nurcu tarikats* became the catalyst of the Islamist capital during the *ANAP* years. Faik Bulut (1997) referred to this era as the fourth phase of the Islamic capital between 1983 and 1994. According to Bulut, the rise of the *tarikat* bourgeoisie and its entry into the financial sector was a manifestation of Özal's neo-liberal economic policy. Hence, a concept of an *Islamic economic model* formed, and the *Nakşibendis* and the *Nurcus* emerged as the main beneficiary of the Islamic banking (Bulut, 1997, pp. 260-262). They played a decisive part in the processes that channelled the inflow of capitals from the Gulf countries and religious conservatives into Anatolian towns.

Between 1983 and 1993, clientelist relationships with the *ANAP* government, and personal ties with Özal family served as a new medium of economic activity. As it advanced further on social and cultural grounds, it critically enabled *Nakşibendis* and *Nurcus* to acquire political legitimacy (Yankaya, 2013, pp. 71-72; *Cumhuriyet*, 9 December 2007). Thus, with strong affiliations to the former, *Al Baraka Türk,* and with links to the latter, *Faisal Finans*[46] were founded in 1983 and 1985 respectively with

[45] In the early 1990s, small and mid-sized enterprises from Konya, Kayseri, Denizli, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Kahramanmaraş, and Çorum with their flexible forms of production and low labor costs got integrated into the global market through subcontracting. See Gümüşcü (2008, p. 4).

[46] See Bulut (1997, pp. 285-286) about the *Faisal Finans - Nurcu* link, and its bureaucratic basis.

exemption from the bankruptcy law.[47] Also, *Kuveyt Türk* and Dar al-Mall were among other notable Islamic financial institutions that were established in this decade with legal privileges.[48] What was crucial to note was that these institutions took root in the financial sector through the channel of *tarikat* networks. Bulut notes that for the first time Özal family, well-known *Nakşibendis,* allowed the entry of Saudi capital into Turkey's financial sector.[49] Also, Özal and Topbaş families of which the latter was *Nurcu* were also the founding partners of *Al Baraka-Türk* based in Saudi Arabia (Bulut, 1997, p. 275).

It is critical to note that besides the apparent financial scope and initiatives, these institutions with their strong ties to the *Sufi tarikats* served as a means of Islamic socialization in Turkish society. In his book *Görünmeyen Üniversite,* (Invisible University) Ersin Gürdoğan, the director of *Faisal Finans of Turkey* (1991), pointed out the objective of the *tarikat* networks as to alienate society from secular thought through peer-interaction and socialization. Also, highlighting the socio-cultural and political projection of these institutions on Turkey, writing for London-based *El Şark El Avsat,* Muhammad Abdo Yamani (1987) stated that:

> Turkish government is now required to live in accordance with religious sentiments and its obligations. Yet, these steps are rather cautious and hesitant. As Arabs, our duty is to enhance Turkey's drift (to Sharia) and (therefore,)

[47] See Bulut (1997, pp. 212-213) about the privileged status these institutions acquired, and their quick rise.
[48] See Bulut's (1997, pp. 274-275 discussion on their structural links with the *tarikats*.
[49] A detailed analysis of Özal family's association with the *Nakşibendi* capital group, and the latter's bureaucratic links in the political realm can be found in Bulut (1997, pp. 277-283). Turgut Özal served as Prime Minister between 1982 and 1989, and then, as President between 1989 and 1993. Occurring initially in the financial sector, the prevalent presence of the *tarikats* in all bureaucratic circles in this period was decisive in the advance of political Islam in the Turkish setting. Bulut (1997, p. 279) notes that ANAP under Özal's leadership was a *coalition of tarikats* of all orders that comprised the *Nakşibendi*, *Süleymancı*, *Nurcu*, *Işıkçı*, and *"Fethullahçı"*.

> engage in special (business) deals. Inserting Arab politics into Turkey's official politics is enough to eliminate the well-recognized obstacles in that country against its return to Sharia. (Hence,) relations between the Arab states and Turkey need to be developed on political, cultural, and economical grounds in order to facilitate this (Turkey's) hopeful return (to Sharia). Because all these activities serve to Sharia (Quoted in Bulut, 1997, p. 276).

In the 1990s, the number of Islamic finance institutions continued to grow, including *Anadolu Finans* in 1991, and associated with the *Nurcus*, *İhlas Finance*[50] in 1995 and *Asya Finans* in 1996 (Yankaya, 2013, p. 75). The *Server Holding* under the *Nakşibendis* involved 38 firms that operated in various sectors, including health, media, publishing, and tourism.[51] Also, active within the *Nurcu* structure, often referred to as the *Fethullahçı*, the *Gülen Group*[52] comprised around 500 firms and owned more than 20,000 schools in Turkey (Atasoy, 2004, pp. 19-20).

Islamic financial institutions were not the sole agent in attracting the Islamic capital. Additionally, with their interests outside the financial sector, mid-size enterprises such as *Kombassan Holding* in Konya and *Yimpaş* in Yozgat secured financial investments on a trust-based system through the informal medium of religious networks (Buğra, 2002, p. 532). Essentially, the hidden wealth that religious conservatives kept under their pillow formed the main source of funding for such business organisations that was essential for their economic endeavours. Also, referred to as *green money*, the

[50] Highlighting the remarkable scope of these institutions in public life, see *İhlas Holding's* ventures in the banking, business, and the media sectors in Bulut (1997, pp. 297-307).
[51] A list of companies operated under the umbrella of the *Server Holding* can be found in Bulut (1997, pp. 284-285).
[52] A brief review of the *Gülen Group*'s business initiatives in different fields with links to various bureaucratic circles can be found in Bulut (1997, pp. 286-294).

amount of Islamic capital that these enterprises collected through informal methods was estimated to be several billion pounds by the late 1990s (*The Guardian*, 17 May 1999).

The Turkish Grand National Assembly Investigation Commission in its 400-page report revealed the names of 78 Islamic holdings that collected 4 billion Euros from 3 hundred thousand households without their consents (*Cumhuriyet*, 9 December 2007). The figures were noteworthy pertaining to the rising concerns about their use in financing the radical Islam. Together with the *Kombassan Holding* and *Yimpaş*, *Büyük Anadolu Holding*, *Endüstri*, *Sahya*, *İttifak*, and *Jet-Pa* were among other notable enterprises that served as facilitators of Islamic capital transfer to Turkey (Yankaya, 2013, p. 76). Hence, these enterprises proved especially instrumental to channel massive money accumulation from Turkish immigrants in Germany to mid-Anatolian towns that in the 1990s emerged as exporters of manufacturers to the global markets (Yankaya, 2013, p. 75). Yeşilada (2002) noted that in the second half of the 1990s alone, the amount of money that three million Turkish workers sent through unofficial channels was $5 billion (pp. 77-78). Setting the destination of the Islamic capital, and the backbone of economic activity in the mid-, East and the Southeast Anatolian regions, provincial towns such as Denizli, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Kahramanmaraş, and Çorum were often described by the media as the *Anatolian Tigers*.[53]

Structure wise, *Anatolian Tigers'* practices exhibited strong resembles with those of economic units from the pre-industrial age (Buğra, 2002, p. 191; Buğra, 1998, p. 522). Distinctive to pre-industrial agriculture societies, social interaction patterns in these

[53] Between 3 and 23 June 1996, the daily *Milliyet* published a series of economic analysis of 20 Anatolian towns as the "Grand Awakening" of the Anatolian industry. See also *Cumhuriyet,* 9 December 2007.

economic units were comparable with less rigid and flexible forms of manufacturing that was essential to the global market economy. Thus, the *Anatolian Tigers* quickly advanced as the Turkish counterpart of the East Asian capitalist models. The East Asian capitalist models constituted a better fit for the Anatolian entrepreneurs in comparison to Western models that operated on a rationalist and positivist basis (Buğra, 2002, p. 194). Particularly, the role of family-ties and religion in the former was comparable with their conservative communitarian outlook which possessed a hierarchic and primordial structure. Thus, it placed a primary emphasis on personalized interactions and mutual trust, and perceived economic activity from an ideological stand point as a mission (Buğra, 1998, pp. 522, 530; Öniş, 1997, p. 760).

Specifically, as opposed to the norms of individualism, secularism and liberal democracy of Western models, the East Asian models set a trajectory for the *Anatolian Tigers* on cultural and political grounds. The RP was the political beneficiary of this export-oriented economy and the new Islamic bourgeoisie that manifested itself in 1990 with the establishment of the Independent Association of Industrialists and Businessmen (*MÜSİAD*). Known as the bastion of religious conservatism in Turkey, the inner-Anatolian towns of Konya and Kayseri, together with the *Anatolian Tigers* formed small and medium-sized enterprises under the *MÜSİAD*'s umbrella (Öniş, 1997, p. 759). Besides its economic endeavours, the *MÜSİAD* was notable given its role in Islamic socialization in Turkey. In 1998, the *MÜSİAD* included almost ten thousand companies with annual revenue of $2.79 billion (Eligür, 2010, p. 203).

5.3 Quest for an Identity in the Silhouette of the *MÜSİAD*: Islamism as a Means of Self-Expression and Socialization

It is crucial to understand the position of the *MÜSİAD* in Turkey. Having formed principally as an economic interest group, it proved to be a notable contributor to the advance of Islamism given its ideological outlook, societal vision, and political discourse. From a different perspective, it emerged as an economical reflection of the socio-cultural gap that had long been occurring between, as Eligür (2010) puts, the *(urban-intellectual) elite* and the *(rural-uneducated) masses* (p. 49). Forming the core of this association, among the *Anatolian Tigers* the half of the manufacturing industries in Konya, Denizli, Çorum, and Gaziantep involved *subcontracted entrepreneurs* that produced for both domestic and foreign markets. Illustrating the peripheral social status of these economic units, a third of them held only an elementary level of education with another third involving middle or high-school graduates (Gülalp, 2001, p. 437).

The *MÜSİAD* as a pro-Islamist voluntary association comprised these economic units that came particularly from the lower stratum with Islamism serving as a means of cultural identity and social expression. Elaborating on the formation of the Islamic bourgeoisie, Yankaya (2013) argues that cultural capital defines social capital that in return transforms into economic capital (p. 67). Furthermore, a common identity, ideology, and personal affiliations advance a sense of belonging among the *MÜSİAD* entrepreneurs. Distinctive to these economic units, religious conservatism served as a means of social coherence through which Gülalp (2001) argues the "*MÜSİAD* attempted to turn peripheral status from a disadvantage into a network of solidarity" (p. 439). In this context, regarding the term "Islamic bourgeoisie", Yankaya (2013) observes that the term

"Islamic" denoted not the *MÜSİAD* members' affiliation with the faith of Islam, but their endorsement of Islam to differentiate themselves as a separate social cleavage in society (pp. 18-19).

The underlying motive beneath this phenomenon remained the existing socio-economic discrepancies between the urban and Anatolian segments of the population. Thus, that is widely held that the *MÜSİAD*'s institutional identity reflected a cultural dualism, and it is perpetuated as a movement of the 'Anatolian people' as the 'true representative of Turkish society' against the 'elitist Istanbul capital' as the 'alien oppressor'.[54] In this framework, religious conservatives and the National View sympathizers formed the social capital within the *MÜSİAD* cadres, making it a catalyst for building the "Islamic counter-elites" against the "Republican elites". Moreover, politicized Islam served the "Islamic counter-elites" to legitimize their claim to power (Yankaya, 2013, pp. 87, 53). In the early stages, notable figures from whom the founding members sought support included Ali Coşkun, İsmail Kahraman, Aydın Bolak, Fethullah Gülen, and Necmettin Erbakan.[55] Also, peer-influence among the Islamist circles that involved Tayyip Erdoğan, Kahraman Eminoğlu, Kadir Toprak, Nusret Bayraktar, and Ali Bayramoğlu played a decisive role in the establishment of the *MÜSİAD*.[56]

On economic grounds the *MÜSİAD* envisioned a new order based on the *homo Islamicus* model which Buğra (2002) argued underlined a social project (p. 194). Led by

[54] See Yankaya (2013, p. 87).
[55] See Yankaya (2013, p. 83) about their roles within the Islamic movement and their *tarikat* affiliations.
[56] In her study of the Islamist socialization beneath the MÜSİAD, Yankaya stated that the *tarikats* constituted the main venue where versions of Islamic ideology were created, and then passed on to others through peer-interaction. Her interviews with three founding members also highlight the function of family, the *imam-hatips*, peer-interaction, *tarikats,* Islamic associations such as *Milli Türk Talebe Birliği* and *Milli Gençlik Vakfı*, and works of various Islamist Arab intellectuals as the material and inspirational highlight of this social capital (Yankaya, 2013, pp. 39, 52-53, 81-83).

the emergence of a new consumer culture, changes in the lifestyle of Islamic bourgeoisie fostered a controversial debate regarding Muslim identity and interests.[57] This highlighted a new discourse in which Islam served for guilt-alleviating purposes in correspondence to acquiring personal wealth. It also served as a means of coherence and mutual trust among the member enterprises to compensate the lack social legitimacy associated with the money-making process (Buğra, 2002, p. 192).

Efforts to promote accumulation of wealth and consumption, and search for moral justification for such pursuits found a voice in *MÜSİAD*'s publications, particularly in the articles of Mustafa Özel, and Sabahattin Zaim.[58] Reference to Islam became a vital component of a marketing strategy both at the domestic and global level. For instance, commercial ties with Malaysia and Indonesia, exportation of *helal food*, Islamic vacationing as a new tourism sector, and the idea of fashion in Islamic attire as a sign of status and class all emerged by the mid-1990s (Gümüşcü, 2008, pp. 9-10). In this process, use of sectarian divisions, and direct emphasis on Islamic motifs and slogans to promote a market rivalry enhanced Islamism in Turkey.

In a wider context, the introduction of Islamic attire as a cheap and appealing option in the eyes of the general public through fashion companies such as *Tekbir Giyim*, encouraging polygamy, and building 'Islamic' beaches, suburbs, and hotels all served to spreading Islamic socialization.[59] This trend exhibited a consistent pattern with what the RP chairman, Erbakan in 1996 described as "giving Islam in a chocolate, instead of given it directly" (quoted in Bulut, 1997, p. 325).

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[57] See Gümüşcü (2008, p. 7).
[58] See Mustafa Özel (1994). Also see Sabahattin Zaim (1994).
[59] Illustrations can be found in Bulut (1997, pp. 323, 363-371).

