

COMPLIANCE AND NEGOTIATION: THE ROLE OF TURKISH
DİYANET IN THE PRODUCTION OF FRIDAY KHUTBAS

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Thesis Abstract

Muhammet Habib Saçmalı, “Compliance and Negotiation: The Role of Turkish Diyanet in the Production of Friday Khutbas”

Friday khutbas are important instruments for reaching the public in Turkey, since approximately twenty million men could be addressed through the khutbas in the mosques every week. These khutbas are written by officials of the Directorate of Religious Affairs in the khutba committees in each city separately and distributed to *imams* to be delivered during Friday prayers. Due to the fact that these khutbas are religious texts and presented by the translators of a holy text in the eyes of the public, Friday khutbas have great influence on people through appealing to their hearts and minds. I consider the state and society to be the main actors that determine and shape the position, aim, discourse, and activities of the Diyanet. With the AK Parti government, for the first time in the history of Turkish Republic there has been a cleavage between the government and established state ideology in the understandings of religion and nationalism. Because of this, I take the AK Parti government as another agent within the state in this determination and shaping. The argument of this thesis is that the officials in the khutba committee, who seem to be the real actors writing Friday khutbas are mostly passive agents and employ self-censorship in the process of khutba writing to comply with the orders and demands of the state, government, and society and to abstain from confrontation and conflict with these actors. To elaborate my thesis, I shall also present the boundaries of various kinds of initiatives taken by the Diyanet officials in the process of khutba production to stand against the demands of these actors.

Tez Özeti

Muhammet Habib Saçmal, “Compliance and Negotiation: The Role of Turkish Diyanet in the Production of Friday Khutbas”

Hutbeler yoluyla camilerde her hafta yaklaşık yirmi milyon erkeğe hitap edilebildiği için Cuma hutbeleri Türkiye’de halka ulaşmak için önemli aygıtlardır, Bu hutbeler her şehirde ayrı hutbe komisyonlarında Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı memurları tarafından yazılır ve Cuma namazlarında okunmak üzere imamlara dağıtılır. Hutbelerin dini metinler olması ve halkın gözünde mukaddes bir metnin aktarıcıları tarafından sunuluyor olması sebebiyle, Cuma hutbeleri insanların kalplerine ve zihinlerine hitap ederek onlar üzerinde büyük tesire sahiptir. Devleti ve halkı, Diyanet’in konumunu, hedefini, söylemini ve aktivitelerini belirleyen ve şekillendiren ana aktörler olarak görüyorum. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti tarihinde ilk defa AK Parti hükümeti ile birlikte, din ve milliyetçilik anlayışlarında hükümet ve yerleşik devlet ideolojisi arasında bir kırılma olduğu için, bu belirleme ve şekillendirmede AK Parti hükümetini de devlet içinde farklı bir aktör olarak alıyorum. Bu tezin argümanı Cuma hutbelerini yazan gerçek aktörler olarak gözüken hutbe komisyonundaki memurların çoğunlukla pasif aktörler oldukları ve hutbe yazımında devletin, hükümetin ve toplumun emir ve taleplerine uymak, bu aktörlerle karşılaşmamak ve çatışmamak için oto-sansür uyguladıklarıdır. Tezimi daha ayrıntılı ifade etmek için, hutbe üretimi sürecinde Diyanet memurları tarafından bu aktörlerin taleplerine karşı durmak için alınan çeşitli inisiyatiflerin sınırlarını da göstereceğim.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Although each secular country differs in its type of secularism from another to an extent, this difference is more or less a difference in degree, not in kind. The experience of secularism has been quite different in Turkey, mainly because of the existence of the Directorate of Religious Affairs¹ (DRA, Diyanet) as a state institution. Diyanet is a state institution that operates under the Prime Ministry, and is responsible for all religious issues ranging from administering all mosques in the country to issuing “official” *fatwas*. As a result of this, Diyanet works according to the orders and demands of the government and state. However, this fact is generally denied by politicians such as Süleyman Demirel, R. Tayyip Erdoğan, and also by the Diyanet representatives themselves. For instance, Ali Bardakoğlu, the president of the Directorate between 2003 and 2010, argues that Diyanet is completely free when choosing the religious and scholarly discourse. He posits his presidency term as clear evidence for this freedom.²

Nevertheless, when we look at the literature on the state-religion relations in Turkey and at historical records, we see that there has been clear intervention and domination by the state and government of the affairs of the Directorate. The existence of the Diyanet has been very crucial for the Turkish nation-state since the establishment of the Republic. Through this institution, Islam was accepted as a “*de*

¹ I prefer to use “Directorate of Religious Affairs” instead of “Presidency of Religious Affairs” for “Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı”, since native English speakers do not use “presidency” to refer to a government agency.

² Ali Bardakoğlu, “The Structure, Mission and Social Function of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (PRA)”, *The Muslim World* 98, no.2-3, (April 2008), pp. 176-177.

facto religion”³ of the state and the Republic has used religion both as a cement of the nation to create loyal citizens and as a vehicle to pave the way of its secularization and modernization policies. In this sense, Islam was considered a civic religion by the Republican elite during the foundation of Turkey and this understanding still continues in the Turkish nation-state. Diyanet has served as a mediator between the public and the state to fulfill the functions of religion as the cement of the nation and as the vehicle of the secularization and modernization project. Through the Diyanet, the state has put religion under its control and favored only one type of interpretation of Islam where, for example, there is room neither for Sufi orders, nor Alevis, nor for other religious groups and sects. In such a setting, the Diyanet became the exclusive authority of religion that represents “true” and “real” Islam in Turkey.

Although there have been some changes in the legal status and definition of the aims of the Diyanet from its beginning in 1924 to date, there has not been a major change in the position and functions of the institution. Together with this, it is important to note that especially according to the changes in the government the meaning and the content of these functions also change. In the article 136 of the 1982 constitution the aim of the Diyanet is determined as “promoting national solidarity and unity”.⁴ Based on this article mainly, and also on other articles related to the Diyanet, Gözaydın argues that the Diyanet is a tool of state for social engineering. She claims that the DRA has a civic responsibility of creating loyal citizens

³ Ceren Kenar, *Bargaining Between Islam and Kemalism: An Investigation of Official Islam Through Friday Sermons* (MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2011), p. 19.

⁴ See 136th Article of the 1982 Turkish Constitution. “Milletçe dayanışma ve bütünleşmeyi amaç edinmek”

compatible with the official ideology of the state.⁵ When these views are shared by the scholars such as Kara,⁶ Toprak,⁷ and Davison,⁸ M. Nuri Yılmaz,⁹ the president of the DRA between 1992 and 2003, also agrees with this idea and stresses the importance of religion in the unification of the nation.

It has been a widely shared idea in the literature that since the Diyanet is a state institution, it is subservient to the state and acts according to the official ideology in Turkey. According to this view, the Diyanet has been used by the state as an instrument for controlling religion, creating a monopoly over religion through supplying a specific interpretation and understanding of Islam, and using religion as a unifying element among the citizens. The ideology and several practices of the Diyanet, i.e. from the determination of religious fest dates to books published by the Diyanet, have been analyzed through these arguments both by scholars and also by the Diyanet representatives themselves.

However, in the literature there is a scarcity of works that deal with the Diyanet in a close way in its relation with the state and political authorities. In a few studies¹⁰ specifically on the Diyanet, some examples about some challenges of the

⁵ İřtar Gözaydın, “Diyanet and Politics”, *The Muslim World* 98, no.2-3, (April 2008), pp. 216-227.; İřtar Gözaydın, *Diyanet: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Dinin Tanzimi*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009), p. 47.

⁶ İsmail Kara, *Cumhuriyet Türkiye’si’nde Bir Mesele Olarak İslam*, (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2010), pp. 65-66.

⁷ Binnaz Toprak, “Secularism and Islam: The Building of Modern Turkey”, *Macalester International* 15, (2005).

⁸ Andrew Davison, “Turkey, a ‘Secular’ State, The Challenge of Description”, *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no.2-3, (Spring/Summer 2003).

⁹ An interview with M. Nuri Yılmaz published in the Journal of *İslamiyat* 4, no.1, (2001), pp. 126-127.

¹⁰ İsmail Kara 2010, İřtar Gözaydın 2009.

Diyanet officials and the Diyanet institution itself against the state are given as indicators of the autonomous agency of the Diyanet.

Kara examines the relation between the state and religion in his comprehensive book *Cumhuriyet Türkiye'si'nde Bir Mesele Olarak İslam*.¹¹ Even though he also allocates an important place to the state side in the relationship between the state and religion, he also gives place to the Diyanet's agency in this interaction. He analyzes different faces of the agency of the Diyanet vis-à-vis the state throughout the history of the Turkish Republic.

Gözaydın deals with the Diyanet in her book *Diyanet: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Dinin Tanzimi* in a very detailed way especially from a judicial perspective.¹² In this book, together with the usage of the Diyanet as an instrument for the state to control religion in the public realm, she also shows through various examples that the Diyanet works sometimes directly or indirectly contrary to the official ideology of the state through its publications and several practices.

In her master thesis, Ceren Kenar questions the reason of compliance of *imams* to the Friday khutba texts sent from the Diyanet by looking at the *imams'* preferences as actors through interviewing them and Diyanet officials in the mufti offices.¹³ She shed lights mainly on the voluntary approval of *imams* of the khutbas sent by the center as the reason of their compliance with these texts. Thus, she highlights the importance to an extent of the agency of the imams in this compliance.

¹¹ İsmail Kara, 2010.

¹² İřtar Gözaydın, 2009.

¹³ Ceren Kenar, 2011.

There is only one study focused directly on the producers of Friday khutbas in Turkey.¹⁴ Gibbon had worked in 2007 and 2008 on this subject, participating in the meetings of committee of khutbas in several cities. He tries to find answers to the question of how the Diyanet officials reconcile the tension between bureaucratic instructions, religious rules, and social relations in producing Friday khutbas. In his work, he emphasizes the power of the khutba committee on deciding the content and the literary style of the khutbas. He argues that although the members of this committee are civil servants, they have their autonomous power to an extent, and they become effective through this power in the religious discourse of the Diyanet.

The main importance of Gibbon's work in the literature is that this study shows for the first time the agency of the Diyanet officials in producing religious discourse in the Friday khutbas. Friday khutbas have always been taken as the official documents of the state; and the actor of these khutbas has been considered exclusively as the state itself. Thus, the revelation of the neglected part that is the agency of the Diyanet itself as opposed to "the state" is very significant in terms of handling with the issue in a more comprehensive way by taking different actors into consideration.

In my study, I follow Gibbon's argument about the agency of the khutba committee members as bureaucrats in the process of khutba writing; nevertheless, I develop it further by analyzing different ways and strategies of the members to overcome various actors in their struggle in the determination of the content of the Diyanet's religious message. Moreover, by situating the members of the committee among various central and local actors including the state, the societal agents, the

¹⁴ James Gibbon, "Between Religion and the State: Democracy, Religious Markets, and Turkey's Directorate of Religious Affairs" (paper presented at the Ninth Mediterranean Research Meeting, Florence & Montecatini Terme, March 25-28, 2009).

Diyanet headquarter, and the mufti, I analyze these interactions in a more systematic way.

In my thesis, I have studied the production process of Friday khutbas in the İstanbul khutba committee where the khutbas of the entire İstanbul city is produced, by participating in fourteen meetings of the committee as a participant observer. I have analyzed different kinds of strategies employed by the members of the İstanbul khutba committee in their interaction with other actors when they are in a continuous struggle between obedience and autonomy against these actors. My main argument in this thesis is that the members of the khutba committee resist as much as they can to the demands of the state, government, and various groups within society, even though the khutba committee is heavily circumscribed by these agents. Accordingly, they continuously try to expand their limited autonomous sphere of action through negotiating with these main actors. However, this contestation should not be exaggerated, since the officials of the khutba committee, who seem to be the real actors writing Friday khutbas are mostly passive agents and employ self-censorship in the process of khutba writing to comply with the demands of the state, government, and societal actors and to abstain from confrontation and conflict with these actors.

I believe that the main significance of my study is that by focusing on the agency of Diyanet officials in the İstanbul khutba committee, it looks at the relation between the state and religion from the agents' side. The provision of various discourses and policies of the Diyanet, different actors engaging in the production processes of these policies, and the struggle and negotiations among them give us significant insight into and material about the way in which the state and the Diyanet interact. Thus, this work provides a detailed and deeper understanding of different

actors in the determination of religious discourse and policies, of the struggles between different actors, of what gets negotiated in these struggles, and of the relative power of the actors vis a vis one another.

In the next chapter, the role and significance of religion for Turkish nation-state throughout the history of the Republic will be presented based on the secondary literature. First, the establishment of the Directorate of Religious Affairs by the Kemalist founding elite and the envisioned role of the institution will be elaborated on. Then, the development of relations between the state and religion is going to be handled mainly by focusing on the Diyanet in different time periods according to the changes in the political authority. In this development not only continuities but also changes in the position, aims, and discourses of the Diyanet along with the state's understanding of religion will be analyzed. This chapter will shed light on the effects of different governments and various groups in the society in shaping the state's understanding of religion throughout the Republic. Finally, the changes in the state and religion relations depending on the changes in the perception of nationalism and Islam during the AK Parti period will be presented in this chapter. The main argument of the chapter will be that although the content of the message of the Diyanet changes over time according to the changes in the political authority, the function of the Diyanet, which basically is the provision of religious support to the political and social goals of the political authorities, does not change.

The third chapter analyzes the nationalist religious discourse in the Friday khutbas beginning from the first sample khutba book of the Diyanet published in 1927, to date. In this chapter, first, the history of the production and publishing of the Friday khutbas by the Diyanet will be handled. Then, different ways of localization of Islam and its instrumental use for strengthening Turkish nationalism is dealt with

through a discourse analysis. The data used in the discourse analysis is mainly Friday khutbas of the Diyanet since the beginning of the Republic. Together with this, articles from the *Diyanet Aylık Dergi* are also taking place in these analyses in order to provide a clearer and more detailed picture of the Diyanet's nationalist religious discourse. In this chapter, lastly, I show the reflections of the changes in the understanding of nation and Islam on Friday khutbas during the AK Parti.

In the fourth chapter, local and central actors who are directly or indirectly involve in the process of Friday khutba production will be handled by a specific focus on the İstanbul khutba committee where the khutbas of entire İstanbul city is produced. The discussions in the committee among the committee members, different cases where they either comply with the demands coming from above or try to find ways of overcoming these demands, the employment of self-censorship by the members, and the ways of interaction between different actors are presented in the third chapter. The state, the AK Parti government, and various societal influences are taken as the main actors who influence the discourse of Friday khutbas. The Directorate itself will be shown as an important actor that has overbearing authority over the İstanbul khutba committee. In the chapter, it will be argued that even though the members of the khutba committee prefer complying in most matters with the central actors and employ self-censorship by concealing their own views, they also take initiatives to enlarge the restricted area where they act autonomously by constantly negotiating with these agents.

CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STATE AND RELIGION RELATIONS IN TURKEY

3 March 1924 was the turning point in terms of state and religion relations in Turkey. On this date three radical reforms, which were the Law on Unification of Education (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat*), on Abolition of the Caliphate (*Hilafetin İlgası*), and on Abolition of the Ministry of Sharia and Pious Foundations (*Şeriye ve Evkaf Vekaletinin İlgası*), were passed by the Grand National Assembly. Beginning from this date, Turkey entered into a phase of authoritarian secularism and a rapid, top-down modernization. The main pillars of the Turkish secularism were founded in 1924 and with ups and downs to date Turkey has sustained its secularism to a great extent in line with these main pillars.

Niyazi Berkes stresses the vitality of the separation of *muamelat* (one of the forth part of Islamic *Fiqh* covering a significant part of the Islamic law including family law, criminal law, commercial law, and international law) from *itikad* (belief) and *ibadat* (worship) in terms of the secular identity of the new Republic. He asserts that with the transfer of *muamelat* from religious authorities to the parliament through the law of the abolition of the *Şeriye ve Evkaf Vekaleti*, the independent existence of the Sharia was abolished in Turkey.¹⁵ Gözaydın and Kodamanoğlu also emphasize the significance of this separation for the establishment of the secular Turkish state.¹⁶ About the importance of this change for the “national” character of the state, Rumpf suggests that secularism is an essential part of Turkish nationalism,

¹⁵ Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 1998), pp. 484-485.

¹⁶ Gözaydın 2009, pp. 61,62.; M. Nuri Kodamanoğlu, “Laik Devlet Düzenimizin İlk Yasal Dayanağı”, *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi* 2, no.8, (1991), pp. 644, 645.

since in the Turkish nation-state, contrary to the Ottoman Empire, sovereignty is based solely on the nation.¹⁷

The effect of the Enlightenment on the ideas of early modernizers of the Republic was very strong. Positive sciences and reason had been considered as the essential guides that lead to civilization.¹⁸ Regarding this, Hanioglu states that Mustafa Kemal and the founding elite of the Turkish Republic considered “science as a panacea for the ills of the Empire”.¹⁹ Two major illnesses of the Empire that needed to be cured urgently in this understanding were: (1) the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religious structure of the population, (2) the traditional and religious thinking and way of life that kept society backward in the contemporary age. The remedy offered for curing the first illness by these ruling modernizers was the creation of a homogenous, uniform Turkish nation. The second cure was a more sophisticated one. There were two different ways of dealing with tradition and religion; and these strategies were put into practice at the same time with differing degrees according to the political and social circumstances of the day. The first one was replacing religion by nationalism in the provision of unity and solidarity in society. The second remedy was the instrumentalization of religion for cultivating the sovereignty of the nation-state, and the purification and privatization of religion.

¹⁷Christian Rumpf, *Türk Anayasa Hukukuna Giriş*, (Ankara: Friedrich-Naumann Vakfı Yayını, 1995), pp. 51, 52.

¹⁸ Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, (London: I. B. Tauris and Co., 2004), pp. 232, 233.; Paul Dumont, *Mustafa Kemal*, (Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993), p. 122.; Binnaz Toprak, 2005, p. 30.

¹⁹ Şükrü Hanioglu, “The Historical Roots of Kemalism” In *Democracy, Secularism, and Islam* edited by A. Stepan and A. Kuru, (Columbia University Press, 2012), p.38.

In curing the first illness that is the heterogeneous structure of the population, Ziya Gökalp, the “ideological father”²⁰ of Mustafa Kemal, argues that for hundred years the bacillus of nationalism had broken the Ottoman state into pieces, “but today it has turned out into an advantage for Muslims and tries to repair the damages that it has caused”.²¹ Following their ideological father, Mustafa Kemal, the founding elite of the Republic went into the nationalist ideal wholeheartedly. Şerif Mardin calls this generation as a “positivist-nationalist generation”.²² Based on their positivist ideas, these elite believed strongly in nationalism as a modern phenomenon in the establishment of a new Republic from the ashes of a torn multi-national Empire.

The founding elite of the Turkish Republic defined “being a Turk” in the 1924 Constitution as being bound to the Turkish State with the bond of citizenship.²³ Nevertheless, the state considered religious and ethnic minorities as threats to the homogeneity of the Turkish nation. Here, on the one hand we have citizenship and on the other nationhood. The points where the state’s understanding of nationhood and citizenship did not coincide became the points of exclusion. Accordingly, non-Muslim and non-Turk citizens were discriminated against, because they were not included by the Turkish Republic in the newly created nation.

The non-Muslim minorities, mainly Christian Greeks, were expelled from the country and in turn, Muslim populations from the Balkans were moved to various

²⁰ “Hissimin babası Namık Kemal, fikrimin babası Ziya Gökalp.” Taha Parla, *Ziya Gökalp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye’de Korporatizm*, (İletişim Yayınları, 1989), p. 9.

²¹ “Fakat bugün artık İslamların lehine dönerek yaptığı zararları telafi etmeye çalışıyor.” Ziya Gökalp, *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak*, (Akçağ Yayınları, 2010), p. 73.

²² İştah Gözaydın, 2008, p. 217.

²³ The 1924 Constitution, Article 88.; The 1961 Constitution, Article 54.; The 1982 Constitution, Article 66. 1961 and 1982 Constitutions define with the same sentences: “Everyone who is bound to the Turkish state by ties of citizenship is Turk,” “Türk Devletine vatandaşlık bağı ile bağlı olan herkes Türktür.”

regions of Turkey. The population exchange between Turkey and Greece was one of the clearest examples of the policies regarding the creation of a religiously homogenous society in the Turkish Republic.²⁴ The ethnic character of the envisioned Turkish nation came to the fore when the issue of Muslim populations who did not belong ethnically or culturally to the Turkish nation was at stake. The policy of population relocation within the boundaries of the Turkish nation-state had been applied to the non-Turk Muslims of Anatolia in order to pave the way of their assimilation to this new society. Newly imported minorities such as Albanians, Bosnians, and Circassians were placed in various parts of Anatolia paying attention to the diffusion of these populations within the Turkish population. Apart from the strategic placement of populations, there had been employed various strategies in order to Turkify these non-Turk Muslim minorities. The antagonist policies against the languages of these groups were the main exclusionist policy of the state. As Rumpf states, the understanding of nationalism during the early republican period meant the assimilation of minorities and rejection of ethnic and cultural differences.²⁵ Among many others, the Kurds, being the biggest non-Turk Muslim population in Turkey, have been the most visible victim of exclusionist ethno-racist policies of Turkish nation-state. Apart from being the largest non-Turk Muslim minority, the eastern and south-eastern regions of Turkey has been a part of the Kurds' homeland for a thousand years. They have lived in this region with their distinct cultural characteristics, traditions, and most importantly with the Kurdish language. Thus, to make them forget their Kurdish identity and assimilate them into Turkishness is a very difficult task. However, the founders of the Turkish Republic had been quite

²⁴ Onur Yıldırım, *Diplomacy and Displacement: Reconsidering the Turco-Greek Exchange of Populations, 1922-1934*, (New York: Routledge, 2006).

²⁵ C. Rumpf, pp. 49-51.

keen on this issue, and among many other assimilation policies, the relocation of the population was applied to Kurds, as well. Accordingly, in 1926 more than 26,000 Kurds living in the eastern part of Turkey were forcefully deported to the west by the Turkish nation-state.²⁶ Together with this, the teaching and speaking of Kurdish in the public sphere were banned by the state.²⁷ As seen in the case of Kurds, to be Muslim did not save ethnic minorities from being excluded by the nation-building policies of the Turkish Republic. In analyzing the pressure on Kurds in that period, Zürcher states that the abolition of the Caliphate marked the end of the Turkish-Kurdish partnership.²⁸

In this framework, it is important to see what kind of strategies had been employed by Kemalists in curing the second ill, which is the challenge that comes from the religion. The first method of dealing with religion that had been very effective so far in bringing people together and making them feel as a unity was to replace it with nationalism. According to the founders of the Turkish nation-state, in the contemporary age, religion became outdated and today was the age of nationalism. Thus, in the view of Mustafa Kemal and the founders of the Republic nationalism would play the role of unification of the population that had been played by the religion so far. Binnaz Toprak argues, by pointing the nation as the new sovereignty source of the Republic about the removal of Islam and its replacement by nationalism that the state put its basis as the sovereignty of nation contrary to Islam.²⁹ Similarly, Howard alleges that the state during that time “reinforced the national and

²⁶ Zürcher, p. 172.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 170.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), p. 38.

even ethnic identity of the community as opposed to its religious identity”.³⁰ The idea of civic religion that binds society together is an Enlightenment idea; and according to Tapper, Turkish nationalism was considered by the Kemalists as a “civic religion” and was used until 1945 in order to provide social cohesion.³¹

As a second way of dealing with religion, Kemalist elite favored a positivist interpretation of religion, according to which the “natural” and “pure” Islam that was completely hand in hand with reason and science should be revived as it had been in the beginning of Islam. On this issue, Mustafa Kemal explicitly stated in 1923 that “Our religion is the most reasonable and natural religion. ...In order to be natural, a religion should be in accordance with reason, science, technique, and logic. Our religion is completely in accordance with these.”.³² The emphases on reason, logic, science, nature, and technique in the speech of Mustafa Kemal were clear indicators of his positivist understanding of religion.

Hanioğlu puts in a clear way what kind of a religion is envisaged by this positivist modernizing ruling class. Accordingly, “a new religion free of dogma, myth, supranatural command, and rites and rituals” had been tried to bring out from contemporary Islam. The established *madrasas*, the *ulama*, and the dervish orders (*tariqas*) were considered as the main enemies on the way of reaching the pure, natural, reasonable Islam by these modernizers. The abolition of *madrasas* and Caliphate through a series of laws on the same day in 1924 and the outlaw of the *tariqas* a year later in 1925 were big steps in the transformation of Islam to a modern,

³⁰ Douglas A. Howard, *The History of Turkey*, (London: Greenwood Press, 2001), pp. 105, 106.

³¹ Richard Tapper, “Introduction” In *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics, and Literature in a Secular State*, edited by Richard Tapper, (London; New York: I.B. Tauris & Co., 1991), p. 7

³² “Bizim dinimiz en makul ve en tabii bir dindir. ...Bir dinin tabii olması için akla, fenne, ilme ve mantığa tetabuk etmesi lazımdır. Bizim dinimiz bunlara tamamen mutabıktır.” Halis Ayhan, “Cumhuriyet Dönemi Din Eğitimi Genel Bakış”, *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, Özel Sayı , (1999), p. 244.

enlightened, and natural Islam. Mustafa Kemal and his friends believed that only by constructing an enlightened Islam the nation could progress and reach the level of contemporary civilization. The famous statement of Mustafa Kemal where he says “The most truthful *tariqa* (way) is the *tariqa* of civilization” is very significant in this term. He made this speech three months before the abolition law of *tariqas* were passed in the parliament. By preferring the Arabic word *tariqa* in order to mean “the way,” he makes an explicit reference to the *tariqas* of that time.³³ Superstitions were also blamed for the divergence of Islam from its natural bases and the removal of superstitions was aimed at a large scale. The main critique against superstitions was that they are incompatible with the pure Islam and most importantly with reason and the positive sciences.

In competing with religion and tradition, other than the purification of religion through interpreting it in a positivist way, the early Kemalist elite also aimed at the secularization and modernization of public life that had been dominated by religion so far. Islam was considered by them as a major impediment on the way of modernization; and an attack against religion in various aspects was started by these elite during the early republican period. The idea that the Ottomans remained backward and defeated by the Western powers because of the Ottoman’s religion and the West’s positivism was a belief shared by the Committee of Union and Progress and the modernizing Kemalist elite. As Zürcher points out one the main motives behind the large scale secularization project of the early Kemalists was the survival of the state in the modern age.³⁴

³³ Ş. Hanioglu, p. 43.

³⁴ Zürcher, p. 173.

In the understanding of these republican founders, modernization and westernization had the same meaning.³⁵ That's why, they had engaged in a process of imitating the way of life, the art, and even the constitutions of Western countries to a great extent in the struggle of the secularization and modernization of the country. When analyzing the reforms of the first decade of the Republic, Arat, too, depicts this period as "the wholehearted Westernization era".³⁶

After stating that in the decade after the 1923, the secularization project had been employed in order to minimize the role of Islam in institutional and cultural life and to reduce it into a private affair, Binnaz Toprak categorizes secularization policies under four different titles: symbolic, institutional, functional, and legal. In the first category she includes the language reform, meaning the transition from the Arabic to the Latin alphabet (1928), the abolition of the Caliphate (1924), the hat reform (1925), the transition from the Islamic calendar to Gregorian calendar (1926), the adoption of Western numerical and metric system (1926), and the law on surname (1934) and so on. Secondly, she regards the replacement of the Ministry of Sharia and Pious Foundations and the office of Sheikh al-Islam by Directorate of Religious Affairs and the General Directorate of Pious Foundations (1924) and also the outlaw of *tariqas* (1925) as examples of institutional secularization. Thirdly, she puts the abolition of Sharia courts and transfer of all courts to the Ministry of Justice (1924), the law of the Unification of the Education (1924), the abolition of *madrasas* (1924), opening of new *imam-hatip* schools (religious high-schools) and *ilahiyat* (theology) faculties in the universities (1924) under the functional secularization

³⁵ Çağlar Keyder, "Whither the Project of Modernity?: Turkey in the 1990s", In *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, edited by S. Bozdoğan, R. Kasaba, (University of Washington Press, 1997), p. 37.

³⁶ Yeşim Arat, "Religion, Politics and Gender Equality in Turkey: Implications of a Democratic Paradox?", *Third World Quarterly* 31, no.6, (2010), p. 870.

category. As the last category, she states that the adoption of Swiss civil code (1926), Italian criminal code (1926), and the German commercial code (1926) are the legal aspect of the Turkish secularization in the first decade of the Republic.³⁷

In addition to these reforms Kara gives examples from some other reforms, such as the dress codes of men and women were changed and veil for women and Muslim-style turban for men was banned in 1925. Public holiday was traditionally Friday in Turkey according to the holiness of Friday in Islam and this was shifted to Sunday as the holiday in the Western countries (1925). In 1927, the *tughras* that are symbols coming from the Ottoman Empire written in Arabic letters on the entrance gate of the official buildings were erased. In 1928, the statement of “The religion of the Turkish state is Islam”³⁸ was removed from the Constitution. The use of religious and traditional titles such as *ağa, hoca, molla, efendi, bey, beyefendi, paşa, hanım, hanımefendi* was banned, too, in 1934.³⁹

As can be seen, the reforms not only aimed to leave Islam out of institutional and public life, but also targeted tradition. The governor of Ankara Nevzat Tandoğan during the first half of the 30s had not allow people with village type dress to enter the city unless they dressed in a western way.⁴⁰ The ban on the radio broadcasting of Turkish Classical Music and compulsory broadcasting of Western music (1934) was also an obvious attack on tradition in terms of culture and art. Tradition and religion had been targeted in various aspects in a comprehensive way. About the results of these secularization and westernization efforts, Lapidus states that “Islam was

³⁷ B. Toprak 1981, pp. 39-52.

