

THE PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, WOMEN,
AND POLITICS IN TURKEY: 1968-2014

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AND POLITICS IN TURKEY: 1968-2014

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Ece Han Genç Yıldız, certify that

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ABSTRACT

The Presidency of Religious Affairs, Women, and Politics in Turkey: 1968 – 2014

This study aims to provide an understanding of the evolving role of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (PRA) or *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* and its implications for women. Due to democratization, over the years PRA's primary role shifted from controlling religion to expanding the realm of religion. I hypothesized there is a relation between shifting sociopolitical context and Diyanet's discourse on women. A qualitative analysis of the texts published by the PRA between 1968 and 2014 was conducted. The thesis examined the two periodicals *Diyanet Aylık* and *Diyanet Aile*, the book of *İlmihal*, the pronouncements publicized through the PRA's official website, as well as the statements of the PRA notables. My cross-time comparative analysis found that the PRA has been dominated by a patriarchal discourse that reproduced gender stereotypes, hierarchy between sexes, and gendered division of labor. However, after the 1990s the PRA shifted toward a more gender - sensitive and egalitarian discourse. Dedicated efforts of the feminist movement, as well as the pursuit of EU membership were influential in transforming the state's agenda, which in turn moderated Diyanet's interpretation of religious norms concerning gender relations. Yet, within the last decade the PRA has been radically politicized and tilted toward a new and contradictory type of patriarchy. A critical and gender - focused study of the PRA not only makes a unique contribution to the literature on the relations between state, society and religion; but also deconstructs official religious discourse, which eventually affects the prospects of advancing gender equality in Turkey.

ÖZET

Türkiye’de Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, Kadın ve Siyaset: 1968 - 2014

Bu çalışma, Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı’nın (DİB) değişmekte olan rolünün ve bunun kadınlara yönelik etkilerinin anlaşılmasını sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Demokratikleşme süreci nedeniyle, yıllar içinde DİB’nın temel rolü dini denetim altına almaktan, dinin alanını genişletmeye dönüşmüştür. Değişen sosyopolitik bağlam ile Diyanet’in kadın konusundaki söylemi arasında bir ilişki olduğunu savunuyorum. 1968 ve 2014 yılları arasında DİB tarafından yayınlanan metinlerin niteliksel bir analizi yapıldı. Tez Diyanet Aylık ve Diyanet Aile dergilerini, İlmihal kitabını, DİB resmi web sitesi kanalıyla duyurulan bildirileri ve Diyanet yetkililerinin ifadelerini incelemiştir. Tarihsel karşılaştırmaya dayalı analizim DİB’nda cinsiyet stereo tiplerini, cinsiyetler arası hiyerarşi ve cinsiyete dayalı işbölümünü yeniden üreten ataerkil bir söylemin egemen olduğu sonucuna ulaştı. Ancak 1990’lardan sonra DİB cinsiyete daha duyarlı ve eşitlikçi bir söyleme geçiş yapmıştır. Feminist hareketin azimli çabaları ile beraber AB üyeliği hedefi devlet gündeminin dönüştürülmesinde etkili oldu ve bu da Diyanet’in cinsiyet ilişkilerine dair dini normları yorumlayışını daha ılımlı hale getirdi. Buna mukabil, son on yıllık süre zarfında DİB radikal bir şekilde siyasallaştı ve çelişkili yeni çeşit bir patriarkaya yöneldi. DİB’nın eleştirel ve cinsiyet odaklı şekilde çalışılması siyaset, toplum ve din arasındaki ilişkiye dair literatüre eşsiz bir katkı yapmakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda Türkiye’de toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğinin ilerlemesi sürecine etkileri olan resmi dini söylemin de yapısal çözümlemesini yapar.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved daughter Tuana Yıldız.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Significance of the study	6
1.2 Outline of the thesis	11
1.3 Contribution to the literature	12
CHAPTER 2: HISTORY OF STATE-RELIGION RELATIONS IN TURKEY AND THE PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS (PRA).....	18
2.1 1923 - 1946 Early Republican period: Years of strict control over religion ..	19
2.2 1946-1980 Multiparty politics: Relaxation of control over religion	33
2.3 The 1980s and 1990s: Revival of Islam	50
2.4 The AKP in power (2002 – present).....	70
CHAPTER 3: HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF WOMEN’S RIGHTS AND FEMINISM IN TURKEY	98
3.1 Young Turkish Republic and the years of “state feminism”	100
3.2 Women’s movement in Turkey in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup	109
3.3 Women’s rights and the feminist movement during the AKP period	120
CHAPTER 4: FEMINIST THEORY OF RELIGION	142
4. 1 Gendering religion.....	142
4. 2 Religion, politics, and discourse.....	143
4. 3 Feminism and religion	146
4.4 Themes emerging from the feminist literature on Islam	155
CHAPTER 5: METHOD	167
5.1 Texts under scrutiny	169
5.2 Data collection and precoding	172
5.3 Coding process.....	173
5.4 Methodological shortcomings and reliability	176
5.5 Categories	177

CHAPTER 6: THE ANALYSIS OF THE PRA’S DISCOURSE	179
6.1 PRA’S texts on creation stories	181
6.2 PRA’s texts on the female body and sexuality	192
6.3 PRA’s texts on gender roles	215
CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	246
7.1 Summary.....	246
7.2 Conclusions.....	263
APPENDIX A: QUANTITATIVE REFLECTIONS ON ARTICLES REGARDING WOMEN IN DİYANET’S PERIODICALS	273
APPENDIX B: CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PRESIDENTS OF THE PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS	276
APPENDIX C: CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF TURKISH GOVERNMENTS	278
APPENDIX D: LONG QUOTATIONS IN TURKISH	288
APPENDIX E: PHOTOS OF WOMEN IN THE <i>DİYANET MONTHLY</i>	307
REFERENCES	316

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure A 1 Percentage of articles regarding women in Diyanet's periodicals (1968-2014).....	273
Figure A 2 Annual number of articles on women in Diyanet's periodicals (1968-2014).....	274
Figure A 3 Average number of articles on women per year published by the Diyanet in each political period.....	275
Figure E 1 Woman walking with men.....	307
Figure E 2 Women in front of Mufti Office	308
Figure E 3 Crying woman.....	308
Figure E 4 Group of women walking on the street.....	309
Figure E 5 Old woman walking on the street	309
Figure E 6 Women praying in mosque	310
Figure E 7 Women waiting in front of tomb	310
Figure E 8 Woman praying at home.....	311
Figure E 9 Woman walking with her husband and kids	311
Figure E 10 Bride at wedding ceremony	312
Figure E 11 Woman serving the elderly women	313
Figure E 12 Women weaving carpet.....	313
Figure E 13 Women praying with men.....	314
Figure E 14 Woman and her daughter on prayer rug (<i>seccade</i>)	315
Figure E 15 Woman entering mosque with her children.....	315

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to provide an understanding of the evolving role of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (PRA) or *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* (hereinafter referred to as the *Diyanet*) in the Turkish model of secularism by focusing on its discourse on women. The PRA was established as a state institution by the Republican elite in 1924 in order to control religion, which was perceived as a threat to modernity and to promote a modern form of Islam compatible with the ideology of the new Republic. Thus, the PRA emerged as a bulwark of the Kemalist founding principle of secularism, *laiklik*. However, as a result of the transition to democratic politics in the late 1940s, and particularly the Islamization process that took place in Turkey after the 1980s, there was a relaxation of the secularist policies of the Republican era. Due to the changing dynamics between state and religion, *Diyanet*'s primary role gradually shifted from protecting secularism to expanding the realm of religion. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) period was a major milestone in Turkish politics with respect to the relations between state and religion. Since 2002, Turkey has been ruled by the AKP, which has Islamist origins. Even though the *Diyanet* has always served as a principle vehicle for reinforcing state ideology in Turkey, under AKP rule it turned into a tool for promoting the particular interests of the ruling cadre. As the government shifted toward authoritarianism, it effectively instrumentalized the *Diyanet* to promote its conservative ideology and policies, clearly at odds with the Republican ideals. By giving a particular emphasis to the AKP period, this study examines the implications of the *Diyanet*'s changing role in secularism through its discourse regarding women.

My study concentrates on the aspects of Diyanet's discourse concerning issues related to women, because of women's unique position with respect to relations between state and religion in Turkey. Parallel to the establishment of the PRA, the notion of women's rights constituted a pivotal pillar of the Kemalist projects of modernity and secularism. In the early years of the Turkish Republic, women were the symbol of Kemalist reforms that aimed to catch up with Western civilization (Göle, 1999). Alternative Islamist discourse, which gained increasing visibility and power in the post-1980 Turkish political context, has challenged the Kemalist understandings of modernity and secularism mostly over the rights, roles, and dress codes of women. Thus, women stood at the center of both the Kemalist "civilization" project and the agenda of the Islamist movement.

As Fatmagül Berktaş (1998, p. 126) writes, "every discourse 'recreates' and 'reforms' the world according to its own priorities and aims". In other words, religious concepts and ideas in every discourse reflect the interests of the dominant groups within a particular context at a particular time. For Berktaş (1998, p. 126), "every discourse 'creates' and forms anew male and female bodies according to its aims as well". The Kemalist / secularist vs. Islamist dichotomy has become one of the underlying cleavages that have characterized the nature of Turkish politics. For decades, both the Kemalist and Islamist camps in Turkey have sought to promote and dictate their own model of modernity, as well as their own image of the ideal woman (Arat, 2005). The Presidency of Religious Affairs, as a state institution attached to the Prime Ministry and as the highest religious authority in Turkey, has been a perfect platform for the two camps to foster their visions of women's roles.

This thesis hypothesizes a relationship between the shifting sociopolitical context and Diyanet's discourse on women. It presumes that the expansion of the

Islamist discourse in Turkey has had implications for Diyanet's discourse regarding women related issues, since women stand at the center of both Kemalist and Islamist discourses. As Diyanet's roles and functions have evolved over time within this shifting political and social context, so too has its discourse regarding women. In other words, certain religious norms associated with women promoted through the Diyanet have shifted in accordance with the political agenda of dominant actors. The shifting sociopolitical context in Turkey influences the state through the governing parties, which in turn gradually transforms Diyanet's role in secularism. This transformation manifests itself in the religious discourse regarding women.

A critical and gender-focused analysis of Diyanet's standpoint not only provides valuable insight into the complex relations between state, society and religion in Turkey; but also deconstructs official religious discourse, which has significant implications for the prospects of advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women in Turkish society. As feminist critiques of religion have highlighted, the patriarchal interpretations of Islam reproduce and legitimize sexist norms restrictive of women's rights and freedoms. Thereby, an examination of the Diyanet's discourse through the lens of gender is crucial for challenging religious underpinnings of gender disparities in Turkey.

This thesis aims to address following questions: Does Diyanet's discourse on women conform with the political context? To what extent has Diyanet's discourse regarding women been transformed by sociopolitical dynamics? How have norms related to women promoted through the Diyanet evolved over time? Is Diyanet's discourse characterized by continuity or change? Are there any turning points in the Diyanet's history that mark a radical change in its interpretation of religion regarding women-related matters? What are the implications of the rise of political Islam and

the women's movement in the 1980s for Diyanet's discourse regarding gender roles and women's rights? What is the impact of the AKP episode on Diyanet's discourse concerning rights, roles and dress codes of women? Which themes in Diyanet's discourse regarding women have been the most resistant to change and which have been subject to change over time? Overall, is Diyanet's discourse on women patriarchal or egalitarian? Does Diyanet promote gender equality or does it undermine women's empowerment by disseminating sexist interpretations of religion?

To address these questions, my thesis primarily focuses on the publications of the Diyanet. A qualitative textual analysis of the texts published by the PRA is conducted to deconstruct religious discourse on women. The primary text under scrutiny is the periodical entitled *Diyanet*, which has been regularly published since 1968. As the main material under scrutiny was not available earlier, the thesis takes the year 1968 as its starting point. I examined the content of the materials published until 2014 as this date signifies a milestone in contemporary Turkish history. On August 10, 2014, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was elected President in the first presidential elections based on popular vote, which brought the country ever closer to one-man rule. The thesis also examined the most recent periodical *Diyanet Aile* (Diyanet Family), as well as the *İlmihal* (the book on Islamic jurisprudence) published by the Presidency, which provide important clues about Diyanet's interpretation of Islamic teachings regarding ideal gender relations and women's roles in life. To support findings, data was also collected from press releases and official announcements publicized through the Presidency's official website, as well as interviews with Diyanet notables published in mainstream Turkish newspapers. The study provides some numerical data concerning the fluctuation in the volume of

articles published by the Diyanet about women to assess the transformation over time. Of the 16,492 articles published in *Diyanet* and *Diyanet Aile* throughout the entire study period, 693 articles were found to be related with women issues. Thus, the thesis focused on and analyzed the content of these articles, which constitute about 4 percent of the entire population (See Appendix A, Figure A1).

The content of the materials regarding Diyanet's perspective on women was analyzed through a feminist lens. From my reading of the feminist literature on women, I came up with three major themes. Feminist scholars mostly criticize patriarchal interpretations of religion, because they promote gender inequality by;

- i) generating negative norms and images about women through the creation stories (i.e. The Fall from Paradise and Pandora Myth).
- ii) putting the female body and sexuality under strict control by covering and seclusion
- iii) reproducing gender stereotypes that sanction a gendered division of labor between sexes.

I instrumentalized the central themes in these arguments (depictions of the woman in Islamic creation stories, control over the female body and sexuality, and gendered division of labor) as major categories to decode the Diyanet's texts regarding women, in order to determine whether the Diyanet has promoted gender equality or inegalitarian norms within each political period characterized by certain dynamics between state and religion.

The thesis is organized as follows: It begins with an overview of the state-religion relations in Turkey with a special emphasis on the transformation of the Diyanet. It examines these relations over an extensive period of time starting from the foundation of the Republic in 1923 until August 10, 2014. The relations between politics and religion are analyzed under four distinct periods, which are marked by critical breaking points: 1923-1946, 1946-1980, 1980-2002 and 2002-2014. The

thesis discusses how the structure, budget, and roles of Diyanet have changed within each particular period with the purpose of determining if these breaking points influenced Diyanet's discourse regarding women. This thesis gives a particular emphasis on the secular feminist movement in Turkey, and is theoretically built upon secular feminist theory, as the secular women's movement was an influential social force that pushed the Turkish state to launch a reform process to address gender equality particularly in the early 2000s, whereby the Diyanet was involved. Thus, the history of the relations between the state and the feminist movement in Turkey is provided to assess if those dynamics have had any implications for Diyanet's standpoint concerning women's rights. The thesis then proceeds with an overview of secular feminist theory on religion to introduce the three major themes that are used as methodological tools to deconstruct Diyanet's discourse. Diyanet's texts published since 1968 until 2014, are classified under three political periods (1968-1980, 1980-2002, 2002-2014) and a feminist reading of the women-related content is made for each period not only to determine to what extent Diyanet's discourse conforms with respective political climate, but also to cast light upon the interlinkages between politics, religion, and women's empowerment in Turkey.

1.1 Significance of the study

Religious discourse is an effective and comprehensive tool for constructing, legitimizing and reinforcing social gender roles and dichotomies, since it is based on absolute, eternal and divine orders that originate from religious texts. Furthermore, religious ideas infiltrate into the cultural system and create a moral discourse, guiding social behavior and determining gender relations. Therefore, the prospect of

women's empowerment is very much dependent on the nature of religious discourse in society.

Diyanet's discourse is worthy of research, primarily because it is the highest official religious authority in Turkey. As an administrative unit under the control of the Prime Ministry, the Presidency of Religious Affairs is principally charged with the management of religion, the regulation of Islamic faith and practice, religious education, and the construction and maintenance of places of prayer (Gözaydın, 2009). Under the sponsorship of the state, over the years the PRA became a massive bureaucracy controlling an extensive network of mosques all around Turkey. Thanks to its means to disseminate its religious perspective, such as centralized sermons recited in mosques and its publications, the Diyanet has a considerable capability to shape religious norms and behaviors pervasive in Turkish society and thus create a hegemonic religious discourse that is accepted as legitimate and normal. Therefore, studying Diyanet's discourse regarding women is worthwhile to understand how the dynamics between state and society affect the ways in which religious provisions and sources are interpreted in Turkey.

The nature of religious norms associated with women is more significant in religious societies, like Turkey, where feminists' efforts for gender equality have faced the staunchest challenges. Turkey is a secular country, yet it has a religious population. According to a survey jointly conducted by the Diyanet and Turkish Statistical Institute in 2014, 99.2% of Turkish people stated their religion to be Islam. The percentage of people who believe in another religion or no religion is only 0.4%. 98.7% of people stated, "God really exists and is one, and I have no doubts about it". 96.5% of the respondents agreed with the following statement "Everything described in Koran is real and true, and it applies to all times". 83.4% fast regularly during the

month of Ramadan. The percentage of people, who said they “always” perform their daily prayers is 42.5%. 68.1% considered themselves as “religious” and 19% considered themselves as “very religious”. 71.6% of female respondents declared that they cover their heads when going outside (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 2014). These figures might not reflect absolute reality and actual percentages may be lower than this survey’s results, as people might want to portray themselves as more religious. However, even this manifests that religiosity is highly valued in Turkish society.

In this religious population, Diyanet’s discourse is relevant due to its capability in shaping religious norms and public opinion in Turkey on various matters. According to the latest estimate from 2016, there are 87,381 mosques in Turkey, all of which are owned and managed by the PRA. According to the estimate of 2014, 49.9% of Turkish men goes to mosque 1-5 times a week to do their daily prayers while 13.4% go 6-10 times per week. 57.4% of the male population stated that “they always perform Friday prayer” and 17.6% said “mostly” (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 2014). When asked about the most important source from which they acquired their religious knowledge since childhood, 30% of the Turkish population stated “religious personnel in mosque” as their second most important source¹. Asked about the ways they improve their religious knowledge, 27.2% of respondents replied “with the help of Diyanet personnel”, 16.3% said “through Diyanet’s publications”, and 4.7% “through Diyanet’s website” (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 2014).

¹ 83.4% of respondents stated “family” as the first most important source from which they acquired

A 2002 survey that measured public perception regarding the reliability of Diyanet's pronouncements and publications found that the rate of public confidence was quite high. 80.9% of Turkish people considered the pronouncements by the Diyanet either highly reliable or reliable. 75.1% of respondents said "the publications of the Diyanet are the most reliable sources for learning religion" (Taş, 2002, pp. 162-177).

In such a religious society, messages delivered through the Diyanet with regard to women gain additional importance, especially when alarming statistical facts about gender inequality are taken into consideration. In 2015, Turkey moved down five places, ranking 130th among 145 countries, in the "Global Gender Gap Index" released annually by the World Economic Forum. This score designated Turkey as among the three lowest performing countries in the Europe and Central Asia region. The country's worst performance was under the economic participation and opportunity criteria, where it ranked 131st while it ranked 105th for women's educational attainment and political empowerment (World Economic Forum, 2015). According to United Nations Development Program Gender Inequality Index, among the population aged 15 or older, women's participation in the labor force in 2015 was only 30.4%, whereas men's participation was 71.4% (UNDP, 2016). In 2015, the illiterate female population in Turkey was five times greater than the illiterate male population (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2015). While 64.8% of the male population had at least some secondary education, this rate was 43.5% for females (UNDP, 2016). Moreover, women are not equally represented in decision-making positions; in 2015, 81 of 550 members of parliament, two of 26 ministers, two of 81 governors, one of 25 undersecretaries, three of 30 metropolitan mayors, and 13 of 174 university presidents were female (KA-DER, 2015). Despite significant legal reforms and

campaigns for the prevention of violence against women, there has been a steady increase in femicides. According to the data of Ministry of Justice, the murder rate of women in Turkey increased by 1400% within a period of seven years. While 66 women were murdered in 2002, this figure rocketed to 953 in 2009 (“Kadın cinayetleri yüzde 1400 arttı”, 2010). In 2016 alone, a total of 317 women were killed with weapons. According to the estimate of Umut Foundation, one in every two women in Turkey is subjected to violence either by their husbands or the men they live with (“317 women were killed”, 2017).

In addition to its critical role in shaping religious norms that have significance for gender equality, Diyanet is also an interesting case study because it illustrates how a religious institution can be instrumentalized by the political elite to legitimize certain norms, dress codes, and images pertaining to women. Since its inception, Diyanet has always been under the influence of politicians. However, the leaders of the AKP, who have been ruling Turkey for almost last two decades, have radically different views concerning rights, roles, and dress codes of women than those of the Republican elite, who founded the Diyanet. Despite the women-friendly party program and the so-called “conservative-democratic” image portrayed in the earlier years, the AKP period has been characterized by a new form of patriarchy that is mixed with neoliberal elements (Coşar & Yeğenoğlu, 2011). As the party has shifted more toward authoritarianism the Diyanet has been radically politicized, and basically acted as a mouthpiece of the government. This thesis argues that the politicization of the Diyanet has been most evident in its discourse regarding women. The AKP has effectively instrumentalized the Presidency to dictate its own conservative perspective regarding women. Therefore, studying the implications of the AKP period for Diyanet’s discourse regarding women is essential for better

understanding how the dynamics between state and society transform the official religious discourse in Turkey that eventually affect the prospect of women's empowerment.

1.2 Outline of the thesis

This dissertation is composed of seven main chapters: The first chapter introduces the research questions and core argument of the thesis. It discusses the contributions of the thesis and provides a brief review of previous studies conducted in this field. The second chapter offers an in-depth historical overview of state-religion relations in Turkey and discusses the evolution of Diyanet's structure, budget, roles and functions over time, as well as its activities concerning women. This chapter is based on the idea that Diyanet's discourse on women reflects the changes in broader socio-political context. Thus, shifting political and social dynamics such as Kemalism, democratization, rise of political Islam, the secular feminist movement, and Turkey's relations with the EU are discussed in detail and considered as intertwined factors that have shaped Diyanet's discourse on women's rights and gender relations. The third chapter concentrates on the historical development of the feminist movement in Turkey. Even though their history dates back to the early Republican era, women's groups have gained greater public visibility and political influence in Turkey since the late 1980s. Through the institutions they formed, they increased their ability to challenge the patriarchal norms and practices. Particularly after the 1990s feminist groups and institutions have greatly benefited from Turkey's EU harmonization process. Under the pressure of secular feminist organizations and the EU, the Turkish government adopted significant reforms to meet gender equality. As a state institution, the Diyanet has been highly involved in this process. Thus, this chapter

examines the impact of the feminist movement on Diyanet's discourse regarding women's issues. The fourth chapter focuses on the main arguments mostly raised by secular feminist scholars concerning monotheistic religions in general and Islam in particular. The fifth chapter discusses the eclectic qualitative textual analysis method utilized in this thesis and identifies the texts under scrutiny. After talking about the process of data collection and coding, it introduces three broad categories used to classify and analyze Diyanet's texts. It further elaborates on the reliability of the study, as well as methodological shortcomings inherent in qualitative textual analysis. In the sixth chapter, the three broad themes that have emerged from the feminist literature are utilized as categories to classify and make a critical and comparative assessment of Diyanet's publications concerning women. The texts are analyzed within the framework of three distinct political periods. A comparative section is added for each category to evaluate the continuities and changes in Diyanet's discourse over time. The conclusion chapter sums up the most important findings of the thesis by highlighting the interconnections between sociopolitical context and Diyanet's discourse. It discusses the nature of the Diyanet's discourse and the recent transformation in Diyanet's texts concerning women, by shedding light on the social and political factors that contributed to this transformation. It also underlines the aspects of the discourse characterized by continuity and addresses the questions that motivated this research.

1.3 Contribution to the literature

This study aims to fill a conspicuous vacuum in the literature. There have been a limited number of studies concerning the Diyanet, focusing on its different aspects (Bozan, 2000; Bozan and Çakır, 2005; Sucu, 2005; Arsel 1987; Gözaydın, 2009;

Çitak, 2010). However, unlike previous studies, this thesis primarily deals with the Presidency's evolving discourse on women throughout an extended period of time (1968-2014). Current literature mostly concentrates on the historical development, organizational structure, roles and functions of Diyanet. Only a minority of them examine the texts and practices of the Presidency regarding women. However, these examinations lack academic rigor, methodic qualities, and systematic comparison of different periods. My study also encompasses a broader time span than existing studies. Therefore, it aims to make a unique contribution to the literature by providing a gender-focused and systematic analysis of Diyanet's texts within a historical perspective that enables the comparison of its discourse with respect to changing sociopolitical contexts.

In order to contextualize Diyanet's discourse and assess the changes and continuities throughout time, my thesis starts with a detailed account of the historical evolution of state – religion relations in Turkey. In this respect, I greatly benefited from the previous studies on Diyanet. Hereby, it is crucial to acknowledge the contributions of previous studies in the literature that enabled me to build up the historical background and gain intellectual perspective to probe Diyanet's discourse regarding women.

1.3.1 Previous studies on the Presidency of Religious Affairs

The earliest study that examined the Diyanet through the lens of gender was pursued by İlhan Arsel. In his book entitled “*Şeriat ve Kadın*” (Sariah and Woman), Arsel analyzed Diyanet's books and criticized their sexist content, which he found to be insulting to women. His research illustrated that Diyanet's publications during the 1980s contained various insulting statements such that; women were deficient in

intelligence and also in religion, they were similar to animals like dogs, donkeys, pigs, etc., they invalidate prayer, and they would be the majority of the people in Hell (Arsel, 1987). Arsel's study is important in how it revealed Diyanet's patriarchal perspective.

Even though it is not gender-focused, a research conducted by İrfan Bozan in 2000 affirmed that "patriarchal perspective" has dominated the institution and suggested this problem could be overcome by increasing female recruitment and expanding the services for women. He based his work on interviews conducted with Diyanet personnel to assess their attitudes towards the institution, noting that feminist perspective has been influential upon female personnel since the 1980s (Bozan, 2000, p. 85). Bozan's study illustrated how the Diyanet remained predominantly patriarchal even years after Arsel's research. Bozan's research also highlighted a shift in mentality since the 1980s thanks to the increasing female recruitment. As this thesis illustrates, feminist ideas could penetrate into the Diyanet's publications through these women and led to a more gender-sensitive language after the 1980s particularly in the 1990s.

In addition, there have been noteworthy studies regarding the transformation of the Diyanet within the framework of state-religion relations in Turkey. Many scholars stressed that the Kemalist elite incorporated the Diyanet within the Turkish state with the primary purpose of ensuring the tight control over religion (Toprak, 1990; Zürcher 2005). These studies provided the historical framework required for contextualizing Diyanet's discourse. For instance, İrfan Bozan and Ruşen Çakır's report (2005) entitled "Is a Civic, Transparent and Democratic Presidency of Religious Affairs Possible?" is an important source for understanding the transformation of Diyanet over time. However, as the authors emphasize in the

preface of the study, their report cannot be counted as an academic study, since they employ methods and techniques of journalism (Çakır & Bozan, 2005, p. 11).

Nevertheless, there have been a limited number of comprehensive academic studies. Most notably İřtar Tarhanlı-Gözaydın's book, entitled "Diyanet" (2009) provided a rich historical background of Diyanet's transformation. Even though Gözaydın's studies are not gender-focused, they were highly beneficial to my understanding of the historical evolution and legal transformation of the PRA. Gözaydın's research is particularly significant in the sense that it emphasized instrumentalization of the Diyanet by the state elite. "Diyanet was established to secure Turkish secularism", yet as she suggested, it turned into an "ideological tool" after it received a constitutional status in 1961 (Gözaydın, 2006). According to Tarhanlı-Gözaydın, in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup, in line with the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, Turkey had gone through "a state-led Islamization process", in which the Presidency of Religious Affairs was instrumentalized (Tarhanlı, 1993, p. 185). Gözaydın's studies triggered my curiosity to examine to what extent the Diyanet has been used as an instrument by various political actors to promote their ideologies regarding woman.

A more recent article that validated Gözaydın's arguments was penned by Ahmet Erdi Öztürk (2016). He noted that the Diyanet has functioned as a fundamental "ideological apparatus" within the Turkish state. He argued that, "while the Diyanet has always served as a principle vehicle for reinforcing state ideology in modern Turkey, its political salience and ideological purposes have undergone significant transformation since the early 1980s, and the most radical under the AKP" (Öztürk, 2016, p. 620). His article illustrated how Diyanet's fundamental role shifted from protecting the Turkish state's understanding of Islam and secularism to

promoting and spreading Turkish nationalism and Islamic values both in Turkey and abroad. According to Öztürk (2016, p. 633), the Diyanet has been converted into an “ideological state apparatus” that has been imposing the AKP’s and Erdoğan’s political and ideological agenda, particularly since 2002. Öztürk’s study is important as it reveals Diyanet’s radical politicization in recent years. In the light of selected examples, he claimed that the Diyanet gained new duties during the AKP period, such as providing religious support and legitimacy for AKP’s and in particular Erdoğan’s discourses and actions, suppressing opposition groups, and converting disruptive policies into religious-based facts which could not be questioned or publicly discussed. During the final years of the AKP era, with the authoritarian shift towards one-man rule, as Öztürk (2016, p. 63) claims, “the Diyanet indirectly aligned itself to the de facto ruler of the country: president himself”, since it took the same position as Erdoğan in various matters.

A report titled “Diyanet: The Turkish Directorate for Religious Affairs in a changing environment” published by Utrecht University in 2011 also contributed to the literature by providing a deeper understanding of how relations between religion and the state evolved under constantly changing circumstances. The authors of the report examined Diyanet’s widening scope in Turkey, as well as its activities in the Netherlands. There is also a short section concerning Diyanet’s increasing activities on woman-related matters during the 2000s. Unlike Öztürk, in their conclusion, Sunier et al. emphasized that “a thorough assessment of the policies of Diyanet should neither be confined to the last decade, nor to the policies of the present government alone, but rather take into account the transformations of Turkish society over a much longer period” (Sunier et al., 2011, p. 143). The report emphasized that the continuities and changes in the policies and practices of Diyanet should not

simply be attributed to the AKP era; rather they must be considered manifestations of broader sociopolitical context. Vast social and political changes that have been in place in Turkey since the 1980s, such as rise of political Islam, economic liberalization, growth of civil society, and intensified negotiations between Turkey and the European Union, etc., all had significant implications for the Diyanet's transformation.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF STATE-RELIGION RELATIONS IN TURKEY AND THE PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS (PRA)

In this chapter, I will attempt to provide a historical and critical analysis of the delicate and conflict-ridden relationship between religion and politics in Turkey in order to demonstrate (i) how the Diyanet was born out as a pivotal component of Republican founding fathers' modernization project as a means to control religion and hence "secure" laicism (ii) how its role, functions, legal and bureaucratic structure have been transformed over time in accordance with the changes in sociopolitical conjunctures and (iii) how its primary role has shifted from controlling religion to expanding the realm of religion over years.

Turkish version of secularism, as well as the unique relation between the state and Islam, is highly complex (Sunier et al., 2011, p. 10). As a state institution, Presidency of Religious Affairs has been shaped by the complex interplay between the state and religious forces. This chapter divides the history of the Turkish Republic into four distinct phases. In each phase of the development of the Turkish Republic the relation between Islam and the Turkish state has transformed, causing implications for the roles and functions of the Diyanet. After discussing the major political and social developments in each phase, I will give particular focus on the transformation in Diyanet's organizational structure, roles and functions.

This chapter is based on the argument that, since its inception the Diyanet has always served as a principle vehicle for legitimizing state policies and ideology. However, starting from the early 1980s and most radically in the AKP period, its roles and functions have undergone a significant transformation. Its fundamental

mission has gradually shifted from controlling religion to expanding the domain of religion. The ideological match between the AKP and the Diyanet resulted in the expansion of power and functions of the Diyanet, which has had implications for Diyanet's discourse. The chapter aimed to provide a historical framework in order to contextualize recent transformation in Diyanet's activities and discourse regarding women.

2.1 1923 - 1946 Early Republican period: Years of strict control over religion

"The new born state of Turkey founded in 1923, indicated a new political choice of a modernization project that was based on secularism and nation-state" (Gözüaydın, 2006: 1). In order to break with the Ottoman past² and to reach the contemporary level of civilization, Atatürk and Kemalist elite initiated the project of "making" modern Turkey by building Western style political, social and cultural institutions (Keyman, 2007, p. 220).

Since its inception Turkish modernity has been primarily and essentially a state-centric project. As Gellner points out, the Kemalist elite regarded both "the modernization of the polity and society" and "the legitimacy and justification of political modernity" as linked to the nation-state (1995, p. 83). In order catch up with the contemporary Western civilization, the power of the nation-state to transform a backward society into a secular-rational social entity was viewed as the key to "enlighten the people and help them to make progress" (Heper, 1985, p. 51).

² Here Fuat Keyman clarifies a point: He underlines that he does not refuse the influence of Ottoman past on the Kemalist discourse of modernity and secularism. However, in his conceptualization, making of modern Turkey, involves the emergence of modern nation-state. It is on the basis of this conceptualization that the Kemalist elite attempted to initiate the top-down modernization of society, in which the state was regarded as the key agent of social change. In this sense, for Keyman, the Kemalist mode of modernization in Turkey involved "a rupture with the past, and in this rupture the nation-state, for Kemalist elite, was to play a constitutive role" (Keyman, 2007, p. 231).

For the Republican leaders, the biggest challenge against the realization of modernization and hence reaching the level of contemporary civilization was religion. Since the Ottoman Empire was regarded as a “traditional political order with an Islamic ethos” (Keyman & Gümüşçü, 2014), the making of modern secular nation necessitated a top-down imposition of Western secular and scientific reason into what was then regarded as religious, traditional, and backward (Kazancıgil & Özbudun, 1981). Imposition account of modernization was also clear for Nilüfer Göle. She suggested that the Turkish mode of modernization could be considered as:

.. an unusual example of how ruling elites have *imposed* [emphasis added] their notions of a Western cultural model, resulting in conversion almost on a civilizational scale. By building up a strong tradition of ideological positivism, Turkish modernist elites have aimed toward secularization, rationalization, and nation-building (1997, p. 83).

Kemalist principle of *laiklik* (from French *laïcité*) has played a key role in the process of making modern Turkey. Gözaydın observed “Atatürk’s policy on laïcité was to remove religion from the public realm and reduce it to a matter of faith and practice of the individual” (2008, p. 217). Likewise, according Bernard Lewis, main thrust of Atatürk’s policy toward religion was “to disestablish [Islam] to end the power of religion in political, social, cultural affairs and limit it to the matters of belief and worship. In thus reducing Islam to the role of religion in a modern, Western nation-state, Kemalists also made some attempt to give their religion a more modern and more national form” (Lewis, 1968, p. 412). Kemalists sought to reconstruct Islam as a national, rational, and individual religion that was compatible with the requirements of the modern nation-state (Azak, 2008, p. 162). This “reformist” discourse was reflected in the speeches of Atatürk:

Our religion is a most reasonable and most natural religion, and it is precisely for this reason that it has been the last religion. In order for a religion to be natural, it should conform to reason, technology, science, and logic. Our religion is totally compatible with these. (Parla & Davison, 2004, p. 110)

In this sense, Kemalist regime initiated a set of institutional and structural reforms to realize the objective of *laiklik* (Keyman, 2007, p. 221). In March 1924 Atatürk dismantled the department of *Şeyh-ül-İslam*³, as well as the Caliphate, the religious institution that had underpinned Ottoman rule for hundreds of years and provided the political and spiritual leadership for global Islam. The year 1924 also witnessed secularization of the education system through the Law on the Unification of Education⁴ (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*). The educational sector was put under the authority of the Ministry of Education. The *Şeriat* Courts, which had already started losing their power before the birth of the Republic, were closed and Islamic judges were dismissed. Subsequently, Swiss secular civil code and Italian penal code were adopted in 1926. As Zürcher points out, the final seal on secularization of the state came with the secularization of the Constitution; in 1928 the clause that made Islam the state religion of Turkey was removed. (2005, p.187) Finally, the Turkish Republic was declared a “secular” state by a constitutional amendment in 1937.

³ In the Ottoman Empire the department of *Şeyh-ül-İslam* had been assigned by religious affairs. The Ottoman *Şeyh-ül-İslam* had been in the charge of these four state institutions of contemporary Turkey: Presidency of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, and Directorate of Foundations. The most important task of *Şeyh-ül-İslam* was giving *fetvas* on religious and political matters. This task was performed by *muftis* in provinces (Çakır & Bozan, 2005, p.12). However, the department began losing its former power and authority as a result of modernization and secularization reforms that had been initiated in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. These reforms turned the department into an institution tasked merely with the affairs of Islamic faith and practice. At the transition stage from Ottoman Empire to the Republic, a new *ministry of Şer’iye and Evkaf* was formed in 1920. This ministry took over most of the functions of the *Şeyh-ül-İslam*. Hence, the ministry served as bridge in the process of transition from *Şeyh-ül-İslamlık* in Ottoman Empire to the Presidency of Religious Affairs in Turkey. For details see Kaya, K. (1998). *Sosyolojik Açıdan Türkiye’de Din-Devlet İlişkileri ve Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* [Religion-State Relations in Turkey and the Presidency of Religious Affairs in Sociological Perspective]. Istanbul: Makro. pp: 108-113

⁴ For details see *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*, Kanun no 430, in *Düstur*. (1924/1340, March 3). 3 (5), 665

According to Gözaydın, the reforms in this period aimed at secularizing and modernizing not only the state, but also transforming society into a modern body (2006, p. 2). Or in Göle's words "Kemalist reformers' efforts went beyond modernizing the state apparatus ... they also attempted to penetrate into the lifestyles, manners' behavior, and daily customs of the people" (1997, p. 83). In this sense the fez, turban and other manifestations of Islam were banned. Western attire was encouraged through the Hat Law in 1925. Sufi brotherhoods (*tarikats*) were dissolved and outlawed, their convents and sanctuaries were closed, their prayer meetings and ceremonies were prohibited (Lewis, 2002, p. 411). "Sacred tombs and other religious sites were closed. Some reactionary clerics were executed by the Independence [Courts] (*İstiklal Mahkemeleri*)" (Smith, 2005, pp. 309-310). Socio-cultural policies associated with *laiklik* politics further included the adoption of Gregorian calendar in 1926, the adoption of Aramaic numerals in 1928, abolition of the Arabic script and the adoption Latin alphabet in 1928, the elimination of Arabic and Persian from school curricula in 1929, the conversion of the Hagia Sophia, the great Byzantine church-turned-mosque, into a museum in 1930, the abolition of all titles and hereditary positions in 1934, the adoption of last names in 1935, and the adoption of the Saturday-Sunday weekend in 1935 (Davison, 1998, p. 150).