The *MÜSİAD*'s relevance did not occur solely on economic grounds. Rather, its significance grew further as its discourse produced political consequences. The *MÜSİAD*'s socio-cultural outlook according to Keyman and Koyuncu (2005) presented an "alternative model of Turkish modernity" (p. 108). An anti-secular and irrational worldview defined this 'modernity' that manifested itself based on an extensive network that comprised the Islamic *tarikats*, business circles and state bureaucracy. In the political sphere, it resulted in a notable drift to the far-right by reinforcing Turkey's changing social culture towards religious conservatism. The *MÜSİAD*'s part in collective mobilization with its ideological roots in political Islam proved notable. Crucially, it represented an economic and cultural base from which the Islamic bourgeoisie could challenge the secular order that it viewed as a means of political oppression.[60]

On ideological grounds, the *MÜSİAD* proposed a societal change against what it perceived a "Western style modernization" at the very heart of the foundation of modern Turkey in 1923. It exhibited a trajectory in line with Islamic fundamentalism. Sentiments of radical Islam found a voice in the reactionary outlook of the *MÜSİAD* entrepreneurs. Essentially, the *MÜSİAD* was critical of Turkey's existing socio-political order (Buğra, 1998, p. 528; Öniş and Türem, 2002, pp. 448-449). Moreover, it endorsed Islamism as a value system and called for a return to what it saw the *indigenous cultural identity*. Among the founding members of the *MÜSİAD*, Murat's remarks elaborated on this issue that underlined a *national identity* debate. The most importantly, it revealed the outlook

[60] Yankaya's (2013, pp. 36-38) interview with Cahit Bey among the *MÜSİAD* founders provided important insights. It revealed the socio-cultural inspirations that contributed to the establishment of the *MÜSİAD*. It also provided a valuable understanding regarding the negative perception of the Islamic bourgeoisie towards the secular dynamics of political and cultural life in Turkey.

of the Islamic bourgeoisie which stood at odds with the Republican principles that defined modern Turkey. Murat stated that:

> Our essential motif is Islamic Identity. This is what differentiates us from others. I am first human, and then a Muslim. My conception of the world and my interpretation of life and myself cross over this identity. When you look at my discourse, you will see that it derives from the Quran and the verses as a backbone. All scientific data, economic realities, and everything that we need to do correspond to Islam. That (Islam) is what makes us who we are. I am convinced that that is also the way out. I believe that Islamic values will glorify Turkey... I believe in the fundamentals... If you call me a fundamentalist from that point of view, I agree with you. I sincerely believe in the fundamentals. That is because we lost those fundamentals, we are now incapable of finding our (Turkish) identity (quoted in Yankaya, 2013, p. 47).[61]

Murat's statement did not only reflect his affiliation with the movement of radical Islam, but also indicated the societal make-up of those cadres that formed the *MÜSİAD*. Murat testified that:

> After my return from the United States, I joined with tarikats. I took part in various charitable foundations and began to work on youth that to me looked abandoned. In that period, I adopted a mission. Between 1986-1990 I had discussions with youth. I told them about the world. And I encouraged them to stay active in business, and life, and increase their religious knowledge. This continued until I founded the *MÜSİAD*. Then, I developed my identity as a businessman (quoted in Yankaya, 2013, p. 45).

[61] "Murat" is used as an alias in order to conceal his actual identity and position within the *MÜSİAD*.

In line with this outlook, the *MÜSİAD* advocated Turkey's re-orientation from the West towards the Islamic world. Erol Yarar's rhetoric as chairman of the *MÜSİAD* highlighted this position. Yarar (1996) stated that:

> So-called rationalist, Cartesian philosophy has drawn individual and social life into chaos by rejecting the value and existence of what cannot be measured or calculated. This overturning of religious values, and their replacement by a secular 'morality', transformed Homo sapiens into homo brutalis (pp. 50-51).

Yarar's statement was noteworthy given that in the political realm it conformed those sentiments and tendencies represented by Islamic fundamentalists. The *MÜSİAD*'s Islamist stance became more evident in its clash with the Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (*TÜSİAD*), representing large corporations based mainly in Istanbul. Founded in the early 1970s, the *TÜSİAD* was a secular and Western-oriented organization that saw joining the European Union central to the Turkey's socio-economic future and liberal democracy, whereas, the *MÜSİAD*, turning its face to the East, dismissed liberal democracy as an alien concept. Underlining this sharp difference in the positions of these two business organizations, *Türkiye'de Demokratikleşme Perspektifleri* [Perspectives of Democratization in Turkey] constituted a notable document. Published by the *TÜSİAD*, its introduction (1997) stated that:

> Turkey cannot accelerate its economic growth and acquire the competitive potential required for the 21st century through more intense co-operation with countries that are more backward than herself, but by co-operating with more advance nations. We should design our strategies not according to our present

> position, but according to the objectives we set for ourselves. We should take, as our model, developed Western democracies.

Contrasting the *TÜSİAD*'s position, the *MÜSİAD* envisioned a different Turkey. In his criticism of the *TÜSİAD*'s outlook, Murat stated that:

> (Endorsing) a Western model of life-style, a Western rhetoric, and (aiming) integration with the West, with no expression of national values, and holding no conservative identity can never be a model in Turkey. The *MÜSİAD*'s conservative identity is an essential factor in its rapid development (quoted in Yankaya, 2013, p. 45).

Critically, the *MÜSİAD*'s disapproval of Turkey's secular socio-cultural structure as "Western," and endorsement of religious conservatism as "national" in fact exhibited a political depth. The *MÜSİAD* perceived a conservative religious identity as a defining feature of Turkish society and casted itself as the champion of Turkey's true national and moral values. The *MÜSİAD* was a manifestation of a quest for identity that is purported to occur between the *public* and the *elite*, and therefore, between *Islamic values* and *Westernization*.[62]

Elaborating on the *TÜSİAD*'s outlook, it endorsed the revival of traditional values that also included cultural Islam. However, it was the politicization of this notion that the *TÜSİAD* viewed as an obstacle to the democratization process as it would have conflicted the pluralistic notion of Turkish society. In other words, 'identity politics' and 'religious identity' on cultural grounds did not necessarily clash with secularism. Yet, "political Islam" in its current discourse constituted a direct challenge to Turkey's liberal

[62] For illustrations see Yankaya (2013, pp. 88-89).

democracy. The *TÜSİAD* emphasized the "liberal model of citizenship" which involved achieving individual liberties over cultural identity claims, dictated by the "self-rule" (Keyman and Koyuncu, 2005, pp. 115-116).

The *MÜSİAD*, on the other hand, envisioned Turkey as an Islamic community where citizens were to act accordingly. In this regard, as Keyman and Koyuncu (2005) point out, concepts such as *democracy*, *pluralism*, and *freedom* in the eyes of the *MÜSİAD* needed to be understood within the framework of Islamism as a *communitarian ideology* (p. 119). In a broader context, economic and political stability, transparency and accountability constituted the vital features of the "optimal state" that *TÜSİAD* envisioned for Turkey (*TÜSİAD*, 1995). Öniş (1997) states that while placing an emphasis on social justice, the *MÜSİAD* made no mention of issues that related to human rights and individual liberties in its reports. On the other hand, the *TÜSİAD*'s outlook did not priorities vital issues such as income distribution and social justice (p. 760).

Focusing on the link between the *MÜSİAD* and the RP, they both shared a common philosophy in their desire to re-rotate Turkey's foreign policy away from the West towards the Islamic world. Also, the *MÜSİAD*`s discourse was comparable to that of the RP in its portrayal of Islamic bourgeoisie as the true representative of Turkish society as diligent and unprivileged economic units. Highlighting this point, among the *Anatolian Tigers*, the head of the *İttifak Holding*, Seyit Mehmet Buğa stated that:

> In Turkey there is a conflict between those who seek dynamism and those who seek to maintain the status quo. The TÜSİAD would like to maintain the status quo. We demand the TÜSİAD to leave the domestic markets to the Anatolian bourgeoisie and concentrate on the foreign markets instead. Our concern is due to

> the gap that they cause in the distribution of wealth. They have the support of the state and they have the technology and the domestic market network; it requires a special support to compete with them (quoted in İlhan, 1997).

Reflecting on this contestation that occurred on economic and political grounds among the *MÜSİAD*, *TÜSİAD*, and the Welfare Party, writing for *Cumhuriyet*, Atilla İlhan (1997) stated that:

> ...the Welfare's *Anatolian Tigers*' actual concern is to replace the TÜSİAD in the economic realm that long capitalised on the country's resources. ...hence, bureaucratic privileges and advantages that the TÜSİAD enjoy should be allocated to conservative firms, formed in the countryside. This could only be possible by the Welfare's taking part in the government. And, only then, the equation of the government would change in appearance; and bureaucracy and rural bourgeoisie would come to power, yet the status quo would persist in structure.[63]

With the formation of the RP-DYP *(REFAHYOL*) coalition government in 1996, the *MÜSİAD* became the favourite of the RP wing. İlhan (1997) points out the immense wealth that the top echelons of the Islamic bourgeoisie acquired in a short period. Also, emphasizing on the economic incentives that the *Anatolian Tigers* obtained, he noted that the *Kombassan*, *Yimpaş*, *Ülker*, and *İttifak Holdings* received 10 trillion liras from the government. Furthermore, the *MÜSİAD* accepted the D-8 project, and it received the RP's

[63] İlhan's primary concern is the massive gap in the distribution of wealth in the country. And he suggests that as far as the economic motives are concerned, the *MÜSİAD* and the *TÜSİAD* are no different because the structural status quo continues to remain. His remarks are also noteworthy given that they reflect on the close association between the *MÜSİAD* and the Welfare Party. From a different perspective, he criticizes the Welfare Party's *Just Order* policy as a hype. See also Bulut who criticized the *MÜSİAD* for engaging in a rivalry with the *TÜSİAD* by contributing to the status quo rather than offering a different world system.

support for its endeavours that included *İpekyolu Birliği* (Silk Road Union) and *Medine Pazarı* (Medina Market). *Medine Pazarı* referred to an economic model, inspired by the market system that Prophet Muhammad set in the first Islamic state. Chairman of the *MÜSİAD*, Erol Yarar stated that:

> In Islam there is a notion of *Medine Pazarı*. Our Prophet set a market in Medina and said that "Muslims should do their business here." Also, he set its rules according to which no one would hold any privileged position, the rivalry would be free, and no authority would intervene with the (market) prices. We propose the model of *Medine Pazarı* as an economic model for the 2000s. Islamic union will happen in 2020. We will accomplish this with countries such as Turkey, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Because we will hold a position above the state, this will also include Muslim businessmen in America. Inspired by the *Medine Pazarı*, it will be a system that goes beyond the state boundaries. It will be global, hence, compatible with the realities of the world (quoted in Bulut, 1997, p. 312).

The *İpekyolu Birliği* was another project that Erol Yarar proposed as an alternative to joining the EU (*Cumhuriyet*, 12 August 1995). In the viewpoint of the *MÜSİAD*, business ties with Iran and Iraq were crucial. And relations with African states held a vital place in economic terms. The *MÜSİAD* projected Istanbul as the centre of finance and hajj for the Islamic world (Bulut, 1997, pp. 312-313). Along the same ideological discourse, the D-8 project in Erbakan's definition was an “Islamic Club against the West” (Bulut, 1997, p. 336). The RP wing of the *REFAHYOL* government made the *MÜSİAD*'s economic engagements in foreign trade possible. Within the framework of the *Islamic Common Market*, Erbakan's visits to Islamic countries in 1996

facilitated business agreements between the *MÜSİAD* and Iran, Pakistan, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia that worth 750 million Dollars.[64]

The RP's political strategy involved imposing *cultural Islam* on society by linking the corruption and the deteriorated economy to Turkey`s secular political system and its adherents. In this framework, the *MÜSİAD* constituted a formidable force for the RP by sharing the same socio-political trajectory. Hence, the *MÜSİAD* would criticize the *TÜSİAD* for the RP`s closure in 1998. According to the *MÜSİAD*, the latter played a significant role in what it regarded as the interruption of the democratic order by infusing a fear that the state`s secular regime was in danger (Gülalp, 2001, p. 439).

5.4 Failure of the Welfare State, and the Socio-Demographic Core of "Political Islam"

Against the background of the neo-liberal economic restructuring, social democracy lost its political edge as its discourse became almost identical with that of the centre-right (Öniş, 1997, p. 746). The intensified rural migration to the cities, the massive discrepancies in distribution of wealth, and the diminished social services in the fields of education, health, and social security narrowed down the political space for the former. In result, social democracy lost its relevance to the poor in the current neo-liberal economic conjecture. As differences in the trajectories of the *social democrats* and the *centre-right* faded, the former alienated itself from economically deprived groups. Thus, a correlation

[64] For statistical analysis and detailed review of these business agreements see *10-20 Ağustos 1996 Tarihleri Arasında Yapılan İran-Pakistan-Singapur-Malezya-Endonezya Resmi Ziyaterleri: Başbakan Prof. Dr. Necmettin Erbakan'ın Basın Toplantısı* [The Iran-Pakistan-Singapore- Malaysia-Indonesia Official Visits between 10-20 August 1996: Prime Minister Prof. Dr. Necmettin Erbakan's Press Conference] (Ankara, Prime Ministry Press Centre: 1996).

existed between the diminishing strength of social democracy and the steady rise in the RP's votes (Öniş, 1997, p. 756).

Fragmented[65] due to personal rivalries among different leaders, inadequacy of social democracy to provide public services remained decisive to the RP's transformation into a mass party. As Öniş (1997) noted, 1990 onwards, with the *Just Order* party slogan the RP adopted a very populist rhetoric and shifted its attention to those segments of the population which had traditionally formed the electoral base of social democracy (p. 754). The RP`s new discourse proved especially effective among the working class and the immigrant segment of the city populations that found themselves socio-culturally unable to integrate with the urban elites, and thus, in need of an alternative route to upward mobility in society (Gülalp, 2001, p. 441; Öniş, 1997, p. 760). Consequently, the rural inner, Eastern and South-eastern Anatolia, and the urban poor formed the electoral base of the RP. Kayhan Delibaş (2009) stated that 10 million rural immigrants, now living in slums in the outskirts of the cities, made up 35% of the total urban population (p. 97).

At the centre-left, the CHP did not present any feasible program to address the socio-economic grievances, hence it drove potential left voters out of its political scope. Regarding the SHP, a corruption scandal that involved the *Istanbul Water and Sewage Agency* under the party's municipal control tarnished the party's image in the eyes of the

[65] On the centre-left, the Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti*- DSP) under Bülent Ecevit, and the Social Democratic Populist Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti*- SHP) led by İsmet İnönü represented the social democracy with a very similar party programs. Further adding to the vote-split in the social democratic spectrum, led by Deniz Baykal, the CHP also returned to the political scene in 1992. Similar fragmentation also occurred at the centre-right between the True Path Party (*Doğru Yol* Partisi) under Süleyman Demirel, and Özal's ANAP with almost identical party programs. This political fragmentation which divided ideologically the same votes among different parties decisively contributed to the RP's success both in the 1994 local elections and the 1995 general elections.

general public. Additionally, the SHP's decision to let the runners from the Kurdish separatist *People's Endeavour Party* participate in the 1991 general elections from its own list caused a public disappointment. The SHP's primary emphasis on issues such as human rights, health care and education over those with direct benefits to electorate's current material-being underlined its electoral decline by the mid-1990s.