³⁸ “Türkiye Devleti'nin dini İslâm'dır”

³⁹ İsmail Kara, 2010, p. 32.

⁴⁰ Elif Ekin Akşit, “Ankara’nın Kılık-ları: Boydan Boya Bir Karşı Koyma,” In *Sanki Viran Ankara*, edited by Funda Şenol Cantek, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006), pp. 149-173.; Ş. Hanioglu, p. 48.

‘disestablished’ and deprived of a role in public life”.⁴¹ This view, especially the emphasis on the deprivation of the role of Islam in public life is shared by many academics, as well.⁴² Most of them also share the idea that through these radical reforms early modernizing elite reduced the influence of religion from the institutional and public to private level.⁴³ It is sure that the role of religion in the political and public sphere had tried to be cut down as much as possible during that era; however, as the reform examples above indicate, the early republicans to an important extent did not allow to the expression of religion at the private level. Secularization had been considered by these elite not only as a political system but also a way of life. Accordingly, they had forced people to live in a manner which was thought of as being the most progressive, enlightened, and modern. In analyzing that kind of an understanding of secularization, after arguing that “a neutral secular state cannot impose a secular world view on its citizens”,⁴⁴ Kuru puts forward that “This is an exceptionally radical definition of secularism that imprisons religion to individuals’ consciousness”.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Ira Marvin Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, (Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 608.

⁴² Nilüfer Göle, “Secularism and Islamism in Turkey: The Making of Elites and Counter-Elites”, *Middle East Journal* 51, no.1, (1997), pp. 46-58.; Dankwart A. Rustow, “Politics and Islam in Turkey 1920-1955”, In *Islam and the West*, edited by R. N. Frye, (Hague: Mouton & Company, 1957).; Bryan Turner, *Weber and Islam*, (London: Routledge, 1974).; Gözaydın, 2008, p. 217.

⁴³ Erwin I. J. Rosenthal, *Islam in the Modern National State*, (Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 312.; Ş. Hanioglu, p. 44.; Binnaz Toprak, 1981.; İftar Gözaydın, 2008, p. 217.; Richard Tapper, pp. 5,6.

⁴⁴ Ahmet Kuru, “Secularism in Turkey: Myths and Realities”, *Insight Turkey* 10, no.3, (2008), p. 102.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

The Need for Legitimacy During the Early Republican Era

Although an authoritarian secularism with a positivist world view had been aimed at by the modernizing ruling elite in the creation of a new nation during the first years of the Turkish Republic, the implementation of these ideas was not that easy. In order to be able to completely accomplish the transformation of the multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and traditional society of Anatolia into a secularized and westernized Turkish nation, they had to be able to communicate with these masses and to convince them to these ideals. The penetration into the hearts and minds was the key in the real and sustainable success of these radical reforms. The major obstacle to overcome for the positivist modernizing ruling elite in building a secular and modern nation-state was to bridge the gap between themselves and traditionally living Islamically-molded masses. What these elite had to do in order to convince the public was to resort to the traditionally legitimate power sources, which were Islam as the religion of the society and *ulama* who had been the traditionally legitimate religious scholars interpreting the Holy Text.

As Turan puts succinctly, Islam became the common value of people living in Turkey in the nation-building process, since many non-Turk Muslim ethnicities had been taken into Turkey and non-Muslim minorities had been expelled with the population exchanges.⁴⁶ Hence, together with the historical power of Islam in terms of being a legitimacy source in Turkey, the new republican elite had increased the social strength of Islam in the issue of legitimacy by changing the demography in favor of Muslims to an important extent. Being keenly aware of this fact, Mustafa

⁴⁶ İlter Turan, "Religion and Political Culture in Turkey", In *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics, and Literature in a Secular State*, edited by Richard Tapper, (London; New York I.B. Tauris & Co., 1991), p. 40.

Kemal and the founders of Turkish Republic had incorporated Islam into the newly created regime both for the legitimacy of their political authority and for the enforcement of their West-rooted secular, modern policies. In 1923, after the election of new Caliph by the General National Assembly, Mustafa Kemal claims that the Ankara Government is the *ulu'l amr* of that time, meaning the only religiously legitimate political authority in the land as it is stated in the Qur'an.⁴⁷ In the Surah Nisa, it is said, "O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger (Muhammad), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority".⁴⁸ The part of "those ... who are in authority" is the translation of *ulu'l amr*. Thus, by claiming to be the *ulu'l amr* in Turkey, Mustafa Kemal based the legitimacy of his regime on religion as one of the legitimate sources of authority in the eyes of the society, along with others like his own charisma and like his title the "savior of the nation" (*Halaskar Gazi*) in the War of Independence.

After the abolition of the Caliphate the issue of in the name of whom the khutba shall be delivered had emerged as a problem both for the *ulama* and the rulers of the state. Historically, to be mentioned in the khutbas as the ruler of a certain land had been the sign of being the religiously legitimate political authority in that land.⁴⁹ Moreover, not to mention the name of the ruler in the khutbas had meant revolt

⁴⁷ "What is meant by *ulu'l amr* is rulers; qualified people; and capable people. Thus, a committee composed of capable people governs the government within the framework of justice and as much as *Sharia* allows. Our government contains these elements completely. With respect to this, any Caliph could not be of concern." (16-17.01.1923) Ramazan Boyacıoğlu, "Atatürk'ün Hilafetle İlgili Görüşleri", *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi* 13, no.37, (Mart1997), p. 124. Turkish version of this quotation is available in APPENDIX A.

⁴⁸ Qur'an 4:59, Translation by Mohsin Khan. Available [online]: <http://www.dar-us-salam.com/TheNobleQuran/index.html> [21 February 2013]

⁴⁹ Şevket Pamuk, *Osmanlı Ekonomisi ve Kurumları*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2007), p. 26.

against the current ruler.⁵⁰ Thus, early republican elite and the *ulama* had to fill the gap of religiously legitimate political authority in the khutbas of the land. The mufti of Istanbul during that time solved the problem by suggesting the inclusion of the following statement: “O my Allah! Help our government and the Islamic ummah”.⁵¹ In the first khutba book published by the Directorate of Religious Affairs in 1927, the same statement takes place. These two examples clearly indicate that by using the religion instrumentally the founding republican elite undertook the position of traditionally and religiously legitimate political authority during the foundation years of the Turkish Republic. They had sustained the process of transformation from a religious society to a modern, secular nation not all at once, but in a gradual way by not breaking distinctly away from the traditional value systems and ways of life.

In terms of providing the organic unity of the Turkish nation, Sakallıoğlu puts forward that the legitimacy problem of the newly founded modern Turkish nation-state for the Islamically molded society had been solved by the incorporation of Islam into the nationalist discourse by the early republican ruling class.⁵² She asserts that the major reason for the use of Islam in an instrumental way by these modernizing elite who had put very repressive strategies against Islam in the same period was “the illegitimacy of secular nationalism” in the society.⁵³ Similarly, Sam Kaplan, when analyzing the way Islam has been used instrumentally by the Turkish Republic, states that in the creation of Turkish nation-state, the nation was favored as

⁵⁰ Bruce M. Borthwick, “The Islamic Sermon as a Channel of Political Communication”, *The Middle East Journal* 21, no.3, (Summer 1967), p. 302.

⁵¹ “Allahım! Hükümetimize ve İslam ümmetine yardım et” İsmail Kara, “Cami, Ordu, Siyaset: 27 Mayıs İhtilaline Dair Bir Hutbe”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, no.173, (May 2008), p. 45.

⁵² Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, “Parameters and Strategies of Islam-State Interaction in Republican Turkey”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28, no.2, (May 1996), p. 235.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

opposed to *ummah*, “the *ummah*, however, has not been totally eliminated; it has been reinscribed within the Turkish national consciousness, providing for it a powerful element of historical legitimacy”.⁵⁴ In the process of building of nation from a traditionally Islamic society, Ilter Turan argues that the early republican class had come up with the solution of creating a national *ummah*. As he elaborates, the national *ummah* for Turkey means “a political community of Turks who were also Muslims”.⁵⁵ Waxman, too, states that Kemalists incorporated Islamic elements into the Turkish nationalism in order to strengthen the Turkish national identity.⁵⁶ Although the early republican leadership had a positivist world view, according to which religion is only a private matter of individuals, they had used Islam as a cement of society by envisaging it a communal role that would organically hold different components of society together. In explaining this, Paul Dumont states that even in Kemalism, Islam was the source of spiritual life and a constituent of the national culture.⁵⁷ The inability of the secular positivist nationalism had been overcome by its amalgamation with Islam, which had historical and religious legitimacy in the eyes of public.

The role of the *ulama* in the legitimization of the nation creation project and the radical reforms of secularization and westernization had been very significant in the success of these policies. Borthwick calls the *ulama* as mediators who had played the role of bridging the gap between modernizing ruling elites and Islamically

⁵⁴ Sam Kaplan, “Din-u Devlet All over Again? The Politics of Military Secularism and Religious Militarism in Turkey following the 1980 Coup”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no.1, (February 2002), p. 122.

⁵⁵ Ilter Turan, p. 40.

⁵⁶ Dov Waxman, “Islam and Turkish National Identity: A Reappraisal,” *Turkish Yearbook of International Relations* 30, (2000), pp. 9-11.

⁵⁷ P. Dumont, p. 122.

oriented society after the World War II in the Middle East countries.⁵⁸ Although he does not include Turkey in his analysis, we can safely argue that the republican elite in Turkey, too, had used *ulama* as mediators between themselves and the masses in order to be successful in the implementation of their secularization and modernization policies. As Makris puts forward, “*ulama* had been traditionally the legitimate interpreter and guardian of the religious sphere” and this legitimacy had embedded in the society through various institutional practices conducted by the *ulama* such as wedding, divorce, judgment, education, funerals, *imamate*, and many social events like organizing the support for the poor, ill, and so on.⁵⁹ Thus, a regime could only be completely successful in reaching its transformation policies by getting support from the *ulama*.

In the book *Kuruluşundan Günümüze Diyanet* written by the Directorate of Religious Affairs in 1997, Rıfat Börekçi, the first president of the DRA who had been in this position between 1924 and 1941 is depicted as a complete mediator between “immature society” and “enlightened Turkish intellectuals and politicians”. After the book elaborates on the subject of how Rıfat Börekçi was found suitable for the presidency, it says, “In short, Börekçi’s administrative experience, his material and ideological closeness to the leaders of the Republic, his spiritual leadership of the land, and his opposition to the Istanbul government were the factors that had set him as the president of the Directorate of Religious Affairs.”.⁶⁰ The very existence of the Directorate of Religious Affairs and the carefulness of the republican leadership

⁵⁸ Borthwick, p. 300.

⁵⁹ G. P. Makris, *Islam in the Middle East*, (Blackwell Publishing, 2007), pp. 66-68.

⁶⁰ “Kısaca, idari tecrübe, Cumhuriyet’in liderlerine olan maddi-manevi yakınlık, bölgenin “manevi lideri” olması ve İstanbul Hükümeti’ne karşı tavır alışı gibi faktörler de göz önünde bulundurularak ...Diyanet İşleri Reisliğine Börekçizade Mehmet Rıfat Efendi getirildi” *Kuruluşundan Günümüze Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı: Tarihçe, Teşkilat, Hizmet ve Faaliyetler (1924-1997)*, (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1999). pp. 23, 24.

in selecting the presidents of the Diyanet indicate the efforts of the modernizing elite to bridge the gap between themselves and traditionally and religiously molded society. On this issue, İsmail Kara alleges that in order to increase the influence of the Diyanet as opposed to anti-republican, anti-secular traditional *ulama* on society, the socially esteemed pro-reform *ulama* had been appointed as the presidents of the Diyanet in the first decades of the Republic. Accordingly, the first three presidents of the Diyanet, Rıfat Börekçi (1924-1941), Şerafeddin Yaltkaya (1941-1947), Ahmed Hamdi Akseki (1947-1951) -all of them had remained in office until their death- came from the *madrasa* tradition and were very respected figures both among the *ulama* itself, and among the society.⁶¹

The Establishment of the Directorate of Religious Affairs

The establishment of the Directorate of Religious Affairs after the abolition of the *Şeriye ve Evkaf Vekaleti* marked one of the most essential transformations that paved the way of the safe implementation and continuation of radical reforms of the republican leadership. By creating a new religious institution, the modernizers of the Republic were able to design religion according their positivist and nationalist ideals in the new Turkey. Hanioğlu stresses the fact that the abolition of the Caliphate and the foundation of the DRA took place on the same day and suggests that this overlap indicates the redefinition and control of Islam had been aimed by the secularist reformers.⁶²

⁶¹ İsmail Kara, 2010, p. 81.

⁶² Ş. Hanioğlu, p. 42.

In this redefinition, one of the essential points was that along with close control over the Diyanet as a state institution, there had been a restriction of the public and institutional sphere which had used to be within the scope of religious institutions. The degradation of the Diyanet from the level of ministry, as had been the case with the *Şeriye ve Evkaf Vekaleti*, to the Directorate as an administrative unit under Prime Ministry is indicated by scholars as one of the clearest signs of restriction of the role and scope of the institutionalized religion.⁶³

As a second important sign of the constriction in the scope of religion in the newly founded secular Turkish Republic, the removal of the *muamelat* from the jurisdiction of the Diyanet should be mentioned. When a great secularization step had been taken through the removal of *muamelat* from the tasks of the Diyanet abolishing the independent existence of the Sharia, a big restriction on the scope of the institution had been placed at the same time, since *muamelat* covers a significant part of Islamic *Fiqh*. The importance of this removal revealed itself in the law on the abolition of the *Şeriye ve Evkaf Vekaleti* by taking place in the first article. After this restriction, the tasks of the Diyanet in the same article were determined as such: “the conduct of all provisions and issues related to faith and worship, and the conduct of religious institutions”.⁶⁴

Thirdly, with the second Article⁶⁵ of the law of *Tevhid-i Tedrisat* all *madrasas* and religious schools under the *Şeriye ve Evkaf Vekaleti* were transferred

⁶³ İftar Gözaydın 2008, p. 218.; C. Rumpf, p. 55.

⁶⁴ “İtikadad ve ibadata dair bütün ahkâm ve mesâilinin tedviri ve müessesat-ı diniyenin idaresi için Cumhuriyetin makâmında bir (Diyanet İşleri Reisliği) makamı tesis edilmiştir” *Kuruluşundan Günümüze Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, p. 21.

⁶⁵ Halis Ayhan, p. 247.; *Tevhidi Tedrisat Kanunu*, Available [online]: “<http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/110.html>” [21 February 2013]

to the Ministry of Education as was the suggestion of Ziya Gökalp.⁶⁶ As Ayhan and Gözaydın state, during that time the Ministry of Education had struggled for the transfer of Qur'an seminaries from the Diyanet to the Ministry; however, with the efforts of the president of the Diyanet, Rifat Börekçi, that transfer was prevented.⁶⁷ The transfer of the *madrasas* to the Ministry of Education restricted again the scope of the Diyanet in the founding years of the secular modern Turkish Republic to a great extent. These radical institutional changes were also significant restrictions in terms of indicating the place of religion in the new Republic especially to the *ulama* and groups who had problems with the secular character of the newly established state.

And lastly, there had been a decisive attempt to minimize the role of religion, not specifically on the Diyanet but on religion in general by the early republican leadership in the public life. On the constriction of religion in the public life, Arat puts forward that “The new regime was less interested in securing religious freedoms than in disestablishing Islam and controlling its power in civil life”.⁶⁸ The removal of religion from public life during the early republican period is analyzed by many other academics, as well.⁶⁹ When describing the secularization reforms that put rigid restrictions on individuals' lives in the public sphere, Hanioğlu uses the concept of “de-Islamization” of the society.⁷⁰ The stress on de-Islamization becomes important when the whole early Kemalist era is taken into consideration in terms of radical

⁶⁶ Gotthard Jäschke, *Yeni Türkiye'de İslamlık*, trans. Hayrullah Ors (Ankara: Bilgi Basımevi, 1972), p. 74.; H. Ayhan, pp. 241.

⁶⁷ H. Ayhan, p. 250.; Gözaydın, 2009, pp. 24-25.

⁶⁸ Yeşim Arat, p. 871

⁶⁹ N. Göle, p. 49.; D. Rustow, p. 69.; Zürcher, p. 181.; D. Howard, p. 96.; I. Lapidus, p. 608.

⁷⁰ Hanioğlu, p. 40.

reforms in political, cultural, social, institutional, and religious realms. Under these circumstances, the Directorate of Religious Affairs was in a very constrained position that was not comparable to its predecessor in terms of its span and strength of authority in the early republican period.

İhsan Yılmaz explains the main aims of the Diyanet in the secular Turkish nation-state by putting that “The *raison d’être* of the Directorate of Religious Affairs has been to create a tailor-made national modern Turkish-Islam, definitely suppressing the transnational links and role, cut off from all international and transnational ties, specific and limited to the nation-state’s official borders...”.⁷¹ Similar to this, about the establishment of the Diyanet, Dumont puts forth that Mustafa Kemal aimed at creating a modernized Islam that was full of republican ideals.⁷² Thus, as Arat argues, the state could audit all the Islamic activities taking place in the mosques, Qur’an courses, and other religious institutions, such as determining “what the preachers and prayer leaders could or could not say in Friday sermons”.⁷³

So, the main tasks of the closely controlled Diyanet as it was envisioned in its establishment could be ranked as such; (1) the enlightenment and purification of religion, (2) taking away of the influence and role of Islam on politics as an independent institution, (3) the provision of the organic unity of the Turkish nation, (4) the support to the government through the embedded legitimacy of religion in the enforcement of secularization and westernization reforms and in the internalization of these reforms by the public. Especially the last two tasks that are being the cement

⁷¹ İhsan Yılmaz, “State, Law, Civil Society and Islam in Contemporary Turkey”, *The Muslim World* 95, (July 2005), p. 388.

⁷² P. Dumont, p. 122.

⁷³ Yeşim Arat, p. 870.

of the nation, and legitimizing the modernizing reforms of the state, of the Diyanet aimed primarily at the creation of loyal and proper citizens who feel as members of a modernized, secular, unified Turkish nation. Turan says on that role of the DRA that the teaching of being respectful and obedient to the political authority and also public servants had been provided by the Diyanet.⁷⁴

The existence of a religious institution in the bureaucratic structure to regulate and control Islam, and the acceptance of Islam as “*de facto* Religion” of the state through the Diyanet are the main features of Turkey that make her not a secular but a laic state. Kadioğlu draws attention to the monopoly of the state over religious institutions and interpretation. She suggests that the meaning of laicism in Turkey has been the exclusion of all other types of Islam than official state.⁷⁵ In a similar vein, when Yılmaz argues that the Turkish secularism is unique, he brings up the issue that the state is the secular *müjtehid* (scholar on the interpretation of Islamic law) to the agenda.⁷⁶ Gözaydın, too, deals with the issue of *ijtihad*s of a secular state by analyzing different examples from different periods of the Republic.⁷⁷ Thus, through the Diyanet the state has put religion under its control and favored only a certain interpretation of Islam where, for example, there is no room for Sufi orders, Alevis, and other religious groups and sects. Thus, Islam in Turkey had been equated with the “state Islam”, since alternative understandings of religion had been cut down in a repressive way. In such a setting, the Diyanet, so the state, became the only

⁷⁴ İlter Turan, p. 42.

⁷⁵ Ayşe Kadioğlu, “The Pathologies of Republican Laicism”, *Philosophy of Social Criticism* 36, no.3-4, (2010), p. 493.

⁷⁶ İhsan Yılmaz, pp. 390-392.

⁷⁷ İştâar Gözaydın, 2009, pp. 156-164.

representative and authority of religion that represents “true” and “real” Islam, being the “exclusive political instrument”⁷⁸ of the state, in Turkey.

The base for the religious legitimacy of the political authority and the secularization reforms had been provided through the monopoly over the religious institutions and interpretation. By making itself the only religious authority, outlawing and abolishing all other alternatives, and situating itself as the real interpreter of Islam exclusively, the state had gained religious legitimacy that it lacked for its secularization and nationalization policies. As I mentioned above, in the implementation of radical reforms, the republican leadership needed legitimacy. In this situation, the Diyanet had served for two complimentary aims; (1) the break with the past through implementing secular, positivist, and nationalist transformations in the sphere of religion and supporting the transformations in other areas, and (2) the provision of religious legitimacy to the secular modernizing elite. By introducing radical transformations either directly with the hand or with the approval of the *ulamas* of the *ancien régime*, Kemalists aimed to reconfigure Islam in a more influential way and to make it easier for the public to internalize the transformations.

In the fields of supporting the modernization and westernization reforms, the creation of an enlightened Islam, and the provision of a national Islam, which were the tasks of the Diyanet determined by the state, the Directorate had played important roles in the first decade after its establishment during the transition period from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish nation-state. Here, I am going to give some examples from the discourses and policies of the Diyanet during the 20s in these three areas.

⁷⁸ Kadioğlu, p. 493.

On 25 November 1925, with the hat reform, wearing the Muslim-style turban (*sarık*) was banned and wearing Western-style hats was made compulsory for men working as a civil servant and as well as for ordinary citizens.⁷⁹ Soon after the enactment of this abolition law, in November and December 1925, a khutba on wearing Western-style hats had been delivered in the mosques in Konya⁸⁰. In the khutba text, hat wearing was handled with in terms of its religious verdict as to whether it was right or wrong, and then both a religious and a political discourse was used to praise those who obeyed the reform and to frighten who did not. Since this case was a typical example of the way that the Diyanet has played its role as a religious administrative unit in the “secular” Turkish Republic, I am going to dwell on this khutba, making a short discourse analysis.

After giving a *hadith* of the Prophet on the importance of intentions rather than appearance, it is stated in the Friday khutba that:

[T]o consider a Muslim wearing non-Muslim nations' clothes such as jackets, trousers, hats and flat caps to be a sinful Muslim is a big mistake. ...Not wearing modern clothes that are regarded as proper clothes for the contemporary needs of our land by our ...coreligionist representatives and the honored Republican Government that is the *ulu'l amr*, would require big religious, rational, and political responsibilities and would be punished by cautionary punishments.

The punishment, which was to be hanged, is stated in a clear way by putting that “If people who claim to be Muslim and Turkish want to live, ...they should obey the

⁷⁹ The law no: 671, Şapka İktizası Hakkında Kanun, Available [Online]: “<http://www.mevzuat.adalet.gov.tr/html/389.html>” [21 February 2013].; Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, (Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 269.

⁸⁰ İsmail Kara, 2010, pp. 124, 125. Turkish version of the block quotation below is available in APPENDIX A.

orders of our current government wholeheartedly. This obedience is a holy jihad in the sight of Allah and an honor and dignity in the eyes of people”.⁸¹

The religious legitimization of wearing Western hat provided by the “mediators” is very obvious here, and shows how these mediators play a significant role in the transformation period from a religious empire to a secular nation-state. There is a two-level legitimization here. Firstly, the words of the Prophet are taken as the basis, and then it is argued that according to this basis, wearing Western clothes is not contrary to the religion. Secondly, by granting the government with the title of being the *ulu’l amr*, the religious legitimization of the current political authority is provided. Apart from legitimization, the khutba assumes a complete conformity between the orders of Allah and orders of the government. As a direct result of this, being a pious Muslim is equated with being a proper, obedient citizen.

Borthwick analyzes the role of the mediators in the transition periods and puts forward that the modernizing ruling elite “must amalgamate the new messages with the habits, ways of thinking and social processes of the people, so that they can identify emotionally with the messages and feel that they are indigenous to their culture.”.⁸² The same amalgamation is made here with the provision of religious and political discourses together as if the political actions are in complete compliance with the religious verdicts.

The creation of an enlightened Islam according to the positivist ideals was another duty of the Diyanet as it is determined by the state. Şerif Mardin puts forward on this issue that the republican elite had considered folk Islam as

⁸¹ “Müslümanlık ve Türklük iddiasında bulunan her fert yaşamak isterse, ...hükümet-i hazıramızın emirlerini ifada zerre kadar eser-i te’allül (bahane) göstermemeli, can u yürekten itaat ve riayet etmeli. Onun bu itaat ve riayeti nezd-i Halik’ta bir cihad-ı mukaddes ve nezd-i mahlukta bais-i şeref ve haysiyettir.” İsmail Kara, 2010, p. 125.

⁸² Borthwick, pp. 299, 300.

anomalous and that the DRA has been following the same policy since its foundation.⁸³ The struggle against folk Islam had been carried out by the Diyanet mainly through attacking superstitions embedded in the society.⁸⁴ Both in the khutbas and in several publications of the Diyanet the superstitions had been enumerated and they are described as signs of deviation from the “real” religion by marking superstitions as illogical and irreligious. These were all ambitious attempts to purify and re-naturalize Islam and making it suitable to the requirements of the contemporary civilization.

As the third major task of the Diyanet, the republican leadership envisioned the role of making Islam a powerful element of national solidarity to the Diyanet for the Turkish nation. In line with the needs and demands of the newly created Turkish Republic, the Directorate of Religious Affairs has supplied a nationalized state Islam that serves both the unity of the Turkish nation and also the separation of Muslim Turks living in Turkey from the global Muslim *ummah*. As Barkey puts, “The Diyanet became a national institution, with a forceful message of nation-building as well as a homogenizing function...”⁸⁵ In the second chapter I analyze the nationalization of Islam in the khutbas of the Diyanet throughout the history of the Republic. Thus, to give some examples here from the titles of the first khutba book would be sufficient for showing the emphasis on the nation by the Diyanet. Some of

⁸³ Şerif Mardin, *Din ve İdeoloji*, (İletişim Yayınları, 2002), p. 148.

⁸⁴ Şerif Mardin, 2002, pp. 143-156.; İsmail Kara, 2010, p. 79.; İştâar Gözaydın, 2009, p. 162.; Taha Parla & Andrew Davison, *Corporatist Ideology in Kemalist Turkey: Progress or Order?*, (Syracuse University Press, 2004), pp. 119, 120.

⁸⁵ K. Barkey, p. 27.

these were: The protection of homeland, the honor of military service, the sacrifice of life and property for the homeland, and so on.⁸⁶

As I analyzed in this part, the strong wave of secularization reforms had marked the first decade of the Republic approximately until the 30s. Especially beginning from the 30s a different face of Kemalist secularism where a racist understanding of nationalism, the Turkification of Islam, and excessive restrictions on the religious sphere had emerged. In the following section, I am going to deal with the rigid secularization that had continued until 1947 the date of seventh Congress of the Republican People's Party (CHP) where the relaxation of some religious limitations were begun for the first time under the one-party rule.

The Period of Strict Kemalist Secularism and Nationalism

The period between the 30s and the ends of the 40s can be described as the strict Kemalist era where Kemalist reforms had reached their peaks in the history of the Turkish Republic. With slight differences in the dates scholars writing on this period make a common periodization for this era that began with the 30s and ended during the transition to the multi-party democracy in the end of the 40s.⁸⁷ Parla argues that with the establishment of the third Parliament in 1927 the Republican People's Party

⁸⁶ *Türkçe Hutbeler*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Amedi Matbaası, 1928).

⁸⁷ Nilüfer Göle, p. 49.; Zürcher, p. 176.; D. Rustow, p. 69.; Sam Kaplan, pp. 117, 118.; İsmail Kara, 2010; p. 24.; Ira M. Lapidus, p. 607.; M. Hakan Yavuz, "Turkish Identity and Foreign Policy in Flux: The Rise of Neo-Ottomanism", *Critique* 7, no.12, p. 26.

became the only sovereign of the state.⁸⁸ Accordingly, Zürcher shows the increasing pressure over the religion by the state during the 30s and 40s.⁸⁹

After the removal of Islam from the Constitution as the religion of the state in 1928, a consistent attempt for the replacement of religion by Turkish nationalism gathered a faster pace and an explicitly racist interpretation of nationalism was put into practice by the state. The establishment of Türk Tarih Kurumu (TTK, 1931) and Türk Dil Kurumu (TDK, 1932) and their incredible effort to create a pure history of Turkish race and pure Turkish language cleansed from Arabic and Persian words had marked this era of strict nationalism.⁹⁰ According to the law on surnames in 1934, everyone had to get a surname and these surnames needed to be authentically Turkish. In the acquisition of surnames, words that had an Arabic or a Persian root were not allowed.⁹¹ The discussion on the name of the Directorate of Religious Affairs among parliamentarians was interesting in terms of being a precursor of a purist understanding of Turkish language. The last offer as the name of the new institution “*Diyanet İşleri Riyaseti*” was challenged by another offer demanding the change of the last word as “*Reislik*” in order to get rid of the word “*Riyaset*” which has an Arabic grammatical structure and to make it Turkish “*Reislik*” through stating this reason explicitly as such.⁹² The theories on the superiority of Turkish race and the Sun Language Theory were the peaks of the radical nationalist period in terms of a new understanding of history and language.