2.1.1 The Presidency of Religious Affairs: State's instrument to control Islam

In the political milieu of the early Republic, one of the most important legal regulations made was the Act dated 3 March 1340 (1924) no. 429 on the Abolishment of the Ministry of *Şer'iye* (Religious Affairs) and *Evkaf* (Pious

Foundations)⁵. The law abolished the Ministry, which in the Ankara government, had taken over most of the functions of the *Şeyh-ül-İslam*'s department and assigned the administration of religious affairs to a “presidency” (*Reislik*) within the central administration. Hence, this law is considered as the founding Act of Presidency of Religious Affairs.

The first article of Act no. 429 states that “In the Republic of Turkey, Grand National Assembly of Turkey and the Cabinet which is formed by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey are responsible for the legislation and execution of provisions concerning the affairs of people and the Presidency of Religious Affairs will be formed as a part of the Republic for implementation of all provisions concerning faith and prayer of the religion of Islam and the administration of religious organizations” (Tarhanlı, 1993, p. 41). By assigning religious tasks to the Presidency of Religious Affairs, and all other legislative power to the Grand National Assembly, this law enabled *de facto* division of the state and religion, despite the persistence of the constitutional clause making Islam the state religion until 1928.

⁵ This Act was passed by the Parliament on the proposal of Siirt Deputy Hoca Halil Efendi and his 50 fellows. The full text of the Act was as follows:

Article 1: In the Republic of Turkey, Grand National Assembly of Turkey and the Cabinet which is formed by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey are responsible for the legislation and execution of provisions concerning the affairs of people and the Presidency of Religious Affairs will be formed as a part of Republic for implementation of all provisions concerning faith and prayer of the religion of Islam and the administration of religious organizations

Article 2: Ministry of *Şer'iye* and *Evkaf* is abolished

Article 3: The President of Religious Affairs is appointed by the President of the Republic upon the proposal of the Prime Ministry

Article 4: The Presidency of Religious Affairs is attached to Prime Ministry, its budget is made under the budget of Prime Ministry

Article 5: The Presidency of Religious Affairs is authorized for the administration of all sacred places in the Republic of Turkey including mosques, tombs, and lodges, as well the appointment and dismissal of all imams, *hatibs* (orators), *vaizs* (preachers), *şeyhs* (dervish leaders) and *müezzins* (callers to prayer), and all other employees of religious character

Article 6: *Muhtis* are tied to the Presidency of Religious Affairs

For original version of this law, see: “Ser’iye ve Evkaf ve Erkan-I Harbiye-I Umumiye Vekaletlerinin İlgasına Dair Kanun”, Kanun no. 429 in *Düstur* (1924 / 1340, March 3). 3(5), 794.

As per this enactment, the Presidency of Religious Affairs was put under the Prime Ministry. The President of Religious Affairs was appointed by the President of the state upon the proposal of the Prime Minister. In addition, with this legal regulation Presidency of the Religious Affairs was authorized for the administration of all the sacred places, including mosques, tombs, dervish lodges, as well as appointment and dismissal of all *imams* (prayer leaders), *hatibs* (orators), *vaizs* (preachers), *şeyhs* (dervish leaders) and *müezzins* (callers to prayer), and all other employees of religious character (Çakır & Bozan, 2005, p. 15). The organizational structure of the Presidency and positions under it were not specified in this act, except by the provision that “the place where *muftis* [jurist expert] would refer to is the Presidency of Religious Affairs” (Gözüaydın, 2006, p. 3).

The enactment on the abolishment of *Şer’iye and Evkaf* and the foundation of the Presidency of the Diyanet symbolized a milestone in the relations between Islam and the state. To Gözüaydın, this law was an important step to “secure” Turkish secularism. By putting religion within the central administration, Republican ruling elite brought religion under state control, at the same time sought to break the potentially sacred significance of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (2006, p.1-2). The institution became the main official instrument for disseminating “the state Islam” which was defined as a matter of individual conscience (*vicdan*) and hence compatible with the modernity project, throughout the country (Azak, 2008, p. 161).

In fact there is a robust literature emphasizing that, through the establishment of the Presidency, Kemalist elite aimed at putting Islam under strict state control. Dankwart Rustow (1957) for instance, emphasized the control-oriented character of Kemalist laicism by stating that “The religious establishment has never been separated from the state”. Likewise, Toprak observes, “The separation of

religion and state was never attempted in its Western sense. Islam was put under control of and made subservient to state authority” (Toprak, 1990). For Zürcher, Presidency of Religious played a key role in control of religion by the Turkish state (Zürcher, 2005, p. 187). To put it differently, Kemalist elite sought to control all religious activity within the borders of Turkish Republic by making the Presidency of Religious Affairs a part of state bureaucracy. This bureaucratization of Islam was emphasized by Toprak (1995, p. 35) by a felicitous phrase “organization and personnel of Islam” became “paid employees of the state”.

The Act 429 that passed in 1924 made the President of Diyanet the highest echelon of religious bureaucracy. Börekçizade Rıfat Efendi⁶, who had been formerly mufti of Ankara, was appointed as the first President of Religious Affairs by Mustafa Kemal (For a chronological list of presidents of the PRA, see Appendix B). As Kaya writes, this appointment invoked reactions in the Turkish public, since in the Ottoman bureaucratic system the nomination of an ordinary mufti to the highest religious position – *Şeyh-ül- İslamlık* – had been almost impossible. However, this development indeed revealed Republican decision-makers’ approach to the institution. Within a political context as such, appointment of someone, who would show loyalty to the Kemalist regime and follow the laicist policies, was no surprising. Börekçizade Rıfat Efendi had actively supported Mustafa Kemal throughout the War of Independence. In the early years of the War, he had opened a branch of Association for Defense of the National Rights (*Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti*) in Ankara, and for this reason he was dismissed from his position by the government in Istanbul that was loyal to the Sultan (Çakır & Bozan, 2005, p. 53).

⁶ After the adoption of last names in 1934, he took the last name “Börekçi”.

Besides, he had taken a positive approach to Kemalist reforms (Dursun, 1992, p.182). Hence, the appointment was consistent with the leadership's overall policy of secularism as control.

With the Law on the "Unification of Education" passed in the same year, all institutions providing public education were united under the same umbrella. As per this enactment, all colleges including *medreses* and religious schools, which had been under the supervision of *Ministry of Şer'îye and Evkaf* in the past, were placed under the authority of the Ministry of Education. Although the law did not contain an article that explicitly necessitated the closure of medreses, the Minister ordered the closure of all medreses over a night by a telegraph (Jaschke, 1972, pp. 74-75; Kaya, 1998, pp. 158-159). Therefore, medrese system that had hitherto provided the education of religious clerics was dismantled. In their place, the state began establishing *İmam-Hatip schools*, in order for instruction and training of imams and preachers, who would perform daily religious services. However, the number of these schools had gone down every year since their inception, with the claim of "insufficiency of number of students". Initially, the total number of İmam-Hatip schools was 29. This number dropped to 26 in 1924-25, dropped further to 20 in 1925-26. In 1926-27, only two were remained and finally all of them were closed by 1930 by the state (Kaya, 1998, p. 158).

Furthermore, the Article 4 of the Law on the "Unification of Education" required the establishment of a Divinity Faculty, in order to provide higher education in religion. A Faculty of Divinity was opened within İstanbul University shortly after the law in 1924. For Lewis, this faculty "was intended to serve as the center of a new, modernized, and scientific form of religious instruction, more appropriate to a

secular, Westernized Republic” (Lewis, 2002, p. 414). Yet, the faculty was closed in 1933 with the claim of inadequacy of the number of students⁷.

Gradual closure of İmam-Hatip schools, as well as the Faculty of Divinity, prevented the instruction of religious personnel and in turn dramatically reduced its size. As a result of these harsh policies of the single-party regime, basic religious services were hindered. This caused not only public resentment towards the regime, but also reactions within the governing Republican People’s Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*; hereafter the CHP). For instance in 1948, during the Seventh Congress of the party, the deputy of Seyhan - Sinan Tekelioglu- commented on the condition of religious services and the position of the Presidency of Religious Affairs:

...the President can not do anything. He is present, but he is bound hand and foot. The Christians and the Jewish communities managed to establish their schools and raise their religious clergy. However, our peasants do not even have imams to carry out funerals. The state should treat its own religious personnel, the same as it treats those of other religions. (as cited in Kaya, 1998, p. 171)

The administrative structure of the central and provincial branches of the Presidency of Religious Affairs was specified for the first time in the 1927 Budget Act. With this Act, several new departments were established under the central organization of the Diyanet, such as Consultation Committee (*Heyet-i Müşavere*) and Research Committee (*Tetkik-i Mesahif Heyeti*). Provincial organization, on the other hand, was

⁷ Professor Albert Malche from the University of Geneva was invited by Mustafa Kemal to act as an consultant to the Ministry of Education of Turkey. Professor Malche was asked to write a report on Istanbul University. He completed his report on 29 May 1932. In this report he stated that “I cannot have a say in the direction the religious institution of a nation will take place, but this is the situation: It [the faculty] has thirteen teachers and three students” (1939: 52). For a brief analysis of the parliamentary debates on the closure of the Divinity Faculty at the 1961 constitutive assembly, see: Akan, M. (2011). The infrastructural politics of laiklik in the writing of the 1961 Turkish Constitution, *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 13 (2), p. 204.

composed of *müftis* employed in provinces and districts (Kaya, 1998, p. 22). On 30 June 1929, Act no 1452 on the “Unification and Equation of the salaries of civil servants” (*Devlet Memurları Maaşatının Tevhid ve Teadülüne Dair Kanun*) came into effect. In this act, permanent positions the Diyanet were stated for the first time. The Article 2 of the act provided this law was to be admitted the organizational law of the Presidency of Religious Affairs until a new law would be made (Gözaydın, 2008a, p. 219).

The year 1931 witnessed an important development that reduced the powers of the Presidency of Religious Affairs significantly. The 1931 Fiscal Year Budget Law (*1931 Mali Senesi Bütçe Kanunu*), which was adopted on June 8, 1931, required the management and personnel of all mosques and prayers to be transferred to the Directorate-General for Foundations (*Evkaf Umum Müdürlüğü*). As a result, the personnel of the Presidency of Religious Institutions and Presidency of Supplies, which had formerly been under the central organization of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, were put under the control of Presidency-General for Foundations. Moreover, the number of the personnel was also considerably reduced, as the seventh article of the Act required that mosques and prayer rooms would be classified with respect to “real needs” of the people of Turkey. In spite of all these significant modifications, as Gözaydın stated, “the legal regulation was passed in the Assembly without any objection” (Gözaydın, 2006, p. 3). These can be regarded as a part of the set of attempts made by the Republican ruling elite for limiting the role and influence of Islam on politics and society. Such regulation that weakened the Presidency and reduced the size of religious personnel was a significant reflection of the political environment and the overall policy of the laicism as control.

The final legal regulation regarding the Diyanet within the first period came out in 1935. Act no. 2800 titled “The Organization and Duties of Religious Affairs” (*Diyanet İşleri Reisliği Teşkilat ve Vazifeleri Hakkında Kanun*) that was passed on June 14, 1935, is accepted as the first organizational enactment of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. In addition to bringing a number of novelties in the organizational structure, the law also introduced a procedure of election for nominations of the muftis (Çakır & Bozan, 2005, p.15).

2.1.2 Turkification of Islam and the Presidency of Religious Affairs

In its early years, The Presidency of Religious Affairs took a number of significant initiatives. Translation and interpretation (*tafsir*) of the Islamic holy book, *Koran*, was one of those initiatives. The Presidency received a financial grant of 20,000 liras from the government for realization of this task (Sarıkoyuncu, 2002, p. 100). After long and heated discussions, nationalist poet Mehmet Akif Ersoy⁸ was tasked with the translations, whereas the *tafsir* was to be made by Elmalılı Mehmet Hamdi Yazır⁹. In addition to his literary merits and patriotic personality, Ersoy was deeply a pious man, who had engaged in *tafsir*, as well as the few poetic translations of the *Koran*. Atatürk, who had been deeply impressed by the sample of his translations, asked him to translate the entire *Koran*, and he accepted. He was making the translations and sending them to Mehmet Hamdi, who was in turn interpreting and presenting them to the Presidency of Religious Affairs. Atatürk played an active role

⁸ Mehmet Akif Ersoy (1873-1936) is further known for writing the lyrics of Turkish National Anthem, *İstiklal Marşı*.

⁹ Elmalılı Mehmet Hamdi Yazır (1878-1942) was a prominent religious scholar of the Republican period, who had previously worked at the Seyh-ül-İslamlik and served in the people’s assembly (*Meclis-i Mebusan*) during the Second Ottoman Constitutional period (*II. Mesrutiyet*). For details see, Yazır, H. M. (2011). *Mesrutiyetten Cumhuriyete Makaleler* [Articles from the Constitutional Period to the Republic]. Istanbul: Klasik Yayinlari.

in this process. He stated “I ordered translation of the Koran” (*Atatürk’ün söylev ve demeçleri*, 1989). “Turks do not know the essence of their religion. For this reason, the Koran should be in Turkish” (as cited in Sarıkoyuncu, 2002, p. 88). Meanwhile, there were few attempts in a mosque in Istanbul¹⁰ to perform prayer (*namaz*) by reading the Turkish Koran, without any official notice issued by the Presidency of Religious Affairs. In the face of strong opposition and criticism, President Rıfat Börekçi declared his disapproval of prayer in Turkish, and dismissed the imam from mosque duty temporarily. These incidents worried Ersoy and led him to withdraw his translations. Finally the Presidency assigned Yazır with translations and the work titled “*Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*” (Religion of God Language of Koran) came into existence (Kaya, 1997, pp. 161-164).

Following years witnessed other bold steps taken to Turkification of worship. In 1928 the faculty of Divinity in Istanbul University appointed a committee to examine the issue of reform and modernization in the Islamic religion and to report to the Ministry of Education. The President of the committee was Mehmet Fuad Köprülü, who was a professor in History of Literature. In the report, published in June 1928, it was stressed that “religious life, like moral and economic life must be reformed on scientific lines that it may be in harmony with other institutions” (Lewis, 2002, p. 414). The recommendations for the fulfillment of this goal were described under four headings. As Lewis noted, the first heading “the form

¹⁰ On the 15th and 17th of March 1926, İmam *Hacı Cemaleddin Efendi* performed prayer in Turkish, as well as delivering the entire sermon (*Hutbe*) at Göztepe mosque in Erenköy. A group of people in Istanbul visited the President Rıfat Börekçi in order to express their complaints. The imam’s actions were furthermore stirred up controversies in the press. On the 11th April, a columnist in *Milliyet*, Ahmet Ağaoglu, sharply criticized the Presidency of Religious Affairs because of his dismissal of the imam. For him, imam acted in accordance with the requirements of the Turkish language, as well as serving for the sake of reforms. In response, the President stated that “Reformism is one thing, *namaz* is another... Prayer in Turkish is not possible, Koranic verses and suras must be read in Arabic”. (Ceylan, 1991(II), p. 47)

of worship” called for the need for clean and orderly mosques, into which people must be urged to enter with clean shoes. The second on the “language of worship” the report stated that all prayers and *hutbes* (sermons delivered at the noon prayer on Fridays and on certain other occasions) should be in the national language, instead of Arabic language. The third, on “the character of worship” the report underlined the urgent need for trained musicians and musical instruments in the mosque to make worship beautiful, inspiring and spiritual. The fourth and last focused on “the thought side of worship” and sought to replace printed, set sermons by real religious guidance, which only competent philosophers with philosophic training would give (Lewis, 2002, p. 414).

In all but one respect, the recommendations of the committee turned out to be a dead letter, because of the harsh reactions came from the public (Dursun, 1995, p. 67-68). Only the recommendation on the Turkification of worship had any practical consequences. Although earlier attempts to Turkify mosque service provoked strong public reactions, Kemalist leadership never gave up its urge to reform Islamic practice by Turkifying the ritual. Mustafa Kemal insisted that mosque service should be done in Turkish language in accordance with the requirements of the modern nation state. For instance, in 1923 at a mosque in Balıkesir where he addressed the congregation, Mustafa Kemal stressed the significance of reciting sermons in a language comprehensible to the people:

(T)he style of current sermons does not fit our nation's feelings, ideas and language as well as the needs of the civilization. In case you read the sermons of our Prophet and the rightly guided caliphs, you will see that all these are about daily matters related with military, administrative, fiscal and political issues. ... That sermons were recited in a language which was not understood by the people and their contents had nothing to do with our current necessities and needs was to force us to obey as slaves the oppressors, who were named caliph or sultan. Sermons are meant to enlighten and guide the people, and nothing else. To recite sermons of a hundred, two hundred, or

even one thousand years ago is to leave the people in a state of ignorance and negligence. ... Therefore, sermons should and will be totally in Turkish and suitable to the requirements of the day. (Azak, 2008, p. 165)

For Lewis, Mustafa Kemal and Republican cadres were deeply influenced by Ziya Gökalp's ideas on nationalization of Islam. Ziya Gökalp, who was a leading ideologue of Turkish nationalism, defended nationalizing Islam by replacing Arabic with Turkish as the language of ritual. In a poem he penned in 1915, had openly demanded that the call to prayer (*ezan*) should be recited in Turkish¹¹ (Lewis, 2002, p. 415). To him, prayers and the Koran during every ceremony and worship had to be read in Turkish language so that the people could understand the real essence of religion.

The project of the Turkish ezan was initiated directly by Mustafa Kemal. In 1931, he gathered a group of distinguished reciters of Koran (*hafız*) in the Dolmabahçe Palace and requested them to recite the chapters from the Turkish Koran. Later, during the month of Ramadan the Turkish Koran was recited at the Hagia Sophia mosque with Mustafa Kemal's order. (Azak, 2008, p. 169). On 30 January 1932, the call to prayer was uttered from the minarets of Hagia Sophia, for the first time, in Turkish (Lewis, 2002, p. 416). Shortly after, with a decree dated 18 June 1932, the Presidency of Religious Affairs announced that all calls to prayers would be recited in the Turkish language¹² (Çakır & Bozan, 2005, p. 54). In 1941, an

¹¹ In his poem titled "Vatan" (Fatherland) Ziya Gökalp had written:
A land where the call to prayer from the mosque is recited in Turkish
Where the peasant understands the meaning of the prayer in his worship,
A land where in the schools the Koran is read in Turkish,
Where, big and little, everyone knows the command of God
This, O son of the Turks, is your fatherland (*Yeni Hayat*, 1918).

¹² Turkish version of the call to prayer was prepared by the Turkish Language Society and approved by the Presidency of Religious Affairs, as well as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. This new version of ezan in Turkish was as follows: a) Tanrı Uludur b) Şüphesiz bilirim bildiririm Tanrıdan başka yoktur tapacak

amendment in Turkish Penal Code, penalized the act of reciting the call to prayer in Arabic language, with imprisonment (Tarhanlı, 1993, p. 20). According to Azak, “the ban on the call to prayer in Arabic was part of a wider nationalist program, which aimed to Turkify all cultural fields including religion and to promote a local vernacular Islam” (Azak, 2008, p. 161).

2.2 1946-1980 Multiparty politics: Relaxation of control over religion

By the end of the Second World War, single-party government had become deeply unpopular. In addition to socio-economic problems and low levels of living standards arose from harsh war-time policies, “resentment against the state ... was also exacerbated because of the state’s secularist policies” writes Zurcher (2005, p. 207). “Especially the suppression of expressions of popular faith severed the most important ideological bond between state and subject” (Zurcher, 2005, p. 207).

As a matter of fact, the regime had never been popular with the masses. Kemalist reforms were far from being internalized by the majority. Particularly, in rural areas and small provincial towns, a conservative, strongly religious worldview was still widespread among the population that had hardly been touched by the Kemalist cultural revolution (Sunier et al., 2011, p. 12; Mardin, 1989). Therefore, Kemalists failed to mobilize masses into the project of modernity. “Altogether, the Kemalists had a fine understanding of regulation”, as Mardin notes “but they missed the revolutionary-mobilizational aspect that, in certain contemporary schemes of modernization, mobilized masses are needed for a reconstructing of society” (Mardin, 1973, p. 25).

c) Şüphesiz bilirim bildiririm Tanrının elçisidir Muhammed d)Haydi namaza e) Haydi felaha f) Namaz uykudan hayırlıdır g) Tanrı uludur h) Tanrıdan başka yoktur tapacak (Jaschke, 1972, p. 45).

On 1 November 1945 in his speech at the opening of parliamentary year, İsmet İnönü, Mustafa Kemal's successor, gave the first signals of a change in the political system by declaring that the unique shortcoming of the Turkish political system was the lack of an opposition party. The first free and direct elections were scheduled for 1947 (Zurcher, 2005, p. 211; for a chronological list of Turkish governments, see Appendix C).

When Turkey made a shift to a multi-party democracy, it immediately had implications for the relationship between the state and Islam. Competition for electoral support became a matter of great significance. In their election campaigns, the parties were faced with requests to support Islamic activities and soften secularist limitations. In this sense, Islam turned into an important electoral issue (Sunier, et al, 2011, p.12). From 1945 to 1950, 23 new parties emerged in total, most of which had conservatives themes in their party programs and guidelines to soften the pressure on religion. The first opposition party was founded by Nuri Demirağ, Hüseyin Avni Ulaş and Cevat Rifat Atilhan on 18 July 1945 under the name "National Development Party" (*Milli Kalkınma Partisi*). The MKP's party program contained explicit Islamic orientations; as such it called for a union in the Islamic world and promised foundation of a university on technology and morality (Çakır & Bozan, 2005, p. 56).

The real breakthrough came a little later when Celal Bayar, Adnan Menderes, Refik Koraltan, and Fuad Koprülü¹³ left their posts from the CHP and officially

¹³ Celal Bayar had served as the Prime Minister under Atatürk during 1937 and 1938. Adnan Menderes was young lawyer and landlord of a large farm in western Anatolia. Refik Koraltan was a veteran of the War of Independence. Fuad Koprulu was a history professor from an Ottoman family, whose line had a number of famous and influential Grand Viziers. On 7 June 1945, these four prominent members of the CHP signed a proposal, known as Proposal of the Four (*Dörtlü Tahrir*), which stirred the party group in the TGNA. In the proposal the signatories were basically demanding

established the Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti, DP*) on 7 January 1946 (Zurcher, 2005, p. 212). The Democratic Party had emerged as the champion of “the people” (Kalaycıoğlu, 2005, p. 89). Its program and election campaigns severely criticized stiff bureaucratic rule of the CHP and promised more democracy, liberalization both economic and political, in particular the relaxation of laicism and greater freedom for religious expression. Because of the Democrat Party’s appeal to Islam and traditional rural values, for Mardin, the DP represented the “democratic periphery”, whereas for its firm preservation of Kemalist status-quo, the CHP represented “the bureaucratic center” (Mardin, 1973, p. 30).

As a result of the electoral competition and overall changes in the political climate, there was a moderation of radical laicist policies and hence a remarkable degree of relaxation of control over religion. After the transition to multi-party politics, religion also became an issue within the ruling Republican People’s Party. Agenda of the Seventh Congress of the party was a reflection of a religiously different climate. Laicism was the dominant issue on the agenda (Çakır & Bozan, 2004, p. 56). During the conference various deputies underlined the importance of religion and leveled criticisms against the radical secularist policies of the 1920s and 1930s. For instance for the deputy of Seyhan, Sinan Tekelioglu “nations without religion can not survive ... this has been already proved and demonstrated by history ... nations without religion have no fear, for a nation to survive there must be something to be frightened of”. The deputy of Kayseri, Sükrü Nayman stated, “Today’s need is the spiritual need that the Turkish nation and youth have longed

from government to end the extraordinary measures taken during the war and provide more political and economic liberty. In response, the government asked their defence, or be disciplined by the party. Since their explanations were found unsatisfactory Menderes, Koraltan, and Koprulu were expelled from the party in 1945. Soon in the same year, Bayar also resigned from his post (Kalaycıoğlu, 2005, p. 69).

for” (as cited in Gözaydın, 2009, p. 250). At the congress, CHP leadership took a series of consequential decisions regarding religion, such as reopening sacred tombs for visit, integrating an optional course on religion and ethics into primary schools’ curriculum, inserting an article on the necessity of religious education into the party program, and reopening Imam-Hatip schools (Toprak, 1981, p. 79).

Following the congress, CHP abandoned its former militant laicism and became more tolerant of religion. For instance in 1947, foreign currency were supplied for the citizens who would go on pilgrimage (*Hajj*), in 1949 legal regulations were made to open a divinity faculty at Ankara University, and first Imam-Hatip training courses were opened in Istanbul and Ankara, later sprung up in various cities. Same year also witnessed the introduction of religious instruction into primary schools’ curricula. Parents need to make a signed application for students, who would participate in these classes that were scheduled for Saturdays (Tarhanlı, 1993, pp. 23-24). The overwhelming majority did. As Jaschke reported that the percentage of parents in Istanbul who requested their children’s participation to these courses was 93 per cent, whereas it amounted to 100 per cent in rural areas (Jaschke, 1972, p. 92). Besides, the textbook of the course was prepared after a thorough investigation by a joint committee composed of the representatives from the Ministry of Education and the Presidency of Religious Affairs. Lewis wrote that this book was presenting such a modernized understanding of Islam that Muslims in, say, Mecca or Damascus would have some difficulty in recognizing their own religion (Lewis, 1952, p.41). Moreover, in 1950 tombs of “great Turks” and “tombs with an artistic value” were allowed to reopen (Çakır & Bozan, 2005, p. 58).

The appointment of Şemsettin Günaltay as the Prime Minister on 16 January 1949 was also an indication of CHP’s tolerant policy on religion. A medrese

graduate and a professor in Islamic studies, Günaltay was known for his conservative worldview¹⁴.

2.2.1 Changes in the organizational structure of the Presidency of Religious Affairs during the late Republican period

Such a political environment had mirror effects on the policies regarding the Presidency of Religious Affairs. The Günaltay government changed considerably the organization of the Diyanet, with the Act No. 5634 legislated on 29 April 1950. Gözaydın wrote that the change in political climate was particularly evident in speeches of some deputies at parliamentary discussions took place during the enactment of this law, where they expressed their pleasure for the positive changes in religious organization and its personnel¹⁵. Comparing the attitude during these proceedings to those related with previous related laws, Gözaydın observed that “previous debates were generally just votes on the proposed regulations ... the statement ‘necessity and need reflected by continuous applications and dictated requests in party congresses’ in the preamble of Act no. 5634 was another indication of the same change in climate” (Gözaydın, 2008a, p. 220). With this law, the management of the mosques and worship place, which had been previously transferred to the Directorate-General for Foundations, was transferred back to the Diyanet. This regulation boosted the institution’s prestige (Sunier et al, 2011, p. 13).

¹⁴ Mehmet Akif Ersoy had praised Günaltay by calling him as “Benim Şemseddin’im” -My Semseddin (Gün, 2001, p. 125). Besides, the editor of the most influential Islamist journal of the time - *Sebilürreşad*, complained about the CHP to Günaltay by writing that “May Allah make you the benevolent guide, who would bring about liberties and joy to this miserable nation. Do not ever fear. Let the cry ‘Allahu Ekber’ be uttered from the minares,. Break and shatter the chains that hinders your faith . . . Sooner or later the pressures over the nation’s religion will end. I hope that you are predestined to this victory by Allah”. See Esref E. (1949). Günaltay’ın başkanlığı ve akisleri [Günaltay’s presidency and its consequences]. *Sabilürreşad* II, 29, p. 57.

¹⁵ For speeches by the Seyhan deputy Sinan Tekelioğlu and Erzurum deputy Vehbi Kocagüney see TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi [TGNA proceedings]. (1950). VII, 25, p.838.

Several new units such as the Department of Publications were established; new cadres were added as well. Moreover, the name “*Reislik*” was changed to “*Başkanlık*” which reflected attempts to purify Turkish language from the Ottoman words.

2.2.2 The Democrat Party episode and its policies in religious area

The elections held on 14 May 1950 put an end to the CHP’s single-party rule that had lasted for 27 years. The opposition party, under the leadership of Adnan Menderes won a landslide victory by obtaining 52.7 per cent of votes. Since “they ended an era and ousted the most vehement political force in Turkey until that time from power without any violence, the [elections] of 1950 have been referred to as the ‘White Revolution’ in Turkish politics” (Kalaycıoğlu 1997, p.181).

The Democrats showed sensitivity to the needs and perceptions of people other than the urban elite. Moreover, they had secured the electoral backing of religious brotherhoods such as the *Nurcus*¹⁶ during the elections. It has been argued that relaxation of secularist policies with the transition to multi-party politics, together with the massive urbanization of Turkey in the 1950s, made Islam much prominent. Turkish scholars interpreted this resurgence of Islam, as traditional culture of mass of the population that had been long suppressed and reasserting its

¹⁶ Nurcus were followers of Said Nursi (1876-1960) a Kurdish Nakşibendi preacher, whose movement split up into various branches after his death. For a detailed study of Said Nursi see Mardin, Ş. (1989) *Religion and Change in Modern Turkey, The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, New York: State University of New York Press.

right to express itself (Zurcher, 2005, p. 234). For instance, in Mardin's view, there had been a return to "Folk Islam"¹⁷ in the post-1940s Turkey (Mardin, 1990).

As a matter of fact, religion and religious freedoms were high on the agenda of the Democrat Party. Celal Bayar explained the understanding of laicism in party's program as follows;

Our party understands laicism (*laiklik*) as state's indifference to religion, and the lack of religious influence in legislation of laws and their implementation. It recognizes freedom of religion as sacred (*mukaddes*) rights of people, as well as others. The use of religion as an instrument for politics, its involvement in political affairs, negative propagation against other religions... should never be tolerated. (Jaschke, 1972, p. 98)

After they had come to power, the Democrats pursued actively radical policies in the religious area, making concessions to the feeling of the Muslim population (Zurcher, 2005: 233). The ban on the recitation of the call to prayer in Arabic language was lifted on 16 June 1950. As religious education in schools was expanded, more training programs for imams and preachers were encouraged. The sale of religious literature was permitted and broadcastings on Koran were commenced on the state radio. In 1959, an Institute on Islam was established in Istanbul (Çakır & Bozan, 2005, p. 60). As the number of religious organizations and Koran courses gradually increased, the DP rule provided entrepreneurship and cultural conditions for building of 15,000 mosques between 1950 and 1960s (Hale, 1981, p. 67). An explosion of religious associational activity also took place. While 7.3 religious associations existed per million inhabitants in 1950, in 1960 this

¹⁷ The distinction between "Orthodox/Official" and "Heterodox/Folk Islam" can be explained best by Bernard Lewis's words "Turkish Islam had always functioned on two levels; the formal, legal, dogmatic religion of the state, the schools and hierarchy; and the popular, mystical, intuitive faith of the masses, which found its chief expressions in the great dervish orders [*tarikats*]" (Lewis, 2002, pp: 404-5). Although religious orders had been outlawed during the Republican period, they persisted beneath the surface, especially in Anatolia.

number escalated to 184, unequaled by any other class or community associations (Tursan, 2004, p. 65). Hence, the democracy experience brought about a backlash against laicism that was the core of Kemalist modernization project.

Increase in the public visibility of Islam had implications for the Diyanet. For instance, Yavuz wrote that “*Süleymancı*”¹⁸ preachers had dominated different levels of the Diyanet until the enactment of No. 633, which ruled that only graduates of İmam Hatip and Divinity schools were to be employed at the Diyanet” (Yavuz, 2003, p. 146). On the other hand, the DP government did not make any noteworthy modifications in the structure of the Diyanet. As Zürcher points out, “the Democrats did not end the integration of the religious establishment into the bureaucracy ... and every preacher remained a civil servant”. (Zürcher, 2005, p. 234) The organizational and personnel structure of the PRA, introduced in 1950 by Act no. 5634, was preserved until 1965 (Gözaydın, 2008a). However, it should be noted that the budget of the institution increased considerably throughout the DP rule (Sarıbay, 1991, p. 128).

At the beginning of electoral competition, the DP had been supported positively by various sectors within society. By the end of the 1950s however, its support decreased considerably. Its hesitant economic policies in the late 1950s; its resort to repressive measures against the opposition; and its cultural policies, which encouraged the religious revival led to widespread disillusion with DP rule among the workers, intelligentsia, and the bureaucracy (Tursan, 2004, p. 66). Among the state bureaucracy, the military officials were probably the most discontented. Their living standards and social prestige were sliding down rapidly during the DP rule.

¹⁸ Süleymancı are the followers of the Naksibendi Sheik Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan (1888-1959). For further information see Yavuz, H. (2003). *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp: 145-149.

The Democrats, however, did not seem to bother, as they believed that they secured the loyalty of the top brass of the military. When “young officers’ coup” became successful on 27 May 1960, the DP government was not only ousted, but also the entire cabinet and the DP deputies of the TGNA, and the commanders of the armed forces, including the Chief of General Staff were arrested and tried (Kalaycıoğlu, 2005, p. 85). The military announced that power was now in the hands of a “National Unity Committee” (*Milli Birlik Komitesi*) headed by General Cemal Gürsel, a former commander-in-chief of the land of forces, who had been previously sent on permanent leave after writing a memorandum to the minister of defense on the political situation. The day after the coup Cemal Gürsel had been appointed head of the state, prime minister and minister of defiance (Zurcher, 2005, p. 242).

2.2.3 1961 Constitution and transformation of the Diyanet into an “ideological tool” According to the military more was needed than a simple change of government. On the day of the military coup, a commission of law professors, headed by Sıddık Sami Onar, was given the task of drawing up a new constitution. The text of the constitution was finalized by a constituent assembly that consisted of two chambers, an upper house-the NUC- and a lower house consisting of 272 representatives of remaining political parties - Republican People’s Party and Republican Peasants’ Nation Party (Zurcher, 2005, p. 245).

Akan’s study of the parliamentary records reveals that the position of the Diyanet was a one of the pivotal themes during the discussions at the 1961 Constitutive Assembly. For Akan, the writing of 1961 constitution, constituted as one of the “the critical junctures” where defenders of *laiklik* have renegotiated its terms. However, Akan asserts this critical juncture did not result in a major

institutional change to *laiklik* away from its original formulation “... the central institution concerning laiklik, the Presidency of Religious Affairs, stayed intact, the paragraph of the article on religious freedom explicitly giving a role to the state in building infrastructure for minority as well as majority religion was removed, and public schools continued to offer Sunnite Islam-based optional courses on religion and ethics” (Akan, 2011, p. 207).

After the adoption of the 1961 constitution, a draft bill related to the organization was proposed to the Parliament, which caused lengthy and intense discussions among the deputies. Act no. 633 on the Organization and Duties of the Presidency of Religious Affairs that came into effect on 15 August 1965, in Gözaydın’s view, was an indication of a different mentality compared to that of the founding elite (Gözaydın, 2008a, p. 220). With this regulation, Presidency of Religious Affairs attained a constitutional status for the first time. Duties of the institution were stated as “to carry out affairs related to the beliefs, prayers and moral foundations of Islam, to enlighten society about religion and to manage places of prayer”. However, Gözaydın suggests, this regulation turned the PRA into an ideological tool:

To create an administrative body to offer services to meet the general and daily needs of practicing Islam may be justifiable as ‘public service’ where about 95 per cent of the population belongs to Islam; however to assign to this organization a function ‘to carry out affairs related to moral foundations’ whose content is legally ambiguous, indicated that the state preferred to use the organization as an *ideological tool* [emphasis added] in a manner different from the original intent of the founding elite. Such a wording ... reveals that the state’s choice of propagating and protecting a particular religion is completely incompatible with the notion of a secular state. Although one may assume that the legal legislators of the 1960s aimed to correct the Kemalist mistake of not adequately recognizing the role of Islam in the formation of Turkish individuals’ identity, the legal inappropriateness of such a regulation is obvious. (Gözaydın, 2006, p. 10)

After transition to democratic politics in 1961, Süleyman Demirel's¹⁹ Justice Party (AP) managed to attract the majority of Democrat Party's former supporters. Policies regarding to Islam remained largely similar to those of the DP. Demirel continuously stated that although the state should be secular, this should not imply that the individual should be non-religious. Islam was regarded as a moral code that provided strength to Turkish society (Sunier et al, 2011, p. 14). After the AP came to power in the 1965 elections, the Presidency of Religious Affairs received 1.15% of the total state budget. In comparative perspective, this meant a dramatic increase in the size of the PRA's budget. One year later, 1.89% of the state budget was spared for the PRA. Tarhanlı underlined the fact that this had hitherto been the highest share in institution's history (Tarhanlı, 1993, p. 138). Parliamentary records of the year 1965 demonstrate that all political parties compromised on the need to increase financial sources available for religious affairs and religious personnel. Deputies representing different parties spoke about the significance of religion in society, expressed the necessity of increasing the living standards of religious personnel, and stressed the significance of religious freedoms (Tarhanlı, 1993, pp. 138-9). These developments unveil the interconnections between politics and the Presidency of Religious Affairs and how the latter has been deeply influenced by the former.