According to *Türkiye Sosyal Ekonomik Siyasal Araştırmalar Vakfı* (*TÜSES*) (1996), only 2.2% of the electorates who went to the polls in the elections of 1994 and 1995 prioritized *democracy* and *human rights* as the main concern. Only 1.6% of the electorates considered *education* as the main problem in the country (pp. 15, 54). Essentially, *high cost of living*, *terror*, and *unemployment* were the top concerns of respectively 46.7%, 16.7%, and 12.0% of the electorates who went to the polls (*TÜSES*, 1996, pp. 15, 54). The 1992 by-elections and the 1994 local elections verified the RP's rise at the expanse of the mainstream parties which otherwise had merely claimed around 13% of the national vote in 1991. In 1992, the RP's 26.95% vote share in Istanbul outweighed the ANAP, SDHP, DYP, and DSP that gained 23.43, 17.31, 14.47, and 14.24% of the votes respectively. In result, the RP won the municipalities of *Bağcılar*, *Bahçelievler*, *Güngören* and Tuzla in the outskirts of Istanbul. In 1994, the RP came third with 17.87% of the votes behind the DYP and the ANAP by claiming the municipal governments in 28 of the 76 provinces, and wining 327 municipalities including Istanbul and Ankara. The SHP, DSP, and the CHP came behind the RP by claiming 13.4, 8.84, and 4.6% of the votes respectively (Salt, 1995, p. 22; Türsan, 2004, p. 234). In 1995, the RP won the general elections by claiming 21.4% of the votes which corresponded to 158 seats in the 550-seat parliament (Lombardi, 1997, p. 193).

The elections in 1994 and 1995 were notable as socio-demographic factors played a decisive role in the results. Vote distribution among the parties exhibited a demographic pattern on the basis of provincial and educational divides within the general electorate. Hence, it provided some valuable insights into societal elements that help to define "political Islam" in the Turkish context. Most votes for the RP came from rural provinces where the social democratic DSP and the CHP's votes were the lowest (*TÜSES*, 1996, p. 106). The RP most appealed to the young electorates between the ages of 18 and 20 while this figure stayed at the lowest for the DSP and the CHP (*TÜSES*, 1996, p. 25). The RP was the choice of distinctively the electorates with the lowest level of education while the social democratic parties, particularly the CHP, exhibited the highest rate of the electorates with higher education (*TÜSES*, 1996, p. 110). In terms of the years of schooling that they received, the RP also ranked at the bottom (after the HADEP), while 28.8% of those who voted for the RP did not receive any schooling at all (*TÜSES*, 1996, p. 110). Drawing attention to the level of education of the general electorate, 77% of the electorates who voted in the elections only had an elementary or lower level of education, while only 4.3% were university graduates (*TÜSES*, 1996, pp. 14, 32).

Figures delineated above are noteworthy given that they elucidate the intellectual setting which gave rise to Islamism by the mid-1990s. Moreover, they help us to conceptualize the "rise of political Islam" as a phenomenon that is in fact very much linked with the socio-economic welfare and the level of education in a society. Salt (1995) described the divide between the 'urban intellectual' and the 'rural uneducated' in 1995 as a *Kulturkampf* as opposed to a 'dichotomy' (p. 23). The phenomenon became well pronounced with the encounter of millions of uprooted rural immigrants with the

urban life-style, a process which Salt (1995) argued, led to the "Anatolianization" of the cities (pp. 23-24). Sencer Ayata (1996) also pointed out *provincialism, illiteracy, poverty, and backwardness* as the defining features of the general electorate beneath the rise of Islamic movement in this period (p. 53).[66]

5.5 Socio-economic Distress: A Prerequisite for "Political Islam"?

The correlation between the rising trend of 'political Islam' and the decline in the welfare state can be best illustrated against the economical background during the DYP-SHP coalition government between 1991 and 1995. 1990 onwards, Turkey entered an era of major economic recession with three digits inflation rates and interest rates reaching up to 150% (Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 84). In 1992, the government embarked on a policy to address all social cleavages in a very ambitious attempt. As of 1993, wage and salaries, interest payments and transfer payments made up for roughly the complete budgetary funds, leaving only 11% for public venture (Heper & Keyman, 1998, p. 269). In 1994, the war expenditure against the Kurdish separatists alone was $8.2 billion, a figure that corresponded to 20% of the state budget (Rouleau, 1996, pp. 80-81).[67]

The deteriorated economy turned into a financial crisis in 1994 with the Turkish lira losing its value by 100% against the U.S. dollar and the inflation rate reaching 149.6% (Rouleau, 1996, pp. 80-81; Lombardi, 1997, p. 199). The GDP dropped 27.3% from the last year's record of $3,004 to 2,184 (Eligür, 2010, p. 154). A negative growth rate for the first time since the late 1970s was recorded, and with the gini coefficient rate

[66] Emphasizing on the demographic trait of 'political Islam', Ayata (1996, p. 53) notes that the RP and its predecessor, the NSP, have scored their highest percentage of votes since 1973 in socio-economically the least developed 10 provinces in Turkey.

[67] Rouleau noted that in 1996, Turkey would rank among the eight most indebted nations.

of 0.50 World Bank rated Turkey among the countries with the least equal distributions of income (Öniş, 1997, p. 751). Turkey ranked the 10th in the list of countries with the worst income disparity in the world as a consequence of rapid urbanization (Türsan, 2004, p. 231).[68] Illustrating the income disparity in 1994, the richest 5% received 30.3% of the total income, and the top 1% received 16.6% (Gülalp, 2001, p. 441). The government initiated an austerity programme that obliged privatisation and cuts in wages in line with the directives of the IMF and the World Bank (Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 84). However, the pursuit of market-oriented policies further distanced the coalition government from the poor as it exacerbated the unemployment (Türsan, 2004, p. 233).

In 1994, a major corruption scandal that involved the Primary School Teachers Health and Social Aid Fund also discredited the DYP in the eyes of the general public. Hence, the general public began to equate the government's economic policies with corruption, and associate the mainstream parties in general with incompetence due to their bleak economic performance. Elaboration on the link between poverty and the increasing threat of Islamic fundamentalism, writing for the National Defence Academy, an analyst noted that:

> On the way towards a cautious re-Islamization, a secular and modernistic, but still Islamic state can only be successful if economic success can be achieved fairly soon... Without an economic upswing, a massive increase of radical and fundamentalistic ideas and structures must be expected, both in Turkey as such

[68] See Gülalp's (2001) emphasis on the scale of urbanization, and the share of urban wages and the distribution of household income in 1994. He noted that as of 1990, for the first time the urban population surpassed the rural population as cities now came to accommodate 59% of the population with an urban growth rate of 70% since the past decade (p. 441). This phenomenon proved critical for the RP's electoral performance in 1994 and 1995 given that this influx changed the constituency profile dramatically in urban settings.

and in the republics of the former Soviet Union (Quoted in Lombardi, 1997, p. 201).

CHAPTER 6

"POLITICAL ISLAM" AND ITS DISCOURSE IN THE SHAPE OF THE RP

6.1 Introduction: Socio-Economic Downfall as a Catalyst for the RP's Political Grip

Socio-economic grievances and poverty provided a major opportunity for the RP to capitalize on for electoral gains. The RP allocated 1 trillion 550 billion liras worth aid package for the 4 million 6 thousand 644 *official poor* in January 1997 for Ramadan. Essentially, 1 trillion liras were distributed in the form of food aids, 550 billion liras given out to cover fuel expenses, and every *official poor* received an additional 500 thousand liras in cash (*Milliyet*, 9 January 1997). In a different occasion, more than 3 million citizens applied following the RP's quest to provide aids for those who were in need of financial support (Bulut, 1997, p. 332).

Çakır (1994) calls attention to financial aids during the electoral seasons that were significant particularly at the municipal level (p. 185). For instance, just before the elections in 1994 and 1995, the RP mayor of the *Bahçelievler* suburb of Istanbul, Muzaffer Doğan, gave out 1,500 tons of coal for winter and 250-kilogram food aid for 3,500 households. Doğan also provided clothing for 100 students and money for the circumcision of 1,000 children (p. 185). Mehmet Sekmen, the RP mayor for the Kartal suburb of Istanbul, was known by distributing gold coins and money in addition to the coal and food aids (Akıncı, 1999, p. 77).

Regarding the massive aid campaigns delineated above, Heper (1997) notes that the RP looked more like a "social welfare agency" than an actual political party (p. 36).

Essentially, *poverty* was a crucial determinant at the polls which explained the RP's increasing competitiveness and its political appeal to the electorates. In his illustration of the electoral results, Bulut (1997) noted that the RP was virtually buying the votes from the poor (p. 333). Further elaborating on that, similar remarks were voiced by a senior Turkish journalist who in 1995 stated that: "if you cannot pay your gas bill or your electricity bill, they may call you in and discuss it and forgive it. Once they do that, you will vote for the RP forever" (Quoted in Lombardi, 1997, p. 201).

Consequently, the 1994 local and the 1995 general elections raised concerns about the RP's perception of the electoral processes as a means to install a majoritarian rule. Erbakan's remarks on October 1997 served to justify such concerns about the RP's agenda. Erbakan stated that:

> We are declaring our new objective as '8 million registered party members'. Once we reach this figure there will be no need for elections. We will get the mandate directly from the public notary (Quoted in *Milliyet*, 13 January 1997).

This statement raised a question about the appropriateness of the RP's trajectory with the idea of a pluralist society despite it's *Just Order* propaganda which drew explicitly upon hyper populism.

6.2 The RP's Quest to Become a Mass Party

Lunched before the 1991 general elections, the *Just Order* slogan marked the RP's take on the social democratic cause with its primary emphasis now on the economic hardship and poverty. Yet, underneath this rhetoric, Erbakan was about to target Turkey's secular political regime as the source of social grievances. Erbakan's anti-secular and

anti-Western remarks, and his call for a fundamental change in Turkey raised serious questions about the RP's true motivation. Along this line, his slander of Turkey's secular regime often occurred in a non-explicit manner. For instance, on 10 October 1993 during the RP's fourth congress, he compared Turkey with France in 1789 and Turkish bureaucrats, who he described as ignorant, with Marie Antoinette (*Refah Partisi 4. Büyük Kongre*, 1993, p. 53). The "imitators of the West" had been a frequent rhetoric in his references to other political parties (*Refah Partisi 4. Büyük Kongre,* 1993, pp. 57, 75, and 84). It was an ideological statement that rendered the secular regime void. He dismissed Turkey's political structure as a "dupe regime" which he described as the minority rule over the majority (*Refah Partisi 4. Büyük Kongre*, 1993, pp. 78, 83, 85, and 87; *Erbakan'ın Konuşmaları: Mayıs 1993*, p. 24). On 9 May 1993, in his criticism of the DYP leader Demirel, Erbakan stated that:

> He increased the foreign debt from 48 billion dollars to 58 billion. People are making 8.5 billion dollars interest payment on external, and 150 trillion interest payments on domestic debt. The interest payments on domestic and external debts together make up the state's total tax income. Imagine a state where the poor is deprived of his job and economic welfare while all the money is presented to foreign powers and their mason partners as interest payment. Such order can no longer survive. ... Look at those 9 million unemployed. This is the outcome of 50 years of imitation (Quoted in *Erbakan'ın Konuşmaları: Mayıs 1993*, p. 156).

In the eyes of Erbakan, the same imperialist and Zionist forces, which he argued caused the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, were still in place today beneath Turkey's problems. The Arab-Israeli conflict remained central to his comprehension of world-

politics. An anti-Western and anti-Zionist sentiment shaped his perception of the outside world.[69] He characterized multilateral institutions such as the UN and the NATO as a means of modern-day imperialism. Considering those speeches in which Erbakan slandered the West, the *imitators of the West* discourse raised vital clues. Not only it revealed the RP's xenophobic outlook, but also it highlighted the RP's contempt for the social order in Turkey. It is worth to note that the RP was Erbakan's third Islamist party representing the *national view* tradition after the MNP and the MSP. And, like its predecessors, the RP argued that a moral decay due to *Westernization* existed in Turkey. In 1993, Erbakan stated that:

> ... Nowadays, extremist elements and Zionists in Western societies are provoking the West against Islam. That's why NATO determined green as the enemy colour. (And) therefore, the West is openly planning to eliminate Islam. For the last thousand years nothing has changed in the West, (as) it still exhibits the crusade mentality. On the other hand, another fact is that there is an immense moral decay in the West. What is the West, in reality? In reality, the West is the embodiment of drugs and all sorts of immoral activities. The West is a society with no recognition of family and marriage. In reality, the West is a mafia. It is a system of the oppressor and downtrodden. That is why the West brings happiness neither to its people nor to humanity. (And) these are all the facts that caused the downfall of the imitators of the West in Turkey. These are the facts beneath the collapse of all political parties but the RP (Quoted in *Erbakan'ın Konuşmaları: Mayıs 1993*, pp. 177-178).

[69] See "Anti-Semitism and the Turkish Islamist *Millî Görüş* Movement: Zionists/Jews *Bacteria*, *Disease,*" in *The Middle East Media Research Institute* (*MEMRI*), Special Dispatch No. 1699, August 29, 2007.

The RP changed its discourse that it inherited from the MNP and the MSP with its traditional focus on religion. Now, acknowledging that in order to become a mass party it had to expand its electoral base beyond the traditional Islamic circles, the RP recalibrated its rhetoric to emphasize on issues that were an interest of a broader public. Eligür (2010) noted that by the 1990s, the RP's Islamic support base corresponded to only 11% of the total electorates at the best (p. 148). Yet, 1990 onwards, the RP's trajectory involved a pursuit of an illiberal agenda through a liberal language to attract the electoral support of those beyond the Islamist circles (p. 152).

As a consequence, secular voters who already felt alienated due to the socio-economic hardship now began to fall within the political reach of the RP. The *Just Order* rhetoric illustrated that change in the RP's political discourse and helped to downplay its Islamic agenda. In this period, when the electoral support for the mainstream parties was in decline, the RP emerged as the main beneficiary of the electoral drift to the far-right politics. Coming fourth in the 1994 local elections, the SHP lost all major cities such as Istanbul and Ankara where the votes of the urban poor determined the electoral results. One year later in the general elections, the DYP lost its political supremacy while the social democratic parties of the SHP and the DSP could hardly pass the 10% threshold to win parliamentary seats (Türsan, 2004, p. 230).