⁸⁸ Taha Parla, *Türkiye’de Anayasalar*, (İletişim Yayınları, 1991), p. 20.

⁸⁹ Zürcher, p. 233.

⁹⁰ Parla&Davison, 2004, pp. 77-80.

⁹¹ D. Howard, p. 105.

⁹² *Kuruluşundan Günümüze Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, pp. 22, 23.

During this period, mainly because of the reinforcement and establishment of its authority, the Kemalist elite who did not need the legitimization of Islam for their authority and reforms any more as they did in the 20s, ushered a struggle for the replacement of Islam with ethno-racialist Turkish nationalism.⁹³ The restriction on religion in its public and institutional life had been escalated after the 30s. After the transfer of *madrasas* from the Diyanet to the Ministry of Education in 1924, *imam-hatip* schools and *ilahiyat* faculties had been opened under the Ministry of Education. At the beginning of the 30s, both of these types of schools were closed after they had provided religious education in a period of less than ten years.⁹⁴ In 1929, Arabic and Persian language courses were dropped from the curriculum in all of the education system, in 1930 courses on religion were dropped in the cities, and in 1933 in the villages.⁹⁵ Jäschke states that for fourteen years until 1948, there was no religious education in the public schools.⁹⁶

The Turkification of religion was also another significant attempt of the state during that period. Howard divides the 20s and 30s into two periods as secularization in the former, and nationalization in the latter.⁹⁷ The concept of “Turkishification” rather than Turkification would describe these efforts in a better way, since the Turkification policies of the religion by the state had been conducted mainly through the language. In 1925 the preaching part of the khutbas began to be delivered in

⁹³ D. Howard, pp. 105, 106.

⁹⁴ G. Jäschke, p. 75.

⁹⁵ Niyazi Berkes, p. 477.

⁹⁶ G. Jäschke, p. 83.

⁹⁷ D. Howard, pp. 96-107.

Turkish,⁹⁸ and in 1932 entire khutba text including Qur'anic verses and *hadiths* was delivered in Turkish.⁹⁹ Again in 1932 with a radical decision, the call to prayer, which is originally in Arabic was made Turkish.¹⁰⁰ Many writers righteously share the idea that the aim of these reforms was the localization and Turkification of Islam.¹⁰¹ In addition to this, the de-mystification of religion as argued by Göle is a very significant aspect of these Turkification policies.¹⁰² The emergence of the cult of Mustafa Kemal beginning from the 30s entered into a different phase by the *mawlid* (a traditional religious genre of poem for praising the Prophet Muhammad) of Behçet Kemal for Mustafa Kemal.¹⁰³ In the opening of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1937¹⁰⁴, Mustafa Kemal states that:

It is world-widely known that our main program in the administration of the state is the program of the CHP. The principles that it covers are the main lines that enlighten us in administration and politics. But, these principles should not be equated with the dogmas of books that are supposed to be revealed from the sky. We take our inspirations not from sky or the invisible world, but directly from life.

When we put all these together, we see how far the extent of de-Islamization project of Kemalism reached towards the ends of Mustafa Kemal's life in the Turkish Republic.

⁹⁸ Nesimi Yazıcı, "Osmanlı Son Döneminden Cumhuriyete Hutbelerimiz Üzerine Bazı Düşünceler", *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, Özel Sayı, (1999), p. 215.

⁹⁹ İslam Ansiklopedisi, s.v. "Hutbe", p. 428.

¹⁰⁰ G. Jäschke, p. 45.

¹⁰¹ Ş. Hanioğlu, pp. 43-44.; D. Waxman, pp. 8-11.; P. Dumont, p. 128.

¹⁰² Nilüfer Göle, p. 50.

¹⁰³ Ş. Hanioğlu, p. 45.

¹⁰⁴ Available [online]: "http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tarihce/ataturk_konusma/5d3yy.htm" [21 February 2013]. Turkish version of this quotation is available in APPENDIX A.

In this new period, the Diyanet had played its role again in the implementation of these radical reforms regarding religious issues. In 1933, the ban on chanting the call to prayer in Arabic was directly announced by the head of the Diyanet, Rifat Börekçi, in a very statist and restrictive language: “To provide the harmony of the whole *azan* and as being suitable to the national policy...”,¹⁰⁵ “...definite and severe punishments would be imposed on those who oppose even in a most slightest way.”.¹⁰⁶ As it is obvious, the Diyanet had continued its position as an instrument of the political authority in the new radical nationalist Kemalist era.

The restrictions on religious sphere during this period touched directly to the Directorate of Religious Affairs causing firstly in 1931 a substantial organizational shrinking by a new budget act.¹⁰⁷ Adanalı says regarding this act, “This reorganization aimed at, among other things, the restriction of the authority and functions of the PRA and the reduction of the number of personnel who worked in this institution.”.¹⁰⁸ Again in 1935, through the first organizational enactment of the Directorate of Religious Affairs the central power of the Directorate on the appointment of provincial muftis was reduced.¹⁰⁹

There had been no change in the position of the Diyanet during the İnönü leadership after the death of Mustafa Kemal. Moreover, the harsh attitude against religion had continued with greater intensity in this period. For instance, in 1941 the

¹⁰⁵ “Bütün ezanın ahengini sağlamak ve milli politikaya uygun olmak üzere” Jäschke, p. 45.

¹⁰⁶ “[E]n ufak bir muhalefet irtikab edeceklerin kati ve şedid mücazata maruz kalacakları tamamen beyan olunur efendim” İsmail Kara, 2010, p. 61.

¹⁰⁷ Mehmet Görmez, “The Status of the Presidency of Religious Affairs in the Turkish Constitution and its Execution”, *The Muslim World* 98, no.2-3, (April 2008), p. 246.; The report of *Diyanet: The Turkish Directorate for Religious Affairs in a Changing Environment*, prepared by the University Amsterdam & Utrecht University, January 2011, p. 12.

¹⁰⁸ A. Hadi Adanalı, “The Presidency of Religious Affairs and the Principle of Secularism in Turkey”, *The Muslim World* 98, no.2-3, (April 2008), p. 229.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

punishments for the opposition against the hat law and Turkish *azan* were aggravated. Until 1947, the policies of strict secularization and nationalism had lasted under the single-party regime of the Republican People's Party.

The Multi-Party Democracy Period

The radical transformations that had been carried out by the Kemalist leadership in a rigid and coercive way were not accepted easily by the public. It might have not been possible for people to show their uneasiness explicitly under the repression of the republican regime; however, even during this authoritarian period the public expressed its disapproval in some occasions. In 1926, in a mosque in İstanbul the prayer was done completely in Turkish instead of Arabic, and upon this change people left the mosque and did not pray behind the *imam*.¹¹⁰ In a similar vein, a report on the Turkification of some religious rituals again such as *salah*, by the İstanbul Theological Faculty, was not put into practice due to the reactions of the public.¹¹¹

As it is obvious, these were very limited reactions in an era of authoritarian dictatorship; nevertheless, those kinds of responses were important in terms of indicating the popular resentment. As Lapidus states, “The cultural revolution, imposed from the top, had relatively slight penetration”.¹¹² The Sufi tradition, Islamic values, Muslim identity as opposed to secular nationalism, respect for

¹¹⁰ *Kuruluşundan Günümüze Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, p. 504.

¹¹¹ Jäschke, p. 42.

¹¹² I. Lapidus, p. 610.

dervishes, etc. had not ceased to exist in the society during the strict Kemalist era.¹¹³ The continuous attacks on people's spiritual values and ways of lives had made them angry against the republican leaders.¹¹⁴ The harshly repressed society found for the first time a way of showing its resentment influentially twenty years after the establishment of the Republic. This was done through the ballot box as a consequence of the transition from an authoritarian single-party regime to a majoritarian multi-party democracy. CHP's serious consideration of the responses coming from the public began with this transition period, mainly because of the fear of electorate in the coming elections where the CHP will compete with the Democrat Party (DP). After the seventh Congress of the CHP in 1947, the party introduced essential religious openings such as the establishment of the Ankara Theological Faculty (1949), the provision of selective religious courses to the elementary and secondary schools (1949), the opening of *imam-hatip* seminaries (1949), the opening of seminaries to educate and train preachers, the provision of foreign currency for *hajj*, the removal of the closure of the tombs of Ottoman Sultans and respected religious figures,¹¹⁵ increasing the budget of the Diyanet (1949).¹¹⁶ It is important to state here that these easing policies did not designate a radical shift from the earlier period. The Kemalist secularism and nationalism had continued to exist as they were in the previous era. For instance, as Jäschke shows the religious education in the public schools that took place in this new process was completely from a nationalist perspective. Jäschke analyzes in a detailed way the courses on nationalized religion

¹¹³ Zürcher, p. 192.; I. Lapidus, p. 613.

¹¹⁴ Rustow, p. 92.; Zürcher, p. 192.

¹¹⁵ Zürcher, p. 233.; Rustow, p. 94.; Gözaydın 2009, p. 29.

¹¹⁶ Murat Akan, "Twin Tolerations or Siamese Twins? Kemalist Laicism and Political Islam in Turkey", not published yet, p. 21.

and it is seen there that the famous phrase of “Muslim Turkish nation”¹¹⁷ that have become one of the symbolic phrases to describe Turkish nation after the 50s, was used during that time by the secular nationalist CHP. Reed, too, suggests that the intention with the religious education in 1949 “was to enlighten people in a rational way so that they could avoid ‘reactionary fables’ which had obscured religion for centuries and thus forestall the abuse of religion for political purposes”.¹¹⁸ On the other hand, as clear indicators of the preservation of secularist ideas, on the same day as the opening of Ankara Theological Faculty, the famous law of 163 that prevents religious activities to a great extent in civil society realm,¹¹⁹ and the law on the complete annihilation of *tekkes* were passed in the parliament.¹²⁰

As Waxman clearly puts “It is a dual process involving the Islamization of Turkish nationalism, and the nationalization of Islam”¹²¹ and “Turkish national identity is ...a product of perpetual negotiations between the state and society.”¹²². This point is quite significant in terms of taking the society as an actor in state and religion relations and also in the construction of the Turkish national identity. Although the state significantly repressed the society in certain periods, state and religion relations in Turkey has not been a one-way communication from the top to the masses, but a constant negotiation between the two. Yılmaz’s notice that the state’s attitude towards religion has not always been the same throughout the history

¹¹⁷ “Müslüman Türk Milleti”

¹¹⁸ Howard A. Reed, “The Faculty of Divinity at Ankara” *The Muslim World* 46, no.4, (1956), p. 306.

¹¹⁹ Gözaydın 2009, p. 29.

¹²⁰ H. Reed, pp. 307, 308.

¹²¹ D. Waxman, p. 5.

¹²² Ibid., p. 8.

of the Republic and has varied according to the different circumstances shows us again the flexible character of the state and religion relations.

The 50s had brought an easing towards religion with the soft policies of the DP government by relaxing the strict control over religious practices.¹²³ Some substantial reforms of this period could be ranked as such: The return to the performance of *azan* in Arabic in 1950 after 18 years; recitation of the Qur'an in the state radio three days a week, religious talk broadcasting, the inclusion of the religious courses to the curriculum in the public schools,¹²⁴ the opening of *imam-hatip* schools (1951),¹²⁵ an increase in the construction of the mosques¹²⁶ and so on.

It was explicit in the period of Menderes that the re-incorporation of Islam into the Turkish nationalism began after a period of ethno-racial nationalism. Ümit Cizre states that in the post-50 era the Menderes government had used Islam for the unity of nation in a stronger way than before.¹²⁷ By describing the changes in the Menderes period as “the new official attitude toward religion” Kaplan puts that the DP government presented publicly the Turkish soldiers in the Korean War as the Muslim soldiers fighting against the atheist communist forces.¹²⁸ Similarly, Poulton argues that following the 50s the state has increasingly integrated Islam to the Turkish nationalism.¹²⁹ With the strong re-inclusion of Islam to the Turkish nation in

¹²³ Binnaz Toprak, 2005, p. 34.; H. Reed, p. 308.; B. Turner, pp. 168, 169.; D. Rustow, p. 95.

¹²⁴ H. Reed, p. 311.

¹²⁵ Suat Cebeci, “Cumhuriyet Döneminde Yüksek Din Öğretimi”, *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, Özel Sayı, (1999), p. 230.

¹²⁶ Zürcher, p. 233.

¹²⁷ Ümit Cizre, p. 238.

¹²⁸ Kaplan, p. 118.

¹²⁹ Hugh Poulton, *The Top Hat, The Grey Wolf and The Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic*, (NYU Press, 1997), p. 318.

the beginning of the 50s, after a break in the 30s and 40s, the period of “Muslim Turkish nation” that has lasted until now began.

In terms of enlarging the scope of the Diyanet and increasing its power, the Menderes government had introduced important changes, too. The major empowerment was the increase in the budget of the Directorate. The shrinking of the budget by the CHP through the budget act in 1931 was reversed by a regulation in 1950 and caused a big increase in the DRA’s financial resources. Similarly, the previous change in the provincial mufti offices that weakened the authority of the Diyanet in 1935 was annihilated and the situation prior to 1935 brought back.¹³⁰

Nevertheless, all these easing policies did not mean either a challenge to the secular character of the state or a change in the administrative position of the Diyanet. As Ümit Cizre puts clearly, the DP did not use Islam ideologically but again instrumentally, and there was no change during the DP period “in the scope or intensity of state control over religion”.¹³¹ Similarly, Rustow suggests that the changes of the Menderes government were not an Islamic renaissance but a partial restoration that affected a small part of the Atatürk secularism.¹³² Sharing these views on the continuity of the main structure and position of the Diyanet in relation to the state as it had been envisioned and practiced during the early Kemalist era, Zürcher and Gözaydın shed light on the other side of the coin that is the restrictive policies against religion in the same period.¹³³

The military coup d’état in 27 May 1960 opened a new era in Turkish politics and İsmet İnönü established again the government after general elections in 1961 and

¹³⁰ Mehmet Görmez, p. 246.

¹³¹ Ümit Cizre, p. 237.

¹³² D. Rustow, p. 96.

¹³³ Zürcher, pp. 233, 234., Gözaydın 2009, pp. 34-36.

remained in the office until 1965. After the coup, Alpaslan Türkeş who was a military officer during that time gave an interview to the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* and said that the reason of the coup was the divergence from Atatürk's religious understanding during the last decade. He gave also the example of the re-delivery of *azan* in Arabic instead of Turkish as it was transformed by Mustafa Kemal.¹³⁴

Although, this was a coup to restore state and religion relations as it was during the single-party era,¹³⁵ there had not been a clear reverse to the condition prior to 1950 after the coup even under the Prime Ministry of “national chief” İsmet İnönü. On the contrary, the İnönü government made further openings toward the incorporation of Islam to the Turkish nationalism and the state. In 1962, the state minister Hıfzı Oğuz Bekata who was in charge of the Diyanet, delivered a speech about the new roles of the “enlightened” religious men (*aydın din adamları*) and stated that in competition with *imams*, progress is difficult, and that's why as the government they embraced *imams* and teachers in order to accomplish national progress goals.¹³⁶ There is a direct reference to the positivist ideals of Mustafa Kemal in these words; however, the CHP after 1960 did not seem to take its “inspirations only from life” as Mustafa Kemal did in 1937, but from “books that are supposed to be revealed from the sky” like Mustafa Kemal of the 1920s. The major reason for the reverse from the Kemalism of the 30s to the Kemalism of the 20s by the CHP in the beginning of the 60s was the reemergence of the legitimization problem of the secularism and secular nationalism in a multi-party democracy regime. By accepting the inseparability of the religion from the public life, the CHP had left the strict Kemalist understanding

¹³⁴ İsmail Kara, 2008, p. 46.

¹³⁵ Binnaz Toprak, “The State, Politics, and Religion in Turkey”, In *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, edited by M. Heper and A. Evin (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), p. 123.

¹³⁶ *Aydın Din Adamları*, (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1962), p. 11.

of the 30s and 40s even after a military coup in order to be able to communicate with the public and to convince them. After the İnönü government, the inclusion efforts toward religion had continued, too. Accordingly, for instance, in 1967 selective religious courses were opened at the high-school level, and extended in 1976 to the last year of the secondary schools.¹³⁷

In the 1961 Constitution written after the coup, the esteem of the Diyanet was restored through its inclusion in the Constitution again after the degradation in 1924. This restoration was a clear sign of the state's re-incorporation of religion. Rumpf puts forward that with the '61 Constitution, the state began to make concessions towards religion.¹³⁸ In 1965, the task of "administering affairs related to the moral principles,"¹³⁹ which has been very controversial since that date was added to the duties of the Diyanet in the law. On this addition, Gözaydın puts that "To load this institution with a charge whose content could not be determined judicially, like 'administering affairs related to the moral principles', means definitely that the state adopted a religion as ideology".¹⁴⁰ In addition to this, with the same law the capacity of the Directorate in terms of administrative organization had been increased. Beginning with this law until the '80s the Directorate had widened the extent of its services and employees even when working abroad to provide religious service for emigrant workers.¹⁴¹ In the same law, Adanalı states that "to take protective measures that maintain the loyalty of Muslim citizens to the national ideals" was also

¹³⁷ Halis Ayhan, p. 251.

¹³⁸ C. Rumpf, p. 53.

¹³⁹ "ahlak esaslarıyla ilgili işleri yürütmek"

¹⁴⁰ "...Bu kuruma 'ahlak esaslarıyla ilgili işleri yürütmek' gibi içeriği hukuken belirlenemeyecek bir işlev yüklemek ancak devletin bir dini ideoloji olarak benimsemiş olduğu anlamına gelir." Gözaydın, 2009, p. 252.

¹⁴¹ A. Hadi Adanalı, p. 230.

taking place.¹⁴² Similarly, Parla argues that the addition to the law that the Diyanet works “aiming at national solidarity and unity”¹⁴³ in the 1982 Constitution did not sign a change in the duties of the Diyanet, since it was same in the ‘61 Constitution, as well. According to him, what the ‘82 Constitution did is stating the obvious.¹⁴⁴ Thus, we can argue that there had not been a change in the state ideal of nationalism; however, its content had undergone a change by leaning towards religion. The significant point here is the fact that this shift, which had mainly been introduced by the DP, had been sustained by the military and the CHP, as well, even after the coup.

Turkey had entered into a different political and social phase in the beginning of the ‘80s again with a harsh military coup. The military commanders considered the increase of the socialist movement as a threat to the Turkish Republic and took a radical precaution on March 12 to prevent the expansion of this leftist movement. “Turkish-Islamic Synthesis” (*Türk-İslam Sentezi*) that had created by the *Aydınlar Ocağı* during the ‘70s was the favorite formula of the military after the coup. As Kaplan puts, since the ‘70s the military had situated itself on the side of this synthesis¹⁴⁵ and with the 1980 coup and the ‘82 Constitution this support gained a clear visibility in the public. As it is obvious from its name, this synthesis suggested the closeness of Turkishness and Islam both historically and culturally so that it was impossible to separate these two from one another.¹⁴⁶ Ahmet Kabaklı, one of the distinguished members of the *Aydınlar Ocağı*, stresses the importance of mosque, school, and army as the three institutions that strengthen the national spirit equally,

¹⁴² A. Hadi Adanalı, p. 230.

¹⁴³ “milletçe dayanışma ve bütünleşmeyi amaç edinerek”

¹⁴⁴ Taha Parla, 1991, p. 97.

¹⁴⁵ Kaplan, p. 114.

¹⁴⁶ İbrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türk-İslam Sentezi*, (Ötüken Neşriyat, 1985), pp. 143-145.

so no one has the right to favor one of them and to disregard others.¹⁴⁷ The effect of Turkish-Islamic Synthesis and the *Aydınlar Ocağı* showed itself both through the application of some principles of the synthesis in the ‘82 Constitution,¹⁴⁸ and through the appointment of the members of the *Aydınlar Ocağı* to the most influential state institutions such as Turkish Radio and Television Company (TRT), Higher Education Council (YÖK), and the Ministry of Education (MEB).¹⁴⁹

The above-mentioned addition of “working with the aim of national solidarity and unity” to the duties of the Diyanet in the ‘82 Constitution pointed the complete incorporation of Islam into the “secular” Turkish Republic. Sam Kaplan analyzes that period in a detailed way in terms of state’s nationalism policies regarding religion and the military, and he states, “The new texts (meaning “textbooks”) extol the alliance between the military and religion as native to the Turks’ cultural essence”.¹⁵⁰ The introduction of compulsory religion courses in the primary and secondary public schools was another dimension of the escalation of the incorporation of Islam to the state. However, as it is obvious, this was not an independent Islam, but a nationalized, controlled Islam in order to teach official Islam to the Turkish youth.¹⁵¹ On the logic of compulsory religion courses Kenan Evren stated that “The state unifies the religious and secular education in integrity, and administer and control it centrally”.¹⁵² It is clear by this statement that the logic

¹⁴⁷ Yüksel Taşkın, *Milliyetçi Muhafazakar Entelijansiya*, (İletişim Yayınları, 2007), p. 223.

¹⁴⁸ Taha Parla, 1991, pp. 28-29.; Yüksel Taşkın, p. 262.

¹⁴⁹ Dov Waxman, pp. 18-19.

¹⁵⁰ Sam Kaplan, p.120.

¹⁵¹ Dov Waxman, p. 19.

¹⁵² “Devlet ‘dini ve dünyevi’ bütün eğitimin bir bütün olmasını gerçekleştirir, bir elden yönetir ve kontrol eder.” H. Ayhan, p. 252.

of unification of the education (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat*) was still continuing in 1982 after sixty years. Together with nationalized religion, positivist understanding of Islam was again prevalent in the period after the 80s. The duty of the DRA as to “enlighten people in religious matters”¹⁵³ took place again in the ‘82 Constitution. Ümit Cizre shows the positivistic flavor in Evren’s religious references where he stresses the literacy, science, knowledge, civilization, enlightenment and so on.¹⁵⁴

The transformation of High Islamic Institutes (*Yüksek İslam Enstitüleri*) that were opened in 1959 to the Theological Faculties,¹⁵⁵ increase in the number of *imam-hatip* schools and the mosques,¹⁵⁶ increase in the volume of the religious content in school textbooks and also in the broadcasts of the TRT¹⁵⁷ were some other significant reforms of the post-80 period. Even though the state made vital openings towards religion, it also took strict precautions to guarantee the secular character of the Republic. For instance, Parla draws attention to the addition of “being obedient to the Atatürk’s ideals and reforms” in the oath of parliamentarians by the ‘82 Constitution. More importantly, the reform laws of Mustafa Kemal during the 20s and 30s were taken under constitutional protection.¹⁵⁸ Stepan points the restrictive aspect of the ‘82 Constitution on religion by arguing, “No long standing democracy actually constraints and manages the role of religious expression in civil society and political society as much as Turkey’s current Constitution does.”¹⁵⁹ About the

¹⁵³ “din konusunda toplumu *aydınlatmak*” Emphasis added.

¹⁵⁴ Ümit Cizre, p. 246.

¹⁵⁵ Suat Cebeci, pp. 229-233.

¹⁵⁶ Sam Kaplan, p. 120.; Zürcher, pp. 288, 289.

¹⁵⁷ Zürcher, pp. 288, 289.

¹⁵⁸ İsmail Kara, 2010, p. 31.

¹⁵⁹ Alfred Stepan, *Arguing Comparative Politics*, (Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 246.

restrictions on Islamic activities beyond the framework of official Islam in the post-80 era, Howard puts forward that the expression of Islamic political activism was not allowed and suppressed in this period.¹⁶⁰ Similarly, Sam Kaplan argues that the graduates of *imam-hatip* schools were not allowed to enter into the army, and religious officers in the army were selected and fired.¹⁶¹

Turkey had experienced a different version of the 1980 coup with the February 28 process in 1997. This time, the army showed its strength not with a military coup, but with a “post-modern coup” suppressing Islamic activities at each level of the society. The Prime Minister Necmeddin Erbakan was forced to resign, and his party was closed down with the allegation that “the party acts against the principle of the laic Republic” in January 1998.¹⁶² As Kramer argues the architects of the February 28 process made a purist interpretation of Kemalism.¹⁶³ The major difference of the February 28 from the 1980 coup, other than their differing ways, was the clear antagonist stance and policies of this new period. Cizre and Çınar¹⁶⁴ rank the strict policies of the February 28 as such:

All primary and secondary school curricula were altered so as to emphasize both the secularist history and character of the republic and the new security threats posed by political Islam and separatist movements. Teaching on Atatürkism was expanded to cover all courses taught at all levels and types of schools. The secondary school system for prayer-leaders and preachers (*imam hatip*) was scrapped and an eight-year mandatory schooling system was introduced. Appointments of

¹⁶⁰ D. Howard, p. 160.

¹⁶¹ Sam Kaplan, pp. 122, 123.

¹⁶² D. Howard, p. 179.

¹⁶³ Heinz Kramer, *A Changing Turkey, the Challenge to Europe and the United States*, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), p. 71.

¹⁶⁴ Ümit Cizre, Menderes Çınar, “Turkey 2002: Kemalism, Islamism, and Politics in the Light of the February 28 Process”, *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no.2-3, (Spring/Summer 2003), p. 312.

university chancellors since 1997 were pointedly made from among staunch Kemalists. Teaching programs on Kemalist principles, the struggle against reactionism, and national security issues were also extended to top bureaucrats and prayer leaders. Finally, military institutions and personnel were actively involved in administering the programs.

In this period even the topics of the Friday khutbas were determined in the National Security Council (MGK) as it is reported by the general director of the TRT, Yücel Yener, during that period.¹⁶⁵ Kenar also shows in her master thesis the monitoring of the khutbas by the army personnel in the February 28 process.¹⁶⁶ The reform of country-level centralization of the Friday khutbas was actualized in this period, too.¹⁶⁷

The AK Parti Era

The February 28 process had not lasted long and with the coming of the AK Parti to the power alone in general elections on 3 November 2002 a new period began in which the visibility and influence of Islam have been reinstituted and strengthened further. In 2007, AK Parti again came to the power alone with a significant electorate support behind it by getting 47 % of the votes. In the general elections of 2011, AK Parti increased its popular support and with the 50 % of the votes established the government again alone. As Arat indicates for the 2007 election, “It was the first time in Turkish history that a political party with an Islamist background had come to power with half of the electorate behind it. The balance between the so-called

¹⁶⁵ “Yener: TRT ‘Albaylar TV’ Olmuştur”, *Takvim*, 28/02/2012, retrieved on 21/02/2013, <http://www.takvim.com.tr/Siyaset/2012/02/28/yener-trt-albaylar-tv-olmustu>

¹⁶⁶ Ceren Kenar, p. 159.

¹⁶⁷ J. Gibbon, p. 7.

secularists and the Islamists had changed.”¹⁶⁸ With this enormous political power, AK Parti made revolution-like transformations in the social and political arena and broke in the last decade several taboos of the Republic.

AK Parti was founded in 2001 by prominent figures of Erbakan-led *Milli Görüş* (National Outlook) Movement, such as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Abdullah Gül, Bülent Arınç, and Abdüllatif Şener. They split up from the representative of *Milli Görüş* Movement, Fazilet Partisi (FP) in 2000 under the name of “*yenilikçiler*” (reformists). Their major difference from *Milli Görüş* was their moderateness in their previously strict political and religious ideology and stances. Accordingly, the new party defined itself as being conservative and democrat. Even though R. T. Erdoğan is the leader of a moderate conservative party, he has explicitly expressed his pro-Islamic views during his prime ministry from 2003 until the present time. In one of his speeches in 2002, he stated that Turkey should reach a synthesis of its Muslim identity and modern values.¹⁶⁹ Thus, one of his and AK Parti’s main goals has been to embed Islamic values into the state and to set Islam as a basis of the new Turkey. As Sultan Tepe puts, there is a direct relation and continuation between the February 28 process and the Islamic stance of the AK Parti. She states that the AK Parti set its policies regarding Islam on the basis of the opposition to the anti-Islamic practices of the February 28 process.¹⁷⁰ In the following paragraphs, I will mention some of the symbolic pro-Islamic changes and challenges of the AK Parti in its struggle reaching the synthesis of “modern and Muslim” Turkey.

¹⁶⁸ Yeşim Arat, p. 872.

¹⁶⁹ Sultan Tepe, “A Pro-Islamic Party? Promises and Limits”, In *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti*, edited by M. Hakan Yavuz, (The University of Utah Press, 2006), p. 118.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 114.

The ban on headscarf in the universities had been a great problem in Turkey and this practice was further hardened in 1997, after its introduction with the 1980 coup. The AK Parti had struggled so hard to remove this ban constitutionally, but it could not achieve because of the annulment decision by the Constitutional Court in 2008. Then, through changing bylaws the government lifted the ban administratively using the new cadres of the YÖK in 2010. Today, not letting female students with headscarves to enter university campuses has become an offense and is not legally allowed. The change from the ban on entering universities with a headscarf to the punishment of the preventing such an entrance was a radical one and could not have been expected just ten years before, when the process of the February 28 was still continuing.