The new constitution was more liberal than the old one in the sense that it tolerated a wider spectrum of political activity than before, both to the left and to the

¹⁹ Süleyman Demirel (1924-) studied civil engineering at Istanbul Technical University. His political career started with his election to the executive board of the Justice Party, whose chairman he became in 1964. Under his leadership, the AP won majority of the votes in the elections of 10 October 1965 and formed a majority government. As deputy from Isparta, Demirel thus became the youngest Prime Minister in Turkish history. Following the coup of 12 September 1980, he was banned from involvement in active politics for ten years. In 1987 he established True Path Party, TPP (*Doğru Yol Partisi, DYP*), he became prime minister again in 1991. On 16 May 1993, he was elected the President by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. His term of office ended in 2000 (Palmowski, 2004, p. 172).

right (Zurcher, 2005, p. 246). It designated freedom of religion in detail; it explicitly adopted the rights to worship, religious education, and religious expression. Islamic movements benefited from the greater political freedom under the new constitution. Consequently, the decade witnessed the rise of explicitly Islamist movements, whose political outlooks were based on Islamic principles (Sunier et al, 201, p. 14). Furthermore, in the Cold environment, politicians with more conservative orientations viewed Islamic norms and values, as a panacea for the threats of communism and socialism. This provided a fertile ground for religious movements to become strengthened and more integrated into the mainstream of Turkish politics (Yavuz, 2003, p. 62).

2.2.4 Sociopolitical context during the 1970s and the Presidency of Religious Affairs

During the 1960s and 1970s most political parties showed a greater interest in Islam, in order to catch votes. This could be considered as an outcome of democratization process in Turkey that had been ongoing since 1946. However, more significant development was the gradual change of Islam's place in society:

Whether political parties can be depicted as 'real Islamist' or just as 'using Islamic rhetoric' to attract voters is not relevant in this case; it is clear that the social reallocation of Islam caused a reconfiguration of political landscape. The concept of 'laik', secular as it was coined by the early Kemalists to denote Turkish secularism became a rallying point in the process of the 1960s and 1970s. (Sunier et al., 2011, pp. 14-15)

In 1970, Turkey's first pro-Islamic political party, National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*, MNP) - was established by Necmettin Erbakan²⁰. He criticized Demirel and

²⁰ Necmettin Erbakan was a professor of Mechanical Engineering at the Istanbul Technical University. In 1969, he was elected to president of the Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

the AP for being subservient to big business, and especially foreign capital. He denounced the AP for being an instrument of Freemasons and Zionists that had turned its back on Islam (Zurcher, 2005, p. 257). Two months after the military coup of March 12, 1971, the constitutional court banned the MNP, claiming that the party wanted to undermine secular principles of the state and institute an Islamic order. Erbakan, fled to Switzerland and stayed there until 1972. In 1973 Erbakan became the leader of a new party, National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*, MSP), in which religious brotherhoods particularly *Nakşibendi* order played an important role (Yavuz, 1997, p. 66). Erbakan made himself particularly the voice of Islamically sensitive small businessmen, who considered themselves victims because of the pro-industrialist and state-centric economic policies of larger parties. “He appealed to this class with a very specific moral discourse, which was a mixture of global anxiety, national pride, and Islamic morality” (Sunier et al., 2011, p. 15).

Since 1973, the ideology of Erbakan’s party was referred to as “National Outlook” (*Milli Görüş*). Its manifesto included Islamist idioms, such as an emphasis on ethics and morality in education and upbringing, fight against nepotism and corruption, a just Islamic economic order, an interest-free banking system, and end to Western influence over Turkey²¹. The party manifesto surprisingly included an emphasis on secularism. However, this interpretation of secularism was quite different than the Kemalist laicism. What was meant by secularism was complete freedom of religion and putting an end to state intervention. “The Kemalist notion of

The same year he left the AP and was elected to the parliament as an independent member for Konya, the stronghold of religious conservatism in Turkey (Zurcher, 2005, p. 257).

²¹ For a detailed analysis of the National Outlook, see Atacan, F. (2005). Explaining religious politics at the crossroad: AKP-SP. *Turkish Studies*, 6(2), 187-199.

secularism was rejected as the ‘dictatorship of the non-believers’” (Sunier et al., 2011, p. 16).

Despite his bitter discourse on mainstream parties’ policies, Erbakan never hesitated to cooperate with these parties in order to gain more political power. In 1973 elections, by receiving 11.8% of the vote, Erbakan’s MSP became the third party in the parliament. By signing a protocol with the CHP, which failed to gain absolute majority, Erbakan made his party a partner of the coalition government on 14 January 1974. The MSP managed to take seven out of twenty five ministries, including the state ministry, which was responsible for the Presidency of Religious Affairs. The MSP participated in three coalition governments between 1973 and 1978, with Necmettin Erbakan as deputy prime minister, permitting the spread of Islamists throughout the state cadres.

An interview held with Tayyar Altıkulaç²², who was then Vice-President of the Diyanet, revealed how Erbakan sought to use the PRA as a means to promote his party ideology. Altıkulaç stressed that they were at odds with Erbakan. Altıkulaç declared that in one of his visits to the Diyanet, Erbakan demanded imams to read verses and hadiths in the first five minutes during sermons and spend the rest forty-five minutes to describe the National Outlook ideology. He asked them to mobilize congregation’s support for the MSP, without openly calling the party name. “I found this somewhat improper. Actually we could not get along with Erbakan and his team. We could tell our problems to the generals but we could not tell them to Erbakan” (Başaran, 2011, own translation).

²² Tayyar Altıkulaç served as Vice-President of the Presidency of Religious Affairs from 1971 to 1978. In 1978 he became the 13th President of the PRA. He served as president during the 1980 military junta. After resigning from his post in 1986, he entered into politics from the True Path Party (TPP). In 1995 he was elected into the parliament as the deputy of Istanbul. (Başaran, 2011).

However, CHP-MSP coalition was short-lived, due to the ideological incompatibility between two parties. After the dissolution of the coalition government on 18 September 1974 and a short experience of a technocrats' rule until 13 March, Demirel formed the right-wing "Nationalist Front" (*Milliyetçi Cephe*), by allying with the MSP as well as Alparslan Türkeş's²³ Nationalist Movement Party. During the World Islamic Summit, which took place in Istanbul on 12-15 May 1976, fifteen deputies from the NSP performed prayer (*namaz*) in Hagia Sophia. This raised a controversy on the issue of conversion Hagia Sophia into a mosque again. Yet, the AP, which was keeping the Ministry of Culture at hand prevented such a change (Tarhanlı, 1993, pp. 33-34). The MSP gained relatively greater share of votes at the early elections held on 5 January 1977. As a result, it returned to power in the so-called "Second Nationalist Front" (*İkinci Milliyetçi Cephe*). When the coalition broke apart on 31 December 1977, and the government headed by Ecevit received a vote of confidence, the MSP turned into a party of opposition, for the first time since 1973.

The political environment of the 1960s and 1970s had mirror effects on the Presidency of Religious Affairs. The institution started to receive a greater interest by the politicians. This was particularly evident in the official visits made by the top ranked statesmen to the institution. On 19 April 1967, the PRA was visited for the first time by the president of the Republic – Cemal Gürsel. President Fahri

²³ Alparslan Türkeş (1917-1997) was born in Cyprus. He was a graduate of Military Academy. Turkes was one of the most main organizers of the 1960 coup against the Menderes government. He served as the adviser to the President Gursel. However, Colonel Turkes was later ousted from the Natinal Unity Committee. He later joined the Republican Peasants' Nation Party (RPNP) and was elected its chairman. The party was renamed the Nationalist Action Party in 1969 (Zurcher, 2005, p. 405).

Korutürk²⁴ followed his suit by visiting the office of President two times; first on 31 May 1976, and second on 5 June 1979. The very first prime minister, who paid an official visit to the institution was Bülent Ecevit²⁵. On 1 September 1978, Ecevit visited Tayyar Altıkulaç, who then became the President of the PRA, in his office. Later, on 29 January 1980 Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel visited Altikulac to celebrate the prophet Muhammed's birth, *Mevlid Kandili*. In the aftermath of 1980, the frequency of visits paid by presidents and prime ministers have relatively increased (Çakır & Bozan, 2005, p. 65).

In 1975, the Parliament passed a new law that would alter the existing system regarding religious affairs to a great extent. New legislation titled Act No. 1893 was sent to the president for ratification on 6 May 1975 (Gözaydın, 2008a, p. 220). However, president Korutürk refused to ratify the new legislation and sent it back to the parliament to be reviewed again. The parliament enacted the regulations with the title, Act No. 1982 and sent it to the president on 30 April 1976. However, the president regarded this as a new law, since certain changes had been made “beyond the scope of the stated reasons for the rejection of Act No. 1893. Therefore, [he] sent back to the Parliament on 7 May to be reviewed again” (Gözaydın, 2008a, p. 221). When his demand was rejected by the parliament, Korutürk fielded a case against Act No. 1982. On 30 April 1977, the Constitutional Court decided that the enactment was against constitution in form and it was required to be revised one year later.

²⁴ Fahri Korutürk (1903-1987) was a graduate of High Naval Academy and was the chief of naval staff. After his retirement in 1960, he held several diplomatic positions (Gözaydın, 2008a). In 1968 he got elected as a member of the Senate. In 1973 he was elected as the sixth president of the Republic of Turkey (Zurcher, 2005, p. 396).

²⁵ Bülent Ecevit (1925-2006) studied journalism and politics in the USA. Ecevit was elected into the Turkish parliament for the first time in 1957. He served as labour minister in İnönü's coalition cabinets of 1961-65. He became the leader of Republican People's Party (CHP) after İnönü. He was banned from politics in 1980. Later he led the Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti, DSP*) (Zurcher, 2005, p. 389). He had served as Prime Minister of Turkey four times.

However, this had never happened and the legal domain was regulated by cabinet decrees and other administrative regulations, which rendered the Diyanet without proper regulations for over 35 years. Thus Gözaydın writes “the PRA can be defined as a legal oddity that continues to exist as a very powerful administrative unit despite its lack of a technically legal basis” (Gözaydın, 2008a , p. 221).

The 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran in January 1979 encouraged the MSP as well as other Islamist groups. They were increasingly visible and on 6 September 1980 they held a mass demonstration in Konya, during which they called for a return to *şeriat*, the holy Islamic law, by slogans such as “Either Seriat or Death” (*Ya Şeriat Ya Ölüm*), and “Law is Islam, Constitution is Koran” (*Şeriat İslam, Anayasa Kuran*). The fundamentalist threat, as well as a combination of other motives, including politicians’ inability to run the country effectively, social unrest caused by street violence between the leftist and rightist groups, economic crisis, Kurdish separatism, and sectarian terror led the armed forces to take over political power again on 12 September 1980 (Zurcher, 2005, pp. 261-9). On the morning of 12 September, through radio military junta announced that strong measures would be taken against “fundamentalism and other perverted ideologies” (Tarhanlı, 1993, p. 35). Immediately after the coup the MSP was closed and banned due to its anti-secularist activities.

In sum, the shift to multi-party politics in 1946 marked the beginning of a new era in terms of state-religion relations in Turkey. As Turkey has progressed democratically, Islam has been politicized increasingly and it has gained greater public visibility. From 1950 to 1980, there had been considerable degree of moderation of the Kemalist secularism and relaxation of control over religion. The Presidency of Religious Affairs, which was originally designed to promote a “state

Islam” that would be compatible the requirements of modernity project, has been influenced by the changing dynamics between the state and religion. The 1980 coup constituted a new important turning point with respect to the relations between the state and Islam, which had significant consequences on the role and functions of the Diyanet. The following subchapters throw light upon the post-1980 political environment and the changes with respect to the Diyanet.

2.3 The 1980s and 1990s: Revival of Islam

2.3.1 The 1980 military coup and top-down Islamization

The beginning of the third phase with respect to the relations between the Turkish state and religion was marked by the third military coup of the Turkish political history. In the face of growing political violence and social unrest, a junta led by the chief of staff General Kenan Evren, the son of an imam, took control in 1980 (Sunier et al., 2011, p. 16). Immediately afterwards, the parliament was dissolved and a state of emergency was declared throughout the country. Not only all political parties were officially abolished, but also their leaders were arrested. The junta monopolized whole political power. On 14 September 1980 Kenan Evren was officially declared as the head of the state. A week later, a 27-member cabinet under retired admiral Bulent Ulusu was appointed. (Zurcher, 2005, p. 278). In the meantime, as Zurcher writes, a huge wave of arrests took place in the country. In the first six weeks after the coup 11,500 people were arrested, by the end of the 1980 the number had grown to 30,000 and after one year the total number of arrests reached 122, 600 (Zurcher, 2005, p. 279).

The growth of anti-system ideologies such as Marxism - Leninism and fascism during the 1970s and anarchy incurred by their fanatics turned the country almost into a “Hobbesian state of nature”. In order to contain political and social unrest, the leaders of the military coup sought to uproot the competing anti-system ideologies from the political arena (Tank, 2005, p. 10). To fill the vacuum that occurred after the oppression of these ideologies, ironically they formulated so-called “Turkish-Islamic Synthesis”, fusing Turkish nationalism with Islamic identity. The Turkish-Islamic synthesis emphasized military values, religious norms and the primacy of family²⁶. Through the Islamization of society, generals sought to engineer “a more homogenous and less political Islamic community” (Yavuz, 1997, pp. 67-8). Therefore, generals took an utilitarian approach to religion. Islam was promoted for its instrumental value as it was considered as a bulwark against harmful ideologies and as unifying cement for fragmented and polarized society. However, the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, as Poulton points out, was in sharp contrast with the original Kemalist formulation for the basis of state (1997, p. 178). Toprak interpreted this new ideology as redefinition of radical republican secularism that enabled greater tolerance of the secular state towards Islam:

This state engineering of religio-cultural values to the extent that it was designed to recreate a unified community of believers with a strong sense of national rather than individual goals ... open the arena for Islamic movement to flourish not only by redefinition of radical republican secularism, but also by providing it with a *tabula rasa* of social organization. (Toprak, 1991, p.155)

²⁶ For a discussion of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, see Toprak, B. (1990) Religion as State Ideology in a Secular Setting: The Turkish-Islamic Synthesis, in Malcom Wagstaff (Ed.). *Aspects of Religions in Secular Turkey*. Durham, England: Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies.

Parallel to this new ideology, generals took several steps strengthening religion. Turgut Özal, who was a successful conservative bureaucrat, was appointed as vice-president. Özal was known to have connections with the *Nakşibendi* order and he had been once a candidate from the MSP for parliamentary elections (Zurcher, 2005, p. 283). Meanwhile, a new law on Higher Education was adopted in November 1981, which aimed to purge all socialist and Marxist scholars from universities and provide the dominance of the nationalist-conservatives, who would safeguard the ideology of military regime (Ahmad, 1999, p. 219). The generals also gave importance to building good relations with the Islamic world. In 1982, Turkey was represented for the first time by its prime minister at the Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (Kuru, 2009, p. 229)

A new constitution was drawn up by a committee that had been appointed by the military. The constitution was subjected to a referendum on 7 November 1982, which yielded a “yes” vote of 91.4% (Zurcher, 2005, p. 281). The foremost novelty with respect to religion introduced by the 1982 Constitution was, compulsory “religious and moral education” mentioned under Article 24 titled “Freedom of religion and conscience” (Tarhanlı, 1993, p. 35). This religious teaching, however, was exclusively Sunni in content, and patriotism, love for parents; the state and army were presented as religious duty (Zurcher, 2005, p. 288). Evren who had often declared his firm “loyalty to laicism and opposition against fundamentalism” announced government’s decision to introduce compulsory religious instruction in primary and secondary level schools by stating that “This will enable our children to receive religious education through official channels... This is not against laicism” (Cohen, 1981). Thus as Tank rightly puts, an inconsistent message emerged from the state regarding religion during the military rule:

On the one hand Kemalist ideology as expressed in the Constitution declared Turkey a secular state. On the other hand ... religion has been utilized to reinforce Turkish nationalism and re-establish social order. The state's utilitarian approach to religion indicates that it understands religion as a "tool" that paradoxically can be used either to secure or endanger the state. (Tank, 2005, p. 11)

2.3.2 Instrumentalization of the Presidency of Religious Affairs for dissemination of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis

The 1982 constitution mentioned the Presidency of Religious Affairs within the "Executive" chapter. Under the new constitution, the PRA remained just as tied to the state as before. It was stated that the underlying reason of not making any modification in its status was institution's placement within the general administration since its foundation. However, unlike the 1961 Constitution, Article 136 of the 1982 Constitution set the goal of the PRA as "promoting and consolidating national solidarity and unity", in line with the principle of *laiklik* and by remaining out of all political views (Gözaydin, 2008a, p. 223). This task clearly reflected state's new ideology promoting the close ties between Islam and Turkish nationalism. The Law numbered 2820 in the Political Parties passed on 22 April 1983, further consolidated the place of the PRA. The law prohibited political parties from pursuing goals against Article 136 of the Constitution (Gözaydin, 2009, p. 47).

For the leaders of the coup, the PRA was a good instrument for dissemination of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis to society; and hence production of a unified harmonious state. As Yavuz claims, the PRA evoked Turkish nationalism to open more space to religion. For instance, in 1981 a new department named *İrşad Dairesi* was established in order to struggle with Kurdish nationalism in Southeast Turkey. Since then, numerous conferences and lectures were held by this department to

enlighten the people of the region about the dangers of the PKK (Kurdish Workers' Party) and its Marxist-nationalist ideology (Yavuz, 1997, p. 69).

An interview held with Tayyar Altıkulaç, who served as the President of the PRA during the military junta, exposed close relations between the PRA and leaders of the coup. He praised President Evren by stating that:

The best characteristic of General Evren was that you could argue with him. At first he would oppose, later he would be convinced. But you had to be honest and clear to him... As the Diyanet, we always tried to express our opposition concerning the matters that were not acceptable. Our objections were mostly considered reasonable... I had lived problems with generals, yet I could discuss all of them. (as cited from Başaran, 2011; see Appendix D, 1)

To give an example, Altıkulaç told that the Council of Ministers had attempted to restrict Islamic pilgrimage by putting a limit on the number of people that could make pilgrimage. This regulation would also prohibit people who were younger than age 30, and older than age 65 from going on *hac*. Altıkulaç described how he could manage to cancel the regulation by the Council of Ministers by talking to Evren and explaining his concerns (as cited from Başaran, 2011). He further noted that he informed Prime Minister Bülend Ulusu when the deputy governor in a province in Sinop asked a 65 year-old imam to shave off his beard. "He [Ulusu] was very upset. He made a secret phone call and ordered that religious personnel should not be interfered" (as cited from Başaran, 2011, own translation). Consequently under generals' command, imams were provided with certain privileges, and a regulation on the dress codes of religious personnel was prepared.

According to Tarhanlı, since the 1980s, in line with the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, Turkey has gone through "a state-led Islamization process", in which Presidency of Religious Affairs has been instrumentalized (Tarhanlı, 1993, p. 185). As a result of such political milieu, Diyanet bureaucracy expanded: staff membership

grew from 50,765 in 1979 to 84,172 in ten years time (Poulton, 1997, pp. 185-7; Sunier et al., 2011, p. 17). Its budget became 232 billion lira or roughly 115 million dollar (Ahmad, 1999, p. 257). The decade also saw a substantial increase in the number of mosques in the country. From 1981 to 1990 the total number of mosques rose from 47,645 to 66,000²⁷. The number of imam-hatip schools and Koran courses increased rapidly. Before the 1980 coup, the number of Koran courses was 2,610, while it became 4,715 after the coup. The number of students enrolled in these courses rose from 68,486 to 155,403. A tremendous increase occurred in the number of people who went on Islamic pilgrimage. In 1979 the number of people who made pilgrimage was 10,805 while it was reported 92,006 in 1988 (Ahmad, 1999, pp. 257-8).

As the Turkish-Islamic synthesis was turning into the unofficial state ideology in the post-1980 period, the Diyanet officials were encouraged to refer Islamic identity in their discourses as the cement of national unity of Turks at home as well as those living abroad (Landman, 1997, pp. 222-4). In this period the Diyanet also began to be actively involved in Europe. The staff working in Europe was only 20 in 1980; however it turned to 628 in 1989 (Sunier et al., 2011, p. 17). In 1985 the Diyanet started to export imams to European countries through a special funding program provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, so-called “Fund for Advertising Turkish Cultural Heritage Abroad” (*Yurtdışında Türk Kültür Varlığını Tanıtma Fonu*). In the same year a special branch within the Diyanet, the Bureau of Religious Affairs (*Din İşleri Dairesi*), was formed to be in charge of Turkish immigrants. Thanks to the financial and administrative power it has enjoyed,

²⁷ This increase in the construction of new mosques becomes more meaningful if one compares these numbers with those of the previous decade. From 1971 to 1981, the number of mosques rose from 42,744 only to 47,645.

“Diyanet came to supervise the largest Turkish network of mosques in Europe”²⁸

(Çitak, 2010, p. 626). Çitak argued that, since the early 1980s, the Turkish state has used Diyanet as an instrument of foreign policy, in influencing and controlling the Turkish immigrants. But also, through the Diyanet, Turkish state aims to promote “Turkish Islam” – compatible with modernity and secularism - as a model for Muslims in Europe (Çitak, 2010, p. 620).

By providing such a fertile ground for the Islamic groups and religious networks to operate, “military leaders were in part responsible for the Islamic revival” in the aftermath of 1980 (Tank, 2005, p. 10). Islamic periphery, which had been silenced and left out of the political center, was now being integrated and co-opted by the secular state with an accelerated pace (Toprak, 1995, p. 95). From 1984 onwards, press continuously drew attention to the growth of Islamic movements as manifested in the construction of new mosques; the enormous growth in the number of imam-hatip schools, whose graduates were now permitted to enter university; the growing religious content of school books and of the state-controlled radio and television; dramatic rise in the number of Islamic associations, as well as publications (Zurcher, 2005, p. 289).

2.3.3 The Motherland Party and expansion of the Presidency of Religious Affairs

In 1983, the military junta allowed only three parties to participate in the elections: the Nationalist Democratic Party (*Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi*, MDP), Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*, ANAP) and Populist Party (*Halkçı Parti*). Even though the

²⁸ When Diyanet joined the European religious market in early 1980s, it was a latecomer. The market had been hitherto dominated by the *National Outlook*, *Süleymancis* and *Nurcus*. However, Süleymancı movement was not very strong, whereas the Nurcus was more active in educational activities. Thus, the National Outlook was the main rival of the Diyanet regarding mosque activity (Çitak, 2010, p. 622).

generals overtly supported the MDP, which was established by a retired general Turgut Sunalp, the Motherland Party won the elections and its leader Özal became the prime minister (Ahmad, 1999, pp. 223-4). After he came to power, Özal pursued liberal policies, which weakened the state monopoly over economic and social life. He replaced import-substitution industrialization with export-led liberal economy. As a pious Muslim, Özal expanded the influence of Islam in society as well. In 1988, he became the first Turkish prime minister, who went on pilgrimage (*hac*). During his premiership (1983-1989) and presidency (1989-1993), he challenged the Kemalists by promoting conservative politicians and bureaucrats, as well as supporting the expansion of imam-hatip schools (Kuru, 2009, p. 230). Özal pursued a policy of Islamizing the educational system. Under his command minister of education, Vehbi Dinçerler, who was known to be a member Nakşibendi order, prepared a curriculum on geography and national history that used the concept *Milli* (national) in religious terms (Yavuz, 1997, p. 69; Toprak, 1988, pp. 131-2).

The embrace of neo-liberal economics under Turgut Özal in the late 1980s and the privatization took place in the 1990s turned out to be a boon for Islamists (Smith, 2005, p. 318). The economic sphere was opened to new companies owned by Islamist entrepreneurs and interest-free Islamic banking system (Yavuz, 1997, p. 70). The shift to free-trade policy and liberal market economy enabled the growth of a new Anatolian bourgeoisie that was conservative in social ideology but liberal in

economic relations. This new bourgeoisie²⁹ was voiced by organizations such as the Association of Independent Businessman (*MÜSIAD*)³⁰.

Throughout the 1990s, Diyanet's staff membership continued to grow. With the council of ministers' decision no. 90/844, 3027 new cadres were added to the institution's provincial organization. The council of ministers enabled the employment of 725 extra cadres with the decree law no. 190, passed on 4 March 1991. Tarhanlı writes this growth indicated the effort to create a privileged position for the PRA vis-à-vis other executive institutions (Tarhanlı, 1993, p. 116). In parallel, there was a growth in the PRA's budget. In 1990 budget plan that was prepared by the Motherland Party, the PRA's share constituted 1.23% of the total state budget. This was an exceptional percentage in Tarhanlı's analysis of the PRA's annual budget (Tarhanlı, 1993, p. 139). According to the plan, the PRA was endowed with a budget that was 2 times larger than those of Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Transportation, 3.5 times larger than that of Ministry of Industry, 6 times greater than that of Ministry of Tourism and 10 times greater than that of Ministry of Labor and Social Security. 94.7% of the PRA's budget was spared for the expenses of the personnel (Tarhanlı, 1993, p. 123).

²⁹ For a detailed and comparative analysis of so-called "conservative/Islamic bourgeoisie" see Gümüşçü, Ş. (2008). "Economic Liberalization, Devout Bourgeoisie, and Change in Political Islam: Comparing Turkey and Egypt", *EUI Working Papers*, Florence: European University Institute.

³⁰ As Narlı writes, "this organization also functioned as a counterweight to the Association of Turkish Businessmen and Industrialists (TUSIAD), whose members make up the CEOs of Turkey's 300 largest companies" (1999, p.3).

2.3.4 The Welfare Party episode and the impact of the postmodern coup on the Presidency of Religious Affairs

Many scholars studying Turkish politics conceived the post-1980 period as a remarkable turn in the state-society relations. “A relaxation of the secularist stances of the state during Turgut Özal’s leadership has led to the admission that Islam too is essential component of Turkish national identity” (Zubaida, 1996, p. 10). Özal’s political and economic liberalization accompanied by the rise of an Islamic bourgeoisie brought about the electoral success of political Islam (Yavuz, 1997, pp. 67-70). In the municipal elections held on 27 March 1994, the Islamist Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, RP) led by Erbakan managed to get 19.1 per cent of votes. The Welfare candidates won 28 municipalities, including the two largest cities, Ankara and Istanbul (Toprak, 2005, p.172). “This showed that the party achieved a breakthrough” (Zurcher, 2005, p. 295). The elections of 24 December 1995 confirmed the trends that had already crystallized in March 1994. The Islamist Party had gained further strength and became the biggest party by receiving 21.4% of the popular vote (Zurcher, 2005, p.198). In July 1996 by forming a coalition government with Tansu Çiller’s³¹ True Path Party, Erbakan became the first Islamist Prime Minister of Turkey – a true milestone in modern Turkish history. This government heightened the concerns of the military that the principle of secularism might be undermined (Tank, 2005, p. 9). While certain secular groups interpreted the 1994 and 1995 elections as a revolt against Kemalism, Islamists regarded it as democratization.

³¹ Tansu Çiller (1946-) studied economics in Istanbul and at Yale University. After working at World Bank, she returned to Istanbul to become a professor at Boğaziçi University. In 1993, she joined Demirel’s True Path Party. In 1993, she succeeded Demirel to become Turkey’s first female Prime Minister (Palmowski, 2004, p. 130).

After it came to power Erbakan's RP pursued somewhat controversial policies. In the field of foreign policy, for instance Erbakan sought to build closer relations with the Islamic world. His anti-Israel rhetoric and his promise to tilt the focus of Turkish foreign policy from the West towards better relations with the Islamic world based on a common religious authority, were met with serious resistance not only by his coalition partner, but also by the military (Tank, 2005, p. 9). Nevertheless, he was able to make his first abroad trips to Islamic countries, including "rogue" states such as Iran and Libya (Tank, 2005, p. 9). His relations with militant Muslim groups such as Palestinian Hamas, Lebanese Hizbullah and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, made matters worse (Rubin & Kirişçi, 2001, pp. 103-4).

Erbakan's policies were equally controversial, on the domestic front. As Tank writes, in the municipalities, Welfare mayors imposed Islamic regulations. For instance, in Erbakan's hometown Konya, alcohol was banned, new mosques were built and women's clothing was regulated (2005, p. 10). He stated that under his government, university rectors would "kiss the hands" of the female students, who were wearing headscarves and forbidden by the law to enter universities. This was followed by a second provoking statement that the Hagia Sophia Museum would be turned into a mosque again. These matters "became symbols of the tug-of-war between the Islamists and the secularists" (Toprak, 2005, p. 174). In January 1997, Erbakan invited the leaders of religious brotherhoods to a dinner during Ramadan at the prime minister's residence. The appearance of religious leaders in an official residence in their traditional outfits was shown on TV channels for several days (Çayır, 2008, p. 77). The most controversial incident took place in Ankara, in February 1997, when the Welfare Party mayor of Sincan organized "Jerusalem day",

to call liberation of the city from Israel. The Iranian ambassador who was invited to the ceremony, made statements against secularism and he called for the establishment of the Sharia in Turkey, while the crowd shouted slogans in favor of Hamas and Hizbullah, two Islamist groups fighting against Israel (Gözaydın, 2008b, p. 169). Two days later, the military responded by sending tanks through Sincan as a warning. This was followed by the arrest of the mayor, declaration of the Iranian ambassador as *persona non grata*, and an investigation launched against the Welfare Party (Hale, 2000, p. 318). Consequently, on 28 February during meeting of the National Security Council³² (NSC) the military commanders issued a list of demands from the civilian government. This “soft coup” or “post-modern coup”, as it became to be known, received the support of many secular Turks, who considered Erbakan’s term of office to be a danger against secular regime (Smith, 2005, p. 316). The NSC demanded inspection of the schools linked with religious brotherhoods and their transferal to the Ministry of Education, closure of religious brotherhoods, control of Koran courses, application of the Law on the Unification of Education, as well as observance of the dress codes law (“Postmodern Darbe”, 2011). In addition to these, the law targeted imam-hatip high schools, which were originally established as vocational schools to train preachers and prayer leaders. However, over time under pressure from Islamists, their curriculum was expanded and graduates were allowed to enter any faculty they chose. The number of imam hatip schools reached 640 by the 1990s (Toprak, 2005, p.174). As Zurcher points out:

³² National Security Council (NSC), which was established after the 1960 military coup, comprised the Chief of Military Staff and the commanders of land, naval and air forces. Chaired by the President of the Republic, the Council advised the government on national security matters (Ahmad, 1999, p. 21).

The most conspicuous demand was about the introduction of compulsory eight-year primary education in state schools. The idea behind this was that this would put the schools for preachers and prayer leaders (*imam-hatip okulları*) at middle level out of business. ... since the schools produced many times the numbers of graduates than could be employed in the religious establishment, most of these graduates found places in other branches of the “secular” state apparatus. In the eyes of the military and secular Turks this created a danger that Islamist agenda might infiltrate and gradually take over the state. (Zurcher, 2005, p. 300)

Although the cabinet accepted the 28 February demands, it did not put them into practice. On 16 January 1998 the Constitutional Court decided to close the RP on the grounds that it was against the secularist principle of the Republic and Erbakan was banned from politics. In February, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Istanbul's popular RP mayor, was thrown into prison for inciting religious hatred and calling for the overthrow of the government because during an election rally he read a poem³³, in which Turkey's minarets were compared with bayonets (Toprak, 2005, p. 177).

The 28 February process had noteworthy consequences on the Presidency of Religious Affairs. Mehmet Nuri Yılmaz³⁴, then – President of the PRA, made three official visits to the National Security Council. In those visits, the military expressed their sensitivity regarding the use of religion as a political tool (“M. Nuri Yılmaz: Milli Güvenlik Kurulu”, 2002). Interestingly, in 1997 a retired colonel, Oğuz Kalelioğlu³⁵, was appointed as the chief advisor to Diyanet's President Yılmaz. In the face of allegations that this appointment had been pushed by the NSC, Yılmaz

³³ “The mosques are our barracks, the domes are our helmet, the minarets our bayonets and the faithful our soldiers”. Erdoğan was referring to the poem “The Soldiers Prayer” written in 1912 by Ziya Gökalp.

³⁴ Mehmet Nuri Yılmaz (1943-) was the 15th President of the PRA. He was appointed on 3 January 1992 served on this post until 18 March 2003.

³⁵ Colonel Oğuz Kalelioğlu (1945-) had been previously serving as coordinator at the Presidency of Relations with Society (*Toplumla İlişkiler Başkanlığı*) within the National Security Council (Diler, 2012).

declared that “I am the person who appointed him, no one recommended. He is a talented person. When he was retired, I decided to hire him in the Diyanet” (“M. Nuri Yılmaz: Milli Güvenlik Kurulu”, 2002, own translation). Meanwhile, several newspapers highlighted the influence of the military on the PRA. In an interview, Yılmaz stated that the Presidency had organized education programs in order to inform imams on Turkey’s security, its allies, enemies, strategic position, and so forth. He further noted, the ex-colonel Kalelioğlu was his “advisor providing instruction on national security issues” (“M. Nuri Yılmaz: Milli Güvenlik Kurulu, 2002, own translation).

Shortly after the post-modern coup, all the mosques around Turkey that had been built by individuals were officially attached to the PRA and put under its control (Çakır & Bozan, 2005, p. 32). Furthermore, the Presidency of Religious Affairs centralized the writing of Friday sermons (“Kocatepe’den Televaaz”, 1997). The ex-colonel was claimed to take an active role in shaping the content of Friday sermons. He declared that a survey conducted by the PRA found out that in Turkey 23 million people performed Friday prayer. “Since we found that the state had the opportunity to reach such a huge amount of people through Friday sermons, we have made studies on how to utilize these sermons” (“Kalelioğlu: Devletin Mesajını”, 2003, own translation). He asserted that he had only provided “assistance” to the Higher Board of Religious Affairs (*Din İşleri Yüksek Kurulu*), which was primarily tasked with preparing sermons, on relevant issues (“Kalelioğlu: Devletin Mesajını”, 2003).

2.3.5 EU harmonization process and the Presidency of Religious Affairs

Following the closure of the Welfare Party, the Islamists reorganized. On 23 February 1998 former RP deputies founded the Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*, FP). After the postmodern coup of 1997, the first elections were held on 18 April 1997. Before the elections, there had been widespread anxiety about the possibility of an Islamist backlash. President Demirel had made a shocking statement when he said that in case the FP won the elections, “the state would act” (Zurcher, 2005, p. 302). But the Islamist backlash did not happen. The FP lost about a quarter of its predecessor, RP’s electoral support and received only 15.4 percent of votes (Zurcher, 2005, p. 302). Bülent Ecevit’s Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti*, DSP) emerged as the biggest party by receiving 22.19% of votes. It failed, however, to obtain an overall majority. Ecevit formed a coalition government, with the second-placed Nationalist Movement Party and the fourth placed Motherland Party as a junior partner (Kalaycıoğlu, 2005, pp. 159-60).

Despite the leading member of the coalition, DSP, claimed to be a socialist party, in terms of its ideology and political strategy the party had a nationalistic tone and state-centric understanding of democracy (Kınıklıoğlu, 2002). The second major member of the coalition, MHP, by definition was an ultra-nationalist party, which has been historically preoccupied with Turkey’s territorial integrity as well as ethnic homogeneity (Yavuz, 2002). Therefore, although the DSP and MHP might seem quite an odd couple at first glance, there was a lot of common ground between the two. As Zurcher (2005, p. 303) notes “it may seem surprising that ultra-right and democratic left could join forces in a coalition, but in fact there was a lot of ideological common ground. Both parties were fiercely nationalist and believed in a strong state”. On the other hand the junior partner, ANAP, with its centre-right and

economically liberal orientations, did not have enough political leverage to challenge the nationalist and statist configuration under the new coalition government.

One of the foremost issues on the coalition government's political agenda was Turkey's relations with the European Union. Turkey-EU relations reached a decisive turning point in the Helsinki Summit that took place in December 1999, when Turkey was granted a formal candidate status that required a set of legal and institutional reforms to meet the Copenhagen criteria for full-membership, particularly with respect to democratization (Keyman & Öniş, 2007, p. 249). The outcome of the Summit provided a strong motivation for the government to take some major steps to improve political as well as other fundamental human rights. Within such a political landscape women's rights gained greater prominence. In November 2001, the Turkish parliament approved a new Civil Code, which ended the supremacy of men in marriage and thus established the full equality of men and women in the family. One of the most important changes included in the new code, was the removal of the clause that defines the man as the head of the family. The new code also raised the legal age for marriage (which was previously 17 for men and 15 for women) to 18 both for both sexes and required the equal division of the property acquired during marriage (İlkkaracan & Berktaş, 2002).

This political environment, had mirror effects on the Presidency of Religious Affairs. In April 2000 the PRA organized an international conference on the European Union. In his opening speech, President Mehmet Nuri Yılmaz defined the PRA's goals as "contribution into the EU harmonization process, modification of the institution's policies enabling the harmonization process, initiating negotiations regarding issues such as the European Union, relations with the European Union, state-religion relations, and human rights" (Yılmaz, 2000).

Parallel to the coalition government's reforms on women rights to meet the EU membership criteria, PRA's activities regarding women increased during the early 2000s. In May 2002 a council was convened to discuss contemporary religious issues. The council attended by academics from theology departments of various universities, officials from prime ministry, muftis, as well as the members of the Higher Board of Religious Affairs. Women-related issues were high on the agenda and they constituted one of the main chapters of the resultant declaration, which came out from the council. Particular clauses received a lot of coverage in the news media. Several mainstream newspapers, such as *Hürriyet*, *Radikal* and *Akşam*, carried this event to their titles as "Islamic Renaissance", "Egalitarian Declaration from Diyanet", "Women Revolution in Religion" (Güncel Dini Meseleler, 2002, pp. 48-49). In the declaration, Diyanet stressed that "original Islamic sources" treat men and women equally. One clause could be considered as "revolutionary" indeed: Women, who had been hitherto discouraged from praying with men in mosques, were now being called to participate in friday prayers, as well as religious feast (*bayram*) and funeral prayers. It was provided in the declaration that "Islam allows women to attend mosques and perform prayers with men" (Güncel Dini Meseleler, 2002, pp. 48-49).