The RP spread the *Just Order* message through face to face contacts with potential RP constituents and sympathizers. A hierarchically structured network activism lied at the very heart of this campaign. It possessed an outstanding grassroots organization with regard to its scope and penetration into society (Eligür, 2010, p. 185). Reaching out to constituents in every single street and individually addressing their socio-

economic demands remained essential to this activism. Hence, database information for every household in a given neighbourhood was kept to monitor constituents' material and emotional status in the RP's district councils.

During face to face contacts, providing those who were in need of food and jobs, and by doing so, cultivating an emotional bond with constituents was an important aspect of the RP campaign. Around one million volunteers worked for the RP in the 1990s. Also, an informal network of headmasters and teachers engaged with public through personal contact at local coffee-houses, university campuses and in pubs. Yeşilada (2002) noted that during its 1995 electoral campaign, the party had at least 300,000 of such volunteers (p. 70).

Pluralism and demagogy constituted the two defining aspects of the RP's propaganda tactic. The RP recognized variations in constituents' social status and intellectual capacity. Thus, certain interaction patterns and appropriate language were adopted to meet constituents' specifics at their own level. In liberal provinces the RP propagandists would dress in a suit and greet people with "good day," while in immigrant neighbourhoods and shantytowns they would put on a long coat and veil, and use "*selamünaleyküm*" as rhetoric. Also, in their public encounters the propagandists were urged to interact in a welcoming and positive manner and not to use any judgemental and intimidating tone. Crucially, they were also to refrain from talking about religion, but instead, focus on politics (Çakır, 1994, pp. 81-83).

Placing a new emphasis on politics as opposed to religion was part of the propaganda tactic that the reformists oversaw to turn the RP into a mass party. It was not

an indication of moderation in party ideology. The actual Islamist motive remained intact in line with the *national view* outlook. The traditionalists envisioned the RP as ideologically contained and politically inward entity. Accordingly, membership to the party should remain exclusive to only those who pursued a sort of Islamic life-style that conformed the RP's vision. The reformists, on the other hand, driven by a political necessity, saw expanding the electoral support base to seculars imperative to their political competitiveness. While methodology rather than ideology differentiated these two factions in the RP, the emphasized pluralism was a hype. The traditionalists believed that once joined the party cadres, secular individuals would adopt an Islamic life-style eventually. Erbakan once said that "there are two kinds of human beings. The ones who are *Welfarist* and those who are yet to become *Welfarist*" (Quoted in Çakır, 1994, p. 81).

6.3 The RP's Discourse of "Political Islam": A New Inference of the Anti-system?

While the RP did not display it officially, public statements in the advocacy of a sharia-based political regime by the RP MPs and mayors brought the RP's legitimacy into question. More specifically, an explicit desire to replace Turkey's secular order with the sharia law found a voice in the provocative rhetoric of numerous party officials. Notable figures included the RP chairman, Erbakan; the MP for the province of Rize, Şevki Yılmaz; MP for the province of Ankara, Hasan Hüseyin Ceylan; the RP vice-chairman, Ahmet Tekdal; the mayor of Kayseri, Şükrü Karatepe; the MP for the province of Şanlıurfa, Şükrü Karatepe; and the Minister of Justice, Şevket Kazan.

Hatred and vulgarity in the expressions of these RP deputies were particularly noteworthy. They revealed the RP's Islamist agenda, and its propaganda style that was

calibrated specifically to meet the level of the naivety and ignorance of the general RP electorate. Ambition to set-up a theocratic regime, and a sentimental exploitation of religion to deceive potential RP sympathisers were evident in Erbakan's statements. On 13 April 1993, in his speech in the RP caucus Erbakan stated that:

> The second important point is this: *Refah* will come to power and the Just Order will be established. Now, the question is whether this change will be violent or peaceful; whether it will entail bloodshed. I would have preferred not to use those words, but in the face of their terrorism, and so that everyone can clearly see the true situation, I feel obliged to do so. Today Turkey must make a decision. The Welfare Party will bring the Just Order. This is a must. (Yet), will the transition be peaceful or violent; will it be accomplished harmoniously or by bloodshed? The sixty million (citizens) must decide on that point (Quoted in Savaş, 2008, p. 180; and in European Court of Human Rights, *Case of Refah Partisi [the Welfare Party] and Others v. Turkey*.)

On another occasion on 13 January 1991, Erbakan said that:

> Unless you vote for the Welfare Party none of your prayers will be accepted. Because that is imperative to become a Muslim. ... The Welfare is an army. (And) you must work with everything that you've got to strengthen this army. Otherwise, you are an adherent of potato religion. The Welfare Party is an Islamic jihad army. Are you a Muslim? Then, you must be a soldier in this army. ... You cannot be a Muslim without giving money for jihad. One's state of being a Muslim is measured by the money that she donates for jihad. ... We are all obliged to become a *Welfarist* because we are all for jihad. Those who serve for the Welfare are going to heaven. Why? Because the Welfare means working in

> order to make the Koranic order a dominant force in the public sphere (Quoted in Şavaş, 2008, p. 181).

Hatred towards Turkey's secular regime was pronounced on April 1994 by Şevki Yılmaz shortly before his election as the RP mayor from Rize. Yılmaz stated that:

> In the hereafter you will be summoned with the leaders that you have chosen in this life. ...You found a Koranic school, you build a hostel, you pay for a child's education, you preach. None of these is part of the chapter on Jihad but of that on the 'amel-i salih' [peacetime activities]. Jihad is the name given to the quest for power for the advent of justice, for the propagation of justice and for glorification of Allah's word. Allah did not see that task was an abstract political concept; he made it a requirement for warriors. What does that mean? That jihad must be waged by an army! The commander is identified. The condition to be met before prayer is the Islamization of power. ... The question that Allah will ask is this: 'Why, in the time of the blasphemous regime, did you not work for the Islamic State?' Erbakan and his friends want to bring Islam to this country in the form of a political party. ...Muslims are intelligent. They do not reveal how they intend to beat their enemy. ...Our mission is not to talk, but to apply the war plan, as soldiers in the army (*Case of Refah Partisi [the Welfare Party] and Others v. Turkey;* Savaş, 2008, p. 182).

Hasan Hüseyin Ceylan was another RP MP who on 14 March 1993 in Kırıkkale dismissed the secular regime and called to dismantle it. Ceylan stated that:

> This homeland is ours but not the regime, dear brothers. The regime and *Kemalism* belong to others. Turkey will be destroyed, gentlemen. People ask: Could Turkey become like Algeria? Just as in Algeria, we got 81% [of the votes],

> here as well we will reach 81%, we will not remain on 20%. Do not waste your energy on us - I am speaking here to you, to those ... of the imperialist West, the colonising West, the wild West, to those who, in order to unite with the rest of the world, become the enemies of honour and modesty, those who lower themselves to the level of dogs in order to imitate the West, to the extent of putting dogs instead of human between the legs of Muslim women - it is to you I speak when I say: 'Do not waste your energy on us, you will die at the hands of the people of Kırıkkale (*Case of Refah Partisi [the Welfare Party] and Others v. Turkey*; Savaş, 2008, p. 183).

On 8 May 1997 in his Parliamentary speech İbrahim Halil Çelik called for the destruction of Turkey's secular and democratic political order. Çelik stated that:

> If you attempt to close down the 'imam-hatips' while the Welfare Party is in power, blood will flow. It would be worse than Algeria. I too would like blood to flow. That is how democracy will be installed. And it will be beautiful. The army has not been able to deal with 3,500 PKK militants. How would it cope with six million Islamists? If they piss against the winds, they will get their faces wet. ... I am a downright sharia adherent. I will fight to the end to introduce sharia (*Case of Refah Partisi [the Welfare Party] and Others v. Turkey*; Savaş, 2008, p. 185).

Hostility towards the Republic's statute law was also well expressed in the speeches and activities of the RP's vice-chairman, Tekdal; the mayor of Kayseri, Şükrü Karatepe; and the Ministry of Justice, Şevket Kazan.[70] While such remarks were explicit in their aim to dismantle the rule of law in Turkey, to what extent Turkey's liberal

[70] See the European Court of Human Rights, *Case of Refah Partisi (the Welfare Party) and Others v. Turkey*; their remarks can be reviewed in Savaş (2008, pp. 184-185).

democracy could endure such a challenge presented a dilemma. In the RP's party program Erbakan (1991) stated that: "it should never be forgotten that democracy is a means, not an end. The real end is the creation of a felicitous order [*saadet nizamı*]" (p. 46). Along the same lines, mayor of Istanbul, Tayyip Erdoğan's speeches encapsulated this dilemma which suggested that the RP intended to highjack democratic political order in order to install an Islamist political regime. In the aftermath of the 1994 local elections, Erdoğan stated that the electorates were voting for the RP as an alternative to the political regime (Çakır, 1994, p. 71).[71]

In Nilgün Cerrahoğlu's interview on 14 July 1996, Erdoğan stated that: "for us democracy is not an objective, but instead an instrument" (*Milliyet*, 14 July 1996, p. 20). Cerrahoğlu questioned the actual motive beneath the change that the RP aimed to instigate by banning ballet, asking women to cover their heads, and removing artistic sculptures at the municipal level. Cerrahoğlu noted that such practices in fact indicated a systematic effort, aimed at dismantling the secular regime. Erdoğan replied by saying that: "regime is man-made", admitting that such change could be possible. He further expressed that Islam constituted a reference for the RP. When asked whether the RP was seeking to change the laws that it saw contradicted with that "reference", Erdoğan replied, "of course, laws are made by humans" by giving recent amendments for the Custom Union as an example.

When Cerrahoğlu questioned the RP's pursuit of an ideological change in line with the party's Islamist outlook, Erdoğan replied by saying that "how well you put it, an indigenous change (that is)". Furthermore, when asked directly whether the RP was

[71] See Şahin Alpay's article in *Milliyet*, 25 July 1996, 20.

considering a Constitutional change, he answered, "would that make any difference? Constitution is also man-made".[72] Indeed, on 6 December 1997, in his speech Erdoğan stated that:

> Our reference (guide) is Islam. Our only goal is an Islamic state. They can never intimidate us. If the skies and the earth open up, if storms blow on us, if the lava of volcanoes flow on us, we will never change our way. My guide is Islam. If I cannot live according to Islam, why live at all? [Turk], Kurd, Arab, Caucasian cannot be differentiated because these people are united under the roof of Islam (Quoted in the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), *Special Dispatch No. 1596*, May 23, 2007).

In 1994, Erdoğan stated that:

> The fact is that 99% of the people in this country is Muslim. You cannot be both secular and Muslim at the same time. You will either become a Muslim, or secular. When both come together, they create reverse magnetism. It is impossible for them to exist together. Thus, it is not possible for a person who says 'I am a Muslim' to go on and say 'I am a secular too.' Because Allah, the creator of Muslim, has absolute authority (Quoted in MEMRI, *Special Dispatch No. 1596*, 23 May 2007).
>
> ... People ask whether Turkey can become Algeria. No, it cannot. (Because) we are coming slowly by assimilating. Now, people (electorates) aspire to change not only the actors but also the scenario. Our work is aimed at changing the scenario. We cannot be a protector of this (political) order. This is a system of

[72] See Cerrahoğlu's full interview with Erdoğan in *Milliyet*, 14 July 1996.

> denial, cruelty, and servant. (Thus), it is the duty of every human to change it (Quoted in *Erdoğan'ın Gerçek Yüzü* in *Cumhuriyet*, 21 August 2001, p. 4).[73]

Erdoğan's another notable speech that conveyed an anti-systematic message included:

> 99% of people living in Turkey say that they are 'elhamdülillah Muslims.' So therefore, the 99% should say that they are also 'elhamdülillah for the sharia'. I am elhamdülillah for the sharia! The sharia means Islam, (and) the rule of God (Quoted in *Milliyet*, 21 November 1994, p. 17).

When asked about how he proposed to preserve social pluralism within the framework of both the (Islamic) ummah and the nation-state, Erdoğan replied: "I do not envision it within the framework of the (Islamic) ummah, but I think of it within 'Islam's state plan'. I envision it within the framework that we define as the *Just Order*" (Quoted in Çölaşan, 2014, p. 150).

Including the concept of the *Just Order*, Atilla Yayla (1997) described the RP's ideas as "complete fantasies" (p. 2).[74] With no actual political merit or rational basis, he argued, they served solely as a means of propaganda to appeal to the electorate. The RP envisioned the *Just Order* as an alternative world system with economic and societal components. Essentially, *the Just Economic Order* reflected upon a utopian amalgam of the capitalist and the Marxist models with no interest rates and capital. Gülalp (1995)

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[73] See also, Oktay Akbal's article in *Cumhuriyet*, July 28, 2009, 2; see *Erdoğan: Millet isterse laiklik tabii ki gidecek* [Erdoğan: If the people want it, of course secularism will go away] in *Hürriyet*, August 8, 2001; see Ali Sirmen's article, *Demokrasi Nedir?* [What is Democracy?] in *Milliyet,* April 24, 1998, p. 22.

[74] In the same vein with Yayla, see also, "Turkey's Islamist Challenge" by Sabri Sayarı in *Middle East Quarterly,* (September 1996). <http://www.meforum.org/314/turkeys-islamist-challenge>. Sayarı (1996) notes that an awkward mix of proposals, a very simplistic view of economics and life in general, and an imaginary world-system characterized the *Just Order* with no touch with the complexities and realities of the contemporary times. About the *Just Order* discourse see Erbakan (1993), and (2010).

noted that it exhibited a very strong xenophobic ethos, and linked the economic downswing in Turkey to a Zionist plot (p. 56).

Further emphasizing on the *Just Order's* unrealistic promises, Heper and Keyman (1998) noted that the RP did not even bother to implement it (p. 270). And, the societal surmise of the *Just Order* relied on an idea of "legal pluralism" which drew from the *Medine Documents*, an ancient agreement between the prophet Muhammed and Jews. Essentially, it bounded every citizen by the rules of the particular legal system of her respective religion (Yayla, 1997, p. 2).

Drawing attention back to the Islamists' instrumentalist perspective of democracy, Iranian deputy minister of foreign affairs, Muhammad Javad Zarif's speech in the World Economic Forum shed light on the project of 'political Islam'. He noted that: "Islamic order came to Iran through a revolution. Yet, it can as well cultivate through democratic means like in Turkey" (Quoted in *Cumhuriyet*, 3 January 1997, p. 6). In line with this quest, the RP sought to enforce an Islamic life-style through its activism at the municipal level that involved prohibiting alcohol, regulating women's dress, and banning Western films, and segregating people in public spaces according to their sex. Essentially, mayors of the RP between 1994 and 1995; and after 1998, its successor the FP, sought a gradual Islamic transformation of the public domain.