The ban on the headscarf was the product of the 1980 junta regime and the AK Parti succeeded in getting rid of it by standing decisively. However, the extent of the AK Parti transformations did not stop with the 80s and has reached even the radical reforms introduced in the beginning of the Republic by Mustafa Kemal. The grave of İskilipli Atıf Hoca who was hanged in 1926 for violating the law on wearing the Western hat was found through DNA tests in 2008 and in 2012 a mausoleum was built for him.¹⁷¹ In addition, the name of the “İskilip State Hospital” was changed by the government and the new name of the hospital became “İskilip Atıf Hoca State Hospital”.¹⁷² In his group speech in the parliament, the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan challenged the reforms of Mustafa Kemal in a very explicit way and

¹⁷¹“İskilipli Hoca’ya Anıt Mezar”, Hürriyet, 16/04/2012, retrieved on 21/02/2013, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/20355215.asp>

¹⁷²“İskilipli Atıf Hoca’nın Adı Hastaneye Verildi”, 23/02/2012, retrieved on 21/02/2013, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetayV3&ArticleID=1079757&CategoryID=77>

mentioned the change in the name of the state hospital in this regard¹⁷³. By

addressing directly to the CHP, Erdoğan said that:

Continue being proud of Kel Ali¹⁷⁴ who was the judge of the Independence Court, of Kılıç Ali and Necip Ali who were among the architects of the Dersim massacre, and giving their names to the parks.¹⁷⁵ Do not worry, we are proud of the martyrs, *gazis*, *ulama*, great political figures, and we will continue to make live their names.

These words definitely mark an apparent shift from Kemalism and Kemalist reforms in the governance of the state during the AK Parti leadership. Together with this very strong symbolic challenge, Erdoğan brings continuously to the agenda the ban on Arabic *azan* that had lasted from 1932 to 1950 during the leaderships of Mustafa Kemal and İsmet İnönü. This is again a quite clear objection to the reforms and ideals of Mustafa Kemal that has never been challenged in Turkey until the AK Parti.

The challenges of the AK Parti to the secular Kemalism are not only symbolic but these reforms also have significant effects on the ground. The most obvious example of this is the recent change in the education system. Tayyip Erdoğan delivered a speech¹⁷⁶ on creation of a “pious generation” at the beginning of February 2012, where he stated that:

He (The opposition party CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu) says that I divide Turkey as the pious-the atheist. ...In my statement there is no mention such as the pious-the atheist, but bringing up a pious youth. I support this. Do you expect raising an atheist youth from a party having conservative democratic identity? You may have that kind of a goal, but

¹⁷³ “Atıf Hoca’nın Hakkını Teslim Ettik”, 29/02/2012, retrieved on 21/02/2013, <http://www.corumhakimiyet.net/Detay/32245/-ATIF-HOCA-NIN-HAKKINI-TESLIM-ETTİK-.aspx>. Turkish version of the quotation below is available in APPENDIX A.

¹⁷⁴ By Kel Ali, Erdoğan refers to Ali Çetinkaya who was the judge deciding the death penalty of İskilipli Atıf Hoca. Kel Ali is the nickname of him, used by people who dislike him.

¹⁷⁵ Erdoğan refers here to the naming of a park in Ankara as Ali Çetinkaya by the CHP municipality in 2011.

¹⁷⁶ “Dindar Gençlik Yetiştireceğiz”, 02/02/2012, retrieved on 21/02/2013, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/19825231.asp>. Turkish version of the quotation below is available in APPENDIX A.

we do not. We are going to raise a conservative and democratic youth that also protect its values coming from history. This is our reason for being.

At the end of March 2012, meaning two months after this speech, the government changed the education system up to the university level thanks to its great majority in the parliament.¹⁷⁷ Accordingly, the first parts of the *imam-hatips* that were closed down in the February 28 process were reopened. On this change, Erdoğan said that “We are erasing the last trace of the February 28”.¹⁷⁸ Additionally, in all primary and secondary schools apart from selective religion courses, two selective courses about the life of the Prophet Muhammad and about the knowledge on Qur’an were added.

The AK Parti period has been a very favorable term in terms of the Directorate of Religious Affairs. The first uplift was made with the increase in the budget of the Directorate beginning from the first year of the AK Parti government in 2003. However, it should be clarified that the increase in the budget was not an extra uplift. What AK Parti government did was the restoration of the shrunk budget of the Diyanet after the process of February 28 in 1997. From 1997 to 2002 there had been a continuous decrease in the proportion of the Diyanet’s budget and AK Parti had allocated a similar percentage of the national budget to the Diyanet to the 90s. In a report on the Diyanet, published by the University Amsterdam and the University Utrecht, it is suggested on the increase in the Diyanet’s budget during the AK Parti period that “These figures suffice to show that the somewhat alarmist opinions,

¹⁷⁷“4+4+4’ Meclis’ten Geçti”, 30/03/2012, retrieved on 21/02/2013, <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25335485/>

¹⁷⁸“28 Şubat’ın son izini siliyoruz.” “28 Şubat’ın Son İzini Siliyoruz”, 07/03/2012, retrieved on 21/02/2013, <http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/28-subat-in-son-izini-siliyoruz/siyaset/siyasetdetay/07.03.2012/1512056/default.htm>

which suggest a drastic increase in public funding of religion, are premature”.¹⁷⁹ Not having alarmist opinions does not necessarily mean considering AK Parti’s budget increase as an ordinary thing. As I am going to show in the next parts and chapters, the Diyanet institution is a very central instrument of the AK Parti to support the ideology and policies of the government at the public level. Thus, the increase in the budget of the Diyanet during the AK Parti period is an important indicator of the significance of the Diyanet in the eyes of the government.

Diyanet’s share in the budget:¹⁸⁰

Year	Percentage
1993	0.9
1994	1.0
1995	0.9
1996	0.6
1997	0.7
1998	0.7
1999	0.6
2000	0.5
2001	0.6
2002	0.6
2003	0.5
2004	0.6
2005	0.7
2006	0.8
2007	0.8
2008	0.9
2009	0.7

In addition to this increase, in 2010, the government passed a law¹⁸¹ on the administrative structure and duties of the Diyanet. With this law, both Diyanet’s scope was widened and the financial situation of its employees, meaning around

¹⁷⁹ *The report of University Amsterdam & Utrecht University*, p. 47.

¹⁸⁰ Gözaydın, 2009, p. 224.

¹⁸¹ For a more detailed information on this law, see the report of University Amsterdam & Utrecht University, pp. 48-50.

100.000 personnel, improved.¹⁸² After the enactment of the law, in an article in the official journal of the Diyanet, the satisfaction of the Diyanet and the personnel due to the provision of significant expansion to the Directorate was expressed.¹⁸³

Other than the increase in the budget and the legal change in the Diyanet, the appointment of Diyanet officials who are close to the government is another important point in understanding the relationship between the government and the Diyanet. Gibbon argues that unlike older types of Diyanet officials who are passive and only do what is ordered of them by their superiors, the main change with the AK Parti is that new officials take initiatives on their own to expand the services of the Diyanet like a manager would.¹⁸⁴ That's why he calls these new officials as "entrepreneurial bureaucrats".¹⁸⁵ According to him, these new civil servants are the main power of the AK Parti in the Diyanet, since through these servants AK Parti could reach the public more effectively.

When we look at the content of the messages of the Diyanet and its role in the AK Parti, we see continuities in some areas and changes in others. The definition of the aims and tasks of the Diyanet as it was determined in the 1982 Constitution is still in effect. Accordingly, Diyanet is still an administrative state institution under the prime ministry and is charged with the duties of "enlightening" the society in the affairs of faith, worship, and moral principles of Islam, aiming at the national

¹⁸²Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Kuruluş ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun. Available [online]: http://www.diyanet.gov.tr/foyvolant/1_kanunlar/01.pdf [21 February 2013].; "Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Kanunu'na Dikkat: İran'a Benzetme Çabası", 21/04/2010, retrieved on 21/02/2013, <http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/diyanet-isleri-baskanligi-kanunu-na-dikkat-iran-a-benzetme-cabasi/siyaset/siyasetdetay/21.04.2010/1227911/default.htm>

¹⁸³ Mehmet Bulut, "Başkanlıkla İlgili Yasal Düzenlemeler", *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (September 2010), p. 44.

¹⁸⁴ Gibbon, pp. 4, 5.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

solidarity and unity obedient to the principle of laicism. In addition to this, on the official web site of the Diyanet under the title of “Main Principles and Goals,”¹⁸⁶ “To contribute to the adherence to the self-identity of our citizen living abroad without being assimilated, and to their conformity with the society in which they live”¹⁸⁷ is stated as one of its goals. As it is seen from this explicit political goal, the Diyanet’s “representation of the state”¹⁸⁸ still continues in the AK Parti period. Similarly, supporting the decision of the Constitutional Court in 1971 on the necessity of the existence of the Directorate of Religious Affairs as a state institution, the vice president of the Diyanet, Fikret Karaman argued in 2008 that “Leaving religious services to their own devices or to sects and cults also has specific problems, which could result in polarization and disrupt national Turkish unity and solidarity.”¹⁸⁹ In line with these examples, in her analysis on the Diyanet during the AK Parti period, Kadioğlu argues that Diyanet aims at national solidarity and integrity today, too.¹⁹⁰ Gözaydın also draw attention to the continuity of strong pro-state interpretation of Islam of the Diyanet and usage of the institution as a tool for social engineering by the state, even during the governance of the AK Parti, which comes from an Islamist background.¹⁹¹ Based on his interviews with the representatives of the AK Parti and on the speeches of Mehmet Aydın, the minister of state in charge of religious affairs

¹⁸⁶ “Temel İlkeler ve Hedefler”

¹⁸⁷ “Yurt dışındaki vatandaşlarımızın asimile olmadan, kendi öz kimliklerine bağlı kalmalarına ve yaşadıkları toplumla uyum içinde olmalarına katkı sağlamak.” Available [online]: “<http://www.diyamet.gov.tr/turkish/diyametyeni/Diyamet-Isleri-Baskanligi-Tanitim-Taktim-13.aspx>” [21 February 2013]

¹⁸⁸ K. Barkey, p. 27.

¹⁸⁹ Fikret Karaman, “The Status and Function of the PRA in the Turkish Republic” *The Muslim World* 98, no.2-3, (April 2008), p. 289.

¹⁹⁰ Kadioğlu, p. 494.

¹⁹¹ İftar Gözaydın, 2008, p. 223.

between 2002 and 2007, Kuru puts forward that the AK Parti, too, continues statist understanding of religion through favoring a monopoly over religion through the Diyanet.¹⁹² In the Diyanet report of University Amsterdam and Utrecht University, that covers 2009 and 2010, it is argued similarly that AK Parti's "policy changes in recent years, both within the institutional structure of and towards the Diyanet, do not reflect any remarkable breaks with the periods prior to the coming to power of the AKP."¹⁹³ In his article, in the *Muslim World* the president of the Diyanet Ali Bardakoğlu denies the political influence and orientation in the determination of Diyanet's discourse and argues that the Diyanet is totally free in choosing its discourse by putting his presidency term as the evidence of this freedom in 2008.¹⁹⁴ However, in 2006, in the *Diyanet Aylık Dergi* he states explicitly that the political authorities have interfered in the Diyanet.¹⁹⁵ The difference between these two texts stems most probably the fact that he might have not wanted to show English-speaking audiences an image of Turkey as a country that is repressive towards religion. Whatever the reason, it is obvious that the Diyanet is not free in choosing its discourse and under a close and constant scrutiny of the political authority in Turkey including the term of the AK Parti government.

During the AK Parti era, Diyanet is still continuing its opposition to superstitions by publishing lists of superstitions to purify Islam from these

¹⁹² Ahmet Kuru, "Reinterpretation of Secularism in Turkey: The Case of The Justice and Development Party" In *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti*, edited by M. Hakan Yavuz, (The University of Utah Press, 2006), p. 143.

¹⁹³ *The report of University Amsterdam & Utrecht University*, p. 142.

¹⁹⁴ Ali Bardakoğlu, p. 176.

¹⁹⁵ Ali Bardakoğlu, "3 Mart 1924 Kanunlarına Yeniden Bakmak" *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (April 2009), p. 30.

“additions”.¹⁹⁶ However, this purification does not mean that they are maintaining the positivist interpretation of Islam as it had been the case during the last eighty years of the Republic. As far as I could follow, beginning from the July 2007, the *Diyanet Aylık Dergi* has published articles sharply criticizing positivist interpretation of Islam in an explicit way.¹⁹⁷ In these articles modernity is also criticized and the way that should be followed in the religious scholarship is pointed as the “tradition” opposing to the pure positivist understanding of “reason”, “science”, and “experience”.¹⁹⁸

In terms of nationalism, there has been again a radical break during the AK Parti term from the eighty years of Turkish nation-state’s perception of the nation. AK Parti has widened the understanding of the nation by incorporating ethnic minorities into “the nation” that had exclusively referred to the “Turkish” nation, so far. As Tayyip Erdoğan has clearly expressed several times, by his famous phrase “one nation” he means an inclusive nation that contains Turks, Kurds, Circassians, Abkhazians, Arabs, Bosnians, Albanians, etc. within it.¹⁹⁹ It is important to note here that non-Muslim Turkish citizens have still been excluded from the nation during the AK Parti period. In 2010 when the Prime Minister R. Tayyip Erdoğan delivered a speech in Ankara in an organization of the Diyanet he explicitly states that Islam is

¹⁹⁶ *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (June 2006).

¹⁹⁷ Adnan Aslan, “Pozitivist Din Anlayışının Çıkmazları”, *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (July 2007) pp. 9-11.; Mehmet Bayrakdar, “Aydınlanmanın ve Pozitivizmin İslam’a Bakışımıza Etkisi”, *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (March 2009), pp. 4-6.; Fatih Özkan, “Din ve Gelenek”, *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (December 2010), pp. 5-8.

¹⁹⁸ Fatih Özkan, p. 8.

¹⁹⁹ “Erdoğan Muş’u Salladı”, 30/04/2011, retrieved on 21/02/2013, <http://www.haber7.com/haber/20110430/Erdoğan-Kurt-sorunu-yoktur.php>; “Başbakan Erdoğan Muş’ta Konuştu”, 30/04/2011, retrieved on 21/02/2013, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/Gundem/2011/04/30/basbakan-erdogan-musta-konusuyor>.

one of the commonalities of our nation.²⁰⁰ Additionally, Erdoğan has never mentioned Jews, Armenians, and Greeks in his speeches, where he nearly gives the list of all ethnic minorities in Turkey as components of “the nation”. His speech in the party group in the parliament in January 2013 clearly showed his understanding of nation²⁰¹. He stated:

When I say nation, I never mean a race, an ethnic origin, a religious group. Nation, for us, is a community that has a common history, looks at the future from the same direction, and has common ideals. On these soils nation is the whole 75 million. It is the community that Gazi Mustafa Kemal states its spirit, essence as “Islamic components”. We, in our common one thousand-year history as Turk, Kurd, Arab, Laz, Georgian, Circussian, Bosnian, Pomak, ... whichever come to your mind, have lived together without making any discrimination.

As it is obvious from the statement of Erdoğan, the new understanding of nation is very much related to the new understanding of religion. Accordingly, religion that is explicitly Islam is the main common denominator of different ethnic groups that constitutes “the nation” in Turkey. Nevertheless, there have been some attempts during the AK Parti period towards incorporating religious minorities into the Turkish citizenship. The most explicit one of these attempts was the decision of the government to give back the properties of religious minority *waqfs* in 2011. However, by looking at the ongoing discourses of the government we can clearly suggest that these minorities are still not included in the new understanding of the nation.

Erdoğan made a breaking mark on nationalism in his speeches in Mardin and in the party group in the parliament in February 2013. He states in the parliament that

²⁰⁰ *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (March 2010), p. 7.

²⁰¹ “Başbakan Erdoğan: Bu Oyuna Gelmeyin”, 15/01/2013, retrieved on 21/02/2013, <http://www.haber7.com/partiler/haber/977501-erdogan-turkiyeye-bir-rekor-yasattik-canli>. Turkish version of the quotation below is available in APPENDIX A.

“We trample on Kurdish nationalism, Laz nationalism, Turkish nationalism, and Arab nationalism. There is no nationalism depending on race and clan. This is from Satan”.²⁰² As these statements again clearly shows, with the AK Parti government state’s traditional conception of nation is attacked from its very grounds by the Turkish Prime Minister himself. All these challenges indicate that Turkey is entering into a new period in terms of its nation and religion perception and understanding. The emphasis on “Satan” in the speech of Erdoğan is also significant in these terms, since it shows again the intertwinement of religion and nation in this new perception.

The project of “National Unity and Brotherhood”²⁰³ that was introduced by the AK Parti in August 2009 has been the major political tool of the government in establishing this new understanding of nation in the society.²⁰⁴ In the organization of the Directorate of Religious Affairs in March 2010, Tayyip Erdoğan states in his speech, “I request from the respectable members of the Directorate of Religious Affairs to take active role in the process of ‘National Unity and Brotherhood’ that is a state project”.²⁰⁵ In this regard, other than this request, I learned during my fieldwork in the Istanbul provincial mufti office that the government suggested not mentioning the concept of “Turk” or “Turkish” rather mentioning “nation” or “our nation”. There was a big coincidence in the time of the last usage of the word “Turk”

²⁰² “Kürt milliyetçiliği, Laz milliyetçiliği, Türk milliyetçiliği, Arap milliyetçiliğini de ayağımızın altına alıyoruz. Böyle bir ırkı, kabileye dayanan milliyetçilik yoktur. Bu şeytandandır.” “Erdoğan: Bu Nasıl Vampirliktir?”, 19/02/2013, retrieved on 21/02/2013, <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25423157>

²⁰³ “Milli Birlik ve Kardeşlik”

²⁰⁴ *Soruları ve Cevaplarıyla Demokratik Açılım Nedir: Milli Birlik ve Kardeşlik Projesi*, AK Parti Tanıtım ve Medya Başkanlığı, January 2010 Available [online]: “<http://www.akparti.org.tr/acilim220110.pdf>” [21 February 2013]

²⁰⁵ “Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı’nın değerli mensuplarının da bir devlet projesi olan milli birlik ve kardeşlik sürecinde aktif rol almalarını ben sizden rica ediyorum, istirham ediyorum.” *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (March 2010), p. 6.

in the khutbas of Istanbul²⁰⁶ and the introduction of the “National Unity and Brotherhood Project”, both of them were in August 2009. Based on these, we can clearly suggest that by turning the nation from a laicist and ethnically exclusive category into a more religiously inclusive one by incorporating Islam to the understanding of nation substantially, the AK Parti government has brought a vital change in the state’s understanding of religion and nation.

The provision of legal rights about the mother tongue has been one of the most prominent inclusion policies of the state during the AK Parti rule. Although there has not been a clear statement about the official acceptance of other languages alongside the Turkish in Turkey by the government, there has been a consistent policy towards the legal acceptance of Kurdish language. The first one of these policies is the opening of an official TV channel TRT Şeş that broadcasts only in Kurdish. When the Prime Minister R. Tayyip Erdoğan talked in the opening of the channel, he celebrated this opening speaking in Kurdish. This was a strong symbolic message to the Kurdish population about the acceptance of their identity by the state. Even though there is a need of the AK Parti to form common denominator on a Muslim solidarity basis with Kurds through Kurdish broadcasts, this channel is again a very important step in terms of the acceptance of a non-Turkish ethnic identity. Secondly, through enacting a law on private language courses, the government of AK Parti made the teaching of Kurdish language in these private language courses possible. Thirdly, the departments of Kurdish language and literature have begun to be opened in the universities in Turkey. Fourthly, with an enactment of law, selective Kurdish language courses were put into the curriculum of the secondary education

²⁰⁶ The Friday khutba of İstanbul, 28.08.2009. Khutbas from the year 2001 are retrieved from the website of the İstanbul Mufti Office: <http://www.istanbulmuftulugu.gov.tr/hutbeler/1559-hutbe-arsivi.html> [21 February 2013]

schools. Especially, this law marks a breakpoint in the history of Turkish Republic in its perception and attitude towards Kurdish language as any other language other than Turkish. This is an explicit act of official recognition of Kurdish language by the state. Fifthly, again the name of the Hakkari Vocational High School in the University of Hakkari was changed and the name of Çelemerik was given instead of Hakkari. Çelemerik is the name of Hakkari in Kurdish. This change is a sign of the acceptance of not only the language of Kurds but also their existence as a distinct ethnicity in this land by the state. And lastly, the legal right of defense in mother tongue in the courts was provided by a change in the law with the votes of AK Parti and BDP (*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi*, Peace and Democracy Party) parliamentarians in January 2013.²⁰⁷ Moreover, the bringing of easing to the public service in mother tongue is a critical suggestion that take place among the 63 aims in the 2023 program of the AK Parti.²⁰⁸ After all, the new discourse of the state about nationalism and the policies towards other ethnicities in this respect are sufficiently enough to make us suggest that a new paradigm of nationalism which is religiously inclusive becomes more visible and dominant in Turkey today.

Other than the usage of the Diyanet as a religious instrument of the political authority in the issue of nationalism and similar matters, the Directorate has also continued to be used for the support of government policies in the era of the AK Parti. At the beginning of the school year this year, the subject of the khutba of Istanbul was the new selective courses on the Quran and the life of Prophet. In the khutba, people were asked to show sensitivity about these courses and it was

²⁰⁷ “Ana Dilde Savunma Meclisten Geçti”, 25/01/2013, retrieved on 21/02/2013, <http://www.iha.com.tr/ana-dilde-savunma-meclisten-gecti-260443-haber>

²⁰⁸ “Kongrede 7 Sürpriz”, 01/09/2012, retrieved on 21/02/2013, <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25386351/>

suggested that fathers select these courses.²⁰⁹ It is important here to note that in order for the opening of a selective course; at least 10 students have to select it.²¹⁰ Thus, the Diyanet tries to mobilize parents to make their children select these courses in order to support the upbringing of a “pious generation,” which is explicitly the project of the Prime Minister Erdoğan and his government.

Conclusion

The conformity of the Directorate of Religious Affairs with the state demands since the beginning of the Republic shows the continuity of the instrumental usage of the institution by political authorities regardless of their ideologies and policies. Religion has been maintained not as an independent but as a dependent state institution in Turkey by all political authorities in various periods. Thus, although the content and meaning of the functions and roles of the Diyanet has changed according to changes in the state policy or the government, the functions of the Diyanet as the only religious authority that controls religion and as the institution that transforms the political goals of the state into the religious language has not changed.

Other than political authorities, the public has also emerged as an important actor in shaping religious policies of the state throughout the history of the Turkish Republic. Even during the early republican period, the authoritarian Jacobin state stepped back in some of its radical reforms in the face of strong public opposition. The resentment in the society in religious affairs has directed governments to ease

²⁰⁹ The Friday khutba of İstanbul, 07.09.2012

²¹⁰ “Seçmeli Dersler 90 Bin Öğretmen Açığı Yaratacak”, 09/10/2012, retrieved on 21/02/2013, <http://www.hurriyetegitim.com/haberler/09.10.2012/secmeli-dersler-90-bin-ogretmen-acigi-yaratacak.aspx>

some of their policies toward religion. Especially after the introduction of democracy in Turkey, the voice of the public has begun to be heard in a more direct way and the society itself became an important agent in state-religion relations.

CHAPTER III

THE ANALYSIS OF NATIONALIST RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE IN FRIDAY KHUTBAS

The purpose of this chapter is, first, to present the development of the production of the Friday khutbas by the Diyanet from the beginning of the Republic to date. Secondly, I carry out a discourse analysis of the attempts to localize Islam and use it instrumentally for national unity through Friday khutbas where even the five pillars of Islam are narrated in a nationalist religious discourse. I will also show changes in the nationalist discourse of the Friday khutbas in the last years parallel to the changes in the state's understanding of the Turkish nation and Islam with the AK Parti government. Based on an analysis of khutbas written from the beginning of the Turkish Republic to date, and on my six-month field study as a participant observer in the İstanbul Khutba Committee where the khutbas of the entire city of İstanbul, which has more than 3.000 mosques,²¹¹ are produced, I investigate the instrumental usage of Islam in a nationalist discourse through Friday khutbas.

The History of the Production of Friday Khutbas in Turkey

In 1925 with an order by the first president of the Diyanet the language of the Friday khutbas was changed from Arabic to Turkish²¹² and the order began to be implemented in 1927.²¹³ Since that date, the Directorate has been intimately involved in the production of khutbas. Until 1997, Friday khutbas had been delivered by

²¹¹“10 Camiden Sadece 1'i Kadına Açık”, 07/09/2012, retrieved on 22/02/2013, <http://www.haberturk.com/yasam/haber/774354-10-camiden-sadece-1-i-kadina-acik>

²¹² Nesimi Yazıcı, p. 215.

²¹³ *Kuruluşundan Günümüze Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, p. 501.

imams personally without a certain explicit determination from the top. However, the DRA has published several khutba books beginning from the year 1927 to provide *imams* with sample khutbas in various topics. The overlap between the beginning of delivery of Turkish khutbas and the publication of the first Turkish khutba book by the DRA indicates that the DRA took the issue of khutba production seriously. We see that the interest and sensitivity of the Diyanet about the Friday khutbas has been increasing in time so that they began to publish sample khutbas for every two weeks in 1970, and for every week beginning from 1978 until today. Between 1970 and 1991 these khutbas were published in the *Diyanet Gazetesi* (Diyanet Newspaper), between 1991 and 2000 in the *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, and since that date on the websites of the DRA and provincial mufti offices. Throughout the history of the Republic in the years of 1927, 1936, 1937, 1946, 1956, 1972, and 1981 several khutba books had been published by the Diyanet. Through further editions of these books after their first publications Diyanet had tried to provide *imams* with sufficient Friday khutba sources.

Although there was no centralization of khutbas until 1997, we see some attempts and practices towards centralization before that date, too. In 1961, the Diyanet made a pronouncement where it stated that “On Fridays all khutbas delivered in all mosques in Turkey should be on the same subject”.²¹⁴ In 1962, the state minister who is in charge of the Directorate of Religious Affairs ordered the muftis and preachers to write khutbas about “The meaning and importance of the Republic Day” and about “Strengthening the national unity and brotherhood feelings,

²¹⁴ “Cuma günleri memleketin bütün cami’lerinde okunan hutbeler aynı mevzuda olacaktır.” *Müftü ve Vaizlerin İrşad Vazifelerini İfa Ederken Göz Önünde Tutmaları Gereken Hususlar Hakkında Açıklama*, (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 1961), p. 5.

and giving priority to the interest of the country over personal interests”.²¹⁵ A much direct influence was observed on 23 July 1971 when the Diyanet wrote a Friday khutba about donating to The Foundation of Strengthening the Turkish Air Forces (*Türk Hava Kuvvetlerini Güçlendirme Vakfı*). This khutba was published in the Diyanet Newspaper with the notice, “This khutba should be delivered on 23 July 1971 all over the land by *imams*”.²¹⁶ According to the confidential report of “The Religious Education - The Abuse of Religion in Turkey”²¹⁷ prepared after the military coup of 1980 by certain ministers from the cabinet and the president of the Diyanet Tayyar Altıkulaç, the unity of Friday khutba texts all over Turkey needed to be provided.²¹⁸ In the preface of the 1973 khutba book, the president of the DRA writes that *imams* should deliver khutbas only from that book.²¹⁹ During that time the intended centralization policies had not reached their aims; however, it is important to see that Friday khutbas and the nationwide unity of the khutba texts have always been under the close scrutiny of the state in Turkey. In her master thesis, Ceren Kenar deals with the centralization efforts during the 60s, 70s, and 80s by the state in a more detailed way.²²⁰

Between 1997 and 2006, only a single khutba text was prepared by the committee of khutba in the center of the Directorate of Religious Affairs in Ankara

²¹⁵ “Cumhuriyet Bayramı’nın mana ve önemi”, “Milli Birlik ve kardeşlik duygularını kuvvetlendirme ve memleket menfaatini şahsi menfaatin üzerinde tutma” *Aydın Din Adamları*, p. 10.

²¹⁶ “Bu hutbe 23.7.1971 tarihinde bütün yurttan imamlar tarafından camilerde okunacaktır.” *Diyanet Gazetesi*, 15 July 1971.

²¹⁷ “Türkiye’de Din Eğitimi – Din İstismarı”

²¹⁸ İsmail Kara, 2010, p. 70.

²¹⁹ *Hutbeler*, (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1973), second edition of the 1972 book.

²²⁰ Ceren Kenar, pp. 143-165.

which was sent to the *imams* all over Turkey to be delivered during Friday prayers.²²¹ The complete centralization of the Friday khutbas was one of the strict changes of the February 28 process that aimed at the full control of religious supply by the central authority.²²² In 2006, there had been a relaxation in the high centralization of khutbas through an increase of authority at the city level.²²³ Today, there are khutba committees in each city under provincial mufti offices and these committees gather weekly to determine topics and the last version of the khutbas. Once a year they determine the khutba topics of the coming year and after the topics are approved by the mufti they are sent to certain *imams* and preachers, who are determined in advance to write khutbas by the mufti offices according to their knowledge in Islam and writing skills. Then the committee gets different texts from *imams* and preachers, approximately three or four different khutbas are available for each topic, meaning for every week. The committee chooses one of them and edits that text thoroughly word by word. After they finish editing, they send it to the mufti, and with the last edits of the mufti, the khutba is put on the website of the provincial mufti office, making it accessible for everyone on Thursday and to be read on Friday by *imams*. In cases when no khutba at hand is considered as sufficient to be read as khutba or a new topic is suggested from either the Directorate or the provincial mufti, the committee itself writes a new khutba.

In my fieldwork, I participated in fourteen committee meetings between November 2011 and April 2012 in the İstanbul mufti office. This means that out of twenty four meetings during this time, I attended half of them. More detailed

²²¹ *The report of University Amsterdam & Utrecht University*, pp. 51-52.