This period also witnessed a number of positive initiatives by the Diyanet concerning women. In 2001, for the first time in the PRA's history, a female member was appointed to the Higher Council of Religious Affairs (Sucu, 2005, p. 97). Moreover, the PRA initiated a pilot-project in April 2002, whose primary goals included fighting with fundamental women's problems in Turkey such as gender-discrimination, domestic violence, and honour killings. In a number of major cities,

family bureaus were established to enlighten society on these issues (“Diyanet Aile Sorunlarına El Attı”, 2006).

2.3.6 Split in the Islamist movement and the rise of the AKP

The legacy of the so-called “postmodern coup” of February 28, 1997 left the FP, with little chance to survive. Despite its efforts to distinguish itself from the RP and denied any continuity between the two, it was unable to convince the Constitutional Court “that the very same people, who had been active within the Welfare Party and now formed the political cadres of the Virtue Party, changed” (Toprak, 2005, p. 177). Especially, when one of the FP’s female MPs, Merve Kavakçı, attempted to take the parliamentary oath with the headscarf, the party shared the fate of its predecessor (RP) and it was closed down by the Constitutional Court in 2001 (Toprak, 2005, p. 177). The FP case was the fourth time since 1970 that the Constitutional Court had closed an Islamist party, and the sixteenth time it had banned a party since the return to democratic politics in 1983 (Smith, 2005, p. 317).

After the abolishment of the Virtue Party, the Islamist Movement split into two wings: the “traditionalists” and “reformists”. The former, who were in favor of a strict Islamist line, under the old leadership loyal to Erbakan, reorganized itself into the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*, SP) in 2001 and since then it has failed pass the 10 percent threshold required to obtain seats in parliament (Sunier et al., 2011, p. 19). On the other hand, the reformist younger generation led by the ex-mayor of Istanbul, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, founded the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*; hereafter the AKP) in 2001. Under his leadership, reformists strongly criticized the political style and policies of their predecessors, the RP and FP, particularly the confrontational Islamist line and anti-Western aspects of those

policies. In contrast, they projected a progressive image by favoring engagement with global markets, democratization reforms, and Turkey's accession to the EU (Öniş, 2009, p. 22). AKP's party program differed significantly from its predecessors' in many respects. As it was underlined by Toprak:

The program included a long section of human rights and commits the party to put into effect the international charters that Turkey has signed... It has a section on women's empowerment that again commits the party to abide by the provisions of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. It has a paragraph that defines secularism as a principle that protects both the right to religious belief and practice and right to non-believers to organize their life according to an ethics of their choice... In foreign policy, the program states that the party's priority is Turkey's entry into the European Union. The program also states that the AKP's aim is to become a centrist party that will appeal to all sectors of the electorate. (Toprak, 2005, p. 183)

Gümüşçü claimed that the rising conservative bourgeoisie openly supported the reformist wing against the traditionalists, since they believed that their interests were more compatible with the reformists' political vision. The traditionalists' statist, anti-Western, and confrontational discourse conflicted with the interests of this class, who desired liberal markets, a pro-Western attitude, and relatively peaceful relations with the secular state (Gümüşçü, 2010, p. 12). As a result, the conservative bourgeoisie supplied the AKP with financial and political sources and several MÜSİAD members joined the party's local offices (Gümüşçü, 2010, p. 12).

Meanwhile, in the year 2001 coalition government was fully preoccupied with the problems that stemmed from a massive economic crisis triggered by a major political crisis between prime minister Ecevit and the president Ahmet Necdet

Sezer³⁶. In February 2001, during a meeting of the National Security Council, the president confronted the prime minister with files corruption in government and accused him of neglecting this for political reasons (Zurcher, 2005, p. 305). Ecevit's announcement that the country was in a severe political crisis undermined the confidence of the markets in the government. The rapid erosion of confidence in government led to the "mother of all economic crises" (Kalaycıoğlu, 2005:180). Thus, politics by the early 2000s "had reached to an impasse characterized by political instability, clientelism, corruption and drastic loss of societal trust" (Keyman and Öniş, 2007, p. 212). Therefore, the year 2001 marked another turning point in the Turkish context. Economic downturn and widespread cynicism about state corruption discredited the mainstream parties and benefited the AKP, which pledged to "develop every corner of the country and redistribute national income" ("Looking to Europe, a survey of Turkey", 2005).

By the year 2002, the confidence of voters in the coalition government had completely waned (Kalaycıoğlu, 2005, p. 182). As Ecevit's health deteriorated from bad to worse and a revolt started in his party, he was left with no option than to call for early elections. The general elections held on November 3, 2002 changed the whole political configuration in Turkey. The AKP of Erdoğan won an astonishing victory in the elections by receiving 34.3% of the votes and gaining absolute majority in parliament government with 363 seats in a parliament of 550 (Çarkoğlu & Kalaycıoğlu, 2007). For the first time in Turkish history, a party with an Islamist background had formed a single-party government. AKP's coming to power aroused

³⁶ Ahmet Necdet Sezer (1940-) was a graduate of Ankara University, Faculty of Law. He started his career as a judge in 1962. He became the chief justice at the Constitutional Court in 1988. In May 2000, he was elected as the tenth president of the Republic (Zurcher, 2005, p. 403). He was a staunch secularist and upholder of the constitution.

fear in mainstream political parties, military, courts, secularist nongovernmental organizations and media outlets because of its religious credentials. The centrist daily *Hürriyet*, for instance, declared the outcome of the elections with the title “headscarves at the head of state” (Smith, 2005, p. 321). For secularists the party was making *takiyye*³⁷ while sticking to a hidden secret agenda of Islamizing the society and undermining foundational principle of the Republic, *laiklik*. Besides the AKP, only the Republican People’s Party under Deniz Baykal’s³⁸ leadership managed to pass the 10 per cent electoral threshold, and as a result the AKP obtained two-third of the seats in parliament (Sunier et al., 2011, p. 21).

2.4 The AKP in power (2002 – present)

During its first term the AKP adopted a careful and pragmatic policy. Its leaders, who had derived lessons from the past experiences, avoided controversy over issues of secularism. At an international conference Prime Minister Erdoğan maintained that political practice by means of religious propaganda is detrimental to democracy. He additionally stated that religion and politics should be kept apart to guarantee the healthy operation of democracy and he declared his party was a “conservative democratic” party³⁹ (Kalaycıoğlu, 2005, p. 196).

³⁷ As Kalaycıoğlu defines, “*Takiyye* is to act in a way completely contrary to one’s beliefs, values, and faith under the pressing conditions and out of the expediency of the circumstance, without changing one’s beliefs or values” (2005, p.165).

³⁸ Deniz Baykal (1938-) graduated from Ankara University, Law Faculty. Later he studied at University of Berkeley and Columbia University in the United States. He entered to parliament from the Republican People’s Party in 1973. Like all prominent politicians, he was banned from politics following the 1980 military coup. In 1993 he led the movement to re-establish the Republican People’s Party, which was closed down by the junta regime. He served as the leader of the party until May 2010, he resigned from his post when he was involved a video-tape scandal. Deniz Baykal. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved October, 2012, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deniz_Baykal

³⁹ For a study on the AKP’s discourse on “conservative democracy” see Tepe, S. (2005). Turkey’s AKP: A Model “Muslim-Democratic” Party?, *Journal of Democracy*, 16 (3), 75-78.

Right from the beginning of AKP's tenure, party leaders had been actively pursuing Turkey's application for membership to the European Union. The absolute majority in parliament offered the AKP legislative power to quickly introduce a series of constitutional and legal changes designed to extend civil liberties, minority rights and curtail military's power in politics in order to meet the EU's Copenhagen criteria (Toprak, 2005, p. 184). The macro-economic reforms initiated by the preceding coalition government led by Ecevit, were sustained by the AKP government. As a result, the Turkish economy rapidly recovered from the crisis with economic growth and an increase in the general prosperity of the population. Furthermore, the AKP government appeared to put effort into dealing with corruption and address the problems of social justice (Keyman & Öniş, 2007, p. 222). "The decisiveness and vigour of the AKP government resulted in a rise in popularity and also made Turkey a reliable partner for foreign investors. Although these economic policies were initiated by the previous government, the AKP benefited from the results" (Sunier et al., 2011, pp. 21-22). In turn, this helped the party to consolidate its power, helping it to expand its electoral base even further. The local elections that were held in March 2004 confirmed the party's broad national appeal. "Whereas earlier Islamist movements were primarily inner Anatolian phenomena, the AKP swept virtually the entire country" (Smith, 2005, p. 317).

During its first term, the AKP pursued a series of policies that were beneficial for women. Under the external pressure from the EU and internal pressure from Turkish feminist groups the party amended the Penal Code in 2005. The new Penal Code brought about heavier punishments for rapes and honour killings. Penalties for domestic violence increased. Marital rape and sexual harassments were recognized

as crimes. After the Penal Code the AKP issued a decree in July 2006 on the Prevention of Violence against women, as response to honour-killings. Nevertheless, these reforms by no means could eliminate anxiety of secular women's groups over the AKP government. Erdoğan's response when he was asked if women should work outside the home was indeed worrisome. He said that they should, though not in some "indelicate" jobs (Smith, 2005, p. 321). Erdoğan's another big gaffe was an attempt to criminalize adultery in September 2004. In an interview he maintained that "the family is a sacred institution for us. The stronger the family, the stronger the country. If the family is weakened, that country is doomed to destruction". He insisted that outlawing adultery was a vital step toward preserving the family and "human honour" ("Turkey Split by Plan", 2004). In the face of strong protests both in Turkey and abroad, Erdoğan had to withdraw the effort⁴⁰.

In the July 2007 elections the AKP returned to power even with a greater electoral victory. This time the party won 47 percent of votes and 340 seats in the parliament. The AKP's ability to expand its share of national vote from 34 percent to 47 per cent in five years time, clearly constituted a phenomenal success (Çarkoğlu, 2007). As Yeşim Arat rightfully puts; "for the first time in Turkish history a political party with an Islamist background was coming to power with practically half of the electorate behind it. The balance between the so-called secularists and Islamists has changed" (Arat, 2009, p. 5).

During its first term the AKP government made no attempt to lift the ban on the headscarf wearing at the universities. The headscarf issue suddenly became the number one issue of the early 2008 (Hale and Özbudun, 2010, p. 72). The AKP and

⁴⁰ For details regarding adultery debate, see Chapter 3.3.2.

the MHP agreed on an amendment proposal concerning Article 10 and 42 of the Constitution in order to lift the headscarf ban and the proposal was submitted to the Assembly. In February 2008 the amendments were passed in the assembly but they were annulled by the Constitutional Court in June 2008 on the grounds that they were incompatible with the principle of secularism, which is referred in the unamendable Article 2 of the Constitution.

Meanwhile, in 2008 on the World Women's day Prime Minister Erdoğan urged women to have at least three children ("Başbakan Üç Çocuk Doğurun Diyor", 2008). His words set off alarm bells among feminist groups, for whom they meant: "Women should have babies and stay at home" ("Turkey's Bitter Election", 2011). This heightened the fears of the secular feminists that an increasing Islamist tone in the AKP's discourse might have detrimental implications for opportunities available to women.

Having assessed the implications of the two AKP terms in office for the gender based interests of women, Yeşim Arat believes that unlike the first term, the second term did not provide opportunities for women:

During its first term in office AKP at least responded to pressures to amend the Penal Code and expand the legal framework to struggle against gender based violence while the second term was shaped by the party's losing battle to amend the constitution to legalize headscarves in the universities. (Arat, 2009, p. 20)

According to Y. Arat, the AKP used its office to promote a sexist ideology based on an Orthodox reading of Islam where women play a secondary role. For her, this posits a greater danger for women than the lifting of the headscarf ban. As she writes,

I argue that it is not the uplifting of the Islamist headscarf ban in the universities that we should prioritize as a danger, but the propagation of

patriarchal religious values that sanction secondary roles for women, both through public bureaucracy, the educational system and civil society organizations. Party cadres with sexist values are infiltrating the political system and religious movements that were once banned are establishing schools, dormitories, off campus Koranic schools which socialize the young into religiously sanctioned secondary roles for women. (Arat, 2009, p. 3)

In the wake of the AKP's failed attempt to lift the headscarf ban in June 2008, the Constitutional Court filed a closure case against the party because of its alleged threat to the principle of *laiklik*. Not surprisingly the AKP's defence strongly rejected all allegations of the AKP being anti-secular and underlined the party's loyalty to the "values and the characteristics of the Republic – those of a democratic and secular constitutional state" (Sunier, et al., 2011, p. 24). Moreover, in its defence against accusations, the party emphasized its loyalty to Kemalist modernization project and it brought out the EU accession negotiations as one of the trump cards: "It is clear that in the period during which the AK party has been in power, we have more closely than ever approached the goal of modernization as set out by Atatürk – primarily through the distance that we have covered on the path to full membership in the EU" (*AK Parti İddianame Cevap*, 2008). On 30 July 2008 the Constitutional Case gave its final decision. Rather than being banned, as other parties with Islamist roots, the AKP was merely fined and allowed to operate in the Turkish political arena (Kubicek, 2011, p. 443).

Despite the fact that the AKP failed to make legislation on the headscarf ban, in June 2010 the President of the head of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) sent a circular to the Directorate of İstanbul University to initiate a new regulation upon the complaint of a student wearing headscarf. In the regulation YÖK announced that students wearing headscarf might no longer be sent out of class and faculty members, who oppose the new regulation, would face disciplinary

procedures. YÖK's regulation led to a division among universities, as some of them have implemented it, while the administration of certain universities continued to exercise the ban claiming that the decision was a breach of the current constitution ("Türban ikiye böldü", 2010).

As Cengiz and Hoffman (2011, p. 258). claim "the government has departed on a somewhat authoritarian path with regard to freedom of speech and the independence of judiciary" since 2010 onwards. This was particularly evident in the so-called "Ergenekon" investigation as well as the conduct of the 2010 constitutional reform. Ergenekon was the name of an alleged secret organization that has been charged with involving "in terrorist and propaganda activities with the eventual aim of overthrowing the AKP government" through a military coup (Cengiz & Hoffman, 2011, p. 258). Since the Ergenekon investigation was opened initially in 2007, over 500 people have been detained and nearly 300 have been charged with committing crime related to the organization (Fabbe, 2011, p. 661). Among the arrested have been top-ranking military officials, famous journalists, writers and university professors. The trial has deeply polarized the Turkish public. Those who were critical of the trial go so far as to argue that the government has used Ergenekon unjustly to silence the voice of the opposition and to arrest government-critical journalists ("Onlar 101 Gündür İçerde", 2011).

In 2010 the AKP government proposed an extensive constitutional reform package. Although it contained provisions that would introduce positive legal adjustments in areas such as positive discrimination, freedom of information, protection of privacy and civilian supremacy over military, the package would also remarkably increase the power of government with respect to the appointment of high court justices. Thereby, the reform package could have detrimental

consequences on the separation of powers principle and the independence of judiciary from executive power. Furthermore, as Cengiz and Hoffman points out, the AKP government drafted proposed amendments single-handedly without inviting the parties in opposition and civil society organizations into the reform process (2012, p. 259). When the parliamentary vote on the draft failed the required two-third majority, the government decided to hold a national referendum. Despite the strong “no” campaign of the opposing political parties, media outlets, and civil society organizations, the entire amendment package was passed with the support of 57.9% of the vote on 12 September 2010 (“Referandum manşetlerde”, 2011).

While the polarization between those who were pro-AKP and anti-AKP had intensified due to authoritarian policies and discourse of the party leadership, there was a little doubt about who the winner of the 12 June parliamentary elections would be. As it was widely predicted the AKP, which had ruled the country since 2002, won 49.9% of the popular vote on the election day and continued to govern as the majority party. This was “the first time a Turkish party had won three elections in a row while increasing its vote each time” (Kubicek, 2011, p. 445). However, it failed to gain the 330 seat majority which would give it the power to unilaterally write a new constitution and bring it to popular referendum. In fact, although the AKP increased its vote share, it has lost its seats parliament due to the gains made by its competitors⁴¹. The Republican People’s Party⁴², the Nationalist Movement Party, and

⁴¹ In 2007 elections, the AKP won 341 seats in the parliament with 46.7 per cent of the popular vote. In 2011 elections although it increased its vote share to 49.9 per cent, it lost 14 seats and held 327 places in the parliament. On the other hand CHP, which also increased its vote share from 20.9 per cent to 26.0 per cent, expanded the number of its seats from 112 and 135. The AKP’s other main opponent, the MHP saw 1.3 per cent fall in the popular vote, pushing the party down from 71 to 53 places. The number of independents, who would later unite under the PDP, increased from 26 to 35. (Cengiz & Hoffman, 2012, p. 256).

⁴² The CHP was hoped to perform better in 2011 elections as the party’s long serving yet ineffective leader - Deniz Baykal - was forced to resign in May 2010 because of a sex-tape scandal, and he was

the collection of independent candidates united under the Peace and Democracy Party (*Bariş ve Demokrasi Partisi*, BDP) were able to gain representation in the parliament.

After winning the elections third time, more confident AKP leadership increased Islamist tone in its discourse and oriented toward conservative authoritarianism. On 31 January 2012, at the party group meeting Erdoğan announced that the AKP government aimed to raise a “religious generation” (“Dindar Nesil Tepkisi”, 2012). Erdoğan’s statement unveiled AKP’s social engineering project to transform the society toward a direction that is opposite of the Kemalist modernization project. Several reforms in the education system complemented AKP’s new project of transforming the society. In 2012 compulsory education was extended to 12 years, and the middle level imam-hatip schools, which had been closed since the 28 February process, were reopened (“İmam Hatiplerin Orta Bölümü”, 2012). The new education system of 4+4+4 made it possible for parents to send their children to an Imam Hatip school after four years of primary school (“4+4+4 Eğitim sistemi başlıyor”, 2012).

The AKP’s conservative orientation was particularly evident with respect to women’s issues. Despite utter opposition of women groups, the “Ministry on Woman and Family” was abolished and replaced by “Ministry on Family and Social Policies” within the new government. Removal of “woman” from the ministry’s name was symbolic for feminists, since it implied the superiority of family and “mother role” of the woman over the woman as an individual (Mengi, 2011). The party has

replaced by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu (Fabbe, 2011: 660). Kılıçdaroğlu has a Kurdish and Alevi heritage and he has sought to reform the image and the policies of the party. He attempted purge party of much of its old hardliners, spoke in favour of more freedoms for Kurds and Alevis and advocated reforms to increase civilian control over military (Kubicek, 2011, p. 444).

increasingly emphasized the importance of traditional family values and its support for a higher birth rate. For instance, at the International Family and Social Policies Summit held in Ankara on January 2 2013, Erdoğan stated “There are abstract values that make a household a family. And it is extremely dangerous if that family loses those values. Therefore, we are working on developing new projects to protect family values” (Axiarlis, 2014, p. 87).

The AKP’s pronatal family focus has become even more overt in party leaders’ rhetoric. In April 2012 Erdoğan, who had previously urged Turkish women to give birth to minimum three babies, now called them to have five children. “My wife looked after our four children by washing their diapers by hand” he told. “Now it is easier. There are washing machines. Even having five children is possible” (“Şimdi İş Kolay, 5 Çocuk Bile Olur”, 2012, own translation). On 26 May 2011, at the third congress of party’s women branches, Erdoğan declared his bitter opposition to abortion and other means of family planning, as well as caesarean method of childbirth. In his speech, he targeted family planning campaigns and argued that these were “insidious plans” to reduce the Turkish population. Moreover, he equalized the 2011 military air strike and massacre of thirty-four Kurdish civilians in the border town of Uludere with abortion (Kurtuluş Korkman, 2016, p. 113). He claimed “every abortion is an Uludere” and proposed a ban on the procedure (“Erdoğan: Her Kürtaj bir Uludere’dir”, 2012, own translation). Consequently, the health minister, Recep Akdağ, announced that the government would present its abortion bill by the end of June, adding that women pregnant as a result of rape should let the government take care of the baby (“Turkish Women Join”, 2012).

In addition, since the beginning of its third term AKP government made noteworthy attempts to relax the ban on the wearing of headscarf at public buildings.

In May 2012 with an amendment to the regulation on dress codes at military social facilities (*orduevi*), wearing of headscarf, as well as Islamic gown (*cüppe*), cap (*takke*) and turban (*sarık*) were made permissible for civilian visitors (“Onlar 101 Gündür İçerde”, 2012). Erstwhile, the headscarf ban at universities had been already softened and partly lifted despite the absence of a constitutional settlement on the issue. On 26 May, Erdoğan called those who attempted to apply the headscarf ban at universities as “schizophrenic” and he stated “No body can reject my lady sister (*hanım kardeş*)⁴³ any longer at the university doors, those who attempt are schizophrenic cases” (“Erdoğan: Her kürtaj bir Uludere’dir”, 2012, own translation). The ban on headscarf was finally lifted in 2013.

By May 2013, there had been increasingly popular objection to AKP’s growing authoritarianism. Party’s insufficient regard for the separation of powers and the rule of law, attacks on press freedom and freedoms of expression, anti-democratic pressures on the opposition and civil society, as well as its moralizing interference into individual lifestyles and attempts to transform society in line with Islamic values prepared the background of Gezi protests (Saatçioğlu, 2015, p. 268). This authoritarian and moralizing background, combined with the government’s insistence to demolish Gezi Park in Taksim Square in Istanbul, led to massive uprisings across Turkey during the summer of 2013 that lasted for approximately three months. Three and a half million people were estimated to have taken part in almost 5,000 demonstrations across Turkey (De Bellaigue, 19 December 2013). Erdoğan offended the masses by labeling them as “marginal”, “terrorists”, “looters” (*çapulcu*) and “drunkards” (*ayyaş*), which added fuel to the protests (Saatçioğlu,

⁴³ Like its antecessors, the AKP leadership has avoided to use the word “woman” and rather preferred the word “lady” which implied a traditional form of deference that upheld women bound by restrictive social norms.

2015, p. 268). Police suppressed the protests with tear gas and water cannons. In addition to the 11 deaths and over 8,000 injuries, more than 3,000 arrests were made during the Gezi movement.

Turkey's shift away from democracy, as symbolized by Gezi, had critical repercussions for Turkey-EU relations. As Saatçioğlu (2015, p. 269) writes, "As Gezi became the voice of millions all over Turkey against governmental authoritarianism, the EU increasingly evaluated its ties with Turkey from a normative, democratic angle". EU officials and leaders of the European countries criticized government's crackdown on Gezi. Consequently, the EU announced its decision to postpone EU membership talks with Turkey in June 2013 ("Turkey delays membership talks", 2013).

AKP's deviation from democracy accelerated in the aftermath of 17 December 2013, when a sudden corruption probe that involved several key members of the cabinet and Erdoğan's own family broke out. A heated controversy erupted after the release of audio recordings on the social media, in which Erdoğan was heard telling his son to urgently get rid of tens of millions of dollars. Erdoğan claimed that recordings were a montage, denied the allegations, and called the corruption investigation as a "plot" launched by members of the so-called "parallel state" (within the police force and the judiciary) led by the Islamist Gülen movement⁴⁴. Erdoğan argued that the "17 December process" was an international conspiracy organized by the AKP's enemies inside and outside of the country to

⁴⁴ The Gülen Movement is an Islamic transnational movement led by the Islamic scholar and preacher Fethullah Gülen, who has been living in the USA in a self-imposed exile from Turkey since 1999 (Taylor, 2013). The movement is usually referred to the "Service" (*Hizmet*) as it is based on voluntary service of its followers. The *Hizmet* Movement has expanded across the world in over 180 countries and his followers have founded schools in more than 140 countries, a bank, media companies, hospitals, an insurance company and a university (Popp, 2012).

undermine its successes on the political and economic fronts. Consequently, the AKP government purged thousands of police officers and hundreds of prosecutors, who were involved in the corruption investigation in order to clear state bureaucracy from the “parallel state”. The purges were followed by AKP’s tactical moves on the legislative front aimed at further restricting judicial independence and freedom of expression in order to prevent scrutiny (Saatçioğlu, 2015, pp. 275-6).

After the Gezi Protests and the corruption investigations in 2013, Erdoğan perceived the social media as one of the biggest enemies of the government, as all critical documents and videos had been publicized via social media. On 6 February 2013, the AKP majority in the parliament quickly passed a censorship law handing the government unprecedented power to restrict access to certain online material to “protect privacy” (“Erdoğan’s twitter flail”, 2014). Consequently, the government blocked dozens of websites including Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Erdoğan called Twitter a “menace to society” in May 2013 and he vowed to eradicate it. He further stated that “let people say whatever they want, we will take care of these by our own” (Öztürk, 2016, p. 631). Since then, because of criticizing the AKP leadership hundreds of journalists have been fired or arrested and many media outlets closed or taken over by government-backed companies.

All these developments have had implications for Diyanet’s discourse. As the government became unrestrained by the prospect of EU membership and consolidated its power by restricting freedoms, rule of law, and civil society; like every other institutions of the state, the Diyanet turned into a tool of propagating AKP’s political preferences.

2.4.1 2002 – 2010: Diyanet’s women initiative

After the AKP came to power, secularists feared that Diyanet might become the mouthpiece of the AKP. Early signs of Diyanet’s politicization under the AKP showed up, when President Yılmaz resigned from his post under the pressure of the AKP. The President, who had served the longest term in office, explained his reasons for resignation as “intolerable pressure and intervention” from the AKP government. He stated that throughout his term of office he had worked with three presidents, eleven governments, and eight ministers and claimed he had never faced a pressure from those governments, except the last one (“Diyanet İşleri Başkanı İstifa Etti”, 2003). Yılmaz was succeeded by Ali Bardakoğlu⁴⁵, who stayed in office until 2010.

One noteworthy change in Diyanet’s functions under the AKP government concerned the centrality of Friday sermons. After the 28 February post-modern coup, sermons began to be controlled by the central administration of Diyanet. A sermon commission, which was functioning within the Higher Council of Religious Affairs, was tasked with preparing sermon texts. The sermons, afterwards, were delivered to the imams through the monthly journal *Diyanet*. However, in 2006 there was a relaxation of this very centralized procedure of controlling the content of Friday sermons, as the task of preparing the sermons was transferred to sermon commissions within provincial mufti offices (Sunier et al., 2011, p. 51). Since then Diyanet has moved gradually towards a more decentralized system. During the Fourth Religious Council of Diyanet that was organized in October 2009, efficiency of the centralized system of sermons was discussed and it was decided that imams

⁴⁵ Ali Bardakoğlu (1952 -) gained a bachelor degree in law at Marmara University. He earned his Ph.D. degree in Islamic studies at Atatürk University. After having served at the divinity faculties of Erciyes and Marmara Universities, he was appointed as the President of the Diyanet on 28 May 2003. Ali Bardakoğlu, In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved January, 2010, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali_Bardako%C4%9Flu

should become more active in the preparation of sermons texts. Moreover, the Council maintained that this process should take place gradually⁴⁶.

Parallel to the AKP's reforms regarding women rights, the Presidency of Religious Affairs under Bardakoğlu leadership took a series of initiatives concerning women. In 2006 Prime Minister Erdoğan issued a general notice that was titled "Measures that are to eliminate violence against children and women, and honor killings"⁴⁷. In this notice it was declared that Turkish Grand National Assembly, with law no. 853 passed on 28 June 2005, designated a research commission on violence against children and women, and honor killings. It was further stated that the research commission proposed a set of measures in order to address these problems and a list of institutions that would be involved in the process. The list of "responsible institutions" included the Presidency of Religious Affairs, which was urgently called to act in cooperation with the government. As a result, from 2006 onwards the PRA has increasingly played an active role in the campaign on elimination of violence against women. "The head of the Diyanet, Ali Bardakoğlu", as Smith points out "has directed Turkey's imams to champion the humane treatment of women in their sermons" (2005, p. 322). The Vice-President, İzzet Er, reported that from 2006 to 2008, Diyanet had delivered thousands of sermons and organized hundreds of conferences addressing the issue. "Since 2006, we have delivered 5975 sermons" Er stated. "We have organized 1280 conferences and 59 panels" ("Diyanet kadın hakları metnini yumuşatacak", 2008, own translation).

⁴⁶ Information on the 4th Religious Council, 12-16 October 2009. Retrieved from <http://www.diyamet.gov.tr/dinsurasi/sura/default.asp>

⁴⁷ T.C. Başbakanlık Personel ve Prensipler Genel Müdürlüğü B.02.0.PPG.0.12-010-06-8717 no'lu 03 Temmuz 2006 tarihli "Çocuk ve Kadınlara Yönelik Şiddet Hareketleriyle Töre ve Namus Cinayetlerinin Önlenmesi için alınacak tedbirler" başlıklı genelge.

In 2008 the Presidency assembled a team of theologians at Ankara University in order to carry out a “Hadith project”. The project aimed to publish a six volume edition and Turkish translation of the *hadith*; that is, it will encompass a collection of sayings and deeds belonging to the Prophet Muhammad, which is the source of the vast majority of Islamic law (Sunier et al., 2011, p. 89). The project further aimed to purify the hadith from “cultural baggage” and a return to a form of Islam that was compatible with its original values and sayings of the Prophet. This project has been widely discussed both nationally and internationally. It was regarded as “revolutionary” by several foreign commentators and even considered to mark the beginning of a “reformation in Islam” (“Turkey in Radical Revision”, 2008). Leaders of the hadith project argued that, many hadiths were not genuinely coming from the Prophet. They claimed those were invented hundreds of years after his death and have been used as means for social control in various conservative cultures. On the other hand, they pointed out that some hadiths were genuinely spoken by the Prophet yet they needed to be reinterpreted in accordance with the needs of contemporary social life (“Turkey in Radical Revision”, 2008). The Diyanet reacted against the presentations of the Hadith project and argued that it neither aimed at a revolution nor a reform in Islam. They emphasized the project should rather be interpreted as an attempt to make the hadith understandable for people in the 21st century (Gözaydın, 2009, p. 153).

Parallel to the Presidency’s recent efforts on women, the hadith commission was particularly dealing with messages that were restrictive for women. For instance the then Vice-President Mehmet Görmez described how a practice in the Prophet’s time managed to survive until today, despite it lost its validity and hence it requires reinterpretation:

There are some messages that ban women from travelling for three days or more without their husband's permission and they are genuine...But this is not a religious ban. It came about because in the Prophet's time it simply was not safe for a woman to travel alone. But as time has passed, people have made permanent what was only supposed to be a temporary ban for safety reasons. ("Turkey in Radical Revision", 2008)

In addition to these initiatives, the Presidency started to take part in a number of social projects targeting women. A booklet published by the institution titled "Works concerning women and family 2007-2009" (Din Hizmetleri Dairesi Başkanlığı, 2010) listed several significant projects undertaken by the institution. It was reported that the Presidency carried out a joint project with Amnesty International from 2005 until 2010. Within the framework of this project, hundreds of Diyanet personnel participated in workshops concentrated on a wide range of issues, such as "Works of the Presidency of Religious Affairs on violence against children and women and honour killings", "Introduction of Amnesty International", "National and International Regulations on Violence against Women and Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)", "Gender and Social Construction of Gender". The first workshop took place in 2006 in Ankara and totally 12 workshops in different cities were conducted until 2009. In the booklet it was underlined that "this has been the very first project undertaken in collaboration with our Presidency in order to create awareness and raise consciousness amongst religious personnel" (Din Hizmetleri Dairesi Başkanlığı, 2010, p. 46, own translation). It was also emphasized this project was mentioned as a model legal regulation by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in its 2009 report on "Good Practices in Legislation on 'Harmful Practices' Against Women" (Din Hizmetleri Dairesi Başkanlığı, 2010, p. 45).

Furthermore, it was announced that under the sponsorship of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Presidency of Religious Affairs would undertake a project titled “Project of Ensuring Religious Officials’ Contributions into Elimination of Violence Against Women” (*Kadına Karşı Şiddetin Önlenmesinde Din Görevlilerinin Katkısının Sağlanması Projesi*) in 2010. The project aimed to raise public awareness on domestic violence, violence against women, the law no. 4320 on protection of family and other related laws by ensuring contributions of the Diyanet officials (Din Hizmetleri Dairesi Başkanlığı, 2010, p. 43). Ankara was chosen as the pilot area for the first stage of the project, whereby a selected group of Diyanet officials received a two-week training on these issues, after which they provide a four-day training session to their own staff (consisting of imams, Koran teachers and preachers). The project was designed to be completed by 2015 and aimed at training approximately 100,000 religious officials (Dural, n.d., p. 39).

The Presidency has contributed into several more projects that aimed at increasing opportunities for women in education. In 2006 and 2007 Diyanet endeavoured to assist the Ministry of Education and UNICEF in the “Girls to school campaign” (*Haydi kızlar okula*) by providing financial assistance to 2,049 female students, whose families were experiencing financial difficulties. Diyanet officials claimed to make contribution to the campaign not only by providing funds, but also preparing sermons aimed at increasing public awareness on the issue. For instance, on 9 September 2005 the Diyanet prepared a sermon text titled “Do not deprive our children of education” (*Çocuklarımızı Eğitimsiz Bırakmayalım*) and sent it to all mosques in Turkey:

... This week our schools commence a new academic year. Education starts in family, continues at school and in social environment. Every child is under the influence of knowledge and behaviours that are acquired from family, school and social environment... Thus we should mobilize all our means to

provide education for our children without making gender discrimination.
(Dural, n.d., p. 56)

Therefore, the Diyanet has closely followed the agenda of the state and hence involved in women's issues to an increasing extent. As a result of the favourable context, it became more women-friendly and supportive of gender equality. On the other hand, as Gözaydın pointed out, this “women initiative” in fact revealed how the institution has been used as a tool for social engineering at the hands of the government:

Although since June 2006, *hutbes* have not been sent from central Diyanet organization in Ankara, it is apparent that the Diyanet has served as a tool for social engineering as in the “girls to school” campaign, with respect to issues of domestic violence, etc. (Gözaydın, 2008a, p. 223)

Diyanet's greater involvement in women issues was also evident its employment policies. In recent years, there has been a steady increase in the number female personnel within the institution. To put in numerical terms, in 2000 the number of female personnel working within the central organization was only 18, this number rose to 43 in 2007 and became 53 in 2009 (Dural, n.d., p. 36). The Diyanet recruited 4,500 between 2005 and 2007, and in 2008 2,500 – in total, 7000 female Koran teaching staff.

At the Fourth Religious Congress (*4. Din Şurası*) took place in September 2009, the Presidency of Religious Affairs decided to apply “positive discrimination” toward women and stressed the necessity to increase the number of female personnel at the institution (“Diyanet'ten Kadına Pozitif Ayrımcılık”, 2009). The reasons behind Diyanet's attempts to increase female personnel were to reach as many women as possible to provide them with “right” religious knowledge, boost the number of women visiting mosques, to deal with social problems related with family

and offer counseling to women on various matters (Dural, n.d, pp. 36-7). Reaching women has gained more significance in this context as the perspectives of the government and Diyanet converged that women were the primary educators future generations due to their roles as mothers.

Women were integrated into Diyanet's ranks mostly as official preachers. While the number of preachers in 1991 was 34, in 2002 this number increased to 78, and in 2010 to 403 (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 2011, p. 15). The reopening of the imam hatip (middle) schools in 2012 has furthered the increase in female preachers. The total number of female personnel working at Diyanet's central and provincial organization rose from 2,715 in 1991, to 5,495 in 2005, and became 11,041 in 2010 (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 2011, p. 14). Consequently women's rights, gender equality, as well as elimination of violence against women have been articulated much more in the sermons of preachers. Between 2007 and 2009 the PRA recited 413 friday sermons on women-related issues; such as women's rights, domestic violence, honor killing, etc. (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 2011, p. 16).

Fatma Tütüncü claims that the Turkish state mobilized women preachers of Diyanet for other political purposes as well. Her study analyzing the politics of preaching to Kurdish women in the south – east towns and cities, shows “how the women preachers are considered a remedy for the Kurdish question in its feminized form” (Tütüncü, 2010, p. 605). She points out that:

In the south-east region, mostly populated by Kurdish citizens, the gender-sensitive character of the sermons has gained an ethnic twist, targeting female suicides, honor-killings and the illiteracy of girls in the region, and emphasizing the peace and unity in Islam and fraternity of Muslim believers, Turkish and Kurdish alike within the boundaries of the Turkish nation-state. (Tütüncü, 2010, p. 595)

The boldest step taken under the presidency of Bardakoğlu that expanded career opportunities available for female employees was the introduction of a quota system for vice-mufti position (Çakır & Bozan, 2005, p. 35). With the new regulation on appointments and promotions adopted by the Presidency in 2004, the condition required “serving as mufti in a province at least three years” was waived for female candidates applying for vice-mufti positions in cities. As a result in 2005 for the first time in its history, Diyanet had female Vice-Muftis in Kayseri and Antalya. In 2006 female Vice-Muftis were appointed in Bursa, İstanbul, İzmir, Konya and Sivas. This trend was followed a year later in Edirne, Şanlıurfa, Manisa and Adana. In 2010, the total number of female vice-muftis reached 11 (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 2011, p. 15).

Despite the bold steps taken to increase female recruitment, women still remain as a minority group within the PRA. 2009 statistics indicated that women employees still constituted only 28% of the PRA’s personnel (Din Hizmetleri Dairesi Başkanlığı, 2010, p. 75).