Illustrating this effort at instigating an Islamic transformation, the RP Kayseri mayor Şükrü Karatepe denied renewing the alcoholic beverage licences of many restaurants in his province. The RP Ağrı mayor Zeki Başaran rejected granting TV licenses to some stations for their "immoral broadcasts." The mayor of Erzurum, Ersan

Gemalmaz, banned a billboard of the fashion company, LCW, which displayed a young woman in shorts. Mayor of İzmir, Burhanettin Özfatura, banned the retail sale of woman's underwear in the Kemeraltı district that he argued against the national "customs and traditions." Mayor of Kütahya, Süleyman Canan, had the "European Diploma" symbol removed in his province. Canan justified his action by stating that:

> This is a Crusader mentality. They are aiming to convert the people to Christianity by distancing them from their own (Muslim) beliefs. We have to collapse this Byzantine game. We do not want the diploma of Europe which could not stop the flow of Muslim blood in Bosnia (Quoted in Akıncı, 1999, p. 87).

Mayor of the Bolvadin suburb of Afyon, Mehmet Kayacan, had the statue of a bull removed on the grounds that such artistic "idols" were against Islam.[75]

When the RP came as the first party in the aftermath of the 24 December 1995 general elections by winning 21.4% of the votes, other parties' reaction was to contain the RP. When granted with the task to form a government, no party wanted to take part in a coalition with the RP. However, after a short-lived try-out of the ANAP-DYP coalition government (*ANAYOL*), on 28 June 1996 a new coalition government between the DYP and RP was formed under the Premiership of Erbakan, known as the *REFAHYOL*.[76] Following the failure of the *ANAYOL*, the mutual dislike between the DSP chairman Bülent Ecevit and the CHP chairman Deniz Baykal rendered a possible coalition at the centre-left impossible. Different formulas by Çiller such as the ANAP-DYP-CHP-DSP,

[75] See a list of Islamist activism of the RP mayors in Akıncı (1999, pp. 84-87).

[76] The ANAP-DYP coalition government did not last long as the ANAP chairman Mesut Yılmaz insisted on pursuing a parliamentary inquiry that was brought by Erbakan against the DYP chairman Tansu Çiller for corruption charges.

and ANAP-DYP-CHP were also rejected by Baykal and Ecevit as both refused to take part in three-party coalitions. Consequently, when Erbakan was given the task to form a government for the second time, he convinced Çiller into a coalition government by ironically voting against the very same parliamentary inquiry that he himself once initiated against Çiller for corruption charges.[77]

6.4 Targeting Secular Intellectuals and Journalists (1990-1995)

1990 onwards, assassinations of Turkey's most prominent secular intellectuals brought public attention to the extent of reactionary Islamic activism in the country. On 31 January law professor, Muammer Aksoy; on 7 March editor-in-chief of *Hürriyet,* Çetin Emeç; on 4 September Islamic scholar, Turan Dursun; on 6 October an academic of theology and the member of the SHP party caucus, Bahriye Üçok; and on 23 January 1993 writing for *Cumhuriyet*, Turkey's most highly regarded journalist, Uğur Mumcu fell victim to Islamic terror. Six months after Mumcu's assassination, on 2 July 1993 maybe the most horrifying event took place in the mid-Anatolian town of Sivas. 37 individuals, among them many Alevi musicians, intellectuals, and poets, were burnt to death where they were invited to attend the cultural event of the *Pir Sultan Abdal* celebrations. Known as the 'Sivas Massacre,' the event occurred when a large crowd of 10.000 sharia sympathizers after the Friday prayer surrounded their hotel and asked for their “heads” (*Cumhuriyet*, 3 July 1993).

Associated with the RP, students of the National Youth Organization [*Milli Gençlik* Vakfı] were noted to provoke the violence together with the local newspapers

[77] See "Çiller'in Şartı: Kurtarın Beni" [Çiller's Condition: Save Me] in *Milliyet*, 23 June 1996; *Cumhuriyet*, 22 June 1996.

that included the 'Our Sivas' [*Bizim Sivas*] and 'Truth Daily' [*Hakikat Gazetesi*]. Additionally, the RP mayor Temel Karamollaoğlu's part in the event was also notable (*Cumhuriyet*, 4 July 1993). During the massacre, which lasted 8 hours, Islamists attacked Atatürk's statue in the city and called for a sharia rule. Essentially, an atheist intellectual, Aziz Nesin was the Islamists' main target who earlier promised to translate the *Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie into Turkish. Highlighting another notable aspect, led by Şevket Kazan, the Minister of Justice from the RP, a large number of RP officials and party members volunteered for the defence of the Islamists at the court proceedings. Elaborating on the escalating Islamist terror, during Bahriye Üçok's funeral the SHP leader Erdal İnönü stated that:

> In recent years, efforts by those parties in order to replace Turkey's secular regime with a theocratic one, and by targeting youth in the educational realm their advocacy of a theocratic life-style, were all directed at establishing a theocratic political dictatorship through sentimental exploitation. Aided by its collaborators within the government and abroad, this reactionary movement that now targets our politicians and scholars through means of terror raised a deep concern among those with common sense (Quoted in *Cumhuriyet*, 10 October 1990).

The *İrtica Raporu* [Report on (Islamic) Reaction] that Üçok submitted to İnönü three days before her assassination casted light on the reactionary formations by verifying that the radical Islamists had in fact come a very long way for the last decade. The report stressed that reactionary Islam "under the protective wings of the (ANAP) government has been in rise ... since the Islamic fundamentalist efforts received a Constitutional

recognition after 1982" (Quoted in *Cumhuriyet*, 11 October 1990). Üçok's report criticized the *ANAP* government for its indifference to growing number of reactionary formations.

Üçok's report pointed out organizations such as *İlim Yayma Cemiyeti, Milli Türk Talebe Birliği, İmam-Hatip Mezunları Derneği,* and *tarikat* networks such as *Nurcular, Süleymancılar, Nakşiler, Vahdetçiler, Milli Mücadeleciler, Akgüçler, and Yeni Rufailer* among those Islamic elements beneath the radical Islam in Turkey. The report also highlighted the Saudi institutions of *Rabıtat-Ül Alem-ül, Hizbi İslami,* and *Siret Ün Nebi* as jihadist organizations that incited Islamic fundamentalism in society. In her report, Üçok criticized the official receptions that these jihadist organizations received in secular Turkey.[78]

The question of headscarf became a controversial topic in this period. Writing for *Cumhuriyet*, Mumcu (1990) elaborated on the headscarf issue as an "ideological flag" for the conservative faction within the *ANAP* government. Initially, the *ANAP* removed the ban on headscarf in 1988 with a bill that stated: "in higher education institutions, classrooms, laboratories, clinics, policlinics, and corridors modern outfit and look is obligatory. Yet, headscarf is permissible to observe religious duties by covering the neck and hair" (p. 21). The Constitutional Court overruled the bill on 7 March 1989. Mumcu (1990) noted that both Aksoy and Üçok were notable academics with their firm advocacy for the headscarf ban. And, Üçok was also known by her speeches where she demonstrated that the headscarf issue was a matter of politics, not religion. Both

[78] For further details see *Cumhuriyet,* 11 October 1990.

academics were murdered by the *Islami Hareket* [Islamic Movement] terror organization.[79]

The vice chairman of the Constitutional Court, Güngör Özden stated that since the Court's ruling in favour of the headscarf ban, the officials received ten thousand death threats (*Cumhuriyet*, 11 October 1990). Twelve assassinations against secular academics took place between 29 January 1990 and 10 October 1990, and in none of these cases those who were responsible were brought to justice (*Cumhuriyet*, 12 October 1990). In his article, Mumcu (1990) stated that in the face of such horror, the *ANAP* government's reluctance to take a firm action was in fact a sign of encouragement for Islamic radicals which placed the Higher Educational Institutions and the Parliament under great risk.[80] Ironically, one day after Üçok's funeral, on 10 October 1990 the *ANAP* took the same bill to the parliament with a different rhetoric which stated: "unless it contradicts with the public morality and the laws in effect, one is free to put on her own choice of clothes in Higher Educational Institutions" (Mumcu, 1990). Illustrating the *ANAP*'s reluctance to truly investigate the Islamic movement, the SHP's motion, *İrtica Hareketlerinin Amaç ve Boyutları* [The objectives and the Extend of Reactionary Movements] was rejected by the *ANAP* majority votes in the Parliament on 9 October 1990.[81] The SHP responded by submitting a motion of censure on the grounds that "the government was responsible for the terror and crimes against the secular republic" (Quoted in *Cumhuriyet*, 12 October 1990).

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[79] See *Cumhuriyet,* 10 October 1990.

[80] About the *ANAP*'s indifference to the rising Islamic terror and the tension it caused see the SHP Group Vice Chairman, Onur Kumbaracıbaşı's remarks on *Cumhuriyet*, 12 October 1990.

[81] For an elaboration of the *ANAP*'s indifference to mounting Islamic terror in 1990 see also "Terör Tırmanıyor" [Terror is Rising] by Hikmet Çetinkaya; and "Deve Hendek Atlar, Ama" [One May Try to Swim Upstream, But] by Cüneyt Arcayürek in *Cumhuriyet,* 11 October 1990.

In the assassinations of scholars and public officials, the role of the Islamist media was noteworthy. Led by the daily *Akit*, these media organs pointed important figures as target for Islamic terror organizations through propaganda. Çetinkaya (2008) noted that *Akit* particularly praised and supported the terrorist acts by militant Islamist groups such as the IBDA-C, Hizbullah, and *İslami Hareket* [Islamic Movement] (p. 168). The head of Istanbul University Cerrahpaşa General Surgery Department, Prof. Dr. Alemdaroğlu was a notable figure who was targeted for not allowing students to operate with headscarf in applied courses and surgeries. The author of *Şeriattan Kıssalar* [Tales from Sharia], Prof. Dr. İlhan Arsel was another figure who the *Akit* pointed as a target. The *Akit* stated that:

> ...those dogs who put their dirty hands on our prophet should know it well that people do exist to rip off their tongues. ... We damn this article, its author, and the publisher, and remind them once more that the necessary action will be taken... (Quoted in Çetinkaya, 2008, p. 169).

President of Gümüşhane Bar Association Ali Günday was assassinated on 25 July 1995 after the *Akit* marked him as the "enemy of religion" due to his part in banning attorneys Derya Nur Şimşek and Güler Yıldız from attending the court hearings with headscarf (Çetinkaya, 2008, p. 168).[82] Sorgun Public Prosecutor Leyla Yılmaz also became a target of the Islamist media outlets when police took into custody a group of Sharia sympathizers who terrorized the district. Since then, she received death threats.[83]

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[82] See also "Türbanı yüzünden cinayet işlenen avukat, SP adayı" [That attorney, for whose headscarf a murder was commited, is a candidate from the SP] in *Milliyet*, 9 March 2009, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/default.aspx?aType=SonDakika&ArticleID=1068763

[83] Çetinkaya (2008, pp. 240-241) noted that the elements of radical Islam became highly visible in the neighbourhoods of Sorgun with increasing number of people in streets with Islamic outfits created a public scene that was the reminiscent of Iran. Known by its *tarikat* links and the affiliation with the RP, Çetinkaya called attention to the *Yimpaş Holding* in Yozgat whose factory workers resided in Sorgun.

6.5 Growing Extent of Islamist Cadres and its Challenge to Secular Bureaucracy

By the mid-1990s, numerous incidents indicated that the radical Islam exercised a great deal of influence over the educational institutions. Reluctance of some educational associations to participate in national ceremonies which included the *23 April National Sovereignty and Children's Day*, and the *19 May Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day* was a clear evidence of the control that radical Islamists exhibited over bureaucratic circles and their open challenge to modern Turkey on ideological grounds. *Özel Fatih Erkek Lisesi* initially turned down the request of Istanbul Deputy Governor Fehmi Kaya's request to send its students to participate in the national ceremonies in 1994. The family union of the institution rejected Kaya's request on the grounds that activities would deprive students of valuable studying time. Kaya's reply was noteworthy highlighting the state officials' struggle with the Islamists within the bureaucracy. Kaya stated that the "ceremony" in question was not a "leisure activity," but rather a Memorial Day that symbolized the national integrity, hence, the institution must participate it (Çetinkaya, 2008, pp. 26-28).[84] The rejection of the Islamists to recognize the national memorial days found a voice in statement of Istanbul mayor Erdoğan who stated that: "they [secular citizens] make such a big fuss every November 10th [the anniversary of the founder of modern Turkey, Atatürk's death]" (Quoted in *Hürriyet,* 14 November 1994).

The *Turkish Social Services and Child Protection Institution* was another agency that fell under the influence of radical Islamist elements. Çetinkaya (2008) noted that female and male children were kept separated in dining halls and classrooms, and forced

[84] Ibid., 26-28.

to perform prayer. This institution also never celebrated the new year, nor it did recognize any national Memorial Day. Moreover, children were exposed to the elements of radical Islam through propaganda videos from Iran. Çetinkaya (2008) argued that the state officials' indifference to this fundamentalist structuring within the state agencies and in the Higher Education indicated the strong influence of the *tarikat* circles on the *REFAHYOL* coalition government. Verifying this observation, a DYP floor leader stated that: "we cannot make the directorates of national education listen to us. In order to get your voice heard one needs to be a dedicated follower of a *tarikat* leader" (Quoted in Çetinkaya, 2008, p. 39).

The induction of Ziyaettin Akbulut as Governor in the South-eastern province of Şanlıurfa in 1990 presented a good illustration for the decisive weight of the *tarikat* elements within the state bureaucracy and the spread of Islamist elements at the societal level. Çetinkaya (2008) noted that the first use of Islamic attire in public institutions occurred in Şanlıurfa following Akbulut's induction as new Governor (p. 249). Akbulut's wife, school teacher Adviye Akbulut, and the Branch Director of National Education, Mehmet Gürbüzer's wife, Nermin Gürbüzer began to teach classes in Islamic attire and black gloves in the *Şerife Özden Elementary School.* Among other teachers, İlkay Çakarcı and Tülay Irmak also followed the same course.

Governor Akbulut together with the Provincial Director of National Education, Öner Ergenç, turned libraries and sport halls into prayer rooms. In *Yatılı Bölge Okulu* [Boarding Regional School] Ergenç removed Atatürk's oil painting, known as *Atatürk Kocatepe' de* [Atatürk at Kocatepe]. Governor Akbulut rewarded Ergenç as the "bureaucrat of the year". Akbulut also organized *Peygamber Haftası* [Prophet Week] for

the first time in Turkey. He also shut down cinemas, pubs, and restaurants that served alcoholic beverages in the province of Şanlıurfa. Such practices put tremendous pressure on public officials known by their secular and democratic outlook, and those who opposed were sent into exile (Çetinkaya, 2008, pp. 196, 249).