²²² *Ibid.*, pp. 52.

²²³ *Hizmetler ve Projeler: 2003-2010*, (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2011), p. 11.

information about my field study will be given in the third chapter where I deal with the agency of the khutba committee in the production of Friday khutbas in a closer way.

Data and Method

When analyzing the instrumental usage of Islam for the sake of Turkish nationalism through Friday khutbas I will use published khutba books and weekly khutbas by the Diyanet. I am also going to give some examples from my field work to show how the discourse of nationalization is constructed when khutba texts are produced. Apart from the published Friday khutbas by the DRA and my observations during the field work, in order to be able to show some nationalist religious discourses in a clearer way, I will use the *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, the official journal of the Diyanet, as a source.

When one reads Friday khutbas published by the Diyanet from 1927 until today even at an impressionistic level, one sees that although there are some changes in the topics and literary styles, there has been an explicit continuity in these khutbas. Entire khutba texts or long parts from the earlier khutbas are repeated in the new khutbas. For example, in the khutba on the abstinence from waste on 1 January 1983, there is a reference to the khutba book written by Ahmet Hamdi Akseki, the third president of the DRA, in 1937. Many of the khutbas of the 80s and 90s were copied from the Diyanet's khutba book published in 1981, as well. Anyone who reads khutbas on the same topics from different years would encounter these kind of repetitions.

During my fieldwork, I, too, encountered these kinds of copy-paste practices. By chance, in one of the committee meetings that I participated, the committee was determining the topics of the whole year 2012. The head of the committee put forward that for the first time in the history of Friday khutba production they would change the constantly repeated topics of the khutbas. He and the other members of the committee agreed that for long periods of time they have delivered similar khutbas and these khutbas became very boring both for the public and for themselves. Nevertheless, before they began to discuss to determine topics, they put many khutba books published earlier by the Diyanet and began to read the table of contents to select topics from there. At the end, they created a khutba topic list that was nearly identical to the topics of past years.

More important than the continuity in the literary style and content of the Friday khutbas for making a general discourse analysis on nationalism covering ninety years in the khutbas, until very recently there has also been a continuity in the state's understanding of the nation. Until today, the Kemalist nationalist view that has a rejectionist and exclusionary policy against all religious and ethnic minorities has been the dominant ideology of the Turkish state.²²⁴ The continuity in the state's understanding of the Turkish nation for approximately ninety years makes an overall discourse analysis that covers a long period of time possible. However, with the AK Parti government, a transformation has been undergone in the understanding of the Turkish nation and of the role and the meaning of Islam; and thus in the nationalist policies of the state. The process of transformation is not yet finished; nevertheless, there are significant indicators of a new understanding of the Turkish nation through which the state tries to embrace different ethnic identities other than Turks. I will

²²⁴ See Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu; Sam Kaplan; Karen Barkey; Taha Parla&Andrew Davison; Eric Jan Zürcher.

dwell on the reflections of this change in the khutba text as well as in the religious discourse of the state through the Diyanet.

In order to have a comparative data, I read not only specific khutbas on the nation and nationalism, but also on many other topics, such as the five pillars of Islam, the health of the body, being rich, conserving trees and forests, funerals and so on. We can classify the topics of Friday khutbas produced by the Diyanet since the beginning of the Republic under the following titles: personal (the cleanliness of the body, health, harms of alcohol, bad habits, patience, trustworthiness, industriousness,...); communal (the family, duties of parents, the rights of neighbors, visiting ill people, disabled people and our responsibility, marriage, divorce,...); national (the Dardanelles Victory, martyrs and ghazis, the Republic Day, the Youth and Sport Day, the love of homeland, the virtues of military service, August: the month of victories, the conquest of İstanbul, the Malazgirt Victory,...); religious (faith in Allah, faith in the Prophet Muhammed, religious nights, Eid al-Fıtr, Eid al-Adha, five time prayer, *hajj*, *zakat*, fasting, Al-Qur'an al-Karim,...).

Apart from choosing khutbas from different topics under personal, communal, national, and religious titles, I also selected khutbas from different periods in order to be able to cover a long period of time. Accordingly, I give examples from all the sample khutba books that the Diyanet published in 1928,²²⁵ 1936, 1937, 1946, 1956, 1972, and 1981; and also weekly khutbas published in the *Diyanet Gazetesi* during the 1970s and 80s; in the *Diyanet Aylık Dergi* during the 1990s; and on the web in the 2000s.

²²⁵ The sample khutba book of 1928 is the second edition of the first sample khutba book published in 1927 by the Diyanet.

The Nationalist Religious Discourse in the Friday Khutbas

The identification of the Turkish nation with Islam in Friday khutbas provides the main justification within which each topic could be and was interpreted in a nationalist way. Besides this identification, the state, the homeland, and the country are also presented as equal to Islam. All these different concepts are bound with the pronoun “we”: “We Muslims”, “We the Turkish Nation”, “We as the Turkish state”, and so on. Among these usages, the phrase of “Muslim Turkish nation” has been one of the widely used phrases in the khutbas since the first sample khutbas of the Diyanet. In that narration, one does not see any references to the entire Muslim community in the world, meaning ummah, thus even the word “Muslim” means Muslim Turks living in Turkey in the Friday khutbas. Ilter Turan uses the concept of “national ummah” for the Turkish nation, when he mentions the policies of the creation of a homogenous Turkish nation by the state.²²⁶ I think this concept describes best the discourse of the Diyanet about the Turkish nation.

The following is a quotation from the second edition of the first khutba book in 1928. At the beginning of a khutba titled “Science, Art, Craft”,²²⁷ it is written, “O Muslim community! We remained behind other nations and other states in terms of art, craft, trade!”²²⁸

In 1973, we see a similar discourse in a khutba on the National Sovereignty Day: “Thanks to Allah, we Turks who are Muslims, have never been captive in our long history, and we have never bowed down before superstition and whims as a

²²⁶ Ilter Turan, pp. 39-40.

²²⁷ “İlim, Sanat, Marifet”

²²⁸ “Ey cemaat-i Müslimin; biz sanatça marifetçe, ticaretçe başka milletlerden, başka devletlerden geri kalmışızdır.” *Türkçe Hutbeler*, 1928, p. 65.

nation.”.²²⁹ In another khutba²³⁰ from 2005 delivered in August all over Turkey we see the adaptation of a similar discourse:

From the beginning of Islam, the movements of sedition and mischief have begun to try to divide and dismantle Muslims and they have reached the present day under different guises like contagious diseases. Today, the evil powers who could not defeat us and who cannot dare to fight again against us, in order to reach their ominous aims try to overthrow our nation from within by planting the seeds of every kind of sedition and mischief in the country.

In the same khutba, religion, nation, love of homeland, faith, and the famous phrase “Muslim Turkish nation” were put together to reconstruct the discourse of the inseparability of the Turkish nation and Islam as such: “Our religion considers war as a holy duty only against the threats directed towards the homeland and the nation. ... The love of homeland of the Muslim Turkish nation is a reflection of its full faith.”.²³¹

It is important to note here that same khutba in its entirety was delivered again in August 2009 in İstanbul without giving any reference to the original.²³² On the same date, a slightly revised version of this khutba was delivered in Ankara.²³³ The exactly same khutba was delivered again in 2012 in İzmir.²³⁴ These examples of the repetitions in the Friday khutbas from year to year and from city to city show the extent of the continuity between years in the contents of the khutbas and the

²²⁹ “Allah’a hamd olsun ki, müslüman olarak biz Türkler, uzun tarihimiz boyunca esir olmamış, batıla ve keyfilğe boyun eğmemiş bir milletiz.” *Hutbeler*, 1973, p. 178.

²³⁰ The nationwide Friday khutba produced by the DRA, 26 August 2005; The Friday khutba of İstanbul, 21 March 2008. Turkish version of the quotation below is available in APPENDIX A.

²³¹ “Dinimiz, savaşı ancak vatanın ve milletin mukadderatına yönelmiş tehlikelere karşı mukaddes bir vazife sayar. ... Müslüman Türk Milletinde vatan sevgisi, onun engin imanının bir yansımasıdır.” The nationwide Friday khutba produced by the DRA, 26 August 2005.

²³² The Friday khutba of İstanbul, 28 August 2009.

²³³ The Friday khutba of Ankara, 28 August 2009.

²³⁴ The Friday khutba of İzmir, 24 August 2012.

Diyanet's discourse on nationalism, and the similarity of the khutbas among different cities of Turkey.

There are numerous such examples of where close linkages between Islam, Turkish nation, state, homeland, and country are constructed in the Friday khutbas. These quotations indicate that the secular Turkish nation-state has an understanding of Turkish nation and Islam, according to which Islam and the Turkish nation are strongly connected to one another so that it is impossible to disentangle them. To put it another way, what the state tries to achieve using religious discourse is a creation of a national ummah within the geographical borders of Turkey.

A certain distance is put in the Friday khutbas towards other Muslims living outside Turkey. This is mainly the policy of favoring Turkish Islam against all other Muslim cultures. Ali Bardakoğlu, the president of the Diyanet between 2003 and 2010 says in one his speeches in 2010 that the tranquility of religious life in Turkey as it is observed in the public sphere cannot be seen in another Muslim country.²³⁵ To consider Turkish Islam as the best way of living Islam and the Turkish nation as the most powerful and greatest Muslim community throughout the history is one of the main discourses of the Diyanet through which localization and instrumental usage of Islam is provided successfully. The conquest of İstanbul by the Ottoman Sultan, Fatih Sultan Muhammed in 1453 is narrated in similar nationalist way through making comparison with other Muslims in the khutbas every year. For example, in the khutba in 2002 after it is put that Prophet Muhammad praised the conqueror of İstanbul, it is stated that "A lot of nations had struggled to get this praise; however

²³⁵ *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (March 2010), p. 3.

that honor was granted to the Glorious Turkish Nation”.²³⁶ Similarly, in the khutba book of 1956 it is stated, “Allah ...preserved this victory for the Turkish nation and gifted it to that nation”.²³⁷ In the 1973 khutba a similar nationalist discourse goes on: “Thanks to Fatih, the Turkish nation got this honor”.²³⁸

The discourse of the superiority of the Turkish nation among all other Muslim nations is mainly constructed through referring to the history of the nation as is the case in the example of the conquest of İstanbul. The victory of Turkish Independence War in 1922 is also one of the annually repeated topics where the leadership of Turkish nation to the other Muslim nations is told in the Friday khutbas. For instance, in a khutba delivered all over Turkey in 2001, it is stated, “That victory not only protected our honor and holy values from enemy attack, but also it posed a source of inspiration for the other Muslim nations living in captivity”.²³⁹ In his article on secularism, religion and military in Turkey, Kaplan also stresses the superiority myths of the Turkish nation that is presented as the Muslim world leader in the textbooks of primary and secondary schools.²⁴⁰

Apart from the superiority of the Muslim Turkish nation to the other Muslim nations throughout the history, the social characteristics, the way they practice Islam has also been put forward by the Diyanet to show the peculiarity of Turkish nation among all Muslim nations. For instance, in the *Diyanet Aylık Dergi* in 2008 it is put

²³⁶“Hz. Peygamberin bu müjdesine kavuşmak için bir çok milletler mücadele etmiş, fakat bu şeref Aziz Türk Milletine nasip olmuştur.” The nationwide Friday khutba produced by the DRA, 31 May 2002.

²³⁷ “Allah ...bu zaferi Türk milletine saklamış ve ona hediye etmiştir” Mustafa Runyun, *Hacıbayram Minberinden Hutbelerim*, (Kader Yayınları, 1968), fourth edition, p. 126.

²³⁸ “Bu şerefi, Fatih’in sayesinde Türk millet kazandı.” *Hutbeler*, 1973, p. 244.

²³⁹ “Bu zafer, namusumuzu ve mukaddes değerlerimizi düşman saldırısından kurtarmakla kalmamış; aynı zamanda esaret altında bulunan diğer Müslüman milletlere de ilham kaynağı olmuştur.” The nationwide Friday khutba produced by the DRA, 24 August 2001.

²⁴⁰ Sam Kaplan, p. 122.

forward that “The love of the Prophet is diffused into the blood and the marrows of our nation. When love is told, the first thing that comes into minds is Muhammad who is the prophet of love.”²⁴¹ After similar examples in the same article, it is stated that this “elegant” understanding and thinking are peculiar to the Turks, and could hardly be observed in other nations. These are all attempts to show the distinctness of the Muslim Turkish nation from other Muslims in order to boost national feelings and strengthen the brotherhood among Turkish national ummah as opposed to the global Muslim ummah. The efforts of the state to distinguish the Turkish nation from the Muslim ummah throughout the history of the Republic are elaborated and exemplified by many scholars, as well.²⁴² Rumpf shows, for instance, the reflection of the sensitivity of the state in the duality of nation and ummah in the 1982 Constitution. He argues that the role that was casted to the Diyanet in the Constitution, according to which Diyanet has to serve “by aiming at the national solidarity and unity”, is a safety valve against the understanding of Islamic ummah.²⁴³

The differentiation of Turkish nation from other Muslim nations in the discourse of the Diyanet becomes clearer when state interest is at stake. In the khutba book written by the president of the DRA in 1946, it is put forward that “...If we buy our national products, our money stays within our land and so it does not

²⁴¹ “Peygamber sevgisi milletimizin kanına, iliklerine işlemiştir. Sevgi denince akla ilk gelen, sevgi Peygamberi Hz. Muhammed’dir.” Durak Pasmaz, “Yüce Milletimizdeki Peygamber Sevgisi ve Aşkı”, *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (April 2008), pp.28-29.

²⁴² See C. Rumpf, p. 55.; T. Parla& A. Davison, pp. 72, 73.; İlter Turan, pp. 38-40.; Sam Kaplan, p. 119.

²⁴³ C. Rumpf, p. 55.

enter into the safe boxes of foreign nations.”.²⁴⁴ Since the Turkish state considers its borders as the limits of the Turkish nation, everyone beyond that lines fall into the category of “foreigner” even though they might be Muslim, and even though they might be Turkish speaking Muslims such as Azerbaijanis or Uzbeks. However, it is important to note that in the discourse of the Diyanet a specific Muslim country or nation has never been called foreigners even in cases of state interest.

When we closely look at the discourse of the Diyanet on foreigners, we see that the distinction between “us” and “them” indicates again the vitality of Islam for the unity of the Turkish nation. Whereas the concept of “foreigner” is used in the discourses about non-Turk Muslims only in matters related to the state interest, for non-Muslims both living in Turkey and outside Turkey there is a clear identification of them as foreigners. In a sample khutba in the khutba book of 1928 “Europeans”, and “infidels”,²⁴⁵ meaning actually Christians and Jews living outside Turkey, are treated as foreigners.²⁴⁶ In another khutba in the same book Jews and Christians living in Turkey as Turkish citizens are directly described as foreigners.²⁴⁷ In October 1997 in a nationwide khutba it is put forward that “We imitate non-Muslims such that we take everything without distinguishing between good and bad, useful and harmful. This makes us inferior and makes us lose our real national identity.”.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁴ . “...Kendi memleketimizin mallarından alacak olursak yine paramız memleketimizin içinde kalmış ve yabancı milletlerin kasalarına ve keselerine geçmemiş olur” Şerafettin Yaltkaya, *Hatiplik ve Hutbeler*, (İstanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1946), p. 314

²⁴⁵ “Avrupalılar”; “Gavurlar”

²⁴⁶ *Türkçe Hutbeler*, p. 70.

²⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 29-31.

²⁴⁸ “Gayri müslimleri öylesine taklit ediyoruz ki iyi, kötü, faydalı, faydasız ayırt etmeden ne görürsek alıyoruz. Bu da bizi küçültüyor, millet olarak gerçek kişiliğimizi kaybettiriyor.” The nationwide Friday khutba produced by the DRA, October 1997. *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (October 1997).

The description of non-Muslims inside and outside Turkey as foreigners and also as threats to the national identity of Muslim Turks becomes much more evident in the issue of Christian missionaries in Turkey. Apart from that kind of warning, where the imitation of non-Muslims by the Muslim Turks is problematized, the Diyanet takes the issue of missionary activities of Christians seriously. For instance, the title of the khutba in May 1999 is “The Missionary Activities”.²⁴⁹ The main reason of a high sensitivity on missionary activities by the state is the perception of non-Muslim identity as an explicit threat to the national integrity of Muslim Turks. Esra Özyürek deals with the case of Turks who converted to Christianity, showing that these conversions pose a great threat for the Turkish nation in the eyes of the rulers of the country and even in the eyes of Kemalists today.²⁵⁰

In khutbas where unity and togetherness is narrated, language is not put forward as an element that brings “us” together. The logic of that discourse works in such a sequence: Muslims are brothers regardless of their language, color, or descendants. Everyone in Turkey is a member of Turkish nation. The religion of Turkish nation is Islam. Hence, each Turk is also a Muslim brother and sister of one another.

Although that kind of reasoning is applied in the Friday khutbas by the Directorate of Religious Affairs, there is a significant Muslim Kurdish population living in Turkey. Many of them do not speak Turkish in their daily life; a significant part of them cannot understand Turkish, nearly all of them demand education in their mother tongue and other official language rights. Thus, the Kurdish population

²⁴⁹ “Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri” The nationwide Friday khutba produced by the DRA, May 1999. *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (May 1999).

²⁵⁰ Esra Özyürek, “Christian and Turkish: Secularist Fears of a Converted Nation”, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 29, no.3, 2009.

cannot be easily included within the Turkish nation through simple religious discourses, even though Islam is a part of the Turkish Republic and the religion of nearly all Kurds living in Turkey. In that sense, the Kurdish population poses an important problem for the unity of Turkish nation. When we look at the behavior of the state towards Kurds through Friday khutbas, we see that there has been a big silence and ignoring of the Muslim Kurdish population living in Turkey. By considering every Muslim in Turkey as a member of Turkish nation without putting the reservation of Turkish language through the discourse of Diyanet, the state actually accepts tacitly every Kurd as a member of Turkish nation. However, at the same time the state never makes any reference to the Kurdish ethnic identity neither language, nor history, nor traditions and so on in these khutbas. Thus, what the state tries to do with that kind of a blurred and slightly ignoring strategy is assimilating Kurds into Turkishness through resorting so-called “inclusive” religious discourse. The silence of the state on the Kurdish identity does not result from its tacit acceptance of Kurds as members of the Turkish nation based on the common religion; on the contrary, that silence is a part of hegemonic and corporatist assimilation policies of Turkish nation-state through which it tries to melt Kurdish identity into Turkish nation based on the common religion. I give Kurds as an example here since they constitute the largest Muslim ethnic minority in Turkey,. However, there are other ethnicities in similar situation such as Arabs, Albanians, and Circassians in Turkey. Most of the members of these small ethnicities have been assimilated into Turkish nation successfully by the state through the continuous application of the homogenization policies of Turkish nation-state throughout the history of Turkish Republic.

As I stated in the beginning of this chapter, there are other important equations between the orders/rules of Allah and the orders/rules of the state, between working for the cause of Allah and serving the state/the homeland, between the debt to Allah and debt to the homeland and so on.

In a khutba about the sacrifice of life and property for the homeland in 1928 the translation of Quranic verses in the khutba text is written as such: “O You who believe! Shall I guide you to a commerce that will save you from a painful torment. That you believe in Allah and His Messenger, and that you strive hard and fight in the Cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives, that will be better for you, if you but know!”²⁵¹ Then, the khutba begins to explain these verses as such: “Hence, there are two ways of salvation. The first one is faith, and the other one is fighting for the homeland when necessary”.²⁵² The discourse that equates “fighting in the cause of Allah” with “fighting for the homeland” is one of the most powerful strategies of the state by means of the Diyanet through which the strongest national message is given to the public basing it on the holiness of religion. A similar khutba was published in 1972, and there again fighting for the cause of Allah is interpreted as fighting for the homeland and nation. “The religion of Islam orders to fight for homeland and nation. About this in the Qur’an it is said that: ‘March forth, whether you are light (being healthy, young and wealthy) or heavy (being ill, old and poor), strive hard with your wealth and your lives in the Cause of Allah.’²⁵³”²⁵⁴ Again in 1928 khutba book it is

²⁵¹ Qur’an 61:10,11, Translation by Mohsin Khan, Available [online]: “<http://www.dar-us-salam.com/TheNobleQuran/index.html>” [22 February 2013]

²⁵² “Demek selamat çaresi iki şeyden ibaretmiş. Biri iman, biri de sırası gelince vatan uğrunda muharebe”. *Türkçe Hutbeler*, p. 258.

²⁵³ Qur’an 9:41, Translation by Mohsin Khan, Available [online]: “<http://www.dar-us-salam.com/TheNobleQuran/index.html>” [22 February 2013]

stated that in times of national difficulty paying the taxes and also sacrificing more “are all debts to Allah, debts to the homeland”.²⁵⁵

As it is seen in these examples, in the language of khutbas the verses of Qur’an and the hadiths of the Prophet are presented as if Allah had sent the religion only to the Muslims living in Turkey. Accordingly, each member of the nation, actually meaning each Muslim in the country, should obey to the rules of the Republic. In the understanding of the Diyanet being a proper Muslim is equal to being a proper citizen. As I stated in the first chapter, throughout the history of Turkish Republic until now the state has pretended to be the *ulu’l amr* in Turkey. By putting it this way, the Diyanet makes the state and the government as the highest religious authority whose orders and rules are directly the rules of God. When it is presented in that way, fighting for the defense of the homeland becomes a valuable worship to Allah,²⁵⁶ and not to fulfill the citizenship duties about the nation and the country becomes a great sin for which you will be punished harshly.²⁵⁷

However, in the khutba texts, there is no clear answer to the question, “Why am I being awarded hereafter by God when I obey to the rules of Turkish Republic, and why will I be punished harshly when I reject to obey?” The clarity of these equations is quite significant in these terms. The Diyanet does not need even to explain or justify these equations. Through that clarity, the message is given that it is obvious that working for the nation equal working for the cause of Allah such that it needs no explanation. The orders of Allah and the rules of the state, the fight for the

²⁵⁴ “İslâm Dini, Vatan ve Millet yolunda savaşmayı emreder. Nitekim Kur’anı Kerim’de, ‘Ağırlıklı ve ağırlıksız olarak harbe gidiniz. Malınızla, canınızla Allah yolunda savaşınız’ buyurulmaktadır.” *Diyanet Gazetesi*, 15 February 1972.

²⁵⁵ “Bunlar hep Allah borcudur, vatan borcudur”. *Türkçe Hutbeler*, p.262.

²⁵⁶ *Diyanet Gazetesi*, 30 August 1971.

²⁵⁷ *Türkçe Hutbeler*, p. 41.

cause of Allah and for the cause of homeland and nation, the debts to Allah and debts to the homeland, the soldiers of the Turkish Armed Forces and the soldiers of Allah are presented in an inseparable totality in the nationalized religious discourse of the Diyanet. The implication of that kind of totalizing discourse is that these are already *sine quo non* of each other by their very natures and definitions. In terms of enhancing the influence of the message of the totality among Allah, the homeland, the nation, the state, the preference of that kind of a direct language where no explanation is provided for that totality is quite effective. It prevents people even from questioning the validity of the inseparability of the totality. This discourse is also an important mark that indicates the differentiation of the Muslim Turkish nation from the other Muslims around the world, thus from the understanding of ummah.

In the nationalist religious discourse of the Diyanet on the history, the history of the Turkish nation is presented as if it were the continuation of the age of the beginning of Islam. No other Muslim nations' history is narrated in the khutbas when the victories of Muslims throughout the history are being told. A direct connection and parallel is constructed between the Battle of Badr during the time of the Prophet against the Pagans of the Mecca, and the Victory of Dardanelles of Ottomans in 1915 against the Entente Powers in the First World War.²⁵⁸ Whereas a completely religious discourse is used on the subject of Badr by its very nature, on the subject of the Dardanelles, a religious and national language is applied together. The main point in this discourse is this: In the beginning of Islam, Muslims were quite weak compared to non-Muslims and Muslims won with the help of Allah through their powerful faith. Similar to this, the Turkish nation was very weak in terms of material

²⁵⁸ The Friday khutba of İstanbul, 13 March 2009.; Şerafettin Özdemir, "Bedir'den Çanakkale'ye" *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (March 1993), pp. 41-43.

power; however, like the Muslims in Badr, they, too, defeated the most powerful nations of the world thanks to the spotless faith in their hearts. In his famous article on Friday khutbas, Borthwick gives a similar example about the identification of Badr by the Egyptians in their war against Israelis to boost Arab nationalism.²⁵⁹

What the Turks and Arabs do actually is the same thing: the instrumental usage of historical events during the beginning of Islam in order to increase national feelings through considering these events as the historical roots of their nations.

The construction of the historical continuity between the first years of Islam and the history of Turkish nation is mainly provided through the sequence of wars in a certain way as if they are all done by the same agent. Firstly, the wars during the foundation of Islam in Mecca and Medina; secondly, the wars of the Seljuks; thirdly, the wars of the Ottomans; and lastly, the wars that Turkish Republic engaged in. Accordingly, the Battle of Badr, Uhud, Hendek, Malazgirt, Niğbolu, Mohaç, the conquest of İstanbul, the Dardanelles War, the Independence War, the Korean War, and the occupation of Northern Cyprus are ranked as the victories of “the Muslim Turkish nation”. The sentences in the 1981 khutba book is quite interesting in terms of constructing a national discourse based on the history of religion: “In its composition (Turkish Armed Forces, TAF) there is the love of religion and state, the unity of the homeland and nation, because the root of the barracks is in the chest of the nation and also in Badr, Uhud and Dardanelles.”²⁶⁰ Through equating the Muslim army in the beginning of Islam with the TAF specifically; and equating the religious wars with wars in the history of the nation, the understanding of a national

²⁵⁹ Borthwick, pp. 306-307.

²⁶⁰ “Onun (Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri) terki binde din ve devlet sevgisi, vatan ve millet bütünlüğü vardır. Çünkü ocağın kökü milletin sinesinde dir. Bedir’de, Uhud’da, Çanakkale’dedir.” *Hutbeler*, (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1981), p. 510.

ummah is tried to be created and sustained. These, in turn, serve to increase the loyalty and obedience of Muslim Turkish citizens to their state and provide the state and the TAF with the exclusive privilege of speaking in the name of Allah although they are the leaders and commanders of a secular modern nation-state. Based on this understanding, in the 1928 khutba book the Diyanet dares to put forward that “To join the army is more valuable than to pray Friday salah behind the Prophet”.²⁶¹

An important feature of Friday khutbas about historical events, mainly the national victories, is that contrary to the common didactic and descriptive khutba language in these khutbas the literary style of the text is completely emotional. One can observe this emotional tone in the language of the khutbas from the first khutba book in 1927 to date. In one of the committee of khutba meetings that I attended in İstanbul, the committee was writing a khutba on the victory of Dardanelles. In the process of writing, the main thing they were trying to achieve was to produce a very emotional text that touches directly to the hearts of people. One of them said that “This kind of glorious days in our history should be celebrated in high excitement like the emotional atmosphere of political party meetings during election campaigns”.²⁶² Upon this, I asked them, “Is not the *Hijrah* movement as a glorious day as the victory of Dardanelles? Why did not you celebrate *Hijrah* with a high excitement and emotion in the khutba that you wrote in a couple of week ago?”.²⁶³ The man replied, “Yes, of course *Hijrah* is as important as the victory of Dardanelles in our history. Actually we had to write it also in an emotional style. However, our

²⁶¹ “Bu gidiş (askere) peygamber arkasında Cuma kılmaktan da ...daha sevaplı[dır]” *Türkçe Hutbeler*, pp. 161,162.

²⁶² “Tarihimizdeki böyle şanlı günler, seçim zamanlarındaki siyasi parti mitinglerindeki duygusal atmosfer gibi yüksek heyecanla anlatılmalı”

²⁶³ “Hicret de Çanakkale zaferi gibi şanlı bir gün değil mi? Neden geçen haftalardaki Hicret hutbesini yüksek heyecanla yazmadınız?”

meeting room is not a proper place to produce Friday khutbas, since a lot of people come in the room beyond our control and we cannot concentrate on writing.”²⁶⁴ To accept that kind of an excuse that blames the room for the difference in the literary style between *Hijrah* and the victory of Dardanelles is quite hard. The members of the committee were very careful about each word they wrote in the khutba on *Hijrah*. They even called the verse of Nisa (97) where emigrating from your own land in case you could not practice your religion because of the restrictions in that land is urged, as “a very challenging verse”²⁶⁵ that touches directly to the secular Turkish state. Without any discussion they all accepted not to quote this verse in the khutba text and continued to search for another verse “suitable” to the conditions of Turkish Republic. The reason of writing highly emotional Friday khutbas on national victory days and the removal of the “challenging” verse is the same: Trying to increase national feelings of the citizens and their attachment to their state in a nationalist discourse where religion has a space only to the extent it is allowed by the nationalist framework.

The extreme examples of the instrumental usage of Islam in the Friday khutbas are seen in themes that are completely religious and have no national reference, such as the five pillars of Islam, some significant religious days and nights and so on. That kind interpretation is the result of the dominant nationalist view in handling any kind of issue.

In the khutba book of 1937 on five daily prayers it is said that “The general morality of a nation whose members perform five daily prayers would be orderly.