2.4.2 2010 – 2014: Expansion of Diyanet’s scope and period of radical politicization

During the last years of Bardakoğlu’s term, the PRA undertook two significant plans exploring new business areas for itself: the plan to launch “Diyanet TV” and the plan of turning mosques into social centres. As the two plans came out in the *Diyanet Strategic Plan 2009*, it provoked criticisms from secularists, such as the CHP, as they were perceived as threat to the secular Republic (Sunier et al., 2011, p. 67). The Strategic Plan proposed the creation of Diyanet’s own television broadcasting station by 2013, as well as opening of libraries, internet centres, classrooms, tea shops and multi-purpose rooms in 200 pilot mosques. It was announced that seminars would be

held at mosques to enlighten public on societal matters and internet technologies would be benefited to inform public regarding these seminars (“Diyanet İnternetle Atılım Hedefliyor”, 2009). Additionally, websites would be created for several mosques, imams would be trained on the use of these new technologies, and even Koran courses would be accessible through the internet. Therefore, the use of new technologies would enable the Diyanet officials to deliver their messages to people more effectively than conventional methods, such as Friday sermons, Koran courses, or publications. It is argued that with such new initiatives, the Diyanet has sought to extend the scope of religious services beyond mosques and religious services in a way that it has altered the nature of “religious service” and attached to it a wider social-moral understanding, which covered much more than just praying, fasting, and religious ceremonies (Sunier et al., 2011, p. 68). Diyanet’s concern over social issues and its efforts to attach social dimensions into the religious services, marked a transformation in the Diyanet, whereby it has gone through a process of self re-identification and re-interpretation of its duties and roles within the contemporary political and social environment. These new roles and duties have been clearly in contrast with those assigned during the Republican era.

With respect to the “societal role” of the Diyanet, Gözaydın emphasized the scope of the activities is widening. She observes that mosques have been increasingly attracting incomers from different societal groups and the time spent in mosques has also been increasing. In contrast, previously activity of visiting mosques was very much limited to prayer. According to Gözaydın, this was mainly due to the Republican attempt to contain the social influences of religion and limit it as a personal matter. As she claims, Diyanet’s latest attempts to convert mosques

into social centers obviously had an opposite goal; “to increase the influence of religion” (As cited in Sunier et al., 2011, p. 69).

On 1 July 2010, a new bill regarding the inner organization of the Presidency of Religious Affairs was adopted with the initiative of the state minister responsible for the institution. One of the most significant changes was concerning the length of a President could stay in office. Unlike the previous law, the new bill limited the President’s term to five years and it provided that same person could be elected for this position only twice. Moreover, the bill enabled a tremendous expansion in the size of the Diyanet personnel by creating 17,774 new cadres (“Diyanet yeni Teşkilat Kanunu’na Kavuştu”, 2010). The most controversial article of the Diyanet bill was the change in age restrictions for participation in the Koran courses. The new regulation eliminated the age limit for participation and made it possible for younger children to attend these courses, as long as there was family permission. Moreover, the bill aimed to put an end to lengthy discussion on the ownership of mosques in Turkey. Despite the fact that the administration of mosques was among the primary duties of the PRA since its foundation, it did not necessarily mean that it had the exclusive right to own and manage mosques. In fact, many mosques in Turkey have been built by local foundations. In such cases, the PRA was merely charged with appointing mosque personnel and supervising the religious services. However, under the new bill, official ownership of all new mosques was taken from the foundations building them and transferred to the Diyanet (Sunier et al., 2011, pp. 48-50). The bill clearly has expanded the authority and responsibilities of Diyanet over mosques.

While Diyanet’s scope has been growing under the AKP authority, so has its dependency on the government’s policies and discourses. For instance, in 2008, when 120 workers who had been fired because of their membership of an industrial

union, chanted slogans against Erdoğan, Diyanet's local branch in Düzce recited a sermon stating that "slowing down the work, damaging the workplace, actions that cause a decrease in profits put workers under religious responsibility" (as cited in Öztürk, 2016, p. 630).

On 8 November 2010, President Bardakoğlu, under whose leadership these new initiatives had taken place, announced his resignation from his post ("Bardakoğlu: Görevden Ayrılma", 2010). Before his resignation, the press had widely reported about an on-going tension between the government and Bardakoğlu. It has been claimed that Bardakoğlu displeased the government by his several statements that were incompatible with the discourse and policies of the party. On the headscarf ban, for instance, he was reluctant to be a mouthpiece of the government and rather displayed a careful attitude by stating "As the Presidency of Religious Affairs we have already expressed our viewpoint" . "The question should be solved at the parliament. We have stated that the headscarf was a religious obligation. However, we stated that the headscarf was not an entry requirement to Islam, with or without the headscarf, anyone who says 'I am Muslim' is a Muslim" ("Erdoğan Topu Diyanet'e Attı", 2010, own translation). It was further claimed that Bardakoğlu frustrated the governing party when he declared his opposition against the mention of religious affiliation on Turkish identity cards. Bardakoğlu's comment before the Religious Feast of Sacrifice (*Kurban bayramı*) that in certain conditions where it was necessary Diyanet might call believers not to sacrifice an animal was no less provoking for the government ("Bardakoğlu'nun AKP ile Gerilimi", 2010). On 5 November 2010 in an interview when he was asked to explain his reason for not participating in official receptions, "nobody has ever given importance to Diyanet as much as Atatürk did" he answered ("Atatürk'ün Gösterdiği Önemi", 2010, own

translation). For Çakır, Bardakoğlu's reluctance to show explicit support to government's so-called "Kurdish initiative"⁴⁸ was another major reason behind the tension between the two sides (Çakır, 2010). Bardakoğlu was told to reject the government's demand for the Diyanet's approval of sermons in Kurdish language, by arguing that it would increase social fragmentation. He insisted that the recital of sermons and preaches in Kurdish language "could only be thought as a last resort for the solution of the Kurdish question" ("Bardakoğlu: Görevden Ayrılma", 2010, own translation). According to critical media, Bardakoğlu was forced to resign under the AKP pressure, despite the fact that he officially declared he had resigned from his post with his free will. However, in his message at the handover ceremony he emphasized Diyanet has "stood in equal distance to all". He underlined that throughout his presidency Diyanet embraced everyone with an understanding that "all is our people" and provided a service without making discrimination on the basis of belief, sect, dress code, and ethnicity ("Bardakoğlu'nun AKP ile gerilimi", 2010, own translation). Moreover, he added "... I aimed to elevate moral values in our social life, strengthen feelings of unity and solidarity in our country" ("Bardakoğlu: Görevden Ayrılma", 2010, own translation).

Following Bardakoğlu's resignation Mehmet Görmez⁴⁹ was appointed as the President on 11 November 2011. Shortly after this appointment, Ayse Sucu, who had

⁴⁸Partly due to the pressure by the European Union the AKP launched the "Kurdish Initiative" (*Kürt Açılımı*) in 2009 and has made several reforms improving human rights for the Kurdish minority (such as allowance of TV broadcastings in Kurdish language). Nevertheless, there has been no definitive settlement of the most controversial issues, such as constitutional protection for Kurdish cultural rights and political decentralization (Kubicek, 2011, p. 447).

⁴⁹Mehmet Görmez (1959-) went to Imam-Hatip school in Gaziantep. He graduated from Divinity Faculty at Ankara University in 1983. He earned a master's and a doctoral degree in *Hadith* at the same university. He became the Vice-President of the PRA on 13 August 2003. He was appointed as the President on 11 November 2010. The Presidency of Religious Affairs. (2010, November 11). Duyuru [The Announcement]. Retrieved from <http://www.diyaret.gov.tr/turkish/dy/Diyanet-Isleri-Baskanligi-Duyuru-8081.aspx>.

served for fourteen years as the director of the Women Activities Centre (*Kadın Faaliyetleri Merkezi*) at the Diyanet Foundation⁵⁰, (*Diyanet Vakfı*) was discharged from her position in December. This incident stirred up hot controversies in public, as Sucu was known for her antithetical viewpoint regarding the headscarf⁵¹. Before her replacement she declared that the headscarf was not a prerequisite for Islam (“Sucu Görevden Alındı”, 2010). Several newspapers wrote that Sucu’s style of wearing headscarf had been a motivating factor behind her replacement. Her style had drawn broad public attention and been portrayed by secularists as a “modern” way of covering, as it was not covering whole hair. Several newspapers also likened her style to “Butto model”, which had been presented as a model for the Turkish pious women by the main opposition party CHP’s leader Kılıçdaroğlu (“Türban İkiye Böldü”, 2010). Sucu’s case stimulated a wave of resignations at the Diyanet Foundation. Protesting Sucu’s replacement 28 female members resigned from their posts in the same month. Karabulut, who was one those members, referred Sucu as a “modern woman”, who linked the Centre not only with Islam, but also with the Republic:

Ms. Sucu displayed a supra-political attitude by standing neutral towards every institution, community [*cemaat*] and political party, she showed that a modern woman could also be religious. [This Centre] aimed to understand and explain our religion in a correct way, protect our cultural traditions with a democratic and Republican understanding, in short it aimed at constructing a modern and an Islamic family structure. (“Diyanet Vakfı’nda Toplu İstifa”, 2010; see Appendix D, 2)

⁵⁰ Despite the fact that the Diyanet Foundation is established as a civil society organization, the President of the PRA serves as the President of the Board of Trustees, which is the highest department within the organizational structure. See *Teşkilat Şeması* at Diyanet Foundation’s official website (<http://www.diyantevakfi.org.tr/4/kurumsal/teskilat-semamiz>)

⁵¹ In her book titled “*Din ve Kadın*” (Religion and Women) Sucu discussed the issue of covering and dressing in Islam. In this section she carefully avoided any mention of headscarf as an Islamic obligation. Rather she wrote, “Koran tells women to wear their outer dresses when going out in public” (Sucu, 2005, p. 30).

Since 2010, Diyanet has grown exponentially. With a budget of 5.4 billion Turkish lira in 2014, Diyanet's budget was more than the Interior Ministry's, and equal to those of the Foreign, Energy, and Culture and Tourism ministries combined (Dural, n.d., p. 19). There has been a steady growth in the size of its personnel as well. The number of personnel was 79,810 in 2006. This number escalated to 98,555 in 2011. According to the estimates of 2013, Diyanet employed 121,845 people making it one of the largest state institutions in Turkey – bigger than the Ministry of Interior (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, n.d.).

As the size of Diyanet grew, so did its societal role. In 2011, Diyanet began issuing halal certificates for food products. Diyanet also launched "*Alo Fetva*" - a free telephone hotline service that provides Islamic guidance on everyday matters (Cornell, 2015). In May 2012, a major step was taken to realize the "Diyanet TV" plan that had been proposed earlier. State-owned television and radio station, TRT and the Presidency signed a protocol to establish the Diyanet TV, which was announced to start broadcastings in June. Erstwhile partial religious broadcastings had already started on TRT, through a weekly two-hour program titled "In the light of Islam" (*İslam'ın Aydınlığında*). In the protocol ceremony, President Görmez began his speech by noting that "A fifty year-old dream is coming to real" ("TRT Diyanet", 2012, own translation). Parallel to the government's project of "raising religious generations" he stated that through Diyanet TV, they would be able reach to youth and new generations to deliver the message of Islam. Moreover, he maintained "it is needless to explain that the duty to illuminate society on religious matters can no more be limited to preach and sermons within the mosque... In order to ensure religious advancement new instruments are needed" ("TRT Diyanet", 2012, own translation).

President Görmez has acted as the mouthpiece of government on several occasions. For instance, in June 2013 during the Gezi demonstrations, Erdoğan claimed that the protesters drank alcohol within a mosque in Dolmabahçe, adding that they also entered the mosque with their shoes, both of which are inadmissible in Islam. The police started an investigation into the issue after Erdoğan's allegations. In response, Fuat Yıldırım, the muezzin of the mosque that had sheltered injured protesters, denied those claims and stated that he had not seen anyone consuming alcohol in the mosque during the Gezi Park protests ("I Did Not See Anyone", 2013). Even though, he did not actually confirm that protesters drank alcohol within the mosque, President Görmez supported Erdoğan's claims by declaring they took the camera records showing some "unacceptable" actions had taken place in the mosque and he "wished those had never happened" ("Diyanet İşleri Başkanı Görmez: O Caminin", 2013, own translation). Consequently, the imam and muezzin of the mosque, as well as the mufti of Beyoğlu were expelled from their posts and appointed to remote areas. ("Diyanet: Sürgün Değil", 2013).

Another incident, which demonstrated Diyanet's recent radical politicization, was concerning a Friday sermon that sought to justify AKP's restrictions on social media. In line with AKP's restrictions on the social media and freedom of expression, Diyanet recited a sermon on 28 March 2014, which discussed the meaning of "freedom" argued "freedom is not vagabondism, freedom does not mean irresponsibility at all". Speaking metaphorically, the Diyanet claimed those who sought to harm the state increased with expansion of the means of communication:

My brothers! Many problems arise today because of misunderstanding the concept of freedom. This is because, for most people, freedom is to possess everything that one desires. However, let us not forget that such an understanding leads both the person and society into captivity and disaster. Today, as our world is getting smaller with the means of mass

communication and those who want to make a hole in the bottom of the boat are increasing... and hence the humanity is in the need of the messages of Koran and our beloved Prophet on freedom and responsibility more than ever. (“Diyanet’in Cuma Hutbesi”, 2014; see Appendix D, 3)

Manoeuvres as such demonstrated how Diyanet’s religious authority has been used to justify AKP’s attempts to restrict freedoms and hence suppress dissent against the government.

Despite various initiatives regarding the elimination of violence against women by the Diyanet, implications of the AKP’s conservative patriarchal discourse have recently surfaced in the top-level official statements. For instance, on 22 August 2013 during his speech after the “Collaboration Protocols For the Contribution of Religion Workers to Prevent Violence Against Women and Protection of Family” President Görmez addressed the United Nations and declared that he no longer wanted to spend UN’s money on elimination of violence against women. He called “UN to stop human killings, instead of dealing with violence against women” (“Instead of dealing with violence”, 2013).

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND FEMINISM IN TURKEY

The preceding chapter delved into the dynamics between politics and Diyanet; and explained how Diyanet's role, functions and organizational structure have changed in accordance with ideologies and agendas of dominant political actors. It particularly scrutinized the recent politicization of the Diyanet under the AKP authority.

Whereas, this chapter focuses on the women's movement in Turkey and outlines the historical development of the feminist movement in Turkey, as well as its relations with the state.

This study acknowledges the diversity among different women's groups in Turkey and the fact that there is a variety of Islamic feminist organizations, which have diverging views on the rights, roles and ideal dress codes of women than secular feminist organizations. Because it is theoretically based on secular feminist literature; this thesis concentrates on the historical development of the secular feminist movement in Turkey, without neglecting the cleavages that exist within Turkish women's groups.

The main argument in this chapter is that, as secular women's groups have gained greater public visibility, social power and political influence in Turkey since the late 1980s, they have been able push the state to take steps to address gender disparities. These in turn have played an indirect role in moderating Diyanet's dominant discourse on women's issues. The more the state embraced gender equality and norms associated with secular feminist movement, the more moderate and women-friendly the religious discourse on women became. Since the PRA is

attached to the state, its discourse on women has been transformed to the extent that the feminist movement has been transforming the state.

Even though the women's movement has been an influential social actor to shape state policies, its capability to influence religious discourse is linked with the nature of sociopolitical environment and its interactions with the government in power. Diyanet adopts a more gender-sensitive discourse if the political environment is favorable to women's requests and when the ruling government has ideological willingness or vested interests in fulfilling those requests. The women's movement in Turkey highly benefited from the Turkey's pursuit of EU membership. As this chapter illustrates, the pressure of the women's rights groups, which gained significant leverage with the EU harmonization process, was successful to push the state to take major steps to address gender equality in the early 2000s. Diyanet as a state institution was incorporated into process. This led to a revision of its hitherto patriarchal standpoint and crystallization of a more gender sensitive discourse in the texts from the 1990s onwards. On the other hand, a new and contradictory mode of patriarchy represented by the AKP caused tension between feminists and the party, which in turn has complicated Diyanet's discourse regarding women.

Women's activism has fairly a long history in Turkey. As Yeşim Arat writes, women's opposition to the state as active political subjects in the pursuit of their rights dates back to Ottoman times (2008, p. 388). Nükhet Sirman (1989) classifies three stages of the women's movement on the basis of turning points in Turkish politics. According to Sirman, the first stage started in the 19th century and was characterized by the emergence of women's associations mainly among upper strata of society. These associations predominantly called for expanding women's rights of education and employment (Çakır, 1991, pp. 139-57). Tekeli claims that the most

important reforms accomplished by the Kemalist founding fathers were in fact the result of years of activism by Ottoman women (Tekeli, 2010, p. 120). This stage ended with the integration of the women's movement into nationalist movement. The second stage started with the foundation of the Republic in 1923 and lasted until the 1980s. It was marked by so-called "state feminism" carried out by the Kemalist Republican elite. The third stage started in the late 1980s, when women activists started to criticize state feminism and establish independent feminist platforms.

Parallel to the scope and research objectives of this thesis, I took the foundation of the Republic as the starting point to discuss the history of the feminist movement. In addition to the two stages put forth by Sirman, I study the developments that have taken place during the AKP rule under a separate title, not only because the AKP period constitutes an important milestone in Turkish politics; but also because AKP government's approach to the "women question" and its policies toward women require an in-depth analysis to provide a better understanding of Diyanet's discourse in recent years.

3.1 Young Turkish Republic and the years of "state feminism"

With the declaration of new Republic in 1923, new doors open to women. After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the founders of the Republic aimed to establish a liberal, secular and modern society in Turkey. Zehra Arat points out, women were assigned a crucial part in this project and, their progress was interpreted as an important measure of success achieving modernity (Z. Arat, 2000, p. 15). The state undertook a series of reforms that promoted its modernizing goals and at the same time dramatically expanded the realm of opportunities for Turkish women. These reforms during the early Republican period culminated in what various scholars have

called “state feminism” (Tekeli, 1986, p. 185). Despite being male-dominated, the Republican state made women’s equality in the public sphere a national policy (White, 2003, p. 145).

Contemporary analysts agree that Ziya Gökalp, with his unique theory of civilization and nationalism, became a major influence on the Republican leaders and provided the intellectual foundation of many of the new state’s reforms. According to Gökalp, modernization was not the same as Westernization, but something that is essentially Turkish. He claimed that the “modern” was inherent in Turkish civilization and women were its guards. Therefore, the emancipation of women, as well as the progress of the nation, depended not on the imitation of the West, but on a return to this original Turkish civilization, in which “women were equal to men” (as cited in Y. Arat, 1997). Gökalp helped to create a myth claiming that pre-Islamic society was, by nature, egalitarian and that the ancient Turks were both democrats and feminists (as cited in White, 2003, p. 148). Turkish women, he wrote, had been considered equal to their husbands, and had engaged in all aspects of public life along with men. They had ruled fortresses, carried on business transactions, and rode horses on their own. It followed that in order to be truly national or modern, Turks had to restore the lost “Turkish past” by granting equal rights to women. Therefore, in Yeşim Arat’s words “the state’s project of reaching the level of civilization happily coincided with women’s demands for gender equality” (Arat, 2008, p. 392).

In order to promote gender equality, Republican founders emphasized schooling of girls. Primary school education was made mandatory for both sexes in 1923. In 1926, the Islamic civil code was dismantled and a civil code that was adapted from the Swiss civil code was introduced. With the civil code, the principle of gender equality was stipulated and mixed-gender education in primary and

secondary schools applied from 1927 onwards. Republican women were encouraged to attend universities, obtain professional degrees, and contribute to the development of the nation. Soon, women were to pursue careers in medicine, law, engineering, and the social and natural sciences (White: 2003, p. 150). Between 1920 and 1938, ten percent of all university graduates were women. This was a significant achievement in the short time since İstanbul University had opened its doors to women in 1916 (Duben & Behar, 1991, p. 216).

Republican male elite encouraged women to assume new public roles in society, enter prestigious professions and even become airplane pilots (Arat, 1997, p. 99). The favorable climate of opinion vis-à-vis recruitment of women into prestigious professions has had some significant long-term effects. As a case in point, one may refer to Öncü's study (1981) on the role of women in the professions in Turkey. She suggested that women's entry had created a momentum of its own and had avoided the sex typing of many jobs and possibly provided role models for younger generations.

Women were expected to contribute to the process of modernization not only by participating in the workforce, but also by being "modern" mothers and housewives. Modernity, as defined by the Turkish state, included marriage and childbearing as a national duty for women. Marriage was to be compassionate, and children were to be raised "scientifically" by mothers educated in the latest childrearing and household management techniques imported from the West. Girls' institutes and "evening girls arts schools" (*Akşam Kız Sanat Okulları*) were founded to serve this purpose (Arat, 1997, p. 100). Women's domestic duties took on a new character with the "rationalization" of housework and the advent of the science of home - economics. Information about hygiene, scientific upbringing of children,

housework technology, and homemaking were instructed through the courses taught at these schools.

The new Civil Code adopted in 1926 also made significant transformations regarding the structure of the family. It outlawed polygamy, endorsed compulsory civil marriage, prevented child marriages by imposing a minimum age for marriage, granted women the right to chose their spouses, recognized equal rights of divorce to both partners, permitted child custody rights to both parents, and also anticipated egalitarian inheritance laws. According to Zehra Arat (2000, p. 24), although the Civil Law of 1926 significantly improved women's position in the family, it also assured the continuation of male's superiority. For instance, the husband remained the legally recognized head of the family and the wife had to take his permission in order to work outside the home.

Furthermore, the new Republic banned headscarves and veils on official premises, including schools and civil service offices. The image of modern woman was reinforced by encouragement Western attire. Female role models around Atatürk all dressed in Western attire in daily life and attending Republican balls and parties in "modern" gowns insured the "civilized" outlook of the new Republic to the Western world.

Another crucial change was the granting of suffrage to women, which took place in two steps: women were first granted the vote at the local elections in 1930 and at the national level in 1934. As a result, Turkish women could vote and run for political office both at local and national levels quite early compared with most other South European societies. After the 1935 elections, which were largely orchestrated by Atatürk's Republican Party, 18 out of 401 members of the Grand National Assembly were women (White, 2003, p. 151). As a percentage, they accounted for

4.5% of all seats in the Assembly. This had remained as the highest proportion in Turkish history until the 2007 elections.

While these reforms opened the path for “women’s emancipation” (Kandiyoti, 1987), the strict monopolization of the Republican regime of public sphere prevented women’s independent organization (Y. Arat, 2000a). The regime wanted to mobilize women, but only under state leadership and only to the point that was permissible by men (Z. Arat, 2000. p. 23). When women attempt to form *Kadınlar Halk Fırkası* (Women’s People’s Party) in 1923, they were not allowed by CHP on the grounds that women had not yet gained political rights. Instead, the women involved in the party initiative were encouraged to form an association, *Türk Kadın Birliği* (Turkish Women’s Association) in 1924. Its founder Nezihe Muhiddin, who was also the leader of Women’s People’s Party, opted for an independent voice, was expelled by CHP and immediately replaced by a more “moderate” activist (Zihnioğlu, 2003). The Association’s attempt to nominate its own parliamentary (male) candidates for the 1927 elections was blocked and women’s demand for membership to the ruling CHP was denied in the early 1930s (Tekeli, 1982, p. 215). As Zafer Toprak noted, when the Association collaborated with feminists all around the world to host a Congress of Feminism in Turkey in 1935 and issued a declaration against the rising Nazi threat, the ruling elite was displeased (Toprak, 1986). The association was finally invited to dissolve itself in 1935, after women gained the right of suffrage (Z. Toprak, 1988). The pronounced explanation behind the dissolution was that there was no longer any need for such association in Turkey, as women acquired “fully equal status with men in all respects” (Coşar & Onbaşı, 2008, p. 329). White (2003, p. 156) calls this process as “patriarchal bargain”. In other

words, the lack of full rights granted to women was justified with a sense of security and respect given to them.

As the cases of Women's People's Party and Turkish Women's Association illustrate, on the one hand Kemalist elite bolstered women's activism in the founding era, on the other hand it restricted the prospects for the development of independent feminist organizations.

3.1.1 Constraints: Patriarchal norms and state interests

Republican women's activism and autonomy were hindered by two constraints: patriarchal norms and conservative culture; as well as the requirement to remain loyal to state interests. As Yeşim Arat points out, despite enormous changes and new opportunities for women, Turkish society had traditionally been conservative and Kemalism perpetuated the patriarchal division of labor in society (Arat, 1994, p. 244).

Durakbaşa argued that motherhood was still stressed as a woman's traditional role, along with her new role as a socially active and professional woman, as Atatürk's following statements reflected:

Modern women... means social woman in the first place. She is the woman of a vigorous society. These vigorous institutions are science and industry. Modern woman is a woman who is cultivated in science and industrial culture. Motherhood is a woman's duty; she has always done it, she must do it just the same. However, bearing children is not a profession, it is one of the physical needs and duties, just like a man's need and requirement to impregnate.... (Durakbaşa, 2000, p. 144)

Indeed, the theme of motherhood, as an important "duty" of women repeatedly appeared in Atatürk's speeches. In a speech he delivered in 1923, Atatürk called for

women to “take places in the general economic division of labor” and also stated “a woman’s highest duty is motherhood” (Duben & Bahar, 1991, p. 221).

Zehra Arat’s analysis of the secondary school curricula and government documents with the assessment of women who went through the Republican education system showed that despite the emphasis on women’s education, the system maintained a gender bias by reinforcing traditional gender roles in the curricula and in vocational specialization, and attempting to restrict female students’ mobility and femininity. Arat argues that regime regarded “motherhood” role as the primary task of women; hence the gendered curricula as well as the emphasis on vocational training in home economics, fashion, midwifery, and nursing were consistent with its ideology (Arat, 2000a, p. 16).

Moreover, Zehra Arat argues that the Kemalist elite constructed an “ideal Turkish woman” whose duty was raising generations and preserving Turkish national identity (2000, p.1). Therefore, motherhood was a patriotic duty for the Kemalist elite. Sirman (1989) highlights the similarity between the identity of woman during the late Ottoman Era and the early Republican period: If the Ottoman state constituted women primarily as wives and mothers in need of education, the Republican state constituted them as patriotic citizens. The new patriotic woman was still a wife and mother, but also she had another mission, that of educating the nation” (Sirman, 1989, p. 17).

Zehra Arat refers to a dialogue between a female teacher candidate and Atatürk that took place in Teachers Training School for Girls, in 1925 and documents it as an example of an avert expression of the effort to articulate the “desirable” characteristics of the “ideal Turkish woman”. “What should be the Turkish woman like?” asks the female teacher, and Atatürk answers:

The Turkish woman should be the most enlightened, most virtuous, and most reserved woman of the world. . . . The duty of the Turkish woman is raising generations that are capable of preserving and protecting the Turk with his mentality, strength and determination. The woman who is the source and social foundation of the nation can fulfill her duty only if she is virtuous. . . . Let's remember the famous verse by [the poet] Fikret: "Naturally declines the mankind, if woman is destitute". (Arat, 2000, p.1)

To Zehra Arat, this dialogue is significant not just on the grounds that it displays the endeavor to push women into an idealized prototype, but also because it reveals women's willingness to accept and participate in the construction of their gender. Arat also adds this dialogue, most importantly, indicated that construction of "the ideal Turkish woman" was an essential component of the Kemalist elite's "nation building" project (Arat, 2000, p. 2). Even women's journals at the time wrote about the need for women to become educated so that they would like to carry out their political duty properly, that is, to bring up the children into whose hands the future would be entrusted (White, 2003, p. 154). In 1913 a women's journal wrote, "The family provides the future of national life. Family means nation; nation means family" (Duben & Behar, 1991, p. 105).

As White suggests, "the ideal Republican woman was a 'citizen woman', urban and urbane, socially progressive, but also uncomplaining and dutiful at home" (2013, p. 146). State feminism was concerned primarily with women's public emancipation, but did not interfere in domestic sphere. Therefore, in spite of discussions of gender equality, women's education and professionalism, traditional gender roles and conservative sexual morality persisted in domestic sphere. For this reason, until the 1980s problems within the family, such as domestic violence, were not the concern of the Turkish state (White, 2003, p. 154).

"Despite all the efforts, the public space continued to be seen as man's domain. Accordingly, it continued to be defined in masculine terms" (Atakav, 2007,

p. 17). In the workplace, women of the period had to dress to downplay her femininity and sexuality (White, 2003: 153) and were expected to have “masculine” character traits (Z. Arat, 2000, p. 143).

Starting from the 1980s, feminist scholars have pointed the instrumental nature of the modernizing reforms (Tekeli, 1979; Sirman, 1989; Kandiyoti, 1989; Y. Arat, 1997). Tekeli (1981) claimed that suffrage was a means of proving the democratic nature of the Turkish Republic ruled by a single party. At a time when fascist dictatorships were gaining power in Europe, granting suffrage rights to women might have been a symbolic assertion of democracy. As Sirman (1989) argued the linking of women and democracy was also instrumental in the struggle against Islamic forces, in which images of a democratic and feminist Turkish past were used.

According to Yeşim Arat (1997), the Republican fathers who initiated these reforms believed that they knew the best interests of the polity, and these corresponded to the best interests of women in the polity. Atatürk stated, “Republic means democracy, and recognition of women’s rights is a dictate of democracy; hence women’s rights will be recognized” (as cited in İnan, 1959, p. 257). As Arat emphasized, this quotation reveals “not merely the instrumental, functional approach to women’s rights, but also the certainty with which what was good for the other was assumed. What women wanted was not a problematical issue” (Arat, 1997, p. 99).

Nevertheless, despite blocking attempts to develop feminism outside state sponsorship, as White puts it, in the long term, Republican reforms contributed to the development of conditions that paved the way to a more universalist liberal feminism in the 1980s (White, 2003, p.158).

3.2 Women's movement in Turkey in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup

The 1960 military coup marks the beginning of a new era in Turkish politics and history, even though it does not constitute a significant turning point in women's history. Nevertheless, emergence of new and ideologically distinct political groups in the post-1960 Turkey, played a role of politicizing women, since they recruited and mobilized women for their own purposes. Zehra Arat notes various political parties emerged within this period established women's branches and used them to expand their electoral bases and for fundraising activities. Despite their disregard for gender equality, these new political parties and groups caused women's political participation and activism to increase (Arat, 2000a, pp. 17-18). The experience they gained in various platforms during the 1960s and 1970s prepared women to organize around their demands in the 1980s.

According to Coşar and Onbaşı (2008, p. 330) there were two dimensions that had both strategic and essential implications for the rise of the women's movement in Turkey in the 1980s: The first dimension was the changing sociopolitical structure in Turkey in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup. The second one concerned the rise of transnational feminism. Following the military coup, all political parties and organizations were banned from politics. This political vacuum enabled women to free themselves from the boundaries of previously subscribed ideologies and provided them with the opportunity to reorganize in alternative modes (Coşar & Onbaşı, 2008, p. 330). In addition, Sirman (1989, p.19) underlined the influence of Western feminism on these new various groups, in the form of "non-hierarchical and independent forms of organizations, consciousness-raising groups, issue-oriented ad hoc committees".

3.2.1 The 1980s: The years of confrontation with the state

Until the 1980s, there was a consensus in society that Kemalist reforms had been emancipatory for women. The consensus broke down when a younger generation of middle-class, left-wing, educated women professionals, who were in touch with the ideas of new wave of feminism in Western countries, challenged this tradition (Arat, 1997, p. 103; Tekeli, 2010, p. 120). This new movement started mainly in İstanbul and Ankara with small awareness-rising groups echoed the famous slogan of Western feminists: “The private is political” (Tekeli, 2010, p. 120). The new feminist movement was critical of “state feminism” of the Republican period. Feminists discussed the meaning of Republican reforms for women and argued that these reforms provided emancipation in the public field, but did not actually liberate Turkish women (Kandiyoti, 1987). Republican reforms did not aim at women’s liberation since “they essentially defined women as breeders and educators of the new generations” (Atakav, 2007, p. 18). Despite radical changes in the matters such marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc. primordial male-female relations could continue little interferences from the state (Arat, 1997, p. 104). Hierarchies and controls within the private sphere, which had hitherto been ignored, now surfaced.

One target of feminists’ protest was the republican legal framework. The laws, particularly Civil Code, which had been presented by the state and considered widely by public as progressive, were shown to be not egalitarian (Arat, 1997, p. 105). The civil Code recognized the husband as the head of the household and representative of the marriage union. The husband had the privilege of choosing the place of residence and he was expected to provide for the family. As Tekeli (2010, p. 121) writes woman lost her name, her identity and even her freedom to work, as the permission of the husband was required for her in order to work outside the home.

Thus, the Code put woman in a secondary status within the marriage, as a “dependent housewife”. This critical re-reading led the women’s movement to launch a campaign from 1985 onwards calling for reform of the Civil Code.

Sexual liberties and freedoms, once taboo, became articulated issues during the 1980s. Radical feminist women reclaimed sexuality and desires outside of family duty (Atakav, 2007, p. 18). By demanding sexual freedoms, they challenged the morality of the older generation of feminist women and modernizing founding elite in search of liberation beyond emancipation (Arat, 1997, p. 105). In the same period, feminist women discovered that the female body was a target of male aggression and assault. Thus, they brought sexual harassment and violence towards women into public debate. The so-called “virginity tests” required from single female job seekers in the public sector and widespread sexual harassment cases were critical signs of the domination of women’s bodies by men (Tekeli, 2010, p. 121). Yet, the most dramatic issue for women in Turkey was domestic violence, around which they would continue to organize and stage protests.

In 1985, Turkey officially signed the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) under international pressure (Berik, 1990). Even though the Convention legally bound signatories to accord citizens equal rights regardless of sex, it was not implemented. The women’s movement made its first collective, public appearance to protest against government’s neglect of the Convention (Y. Arat, 1994, p. 246). In 1986, a group of feminists delivered a petition signed by 7,000 women demanding the implementation of the CEDAW (Sirman, 1989, p.1). Feminists having diverse ideological orientations united over their dissatisfaction with the Turkish legal framework and called for reform of the civil code and the penal code.

It was in 1987 that feminists literally took to the streets. The first street demonstration took place when a judge refused the divorce application of a pregnant woman who was regularly beaten by her husband, by referring to a Turkish proverb saying: “You should never leave a woman’s back without a stick and her womb without a colt”. Even though only 3,000 women marched on the streets of Istanbul on 17 May 1987, it received high media coverage and public opinion was alerted on violence against women (Tekeli, 2010, p. 121).

3.2.2 The 1990s: The years of cooperation and diversity

As Coşar and Onbaşı pointed out “throughout the 1980s feminists had a negative attitude toward the state. This was mainly because they perceived the state as the main guardian of patriarchal system, and hence they refused to cooperate with it” (2008, p. 330). Feminist women claimed that the state was promoting and legitimizing patriarchal norms through institutions such as the family, the media, and the educational system (Arat, 1997, pp. 105-6). Throughout the 1990s, this attitude was gradually replaced by a willingness to build a more cooperative relationship with the state (Coşar & Onbaşı, 2008). Kardam and Ertürk (1999, pp. 176-80) highlighted feminists’ “increased dialogue with the state” during the 1990s. In this respect, the establishment of the Directorate General on the Status (and Problems) of Women in 1990, with the stated aim of “achieving gender equality in all ranks of life”, was significant (Coşar & Onbaşı, 2008, p. 330). From its establishment, feminist bureaucrats filled the Directorate’s ranks and worked within the state to improve women’s issues (Y. Arat, 2008, p. 399). Women rights organizations sought to influence the Directorate and that increased their involvement in public policymaking.

The 1990s witnessed the diversification of the women's movements .

“Nevertheless Islamist, Kemalist, socialist, liberal and radical feminists all shared a single objective. Not only they [demanded] women's right to work; but also they all stressed the need to gain and sustain an independent identity” (Atakav, 2007, p. 18). Sirman (1989) and Y. Arat (1994) regard the emergence of new feminist groups and the changes in women's agendas as a reaction to the limitations and the marginalizing effects of Kemalist reforms. For Z. Arat (2000, pp. 28-9), economic development could be another contributing factor fueling the women's movements in Turkey. Economic policies that stressed rapid economic growth and implementation of IMF-prescribed measures in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as globalization of markets resulted in social cleavages and income inequality between people and regions. These developments were felt by women of all classes, even though experienced differently. As the market encroachment on private life increased, a second source of income has become a necessity for families struggling for survival.

Among these newly emerged women's groups, the Islamist feminists were noteworthy. As the influence of Islam increased in Turkish politics, many women were attracted to Islam. The appeal of Islamist teachings led women to adopt the headscarf in greater numbers. They insisted they should be allowed to attend universities and work in public service with the headscarf. This became a major controversy between Islamist women and the state (Y. Arat, 2000a, p.119). They had engaged in numerous cases of civil disobedience, such as sit-ins and demonstrations. Besides, they began issuing publications and forming Islamist women's organizations to promote their right to wear the headscarf (Y. Arat, 2008, p. 411). Some women channeled their protest at the secular framework through their engagement in Islamist political parties. Within a short period of time, about a

million women registered to the Islamist Welfare Party as members. Many women among the party ranks had deep resentment regarding the headscarf ban, as it restricted their opportunities for education and employment (Y. Arat, 2008, p. 412).

Protests of women wearing headscarf, at times, ended in the courts. Even though there were some cases that local courts ruled in favor of the women covering their heads, higher courts found the local court decisions unconstitutional. In cases where students with headscarves applied to European Court of Human Rights, they did not receive the support they expected (Arat, 2000a, p. 120). The court decided in favor of Turkish government, which had claimed that principles of secularism and equality necessitated the ban. The law was not lifted until the AKP's rule, however, as Yeşim Arat pointed out (2008, p. 413), "Islamist women had challenged the limits of Kemalist state in the country".

The activism of Islamist women had revived the debate on the nature of modernity and modernization, as well as the role of religion and women in the modernization process. While the Islamist parties and the male leadership of Islamist groups attempt to confine women to the domestic sphere and regard them only as wives and daughters, as İlyasoğlu (2000) states, Islamist women reject these restrictions and struggle to redefine women's social roles in Islam. İlyasoğlu's study reveal that even though Islamist women assign a primacy to family and emphasize motherhood, they refuse to be identified only in such terms.