Akbulut was later inducted as Governor of Konya during the short-lived *ANAYOL* government following the national elections in 1995. After the formation of the *REFAHYOL* government on June 1996, he maintained his post as Governor of Konya. Later in the year, his standing with the RP chairman Erbakan on the election bus would receive major attention. In his criticism, the *ANAP* Vice Chairman Burhan Kara stated that: "The Governor has forgotten the fact that that he is a Governor of the state. His behaviour as a party militant is unacceptable" (Quoted in Çetinkaya, 2008, p. 197).

In September 1995, the CHP's report on the governors, district governors and provincial police chiefs in 77 provinces revealed the build-up of the Islamist cadres within the state bureaucracy. Thus, it provided important clues regarding the extend of Islamist activities in the country. According to the report, 35% of the governors were religious fundamentalists with ties to various Islamic *tarikats*, while 23% were hostile to the Republican regime and Atatürk. The *tarikat* networks exercised a decisive influence in more than 80% of 800 provincial districts. In Kastamonu alone, 14 district governors were the *imam-hatip* graduates. About 50% of all district governors were Islamic fundamentalists. 48% of the police chiefs were Islamic fundamentalists. Only 17% of the governors and 18% of the provincial police chiefs were reported to be social democrats. Additionally, the report also called attention to the prevalence of the Islamist circles within the *Ministries of National Education, and Health* which raised deep concerns

among the top bureaucratic echelons.[85] Illustrating the frustration, the former Minister of National Education, Köksal Toptan stated that: "I cannot make the conservative structure listen to me" (Quoted in *Milliyet,* 22 September 1995).

By 1996 *Nurcu tarikatı* extended its influence over state schools and higher educational institutions where the advance of radical Islamism led to the marginalization of secular and democrat scholars. On 21 January 1997 Çetinkaya's enquiry, "Suç Duyurusu" (Denunciation), underlined the Minister of National Education, Mehmet Sağlam's affiliation with the *Nurcu tarikatı*, and his appointment of two thousand two hundred teachers of whom the half with links to this *tarikat.* Çetinkaya (1997) suggested that Sağlam, as the former President of the Board of Higher Education (*YÖK*), became a DYP parliamentarian from the contingent of the *tarikat* leader. Later, he was inducted as the *Minister of National Education*.[86] During Sağlam's term as the President of the *YÖK*, the advance of radical Islam was evident in the institutions of higher education across Anatolia. Yet, it was most pronounced at the *Universities of Dumlupınar*, *Sivas Cumhuriyet,* and *Harran* (Çetinkaya, 2008, p. 292).

Çetinkaya (2008) stated that commonly known as the "Nurcuların kurtarılmış bölgesi" [*Nurcus'* liberated area], Harran University's indifference towards the ceremonial celebrations for the National Memorial days was notable as it never held any single gathering in the honour of the modern secular republic. Instead, every year it organized panels to honour Said-i Nursi where the *Nurcus* received the title of honorary PhD. While such gatherings indicated the university's ideological hostility towards the secular

[85] See *Milliyet*, 22 September 1995; see also Ali Sirmen's article "Devlet Şeriata Teslim" [The State Gave into Sharia] in *Milliyet*, 24 July 1995.
[86] See "Suç Duyurusu" [Denunciation] by Çetinkaya in *Cumhuriyet*, 21 January 1997.

Turkish state, man and woman sitting separately in these gatherings verified its Islamists outlook.

On 26 March 1996, Harran University held such gathering with the title of "Bediüzzaman'ın Hürriyet ve Demokrasi Görüşü" [Bediüzzaman's View of Liberty and Democracy] in which the sentiments of radical Islam once again found a clear voice. It took place under the Dean of the Divinity Faculty, Prof. Dr. Musa Kazım Yılmaz, with the participations of academics Mahmut Katı, Mustafa Zeren and Nihat Derendere as speakers. During the panel, in reference to Bediüzzaman, Yılmaz stated that: "there can be no relapse in the life of an Islamic scholar who can say that 'I am ready to sacrifice all my soul for the single truth of the Sharia'" (Quoted in Çetinkaya, 2008, p. 296). In a more explicit rhetoric, Mahmut Katın stated that:

> The Republic that Bediüzzaman envisions is not the one at the market (Turkey's current secular and democratic political system). The envisioned Republic can be achieved with the advance of national will along with a Constitution based on Islam, and legitimacy based on Sharia... (Quoted in Çetinkaya, 2008, p. 297).

Highlighting the *tarikat* infiltration into the top echelons of the state bureaucracy, Lieutenant Governor of Şanlıurfa, Hamdi Nayır; Deputy Governor Hasan Duruer, Director of National Education, Öner Ergenç; and Harran University Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Gürbüz Oksoy were present in this gathering. Also, Deputy Prime Minister, Nahit Menteşe sent a telegraphy for being unable to attend the panel (Çetinkaya, 2008, p. 297).

The question over the official recognition for the Islamic *tarikats* and their weight within the state bureaucracy found a clear illustration when Prime Minister Erbakan hosted *tarikat* leaders in his official residence during the fast-breaking meal on 11 January 1997.[87] Cornell (1999) would describe the political scene in this period as "systematic Islamization" of every bureaucratic cadre where the RP was in power which included municipal governments and the state ministries such as the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Justice (p. 215). Early 1997 also witnessed an escalation in the public display of Islamic *tarikat* activism with increasing number of people were now in the streets with veils, long robes, turbans, and beards. With their activisms particularly in Istanbul, these *tarikats* included *Nakşibendis*, *Rufais, Cerrahis, Nurcus, Halidis, Kadiris, Erenköy cemaati*, *Yeni Nesilciler*, *Kırkıncı Hoca Grubu*, *Işıkçıs, Yeni Asya Grubu (Nurcus)*, *Fethullahçılar*, *Süleymancılar*, *İskender Paşa Cemaati*, *Adıyaman-Menzil*, *Kadiris*, and *Mahmut Hoca cemaati*.[88]

6.6 An Overview of the RP as a Pioneer of "Political Islam" in the 1990s

By the mid-1990s onward, with a number of incidents was taking place, the RP deputies seemed to be ready to capitalize on the situation and bring 'sharia' at the centre of the public debate. In this regard, Erbakan's statements were indicative of an intention to install a theocratic regime. According to Erbakan, in reality no more than three percent of the population was secular. Erdoğan also made a similar remark in 1996 when he argued:

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[87] See *Milliyet*, 12 January 1997; *Cumhuriyet*, 12 January 1997.

[88] See Istanbul districts in particular where these *tarikats* were the most active in "Şeriatçılar İstanbul'u Parselledi" [Followers of sharia parceled out Istanbul] in *Cumhuriyet*, 14 January 1997; see also the list of the most prominent Islamic *tarikats* with followers in the entire country in "Tarikat aklı dışlıyor" [Tarikat rejects mind] in *Cumhuriyet*, 10 January 1997.

> The practice [political regime] contradicts with Turkey's everyday realities. I am talking about 79% [of the electorates], I am in fact talking about 99%. [For instance,] people seek imam marriage in mosques [as it opposes to civil marriage] (Quoted from Nilgün Cerrahoğlu's interview Erdoğan in *Cumhuriyet*, 14 July 1996).

Delineating on such statements by Erbakan and Erdoğan, they demonstrated a clear rejection to acknowledge 79% of the electorates who did not vote for the RP. Hence, the RP's political discourse could be described as a *pluralist dictatorship*[89] or *authoritarian populism*[90] that drew upon a demagogy based on racist and nationalist sentiments. Yayla (1997) suggested that as it opposed to social pluralism, the RP's discourse was in fact the "basis of totalitarianism" (p. 3).

In Öniş's (1997) depiction, the RP was an "enigmatic" entity as it did not fully represent any traditional political spectrum (p. 753). With its very populist discourse, the RP rather exhibited diverse features from various mainstream discourses that made the party a radical alternative in the eyes of the average citizen. Especially, in the context of socio-economic recession of the early 1990s, this led to the public perception of the RP as no longer a marginal, but rather an appealing political choice. For instance, on moral issues such as gender equality, the RP's far-right outlook was evident in its advocacy for a subordinate status for woman. Yet, on socio-economic grounds, its political message along the "Just Order" rhetoric resembled to those of the social-democrats despite the RP's support of the free-market economy.

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[89] See *Milliyet*, July 7, 1996.
[90] See *Milliyet*, July 30,1996.

Beneath the RP's populist discourse five factors defined the RP politics. The first, the RP's political rhetoric was an amalgam of both modernist and conservative elements which very often ran in contradiction. The second, a condemnation of the West remained as a defining character of the RP's political trajectory.[91] The third, the RP suggested an economic program that presented free-market economy within a socialist framework. Here, Öniş argued that the RP's economic perspective was built upon a highly populist approach in an attempt to appeal to the electorates from all socio-economic classes. Yet, its emphasis on private-ownership and downplay of issues such as social justice and democracy marked the point where the RP diverted from a true social-democratic stand. The fourth, the RP's political rhetoric involved persistent attacks on Turkey's secular political structure. Consistent with its anti-secular outlook, the RP's aim to move Turkey closer to the Islamic world constituted a final highlight that distinguished it from the mainstream parties (Öniş, 1997, pp. 753-754). Hence, establishing the Islamic counterparts of the UN and NATO, and adopting a new currency, a cultural organization, and forming a new economic union among Muslim countries remained to be the RP's ultimate objective (Eligür, 2010, p. 149).

Conducted by the *Piar Gallup*, a survey that took place between 29 November and 13 December 1996 indicated that 29.6% of the electorates, who voted for the RP, choose the RP for being an "honest and trustworthy party" followed by "defending religious values", and the "promise of the *Just Order*". 40.5% indicated that the *Just Order* defined the RP's ideological outlook while *a "*sharia-based order" came second with 9.0% of the RP electorates indicated it. 81.4% marked the promise of "bringing

[91] Öniş (1997, p. 753) noted that the RP's expression of "the imitators of the West" was a notable rhetoric, commonly found in the Third World politics.

country to a level of modern civilizations" as the main cause of their electoral support while "transition to a sharia-based system" was the motive for 57% of the RP electorates.[92]

6.7 Growing Public Awareness of Islamic Reaction and Anti-Regime Currents

A scandalous incident took place on 31 January 1997 that bears a decisive outcome regarding the longevity of the *REFAHYOL* coalition government. The most crucially, it marked the onset of the RP's downfall. In Sincan province of Ankara, the RP mayor Bekir Yıldız organized a gathering known as *Kudüs Gecesi* [Jerusalem Night] where he and the Iranian Ambassador, Rıza Bagheri, gave speeches in favour of installing a sharia-based regime in Turkey. The gathering took place under the posters of Hamas and Hezbollah leaders. Bagheri was staying in Ankara upon Erbakan's request even though his tenure of office was over. During the gathering, Bagheri stated that:

> We should not be afraid of them calling us fundamentalists. People who praise the ideals of (Islamic) fundamentalism, Humayne, and sharia are the most reasonable, civil, and faithful ones. God will grant many other victories to Muslims (Quoted in *Cumhuriyet*, 3 January 1997).

In his early remarks, Yıldız said that: "We take the *Humeyni regime* as an example for ourselves. We envisioned an Islamic regime in Turkey. In point of fact, seeking an Islamic regime means (that) from a different perspective, seeking sharia" (Quoted in *Cumhuriyet*, 3 January 1997). Yıldız was also known by banning restaurants and pubs serving alcohol, changing street names, outlawing New Year's celebrations, forbiding

[92] see Piar Gallup's survey results on the RP electorates in *Cumhuriyet*, 16 January 1997.

girls and boys sitting together in parks, and changing the traditional tulip festivals into a social occasion to determine who reads Koran the best (*Cumhuriyet,* 3 January 1997). Following the incident, a gathering in Sincan held by a group of the CHP MPs became a target of the RP officials. In the event, a *İnterstar* TV correspondent, Işın Gürel was attacked by radical Islamists (*Cumhuriyet*, 4 February 1997).

In the aftermath of the *Jerusalem Night*, a contingent of tanks were diverted to Sincan on their way to a military manoeuvre. According to the Chief of Stuff, "the government was established through legitimate means, yet its activism has lately pushed the limits of its legitimacy" (Quoted in *Cumhuriyet*, 5 February 1997). A retired military officer explained the purpose of the demonstration as 'drawing public attention to the growing threat of radical Islam' (Çetinkaya, 2008, p. 38). On 5 February 1997, the DSP and the CHP tabled a motion of censure to the Parliament on the grounds that "the Republic's core principles, supported by the government, are under attack, and the government is reluctant and insufficient to follow the rule of law" (Quoted in *Cumhuriyet,* 6 February 1997). As the RP's attacks on the secular and democratic order became more and more pronounced, the longevity of the *REFAHYOL* government became a debate issue. Essentially, search for a formula to forge a new government began among the ANAP, DYP, DSP, CHP, and the DTP cadres.

At the public sphere, academic circles and civil society associations mobilized against the rising tide of Islamism. Higher echelons of higher educational institutions voiced their concern and called civil society organizations to raise their voice against the recent attacks on the regime. From İstanbul University, Prof. Burhan Şenatalar noted that:

> 75 years after the foundation of the Republic, those who think that they can drag Turkey back into the darkness are in a big delusion. Such (Islamic fundamentalist) attempts must receive an answer. We cannot allow them to go on any further. Today, in Turkey silent majority must raise its voice. We need civil society organizations to raise their voice (Quoted in *Cumhuriyet*, 7 February 1997).

The senate of the Yıldız University, Istanbul Technical University, *Hacettepe* University, *Akdeniz* University, *Uludağ* University, and *Muğla* University also expressed similar points in their remarks. The *Association for Supporting Modern Life* [*Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği*], the *United Woman Platform* [*Birleşik Kadınlar Platformu*], the *Mustafa Kemal Association* [*Mustafa Kemal Derneği*], the *Pro-Atatürk Thinking Association* [*Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği*], and the *Faculty Members Association* [*Öğretim Üyeleri Derneği*] were among the civil society associations that challenged the *REFAHYOL* government (Eligür, 2010, pp. 219-220).