²⁶⁴ “Evet, tabii ki Hicret de tarihimizde Çanakkale zaferi kadar önemlidir. Aslında onu da duygusal üslupta yazmamız gerekiyordu. Ama, toplantı odamıza kontrolümüz dışında insanlar girip çıktığı için, bu oda hutbe hazırlamak için uygun bir yer olmuyor. Yazmaya konsantre olamıyoruz.”

²⁶⁵ “çok iddialı bir ayet”

That kind of a nation would be absolutely united and live in solidarity. ...Five times prayer makes people useful to themselves, to their family, to their government and nation.”²⁶⁶ It is presented here that as if there is an inherent connection between performing five time prayer and being useful to the government and nation. The application of a national perspective even in one of the five pillars of Islam shows explicitly the dominance of the nationalist perspective in the religious discourse.

In July 1996 and 1998 the same Friday khutba on the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad was delivered in Turkey²⁶⁷. The second half of the khutba was about fulfilling citizenship duties with the justification that the way that goes to the love of Allah passes through the way of love of his Messenger, and that love should not remain in words but should be practiced through internalization of the morality of the Prophet. According to this morality,

[E]specially those who engage in export trade should abstain from any kind of trick and recklessness that could decrease our national prestige. ...You should refrain from waste and when you use the national goods you should not damage them. ...We should fulfill our duties perfectly to our state, nation, neighbors, family members and ourselves. ...We should pay our taxes that are the public right.

Although connecting a topic such as the birthday of the Prophet to that kind of an intense nationalism is quite difficult, we see how it is applied by the Diyanet in the Friday khutbas, though in a poor and bizarre justification and interpretation.

The *hajj*, which is also one of the five pillars of Islam, is the biggest coming together of Muslims all around the world. When all Muslims regardless of their race,

²⁶⁶ “Efradı namaz kılan bir milletin ahlakı umumiyesi mazbut olur. Böyle bir millet her suretle müttehid ve mütesanid bulunur. ...Namazlar insanı hem nefşine, hem ailesine, hem hükümet ve milletine faydalı bir hale getirir.” Ahmet Hamdi Akseki, *Yeni Hutbelerim: İkinci Kısım*, (İstanbul: Diyanet İşleri Reisliği Neşriyatı, 1937), p. 312.

²⁶⁷ The nationwide Friday khutba produced by the DRA, July 1996, *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (July 1996).; The nationwide Friday khutba produced by the DRA, July 1998, *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (July 1998). Turkish version of the quotation below is available in APPENDIX A.

color, language, nation, age, sex come together and feel the unity of Islam in that huge gathering, the Turkish nation-state still applies its nationalist understanding of religion to the worship of *haji*. Like every year, last year during the *haji* season a khutba on *haji* was delivered in İstanbul. The concluding message of the khutba was very interesting: “The *hujjaj* ...will represent our nation and country in a best way that is suitable to the soul of holy lands”.²⁶⁸

In 2011 a khutba in İstanbul on *zakat* which is among the five pillars of Islam is narrated again in national terms²⁶⁹. *Zakat* is a duty on the rich; accordingly they have to endow the 2.5 percent of their wealth to the poor. In the khutba it is told that:

It is sure that our nation’s perception of *zakat* as a religious commitment and as a humanitarian duty has a great impact in the recognition of our nation as a noble, beneficent, and self-sacrificing nation. Thus, when people of means pay their religious debts by giving their *zakat*, they keep alive one of our national characteristics.

By presenting an exclusively religious theme in a nationalist way, the Diyanet shows how far it can go in the nationalist religious discourse.

In this issue, as a last example, I give the first part of the first pillar of Islam which is the *tawhid* (oneness), mainly the acceptance of the statement “There is no God but Allah”. When in 1937 in the sample khutba book “Islam which is constructed on the understanding of *tawhid*, orders the application of this understanding among the members of family and nation”²⁷⁰ is put forward, in an article published in the *Diyanet Aylık Dergi* in 2008 the antidote of any kind of mischief among the members of the nation is shown as “the brotherhood and soul of

²⁶⁸ “Hacılar ...kutsal beldelerin ruhuna yakışır şekilde milletimizi memleketimizi temsil edecekler.” The Friday khutba of İstanbul, 14 October 2011.

²⁶⁹ The Friday khutba of İstanbul, 12 August 2011. Turkish version of the quotation below is available in APPENDIX A.

²⁷⁰ “Tevhid üzerine bina kılınmış olan Müslümanlık, aynı birliğin aile ve millet efradı arasında da devam etmesini ister” *Yeni Hutbelerim*, 1937, p. 276.

tawhid that was manifested in Dardanelles, because this soil had been molded with *tawhid*’.²⁷¹ Although in Dardanelles people might fight really for *tawhid*, in 2008 when it is used by the Diyanet for the national unity and integrity, it does not fit the fact that Turkey is a secular state and considers religion as a private matter rather than a national or communal one.

These assumed inherent connections are all results of the understanding of the totality that equates Allah’s orders with the state’s orders, serving the cause of Allah with the cause of the state, religious duties with citizenship responsibilities. When it is framed in such a discourse, completely religious issues find counterparts in national duties and responsibilities. Thus, for instance, the display of the love of the Prophet could become paying taxes for the secular Turkish Republic; also abstinence from tricks for the exporters in order not to decrease the national dignity in the eyes of foreigners, among whom non-Turk Muslims are also included. Similarly, the occasion of increasing brotherhood and sisterhood in the *hajj* could become the place where the nation should be represented. These are actually very odd interpretations without a meaningful base and consistency. This oddness mainly results from the attempts of the Turkish nation-state to reduce a global religion whose message is clearly global without having a nationalist or racist implication to a national religion. The attempts of the construction of a national ummah from a universal religion have to fail in terms of logical consistency in the discourse. Dov Waxman

²⁷¹“Milletimizin fertleri arasında oluşturulmak istenen her türlü fitne-fesadın panzehiri Çanakkale’de ortaya konan Tevhid kardeşliği ruhu ve şuurudur. Zira bu topraklar ‘tevhid’ ile yoğrulmuştur.” Sadık Eraslan, “Çanakkale Ruhu ve Avustralya’da Çanakkale Şehitleri”, *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, no. 207, (March 2008), p. 41.

also points this inconsistency by putting that “Islam’s transnational vision contradicts nationalism’s national vision”.²⁷²

What we see in these extreme interpretations is this bizarreness of the state’s nationalist discourse on religion. The contradictions necessarily result from the conflicting nature of religious and national discourses. However, in practice, the nationalist religious discourse of the state through the means of the Diyanet has been very influential in convincing people of the totality of religion, nation, homeland, and state.

As the last way of instrumental usage of Islam, I will mention the nationalist interpretation of certain topics related mainly to personal or familial affairs according to the understanding of Islam. The rights of the mother and the father, the duties of husband and wife to each other, the rights of relatives and neighbors are some of the examples from these topics.

In a khutba on fear of Allah in the 1956 khutba book, this personal issue is connected to the nation in a direct way: “The fear of Allah saves morality, homeland, and the sacred values of a nation in the world”.²⁷³ In a similar way, in the khutba whose title is “Trustworthiness”²⁷⁴ the issue is totally handled from a nationalist perspective. The impacts of trustworthiness and deceitfulness on the nation rather than on individuals themselves or on the community are sermonized in the entire khutba. I put here only a sample sentence from that khutba: “We should abstain from any kind of behavior through which our nation could be introduced as a dishonest

²⁷² Dov Waxman, p. 13.

²⁷³ “Allah korkusu dünyada bir milletin ahlakını, vatanını, mukaddesatını kurtarır.” Mustafa Runyun, p. 72.

²⁷⁴ “Doğruluk”

nation and which may cause to the decrease of the prestige of our products in the domestic and foreign market.”²⁷⁵

In the conclusion of a Friday khutba²⁷⁶ about the rights of parents, it is stated:

The national body is composed of families and morally upright children that are brought up by these families. To the extent that affection, respect, and morality are strong and sincere among the members of family, the national body can be powerful, the country can be prosperous, and the nation can be happy.

In October 1995 again in the conclusion of the Diyanet khutba²⁷⁷ on the rights of relatives and neighbors it is said:

Let us strengthen and increase the brotherhood among us altogether. We should know well that when we come together closely as the society, our state would be powerful. When the state is powerful, we would also be powerful and happy. May Allah protect our state and nation.

In a similar vein, in the 1956 sample khutba book the topic of the rights of neighbors is approached from a nationalist perspective: “Nations who are keen on these issues (the rights of neighbors) have right to survive in this world”.²⁷⁸

A khutba in 1972, whose title is “The importance of life and health”²⁷⁹ is concluded by suggesting, “We have to know that individual health is national health.

²⁷⁵ “Milletimizin hariçte sahte insanlar olarak tanıtılmasına, mallarımızın dış ve iç piyasada itibardan düşmesine matuf her türlü hareketten kaçınmalıyız” *Hutbeler*, 1973, p. 144.

²⁷⁶ *Yeni Hutbelerim*, 1937, p. 262. Turkish version of the quotation below is available in APPENDIX A.

²⁷⁷ The nationwide Friday khutba by the DRA, October 1995, *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (October 1995). Turkish version of the quotation below is available in APPENDIX A.

²⁷⁸ “Bu nizamlara hürmet edip riayet gösteren milletlerin bu alemde hakk-ı hayatı vardır.” Mustafa Runyun, pp. 85,86.

²⁷⁹ “Hayat ve Sağlığın Önemi”

A healthy nation is a strong nation. We shall help to the institutions that serve to the health of the nation”.²⁸⁰

The khutba on the happiness of family and the duties of husband and wife to each other, in 1937, is connected to the strengthening of the nation, as well.²⁸¹ As it is observed clearly from the discourse of khutbas about personal and familial issues, the national perspective is still the dominant approach in these topics, as well. Since the main goals of the Turkish Republic through Friday khutbas are creation of loyal citizens to the state, increasing the national sentiments of the citizens, and providing the unity of the nation, we read nationalist rather than religious preaching from the pulpits of the mosques.

An important mark about khutbas which are not directly related to the nation, namely personal, communal and religious ones, would be that the localization and instrumental usage of religion is more extensive and dominant in these khutbas, since, first, the number of these topics is higher than the exclusively nationalist ones. Secondly, through the emphasis on nation in these topics, the state tries to make the idea dominant that the nation is above everything and thinking in national terms in every issue is the most religious attitude. Hence, the interpretation of personal, communal and religious affairs in national terms is the major strategy of the state to provide adherence to the nation and obedience to the state. In this way, Friday khutbas become a valuable teaching tool of the state to indoctrinate official ideals and way of thinking to citizens.

A significant dimension of this nationalist interpretation of nearly all themes regardless of their relation to the nation and nationalism is the reference to the

²⁸⁰ “Bilelim ki, fert sağılıđı, millet sağılıđıdır. Sıhhatli millet güçlü millettir. Millet sağılıđında hizmet eden müesseselere yardımcı olalım.” *Hutbeler*, 1973, p. 233.

²⁸¹ *Yeni Hutbelerim*, 1937, p. 236.

practices and words of the ancestry. In that kind of narrative, after a topic is articulated in religious terms, the words, mentality, and achievements of the ancestors are narrated in a highly praising manner. For instance, in 2009 just after three verses about the importance of time from the Qur'an is quoted, a proverb is told: "In order to show the importance of time, our ancestors said "time is money".²⁸² In 2007 a hadiths of the Prophet where he says "The most beneficent of human beings are those who are beneficial to human beings"²⁸³ is stated in the khutba text. After this hadith, the emphasis on ancestors and also their differentiation from other Muslim nations are made in a clear sentence: "Muslims who grasped the meaning of this principle, *especially our ancestors*, established waqfs in a manner as if they are in competition."²⁸⁴ In a khutba on saving and waste written in the 1936 khutba book, again after the importance of saving and harms of wasting is told referring to verses of the Qur'an and hadiths of the Prophet, a prayer that had turned into a proverb by the ancestors is given: "May Allah protect us both from the evils of the enemy and debts to people".²⁸⁵

The main message given through the emphasis on the ancestors is the vertical axis of the Turkish nation, which is history. By referring to history, the Turkish nation is clearly differentiated from other Muslim nations. As a second intention in the stress on the ancestors, we can suggest that an identification of religious rules and mentality, and the Turkish nation's practices and way of life is created. So, to live

²⁸² "Zamanın önemini belirtmek için Atalarımız "vakit nakittir" demişlerdir." The Friday khutba of İstanbul, 25 December 2009.

²⁸³ "İnsanların en hayırlısı, insanlara faydalı olan(dır)"

²⁸⁴ "Bu ilkenin mânasını çok iyi kavrayan müslümanlar, *özellikle de bizim atalarımız* bu yolda birbirleri ile âdeta yarışarcasına vakıf eserleri kurmuşlardır." Emphasis added. The Friday khutba of İstanbul, 11 May 2007.

²⁸⁵ "Allah, kul borcundan, düşman şerrinden esirgesin!" Ahmet Hamdi Akseki, *Yeni Hutbelerim*, (İstanbul: Diyanet İşleri Reisliği Neşriyatı, 1936), p. 193.

according to the national traditions is equated with living according to the religious rules. This is significant especially in terms of identification of religion and nation. Thus, in the creation of a national ummah the reference to the ancestors play a very important role by the narration of this discourse repeatedly in the Friday khutbas. The state via the institution of the Diyanet directly aims at the enhancement of national consciousness and distinctness of the public and also at the equation of religion and nation in order to increase the adherence of people to their nation.

The Change in the Understanding of the Nation and Islam

As I analyzed in the first chapter, especially since in past five years of the AK Parti government, there has been a change in the state's understanding of Turkish nation and religion. With "the Project of National Unity and Brotherhood", the AK Parti government has been trying to incorporate different ethnicities in Turkey to the common nation.

The current acceptance of the Kurdish language and identity in some of the new practices of the Diyanet is also a clear indicator of a big change in the understanding of the nation during the AK Parti rule. The president of the DRA Mehmet Görmez declared in March 2012 that *imams* and preachers could preach in Kurdish, Arabic, and Zazaki in the mosques by putting forward that what is important is the content of the message not the language. He included to this new opening even Friday khutbas which have been considered by the state more formalistic than preaches and controlled more strictly.²⁸⁶ As a second policy of

²⁸⁶“Camide Anadilde Vaaz Açılımı”, 26/03/2012, retrieved on 22/02/2013, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalEklerDetayV3&ArticleID=1082914&CategoryID=77>.; “Diyanet Kürtçe Vaazı Böyle Savundu”, 06/04/2012, retrieved on 22/02/2013,

inclusion, the Diyanet incorporated 1.000 *meles* from the East and South East region of Turkey to be employed in these regions in June 2012. *Meles* are Kurdish religious scholars who have been educated in the traditional local *madrasas* that had been outlawed during the foundation of the Turkish Republic. For the first time in the Turkish history religious scholars coming from *madrasa* background is accepted by the state as legal scholars. In these terms this is a breakthrough in the state understanding of nation and religion, and a critical symbolic action towards the acceptance of Kurdish identity.

Nevertheless, both the openings of the government in language or in other areas such as economical support and social policies to the Kurdish region, and the attempts of the government through the Diyanet should not be exaggerated. The suggestion for the removal of the word “Turk” or “Turkish” from the khutbas and the beginning of the preaching in the mosques in Kurdish language are very crucial; however, many other nationalist emphases such as historical victories or national days such the Republican Day take still place in the khutbas. Additionally, there is no specific reference to the histories, identities, traditions of the Kurds and other Muslim ethnicities living in Turkey in the Friday khutbas. In this sense, it would be early to argue that Kurdish identity is totally accepted by the state and incorporated into an overarching “nation of Turkey” rather than “Turkish nation”. The transformation of state’s understanding of nation and religion from an exclusionary to an inclusive one has not yet ended. Moreover, we can never be sure that this process of transformation will be reached at the end to an extent that every ethnic group in Turkey is included with their distinct identities within the “nation of Turkey”.

CHAPTER IV

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CURTAIN: THE AGENCY OF THE DİYANET

In the literature on state and religion relations, the major focus has been placed on the state, and thus, the agency side of the Diyanet has remained understudied. In this chapter, first, in a literature review, I am going to go through studies that look at the agency of the Diyanet. Secondly, I will analyze the agency of the Diyanet vis-à-vis the state based on my own field study as a participant observer in the İstanbul khutba committee for a six-month period in 2011 and 2012.

Literature Review

İsmail Kara examines state and religion relations in his comprehensive book *Cumhuriyet Türkiye'si'nde Bir Mesele Olarak İslam*.²⁸⁷ Although he, too, allocates an important place to the state side in the relationship between the state and religion, he also gives place to the Diyanet's agency in this relationship. He ranks three different faces of the agency of the Diyanet vis-à-vis the state throughout the history of the Turkish Republic. In the first one, Kara argues that until 1968, the presidents of the Diyanet came from a generation that was rooted in the Ottoman state, and they were not pleased with the Republic's religion policies in general. Thus, he continues, these officials had fulfilled their duties by relaxing or widening the contents and limits of their official duties. He also puts forward that these Diyanet officials themselves engaged in illegal religious activities such as education of *hafızs*, the giving *ijaza* (diploma) of *madrassa* and Qur'an recitation, teaching of Ottoman Turkish, dressing

²⁸⁷ İsmail Kara, 2010.

in prohibited religious clothes such as *sarık*, *takke*, *cübbe*, and so on. Until the September 12 regime, he argues, muftis had been called as “*müftü efendi*” or “*hocaefendi*” even though these titles were banned.²⁸⁸ As a second stance of the Diyanet, Kara gives the example of placement of religious groups and *tariqas* within the Diyanet structure and their activities that are organized mainly according to the wills of these groups rather than the state. He states that this practice had lasted until the February 28 process at differing levels and faces throughout the Republic’s history.²⁸⁹ And lastly, Kara argues that the decisions of the Diyanet in favor of wearing the headscarf for female students going to *imam-hatip* schools in 1980 and wearing the headscarf for women in general in 1993 by the High Council of Religious Affairs (*Din İşleri Yüksek Kurulu*); and in favor of the Arabic instead of the Turkish *ibadet* in 1997 during the February 28 process where Turkish Qur’an and Turkish *ibadet* were discussed heavily in the public were very challenging and risky decisions that opposed the state ideology directly. He interprets these decisions also as a tolerance of the state towards the Diyanet’s own sphere.²⁹⁰

Gözaydın deals with the Diyanet in her book *Diyanet: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Dinin Tanzimi* (2009) in a very detailed way, especially looking at the issue from a judicial perspective. In this book when she puts that the Diyanet is an instrument for the state to control religion in the public realm, she shows also through various examples that the Diyanet works sometimes directly or indirectly contrary to the official ideology of the state through its publications and several practices. Religious discourses that puts women into a secondary place against men

²⁸⁸ İsmail Kara, 2010, pp. 109, 110.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 110-115.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 115-118.

in a book published by the Diyanet in the end of the 80s and on calendars in 1976 and 1979; critiques against the education of girls in 1980; explicit opposition against the Kemalist reforms such as the abolition of the Caliphate, transformation of the calendar and dress codes, on the Diyanet calendar in 1979 are some of the discourses of the Diyanet, through which the institution acts according to its own dynamics rather than the state's orders, according to Gözaydın.²⁹¹

In her master's thesis, Ceren Kenar questions the reason of compliance of *imams* to the Friday khutba texts sent from the Diyanet by looking at the *imams'* preferences as actors through interviewing directly with them and with Diyanet officials in the mufti offices. She argues that the first reason for the compliance of *imams* is the disciplinary measures taken by the Diyanet in order to control *imams*. Secondly, the inspection of the public is one of the most effective measures that lead *imams* to comply with the given khutba texts and not to deviate. As the third reason, she argues that since the official Islam as it is envisaged according to the Kemalist view has been internalized by *imams*, as well, they comply with the official khutbas willingly.²⁹²

There is only one study focused directly on the producers of Friday khutbas in Turkey. James Gibbon had worked in 2007 and 2008 on this subject, participating in committee of khutbas in five cities (İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Bursa, Sakarya), and interviewing with the Diyanet officials. He studies this subject to understand how the Diyanet officials reconcile the tension between bureaucratic instructions, religious rules, and social relations in producing Friday khutbas. He uses religious economies approach in sociology and Alfred Stepan's concept of twin tolerations in order to see

²⁹¹ İ. Gözaydın, 2009, pp. 151-162.

²⁹² Ceren Kenar.

the implications of these two approaches in the bureaucratic process. One of the main arguments of the study based on the religious economies approach is that because there is a monopoly over religion in Turkey, it is impossible to meet everyone's demands and this necessarily creates a black market that is the supply of religious services by different groups other than the Diyanet. According to the writer, the Diyanet tries hard to expand its share in the market through increasing its services in many areas during the AK Parti rule. As a second argument, Gibbon suggests that it is possible in a secular country to give religion a legal place to operate within, and the writing of Friday khutbas by the Diyanet officials shows how this "twin tolerations" can be possible in the Turkish case. In his work, he sheds light on the power of the khutba committee in determining the content and literary style of the khutbas. He shows clearly that although the members of this committee are officials of the state, they have their autonomous power to an extent, and they become influential through this power in the development and last version of the religious discourse of the Diyanet.²⁹³

The essential significance of Gibbon's work in the literature is that this study shows for the first time the agency of the Diyanet officials in creating religious discourse in the Friday khutbas. Friday khutbas have always been taken as the official documents of the Turkish Republic and the actor of these khutbas has been considered exclusively as the state itself. Hence, the revelation of the neglected part that is the agency of the Diyanet itself as opposed to "the state" is so important in terms of being able to grasp the issue in a more comprehensive way by taking different actors into consideration.

²⁹³ James Gibbon.

Among other academic works, there is a clear overlap especially between Gibbon's work and my study; hence, to situate my study in the literature by showing its similarities and differences becomes important in presenting the contribution of this thesis to the literature. Firstly, Gibbon uses in his study "religious economies approach" and the "twin tolerations" as conceptual tools when he tries to show the conciliation of bureaucratic directives and religious commitment by the Diyanet officials as bureaucrats in writing Friday khutbas. The conception of twin tolerations is developed by Alfred Stepan, and by this concept he means the reciprocal freedom of religious institutions and democratic institutions to one another. Accordingly, he states, "Religious institutions should not have constitutionally privileged prerogatives that allow them to mandate public policy to democratically elected governments. At the same time, individuals and religious communities, consistent with our institutional definition of democracy, must have complete freedom to worship privately".²⁹⁴ In my study, I use neither the religious economies approach, nor the twin tolerations as my conceptual tools or theoretical frameworks. I consider that the approach of twin tolerations is not applicable for Turkey, since this view assumes separate spaces in which state and religion act autonomously and freely. However, in Turkey as Akan puts, the situation resembles Siamese twins rather than twin tolerations, due to the state monopoly over religion through the Directorate of Religious Affairs.²⁹⁵ As Stepan himself argues, twin tolerations have been exemplified particularly by the fifteen longstanding Western democratic countries. He states that in order to be able to talk about twin tolerations in a country, among some other elements, there should be free and autonomous religious communities

²⁹⁴ Alfred Stepan, "Religion, Democracy, and the 'Twin Tolerations'", *Journal of Democracy* 11, (October 2000), p. 39.

²⁹⁵ M. Akan.

that are separate from the state and free from the state domination. Furthermore, Stepan does not consider Turkey as a secular state because of the official position of the DRA. And lastly, “twin tolerations” in the Western democracies is an important model for other democracies to be achieved, according to Stepan.²⁹⁶ However, he considers Turkey as having “nondemocratic patterns” in terms of the state-religion relations.²⁹⁷ The DRA is a state institution under the prime ministry and has according to the 1982 Constitution the duty of preserving the Turkish national identity as an administrative institution.²⁹⁸ Thus, I think to study the Diyanet bureaucracy by taking the twin tolerations approach of Stepan as a conceptual tool would be inappropriate.

Secondly, our field studies cover different time periods, and especially in terms of the political power of the AK Parti in the governance of Turkey there is a clear difference between the periods of 2007, 2008, and 2011, 2012. As Birand states in his column in the newspaper *Posta*, the period of AK Parti rule in the government could be divided into two as the period before the general elections in 2011 and thereafter.²⁹⁹ According to him, the first period was kind of an “arm wrestling” between the AK Parti and secularists, especially with the army. On the other hand, in the second period the AK Parti emerged as a more powerful actor overcoming many of its secularist rivals and is much more capable of employing its policies with having enormous electoral power behind, gained in the general elections in 2011. Thus, the difference in the periods that our studies cover is significant in terms of the

²⁹⁶ Alfred Stepan, 2000.

²⁹⁷ Alfred Stepan, 2001, p. 225.

²⁹⁸ Gözaydın, 2009, p. 47.

²⁹⁹ Mehmet Ali Birand, “Başbakan Erdoğan Nasıl Bir Devlet Başkanı Olacak,” *Posta*, January 04, 2013.

relative powers and effectiveness of the government and other state and societal actors. As I stated in the first chapter, in the new period, state's established understandings of religion and nation have changed to an important extent with the AK Parti government. Unlike the state's traditional nationalist view that had excluded so far all religious and ethnic groups other than Turks, the AK Parti is taking different Muslim ethnicities, such as Kurds, Arabs, Circassians into the new understanding of nation, though it still continues to exclude religious minorities from the components of "the nation". When on the one hand, such an important change is undergoing in the understanding of nation mainly as a result of the change in the understanding of religion in the state by the AK Parti, on the other hand in this new period the AK Parti tries hard to expand the sphere of religion both in public space and in the state. Accordingly, the visibility of Islam in the public sphere is increased considerably; and the religious expression becomes freer.

Other than the July 2011 election, the change in the Diyanet's presidency from Ali Bardakoğlu to Mehmet Görmez in November 2010 is also a significant point that divides these two periods in a clearer way specifically in the Diyanet. While Ali Bardakoğlu had tried to put a certain distance to the interference of politics in the institution, Mehmet Görmez has been staying very close to the government and the prime minister R. T. Erdoğan, both being present physically in many organizations within Turkey and abroad, and sharing similar views on political issues, i.e. Kurdish opening,³⁰⁰ "religious generation" (*dindar nesil*),³⁰¹ and so on. As a result of this change, in this new period, the actualization of the impact of the

³⁰⁰ "Kürtçe Hutbe mi Götürdü?", 12/11/2010, retrieved on 22/02/2013, <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25150807/>

³⁰¹ "Dindarlık Tarifi", 10/02/2012, retrieved on 22/02/2013, <http://www.haber7.com/haber/20120210/Diyanet-Islerinden-dindarlik-tarifi.php>

government on the discourses and activities of the Diyanet is more likely than in the term of Bardakoğlu. Thus, I believe especially in the issues related to nationalism and religious expression there is most likely a difference between the periods before and after 2011 in the behaviors of the committee members. As I will show in the next sections, when the members of the committee is willing and more courageous in taking initiatives towards revealing their religious thoughts in Friday khutbas, it is not the case for the application of the new understanding of nation. As Kenar puts, the main reason of the uneasiness in the latter is the fact that *imams* and most of the Diyanet officials share the Kemalist nationalist religious view that teaches the integrity of Muslim Turks and their superiority over other religious and ethnic groups.³⁰²

As another important point, in his work Gibbon presents only a general picture about the functioning of the khutba committee, the writing process, and the interaction of the committee members with other actors both in the state and society. In my study, by accepting his argument about the agency of the khutba committee members as bureaucrats in the process of khutba writing, I develop it further by analyzing different ways and strategies of the members to overcome various actors in their struggle on the determination of the content of the Diyanet's religious message. Moreover, by situating the members of the committee among various central and local actors including the state, the societal agents, the Diyanet headquarter, and the mufti, I analyze these interactions in a more systematic way.

³⁰² Ceren Kenar, pp. 182-198.

The Agents of the Friday Khutba Production

I consider the actors within the state and society as the main agents that determine and shape the position, aim, discourse, and activities of the Diyanet. My argument in this chapter is that even though the officials in the khutba committee are mostly passive agents who employ self-censorship in the process of khutba writing to comply with the orders and demands of the state, government, and societal actors and to abstain from confrontation and conflict with these agents, they, too, take certain initiatives to stand against the demands of these actors by trying to expand their own autonomous sphere of action.

Before going into detail about the İstanbul khutba committee, I want to elaborate shortly the actors that directly or indirectly involve in the production of Friday khutbas. Firstly, we have to look at the “state” more closely especially when we are talking about a term where state ideology undergoes important transformations in different issues. As I mentioned in the first chapter in a more detailed way, with the AK Parti government, for the first time in the history of Turkish Republic there is a gap between the government and established state ideology in the understandings of religion and nationalism. More inclusive and comprehensive nationalism, and stronger and freer religion in the public sphere and state affairs become the new understandings of the state on nation and religion in this new period. Since the AK Parti is the major locomotive of this change in the state, I take the AK Parti government as another agent within the state in the determination and shaping of Diyanet’s activities and discourses. When we look at the history of the state and religion relations in Turkey, we see a similar gap between the Kemalist state ideology and the government in the 70s, too. Tayyar Altıkulaç, the president of

the DRA between 1978 and 1987, writes in his recently published memoirs that in 1974 when he was the vice president in the DRA, Necmettin Erbakan, the leader of the coalition party *Milli Selamet*, requested from the top officials of the Diyanet that in the mosques preachers shall talk five or ten minutes about the verses of Kur'an and *hadiths* of the Prophet, than forty minutes on National Outlook (*Milli Görüş*). Altıkulaç concludes by saying that this imperative was not accepted by the DRA at that time.³⁰³ Although it was not accepted according to the statements of Altıkulaç, it is quite important to see that *Milli Selamet* as a political party in the government tries to determine and shape the discourse of the Diyanet using its political power as opposed to the state ideology.