Islamic discourse intersects with that of the feminists in several ways. According to Sirman (1989, p. 8), "many of the [Islamist] women who responded repudiated feminism as a product of Westernization and modernization, which had nothing to offer to a true Muslim; but they nevertheless accepted that the position of women is something that Islamic writers and intellectuals had not been very sensitive

about”. Muslim women are attracted to feminism to the extent that the latter questions the objectification of women and the commoditization of the female body and sexuality. Islamist women emphasize the equality of men and women in the sight of God (Sirman, 1989). Likewise, Yeşim Arat (2000a, p. 115) observes that, even though Islamist women did not call themselves feminists, they implicitly criticized the patriarchal underpinnings of religious dictates, as they wanted to recognize no authority above them, except God.

Younger generation of feminists treated Islamist women as their equals and supported lifting the ban on the headscarf, whereas the Kemalist women perceived the Islamic upsurge as a threat to secular order and hence they organized to counter it. They founded an association called the Association to Promote Contemporary Life (*Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği*) to protect secular order and fight the Islamists (Y. Arat, 1997, p. 108). In turn, Islamist women challenged secular feminists for being elitist. They claimed "secular feminists were assuming that they, not others, knew where women's liberation was" (Y. Arat, 1994, p. 246). Nevertheless, Zehra Arat (2000, p. 21) finds a similarity between the Kemalist women and Islamist women in the sense that they both seek fulfillment by contributing to society at large and define their work as professionals in the altruistic terms of "serving others". In addition to sharing altruistic rhetoric of Kemalist women, Islamist women use the opportunities created by the Kemalist modernization project to advance their own goals (Y. Arat, 1994, p. 246).

As the women's movement grew, the level of institutionalization in the movement significantly increased (Bora and Günel, 2002). There had been 10 organizations between 1973 and 1982 and 64 between 1983 and 1992, whereas this number reached more than 350 by 2004 (Y. Arat: 2008, p. 400). Many of the new

organizations began acquiring funds from abroad. These included the women's library and information center, the associations to fight against violence towards women, the association to promote women in politics KA-DER (Association for Supporting and Training Women Candidates), and the women's communication network, Flying Broom (*Uçan Süpürge*).

Attempts to organize and build institutions against domestic violence were a central platform of feminist activism (Y. Arat, 2000b, p. 299). A group of women established the Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation (*Mor Çatı Sığınma Vakfı*) in İstanbul in 1990. Mor Çatı was crucial because it was a symbol of feminist opposition to domestic violence and major voice in the feminist organizing in the country. The foundation provided shelter and counseling services to battered women. Mor Çatı led the struggle against violence towards women during the 1990s.

Members of the foundation sought to increase public awareness by organizing conferences and panels and giving interviews in television channels and newspapers (Y. Arat, 2008, p. 400). Moreover, Yeşim Arat argues that Purple Roof is a significant case in Turkish context, as it has helped sketch a more democratic citizenship. As Arat (2000b, p. 307) notes, "where women's protection from violence is a necessary if not sufficient condition of 'substantive' citizenship and democracy, then the attempt to institutionalize the protest against violence becomes all the more critical for democratic citizenship".

Furthermore, the 1990s witnessed the proliferation of feminist research and findings. Women's studies centers and academic programs opened at a number of public universities. The first among these was a women's studies center (*Kadın Sorunları Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi*) established in 1990 within İstanbul University. In the same year, a women's employment research center (*Kadın İşgücü*

İstihdamı Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi) was founded within Marmara University. Later Ankara University instituted a women's studies center (*Kadın Sorunları Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi*). A year later in 1994 Middle East Technical University in Ankara initiated a women's studies program (Y. Arat, 2000b, p. 298). Individual scholars and feminists began receiving foreign funds to undertake their projects on women's issues (Y. Arat, 2008, p. 400). Civil society organizations, in turn used these projects in order to advance their goals. As a result, feminist knowledge spread within the media and infiltrated into government structure and political parties (Y. Arat, 2008, p. 401).

Yeşim Arat (1994, p. 246) observes that 1991 general elections were significant in the sense that "women's issues became a visible item in the campaigns and party programs of all major parties. This development was unprecedented in Turkish politics". The Motherland Party, which came to power in 1983 after the military junta ended and also became the winner of the 1987 elections, made women's issues one of the seven items in the 1991 party campaign. The leader of the party, Mesut Yılmaz, declared that they would implement the CEDAW, which was neglected by previous governments. The Social Democratic party had installed a 25% quota for women in the party organs in 1989, and the True Path Party followed suit. Unexpectedly, the religious Welfare Party also used concepts such as women's exploitation, inequality, domestic violence, and commodification of the female body by the market economy in the 1991 election campaign in order to be appealing for the female electorate. There is also some evidence that women supported political parties, which promoted women's issues (Y. Arat, 1994, p. 247).

In spite of the rhetoric of the political parties, only eight women were elected to the parliament, thus keeping the percentage of female representatives as low as it

had always been. Nevertheless, there were some promising developments. The coalition government between Social Democratic People's Party and the True Path Party appointed a female Minister of State responsible for women's affairs. In consultation with feminists and academicians the minister prepared a radical amendment to the Civil Law, which would abolish the article stating the husband as the head of the family, as well as the article making women's employment outside the house conditional on husband's permission. The amendment would also allow women to use their maiden name along with their husband's. However, the amendments did not come into reality since the minister responsible for women's affairs was forced to resign due to her alleged involvement in fraud concerning misuse of public funds (Arat, 1994, p. 247).

Years of continuous and fierce fight by women's organizations in various forms such as lobbying, public debates, petition campaigns; as well as the efforts of the minister of state responsible for women and family finally resulted in the Law for the Protection of the Family 1998. With the law, the state provided protection for the women exposed to domestic violence and gave the public prosecutor the right to file a suit against the guilty spouse (Tekeli, 2010, p. 121).

In 1999, Turkey lifted all restrictions against the CEDAW. However in 2000, legal discrimination of women persisted. In 2001, the Article 41 of the Turkish Constitution was amended with a view to establish the principle of equality between spouses as the basis of family union (Stivachtis & Georgakis, 2008). In 2002 the new Civil Law was eventually adopted. As a result of the reform husband lost his privileged status as "head of the household". The property system also changed. Upon divorce, the wife was to get an equal share of property acquired during marriage (Tekeli, 2010, p. 122). Moreover, the regulation, which allowed female

students at public nursing to be subjected to virginity tests, was abolished in February 2002 (Stivachtis & Georgakis, 2008).

These legislative shifts coincided with Turkey's continuing bid to qualify for EU membership. The reports of the European Commission put significant a pressure on the government to carry out legal reforms aiming at improving the status of women in Turkey. However, some feminists did not believe that new legislation was a result of Turkey's EU candidacy. For instance, İlkaracan and Erçevik (2005, p. 115) claimed that the reform of the civil code was actually a result of decades of lobbying by the women's movement.

By the end of 1990s the wind of change started to be felt, as a result of the process of Turkey's accession to the EU. During the period 1998-2000 due to the legal reforms in Turkey in the area of women's rights and gender equality there was a great deal of progress towards the implementation of the *acquis communautaire*. As Coşar and Onbaşı observed:

In the midst of these developments, women's movement has accumulated significant leverage in bargaining with governmental authorities. This has been the case in two respects: First the government, introducing EU criteria into their policy proposals, felt the need to engage with [women's rights organizations'] demands so as to assure their attentiveness to liberal and democratic priorities. Second, WROs have found the opportunity to voice their demands more forcefully through EU-financed projects (2008, p. 331).

In Yeşim Arat's words (2008, p. 416), "women and the [state] made instrumental use of one another to promote their respective goals". Women's engagement with the state improved latter's international legitimacy and respect. Women in turn, benefited from Turkey's pursuit of the EU membership and its search for international legitimacy (Y. Arat, 2008, p. 416).

Therefore, both the EU accession process and the UN initiatives were the underlying factors behind the increase in women's rights organizations' strength in domestic politics. Kardam and Ertürk (1999) asserted that the strengthening of the women's movement was also closely related to the gradual rise of transnational cooperation among women's rights organizations worldwide. As Yeşim Arat emphasized, by demanding rights and pushing the state to abide by international human rights documents, secular women's groups have challenged "Turkey's 'strong state', which has allegedly undermined civil society" for decades. Thereby, feminists democratized Turkish politics and helped "cultivate a vibrant civil society" (2008, p. 416).

3.3 Women's rights and the feminist movement during the AKP period

The 2002 elections in Turkey were considered as a political earthquake by many scholars (Özel, 2003; Öniş & Keyman, 2003; Çitak & Tür, 2008). The elections resulted in the victory of the Justice and Development Party and led the formation of a single-party government after a long decade of coalition governments.

On the one hand, AKP's majority of party leadership and parliamentarians, as well as its voters had Islamist identity. On the other hand, for achieving political legitimacy the party initially made a strategic decision to refrain from a potential confrontation with the Kemalist military-bureaucratic elite and hence labeled itself as a "conservative democratic party". In trying to distance itself from political Islam, this label served the AKP as an innovative shelter (Tepe, 2006). As Cizre (2008, p. 5) argued, "AKP pragmatism laid the grounds for successfully managing the coexistence of 'religious, conservative, democratic and, reformist and pro-European'". However, such an identity has had conflicting and contradictory

implications for the women's movement. While the party has liberally engaged in dialogue with the women's movement and carried out a crucial set of reforms addressing gender equality in the pursuit of the EU membership, it has also been persistent in its conservative approach to womanhood. The concept of womanhood was shaped first and foremost in terms of the familial sphere in the basis of religious understanding. Coşar and Yeğenoğlu (2011, p. 555) claim that "AKP's period in government has been marked by the emergence of a 'new mode of patriarchy'", which is formed through a strategic combination of religious-conservative and liberal discourses (Coşar & Yeğenoğlu, 2011, p. 557). The neoliberal - neoconservative contradictory alliance might both encourage women's participation in the economic sphere and ask women to stay at home (Coşar & Yeğenoğlu, 2011, p. 561).

3.3.1 AKP's new mode of patriarchy

AKP's new mode of neoliberal-conservative patriarchy manifests itself in the contradictions between liberal tenets in the party program and party leaders' conservative approach in addressing women's issues. As Çitak and Tür (2008) points out the AKP Party Program has a separate section titled "Women", devoted to explaining AKP's perception of the women question and their problems. The program cites CEDAW and states that women and their problems constitute one of the priorities of the party. The party program announces that:

[The AKP encourages] women's participation in public life and politics; ... promises to support women's civil society organizations; aims at addressing educational activities targeting sexual and economic exploitation of and violence against women, which also involves women's suicides and "honor killings", and finally emphasizes the schooling of girls (Çitak & Tür, 2008, p. 456).

As Arat emphasized (2009, p. 10) these were all novel promises for a political party with Islamist roots.

In spite of the liberal and egalitarian tone in the program, many AKP leaders, including the Prime Minister Erdoğan, encourage maternal roles for women. “While women’s empowerment has been one of the recurrent themes in party’s discourse, it is located within the context of family politics” (Coşar & Yeğenoğlu, 2011, p. 565) which is a corollary of conservatism. The family is the primary unit within which women’s rights are considered. Erdoğan underlined the importance of family values and said, as a conservative democratic party, they focused their whole policy around the idea of strong families. “There are abstract values that make a household a family. And it is extremely dangerous if that family loses those values. Therefore we are working on developing new projects to protect family values” (“Turkish PM Erdoğan”, 2013). In June 2011 Erdoğan announced that the "Ministry for Women and Family" would be replaced by a "Ministry of Family and Social Policies," ending a much-needed explicit focus on women's rights (Human Rights Watch, 2011). This was much more than a simple name change and signaled a reduced emphasis on women's rights. To Kandiyoti, the change reveals that in the eyes of the AKP leadership women are just one group in need of special protection, like orphans and families of veterans (as cited in “Is Life Getting Worse for Women”, 2015).

Women’s essential role, for many party members, is “bringing up the next generations and ensuring happiness in the family” and hence women’s primary locus is domestic sphere (Coşar & Yeğenoğlu, 2015, p. 565). Kandiyoti states that “It was made very clear that women were first and foremost mothers, and that women had the duty to make the nation big” (as cited in “Is Life Getting Worse for Women”, 2015). This is confirmed in Erdoğan’s reiterated call to Turkish women to have

minimum three children (“Turkish PM Erdoğan”, 2013). Similarly, at the Third Congress on Women in Local Governments held in 2007, he stated that there was no status comparable to motherhood and that was the reason why “our civilization has placed the heaven under the feet of mothers” instead of fathers (“Erdoğan: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti”, 2007, own translation). In this regard, Arat argues that:

This conservative mindset resonated with orthodox interpretations of the religious texts that encourage maternal roles for women and restrict substantive opportunities for them. Independent of the party program that cited CEDAW as the politically correct means of approaching EU, the party cadres held restrictive views on women’s roles in line with religious teachings. (2009, p. 14)

For AKP, women play a key role in the creation and continuity of a morally upright society due to their capacity as mothers, “who will raise generations with high moral values and hence will directly contribute to the transmission of moral values to the future. Moreover, a morally correct society depends on the morality of women themselves” (Çitak & Tür, 2008, p. 464). This mentality led to a growing interference into women’s bodies and sexuality through a set of new regulations. In 2012 a heated discussion regarding abortion started. Addressing women at the International Conference on Population and Development, Erdoğan said “there is no difference between killing a baby in its mother’s womb and killing a baby after birth... I consider abortion as a murder. No one should have a right to let this happen” (“Erdoğan: Kürtaj”, 2012, own translation). The then Health Minister Recep Akdağ declared that the government would prepare a draft law that would ban or restrict abortions. In reference to babies born as a result of rape, Akdağ said that “the state would look after the babies” if the mother was raped (“Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan”, 2012). The tension between women and AKP further escalated when Ankara Mayor Melih Gökçek, asked on a government-backed TV program, “Why

should the baby die, if mother is raped?" and claimed, "the mother should die instead" ("Çocuğun ne suçu var", 2012, own translation).

The regulation regarding abortion could severely restrict women's control over their bodies and reproductive capabilities. Women's rights groups reacted angrily. They organized mass protests and marched on streets with banners declaring, "Murder is male violence, abortion is a choice!" and "Our body, our life, our decision!" ("Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan", 2012). Erdoğan's remarks caused polemics in international media as well. Le Monde for instance described the abortion controversy with the title "Guardian of the vaginas in Turkey" and harshly criticized the government's "authoritarian" policies (as cited from "Dış Basında Kürtaj, 2012, own translation). As a result of pressure coming from local women's groups and foreign media, the government withdrew the proposed ban on abortion.

Prime minister also called for limits on cesarean births, saying they were "nothing more than an insidious plan to reduce the Turkish population" because, he claimed women giving birth by cesarean section could not have more than one child ("Premier of Turkey", 2012). The Ministry of Health accused doctors of pushing women towards the operations out of greed, as the Turkey had one of the world's highest caesarean rates. In 2012 the AKP government adopted a new law, which made Turkey the first country that made elective caesarean sections punishable by law. Threatening fines were introduced for doctors who persuade women to have surgery deemed unnecessary ("Turkish doctors face fine", 2012). Consequently, Turkish women lost their right to choose when it comes to their own birth plan.

Meantime, Erdoğan reiterated the significance of young and dynamic population and mothers' role for population growth. In 2013, speaking at the International Family Summit he said "One child means bankruptcy for the country,

two means skidding. Three children are okay, but we need four to five to carry the country forward” (“Turkish PM ups the ante”, 2013). He also harshly criticized birth control campaigns and argued that Turkey’s enemies conducted a movement of depopulation in Turkish society in order to reduce the power of the country (“Turkish PM ups the ante”, 2013).

Misogynistic statements from the party leaders veer into perverse such as dictating that women should not laugh in public, go out at night, or be seen in public while pregnant (“Why Turkey’s election”, 2015). In 2010 at a conference of women’s organizations Erdoğan openly said “Women and men can not be equal. They are complementary” and suggested that women should be “entrusted to men” for protection (“Is life getting worse for women”, 2015). Furthermore, he accused feminists of being against family and not true Muslims (“Why Turkey’s election”, 2015). In 2014, he once more voiced his objection to gender equality, as well as feminism by stating that:

You cannot put women and men on an equal footing. It is against nature. They were created differently. Their nature is different. Their constitution is different . . . Motherhood is the highest position . . . You cannot explain this to feminists. They do not accept motherhood. They have no such concern. (“Turkish President Declares”, 2014)

Erdoğan’s comments sparked protests in major cities, where hundreds of women lined streets chanting slogans against AKP.

The religio-conservative gender climate is reflected in education as well. In 2012, the duration of compulsory education was raised from 8 years to 12 years. However, after the completion of the fourth year of education in elementary school, home schooling or schooling in occupational schools, including religious functionary schools, was legalized. According to Güneş-Ayata and Doğangün, by doing so, the

government restricted girls' education and opened the way to bind them to domestic sphere, where they were expected to do housework and caregiving work (2017, p. 622). In November 2013, Erdoğan drew public attention to the cohabitation of female and male university students. He has condemned female and male students' living under one roof, vowing to take measures against such instances. He implied that home sharing might lead to premarital sex, which is not morally acceptable in Turkish culture ("Female, Male Students", 2013). Likewise, the then Vice-President of the Parliament, Sadık Yakut expressed his personal desire for a sex-segregated education system and stated that, "I consider co-education a great mistake. I hope this mistake will be corrected in the upcoming period" (TBMM Başkanvekili Yakut", 2013, own translation). To sum up, in spite of the women-friendly party program, through public statements the leaders of the AKP promoted the segregation of sexes and sanction control over women's bodies and sexuality (Acar & Ayata, 2002). On the one hand, the AKP launched a set of very important reforms aiming at women's empowerment and legal gender equality; on the other hand AKP period has been a major setback for women's strive for liberation. Therefore, AKP's new mode version of patriarchy combining contradictory assets leads one to come up with seemingly contradictory findings: The party portrays a liberal standpoint with respect to commitment to international women's rights documents, but anti-feminist at the same time.

The rest of this chapter focuses on the issue areas that AKP's new mode of neoliberal-conservative patriarchy has been most evident. Gender-sensitive legal reforms carried out by the AKP government eventually ended up deepening gender disparities in society due to their weak enforcement and conservative mindset of the party leaders. The New Penal Code, new laws regulating women's employment, the

campaign against domestic violence, gender quota dispute with the feminists, as well as the headscarf issue are discussed in detail in order to expose the internal contradictions of the AKP's new mode of patriarchy. These contradictions have led to a transformation in Diyanet's discourse in recent years. Women-friendly legal reforms aiming at gender equality and greater women's employment, as well as elimination of gender-based violence have been pulling Diyanet's discourse to a more egalitarian direction. However, AKP's persistent conservative attitude concerning women's dress codes and their maternal roles exacerbates Diyanet's patriarchal discourse particularly with respect to "body and sexuality" and "gender roles".

3.3.2 New Penal Code and the adultery debate

Expressing loyalty to the long-lasting desire for European integration of the country, the first AKP government launched an ambitious political reform program between 2002 and 2004, continuing the former government's legislative packages (Çitak & Tür, 2008, p. 455). Meanwhile, women also benefited from AKP's drive to meet Copenhagen criteria (Arat, 2009, p. 10). Within the framework of legal harmonization with the EU, the party took important steps to legislate women-friendly laws. It is also worth noting that the first AKP government acted by the liberal tenets of its program and was in favor of negotiating with NGOs in general and women's rights organizations in particular (Coşar & Onbaşı, 2008, p. 326). Therefore, initially women's NGOs had the opportunity to push for gender-sensitive legal amendments. However, the party also displayed a fluctuating attitude in its relations with women's organizations and its policy preferences concerning women's demands.

Among gender-sensitive policies, one can note the reform in the Turkish Penal Code. The process of introducing the Turkish Penal Code process began in Parliament in 2002. By then women's movement had already been leading an intensive campaign for the "Reform of the Turkish Penal Code from a Gender Perspective". (Atakav, 2005, p. 19). Feminist groups were involved with the discussions of the Turkish Penal Code proposal, which was monitored in the Parliament by seven women's platforms and 80 women's organizations from various regions of Turkey.

While the draft Turkish Penal Code was being discussed in the Justice Commission of the Parliament, the government made a last minute attempt to add a clause that would criminalize adultery, against which feminists had been fighting for almost a decade. The draft was initiated by the Prime Minister Erdoğan, who argued that the party leadership "should take all precautions to protect Turkish family" (as cited in Güneş-Ayata & Tütüncü, 2008, p. 380). The party leadership argued that the bill reflected public opinion and the demands of the majority of women. Nimet Çubukçu, who later served as the state minister responsible for women and family, stated, "Unfaithful husbands are major problem of the Turkish women" ("Women's Biggest Problem", 2005, own translation). The party leadership wanted an equal punishment for women and men, but this would effectively translate into punishment of women rather than men, because it was more common for men to commit adultery rather than women. Besides, women would not be able to sue their husbands for adultery because they would have less access to law and also because there would be social pressure against exposing their husbands. Furthermore, as feminists argued, adultery could be a reason for divorce not punishment (Arat, 2009, p. 11).

Yet, feminists were organized very quickly. They mobilized the European Women's Lobby to bring pressure on the government from the EU and raised havoc through the media (Arat, 2009). After the adultery dispute with feminist groups, Erdoğan went to Brussels to convince European leaders on the proposed Code, and afterwards in 2004 he participated in the First Congress of Women in the local Government, organized by his party. In his speech he reflected his reaction against the protests by the feminist groups, by calling them as “marginal”:

There are particularly those, who have marched in Ankara in the name of democracy during the recent uproar. I was truly upset on behalf of Turkish women when I saw some handbills that were unsuitable for our traditions and moral values... There can be no such understanding that a specific marginal group represents the power of Turkish women. 52 percent of Turkey's population is women. Among them, there are also those, who have set their hearts on the AKP. (“Erdoğan'ı Zina Pankartı Üzdü”, 2004; Appendix D, 4)

As a result of harsh criticism and pressure by the EU, as well as local pressure from women's platforms, the AKP withdrew the proposed clause on adultery. In 2004 the Penal Code was finalized, abolishing most of the discriminatory articles against women and providing heavy penalties for cases of “honor killings”. As Tekeli pointed out this tragedy was widespread in rural regions where “tribal structures” survived, and the killing of a woman in order to protect the family's honor was not punishable under the old Code. Under the new Penal code it became a crime, which is punishable by maximum penalty: life imprisonment (Tekeli, 2010, p. 122).

Another significant change made in the new Penal Code was that it terminated the provisions that had previously enabled rapists to escape from legal punishment in the case of marriage (Çitak & Tür, 2008, p. 456). Under the new code sexual assault within marriage could lead to legal investigation and prosecution if the

victim makes a complaint. Moreover, the code foresaw a slight increase in penalties for polygamy and non-registration of religious marriages. With respect to virginity testing, the new Code introduced a prison sentence for those ordering and conducting such tests in the absence of a court order (Stivachtis & Georgakis, 2008). The new Penal Code had been a great achievement for women's organizations as it embodied most of the amendments they proposed to ensure gender equality and legal recognition of sexual and bodily rights of women.

In its 2004 Annual Report, the European Commission found the new Penal Code to be generally progressive in terms of women's rights, addressing such crimes as honor killings, sexual assault and virginity testing (Commission of the European Communities, 2004, p. 45). Yet, full transposition of the directives on gender equality was still required (Commission of the European Communities, 2005, p. 96). Particular concern was given to parental leave, equal pay, and access to employment, as well as statutory and occupational social security. The commission pointed out that further efforts were needed to improve gender equality in economic and social life and to ensure effective enforcement of the relevant legislation (Commission of the European Communities, 2005, p. 96).

3.3.3 New laws regulating women's employment

In response to the EU directives, in May 2003 the government adopted the new Labor Law, which promised greater gender equality in the labor market. Despite some problems, the new law were welcomed by women's groups and legal experts, as it operated parallel with the gender equality directives of the EU (Dedeoğlu & Elveren, 2012, p. 132). The new law recognized the principle of equal treatment in employment of persons irrespective of gender (Stivachtis & Georgakis, 2008). It

includes the principle of equal pay for work of equal value; protection of pregnant and breastfeeding women, and women who recently gave birth; the reversal of burden of proof to the employer in cases of sex-based discrimination at the workplace, and non-discrimination against part-time workers. Moreover, it introduced for the first time provisions against recognition of sexual harassment at the workplace (Dedeoğlu & Elveren, 2012, p. 133).

However, these legislative changes, aiming to promote gender equality in employment and workplaces, are still insufficient in improving the position of women in the labor market. For instance, Article 5 of the New Turkish Labor Law grants equal treatment and equal pay to men and women and prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender at workplace. The Article is supported by the equality principle in the Constitution, and it is compatible with international women's rights norms, as well as EU gender equality directives. Nevertheless, feminists and law experts draw attention to the weaknesses of the Article, as it does not include exact definition of discrimination and the access to all types and to all levels of vocational training and practical work experience (Dedeoğlu & Elveren, 2012, p. 133). Again, Article 14 of the Labor Law concerning severance pay provides that if a woman leaves her job within a year of marrying, she is entitled to severance pay but men do not have such entitlement. Women's groups argue that the Article reflects a patriarchal family structure and supports women's dependence on men (Kılıç, 2008, p. 493).

In 2004, the Regulation on Working Conditions of Pregnant and Nursing Women was issued. The Regulation obliged establishments employing more than 100 women workers to have nursery rooms for nursing mothers, and those employing more than 150 women workers to have pre-school facilities for children

aged between 36-72 months. However, the enforcement of the Regulation has remained very limited. Ineffectiveness of the existing regulation has been criticized by feminists due to its bias for taking only the number of female employees into account as a precondition for having nursery at the workplace. This is the result of the sexist assumption that mothers are primarily responsible for childcare. In this regard, several women's organizations express their concerns about the negative effects of the regulation, as it may cause a strong unwillingness to hire women in that it will lead additional expenses for the employer (Dedeoğlu & Elveren, 2012, p. 137).

The legislative changes aiming at bolstering women's participation in labor market mostly remained in paper, as female inactivity has been the norm during the rule of the AKP. In 2006, the European Commission recorded that prevailing discrimination still existed, for the fact that there was an ongoing decrease in the participation by women in the Turkish workforce and pointed out that the rate of female employment was among the lowest in OECD countries (Commission of the European Communities, 2006, p. 52). By 2014, even though little progress had been reported, female employment rate was still below the EU standards. In 2013 and 2014 women represented only 26 percent of the workforce (Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey, 2016). In contrast, in 2013 the mean female employment rate of the EU member countries (28 countries) was 58.8% (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2014). In fact some pro-woman policies, such as childcare provisions at workplace and extending maternity leave, have implemented carelessly and ended up discriminating against women and pushing them further out of the labor market as these policies make female labor more expensive for employers.

Dedeoğlu and Elveren (2012, p. 136) point out that women's position in the labor market can effectively be improved by reducing the burden of care work in the domestic sphere through increasing public facilities of care, especially child care facilities. However, there has been no political commitment to increase public childcare facilities. The absence of public support for childcare is a reflection of the AKP's vision of women's primary role in society (Dedeoğlu & Elveren, 2012, p. 137). Parental leave is also considered as a remedy to low rate of female employment since some of the care duties can be delegated to men by entitling them to parental leave. In 2005 a draft law was prepared proposing to give six months of unpaid parental leave for both spouses upon their request. Women's NGOs have supported the draft bill and pressed for the urgency of passing the parental leave, as it would eventually challenge sexist gender roles. However it was dismissed by the Parliament, as it could not find support from the employers' organizations (Dedeoğlu & Elveren, 2012, p. 138).

Furthermore, the AKP introduced the new Social Security and General Health Insurance Law 2006 aimed at an equal treatment of women and men in terms of retirement rules. According to this law, which became effective in October 2008, women's retirement age was raised and their conditions for retirement were made more difficult (Y. Arat, 2009, p. 15). In March 2008, feminist groups and women in the labor force protested the new Law and claimed that under these conditions, women's entry into the labor market would be even less attractive and more intimidating especially because there are no initiatives to change the existing gender roles where women are still expected to assume traditional domestic roles and be super mothers if they choose to work outside the house. Since most women do not work full time or have secure jobs, working outside the house to acquire the safety of

a pension would not now be possible for many women. In the same proposal, their ability to benefit from their father's health insurance was revoked. "Feminists argued that these changes undermined women's economic independence and opportunities for work, made them more dependent on husbands and encouraged them to stay at home" (Y. Arat, 2009, p. 15).

According to Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, AKP's new mode of patriarchy, which represents contradictory integration of conservative and neoliberal discourses, shows itself in the new Labour Law and the Law on Social Security and General Health Insurance. While the former instituted the replacement of welfare by workfare, the latter further deepened the subordination of women in the employment market by leaving them with two polar options: either working under insecure conditions or staying at home as dependents (Coşar & Yeğenoğlu, 2009). As Coşar & Yeğenoğlu put forth:

AKP's mode of patriarchy shares with neoliberal patriarchy the call for women's participation in the now flexible labor market. Yet it adds a warning about the hardships in intertwining their working life and familial responsibilities. It does so by implying that this involvement may risk the children's well-being, integrity of family and, eventually, social integrity – thus setting the boundaries of women's primary sphere. (2011, p. 568)

Another case illustrating how AKP's mode of patriarchy has restricted women's opportunities in workforce was the "Women's Employment Package", *İstihdam Paketi* of 2013. With the goal of boosting birth rates, the Package pledged to provide possibilities for women to work from home and part-time, as well as an extension of maternity leave from 16 weeks to 18 weeks. The Package was presented as a policy of positive discrimination towards women. However, some workers' confederations and women's organizations opposed and claimed that it would

discourage employers from hiring female personnel and hence ultimately lower women's employment ("Kadın istihdam paketi", 2013).

Feminist women argue that, despite promises of commitment to EU standards and legal reforms regarding female employment, the AKP government also discouraged women from participating in the labor force by its sexist discourse. For instance, when an unemployed woman requested job from the then Minister of Environment and Forestry Veysel Eroğlu, he replied her, "Is housework not enough for you?" ("İş isteyen kadınlara", 2009, own translation). In a similar manner, Mehmet Şimşek, who served as the Minister of Finance argued that high unemployment rate in Turkey was due to the women, who were seeking jobs in the job market ("Şimşek'e bakılırsa", 2009).

3.3.4 Campaign against domestic violence

After the Penal Law, the AKP government initiated a campaign against gender-based violence and took some important steps for the elimination of violence against women. In 2005 an amendment to the Law of Municipalities (2005) obliged municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants to open women's shelters to female victims of domestic violence. However, the implementation of this legal obligation has been weak. By 2012, there was still no shelter in 35 of the 81 provinces in Turkey (Güneş-Ayata & Doğangün, 2017, p. 620).

In 2006 Erdoğan issued a general notice that was titled "Measures to address violence against children and women, and honor killings"⁵². In this notice it was declared that Turkish Grand National Assembly, with law no. 853 passed in June

⁵² See Chapter 2 for further details and implications of the law no. 853 on the policies of the PRA.

2005, designated a research commission on violence against children and women, and honor killings. In line with the policy proposals of the commission, the Prime Ministry issued a Decree in July 2006 on the Prevention of Violence towards women, which “reads like a feminist manifesto” (Y. Arat, 2009, p. 11). The decree was significant as it recognized the responsibility of the state for the prevention of any type of violence to women and provided a detailed plan of cooperation between different state institutions and civil society organizations to realize this goal. The measures prescribed by the Decree reflected the proposals of women’s NGOs at large and the statements issued by the Women’s Shelters Assemblies that had been meeting annually since 1998, bringing together more than 100 women at a time to discuss the problems of gender-based violence and shelters (Y. Arat, 2009, p. 11).

Despite the campaign against the elimination of violence against women, in 2010 the Ministry of Justice reported that 14 times as many women were murdered in that year than in 2003. Since then the government has stopped publicizing statistics. Erdoğan claimed that the problem of “violence against women has been exaggerated by the opposition and media” (“Erdoğan: Kadına Şiddet”, 2011, own translation). Likewise, Fatma Şahin, who was the minister responsible for “Family and Social Policy” argued, “the media exaggerates the incidents of violence and the increase in rates was indeed a result of “selective perception” (“Fatma Şahin: Kadına Yönelik Şiddet”, 2013, own translation).

Even though it is difficult to find accurate numbers due to the lack of official statistics on violence against women, info graphics drafted by Bianet reported that more women were murdered in 2014 (Çiçek, 2015). According to Kurtuluş Korkman, increasing rates of murders of women during the AKP period, “attest to the urgent and vital significance of critically addressing the emergent

neoconservative politics of intimacy” (2016, p. 115). AKP leaders’, in particular Erdoğan’s insulting and misogynistic language legitimizes and incites gender-based violence in Turkey. For instance, in June 2011 he questioned the virginity of a female political activist named Dilşat Aktaş, who was severely beaten by the police during an anti-government rally in Ankara, by stating that "Someone – I don't know if she is a girl or a woman – got on a police panzer in Ankara". His statements led to fierce reactions in social media and became the top trending twitter topic of the day (“Başbakan: O Kadın”, 2011, own translation). Nükhet Sirman has observed that “hegemonic masculinity has become more contested in Turkish society and hence it is increasingly in the need of violently reasserting itself” (as cited from “Toplum bu insanları ürettiyor”, 2015, own translation). According to Kurtuluş Korkman (2016, p.115) “the politics of intimacy à la Erdoğan articulates this crisis of masculinity and fuels, in the words of Deniz Kandiyoti (2013), a project of ‘masculinist restoration’ to which gender - based violence is essential”.

3.3.5 Quota dispute and women’s representation in politics

“Gender quota” has become an important dispute between the AKP government and feminists. The feminist organizations have demanded gender quota for removing the long-lasting male domination in politics. They asked for an equal representation of women in the parliament and local governments. Especially KA-DER organized a campaign for a gender quota. The association demands a temporary practice of at least a 30 percent gender quota in party organizations as well as local and national decision-making bodies, claiming that quota will initiate the transformation from “male democracy” to “real democracy” (KA-DER, 2005).

Despite its initial support for a quota system, AKP later turned deaf ears to women's organizations' demands for the adoption of gender quota for intra-party, municipal and general elections (Coşar & Onbaşı, 200, p. 326). Prime minister Erdoğan expressed his anti-quota stance: "It is unjust to privilege women by means of [gender] quota. Women are powerful enough to achieve representation at any level of politics without the need for privilege (as cited from "Yeni Dünya için Çağrı", 2004, own translation).

Years of continuous fight and lobbying by women's organizations, particularly efforts by KA-DER resulted in a gradual yet slow increase of women's representation in the national parliament. The proportion of women members in the parliament rose from 4.3% to 8.72% in 2007 elections ("48 Kadın Mecliste", 2007), to 14.2% in 2011 elections ("Mecliste Kadın Sayısı Arttı", 2011), to 17.8% in the July 2015 elections and finally fell to 14.5% after the snap elections took place in November 2015 ("Kadın Milletvekili Sayısı", 2015). Nevertheless, requests of the feminists regarding gender quota have not yet complied. Party leadership has not altered its negative standpoint, as Erdoğan's statement makes clear; "Are women like tradable goods to which you can impose a quota? Can there be such a thing? This is nonsense" (Çitak & Tür, 2008, p. 457). For Coşar & Yeğenoğlu, it is not possible to name AKP as a pro-women's rights political party especially when one considers the government's long hesitation to make gender quotas legally binding (2011, p. 563).

3.3.6 The headscarf issue

In its first term AKP did not attempt to lift the headscarf ban as they did not want to confront with the secular establishment. In its second term in office, after AKP assumed power with 47 percent of the vote, it became more responsive to the

demands of its major conservative constituency. Especially, when the party had its candidate Abdullah Gül elected to the Presidency, it gained self-confidence to bring the headscarf ban into the political agenda. In January 2008, by forming a coalition with National Action Party, AKP attempted to amend the Constitution to abolish the headscarf ban at universities. However, the amendment was refused by the Constitutional Court in June 2008 for undermining the Constitutional principle of secularism. Despite the fact that the AKP failed to make legislation on the headscarf ban, in June 2010 the President of the head of the Council of Higher Education (*YÖK*) gave a notice to the Directorate of İstanbul University, which opened the doors of universities to the students with headscarves. As a result, the decades old the problem of headscarf at higher education was solved. The headscarf ban in public offices was also abolished in October 2013, with “the democratization package” introduced by Erdoğan. The 5th Article of the Regulation concerning dress codes of the public servants was amended to allow women in headscarves to work in public offices (“Türkiye’de Başörtüsü Yasağı”, 2013). Shortly after the headscarf ban had been removed in the civil service, in October 2013 four female parliamentarians from AKP attended the Turkish National Assembly in their headscarves in October 2013. They declared that they did not want to take off their headscarves after they had made their hajj to Mecca. The Prime Minister Erdoğan said that “There is nothing in the laws that stands as an obstacle to this” and “Everyone should respect our sisters’ decision” (“Female MPs attend”, 2013, own translation). The parliamentary session ended without a serious tension between AKP and opposition parties. Henceforth female parliamentarians with headscarves have been allowed to attend the Assembly, breaking a long taboo in the staunchly secular country.

After AKP introduced the headscarf issue into the political agenda, women's organizations' demands began to be colonized by the "Islamists versus laicists" cleavage (Coşar & Onbaşı, 2008, p. 326). Liberal feminists deemed the ban as an obstacle against women's right to education and hence its abolishment. However, for Kemalist feminists, women with the headscarf were a threat to the principle of secularism. Therefore, the headscarf controversy not only divided the public opinion, but also it divided the feminist movement.

Even though the ban was lifted at universities as well as in government offices, AKP continued to use it as a means to mobilize the votes of its conservative constituency. During the Gezi Park anti-government protests in 2013, Erdoğan repeatedly referred to the danger facing "our sisters with headscarves" as if to distinguish between veiled women and secular female protestors. In a separate incident before the demonstrations, he speculated about whether an arrested female protestor was a *kız* (a girl, her virginity implied) or a *kadın* (a sexually experienced woman) ("In Turkey Women's Issues", 2015). Erdoğan's discriminatory and misogynistic statements caused a deep resentment among feminist groups. They argued that reforms carried out by the AKP government showed double standard and were more for political reasons than any sincere interest in advancing women's rights. They believe these attempts to play on religious differences are politically motivated and they aim at dividing the women's movement. "The AKP ultimately divides the women's movement in hopes to destroy it" said Banu Paker, a leader of Socialist Feminist Collective. "Building solidarity among women is difficult" ("In Turkey Women's Issues", 2015). Likewise, Coşar and Yeğenoğlu (2011, p. 568) claim that the women's movement currently faces the risk of colonization by a new

mode of patriarchy with which it has not been accustomed to bargaining on a collective basis.