In February, representing 52 different associations women organized a meeting, known as "Şeriata Hayır" [No to Sharia] in Ankara (Bulut, 254). Scheduled for March 2, the *Education Personnel Union* [*Öğretim Elemanları Sendikası*], the *University Faculty Association* [*Üniversite Öğretim Üyeleri Derneği*], and faculty members from the Universities of *ODTÜ, Gazi*, *Akdeniz* and *Hacettepe* organized a gathering, "For Democratic and Secular Turkey, For an Autonomous University" at the *ANITKABİR* (*Cumhuriyet,* 1 March 1997). The labour unions that included *Türk-İş*, *DİSK*, *TESK*, *TİSK* and *TOBB* gave a joint declaration against the *REFAHYOL* government due to its role in the rise of radical Islam. The *TESK* chairman Derviş Günday stated that "the RP

emulates Iran. They sow the seeds of hatred towards Atatürk. No other government in the Republican history has every achieved to create such polarization in society" (Quoted in *Cumhuriyet,* 7 June 1997).

On 28 February 1997, during the National Security Council (MGK)[93] meeting "the threat of sharia against the secular-democratic Republic" was high on the agenda. The MGK meeting took place with the participation of the President Demirel, the Prime minister Erbakan, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Çiller, the Undersecretary of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Ministers of Defence and the Internal Affairs, the Undersecretary of the National Intelligence Organization (MİT), the MİT Intelligence Head, the Chief Polis Constable, the Chief of Stuff, the Commanders-in-chief of armed forces, the Director of General Stuff Intelligence Division, and the Regional Governor of the State of Emergency. It lasted nine hours (*Cumhuriyet*, 1 February 1997). In the aftermath of the meeting, the preliminary statement consisted of four articles with the conclusion that the Republic was the target of anti-regime forces which aimed to undermine the secular and the democratic order by polarizing society into two camps as "secular" and "non-secular". It stated that:

> Secularism serves not only as the assurance for the regime, but also as the guarantee for social coherence and democracy in Turkey. Hence, no concessions will be made from the Constitution and the Republican laws which ensure the existence of the Turkish Republic and its progress within the democratic system

[93] The MGK constituted a consultative organ with the obligation to make policy recommendations to the government.

> in line with Atatürk's principles and reforms (Quoted in *Cumhuriyet*, 1 February 1997).[94]

The second statement comprised 18 articles to fight back against the radical Islamic activism. It urged an action against the Islamist infiltration into the state bureaucracy, particularly in the spheres of education and justice, and security. It called for the closure of the student dorms and foundations that served under the control of the Islamic *tarikats*. Henceforth, initiatives must be taken in order to monitor financial resources of the *tarikat* circles. And, actions would be taken against their armament. Also, operated by the *tarikats,* the Quran courses were to be closed, and the number of the *imam-hatip* schools were to be reduced on the basis of the actual need. Furthermore, the compulsory primary education was to be extended from five years to eight which meant the closure of the intermediate divisions of the *imam-hatips*.[95]

The proposal regarding the *imam-hatip* schools was of an uttermost value in the fight against radical Islam given that Erbakan once described them as "the backyard of our party". 1.685.000 students were trained in private Quran courses which the figure was projected to reach 7 million in the year of 2000. Also, from 561 *imam-hatip* high schools, 53.553 students were graduated every year while the actual demand remained at 2.288.[96] In April 1997, a *Piar-Gallup* survey on the *imam-hatip* student-body indicated that 80% of the students do not envision a future career as religious officials which stood in direct contradiction with the original purpose of these institutions. According to 63.9%, "raising a youth with moral and religious values" constituted the main purpose of the *imam-hatip*

[94] See Kongar (2012, p. 282).
[95] see Bulut (2008, p. 266); *Cumhuriyet*, 2 February 1997.
[96] see the briefing by the Chief of Stuff in Kongar (2012, pp. 287-288).

schools. 80% were in support of having Islamic mandates within the legal system. 84.9% came from lower-middle class or poor segments of the social stratum. 65% of the *imam-hatip* students favoured segregation between man and woman in public transportation and education. And, 56% supported Turkey's integration with the Islamist countries within a common union. The survey revealed that the *imam-hatip* students exhibited a more radical attitude in their outlook when compared to the overall RP electorates (*Cumhuriyet*, 1 April 1997).

On 11 May 1997, a political rally took place to protest the MGK's decision on eight-year compulsory education. Many RP MPs and district governors; parliamentarians from the conservative wing of the *ANAP*; Erol Yarar, chair of the MÜSİAD; Nevzat Yalçıntaş, former chair of the *Intellectuals' Heart*; and Islamist associations such as the *Graduates and the Members of the İmam-Hatip Foundation* [*İmam-Hatip Mezunları ve Mensupları* Cemiyeti], *Akabe Cultural Foundation*, the *Ensar Foundation*, the *Society to Disseminate Science* [*İlim Yayma Cemiyeti*], and the *National Youth Foundation* [*Milli Gençlik Vakfı*] participated in the rally. Known as the "do not touch my *imam-hatips"* [*imam-hatiplerime dokunmayın*], the event turned into an anti-regime demonstration under the sharia flags and the slogans that called for the destruction of the political system. Speaking on behalf of the Society to Disseminate Science, Mustafa Ergun stated that: “eight-year compulsory education is desired only by a small (and) happy minority who are in denial of the national values” (Quoted in *Cumhuriyet*, 12 May 1997). In the same vein with Ergun, the RP MP Yasin Hatipoğlu stated that: “the nation will advance with the *imam-hatip* soul” (Quoted in *Cumhuriyet*, 12 May 1997).

Although the MGK proposal was signed by both Erbakan and Çiller, the *REFAHYOL* government's reluctance to take an action towards the identified goals led the Chief of Stuff to raise a public awareness against the spread of radical Islam. Also, in this period, the *Western Working Group* [*Batı Çalışma Grubu*] was formed under the General Stuff to monitor the Islamic fundamentalist activities and their financial resources. In May 1997, the Chief of Stuff initiated a series of briefings which aimed to inform civil society associations, academics, the Judiciary, public administrators, and the press about the activisms of Islamist circles in the country. Essentially, government's privatization agenda, an evaluation of *Kombassan*, *YİMPAŞ*, *Ülker*, and *İttifak Holding*, and their business link with the government; prevalence of the Islamists cadres in the treasury, the Judiciary, and the police force; and the situation regarding private Quran courses, and the *imam-hatips* constituted the context of these briefings. The first briefing was held on April 29 specifically for journalists. During the gathering new defence strategy was disclosed, and the internal threat in the form of Islamism in collaboration with the Kurdish separatist was declared as the top priority (*Cumhuriyet*, 30 April 1997).

Another symposium, known as the *İrtica Brifingi* (Briefing on the Islamic Reaction), was held on 12 May upon the request of Müfit Utku, the President of the Supreme Court. More than 500 affiliates of the Judicial Council attended the briefing despite the RP MP and the Minister of Justice, Şevket Kazan's threat to open an investigation against those who would participate in the briefing. Three months after the MGK meeting, the *REFAHYOL* government's failure to pursue any of the proposed initiatives was taken as "Erbakan did not understand" [*Erbakan anlamadı*] (Quoted in *Cumhuriyet*, 13 June 1997).

The findings of the *Western Working Group* revealed striking figures that highlighted the vast progress of the Islamist circles by 1997. Accordingly, 854 private schools, approximately 5000 prep schools, 124 radio stations, 41 television networks, 5200 local newspapers, and journals, numerous publishing houses, 4500 charitable foundations, 40 governors, 89 deputy governors, around 300 district governors, numerous members of parliament, 7 large holdings, more than 4 thousands large firms, and 11 financial institutions that controlled a sum of 350 trillion liras formed the means of the radical Islam in Turkey. It was reported that due to technical difficulties, the Radio Television Supreme Council (*RTÜK*) was unable to monitor anti-secular radio broadcasts. Particularly, in the East and the South Eastern Anatolian regions one in every three radio stations made sharia propaganda in their public broadcasts (*Cumhuriyet*, 29 January 1997).

The report also noted that despite the "incredible extent" of these figures, Islamist circles believed that they were yet to acquire enough resources and the public support before they could actually call for a mass mobilization. Essentially, irreconcilable differences between more than 20 prominent Islamic *tarikats*, failure to transform the general population into masses in favour of Islamism, and failure to build Islamist cadres within crucial state institutions highlighted the main obstacles for the Islamists to accomplish their agenda.[97]

In the reports of the *Western Working Group*, a particular emphasis was given to the *Fethullahçıs* and the *İhlas Holding* under the *Işıkçıs*. Findings revealed that with their strong ties to the radical Islamic movement, 385 firms of which 203 were belong to the

[97] See key highlights from the *Western Working Group*'s report in *Cumhuriyet*, 21 July 1998.

Fethullahçıs, controlled a financial capital of 500 trillion liras. With his affiliation of the *Işıkçı* branch of the *Nakşibendi tarikatı*, a former Colonel in the Turkish armed forces, Abdullah Işıkçı, was known by his statement of "we will stand against Atatürk until the Turkish Republic is destroyed" (Quoted in *Cumhuriyet*, 12 July 1997).

In the public administration, of 80 governors, 32 were *Nurcus*, and 5 were the advocators of the RP. Of 550 members of the Parliament, 37 were the graduates of the High Islamic Institutes, and 61 were the graduates of the *imam-hatip* high schools. Of 15 metropolitan municipality, 6 governed under the RP, while 17 of the 65 municipality were under the RP. The report also indicated that of 874 district governors, 437 were the adherents of Erbakan's *National View* movement (*Cumhuriyet*, 12 July 1997).

Underlining the spread of the Islamist cadres within the state bureaucracy during the *REFAHYOL* government, between July and December 1996 the appointment of 67 thousand 455 public officials were carried out in the Ministries of National Education, Culture, Agriculture, Labour and Social Security, and Finance. In November 1996, the induction of 60 provincial governors took place among whom at least 30 had affiliations with the RP. In result, by the end of 1996, around 10 thousand public officials in total were discharged, and their posts were filled by the RP affiliates. Elaborating on this process in the labour force, chairman of the Confederation of Public Labourer's Union [*Kamu Emekçileri Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*] (KESK), Siyami Erdem called attention to the replacement of the expert stuff in public offices with the affiliates of the RP MPs, and the members of the *National Youth Foundation* [*Milli Gençlik Vakfı*] and *European National View Association* [*Avrupa Milli Görüş Teşkilatı*]. Erdem noted that in less than one year 4293 public officials were sent to exile, 1899 were discharged, 71291 were cut

off their funds, 1677 had their cadres removed, 1507 were denied promotion, 7772 received disciplinary penalty, 600 were dismissed from profession, and 12642 officials faced with investigations.[98]

The Ministry of Labour and Social Security under the RP also took the initiatives to infiltrate 150 thousands Islamic officials as new replacements in the public offices that under normal circumstances remained within the jurisdiction of the KESK.[99] Along the same lines, chairman of the *Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Trade Unions of Turkey* [*Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Federasyonu*] (DİSK), Rıdvan Budak drew attention to systematic weakening of labour unions, which the process he argued, contributed to the growing strength of the Islamist circles in public offices (*Cumhuriyet*, 7 October 1996).

Islamic cadre-building at the expense of secular public officials was also noteworthy at the municipal level. For instance, in 1996 the mayor of the Eminönü district of Istanbul, Ahmet Çetinsaya discharged 200 municipal workers for allegedly lack of sufficient funds. Yet, he quickly recruited the RP affiliated officials for the vacant positions. And, university graduates outside of the Islamist circles were reassigned to tasks such as counting stray dogs in streets. Essentially, reassigning non-Islamist officials to irrelevant tasks became a norm in the RP-controlled municipalities to deter secular cadres. Illustrating this systematic pursuit, the RP mayor of Ankara, Melih Gökçek, reassigned Yahya Dayı, a saxophonist in the City Band, to water gardens. In 1994, the RP

[98] See the full list of the eliminations in the cadres of 13 different labor unions; also see a list of the RP affiliates, *imam-hatip* graduates, and the affiliates of various Islamic associations who were employed as public officials in *Cumhuriyet*, 11 July 1997.

[99] See "Memur Sendikasına İmam Kozu" [The Imam Trump against the Labour Union] in *Milliyet*, 18 February 1997.

mayor of Van, Aydın Talay, reassigned Şemsettin Polat, the Director of Legal Affairs with 23 years of experience as a gardener within the Parks and Gardens Directorate. The RP mayor of Erzurum, Ersan Gemalmaz, assigned an elementary school graduate, Mehmet Yalçıntaş, as the new Directorate of Culture (Akıncı, 1999, pp. 82-83).

In the face of mounting public reaction, Erbakan gave his resignation as Prime Minister on 18 June 1997 to President Demirel. Erbakan hoped that Demirel would return the task of forming a new government to his coalition partner, Çiller. That would assure the continuation of the *REFAHYOL* government. However, Demirel entrusted the *ANAP* leader Yılmaz for the task who had the majority of the Parliament after the RP. It was worth to note that by that time, the DYP had already lost 40 deputies to *ANAP* and the Democratic Turkey Party [*Demokratik Türkiye Partisi*] which brought the number of the DYP Parliamentary seats down to 90, making it the third party after *ANAP* (Cornell, 1999, p. 218).

On 25 May 1997, the Chief Prosecutor of the High Court, Vural Savaş initiated a suit in the Constitutional Court for the closure of the RP on the grounds that the "RP became the centre of the activities against the principle of secularism" (Savaş, 2008, p. 173). With regard to the Constitutional proceedings which led to the closure of the RP on 16 January 1998, the relevant laws involved the *Constitutional Provision no. 68, Article 4* which stated that: "the statute, program and activities of political parties shall not contradict democratic and secular principles of the Republic" (Savaş, 2008, p. 203). The *Provision no. 69 Article 5 and 6* stated that:

> In the case that the statute and the program of a political party violate the Provision no. 68, Article 4, a verdict for the permanent closure of that political

> party shall be made. (And,) upon the violation of Provision no. 68, Article 4, a closure can take in effect only if the Constitutional Court rules that the political party concerned constitutes a centre of such activities (Savaş, 2008, p. 204).

Also, according to the *Political Parties Act Section 78*:

> Political parties: ... shall not incite polarization on the basis of religious and ethnic differences; and shall not aim or pursue an objective to establish a State order on such grounds, or provoke and encourage the third parties for that purpose. ... Political parties shall not base on the principles of a religion, ethnicity, or tarikat, and shall not use their names (Şavaş, 2008, p. 205).