Along with the state, the societal agents are the second actor that affects the discourses and activities of the DRA. Various groups in society influence the supply of religious good from the state through Diyanet by functioning as a double-checking actor. There are two different balance scales in this respect. The first one is between extreme secularism of the state and religious demands of certain parts of the society; and the second one is between the supply of excessive religious goods by the Diyanet and the moderateness of some other groups in the society in religion. When, in the first balance scale, the state tries to reduce the amount of religious services and weaken the role that religion plays in the society, the public balance it through its religious demands. In the second scale, when the Diyanet wants to push religion forward into the public, the society breaks it, demanding a more moderate way from the Diyanet. Thus, the society fulfills two different functions in balancing the service of religious goods between too much secularism and excessive religiosity. Time could be considered as an important factor according to which religious demands of

³⁰³ Tayyar Altıkulaç, *Zorlukları Aşarken - I*, (İstanbul: Ufuk Yayınları, 2011), pp. 482-484.

the societal actors change towards either direction. In this issue, the main point is that although people's religious demands may differ in different time periods, neither the more religious demands in various groups in the society nor the desires for more moderateness disappear with the change in time.

Among these actors and differently envisioned roles of the Directorate of Religious Affairs, I look at the agency of the İstanbul khutba committee in the production of Friday khutbas. Since my fieldwork does not include the center of the Diyanet in Ankara, which is called mainly "The Directorate", I take it as an actor that has a power over the İstanbul committee in many occasions, too. In that kind of cases, I specified the position of the committee and the Directorate as different agents.

İstanbul Khutba Committee

There are various actors who are involved in the process of the production of Friday khutbas at the provincial level; and the influence of these agents in the last version of the khutba text differ according to their bureaucratic positions. Mainly there are three agents in this production process; (1) *imams* and preachers, who write the first draft of khutbas, (2) the khutba committee, which determines the topics of khutbas for an entire year and that edits weekly khutbas coming from *imams* and preachers, (3) the provincial mufti, who has the final say on the khutba topics and weekly khutbas after the preparation and edit by the khutba committee.

The khutba committee is the place where the most detailed effort is put into the writing of Friday khutbas. After the decentralization of the production of Friday khutbas in 2006, khutba committees were set up in every city in order to oversee the

writing of khutbas in this semi-centralized production. One is not allowed to take part in the meetings of the committee, and has to get permission from the İstanbul mufti office in order to be able to participate. At the beginning of my field research, I went to the İstanbul mufti office, and talked with the vice-mufti of İstanbul who is responsible for the khutba committee about my research. Firstly, he gave permission for my participation in one committee meeting. I attended that meeting, which was held in his office; then he said to me that they would declare their decision after he talked with the provincial mufti. After a few days, I got a letter from the İstanbul mufti office declaring that I was allowed to take part in the khutba committee meetings during my research for the master thesis.

In this field work, I attended to fourteen committee meetings between November 2011 and April 2012 in the İstanbul mufti office. In the first three months I participated in the meetings more regularly. My field work was limited to fourteen meetings both because I had gathered substantial information for my thesis during this period and also because my presence began to be not very welcomed by the committee members towards the last meetings. I sat around the same table with the committee members and apart from taking notes I actively participated in some discussions especially when my view was asked by them and when I had some questions about their attitudes regarding the editing or writing of the khutba. Most of the time I remained silent during the meeting; however, in some cases I actively participated in the discussions. For instance, there was a khutba on consumption, and the committee was going to edit that khutba after they read it loudly. Before they engaged in the task of editing, an old member of the committee asked my view about the khutba. Upon this request, I expressed my opinion about the khutba to the members of the committee. Then, the same member said that they lacked feedback

from people listening to Friday khutbas in the mosques and they take these views from a listener seriously. Other than those kinds of occasions where my view was asked, I also asked the members, directly engaging in the discussions or redaction, questions regarding the reason of their choices in editing, in the selection of words, in the literary style of the khutbas, and on similar issues. In the fifth meeting I participated in, a member said to me jokingly that I also learned well the task of the committee, so it would be better to accept me to the committee. Although, approximately in the first ten week my relation with the members of the committee was good, after that week I felt that they were no longer happy with my existence in the committee. In the eleventh week, during the meeting a member asked me, “Isn’t your work finished yet? It should have been finished already according to your earlier plans.”³⁰⁴ I answered that question properly by saying that in a few weeks I hoped to finish the field research. What is significant for me in this question was that this was a clear indicator of their uneasiness with my continued existence in the meetings. Although they showed their inconvenience about my participation, in the last weeks that I went to the committee, they were again kind and they did not disturb me during my field work.

The khutba committee of İstanbul is composed of six members all of whom are academics in the field of theology. Three of them still work in the theology faculties of some universities in İstanbul as lecturers and the other three are *imams* and preachers. Members of the committee are chosen by the provincial mufti, vice-mufti, and the current committee itself among *imams* and preachers in the city according to advices from one of these three agents. In the fifth meeting that I participated, I saw a new member about whom I had nothing heard before was added

³⁰⁴ “Çalışman hala bitmedi mi? Önceki planlarına göre şimdi bitmiş olması gerekiyordu.”

to the committee. After the meeting when we were leaving the office, I asked about the recruitment procedure of the new member to an old member in a one-to-one conversation. He told that the new member sent an e-mail criticizing the khutba committee harshly by accusing them with having insufficient religious knowledge, unqualified literary skill, etc. to the committee three weeks ago. Then, the vice-mufti in charge of the committee took him in, in order to show the difficulty of the work of the committee and also to make use of his capabilities. The old member was very displeased with that situation, but he said that when the vice-mufti decides on an issue, he, as a member of the khutba committee, has no say. As can be seen from this example, in the determination of khutba committee members, officials who are in higher positions are more powerful than others as is the case in most of the issues in the bureaucracy.

The committee gathers once a week in the office of the vice-mufti in the building of the provincial Istanbul mufti office in Süleymaniye. The meeting room is of big concern for the members of the khutba committee, since they are working in one of the corners of the vice-mufti's office and sitting around a small table as six people. The members always complain about the unfitness of the room for work that needs high levels of focus and in some cases long discussions. The duration of a committee meeting is approximately three hours; and during this time at least ten visitors come in the room to talk with the vice-mufti for various reasons regarding different topics. The phone calls during that time are really too much and become very disturbing especially in cases when the vice-mufti is not in the office and the phone continues to ring for minutes. Visitors of the vice-mufti sometimes greet the committee and shake the members' hands without knowing the work and position of the people who sit around a table in the vice-mufti's room. When people who know

the committee members visit the vice-mufti, they talk with the committee, too, for short whiles. In one of the meeting in January 2012, inspectors from the headquarters of the Diyanet in Ankara visited the Istanbul mufti office; and officers responsible for hosting the guests in the mufti office chose the room of the vice-mufti, where the committee gathers. These officers asked the committee members to find another room to continue their tasks. In a couple of minutes, the inspectors came into the room, and the khutba committee left to find another place to work. Outside the room in the hall the committee members began to talk very angrily and I saw that they all got angry because of this displacement. They stated that the reason of this displacement was the fact that the khutba committee was not seen as a significant organ by the higher officers in the mufti office and that's why no special room was allocated for the committee. All these interventions and inconveniences of the place for the preparation of the Friday khutba is caused mainly by the lack of a special room for the committee; and the committee voices its complaints to the vice-mufti continuously. The main impact of having no room for the khutba committee on the members of the committee is the fact that they feel themselves as insignificant people in the mufti office as a result of the attitudes of higher officers about the committee. The lack of a special office for the committee is one of the main reasons of the weakness and passivity of the khutba committee.

In the meetings, the members of the committee, first determine the topic of the khutba and then select a khutba on that topic to edit it. Since khutba topics were determined by the committee beforehand, it is not difficult for them to determine which topic they are going to choose what week. The national and religious days or nights, such as the Republican Day and *Laylat al-Qadr (Kadir Gecesi)* etc. are fixed khutba topics; and when these days come khutbas on these topics are prepared by the

committee. Other than these days and nights, there are certain days and weeks such as *Vakıflar Haftası* (Pious Foundations Week), *Engelliler Haftası* (Week of Disabled), *Okul Haftası* (School Week), *Hicret* (*Hijrah* –The date of the beginning of Muslim calendar-), etc. when Friday khutbas are written mostly on these topics. These fixed, pre-determined khutba topics for important days correspond approximately to twenty topics a year.³⁰⁵ When the topics on the remaining thirty weeks are determined, repeatedly delivered khutbas in the previous years are taken into consideration; and accordingly, most of these topics become same with former years. The khutba committee calls generally the collection of those thirty topics as the “pool”. The committee is also aware of the fact that they are restricted in terms of topic selection by the Directorate and they are not pleasant with this situation. In a committee meeting where the weekly khutba topics of the entire 2012 year was being determined, two members complained that thirty khutbas out of fifty were standard khutbas and a very small part remained for them to decide on. After the twenty topics that have specific dates to be delivered in the İstanbul mosques are scheduled, the committee picks topics from the pool more or less in a random manner to edit. The khutba committee goes around three or four weeks ahead of the time schedule, so the

³⁰⁵ Twenty of the fifty two Friday khutba topics of 2012 that are on important dates are: *Hicret* (*Hijrah*), *Eğitim Öğretim* (Education and Schooling), *Muharrem – Aşure* (*Muharram - Ashura*), *Çevre Sorumluluğu* (Environment Responsibility), *Şehitlik ve Gazilik* (Martyrdom and War Veterans), *Yaz Kur'an Kursları* (Summer Qur'an Schools), *Çanakkale Zaferi* (The Victory of Dardanelle), *Ramazan ve Oruç* (Ramadan and Fasting), *Kadir Gecesi* (*Laylat al-Qadr*), *Zekat ve Sadaka-i Fitr* (*Zakat and Alms-giving of Fitr*), *Gençliğin Önemi* (The Importance of Youth), *Kurban* (*Eid al-Adha*), *Hac* (*Hajj*), *Üç Aylar ve Regaib* (Three Months and *Ragaib*), *Berat* (*Laylat al-Bara*), *Miraç* (*Laylat al-Miraj*), *Mevlid* (Mawlid), *İstanbul'un Fethi* (The Conquest of İstanbul), *Camiler Haftası* (The Week of Mosques). (I got the list of the entire 2012 Friday khutba topics upon my request from the vice-mufti.) In 2011 eighteen of the khutba topics are again on the similar important dates: *Şehitler* (Martyrs), *Vakıf* (*Waqf*), *Kadınlar ve Cami* (Women and Mosque), *İstanbul'un Fethi* (The Conquest of İstanbul), *Yaz Kur'an Kursları* (Summer Qur'an Schools), *Miraç Kandili* (*Laylat al-Miraj*), *Ramazan ve Oruç* (Ramadan and Fasting), *Zekat* (*Zakat*), *Kadir gecesi* (*Laylat al-Qadr*), *Gaziler Haftası* (The Week of War Veterans), *İlim Öğrenmek* (Getting Knowledge), *Hac* (*Hajj*), *Aziz Şehitlerimize* (To Our Glorious Martyrs), *Kurban* (*Eid al-Adha*), *Kerbela'yı Anlamak* (Understanding *Karbala*), *Engelliler ve Sorumluluğumuz* (The Disabled and Our Responsibility), *Kadına Karşı Şiddet* (Violence Against Woman), *Cami Çocuk Buluşması* (Meeting of Mosque and Child)

supply of prepared and controlled Friday khutbas is provided without getting stuck with the time. As I mentioned before, in the folder of the committee there are three or four khutbas written by the pre-determined *imams* and preachers for each topic. After the committee decides on the topic that is going to be delivered next, they take out that topic from the folder and one member begins to read those khutbas aloud to the committee one by one.

There is a specified procedure of choosing a khutba elaborated in the “Guide of Khutba Preparation and Evaluation” issued by the Directorate, out of three or four khutba texts. In this guide there is a form that includes 25 questions that should be answered by points between “0” and “3” according to the strength of the khutba in these fields. However, I had not observed the practice of this procedure during my field study. As Gibbon states, he also had not encountered this practice during his field research in the Istanbul khutba committee between 2007 and 2008.³⁰⁶ After the khutbas are read loudly, members make comments on the quality of these khutbas both in terms of literary style and content. In all the meetings I participated, the committee was very quick in determining which text is going to be redacted and which ones are taken out. On the khutba texts that are not chosen they write some short statements such as, “The issue is not handled properly”, “It is literarily weak”, “The content is insufficient”.³⁰⁷

The copies of the chosen khutba text is printed out and delivered to each member around the table. One member sits before the computer and makes the changes decided by the committee in the text. As Gibbon suggests, the members of the committee were very tolerant towards each other’s comments and they hardly

³⁰⁶ J. Gibbon, pp. 13, 14.

³⁰⁷ “Mevzu yeterince işlenmemiş”, “Edebi yönden zayıf”, “Muhteva yetersiz”.

make change in the khutba text without reaching a consensus.³⁰⁸ As far as I could observe, I did not see any member who has more say on the editing of khutbas than other members. Even in the first meeting that the new member participated, the committee took his views and redaction offers seriously in a very respectful manner. However, it is fair to suggest that the position of the vice-mufti is apparently higher than others. He rarely sat at the table and most of the time followed the meeting from his own table. Generally, he did not get involved in the discussions and the committee did its work by itself. Nevertheless, when the vice-mufti gets involved in the discussion from his own table by suggesting a change or an addition in the text, other members take this suggestion as an order and accept it without debating on it further. Usually, the vice-mufti referred to the mufti's view in his involvements and conveyed the concerns of the mufti to the committee. Thus, the vice-mufti's position could be regarded as the representative of the mufti in the khutba committee.

It may seem surprising that the edit of the approximately 400-word, one page Friday khutba text lasts around three hours. However, the committee feels totally free in terms of time and discusses nearly everything at length. Since, as I stated, they do not prefer making a change in the text or going over an issue without reaching a compromise, the duration of the redaction lasts long. There are, obviously, other reasons of this length of the meeting duration. For instance, they are very keen about the selection and translation of Qur'anic verses and *hadiths*, and allocate significant time to that task. Other than the selection and translation, the issue of authenticity of *hadiths* is another work that the committee takes seriously. All of the members have Arabic knowledge and the committee uses resources both in Turkish and Arabic. In terms of having available resources on the *tafsir* (commentary) of the Qur'an and

³⁰⁸ J. Gibbon, p. 14.

sharh (explanation) of the Prophet's *hadiths*, the committee is rich in terms of having computer programs and primary and secondary sources. The library in the vice-mufti's office is mainly allocated for the works of the committee and members use it frequently. The issue of how to interpret these verses and *hadiths* are also an important matter that the members take seriously. Accordingly, they discuss religious issues in a detailed way and at the end they either find a common solution as to how to write it or they remove that controversial issue from the khutba.

The edit of the khutbas in terms of their literary style is another significant issue that takes time. The committee attaches importance to the literary quality of the khutbas and edits the text thoroughly word by word. The length and the logical sequence of paragraphs, the selection of words and their right orthography, the ways of addressing, the length and understandability of sentences are all looked through by the committee. By thinking loudly in a focused manner, they try to find better ways of stating the issue handled in the khutba text. In some cases, if they find it difficult to correct the text, only one member takes the task of editing by himself, and others continue to redact the rest of the khutba. When that member finishes his edit, he offers his solution to the committee and most probably it is accepted as he writes, or just with small changes. As I observe, there are few discussions on which statement to prefer, and the committee agrees generally on how to redact the sentences without getting into deep discussions as it is the case for some other issues.

The main reason behind the length of the edit duration is the fact that even one of the committee's simple inattention may result in big consequences. That's why the committee tries to work in a concentrated way in reading and redacting the khutba. They express that they work under the pressure of various groups such as, the media, the different societal actors, the Directorate, and the state. As they

suggest, to satisfy the demands and meets of these different groups is not easy and they have to find a way to make happy all these actors in Friday khutbas. The issue of producing khutbas either for the satisfaction of the needs of certain groups or just for the sake of telling the truth as stated in the “Book” becomes a very controversial matter in many of the meetings. In the coming section where I deal with the relation of the committee with all these agents, I open up the issue in a more detailed way.

The Khutba Committee under the Influence of Various Actors

Avoidance of criticism is one of the main characteristics of the khutba committee in all of its tasks from the determination of weekly khutba topics to the redaction of a single word. During the discussions in the meeting, they explicitly stated that as the khutba committee they had to refrain from causing any debate in the public.

Accordingly, the members were very careful about going through the middle way without touching any sensitive issue for different parts of the society and the state. They employ self-censoring in many cases in writing of the khutbas even though there is no visible pressure on them. In a meeting, I asked the committee the reason of the self-censorship, and the oldest member replied that what they have experienced so far in similar cases taught them to act in line with the demands of higher authorities and society.

Since this abstinence is significant in understanding the stance of the committee, I open up it here with another recent case related to the abstinence of bureaucrats in religious freedoms and expression during the AK Parti period. In 19 May 2012 in the city of Kütahya, a young female student going to an *imam-hatip* high school came in third in a race contest organized for the May 19 Youth and

Sports Day in a district. As the local authorities themselves said, since the girl was covering her head with headscarf, these authorities including the principal of the *imam-hatip* high school and the district director of National Education gave the award not to that girl, but to a friend of hers. After this event was reflected in the press, the district director stated, “It happened because of the timidity resulting from the experiences in the past”.³⁰⁹ This case is important, since as opposed to the view that everything related to Islamic life began to be expressed and practiced freely both at social and state level with the AK Parti government, this case shows that the abstinences and fears of bureaucrats still continue in issues related to religious expressions even in such simple issues. In addition to this, the strict control over the Diyanet bureaucrats both by the Diyanet institution itself³¹⁰ and by the government mainly through the Ministry of Education³¹¹ has been one of the main reasons of the Diyanet bureaucrats’ abstinence from any possible “deviance” from the established, official Islamic discourse. Shankland states on this issue that as a result of tight control over the religious discourse in the Diyanet, little room remains to *imams* for making and voicing their religious interpretation.³¹²

Other than fearing from possible negative consequences of their writings as a reason for preferring to go the middle way, I consider the position of the Diyanet as “the exclusive religious authority” in Turkey, as a very significant factor in the committee’s preference of avoidance of criticism. Accordingly, the committee does not want to be objected to due to the invalidity or incorrectness of their writings. For

³⁰⁹ “Geçmişte yaşadıklarımızın verdiği çekingenlikle oldu”. “Başörtülü Öğrenciye Ödül Geçmişe Takıldı”, 21/05/2013, retrieved on 22/02/2013, <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25351077>

³¹⁰ Ceren Kenar, pp. 165-181.

³¹¹ Jäschke, pp. 83-93.; İhsan Yılmaz, p. 12.

³¹² David Shankland, *Islam and Society in Turkey*, (The Eothen Press, 1999), p. 29.

instance, in a khutba written by an *imam* it was stated, “Disability comes mostly from birth.”³¹³ One member objected that sentence by arguing that we cannot be sure whether it is mostly by birth or after birth. Others agreed and at the end the statement was corrected as such: “Disability may come from birth, or may happen afterwards”.³¹⁴ In another meeting, the committee was redacting a khutba on consumption. There was a sentence where it is said that “Today, people produce in order to consume instead of working and earning money to meet their needs.”³¹⁵ A member objected the statement of “people” in the sentence and argued that instead of “people” they should write “some people” in order to be more proper. Another member agreed with him and went further by stating that there are people in the mosque working for minimum wage; they would absolutely reject it and ask, “How am I going to spend money just for consumption?”.³¹⁶ Others confirmed these two objections and made the statement as “Today, some people...”.³¹⁷ Thus, the committee tries to be always in an authority position and shows this effort by selecting the statements in the khutbas very carefully. Although that kind of an effort results mostly in abstinence from clear-cut statements through using diplomatic language, in some cases we see the opposite. In a khutba on the Dardanelles Victory, it was written that “Our approximately 250.000 martyrs who lay on the crests of Dardanelles...”.³¹⁸ A member said that to remove the word “approximately” will be

³¹³ “Engelli olmak çoğunlukla doğuştan gelen bir özelliktir.”

³¹⁴ “Engellilik doğuştan da sonradan da olabilir.”

³¹⁵ “Bugün insanlar ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak için çalışıp kazanmak yerine tüketmek için üretir hale gelmişlerdir.”

³¹⁶ “Ben nasıl sadece tüketim için harcayayım?”

³¹⁷ “Bugün bazı insanlar...”

³¹⁸ “Çanakkale sırtlarında yatan 250.000 civarındaki şehidimiz...”

better, because there is hesitation in the statement. The committee found this objection appropriate and they removed that word by stating, “Our 250.000 martyrs who lay on the crests of Dardanelles...”.³¹⁹ As these examples obviously suggest, either by speaking broadly or in a very clear way the khutba committee avoids meddling and tries to preserve its position as the exclusive religious authority.

One of the clearest areas where the committee takes a very wary stance is the issues related to the Kemalist state ideology. As I mentioned in the first chapter, the committee did not write in the khutba a Qur’anic verse on *hijrah*, which propels Muslims to leave their lands where they could not live according to the rules of Allah, with the reason that this is a very “challenging verse”³²⁰ that directly touches the state. Again in the redaction of the same khutba, one member suggested adding a new sentence to the text as such: “*Hijrah* was the beginning of state-making”.³²¹ Another member promptly replied that it would be risky to talk about the “Islamic state” in the khutba. The first guy insisted on his offer by arguing that it is the reality. Then others involved and said that “Let’s skip it right now, then we will look at it at the end”.³²² However, they did not look again and the statement was not added to the khutba. As this case shows, the committee is very careful in matters related to the secular characteristic of the state, and it abstains from any kind of “dangerous” statement that may be linked to the state.

³¹⁹ “Çanakkale sırtlarında yatan 250.000 şehidimiz...”

³²⁰ “iddialı bir ayet”

³²¹ “Hicret devletleşmenin başlangıcıdır.”

³²² “Onu geçelim şimdi, sonunda tekrar bakalım.”

To consider, nevertheless, Diyanet officials as “paid employees of the state”³²³ who by no means stand against the official state ideology or state Islam would be inappropriate. In his work where he studies state and religion relations in the Middle East, G. P. Makris states that most officials working in religious institutions of the state in Egypt think similar to Islamists rather than the state; however, they conceal their ideas and comply with the state’s demands in religious discourse and activities.³²⁴ In terms of unpacking a black box that has been considered so far as a fixed and given variable, the work of Makris is very valuable.

In Turkey, too, the idea of “paid employees of the state” about the officials working in the Diyanet has been a prevalent idea that conceals the agency of these officials and treats them as if they are passive transmitters of the state’s demands either from Kemalist ideology as it had been the case until recent years or from the ideology of AK Parti like today. However, my fieldwork as a more detailed study within the Diyanet institution itself suggests something else about the agency of these officials. For instance, there was a khutba on “the balance between the world and the hereafter”³²⁵ written by an *imam*, and the committee was reading and editing it. In one of the sentences regarding the world side in this balance, it was stated, “to protect the homeland, nation and all the other sacred values is a responsibility on Muslims”.³²⁶ After they read this part, a young member asked whether there is relevance between protecting the homeland, nation and our worldly duties. Another member replied, “Yes, there is relevance but this is too much ‘*Vatan millet Sakarya*’,

³²³ Binnaz Toprak, “Islam and the Secular State in Turkey”, In *Political, Social and Economic Challenges in the 1990s* edited by Balım, C. *et al.* (Leiden: E. J. Brill 1995), p. 35.

³²⁴ G. P. Makris, pp. 79, 80.

³²⁵ “Dünya Ahiret Dengesi”

³²⁶ “Vatanı, milleti ve bütün mukaddes değerleri korumak Müslümanların vazifelerindendir.”

and actually would be better to remove it”.³²⁷ Another one accepted the removal and added, “Why should we propagate national values here? Our duty is to enlighten people on religion not on the nation”.³²⁸ After this short conversation, they removed that part from the khutba. Actually, it is the duty of the Diyanet as stated in the 1982 Constitution to preserve the Turkish national identity and to aim at the unity and solidarity of the nation as an administrative institution.³²⁹ When we look at the discourse of the khutbas since the beginning of the Republic, we see ample evidence on the nationalization of nearly all religious subjects as shown in the second chapter in a detailed way. For instance, on the same subject, which is “the balance between the world and the hereafter”,³³⁰ in a khutba written in 1937 by Ahmet Hamdi Akseki the vice president of the Diyanet, it was stated, “We should sacrifice everything that is endowed from Allah to us for our prosperity in this world and hereafter, for the welfare, wellbeing and the progress of our homeland and nation”.³³¹ When we consider the removal of the sentence about the protection of homeland and nation in this framework, we see that the committee does not fulfill its envisioned role by the Constitution and not follow the established practice in the production of khutbas.

The main area where the committee shows its real agency continuously against the Kemalist ideology is the selection of the words. They are very keen on this subject and always try to replace “pure Turkish” (*Öztürkçe*) words with old words, the ones that are Arabic or Persian. When I asked the reason of these changes

³²⁷ “Evet, alakası var ama bu da çok fazla ‘Vatan, Millet, Sakarya’ olmuş, aslında kaldırsak daha iyi.”

³²⁸ “Neden burada milli değerlerin propagandasını yapmak zorundayız ki? Bizim görevimiz insanları din konusunda aydınlatmak, millet konusunda değil.”

³²⁹ Gözaydın, 2009, p. 47.

³³⁰ “Dünya Ahiret Dengesi”

³³¹ “Allah Teala bize ne vermiş ise, biz de onları dünya ve ahretimizin mamur olmasına, memleket ve milletimizin refahına, saadetine, yükselmesine sarfedeceğiz.” *Yeni Hutbelerim*, 1937, p.37.

in several cases, they replied that they prefer old words because these words belong to the Islamic civilization; and the new ones are the secular replacement of these rooted words. They stated, too, that as the members of the khutba committee they have the responsibility of reminding and keeping these old words and concepts alive in the society. Thus, I regard their emphasis on this issue as an important indicator of their ideological stance. Favoring *öztürkçe*, trying to enlarge its usage and getting rid of Arabic and Persian words used in Turkish is one of the significant policies of the Kemalist ideology. By replacing the new words with the old ones, they stand against the official ideology as much as they can do as members of a provincial khutba committee. They also stated explicitly that “Our language is our religion”,³³² so they could not be indifferent to the language. Some of the words and concepts that they remove and prefer could be ranked as such: Instead of “*sosyal*” they prefer “*içtimai*”; for “*ayrıcılık*”, they use “*müstesna*”; for “*sorun*”, “*mesele*”; for “*sınanma*”, “*imtihan*” and so on.

Other than state, the government is a very influential actor that has significant power over the Diyanet institution in general, and over the content and language of khutbas specifically. As I mentioned in the previous chapters, during my observations, I realized that when the committee edited khutbas written by *imams* and preachers, the members removed the word “Turk” and replace it with the word “nation”. For example, if it was written in the text “Turkish nation” (*Türk milleti*) they turned it into “Our Nation” (*Milletimiz*). This change was occurred by a clear suggestion from the government within the framework of “Kurdish initiative”. The insistence of the government on this issue is worth mentioning. In a committee meeting, a district mufti in Istanbul complained to the vice-mufti and the committee

³³² “Dilimiz dinimizdir”

about the close control of the government in the funerals of “martyrs”. Accordingly, the government ordered that not *imams*, but either district muftis or provincial muftis will be *imam* in the funeral prayers of these martyrs and they should not use the words “Turkish nation”, instead “Our nation” during *dua*. On this restriction, the district mufti was very angry and said that he could not say “Turkish nation”, although he wanted in *dua* of a “martyr’s” funeral. In November 2012 a representative of the National Movement Party (MHP) from Denizli blamed the Denizli provincial mufti on the ground that the mufti abstained from using the words “Turkish nation” in the funerals of martyrs.³³³ When we take these two examples into consideration, too, we see that the government has taken this issue seriously. As a result of this, the Istanbul khutba committee obeyed to the orders of the government in the production of Friday khutbas and became very careful in this matter.

As another example to the direct influence of the government on the Diyanet through the khutba materials, I can give the example of Hocalı massacre. In 2012 for the first time the AK Parti government began to voice as a policy in its twentieth anniversary the Hocalı massacre occurred in Azerbaijan in 1992 by Armenians. A big public meeting was organized in Taksim and the government explicitly supported this meeting. This was mainly a counter attack of Turkish foreign policy against the thesis of Armenians about the 1915 incidents where they claim that Turks carried out genocide against Armenians in Anatolia. When these were occurring in the Turkish politics, in the khutbas of that week which is the end of February 2012, all over the Turkey a part was added by the Diyanet where Hocalı massacre is reminded and told with prays to the martyrs and hopes for the independence of Karabağ that is still under the occupation of Armenians. When we look at the history of the khutbas since

³³³ “MHP’den Denizli Müftüsüne Tepki”, 13/11/2012, retrieved on 22/02/2013, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=21916171>

1992 we do not see any reference to the Hocalı massacre. The AK Parti government, too, began newly to bring up this issue publicly. In this situation, it does not seem that this was a coincidence, but this was an order from the government, most probably through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the Diyanet to mention this topic in the khutbas. Consequently, the Diyanet obeyed it by making it delivered in all cities of the country, and the İstanbul khutba committee was not exception in this obedience.