In conclusion, even though AKP carried out important advancements regarding gender equality during its first term of government, such as the New Penal Code, the New Labor Law, and the campaign against gender-based violence; a detailed look at the party leaders' discourse and policy references with respect to feminism and family structure sheds light on the patriarchal route it has been following since its second term. Although the removal of the headscarf ban, which has long been an obstacle against pious women's right to education, can be considered as a bold step toward creating a more egalitarian and democratic society; the problem could have been solved through a broader coalition by engaging in a democratic dialogue with those, who perceive the headscarves as a threat to the *laiklik* principle. Besides, the discourse of the party leaders has not been egalitarian, at all when it comes to sexual and bodily rights of women. On the one hand, the party legislated a set of laws that would increase employment opportunities of women, yet they undermined the implementation of these laws by promoting maternal roles for women and a gendered division of labor. Being torn between modernity and tradition, neoliberal and conservative discourses; the party has had fluctuating relations with feminist groups. It can be said that women benefited from women-friendly reforms adopted in the pursuit of EU membership, however AKP cannot be called a pro-women's rights party when its hostile standpoint toward feminist political identity is taken into account. AKP's contradictory nature of politics has had implications for the discourse of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. The following chapters aim to throw light upon those implications.

CHAPTER 4

FEMINIST THEORY OF RELIGION

4. 1 Gendering religion

The preceding chapters aimed at probing the political and social dynamics in Turkey that have had significant implications for the religious ideas transmitted by Diyanet concerning women and gender relations. This chapter provides a theoretical analysis of the feminist critiques of religion to make a critical analysis of the discourse of the Presidency on women.

Since the middle of the 1970s, feminist scholars started to examine Islam through the lenses of gender (Beck and Keddie 1978; Mernissi 1991; Ahmed 1992; Tucker 1993). Secular feminists claim that, Islam, like other monotheistic religions, is a sexist and patriarchal religion that fosters gender inequalities and being oppressive towards women. On the other hand by the 1990s a new feminist paradigm emerged in some parts of the Muslim world, which scholars called as “Islamic feminism”. This new discourse was articulated within the Islamic paradigm and derived its mandate from the Koran. In a nutshell, Islamic feminists claimed that the Koran supported the principle of equality of all human beings and principle of gender equality had been impeded by patriarchal local traditions infiltrated into Islam (Badran, 2009: 242). This thesis leaves the verification of “true Islam” to the theologians and mostly relies on the arguments raised by secular feminist scholars in order to study Diyanet’s perspective on women-related issues.

This chapter starts with the definitions of “religion” and interrelations between religion and political power. Next, it provides a summary of the main arguments raised by feminist critiques of religions in general and proceeds with the

criticisms leveled against Islam in particular. As a productive way of organizing the wide field of feminist research on religion, I gathered and summarized the most striking arguments under three broad themes reiterated in the literature: a. Depictions of the woman in Islamic creation stories b. Control over the female body and sexuality in Islam c. Gender stereotypes sanctioning gendered division of labor.

4. 2 Religion, politics, and discourse

It is possible to encounter with different definitions of “religion” in the literature. The typical dictionary definition of the term is “belief in or worship of a god or gods” (*The Chambers Dictionary*, 2011). However, scholars in various disciplines have expanded the definition of religion to capture the diversity of religious thought and experience. For instance, the sociologist Durkheim defined religion as “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things”. For him “sacred things” are not limited to gods but covers everything which “set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices, which unite into one single moral community called a Church or all those who adhere to them” (Durkheim, 1976).

On the other hand, anthropologist Geertz defines religion as a “cultural system of symbols” (1973, p. 91) in which “religious patterns” (made up of clusters of such symbols) are “frames of perception, symbolic screens through which experience is interpreted” while also being “guides for action, blueprints for conduct” (1968, p. 98). According to Geertz:

The importance of religion derives from “its capacity to serve, for an individual or for a group, as a source of general, yet distinctive, conceptions of the world, self, and the relations between them ... Religious concepts spread beyond their specifically metaphysical contexts to provide a framework of general ideas [or paradigms] in terms of which a wide range of experience – intellectual, emotional, and moral – can be given meaningful form. (Geertz, 1973, p. 123; p. 112)

One such paradigm of faith is the lessons or messages on women derived from religious sources.

For Casanova religions are “*discursive* systems of beliefs and practices that offer structures of moral order, cultural meaning, and motivational purpose to individuals and collectivities through symbolic means of transcendence and spiritual communication with some extra human, supernatural, or divine reality” (2009, p. 39, emphasis added). He, moreover, emphasizes that “religions have always been involved in regulating sexuality, [biological] and social reproduction, family structure, and gender roles in accordance with some transcendent principle posited as sacred or of divine origin” (Casanova, 2009, p. 39).

As Stowasser points out “religious ideas are linked with social reality in mutually affective relationships, shaping it and being shaped by it in turn” (1994, p. 5). In other words, religious ideas and concepts are not born and transmitted in a vacuum. They have always been shaped by the political, social, cultural and historical factors within the particular context they strive to survive. As Giddens rightly points out “Religions are clearly influenced by culture, and the sort of religions taken up by societies are likely to relate to the prevailing context, which makes some more attractive than others” (Giddens, 1997, p. 584).

This thesis is based on the understanding that religion is socially, and politically constructed and produced from culture. Religious ideas regarding gender relations and women have reflected the diverse and varied realities of their respective societies inherited throughout the ages. As Esposito claims the status of women in Islam and Muslim society is complex:

Outside ideals embodied in the Koran and the traditions (hadith) of the Prophet Muhammad, one must look at the actual condition of Muslim women

in diverse time period and sociohistorical contexts. The status of women in Islam was profoundly affected not only by the fact that Islamic belief interacted with and was informed by diverse cultures, but also, and of equal importance, that the primary interpretation of Islamic law and tradition were men (religious scholars or ulama) from those cultures. (1998, p. xii)

In fact there is a close connection between religion and power relations, as well as politics. Casanova suggests that religions are analogous to politics:

Sociologically one can view institutionalized religions as analogous both to politics, as systems of distribution of power, authority, and decision-making within a community in relation to the sacred, and to economic modes of production, as symbolic modes of production, distribution, and consumption of the sacred and of religious goods. In both cases the obvious question is to what extent the system of power relations and the social relations of production are gendered and unequal – that is, whether men and women have unequal differential access to the means of production, distribution and consumption of religious goods. (Casanova, 2009, p. 40)

Fatmagül Berktaş suggested, “every discourse ‘recreates’ and ‘reforms’ the world according to its own priorities and aims. In this context, every discourse ‘creates’ and forms anew male and female bodies according to its aims as well” (1998, p. 126). According to Foucault (1979) the body is a social, historical and imagined space that carries in itself power relations and hierarchies. Foucault asserts that discourse is a public construct comprising both words and action, at the same time the subject and the object, in other words, power relations. For Weber, religious discourse, which determines the relations in this world, is a source of truth, legitimacy, and hence power. It constructs a sacred discourse that regulates woman’s status, her body, her role and function (as cited in Berktaş, 1998). From this perspective, discourse of Islam in general aims at regulating and controlling the body particularly the female body.

Religious discourse is the most affective and comprehensive tool for constructing, legitimizing and reinforcing social gender roles and dichotomies, since it is based on absolute, eternal and divine orders that originate from religious texts. Furthermore, religious ideas, patterns and practices infiltrate into and become parts of the cultural system and create a moral discourse centering on family and sexuality. As a consequence, they turn into a powerful ideological weapon reinforcing the status quo and existing social gender relations.

Religious concepts and ideas reflect the interests of the dominant groups within particular contexts at particular times. For instance in her book *The Veil and the Male Elite*, Fatima Mernissi discusses the desire of the male politicians to manipulate the sacred and she writes that “The source of the invention of Hadith⁵³ – manipulation par excellence of the sacred text – is to be found in the very nature of a political system, which never managed transcend its elitist origins and seek pragmatic ways of mobilizing the whole population to participate in the choice of the head of state” (Mernissi, 1991, p. 46). Likewise, Engineer (2001) highlights the connection between religion and political elite by claiming that those who want to perpetuate the old order always find ways and means to manipulate religion according to their own benefits.

4. 3 Feminism and religion

The feminist critique of the way that religions think about and treat women has a long history, dating back to the 1940s. In her book *the Second Sex*; Simone de Beauvoir argues that religion is necessary to the subordination of women as a social

⁵³ Hadith is a record of the Prophet Muhammad’s statements and practices.

group because it provides women with a “supreme compensation” (Beauvoir, 1972, first published 1949). Religion enables men’s authority over women and makes resistance difficult because of divine punishment keeps women in their place (Beauvoir, 1972, p. 632). Kate Millett (1972) similarly argued that religion was the justification that men used for their rule over women and ensured that male power is beyond criticism.

Feminist criticism of religion as detrimental to women was more powerfully expressed in the 1970s, usually in relation to Christianity (Daly, 1985). In her book, *Church and the Second Sex*, Daly rejected the maleness of God, which she calls, “the absurd idea that God is male” (1985, p. 180). Her book details how the Christian notables and clergy throughout history have been antifeminist and have seen the female body as a temptation, through criticism of the works of Tertullian, Aquinas, and Pope Leo. Since the 1980s these criticisms were extended to Judaism and Islam and feminists have claimed that all monotheistic religions oppress women. For instance, Julia O’Folain and Lauro Martines (1973) documented the womanhating pronouncements and practices in their book *Not in God’s Image* and revealed that the statements of Christian divines, Judaist prophets and the Koran are uniformly and in very similar ways hostile towards women.

To El Saadawi, the position of women is inferior to that of men in all three religions. She notes “The great religions of the world (both East and West) uphold similar principles as far as the submission of women to men is concerned. They also agree in the attribution of masculine characteristics to God” (El Saadawi, 1982, p. 193). Stowasser stresses the fact that all of God’s prophets from Adam to Muhammad were men (Stowasser, 1994, p. 20). Likewise, Lerner stated that men

are the subjects that mediate between God and human beings; women can reach God only through the mediation of men (Lerner, 1986, p. 6).

Ashrof claims that all major religions of the world are misogynistic and portray women as unclean, sinful and debilitating. Misogyny, as a term, refers to men's hatred of women and denotes the belief that women are not only morally and intellectually inferior to men, but also the source of evil in the world (Ashrof, 2005, p. 245). According to Ashrof, Muslims adopted Christian misogyny and reduced women to the rank of second-class citizens. He asserts Muslim theology, like other monotheistic religions, developed patriarchal cultures, has been used traditionally to deprive women of their fundamental human rights. For him, Muslim scholars (*ulema*) adopted a Christian theory that women are the primary source of "Original Sin" (Ashrof, 2005, p. 166). They also adapted the Hebrew myth of the creation of Eve, from the "rib" of Adam as the basis of their gender perception. Eve was considered less intellectual than Adam and hence she was more vulnerable. Therefore, as Ashrof asserted, in this narrative the devil tempted Eve, who then tempted Adam. Woman was portrayed as the seducer who led man to sin. Since sin was the result of lust, and the lust was most evident way that sexual desires could override the intellect, sexuality was associated with sin and women (Ashrof, 2005, p. 246). Men therefore, sought to control women by veiling and secluding them. Such patriarchal theology resulted in women's exclusion from public life and their seclusion to the domestic sphere (Ashrof, 2005, p. 167).

Moreover, such religious views and representations of women lead to an absolute and "sacred" division of gender roles. As Jeffreys writes;

Religion gives authority to traditional, patriarchal beliefs about the essentially subordinate nature of women and their naturally separate roles, such as the need for women to be confined to the private world of the home and family,

that women should be obedient to their husbands, that women's sexuality should be modest and under the control of their menfolk, and that women should not use contraception or abortion to limit their childbearing. The practice of such ancient beliefs interferes profoundly with women's abilities to exercise their human rights. (Jeffreys, 2012, pp. 5-6)

According to Berkday, the birth of monotheistic religion is related to a specific historical and sociological "moment", thus all three major religions share common characteristics. Through interaction with the birth and institutionalization of the patriarchal system, these common characteristics have demonstrated themselves as the demand for the absolute hierarchical division of gender roles sanctifying the patriarchal family with male supremacy over women and legitimization of the control over women's bodies. Thereby, the norms monotheistic religions preach regarding the "nature", status and roles of women provide the basis the values of patriarchal hierarchical society that give rise to them and that they in turn legitimated (Berkday, 1998, pp. 9-10).

Historian Gerda Lerner summarizes the common patriarchal prejudices and hypotheses shared by the patriarchal systems that provide the basis of the monotheistic religions, as follows: Men and women are different not only biologically, but also in terms of their needs, capabilities and functions. Since God has created men and women differently, they have different social functions. Men "by nature" are physically stronger and more rational; therefore they are to be the dominating sex. Also because of their nature, men are more suitable for involving in politics and to govern. Women, on the other hand, "by nature" are weaker and irrational. Since they are emotionally unbalanced, they are disqualified from political participation. Owing to their rational mental qualities, men can interpret and rule the world. Whereas, due to their reproductive and nurturing capabilities, women are responsible for the perpetuation of species and of daily life. Even though both

functions are considered important, men's functions is thought to be superior.

Furthermore, men have the right to control women's bodies and sexuality, while it is impossible for women to claim such a right. (Lerner, 1986, pp. 5-6).

4.3.1 Feminism, Islam, and patriarchy

Commenting on Muslim societies, John Esposito stressed the fact that "In no area was the force of tradition felt more strongly and the clash of civilizations⁵⁴ more apparent than the status and roles of women" (1998, p. ix). In their study, Inglehart and Norris put forth a "sexual clash of civilization thesis" and maintained that main cultural fault line that divides the West and the Muslim world is not about political values and democracy, as Huntington assumed. Their survey on societies throughout the world (Muslim and Judeo-Christian alike) revealed that the real fault line between the West and Islam is on gender equality and sexual liberalization, or to put it in their words "the values separating the two cultures have much to do with eros, rather than demos" (Inglehart & Norris, 2003, p. 65).

Grave injustice against women in Muslim societies have stirred heated controversy with respect to the image of women within Islam and the role of Islam in legitimating and reproducing patriarchy,⁵⁵ and gender inequality in the last few decades (Casanova, 2009, p. 44). As in the case of Christianity, feminist scholarship has made the most significant contributions to those debates (Mernissi 1987 and 1991; Ahmed, 1992; Stowasser, 1994; Wadud 1999; Moghissi, 2005). Feminist

⁵⁴ "Clash of civilizations" thesis is proposed by political scientist Samuel P. Huntington. Huntington in 1993. Basically he claims that cultural and religious identities will be the primary source of conflicts in the post-Cold War era. To Huntington, the main fault line between the West and Islam will be over political values and democratic ideals (Huntington, 1993).

⁵⁵ Patriarchy, according to Zillah Eisenstein, is a politics of sexual differentiation that privileges males by "transforming biological sex into politicized gender, which prioritizes the male while making the woman different (unequal), less than, or the 'Other'" (1984, p. 90).

critiques of religion accused Islam as a source of injustices toward women in Muslim societies and believed that Islam treats women unfairly.

Mernissi's book titled *Beyond the Veil* (1987, first published in 1975) became a popular source for future feminist studies of gender in Islam. Mernissi discusses the impact of sexuality in Islam on Muslim women and writes, "The entire Muslim social structure can be seen as an attack on, and defense against, the disruptive power of female sexuality" (1987, p. 45). But why does Islam fear from the power of female attraction? As Mernissi forcefully argues, "Islamic sexual culture emphasizes the female as powerful, seductive temptress who – consciously or unconsciously – is driven to capture the hearts and souls of men and bind them to her, interfering with the males ability to focus on God" (as cited in Combs-Schilling, 1989, pp. 92-3). The Muslim male is perceived to be vulnerable in the face of female sexuality. Therefore, there is a strong effort in Islam to control women's dangerous sexuality, which in turn paved the way for institutionalization and legitimization of patriarchal structures.

Stowasser suggests that classical medieval Islamic school viewed women's innate nature as weak but also dangerous to the established moral order and hence woman is (and should be) man's follower in all respects (Stowasser, 1994, p. 21). Classical interpretation of woman's origin and nature denies female rationality and female moral responsibility. Stowasser emphasized that hadith materials reproducing gender inequality had been promoted by the Islamic jurists for a long time:

This signifies both a social base of gender inequality and also the existence of structures bent on its preservation. The *Hadith* materials on women's inferior nature were accepted and propagated by the consensus (*ijma*) of learned doctors of law and theology until eighteenth-century pre-modern reformists began to question their authoritative status. (Stowasser, 1994, p. 28)

Having studied the status and position of women in pre-Islamic society, El Saadawi claims that Arab women enjoyed a higher degree of liberty and independence, compared to Muslim women in Islamic era. Relatively higher status and prestige enjoyed by women in pre-Islamic Arab tribal society, for El Saadawi, may possibly be explained by the vestiges of matriarchalism. Before the Islamic age, a woman could even practice polyandry and marry more than one man (El Saadawi, 1982, p.194). However after Islam arrived, Arab women gradually lost their independence and active social role. El Saadawi argues that Islamic jurisprudence stripped women from their rights in several matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc. Matriarchy was replaced by patriarchy; as well as polyandry by polygamy; women were veiled, excluded from public sphere and attached to domestic realm (El Saadawi, 1982, pp.198-202).

Likewise, Leyla Ahmed challenged the argument of Islamic thinkers that Islam's banning of infanticide demonstrated the fact Islam improved the position of women in all aspects. Ahmed finds this argument both inaccurate and simplistic. In fact Jahilia marriage practices indicated that women enjoyed greater sexual autonomy than they were allowed under Islam (Ahmed, 1992). Ahmed also documents that in pre-Islamic society women could actively participate in wide range of activities, including warfare and religion and even could become leaders. However, their autonomy and participation were curtailed with the establishment of Islam. To Ahmed, "Marriage as sanctioned or practiced by Muhammad included polygamy and the marriage of girls nine or ten years old. Koranic utterances sanctioned the rights of males to have sexual relations with slave women and to divorce at will" (1992, p. 62).

To prove her point, Ahmed compares the lives and marriages of two Muhammad's wives, Khadija and Aisha. Her comparison illustrated the changes that had been experienced by women of Islamic Arabia. Khadija, Muhammad's first wife was a wealthy widow, before her marriage to Muhammad, employed him for her business. She proposed to and married him when she was forty and he was twenty-five and she remained his only wife until her death at about sixty-five. She was in her fifties, when Muhammad received his first revelation and became a prophet. Therefore, it was Jahilia customs, rather than Islam that shaped her conduct and life as a woman. "Her economic independence; her marriage overture; apparently without a male guardian to act as intermediary; her marriage to man many years younger than herself; and her monogamous marriage all reflect Jahilia rather than Islamic practice" (Ahmed, 1992, p. 62).

In contrast, autonomy and monogamy were absent in the lives of women Muhammad married after he became the prophet and leader of Islam, and the control of women by male guardians and the male polygamy emerged thereafter as formal features of Islamic marriage. As Ahmed claimed, the life of Aisha, the prophet's most favored wife, reflected the limitations imposed by Islam on women's lives:

She was born to Muslim parents, married Muhammad when she was nine or ten, and soon thereafter, along with her co-wives, began to observe the new customs of veiling and seclusion. The difference between Khadija's and Aisha's lives – especially with regard to autonomy – foreshadows the changes that Islam would effect for Arabian women. Aisha, however lived, at a moment of transition, and in some aspects her life reflects Jahilia, as well as Islamic practice. Her brief assumption of political leadership after Muhammad's death doubtless had its roots in the customs of her forebears, as did the esteem and authority the community granted her. The acceptance of women as participants in and authorities on the central affairs of the community steadily declined in the ensuing Islamic period. (1992, p. 43)

Stowasser asserts that Koranic command to Muhammad's wives to "stay in your houses" (33:33) was applied to women in general⁵⁶; in tandem with the *hijab* (veil) rule⁵⁷ – in its original meaning imposed a screen / curtain of separation between Muhammad's wives and stranger men at his dwellings (33:53) – which in turn provided a scripture-based legality for women's segregation and hence curtailed their free participation in community affairs (Stowasser, 1994, p. 98). In parallel, Smith wrote there was a rapid decline with the institutionalization of the early Muslim community, marked by what she termed "a dual process of exclusion" of women not only from leadership roles, but also from the communal aspects of religious life. After Muhammad's death, women were rapidly secluded to a place apart from normal social intercourse with men (Smith, 1985, pp. 19-35).

Ahmed (1992) elaborates how Muslim male elite stripped women from some of the rights they had gained in the early Islamic age and attempted to seclude them further. For instance, she speaks about Caliph Umar's (634-44) harsh attitude toward women in both private and public life, as well as his policies seeking to confine women to their home and to prevent their participation in prayers at the mosques. As Ahmed described, Umar instituted segregated prayers, appointing a separate imam for each sex. Contrary to the prophet's practice, he also prohibited prophet's wives from going on pilgrimage. When Uthman the third caliph (644-56) was murdered,

⁵⁶ Verse (33: 33) reads: [Oh women of the Prophet] And stay in your houses and do not strut about in the manner of the former Jahilia and perform the prayer and give the alms and obey God and His Prophet. God wishes but to put all filthiness away from you, People of the House and cleanse with you with cleansing.

⁵⁷ The *hijab* verse (33:53) reads: Oh believers do not enter the Prophet's houses except that permission is given you for a meal, without waiting for its time. But when you are invited, enter, and when you have eaten, disperse, without seeking familiarity for talk. This used to cause the Prophet annoyance, and he is ashamed of you. But God is not ashamed of what is right. And if you ask them [the women] for a thing, then ask them from behind a *hijab*. That is purer from your hearts and their hearts. And it is not for you to cause annoyance to God's Messenger, nor that you should marry his wives after him. Truly this with God would be enormous.

Aisha, who was still active in public life, led the Battle of Camel (656). Ahmed claims that her defeat against Ali (who became the fourth caliph, 656 -61) and the controversial nature⁵⁸ of battle bolstered womanhating assumptions in the Muslim community. Charges that the opposition had made from the start – that Aisha’s leadership in the battle violated Koranic verse ordering Muhammad’s women to stay at home, seemed more fully justified (Ahmed, 1992, pp. 60-1). In Abbasid society women became invisible in all arenas of the community’s central affairs. Women in this age, unlike the previous eras, were neither in battlefields nor in mosques. They were textually invisible as well. Important religious texts of the Abbasid age were created by men, who grew up living and internalizing the society’s assumptions of gender and women and the structures of power relations between the sexes. As a result, these assumptions and structures were inscribed in the texts written by men. The texts created in this period are regarded as the core prescriptive texts of Islam, in turn reflect implicit or explicit ideology of gender that legitimizes misogynistic practices (Ahmed, 1992, p. 82).

4.4 Themes emerging from the feminist literature on Islam

For coding purposes, I organized the robust literature on feminist critiques of Islam under three major themes: The depictions of the first woman in Islamic creation story, the obsession to take the female body and sexuality under control, and religious division of labor between sexes are the three reiterated themes that emerge from the literature. Patriarchal religious discourse based on these pivotal themes undermines gender equality and becomes a source of injustice against women in real

⁵⁸ The Battle of Camel resulted in a factional split in Islam and became referred as the first battle, in which Muslim shed Muslim blood.

life. The rest of the chapter provides a brief overview of the arguments collected for each theme. These themes are then utilized as major categories for coding and hence making a critical assessment of Diyanet's texts in the following chapters.

4.4.1 Depictions of the woman in Islamic creation stories

Feminist scholars, who view religion as a threat to women, have commonly studied how the first woman is figured by creation myths in Judao-Christian-Islamic tradition. As Millet explains, there are two leading myths that give valuable insights into this tradition's understanding of woman's roles and functions as well as her essential nature, "the classical tale of Pandora's box and the Biblical story of the Fall, and they tell the same story" (Millet, 1972, p. 51). In this tradition the world in which the first woman was not yet created, had been a golden age, a paradise of all good things. Everything changed negatively with the birth of the woman. This idea was first represented in Greek mythology by the myth of Pandora's box. Greek poet Hesiod, described how the smith Hephaestus modeled a woman from clay, who then became enlivened as a woman:

Up to this time the races of men had lived on earth free from harm, from toilsome labor and from the painful diseases, which bring death to humankind. But the woman's hands raised the lid of the great jar, scattered the evils within it, and laid up the harsh troubles of men (O'Faolain & Martines, 1973, p. 24).

In his work, "the origin of damnable race of women – plague which men must live with", Hesiod describes Pandora as perilous temptation with "the mind of a bitch and a thievish nature" full of "the cruelty and cunning words and a deceitful soul", a snare sent by Zeus to be the "ruin of men" (Jeffreys, 2012, p. 25).

According to Millet (1972), this idea that woman tempts man with a dangerous

sexuality, was taken up by all the religions of the Middle East. As Millet claims patriarchal religion regards sex as “unclean, sinful, and debilitating, pertains to the female, and the male identity is preserved as human, rather than a sexual one” (Millet, 1972, p. 51)

El Saadawi writes that the myth of Adam and Eve, which was first inscribed in the Old Testament, portrayed Eve as the origin of all sin and this Eve image was inherited by the other two monotheistic religions. “Eve took the first step towards the tree of knowledge . . . Yet she was the ‘sin’ or the ‘fall’ depicted in the Old Testament, from which Christianity and Islam inherited the myth which made Eve the origin of all sin” (El Saadawi, 1982, p. 193). According to Jeffreys, the Pandora’s box story was written into the Old Testament as the story of Eve, who led to the fall of man from paradise, since she tempted Adam with the apple of the forbidden tree, and he accepted to eat. This was, as with Pandora, a metaphor for sexual relations, and seductiveness and sinfulness of woman. (Jeffreys, 2012, pp. 25-6).

Jane Smith and Yvonne Haddad, on the other hand, focused on how the figure of Eve was portrayed in Koran and in Islamic tradition. They noted that Koran is generally silent on how, why and when Hawwa was created. To address these questions, they examined the hadith literature and found references suggesting that Hawwa was created from Adam’s rib for his comfort and solace. Here, they quoted one of the most common hadiths referred to as authoritative on these matters belong to Ibn Abbas and Ibn Mas’ud:

When God sent Iblis out of the Garden and placed Adam in it, he dwelt in it alone and had no one to socialize with. God sent sleep on him and then He took a rib from his left side and placed flesh in its place and created Hawwa from it. When he awoke he found a woman seated near his head. He asked

her, “Who are you?” She answered “Woman”. He said; “Why were you created?” She said, “That you might find rest in me”. The angels said “What is her name?” and he said “Hawwa”. They said, “Why was she called Hawwa?” He said, “Because she was created from a living thing”. (as cited in Smith and Haddad, 1982, pp. 136-7)

By looking at the overall picture as presented in the reports and commentaries, the implications are quite clear: God creates the Man first. Adam is lonely, so Hawwa is created so that Adam can have rest in her. Eve is taken out of Man and created from Adam’s bone. Besides, she had no name until Adam names her. God concedes all naming power to Adam. Adam names all creatures as well as woman. For Berktaý, naming is a powerful act, a symbol of authority:

... Naming does not remain as a symbolic creation but defines woman as a “natural” part of man ... Man through the miracle of God’s creative power creates woman out of his own body just as the human mother creates a new being from her own body. Thus, this description, which fits the only human relation, that of the relation between mother and child, is turned upside down and *man appears as mother of woman* [emphasis added]. (Berktaý, 1998, p. 37)

Smith and Haddad claimed that there is a disparity between the narrative of the Koran regarding the fall from Paradise and those of the scholars of Islam and hadith literature. For instance, as they note, in the Koranic narrative both Adam and Eve are warned about the forbidden tree, both are tempted and both ate the fruit. However, commentators have little doubt that she was guilty of listening to the words of Satan and tempting Adam to eat of the tree and expulsion from the Paradise. Besides, despite the Koran makes it clear that the consequences are the same for both man and woman; in commentators’ account additional burdens are imposed on Eve. For instance, Smith and Haddad points that in one of the most influential Koranic commentaries, *Tarikh*, written by Persian scholar Al-Tabari it is

told that while Adam is ashamed, the response of God is to curse not him but the earth from which he was created. Eve, however, is cursed by the pain of childbirth. “When it is time for you deliver what is within you your belly” said God to Eve “you will repeatedly be close to death”. Al-Tabarsi, who is also a prominent religious thinker, in his *Tafsir* mentions even further punishments for Eve “As for you, O Hawwa, as you have bled this tree so shall you bleed every month!” (as cited in Smith & Haddad, 1982, pp. 139-40). Smith and Haddad also point out that in misogynistic commentaries all women are deemed as cursed due to Eve’s guilt in Adam’s fall from the Paradise:

Adam is the one with whom God makes a covenant; Eve is both the first to succumb to temptation and often is portrayed as the immediate cause of Adam’s fall. Adam is rational until Eve boggles his senses by feeding him wine. When Adam feels shame it is the earth, not he, that is punished; Eve for her part is cursed, and with her all generations of women. (Smith & Haddad, 1982, p. 141)

4.4.2 Control over the female body and sexuality

Berktaf points out that all cultures differentiate male and female bodies, assigning different meanings to them. In both Western and Islamic traditions woman is identified with body, for the fact that it is the female body that gives birth and thus perpetuates human life from one generation to the next (1998, p. 125). One of the most central issues in these traditions with respect to the female body is covering. The seclusion and covering rules are part of the range of measures that these patriarchal religions invoked to control women’s sexuality. Rules about the virginity, chastity, and honor are common to the three religions (Jeffreys, 2012, p. 28). Still, there are many differences as similarities among them. Islam is the most persistent one, among the three religions, when it comes to covering woman’s body or hiding

her femaleness with various items of clothing such as veiling or the headscarf. As Mernissi suggests:

All the monotheistic religions are shot through by the conflict between the divine and the feminine, but none more so than Islam, which has opted for the occultation of the feminine, at least symbolically, by trying to veil it, to hide it, to mask it. Islam as sexual practice unfolds with a very special theatricality since it is acted out in a scene where the hijab (veil) occupies a central position. (Mernissi, 1987, p. 81)

To Berktaý (1998) this phobic attitude toward the female body is due to the perception in Islam regarding women's potential to disrupt and subvert the established order based on strict gender differentiation, or in other words their potential to create social disorder "*fitna*". In Islam female sexuality is regarded as more powerful and natural than male sexuality. Therefore, it is viewed as the source of a major social problem unless it is taken under control. The veil and seclusion imposed on women are measures to "protect men and society from the disruptive consequences of women's sexuality" (Berktaý, 1998, p. 132). Thus, covering or veiling is prescribed as a remedy for women's "irresistible seductiveness" (Jeffreys, 2012, p. 27). Women should cover their beauty so that men would not be tempted. Women should be covered to show obedience to God and to men, and particularly to show their modesty and willingness not to tempt men to sin (Jeffreys, 2012, p. 27).

Likewise, Mernissi claims that Islam fears the power of female sexual attraction over men due to the essentialization of female nature by *fitna*, which is a pervasive topic in her study. To prove her point Mernissi quotes several misogynistic hadiths that equate the woman with Satan, including one in which the prophet is alleged to say "After my disappearance there will be no greater source of chaos and disorder for my nation than women" (as cited in Mernissi, 1987, pp. 42-3). To

Mernissi, the dilemma facing the Muslim men – women are so irresistible that men are unable to control themselves – is solved with veil and seclusion. In this regard, she discusses the context that the veil (*Hijab*) verse that was revealed to Muhammad. At the marriage celebration the prophet “was impatient to be alone with his new wife, his cousin Zaynab”. A small group of “tactless guests” remained and Muhammad was too polite to tell them leave. In response, the verse on veil came out as “God’s answer” to a community that offended a Prophet (Mernissi, 1991, pp. 86-7).

Abbot interprets the verse on the *hijab* but translates the word “curtain” as the subsequent regulations that curtail the liberties of prophet’s wives, rather than an item of clothing. She argued that Muhammad had more or less come to be a “prophet-king”, and hence he needed certain restrictions to protect his family’s honor. However, the outcome as she asserts, was the “foundation stone of what was to prove in time one of the most stubborn and retrogressive institutions in Islam – the segregation of the women behind curtain and veil” (Abbott, 1942, p. 26). Ahmed confirmed that the *hijab* rule imposed on the prophet’s women resulted in the seclusion of women and emergence of “a new unambiguously patriarchal society” (Ahmed, 1992, p. 55).

On the one hand, Islam seeks to control women’s irresistible and dangerous sexuality by covering and seclusion, on the other hand the female body is seen as an object of pleasure created to satisfy men’s sexual needs. As Berkta (1998) emphasizes, women, like gold, silver, horses, land, etc. are listed as “properties” that

connect men to “worldly pleasures” in Koran (3: 14)⁵⁹. Moreover, according to Berktaý “the tilt” metaphor used in Koran in several verses (2: 223) illustrates how sexual activity is considered as a one-sided affair; and the female body is perceived as an object to satisfy male desire⁶⁰ (Berktaý, 1998, p. 127).

As feminist scholars emphasize, in the patriarchal interpretations of Islam while women are regarded as dangerous and tempting, they are simultaneously seen as disgusting and polluting. For instance, Mernissi cites a misogynistic hadith recorded by Al-Bukhari, which the prophet is alleged to mention women as one of the three things⁶¹ that interrupt prayer if they pass in front of the believer (as cited in Mernissi, 1991, p. 64).

Impurity of women is a reiterated theme not only in Islam, but also in Judaist and Christian theologies. The idea of impurity of the female body is mostly associated with her menstruation. For instance as O’Faolin and Martines claim, the Old Testament lays down the rules, through which women must avoid touching men or allowing men to touch them during the menstruation periods (O’Faolain & Martines, 1973, p. 106). They also underline that the Koran, too, regards menstruating woman as source of pollution, as it states, “They are a pollution. Separate yourselves therefore from women and approach them not, until they are cleansed. But when they are cleansed, go in unto them as God hath ordained for you” (as cited in O’Faolain & Martines, 1973, p. 26).

⁵⁹ Verse (3:14) reads: Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire – of women and sons, headed sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return.

⁶⁰ Verse (2: 223) reads: Your wives are a tilth for you (to cultivate) so go to your tilth as you will.

⁶¹ “The Prophet said that the dog, the ass, and woman interrupt prayer if they pass in front of the believer, interposing themselves between him and the qibla” (Bukhari, Sahih, vol. I, p.99).

4.4.3 Gender stereotypes sanctioning gendered division of labor

Feminists claim that, in Islamic discourse women are primarily regarded and portrayed as “wives” and “mothers” due to the meaning assigned to the “family”. In Islam family is essential instrument for ensuring the preservation of the established moral order, for preventing its degeneration and for encouraging individuals to live according to God’s orders. As Stowasser asserts, preservation of the established order requires preserving the given gender division of roles:

In this God-willed natural order, *the man is charged with “leadership” to protect domestic life and well-being, and is to the wife as the head is to the body* [emphasis added]. . . woman’s role is to be in charge of all domestic affairs, for which she has to be trained in order to cope with all modern exigencies. Man is in charge of all work outside the house. Therein consists the exact equivalence of the spouses. (Stowasser, p. 1987)

Berktaý (1998) suggests that legitimatizing gender roles with Islamic doctrines and labeling them absolute have significant consequences for women’s status. Besides, the dichotomies such as emotional / rational, strong /weak, from which gender roles originate, become the foundation of the inequality between men and women. Deprivation of women from decision-making in important matters such as marriage and divorce is legitimized due to women’s “emotional” nature. These God-given gender roles also necessitate women to be “protected” and hold their husbands for maintenance of them. As a result “woman is denied the right to exist independently, outside of her father’s or her husband’s home. The woman trying to acquire economic independence and stand on her own two feet is considered as the cause for the destruction of first, the institution of marriage, then, the order of society” (Berktaý, 1998, p. 100). What is more, challenging and suggesting a change in these roles become very difficult and mean an act of religious disobedience since they are determined by God’s will and inscribed in the Koran.

According to Stowasser (1994), the Koranic account of Adam and Hawwa's story provides a scriptural support for natural gender roles ascribed to the two sexes. It is Surah 20: 117 in the Koran, in particular, that is understood as God's order to the man to toil in the world at large and his command that the woman remain at home, to be a wife and mother. "God warned Adam (alone) of Iblis' enmity and said that he would come to toil... as God meant for Adam to expend all of his energies in life (outside of the home)... and then return to the woman (in the home) to find rest in her" (7: 189 and 30:21). Therefore, the story of Adam and Hawwa teaches that woman is created for wifehood and motherhood and can only fulfill these God-ordained tasks and realize her full potential if she stays away from "the toil" of the job market, which is imposed upon Adam (Stowasser, 1994, p. 37).

Smith and Haddad cite one narrative in al-Tabari's work (1:61) that attributes to Hawwa the origins of the tasks generally associated with womankind: after the fall from Paradise, she was told to have been engaged in weaving, spinning, kneading dough and making bread. As Al-Tabari comments, "She had done all the things women do" (as cited in Smith & Haddad, 1982, p.140).

Similarly, Ashrof blames the myth of the creation for providing a scriptural basis for gender stereotypes and for promoting natural sex roles. Due to the presentations of Eve's image in religious texts, duties attributed to Eve such as child raising and housekeeping have been associated with womankind. These narratives, in turn, paved the way for identification of women with the domestic realm and their imprisonment through seclusion. As Ashrof maintains, "being a homemaker was not a choice, but a consequence of being a member of Eve's party, the sinful party. Child raising and housekeeping, two of the most important and difficult jobs in the world, were considered inferior by men" (Ashrof, 2005, p. 166).