And, according to the *Political Parties Act Section 87*, "political parties shall not make propaganda in an attempt to change the principles of State's social, economic, political or legal characteristic on the basis of religion, or as a means of political gain" (Savaş, 2008, p. 205). With their public statements and activities, the RP MPs Necmettin Erbakan, Ahmet Tekdal, Şevki Yılmaz, Hasan Hüseyin Ceylan, and İbrahim Halil Çelik paved the way for the closure of the RP. These individuals also lost their MP status and banned from political activity for five years.[100]

By the time the RP was closed down, the Virtue Party [*Fazilet Partisi* - FP] had already been established as its successor by Erbakan's student, Recai Kutan. In the aftermath, almost all unbarred RP deputies transferred to FP in an effort to assure the continuation of the RP's politics. On 21 April 1998, the National Security Court found the FP Istanbul mayor Erdoğan guilty based on the *Turkish Penal Code Article 312* for

[100] For a detailed evaluation of political statements made by the PR MPs mentioned above see Şavaş (2008, pp. 210-231); see also the European Court of Human Rights, *Case of Refah Partisi (the Welfare Party) and Others v. Turkey*.

"dividing people by inciting them along the lines of ...religious... differences" (*Cumhuriyet*, 9 December 1997). It was due to a poem that Erdoğan read in December 1997 in the South-eastern province of Siirt. The poem read: "Our mosques are our barracks, our domes are helmets, the minarets are our bayonets and our believers our soldiers" (*Cumhuriyet*, 9 December 1997). In the aftermath of the Court's decision, Erdoğan was banned from politics for five years and sentenced to 10 months of imprisonment (*Cumhuriyet*, 22 April 1998). The FP came second in the 1999 national elections behind the DSP by claiming 14.79% of the votes.

On May 1999, the Chief Prosecutor of the High Court Vural Savaş brought a case for FP's closure. The Constitutional Court closed down the FP on 22 June 2001 given the anti-secular activities and statements of the FP MPs, Nazlı Ilıcak and Bekir Sobacı, and the party members, Merve Kavakçı, Ramazan Yenidede, and Mehmet Sılay.[101] Following the FP's closure, a younger generation of the Islamist cadres formed the Justice and Development Party [*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* - AK Party] under the leadership of Abdullah Gül and the founding member of the former RP and FP, and Istanbul mayor, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who in August 2001 stated that: "we have changed" (Akşin, 2007, p. 308). The old cadres, on the other hand, established the Felicity Party [*Saadet Partisi* - SP] under Recai Kutan.

[101] See an evaluation of evidence in Savaş (2008, pp. 232-268).

CONCLUSION

Challenging the basic premises of the dominant literature, this thesis raised two questions. The first, did *political Islam* really represent a faith-driven notion as widely held, hence, was it *Islamism,* as a faith-oriented movement, that was in rise? The second, did the purported "Islamic awakening" constitute an "indigenous" social movement that stemmed from a cultural battle as the critics of the modernization and secularization thesis claimed? Since the mid-1990's, dominant representations of *political Islam* have revolved around a theme that portrayed Turkey as a secular republic a false state where the "real people," cut off from their cultural roots through an artificial modernization project, are rising against the "secular tyrant." Through a careful analysis of the processes underpinning this phenomenon, this study challenged the conventional depiction of *political Islam* in Turkey in an attempt to redefine the concept.

It contended that *political Islam* was less a faith-driven phenomenon or a new political movement than an unintended outcome of secular decision-makings and policy choices. The Turkish case showed that *political Islam* or the "Islamic awakening" did not correspond to a faith-driven phenomenon nor was it born out of a cultural dilemma. It was an outcome of processes of *religious exploitation* by *the secular* at the expense of backsliding in reform and deprivation of the *uneducated rural* of its socio-economic and intellectual opportunities. Beneath this phenomenon this study highlighted a developmental neglect that the conventional readings had largely overlooked.

Following the introduction of the multi-party system in 1946, an in-depth analysis of the 1950s showed how quickly the political terrain became a new ground where

outmanoeuvring the opponent and vote-hunting set a new norm. Furthermore, it provided notable insights about how this pursuit led to a liberalization in the religious sphere and raised the *question of secularism* at this precarious period. As reviewed in Chapter 2, amendments made to the Article 14 in the DP program on 7 January 1946 and the Article 15 in the CHP program on 2 January 1947 presented a good illustration of changing approach of the secular cadres in politics to become more competitive in the electoral race. Beneath the political concessions to the religious-conservative circles, there lie a change in the façade of the post-war elite and a decline in the political weight of the progressive bourgeoisie element. Essentially, as the electoral race was now in place and capitalism began to define Turkey's new political parameters, new bureaucratic cadres did not refrain themselves from taking initiatives that could jeopardize the Kemalist reforms.

Particular attention is given to the rhetorical terrain of the political discourse that took place between the rivals. Notably, the 1950 and 1960s bore witness to heavy reliance on the "freedom of religion and conscious" rhetoric as a political expression and propaganda tactic. Its everyday use as revealed in Chapter 2, took shape specifically in Menderes and Demirel's initiatives in an effort to evade political criticism and justify their policy concessions to the Islamist *tarikat* circles in return for votes. With regard to the former, reactionary demands during the DP's Aydın, Konya, Çorum and Samsun city congresses between 1951 and 1952, and Menderes' commitment to downplay them as minor incidents were noteworthy. Moreover, Menderes' categorization of the Kemalist reforms as the ones that were fully embraced by the general public and those that were not grasped by the masses were another illustration that this chapter noted.

Other notable aspects included the decision to bring the Islamic *tarikat* networks to the political scene in 1951 that had been outlawed on 30 November 1925, and the closure of the *People's Home*, the *People's Chamber*, and the *Village Institutes* which this study reviewed within the framework of *religious exploitation*. Elaborating on the attitude of the bureaucratic cadres in that period, Harris (1970) noted that:

> Their interests were not those of the older elite. Children of the revolution, they took for granted many of its hard-won gains. They neither shared nor perhaps understood Kemalist sensitivity over back backsliding in reform (pp. 439 – 440).

This study also made an important note of the changing perception of the "Turkish nationalism" in pertain to the U.S. Cold War strategy that re-defined Islam in political terms as an ideological bulwark against communism. By 1970, Turkish nationalism adopted a Sunni Islamic dimension as a strategic move to turn it into a popular movement against the left. In due assessment, proposed by the far-right *Intellectual's Heart* as a blend of Turkish nationalism and Sunni Islam, the idea of the "Turkish-Islamic Synthesis" underlined a critical phase that this study evaluated. It was important to recognized regarding the socio-political remedy that it proposed to save the *national culture*. It will be fair to argue that it marked an onset for *imposed social conservatism* along a strategic use of Islam to carry out a complete restructuring of Turkey's socio-cultural dynamics against the Marxist-Leninist currents. In this particular context, Chapter 3 presented a detailed analysis of the *National Cultural Report* (NCR) which officially endorsed the "Turkish Islamic Synthesis" as an ideological guideline in policy-makings.

Chapter 3 also made a critical note of changing rhetorical terrain which took shape in the NCR's discourse. Expressions such as "moral break-down", "declining morality", "moral deficiency", and "reviving the national culture" replaced "freedom of religion and conscious" rhetoric which revealed a continuity in the instrumentalist use of religious themes by the secular cadres. Along the same lines, as described in this chapter, the intended use religion to create an *ideal citizen* who would exhibit "acceptance, "obedience", and "surrender" as the dominant behavioural traits was in direct contradiction with the pragmatic and positivist outlook that the Republican Education system originally envisioned. The NCR (1983) claimed that: "Hence, our education system deprived citizens of sentiments of submission to authority and religious discipline, embedded in our family values, customs, and faith. As a result, this bleak situation emerged" (p. 543). And, "unless religion is thought and enforced, its consequences in society are now better understood based on the incidents that occurred way back in the past and recent history" (p. 516) were explicit dialogues in their expressions that revealed the intention to make religion a dominant force in social and cultural life against anarchy.

Based on the remarks illustrated above, an argument can be made that even though Islamic indoctrination was not the objective, a rapid succession of decision-makings and strategic alliances with the various *tarikat* networks in fact facilitated the legitimization of the elements of radical Islam, and reinforced *the traditional* as opposed to *the modern*. The NCR became the official state policy in the realm of culture on 18 October 1982 and it would set the basis of the Fifth Five-Year Developmental Plan Special Working Commission Report in October 1983.

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, Özal's neo-liberal economic policy which excluded *welfare* and *income distribution*, and recognized the necessity of *inequality* highlighted another crucial topic beneath the formation of "political Islam" as an expression of a social shout. A close reading of narratives by the newly rising Islamist writers of that time such as Ali Bulaç, İsmet Özel, and Abdurrahman Dilipak showed that beneath their perpetuated religious rhetoric and call for the Sharia, their struggle was in fact of a *quest for an identity*, and *class conflict*. In this regard, Meeker's account was noteworthy as it provided important insights about shift to an urban society, a *Gesellschaft*, and immigrants' inability to take a genuine part in social and cultural life of the urban setting. Crucially, it reflected on the focal point of the Islamist narratives which called Islamization of life as a remedy for their social struggle. The ANAP government's decision to introduce Islamic banking was another issue that this chapter reviewed given its role in *Islamic socialization* in the same period.

In the Turkey of the 1990s, when the state no longer exhibited the capacity to provide services to its citizens, and the political-left had had its electoral appeal dramatically weakened, Chapter 4 traced the formation of "political Islam" as a means of social expression for *the excluded* to reclaim her place in society. Also, it made a note of the MÜSİAD's role as an economic and cultural drive beneath the processes of Islamic socialization in the current neo-liberal economic conjecture. Here, the crucial point is that "political Islam" found a body through the MÜSİAD as *a language of social disadvantage* and *new consumer culture*. In this period, the level of *social agitation* and *poverty* as described in Chapter 4, constituted a decisive factor beneath the electoral

results of the RP that successfully capitalized on social grievances to transform itself into a mass party.

Chapter 5 called attention to economical downfall and propaganda tactics through which the RP managed to project itself more like a social welfare agency than an actual political party. It was noteworthy that the RP was virtually buying the votes from the working class and the immigrant segment of the city population through massive aid campaigns. Another crucial dimension that this chapter brought attention was a distinct demographic pattern in the split of the votes during the 1994 and 1995 elections on the basis of provincial and educational divides. It suggested a strong correlation between *illiteracy*, *poverty,* and *backwardnes*s and the electoral support for "political Islam" that found a ground in the RP's electoral success in the 1995 general elections.

Chapter 6 questioned the accuracy of the well-rehearsed inference which has long affiliated the *political Islam* with democracy and liberty. Hence, it made a critical note of the political discourse and rhetorical terrain of the RP officials in an attempt to answer what political Islam has got to offer in terms of a democratic polity. Reviewing numerous speeches and statements Chapter 6 revealed irreconcilable differences between the ideals that a democratic polity sits upon and the outlook that the political Islamists represent.

Briefly, whereas "political Islam" has been depicted by the critics of Turkish modernization as an outcome of a clash between *the indigenous faithful* and *the secular oppressor* by suggesting a prolonged cultural dilemma, in-depth review of Turkish political history raised questions about the accuracy of this narrative. Taking into account the extent and implications of numerous key policy-decisions by the secular cadres, a conclusion now can be drawn that it was in fact numerous policy-choices by the secular

cadres that paved the way for "political Islam" by continuously invigorating it. Essentially, in an attempt to counter newly emerging concerns both at the domestic and global realms, this study revealed a constant reliance on *imposed conservatism* and *Islamic indoctrination* on the part of *the secular* whose policy initiatives in fact served to legitimize anti-secular formations that were once considered marginal.

Another noteworthy aspect is that this process cultivated at the expense of socio-economic and intellectual deprivation of *the traditional* in contradiction with the founding reforms and ideals originally envisioned by Turkish modernization. This finding is important because it tells a story outside the context of *religio-politics* and it can affect the way scholars and policy-makers interpret secularism and "political Islam" in Turkey.

In conclusion, this study showed that "political Islam" did not occur and advance in pertain to "faith" or born out of a cultural clash as widely held. And, it will be fair to argue that scholarly approaches to view it exclusively through the prism of religiosity are likely to fail to present an accurate picture because they do not take into account secular decision-makings that involved in the process. Furthermore, they overlook the socio-psychological and socio-economic deprivation of *the traditional* and the consequences of a prolonged neglect which this study concluded actually set a strong base for the formation of "political Islam."

By the mid-1990s, as the literature on Turkish modernization and secularization have come under increasing pressure, the motive underneath this new reading is yet to be investigated. Within the context of "Islamic revival", it bears a decisive mark in the scholarly antagonism towards Turkish modernization. For decades it has also shaped how

people are now taught to think about Turkish politics. It can be argued that this new evaluative stance has never been immune from the effects of the conjectural change that occurred in the aftermath of the Cold War in 1991. Thus, this new political drift which discredits secularization and modernity and praises political Islam needs to be evaluated with respect to the changes in the corresponding U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy. In his article "Our Enemy's Face", Richard Holbrook (2005) would note that "the long-term battle is against the underlying ideas", highlighting the role of new rhetorical terrain in shaping public opinion and getting international support for U.S. policy in the region.

More specifically, the motive underneath this new reading can be examined 2001 onwards in light of the *Global War on Terrorism* by focusing on the replacement of the *green crescent* with the *moderate Islam* as a new idea, and the U.S. efforts to build *moderate Muslim networks* to counter radical Islam. This process required first the identification and then mobilization of "liberal Muslims" and "moderate traditionalists" that included the Sufi *tarikat* networks as ideal partners. And the question to be raised in this scheme is whether Turkey with its secular foundation constituted an ideal ally in the eyes of the U.S. officials. And if it did not, how did it affect the academic perception and approach towards the literature on modern Turkish politics? While the answers can vary, recent criticism raised at Turkish modernization need to be re-considered by investigating the impact of this new threat inference of "radical Islam" on academic publications and public opinion.

Another issue to be investigated pertains to the *government-imposed social conservatism* and how it will determine Turkey's political prospects at polls. The first

decade of the AKP rule provides important patterns to investigate due to various administrative measures by which the AKP sought to foster social change, and in conjunction with this change, due to the voter behaviour. In this context, the electoral results of the 2007 and 2011 general elections presented difficult questions considering the voters' tendency to resist change and accept inequality. The electoral results were considered abnormal under the existing socio-economic conditions and welcome rather by surprise by many critics as they did not conform the realities of everyday-life. The main opposition party leader, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's description of the results as "Stockholm Syndrome" called attention to the display of a strong tendency on part of the general voters for resistance to change and preservation of the status quo.

It can be argued that it bears vital clues regarding the current boundaries of the contemporary Turkish politics to offer alternatives that can actually draw the general voters. Thus, attitudinal traits such as *xenophobia*, *uncertainty, anomie,* and *otherization* need to be examined in conjunction with the projections for future political formations and discourses that are likely to appeal to the general electorates. In short, the main question that it raises is: How does and to what extent the *government-imposed social conservatism* affect Turkey's political trajectory? And, what scenarios does it hold for the country's political prospects?

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