The Directorate itself, too, is an important actor that directly intervenes in the work of the İstanbul khutba committee. As I mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, there are certain fixed topics that are repeated every year such as *Ramadhan*, *Salah*, *Dardanelles*, *August 30*, *The Republican Day*, and so on. *Hijrah* is also one of these topics and nearly every year a khutba on *hijrah* is prepared and delivered in the mosques. In a committee meeting a khutba on *hijrah* was prepared by the committee and when they will put it on the website of the Istanbul mufti office, they learned that another khutba on “Violence against woman” was prepared and sent by the Directorate. They got so angry, and one said that “This cannot be acceptable, to replace *hijrah* with some topic related to women is improper”.³³⁴ Another one said that “Most probably this khutba is prepared with the demand of the Ministry of State for Woman and Family”.³³⁵ Others agree with what these people said, but they did nothing against it and put the new khutba on their website in order to be delivered in the mosques of Istanbul next day. For the *Eid al-Adha (Kurban Bayramı)* in 2011 the committee prepared a khutba; however, again not the committee’s but the Directorate’s central khutba all over Turkey was delivered in İstanbul. A week later

³³⁴ “Hicret yerine kadınla ilgili bir konu koymak kabul edilemez, çok çirkin.”

³³⁵ “Büyük ihtimalle o hutbe Kadın ve Aileden Sorumlu Devlet Bakanlığı’nın talebi üzerine hazırlanmıştır”

in the next committee meeting I asked the reason for this, and added, “Was not it possible to send your own khutba to *imams* instead of the khutba of the Directorate?”.³³⁶ Upon this, a member told me a joke: In the sea, an old, experienced fish was teaching to the young fish how to save their lives against different fishing ways of the fishermen. Just then, the fishermen casted their nets on these fishes. Then, all of the fish captured in the net, and the young fish asked the old what to do now. The old one answered: This is called “coming from above”³³⁷ and nothing could be done against it. After telling this joke, he said the khutbas sent by the Directorate are like the nets coming from above; they could do nothing in that case. I encountered a similar case during the meeting where the committee decided on the topics of the year 2012. Among other topics, when they included Dardanelles Victory to the list, I asked to the vice-mufti: “What if you do not give place to the Dardanelles Victory in the khutba topic list?”.³³⁸ He replied that even if they do not include that kind of national topics, the Directorate adds these topics at the end. Thus, according to him, it is meaningless not to include these topics in the topic list, if it will be added eventually by the Directorate. Here, the committee obviously prefers to remain passive and obey to the higher authorities in a sensitive issue for the state and certain groups in the society.

When there are such clear orders and demands from above, the khutba committee most probably implements it, even though they do not agree. However, if they could find a way of escaping from the demand and presenting their own views in the new area they created, they do it. For instance, in one of the meeting, they

³³⁶ “İmamlara Başkanlığın hutbesi yerine kendi hutbenizi göndermeniz mümkün değil miydi?”

³³⁷ “Tepeden inme”

³³⁸ “Hutbe konu listesinde Çanakkale zaferine yer vermeseniz ne olur?”

were determining the khutbas of the March and one of the members said that “On the eighth of March there is International Women’s Day and most probably the Directorate sends from the center a khutba on women, so let’s prepare a khutba on this topic”.³³⁹ Another one replied, “We shall not comply with the new understanding about women that is pushed forward by some and not submit to the Directorate and the government on this issue”.³⁴⁰ A third member said that “Then, now let us prepare another khutba and wait until they send us a khutba on women, if they don’t, then we send our khutba to *imams*.”.³⁴¹ On the week when the International Women’s Day fell, the Directorate did not send a khutba about women, and the committee puts its own khutba that is about patience on the website. Here we see both the passivity and the agency of the members of the khutba committee as confined by the Directorate. They try to enlarge their autonomous sphere of action by employing certain slight tactics and when there is clear demand they obey it without visible objection. It should be mentioned here that the obedience of the committee members to the demands and orders coming from the Directorate is their duty, since they are officials of the state and working in a hierarchical bureaucratic structure. So, to remain passive and not to take initiative on their own is actually what they are expected to do in this hierarchical relationship as bureaucrats of the state.

The pressure of the society in affecting the discourses of the khutbas is of great importance and should be emphasized when analyzing the İstanbul khutba committee under the influence of various actors. The concern of various groups in

³³⁹ “8 Mart’ta Dünya Kadınlar Günü var ve büyük ihtimale Başkanlık merkezden kadınlarla ilgili bir hutbe gönderir, biz de onu hazırlayalım.”

³⁴⁰ “Bazıları tarafından ileri sürülen kadınlarla ilgili yeni anlayışa biz katılmamalıyız. Başkanlık ve hükümete de bu konuda uymayalım.”

³⁴¹ “O zaman şimdi başka bir hutbe hazırlayalım ve onlar bize kadınlarla ilgili bir hutbe gönderene kadar bekleyelim. Eğer göndermezlerse o zaman biz de imamlara kendi hutbemizi göndeririz”

the society is raised mainly by the mufti; and the committee tries to take a stance considering both the societal reactions and the view of the provincial mufti who at the end approves or rejects the khutba coming from the committee. A khutba written by the khutba committee on being covered (*tesettür*) was rejected by the mufti with the argument that there are many women who are not covered according to the rules of Islam in Istanbul and their husbands, fathers and children come to the Friday prayer. In that case, as mufti puts, if they deliver a khutba on this subject they may disturb these people. Similarly, a khutba about plastic surgery was rejected with the same justification by the mufti. The committee got angry upon the last rejection, and one of them said “If it continues in this line, in the near future, we may even not suggest people performing five time prayer, or fasting in Ramazan. We should not take society that seriously; rather we should tell the truths to the public”.³⁴² Although they are angry and do not agree with the mufti and his justification about the situation of the society, they did not do anything against it and accepted without voicing their objection.

In one of the meetings, the committee was editing a khutba written by a committee member on hell. After the khutba was read loudly to the committee by a member, one of the members suggested that it would be better to make a softening introduction to the khutba, since it is only about the hell and about the punishments in the hell. Others agreed by stating that this kind of frightening style has been criticized by the media and also public. However, the author of the khutba stated that to think that people coming to the mosque will be frightened is not right. The discussion continued in this line and at the end the author agreed to add a soft

³⁴² “Eğer bu şekilde devam ederse, yakın gelecekte insanlara belki beş vakit namaz kılmalarını, Ramazan’da oruç tutmalarını bile söyleyemeyeceğiz. Toplumu bu kadar ciddiye almamalıyız. Asıl, topluma gerçekleri söylemeliyiz.”

introduction to the khutba. In the next week, the vice-mufti told to committee that he gave the khutba on hell to the mufti and the mufti rejected the khutba with the reason that it only covers the hell without dealing with the heaven in a balanced way. The committee did what was demanded by them without discussing further after the involvement of the mufti.

In a khutba being edited by the committee it was stated that “Just as a complete materialist understanding is not right, the understanding of ‘*bir lokma bir hırka*’ is also not right”.³⁴³ ‘*Bir lokma bir hırka*’ is a well-known adverb and principle of Sufism, according to which living in the poorest condition is advised to people. Two members promptly objected this statement without presenting any justification in a decisive manner. Upon this strong objection, the new member of the committee said that “Why do we remove it? No one can argue that this understanding is compatible with Islam”.³⁴⁴ Another one replied, “But you also cannot say that it is not incompatible with Islam”.³⁴⁵ The young man said, “Yes, I can”.³⁴⁶ Then the other member objected in the beginning interfered in the discussion by suggesting that “There is a significant sufi-oriented population in the community coming to the mosques. Thus, we cannot oppose this group”.³⁴⁷ The young member insisted by saying, “But we are discussing here as academics”.³⁴⁸ Then, the first man with whom the young one discussed said that “No, we are not discussing as

³⁴³ “Tamamen maddeci bir anlayış nasıl doğru değilse, ‘bir lokma bir hırka’ anlayışı da doğru değildir”

³⁴⁴ “Niye kaldırıyoruz? Kimse bu anlayışın İslamla bağdaştığını söyleyemez.”

³⁴⁵ “Ama sen de İslam’la bağdaşmıyor diyemezsin”

³⁴⁶ “Söylerim.”

³⁴⁷ “Cami cemaati içinde büyük bir mutasavvıf kesim var. Bu kesimi karşımıza alamayız.”

³⁴⁸ “İyi de burada akademisyenler olarak tartışıyoruz”

academics. How many of people coming to the mosque are academics? We are writing khutbas considering the public”.³⁴⁹ Although, the young member was not satisfied with this answer, the committee except for him agreed with the last statement. When they are changing that part in the sentence, the vice-mufti involved in the discussion by putting that “Be sure that you remove ‘*bir lokma bir hırka*’, because it is about *tasavvuf*, and to criticize something about *tasavvuf* would be wrong, when there is a big portion of *mutasavvif* (Sufi-oriented people) in the mosque-attending community”.³⁵⁰ Upon this last warn, they “corrected” the sentence as such: “Just as a complete materialist understanding is not right, it is also not right to stop working and looking for the help of others”.³⁵¹

To look at the previous khutbas on the understanding of “*bir lokma bir hırka*” shows another aspect of the issue. In 1937, in the sample khutba book of the Diyanet, it was stated about this Sufi understanding that “They think that contentment means being complied with ‘*bir lokma bir hırka*’ and just sitting...”.³⁵² In July 1995, in the khutba written by the Diyanet itself, it was suggested clearly that “There is no place of the understandings such as ‘*bir lokma bir hırka*’ ...in Islam”.³⁵³ In November 2001, again in the khutba of the Diyanet it was put that “There is no place of incautious submission through the understanding of ‘*bir lokma bir hırka*’ in our

³⁴⁹ “Yo, akademisyenler olarak tartışmıyoruz. Camiye gelen insanlardan kaç akademisyen? Biz hutbeleri halka göre yazıyoruz.”

³⁵⁰ “‘Bir lokma bir hırka’yı çıkardığınızdan emin olun hocam, çünkü o tasavvufî bir şey. Cami cemaatinde büyük bir mutasavvıf kesim varken tasavvufla ilgili bir şeyi eleştirmek doğru olmaz.”

³⁵¹ “Tamamen maddeci bir anlayış nasıl doğru değilse, çalışmayı bırakıp başkasının eline bakmak da doğru değildir.”

³⁵² “Öyle sanıyorlar ki; kanaat demek, ‘bir lokma ve bir hırka’ya razı olup oturmak...[tır]” *Yeni Hutbelerim*, 1937, p. 288.

³⁵³ “‘Bir lokma bir hırka’ düşüncesi,... gibi söz ve düşüncelerin İslam’da yeri yoktur.” *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (July 1995).

religion”.³⁵⁴ More surprisingly, in February 2009, the İstanbul mufti office sent the same khutba to the *imams* to be delivered in the mosques, with the one that the committee worked on it in 2011. In the khutba of 2009, the objected statement took place without undergoing a change, “Just as a complete materialist understanding is not right, the understanding of ‘*bir lokma bir hırka*’ is also not right”.³⁵⁵ As it is seen from comparative Friday khutbas there has been continuity in the discourse of the Diyanet against the understanding of ‘*bir lokma bir hırka*’. However, in 2011 the İstanbul khutba committee made a change in this discourse by taking an explicit initiative on its own. Thus, this case indicates that in some cases the pressure coming from a certain group within society affects the khutba committee and consequently the committee takes a stance as opposed to the established Diyanet discourse in Friday khutba production.

In one of the committee meeting, the committee worked hard on a khutba on “the responsibility of *irshad* (showing the true path)”. During the meeting, the vice-mufti involved in the discussions so much, and always reminded the possible objections of the mufti to the committee. For instance, he warned the committee that instead of “immorality” (*ahlaksızlık*) they had to use “bad morality” (*kötü ahlak*), because the mufti did not accept something “morality” or “immorality”, instead “good morality” or “bad morality”. When interferences of that kind and also regarding the content of the khutba became so much for the committee, they got angry to the high restriction. Moreover, as they worked hard on the khutba and they appreciated their work as a well-done task, they were not willing to make the possible changes demanded by the mufti. After a short discussion among themselves,

³⁵⁴ “Dinimizde, “Bir lokma, bir hırka” anlayışı ile tedbirsiz tevekkülde bulunmanın yeri yoktur.” The nationwide Friday Khutba of the Directorate, 30 November 2001.

³⁵⁵ The Friday khutba of İstanbul, 13 February 2009.

they decided not to give the khutba to the current mufti that week and to wait for the coming of the new mufti to hand in the khutba without making any change on the text. The vice-mufti did not get involved in the discussion and accepted tacitly their decision by remaining silent. After a couple of weeks the new mufti took office; however, during my field study the committee did not give that khutba to the new mufti, so I do not have information about the aftermath of the khutba. Nevertheless, the significant thing here is that although the committee accepted the mufti as a superior actor and acted in line with his demands in most of the cases related to their work, sometimes they showed up their agency and by employing subtle tactics they try to overcome that “superior” obstacle before themselves.

As a last example, I will present the conversations in a committee meeting where multiple actors mainly the members of the committee, the mufti, vice-mufti and state is involved in a complicated way. As I stated in this chapter before, there are certain standard khutba topics according to the calendar such as religious and national days. In the last committee meeting of April 2012, the committee was preparing a khutba on “*Üç Aylar*” (Three holy Islamic months; *Rajab*, *Shaban*, and *Ramadhan*) as a standard khutba in the beginning of *üç aylar*. In the beginning of the meeting there were just two members and also the vice-mufti in his own table. I was sitting at the committee’s table with other two guys. When they tried to find khutbas on *üç aylar* from the folder, the vice-mufti interfered in their work and suggested them to pick the khutba of the May 19 Youth and Sports Day that is a national day; and then create a new khutba merging these two topics, since “*üç aylar*” and “May 19” overlapped this year. Without any comment or objection, they began to do what was demanded. They found both of khutbas and began to work on these khutbas. After a short while, the vice-mufti left the room and in a couple of minutes other two

members came in and sat around the table. One of them asked the topic of this week to the members coming earlier. They replied that they are merging “*üç aylar*” and “the youth”. Then, the newly coming member asked the relevance of “*üç aylar*” and “the youth” in a surprised manner. One of them answered that because the summer was coming, and it will overlap with the *Ramadhan*, we have to warn the young to be careful about committing sin. Then, the other one coming again earlier said that “I did not understand this way, rather the vice-mufti’s implication was about the ‘May 19’”.³⁵⁶ The member who came late asked again, “My friend, we should not accept it, if it was by implication. However, if there was a clear demand by the mufti, then okay, let us follow this way”.³⁵⁷ The early coming members, too, stated that actually they were not happy to merge these two irrelevant topics and also including a national day into a religious and holy topic. Nevertheless, they prefer abstaining from taking any initiative in this issue, because the vice-mufti directly told them to do as such and they were not sure whether it was an order from the mufti himself or a demand by the vice-mufti. During this conversation continued, the vice-mufti came in the room and the committee ceased the discussion on this issue. With the entrance of the vice-mufti they all began to talk about different topics not related to the khutba. At a certain point in the discussion, one of the late coming member said, as if he did not know the demand of the vice-mufti, to the vice-mufti that the khutba that they worked on this week on *üç aylar*, felt short and they wanted to merge it with *nafile ibadetler* (supererogatory prayers) if possible. The vice-mufti said “Yes, you

³⁵⁶ “Ben o şekilde anlamadım. Hocanın iması 19 Mayıs’la ilgiliydi bence.”

³⁵⁷ “Hocam, ima ile olmaz, öyleyse kabul etmeyelim. Ama müftüden açık bir talep varsa o zaman tamam, o şekilde yapalım.”

can”.³⁵⁸ Then, the committee prepared a new khutba combining “*üç aylar*” and “*nafile ibadetler*”, instead of “May 19”. At the end, the mufti made the title of the khutba “*Laylat al-Ragaib*” (a religious night in the beginning of *üç aylar*) by adding only a sentence to the khutba text. In this way, the khutba was put on the website of the İstanbul provincial mufti office with the statement of the İstanbul khutba committee as the author of the khutba instead of a specific *imam* or preacher as is the case for most of the khutbas, to be delivered in 18 May 2012.³⁵⁹ Moreover, the May 19 Youth and Sport Day did not take place in the Friday khutbas of the mosques in İstanbul in 2012 contrary to the previous years, with the direct effect of the members of the khutba committee. This case, again, is a clear indicator of the agency of the committee members in the content of the Friday khutbas. Although they prefer most of the time to self-censor and comply with the demands of their superiors, sometimes they actively employ different strategies to make their voice heard and they could achieve. The complexity of this case is significant also in terms of showing the influence of different actors in the process of the production of Friday khutbas.

Conclusion

There is an embedded inclination in the khutba committee towards compliance and abstinence from any kind of confrontation and visible conflict with the state, government, societal actors, and sometimes even the Directorate itself. Accordingly, the committee prefers nearly in all the essential and sensitive issues for the state, society and the Directorate to comply with their orders and demands and to abstain

³⁵⁸ “Evet olur”

³⁵⁹ The Friday khutba of İstanbul, 18 May 2012.

from any kind of confrontation. However, as it is shown through various examples, in some cases the committee takes a stance against these actors, and develops different strategies to get over them. The occasions where the committee takes initiatives against these actors, among which the Kemalist official ideology is still the most powerful one, are quite few. They explicitly state that they are not pleased with this situation especially with the demands coming from above. Since they are unwilling to comply, but at the end comply, the khutba committee remains as a passive actor that has a restricted power in the production of Friday khutbas.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The relation between the state and religion is neither one-sided nor two-sided, but it is a complex interaction with multiple actors and various dimensions. Even in the most powerful periods of the state, as it was the case during the early Kemalist era, the state took a step back in some restrictions in religious life due to the public resentment. With the introduction of multi-party democracy mainly after the 1950s, the political parties, and especially those that in a way deviate from the Kemalist ideology in the government, have become another important power that shape state and religion relations. In the AK Parti period, especially in the third term of the government, which is called by the party as the “term of mastership” (*Ustalık Dönemi*), this deviation becomes more apparent. In this new period, the Kemalist state ideology has undergone significant transformations especially in the perception of nationalism and religion. A closer stance to the religion, and a more inclusive understanding of nationalism based on the common religion Islam, are becoming new dominant views of the state during the AK Parti government. Thus, when the Diyanet is at stake, it is clear that the content of its messages, too, is undergoing a transformation especially in the last years of the AK Parti government. Diyanet, now, engages in the “Kurdish initiative” policies of the government explicitly; supports the government in its struggles to raise a “religious generation”; and to make religion more visible in the public sphere.

Being one of the most essential instruments of the Diyanet to reach the public, Friday khutbas are also used to support the new policies of the state. The removal of the concepts of “Turk” or “Turkish nation” from the Friday khutba texts

upon the demand of the AK Parti government is the most visible example of this instrumental usage of the Diyanet by state authorities. Being quite in line with this fact, scholars working on state and religion relations in Turkey commonly argue that Friday khutbas are important mediums of state ideology's conveyance in a religious format.³⁶⁰ The possible influence of the Diyanet as a separate actor in the determination of the content of the Friday khutbas is either denied or ignored in these analyses. Accordingly, Diyanet is portrayed as a pure vehicle of the state, which only transmits to the society what is given to itself by the political authorities. As an example of this common idea, Yılmaz's argument, where he puts forward that "in every Friday sermon, there is another official concern that needs to be underlined"³⁶¹ can be given.

Although that kind of a view provides us with valuable analyses about the fulfillment of the envisioned roles of the Diyanet, it omits the other side of the coin and cannot supply any information or idea about the Diyanet side itself. A significant lack of this one-sided view is that whatever published or stated by the Diyanet are regarded as the messages of the state and analyzed accordingly. This is important, since by this wrong attribution, the messages that are given by the Diyanet itself contrary to the demands of the state are linked to the state; and accordingly analyses are made about the aim of the state by these messages. The main reason of this misinterpretation is the view that puts everything into the same box that is the state in our case. However, when the Diyanet is taken into consideration as a separate agency in these analyses, it will be seen that the discourses and policies of the Diyanet

³⁶⁰ Sabine Prator, *Türkische Freitagspredigten: Studien zum Islam in der heutigen Türkei*, (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1985).; İlder Turan, p. 42.; Erkan Yar, "Dinin Siyasallaşması ve Dinsel Bürokrasi" *İslamiyat* 4, no.1, (2001), pp. 45, 46.; İsmail Kara, 2008.

³⁶¹ İhsan Yılmaz, p. 392.

cannot be taken simply as the reflections of the state ideology or demands of the political authorities. The works of Kara and Gözaydın, which I presented in my literature review, are significant studies in this sense, pointing to the practices of the Diyanet and its bureaucrats that are diverging from the state's line. These studies show that the Diyanet has not been solely a transmitter of state's messages to the public; on the contrary it has tried and sometimes succeeded to be effective in determining the content of religious discourses and activities in spite of the state ideology and the demands of the political authorities. Thus, in the process of production of the public services of the Diyanet there are various actors involving in different phases with varying powers both locally and centrally.

The case of Friday khutba production that I focused on in this thesis is a very telling example in these terms. By looking at the production process from within the Diyanet institution itself, I could observe different agents taking part in these religious discourse constructing processes. Accordingly, I rank the state, the government, various actors within society, and in some cases the Directorate as central actors in the production of Friday khutbas. On the other side, *imams* and preachers, provincial khutba committees, and provincial muftis are the local actors of this process. The influence of these different actors is not same in the content of the Friday khutbas. They all in a way engage in the production process and the last version of the khutba text comes up as a result of multiple interactions and negotiations between these actors.

When the İstanbul khutba committee writes or edits Friday khutbas, they work under the influence of these local and central actors. The members of the committee express explicitly the difficulty of their tasks mainly because of the nature of the material that reach to the millions of people directly in the mosques or

indirectly via mass media. Under the influence and close scrutiny of these actors, the khutba committee complies with the demands of the state, government, various societal influences and the Directorate most of the time. As bureaucrats of the state, they act in line with the demands and orders of the higher authorities above them. This is something to be expected from the bureaucrats in a modern state structure; and the Diyanet officials are not exceptions to this practice. They themselves state some possible dangerous results of their actions when they act against the orders of the government or against the principles of the state as they experience in several cases in the past. Nevertheless, by employing subtle tactics they try and sometimes succeed in finding a way around these agents in order to make their voice heard in Friday khutbas without censoring themselves. The constant struggle between compliance and negotiation is one of the most important depicting marks of the khutba committee meetings.

Thus, when we look at the relation between state and the Diyanet from a comparative historical perspective, we can argue that it is neither solely the state, nor various actors within society, nor the Diyanet itself that determines the position, aim, discourse, and activities of the Diyanet; but a mixture of all these agents as a result of constant negotiation between them. In this determination, the khutba committee working in the Diyanet emerges as a different actor that perpetually tries to voice its independent views, though lacking an autonomous power, standing against all circumscribing actors in a challenging manner to the extent that it can.

APPENDIX A: TURKISH EXCERPTS USED IN THE STUDY

The Excerpt from the speech of Mustafa Kemal in the Parliament in 1923

Ulu'l emrden maksat ...amirler demek ihtisaslı kişiler demektir. İş beceren kişiler demektir. O halde iş beceren kişilerden oluşan bir şura, adalet dairesinde ve şeriatın müsaade ettiği ölçüde hükümeti yönetir. Bizim hükümetimiz tamamen bu esasları ihtiva eder. Buna nazaran başkaca Halife mevzubahis olmaz. (p. 20)

The Excerpt from the Friday khutba on Hat in 1925

[P]antolon, ceket, şapka, kasket gibi namlarla milel-i gayri müslimenin labis oldukları melbusatı bir Müslümanın istimal etmekle ona bir günah işlemiş nazarı ile bakmak pek büyük bir hatadır. ...Vekil intihap ettiğimiz (milletvekili) dindaşlarımızın, ulu'l-emir olan mübeccel Hükümet-i Cumhuriyemizin ...memleketimizin asri ihtiyacatına muvafık gördüğü kisve-i medeniyeyi labis olmamak dinen, aklen, siyaseten mesuliyet-i azimeyi müstelzim, ibreten li's-sairin mu'atebe ve mücazatı daidir. (p. 30)

The Excerpt from the speech of Mustafa Kemal in the Parliament in 1937

Dünyaca bilinmektedir ki, bizim devlet yönetimimizdeki ana programımız, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi programıdır. Bunun kapsadığı prensipler, yönetimde ve politikada bizi aydınlatıcı ana çizgilerdir. Fakat bu prensipleri, gökten indiği sanılan

kitapların doğmalarıyla asla bir tutmamalıdır. Biz, ilhamlarımızı, gökten ve gaipten değil, doğrudan doğruya yaşamdan almış bulunuyoruz. (p. 36)

The Excerpt from the speech of R. Tayyip Erdoğan on 29 February 2012

Siz İstiklal Mahkemesi yargıcı Kel Ali ile, dersim katliamının mimarlarından Kılıç Ali ile, Necip Ali ile gurur duymaya, onların ismini parklara vermeye devam edin. Hiç merak etmeyin, biz bu ülkenin şehitleriyle, gazileriyle, âlimleriyle büyük siyaset adamlarıyla gurur duyacak, onların isimlerini yaşatmaya devam edeceğiz. (p. 52)

The Excerpt from the speech of R. Tayyip Erdoğan on 2 February 2012

Türkiye’yi dindarlar-dinsizler diye ayırdığımı söylüyor (Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu’nu kastediyor). Önce şu kulakların duymaya alışsın. Benim ifademde dindarlar-dinsizler diye bir ifade yok. Dindar bir gençlik yetiştirme var. Bunun arkasındayım. Muhafazakâr demokrat partisi kimliğine sahip bir partiden ateist bir gençlik yetiştirmemizi mi bekliyorsun? Senin öyle bir amacın olabilir ama bizim böyle bir amacımız yok. Biz muhafazakâr, demokrat, tarihten gelen ilkelerine sahip çıkan bir nesil yetiştireceğiz. Bunun için varız. (p. 52)

The Excerpt from the speech of R. Tayyip Erdoğan in January 2013

Millet diyorsam asla ve asla bir ırkı, etnik kökeni, inanç grubunu kastetmiyorum. Millet, bizim için ortak tarihi olan, istikbale aynı nazarla bakan, ortak idealleri olan

bir topluluktur. Bu topraklar üzerinde millet, 75 milyonunun tamamıdır. İlk Meclis'te Gazi Mustafa Kemal'in 'anasır-ı İslamiye' diye, onun ruhunu, özünü ifade ettiği topluluktur. Biz, bin yıllık ortak tarihimiz boyunca Türk, Kürt, Arap, Laz, Gürcü, Çerkez, Boşnak, Pomak... hiç bir ayırım yapmaksızın aklınıza hangisi geliyorsa hep birlikte yaşadık. (p. 59)

The Excerpt from the Friday Khutba written by the Diyanet in August 2005

Müslümanları bölüp parçalamak için İslam'ın ilk yıllarından itibaren fitne ve fesat hareketleri başlamış, çeşitli şekillere bürünerek bulaşıcı bir hastalık gibi günümüze kadar gelmiştir. Bugün ise, bizleri savaş alanlarında yenemeyen ve bizimle bir daha savaşmayı göze alamayan şer güçler, çirkin emellerine ulaşabilmek için, ülke içinde her türlü fitne ve fesat tohumları ekerek, milletimizi içten çökertmeye çalışmaktadırlar. (p. 73)

The Excerpt from the Friday Khutba written by the Diyanet in July 1996

Özellikle ihracat yapanlarımız, yabancılara karşı milli itibarımıza gölge düşürecek hilelerden ve hatta dikkatsizliklerden sakınacaklardır. ...İsraftan kaçınılacak, milletin malı kullanılırken ona zarar verilmeyecektir. Devletimize, milletimize, komşularımıza, aile fertlerimize ve kendi kişiliğimize karşı olan görevlerimiz kusursuz bir şekilde yerine getirilecektir. ...kamu hakkı olan vergilerimizi ödeyeceğiz. (p. 86)

The Excerpt from the Friday Khutba written by the Istanbul Mufti Office in August

2011

Bizim milletimizin âlicenap, hayırsever ve fedakâr bir millet olarak tanınmasında zekâtı hem dinî bir vecibe hem de insanî bir ödev olarak algılamasının büyük bir tesirinin olduğu muhakkaktır. Şu halde imkânları elverişli olanlar zekâtlarını vererek dinî borçlarını ödedikleri gibi, milli bir hasletimizi de yaşatmış olacaklardır. (p. 87)

The excerpt from the Friday Khutba written by Ahmet Hamdi Akseki in the book

Yeni Hutbelerim

Milli bünye ailelerden ve faziletli aile reislerinin yetiştireceği ahlaklı, seciyeli ferdlerden teşekkül eder. Aile ocaklarında aile fertleri arasında sevgi ve saygı, ahlak ve fazilet hissi ne kadar sağlam ve samimi olursa milli bünye o derece metin, memleket mamur, millet mesut ve bahtiyat olur. (p. 90)

The Excerpt from the Friday Khutba written by the Diyanet in October 1995

Hep birlikte kardeşlik bağlarımızı daha da kuvvetlendirelim, yüceltelim. İyi bilelim ki toplum olarak kaynaşırsak devletimiz güçlü olur. Devlet güçlü olursa, biz de güçlü oluruz, mutlu oluruz. Yüce Allah Devletimize, milletimize zeval vermesin. (p. 90)

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