As noted above, natural division of labor between sexes rests on the stereotypes about woman in Islamic tradition. Feminists claimed that, woman is regarded in Islam as weak, irrational and emotional creature, who needs protection from the strong and rational opposite sex. Paradoxically woman is also dangerous, sinful, and irresistibly seductive, and hence she poses a potential threat for the established moral order. Thereby, she has to be taken under control by and be obedient to the male authority. She also has to be modest in the look and should cover her body and sexuality. Due to her reproductive capabilities, as well as physical and psychological characteristics, her place is domestic sphere where she must perform the tasks – mainly housekeeping and child raising – that her innate nature allows her best. All these stereotypes associated with women, not only sprung from the creation myth, but also from portrayals of the prophet's wives in Islamic narratives. Koranic female exemplars serve as “models” and function as images, representing past women's experience but also they are called upon to shape present lives and future of women.

Motherhood theme reappears when the Koran addresses Prophet's wives⁶². As Stowasser (1994, p. 85) highlights, in the Koran Muhammad's wives are not addressed by their names, but as the “Mothers of the Believers” as in the Medinan verse (33:6). Moreover, she explains that the wives are portrayed in Hadith literature in conflicting ways. “On the one hand, they emerge as perfect exemplars of their sex regarding virtue and righteousness. On the other hand, they are portrayed as embodiments of female emotionalism, irrationality, greed and rebelliousness” (Stowasser, 1994, p. 106).

⁶² While there is no consistency in the hadith about the number of women whom the prophet married, the majority of traditions put their number at fourteen (Stowasser, 1994, p. 86).

A large part of the Hadith presents the Mothers of Believers as models of piety and righteousness. Their attitudes, dress, performance of ritual and worship, etc. are recorded in detail and their sum reflects ideal / normative categories of behavior, which are placed upon Muslim women in general. In other words, the wives of the Prophet are “norm-setters”. This is especially clear with respect to modesty, veiling, and seclusion (Stowasser, 1994, p.115).

On the other hand, many of the accounts on life in the Prophet’s household contain detailed descriptions of the jealousies and domestic political maneuvers of the Mothers of Believers. These narratives portray Muhammad’s wives as petty, greedy, backbiting and power-hungry. New arrivals in the household are told to cause intense jealousies among established wives, who feared that a new rival might replace them in the Prophet’s affection. Besides, there are narrations that his wives competed among themselves when one of them played an important role in an “occasion for revelation” or had a special relation with the Prophet⁶³ (Stowasser, 1994, p. 109). The image of the jealous wife has been transmitted and maintained by these narratives. Personal characteristics attributed to the Mother of the Believers, provide a religious backing for gender stereotypes that cause unequal and unfair treatments of women in domestic and public spheres.

The subsequent chapter on the method discuss how the three broad themes emerged from the feminist critique of patriarchal interpretations of Islam are used to deconstruct the nature of Diyanet’s messages regarding women.

⁶³ For instance, some narratives describe that Zaynab was disliked by other wives because her marriage had aocured by a specific divine dispensation (Koran 33:37-38) and the *hijab* verse had been revealed on her wedding day. It is also told that other wives were jealous of Aisha, since she was the only virgin bride and she was the dearest companion of the Prophet, who was calling him “as superior to all women as breadsoup is to all food” (as cited in Stowasser, 1994, p.109).

CHAPTER 5

METHOD

This thesis is case oriented. I made an in depth study of the texts published by the PRA. I employed an eclectic qualitative textual analysis method, which combined the elements of Content Analysis and Discourse Analysis methods in my research. This chapter starts with a discussion of the method I employed in this thesis.

Textual analysis is an umbrella term referring a variety of methodologies used for analyzing textual content. Lockyer (2008) explains that textual analysis is a method of data analysis that closely examines either the content and meaning of texts or their structure and discourse. As Alan McKee writes, “when we perform textual analysis on a text, we make educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text” (McKee, 2003, p. 1).

Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) is probably the most prevalent approach to the qualitative analysis of documents and it involves any kind of analysis where communication content is categorized and classified. To Schiling (2006), qualitative content analysis is a systematic, rule-based process of analyzing verbal and textual data such as written documents, interviews, party manifestoes, newspaper articles, etc. Hsieh and Shannon underlines “subjectivity” inherent in the nature of this method, by writing that qualitative content analysis is “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of the text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, p. 1278).

On the other hand, Discourse Analysis is strategic examination of speech or texts for embedded and inferred socio-political meanings (Gee, 2011; Rapley, 2007;

Willig, 2008). Fundamental concern of discourse analysis is with the ways in which language and social reality are interrelated, especially when it comes to issues of power and ideology; and the analysis of realization of inequality in and through language (Phillips and Hardy, 2002, p. 10). Schreier notes that unlike Discourse Analysis, QCA has no assumptions about reality or have implicit assumptions. QCA also differs from Discourse Analysis in the sense that it is typically descriptive, whereas Discourse Analysis often criticizes the values that are transported by the dominant discourse (Schreier, 2012, p. 46).

In my thesis, my research objective has been systematically describing the meaning of the texts released by the Presidency of Religious Affairs. For this reason, I mostly benefited from the techniques of QCA. Yet, my study goes beyond simply describing the data; because it aimed to uncover the interrelations between religious texts with political power over time. Moreover, it has made a critical analysis of the content of texts conveyed by the PRA and it assumed from the outset that a patriarchal religious discourse might have been used as a powerful ideological weapon reinforcing gender inequalities. Thus, I combined qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis by putting the method of QCA into the service of the critical-interpretive attitude underlying discourse analysis. In this sense, critical discourse analysis is less a method, and more an attitude towards my research.

Schreier (2012, p. 3) writes that QCA is a suitable method for describing rich, symbolic material that requires some degree of interpretation. Materials published by the Diyanet meet this criterion, as they are mostly abstract, ambiguous, inconsistent, and contain a great deal of religious terminology. Moreover, they do not have standardized meanings and tend to convey different meanings simultaneously. Thus, Diyanet's texts require certain degree of interpretation. Interpretation is a complex

process, in which “we bring together our perception of the material with our individual background”. In other words, “we construct meaning”, as the meaning is not given (Schreier, 2012, p. 3).

5.1 Texts under scrutiny

As McKee notes “A text is something we make meaning from” (2003, p. 4). In qualitative textual research, texts, which can range from books, websites, newspapers to TV programs “are deconstructed to examine how they operate, the manner in which they are constructed, the ways in which meanings are produced and nature of those meanings” (Lockyer, 2008). In this study, “text” refers to the written materials published or publicized by the PRA.

The primary text under scrutiny is the periodical entitled *Diyanet*, which has been regularly published since 1968. The thesis additionally reviewed PRA’s most recent periodical *Diyanet Aile* (Diyanet Family), as well as the book of *İlmihal* published by the Presidency. I also browsed the press releases and official announcements that have been publicized through the Presidency’s official website. In addition, I surveyed digital media and gathered data from the interviews with *Diyanet* notables published in mainstream newspapers. For the fact that main text under scrutiny was not available earlier, the thesis took the year of the first issue of the *Diyanet* periodical as its starting point and studied the content of the periodical until the presidential elections held in August 2014.

Diyanet periodical is the primary source that enables a researcher to track the transformation of the Presidency’s discourse on women over time, as it has been published on regular basis. *Diyanet* initially came out as a newsletter published twice a month, from 1968 until 1991. Since 1991 the Presidency has published an issue

every month, and hence the title of the periodical was changed as *Diyanet Aylık* (Diyanet Monthly). The mission of the periodical is stated by the PRA as follows:

Diyanet Monthly Periodical aims to spread the universal message of Islam to people, by taking present circumstances into consideration and in accordance with the needs of society, [it] also considers as a very important duty to contribute to the formation of a community of self-confident, expert religious personnel . . . (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 2011, p. 57; Appendix D, 5)

The thesis reviewed the content of 835 issues of *Diyanet Aylık* in total. The number of articles published in *Diyanet* periodical fluctuates from month to month, between 10 and 20 articles. Articles are written on diverse topics ranging from Islamic teachings and interpretations of Koranic verses, to commentaries on contemporary political and social issues. These articles are mostly written by high rank officials of the Presidency (such as the President, Vice President, or members of the Higher Board of Religious Affairs), scholars of Islam from theology faculties of various universities in Turkey, preachers, muftis, as well as psychologists, sociologists, teachers and other experts. In these articles authors express their opinions and elaborate on the matters with Islamic perspective; by referring to Koran, the life of the prophet and classical Islamic works. Since all articles that are to be published in the periodical are reviewed and approved by the Presidency, they reflect the institutional perspective on diverse issues.

With respect to the circulation rate of *Diyanet Aylık* periodical, systematic information is not available. However, the Department of Religious Publications in Ankara provided that in 2009, approximately 80,000 copies are published in each month and hence 960,000 copies are printed in total for the whole year (E. Genç Yıldız, personal communication, December 28, 2009). In 2010, monthly circulation of the periodical increased to 85,000 (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 2011, p. 57).

Majority of these periodicals have been distributed to muftis and imams all over Turkey and religious foundations, whereas only a minority have been posted to individual subscribers. However, small proportion of individual subscribers should not necessarily mean that the public access to the periodical is limited, as *Diyanet Aylık* is also accessible through the official website of PRA. In fact, every month the website attracts a large number of visitors. For instance, the automatic tracking system that counts the total number of online visitors on monthly basis, reported that 1,584,433 people visited the website in June 2014⁶⁴.

Second periodical under scrutiny is *Diyanet Aile* (Diyanet Family), which has been published since 2013. It is stated in the first issue of *Diyanet Aile* that the periodical serves PRA's founding purpose of "enlightening Turkish public on religious matters". Texts on *Diyanet Aile* concentrate on topics related with home, family, relations between spouses, motherhood, and care of children. The thesis browsed the content of 19 issues printed from January 2013 until August 2014. The total number of articles published every month in *Diyanet Aile* also fluctuates from 10 to 20.

Diyanet's views regarding the female body and sexuality are also be found in *İlmihal* or the book of fiqh, which prescribes basic Islamic laws and rituals through hadiths. *İlmihal* is a comprehensive book that reflects Diyanet's interpretation of Islam and it refers to primary Islamic sources in order to provide commentary on contemporary issues concerning morality and religion. In the first volume, the book essentially concentrates on Islam and its fundamental teachings. Whereas, the second volume deals with matters such as, family relations, social affairs and political life,

⁶⁴ This number was retrieved from Diyanet's official website ([www. Diyanet.gov.tr](http://www.Diyanet.gov.tr)) on June 23rd, 2014.

legal and commercial issues, individual and social morality. This volume exhaustively sets the rules of conduct that must be followed by an “ideal” Muslim woman in both private and public domains. When the data available in *Diyanet* and *Diyanet Aile* were insufficient, the second volume of *İlmihal* served as a useful source to uncover Diyanet’s understanding of ideal Muslim woman. In addition, I explored and collected Diyanet’s official declarations / pronouncements publicized at the Diyanet’s website. Several pronouncements by the Presidency on subjects, such as the headscarf and abortion, contained salient data serving my research goals. To support my findings, I additionally browsed digital newspapers and gathered data from the articles on the Diyanet and interviews conducted with Diyanet notables.

5.2 Data collection and precoding

I started with collecting texts available on Diyanet’s official website. However, while I was gathering data, only issues published after 2004 were available online⁶⁵. Therefore, I made my field trip to Ankara in July 2012 and visited Diyanet’s headquarters, where I met with several high - rank Diyanet officials and collected copies of the all sort of written materials that might be relevant with my thesis. Along with hardcopies of the older issues of gazette and monthly periodical; I obtained a digital disc, into which all issues of *Diyanet Gazette* and *Diyanet* periodical from 1968 until 2004 were recorded. Despite technical problems and setbacks, the program had a search engine, which made it possible to find all texts

⁶⁵ The PRA later updated its online archive and uploaded the issues of the *Diyanet Aylık* that have been published from 1990 onwards. These issues are accessible from the official website of the PRA (www.diyane.gov.tr) under the section “The Directorate General on Religious Publications”.

containing the key words entered. The engine had the options of title-based search and word-based search.

First I conducted a title-based search within the entire population of articles by using the word “woman” and its synonyms (*kadın, hanım, bayan, dişi*) in Turkish. However, when I compared the number of results with that of word - based search, I found a huge difference (See Figure A2). This was because many articles mentioning these subjects did not include the word “woman” in their titles. Consequently, I proceeded to gather relevant texts on word-search basis. Majority of the significant data were embedded within the texts written on other subjects such as; family, marriage, relations between spouses, parenting, human rights in Islam, creation, morality, chastity, sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad, and Prophet’s life and marriages.

I browsed 16492 articles in total and initially selected 693 articles as relevant to my research questions (See Figure A1). In this way, I was able to reduce vast amounts of texts and hence limit my analysis on relevant aspects of my material. Each relevant article became the unit of analysis. While I was doing initial reading, I used “pre-code” technique (Layder, 1998) by circling, highlighting, underlining, or coloring significant quotes and passages that struck me – those “codable moments” worthy of attention (Boyatzis, 1998). All relevant material was taken into account during the process of coding.

5.3 Coding process

Weber (1990, p. 69) assures researchers that “there is no single right way to do content analysis. Instead, investigators must judge what methods are appropriate for their substantive problems”. Likewise, Saldana (2016, p. 75) suggests, “Because

each qualitative study is unique, the analytic approach you use will be unique”. Thus, I developed a hybrid coding method, customized to suit the unique needs of my own study. After carefully considering the available coding methods in the literature, I found that a mixture of Holistic and Longitudinal Coding methods would best serve the nature and goals of my study and forms of my data.

Holistic Coding (also labeled as “macro-level coding”) is an attempt “to grasp basic themes or issues in the data by absorbing them as a whole, rather than by analyzing them in line by line” (Dey, 1993, p. 104). Saldana (2016, p. 166) writes that Holistic Coding is appropriate for “beginning qualitative researchers learning how to code data” and studies dealing with “massive amounts of data”. He also adds, “Holistic Coding is applicable when the researcher already has a general idea of what to investigate in the data, or to ‘chunk’ the text into broad topics as a preliminary step before more detailed analysis” (Saldana, 2016, p. 166). Nature of my research certainly met these criteria, as I have been dealing with a large magnitude of data published over an extended period of time. From the literature on feminist critique of religion, I also acquired a prediction about what would be found in the data before undertaking the analysis. Thus, as my first cycle coding method, I applied Holistic Coding for the refined texts in hand.

Some methodologists advise that “the choice of coding method(s) and provisional list of codes should be determined beforehand (deductive) to harmonize with [the] conceptual framework, paradigm or research goals of the study” (Saldana, 2016, p. 166). I deductively developed three broad categories from my reading of feminist theory on religion: “Creation Story”, “Female Body and Sexuality” and “Gender Roles”. Each major category corresponds to a different aspect of equality between men and women: First category deals with equality in terms creation,

second category deals with equality in bodily rights and sexuality, and third deals with equality of choosing roles in life without the limitations set by gender stereotypes.

Because each article published in the journals mostly mentions a multitude of topics, I divided the text into separate short paragraph-length units or segments when a topic or subtopic shift occurs. I classified each unit/segment under a category. Therefore, rather than coding line by line, I coded entire unit with a category. This type of coding enabled me to see bigger picture. All data were coded manually, no software aid was utilized. After a first review of the data corpus with holistic codes applied, I brought together all the data for a category to examine it as a whole and to make a comparative analysis on how Diyanet's discourse regarding each category has transformed over time according to sociopolitical reality.

As the second cycle coding method, I used a simple version of longitudinal coding. "Longitudinal coding is the attribution of selected change processes to qualitative data collected and compared across time" (Saldana, 2016, p. 262). As Saldana (2016, p. 262) writes "During the first cycle of collection and analysis, qualitative data collected through extended period of time may have been coded descriptively, processually, etc. In Longitudinal coding, the data corpus is reviewed categorically, thematically, and comparatively across time to assess whether change may have occurred". This type of coding is appropriate for studies "that explore change and development in individuals, groups, and organizations through extended periods of time" (Saldana, 2016, p. 263).

Longitudinal qualitative analysis enables the researcher not only to make comparative analysis and interpretation to generate inferences, but also figure out contextual / intervening conditions influencing/ affecting the changes in vast

amounts of qualitative data collected (Saldana, 2003, p. 261). Therefore, in the second cycle of coding, I made a chronological and comparative assessment of my three major categories in order to identify qualitative increase, decrease, constancy, consistency, inconsistency, emergent themes, turning points, etc. in PRA's discourse on women over time. In Chapter 6, I added a summary of my observations after discussing the data found for each category. I reported any changes inferred from the comparative analysis of three distinct periods (1968-1980, 1980-2002, 2002-2014); and shared my reflections regarding contextual/intervening factors influencing those changes.

Once I completed my research analysis, I presented my results in qualitative style. I described and illustrated my findings using "continuous text" strategy (Schreier, 2012, p. 220). I organized my findings under three categories and discuss each category by providing various examples from the material in chronological order. As Diyanet's texts have been written in Turkish and contained a thick religious terminology, they required nuanced translation. All texts quoted in this thesis are my own translations. For the purpose of objectivity, original versions of the texts that were translated and paraphrased or directly quoted are provided in the Appendix D.

5.4 Methodological shortcomings and reliability

One methodological shortcoming of qualitative textual analysis is subjectivity. In other words, if two researchers are given the same question and asked to use qualitative textual analysis they will come up with different answers. Moreover, if two researchers are given the same group of texts, they still will not end up with the same interpretation. The researchers will draw on their own knowledge and

theoretical perspective as they attempt to guess the likely interpretations of those texts. Researchers using different theories will inevitably interpret the same texts differently. Therefore, there is no single correct interpretation of any text. I acknowledge the subjective nature of this study and hence I do not claim that I uncover the meaning of my material in absolute terms. Nevertheless, systematic use of the method (i.e. following the same sequence of steps) and quality of the coding frame ensure approximation of objectivity in an interpretative research study.

In order to check for reliability, I checked for consistency between different points in time. As I was working on my own with a massive amount of data and did not have a second coder, I recoded a part of my material after approximately a few months after I finished main coding and then compared the results. Two rounds of independent coding yielded approximately the same results.

5.5 Categories

In order to make a critical assessment of the status of woman in PRA's discourse, it is essential to deconstruct PRA's texts with respect to gender equality. Each major category in my coding scheme corresponds to a different aspect of gender equality:

- 1) Creation Stories: This category corresponds to gender equality in terms creation. I examine how stories about the creation of the first woman are portrayed PRA's discourse. I delve into PRA's narration of the scriptural story of the "Fall" and Pandora myth to see if notion of equality is emphasized. Judgments about woman's nature associated with creation stories also matter, since stereotypes about woman emanating from these stories become a source for religious legitimization of gender inequality in private and public spheres.

- 2) The female body and sexuality: This category corresponds to equality between men and women over bodily rights and sexuality. Gender equality entails people's full entitlement of rights over their own bodies, regardless of gender. Thus, gender equality is curtailed by religious suppression of women's bodily rights and women's sexuality. I deal with PRA's texts with respect to the female body and sexuality under this category. Everything associated with the female body and reproductive capabilities; ranging from menstruation, birth, puerperancy, abortion, to covering, and virginity are examined within this category. I gave special emphasis on the headscarf issue and studied in which political context Diyanet has promoted the headscarf.
- 3) Gender roles: Gender equality is achieved when women are able to access to workforce and enjoy career opportunities as far as men. An absolute gendered division of labor justified by sacred texts restrains woman's opportunities in public sphere and hence hinders gender equality. Publications of the PRA are assessed to find out whether it propagates gender stereotypes sanctioning the traditional division of labor between sexes. Motherhood and wifehood are the most salient themes within this category. Female role models constitute another significant theme, from which implicit / latent messages regarding gender roles have been derived.

CHAPTER 6

THE ANALYSIS OF THE PRA'S DISCOURSE

Previous chapters provided a historical, contextual and theoretical perspective required for deconstructing Diyanet's discourse on women. This chapter discusses the findings of the qualitative analysis of Diyanet's texts. Three major categories predetermined by a systematic reading of the feminist literature are utilized as conceptual boxes for gathering and sorting all relevant texts. Data collected for each major category is then organized around three broad periods and presented in a descriptive manner; to explore consistencies and transformation in Diyanet's discourse across time. A chronological and comparative assessment of the data offers valuable insight into the political and social factors that have been influential in Diyanet's perspective on the status, rights, and roles of women.

It should be emphasized at the beginning that the volume of articles related to women has been increasing in recent years (See Figures A2 and A3). This can be partly explained by the overall increase in Diyanet's publications. According to statistics obtained from the PRA, total number of books and periodicals published by the Diyanet within the entire period between 1924 and 2002 was only 33,046,915. Whereas, between 2003 and 2010, this number escalated to 36,106,574 (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 2011, p. 46). However, when I compared the share of the articles written on women – related matters within the entire population of articles published throughout 1968 – 2014, I found that it was only 4.2%. Even this documents the masculinist perspective dominating PRA's texts.

It is also worthy to note that the weight of articles related to each major category is not equal. The Diyanet produced the least amount of texts on Islamic

creation story. Diyanet's interest by far the largest when it comes to gender roles. Moreover, it was observed that there has been an increasing trend in recent years in the volume of the texts related to this theme.

The female body and sexuality have always been popular themes in Diyanet's publications. However, recently a certain woman image has been promoted as an "ideal type", which becomes increasingly more observable not only in the textual content, but also in visual content of articles. Particularly within the last decade, typical woman figure displayed in the photos published in *Diyanet* and *Diyanet Aile*, is headscarved and wearing a modest outfit that fully covers her body (See Figures E1 – E5). This is a new role model for the country's women, promoted through the Diyanet. In these photos women are mostly shown in mosques, reading Koran, and practicing religious rituals (See Figures E6, E7 and E8). Moreover, they are generally depicted at home with their children and spouses (See Figures E9 and E10). Even if they are occasionally shown as participating in the public space, the tasks they perform overlap with gender roles that are traditionally assigned to women; such as caring for the sick and elderly, carpet weaving, etc. (See Figures E11 and E12). These can be read symbolically: The ideal woman in Diyanet's current perspective is covered and modest in her look. She is encouraged to live a devout life; and treated as equal to men when it comes to her rights to attend the mosque and perform religious duties (See Figure E13). Her primary tasks are motherhood and wifehood; and her ideal place is domestic sphere, where she plays a key role in raising religious generations (See Figures E14 and E15). Even if she participates in public life, she is supposed to assume roles that are compatible with traditional division of labor between sexes.

Having based upon these three categories derived from the feminist literature, the rest of the chapter provides a detailed qualitative analysis of the texts published by the Diyanet between 1968 and 2014, in order to throw light upon the interlinkages between religious discourse and sociopolitical context in Turkey.

6.1 PRA's texts on creation stories

6.1.1 1968 - 1980: Adam as "mother" of Hawwa

The first article in *Diyanet Gazette* that refers to the mythology regarding the first woman's creation published in May 1972. In this article Diyanet compared Islam with other two monotheistic religions, as well as ancient civilizations, with respect to the status of women. According to the PRA, an understanding of the status of women prior to the rise of Islam could be acquired by studying myths and ancient literary works. The article referred to the "Pandora" myth written by Greek poet Hesiod and provided that Pandora was the name of the very first woman who had been formed out of clay and water. Pandora opened the lid of the jar containing all evils and released its contents upon the world. The PRA claimed, the Pandora myth was a proof that in ancient Greece women had been seen as the source of all evils (Aktaş, 1972a, p. 12; Appendix D, 6).

Even though the Diyanet criticized equalization of women with evils within the framework of creation, in 1974 it mentioned women and satan together and listed them among the ills that men should avoid:

One should not be enslaved by . . . matter and stomach, wealth and throne, property and estate, table and money; extreme desires and ill feelings, women, satan and this world; but should work to acquire self – hood, pride, freedom, felicity, and serenity (Ayvalılı, 1974, p. 10; Appendix D, 7).

On the other hand, the Diyanet discussed and criticized misogynistic traditions in other ancient civilizations, which had dwelt in Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt and Palestine in order to support the claim that Islam was the “savior of women”. It was argued that before the emergence of Islam, women had not been recognized as a human being. “Woman was considered as the mother of all evils and the primary source of bad luck. She was neither treated nor named as a human being. She was no different than a commodity” (Aktaş, 1972a, p. 12; Appendix D, 8). Therefore, Diyanet portrayed the history up until the birth of Islam as “a tragedy of women”. This narrative sharply contrasts with the feminists’ analyses of pre-Islamic age, which document that women had enjoyed higher degree of liberty and independence⁶⁶. In Diyanet’s account of Jahilia, women had been deprived of fundamental rights and they had been oppressed, dehumanized, physically and sexually abused, and even killed before Islam came to rescue them from their miserable lives.

The first article written on the creation of Adam and Hawwa came out in 1972. The article started with a comparison of the story of Eve in the Old Testament and that in the Koran. The author assumed that in the Old Testament, Eve was told as being created from Adam’s rib and named by him. Devil came to Eve first in the form of a snake and tempted her with the apple from the forbidden tree. She accepted to eat the apple and then she tempted Adam to eat it, leading to their fall from paradise. The article contended that the woman was cursed in Judaism as she had led to the expulsion from the Paradise, and henceforth she was punished by the pain of childbirth (Aktaş, 1972b, p. 1; Appendix D, 9). It was underlined that even though

⁶⁶ For a detailed discussion of these studies please refer to Chapter 4.

Koran did not specifically mention it, the Prophet Muhammad explained Hawwa's creation from Adam's rib. However, in contrast to the Old Testament, Koran did not treat Hawwa as guilty but Adam instead, through whom God had sent his commands. The PRA emphasized, Hawwa was not guilty because she was "dependent on him". "Koran does not accuse our mother Hawwa" noted the PRA and denied the idea of "original sin has been passing from generation to generation" (Aktaş, 1972b, p.1; Appendix D, 10). Even though with this excerpt, the PRA sought to present a positive image regarding Islam's standpoint toward women, it underlined Adam's superiority in receiving God's messages and Hawwa's "dependent" status.

In July 1973, Diyanet gazette mentioned Adam and Hawwa as the first created human beings. However, it was stressed that Adam had been created first and Hawwa was created from him. Thereby, "all of humanity came from Adam, who had been created out of clay" (Aydın, 1973, p. 9; Appendix D, 11). By emphasizing a chronological order in terms of creation, Diyanet promoted a hierarchy between sexes. Here it is also worthwhile to recall Berktaş's analysis (1998, p. 37): With this narration, Diyanet turns the relation between mother and child upside down. Man appears to be mother of woman since he creates her from out of his body just as a mother creates a child from her body.

In January 1978, in the same manner Diyanet named Adam as the first created individual by citing An-Nur Surah that reads "God created all human from a single person (Adam) and from him he created His mate (Hawwa) and from them created multitude of men and women" (Yalar, 1978a, p. 10; Appendix D, 12). It is also claimed that Islam sanctified woman because of Eve's role in human reproduction;

While Europe, which is deemed as the cradle of civilization, regarded woman as a wild animal or demonic creature and punished her with inhumane methods,

Islam blessed woman by declaring her as one of the two fundamental beings, who provided for human reproduction. (Yalar, 1978a, p. 10; Appendix D, 13)

6.1.2 1980-2002: Toward a more gender-sensitive discourse

During the 1980s, the Presidency of Religious Affairs did not publish a text specifically addressing the scriptural story of creation. The earliest article mentioning this theme came out in 1993 in May issue of *Diyanet* monthly journal. It was stated that God had created Adam and Hawwa as spouses and placed a bond of love and compassion between them (Öztürk, 1993, p. 30; Appendix D, 14). In this commentary of the creation story, Diyanet did not specify an order of creation. In contrast to previous narrations; it did not engage in a discussion regarding who was created first either.

In August issue of the same year, the Presidency of Religious Affairs published an article entitled “Science found the *mother* of humanity!”. The Presidency claimed that Darwin’s evolution thesis had been challenged by a new scientific discovery called “Eve Hypothesis”. According to the article American scientists, who had compared DNAs of women from 5 different geographic regions, found that the DNA samples were almost identical. “This had only a single meaning” the Diyanet uttered in excitement, “the fact that all humans shared one common ‘*Mother*’ [emphasis added] ... whom scientists inevitably named ‘Eve’. Modern science got a little closer to the facts thanks to the discoveries made in laboratories... The current studies are in the search of the Father, that is Adam ” (Gürkan, 1993, p. 65; Appendix D, 15). As this excerpt indicates, in Diyanet’s view Eve is not just the first woman; but she is also the first “mother” and more importantly she is “the mother of humankind”. In other words, by sanctifying Hawwa’s role in the recreation

of humankind; the Diyanet equated womanhood with motherhood, and promoted the idea that motherhood is the universal function of womanhood.

By the end of the 1990s, Diyanet started to discuss the story regarding creation within the context of human rights. An article published in September 1998 exemplified this change. In the article entitled “Women’s Rights in Islam”, the author emphasized that God created humanity from one man and one woman. “Without one, future of another cannot be spoken” wrote the author and added “both sexes have had certain fundamental rights and duties since their creation. One is not made more virtuous than another on the basis of gender” (“İslam’da Kadın Hakları”, 1998, p. 32; Appendix D, 16).

In the same year, December issue of *Diyanet* monthly journal contained two articles discussing the creation of the first woman. Both of them approached the issue from human rights perspective and emphasized the equality of sexes on the basis of creation. Besides, both articles compared Islam with the two other monotheistic religions as well as some other cultures in order to advocate that Islam holds woman in the highest esteem. In the first article, which is titled “Human Rights in Islamic Culture”, it is declared, “the woman and the man were formed from the same yeast” (Altıntaş, 1998, p. 28; Appendix D, 17). This reflects that starting from the 1990s, Diyanet reconstructed its narration of the creation in a more gender-sensitive manner as oppose to its previous “Eve was made from Adam’s rib” type of narration. The second article appeared in *Diyanet*’s December issue in 1998 criticized gender stereotypes emanating from Biblical presentation of Hawwa and highlighted that Islam, in contrast, provided women with opportunities. The author suggested that Christianity, through the misrepresentations of Eve, has led to negative and unfair judgments regarding woman. According to the article, Islam has sought to correct

these misjudgments and superstitions in Koran (Sevgin, 1998, p. 35; Appendix D, 18).

Diyanet's relatively more gender-sensitive discourse with respect to the creation story was also apparent in an article published in February 1999. In his article titled "Woman in Islam" the author wrote that throughout the ages prior to the emergence of Islam women had been dehumanized, mistreated, beaten and alienated (Tetik, 1999, p. 63; Appendix D, 19). Islam saved the woman from her inferior status, offered her protection and provided her with temporal and spiritual opportunities. The author emphasized gender equality in terms of creation by citing An-Nisa Sura (4:1) in Koran, which had stated that "O mankind! Fear of your Rabb, who created you from one *nafs*, and from it its mate, and from that spread a multitude of man and woman" (Tetik, 1999, p. 63; Appendix D, 20). The word *nafs* or *nefis* incorporates multiple meanings in itself; such as "self", "soul", and "living entity". Here, Diyanet's preference for such ambiguity might be interpreted either as adherence to Koranic wording or a strategic choice to avoid any sexist interpretation. Without specifying who was created first, the PRA explained that human race was created from a single self or a soul, letting the readers to derive their own understanding from the text.

6.1.3 2002-2014: AKP's influence

From 1999 to 2010, the Presidency of Religious Affairs did not publish any commentary significantly touching upon how, why, and when Hawwa was created. In May 2010, in an article penned by a female author, equality was emphasized in the sense that Adam and Hawwa were equally responsible of their acts. As opposed to the misogynistic narrations of the "Fall", in Diyanet's interpretation of the story

they both disobeyed God's ordinance by eating the forbidden fruit. They both regretted after and asked for forgiveness from God. Consequently, they were punished equally and expelled from the Paradise. They were sent to the Earth as the first Caliphs to preach God's message. The article describes the Fall as follows:

The ban was violated when Adam and Eve, man and woman acted carelessly in good faith and with a desire of perpetual servitude, did not listen to this commandment. Immediately afterwards they prayed their Creator in shame and begged "Our Rabb! We have wronged ourselves: If you do not forgive us and bestow your Mercy upon us, we shall surely be among the losers." (Al-Araf, 23)... Almighty God replied their prayer but laid "the fall" down as a condition: "...Therein you shall live, and therein you shall die; but from it you shall be brought forth" (Al-Araf, 25). Thereby, Adam and Eve, man and woman started their life journey on earth as being created together, having faith together, being mistaken together, and asked regretfully for forgiveness ... eventually starting their life journey together... as the first Caliphs on Earth and being tasked by conveying God's revelation and religion for the first time . . . (Görmez, 2010, p. 33; Appendix D, 21)

Moreover, in the same article the PRA explicitly declared, "according to the correct teachings offered to us; Hawwa was neither formed from Adam's rib, nor she was the first one who believed in Satan's words, and she did not provoke Adam to rebel either". "Islam", as Diyanet suggests "does not approve of the depictions of Eve in the Old Testament being deceitful, seductive, cursed and sinful" (Görmez, 2010, p. 33; Appendix D, 22).

Similarly, through an article published in April 2013, the Diyanet again criticizes Judaism and Christianity for presenting her as "the origin of sin". The Old Testament writes the snake tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, in turn Eve tempted Adam to eat it. However, the Presidency of Religious Affairs underlines:

Such a belief and understanding is incompatible with the Koran. In the Koran it is told, "Satan made both of them to slip therefrom" (the Paradise)... In another surah Hawwa is not even mentioned and Satan directly addresses Adam as "the Satan whispered to him; he said 'O Adam! Shall I direct you to

the tree of eternity and possession that will not deteriorate?''' (Bilgiz, 2013, p. 18; Appendix D, 23)

Under this period, it is observed that creation story has been used in a way that justifying AKP's certain policies. For instance, it was stated that, "without a woman Adam would be a half... Two men are incapable. Without woman, neither Adam, nor the Paradise, nor family could exist. The life of all humanity begins in the womb and hands of women" (Bilgiz, 2013, p. 18; Appendix D, 24). As this excerpt illustrates woman was identified with her womb and reproductive capabilities. Men were helpless without women for reproduction and propagation of mankind. The overemphasis on women's reproductive roles conforms with AKP's emphasis upon motherhood and its pronatal policies.

An article in August issue of the same year covered the creation story by presenting Satan as the sole responsible for Adam's and Hawwa's fall from the Paradise. According to this narration, Satan persuaded them to eat from the forbidden tree, strip off their clothes, and uncover their private parts (Karşlı, 2013, p. 44; Appendix D, 25). During their first encounter, Satan was able to seduce man and woman; and undress them (Karşlı, 2013, p. 44; Appendix D, 26). That shows that men and women have tendency toward sin. The author links this narrative with notions of "modesty" and "chastity". It was written that, Islamic value system gives great importance to the protection of privacy of the body and hence does not approve the exposure of female and male bodies. "Islamic value system strives toward a chaste individual and a chaste society... It sets rules of conduct regarding relations between sexes. Prohibition of illicit gaze and the observance of headscarf are some of them " (Karşlı, 2013; Appendix D, 27).

Even though PRA announces that it does not support a theology that portrays the woman as a seducer, who leads man to sin, it still associates sexuality with sin and the woman. Moreover, creation story is used for legitimizing the control over women's bodies as well as endorsing modest clothing. Diyanet's use of the story of the Fall as a basis for promoting the headscarf is found as a novelty in this period.

Throughout the AKP period, there has not been a major change with respect to PRA's standpoint about the creation story. Two articles on this subject were published in 2014 in Diyanet's more recent Journal entitled *Diyanet Aile* (Diyanet Family). Both of them were penned by the same author, who repeated the ideas proposed in previous articles:

Hawwa was not formed from Adam's rib. She was not the first one, who believed in Satan and led to Adam's rebellion. Unlike what is told in the Old Testament, neither Hawwa for tempting Adam and seduce the man, nor all generations of women due to Hawwa are seen as damned and sinful. This is not an understanding that Islam approves. In Islam the woman is not seen as the source of all evil (Görmez, 2014a, p. 15; Appendix D, 28).

Christians believe that Adam and Eve committed a major sin by approaching to the forbidden tree and as a consequence, they were cursed by God. This sin passes upon every infant born until the day of Judgment and thus they consider they will be saved from going to hell only by baptism... However, Islam does not approve this belief because not only the concept of original sin is inexistent in Islam, but also the woman is not seen as the source of all ills and evil. (Görmez, 2014b, p. 13; Appendix D, 29)

One noteworthy change observed in the content of these publications is that the PRA, which had been hitherto silent on the reason why Hawwa had been created, now claimed "Adam's loneliness was eased by the creation of Hawwa" (Görmez, 2014, p. 14; Appendix D, 30). In other words, in Diyanet's perspective Hawwa was created for Adam's comfort and solace, as he was feeling lonely. The man was not created for the woman, but the woman was created for the man and his needs. In this type of

union there is a hierarchy, whereby the man is the head of the union and the woman is made subservient to the man.

6.1.4 Comparative analysis

By studying the commentaries and narratives with respect to the creation story, it can be stated that the PRA's discourse has been somewhat consistent throughout the research period. The PRA has mostly held onto the Koranic narrative, where both Adam and Eve were warned about the forbidden tree, both were tempted and both sinned by eating the fruit. The officials of the PRA did not refer to the misogynistic works of Islamic scholars, such as al-Tabari and al-Tabarsi, who claimed that the woman was sinful and hence cursed. In all periods studied, it is observed that the PRA has criticized the depictions of the first woman in the Biblical and Hebrew narratives, as well as in Pandora myth and rejected the belief that the woman is sinful, seductive, and the source of evil.

Despite Diyanet's critique of Eve's demonic depictions, it was found that in the early 1970s Diyanet mentioned women and satan together and argued that both should be avoided for a felicitous and serene life. The comparative study of the three periods also found that in the first period (1968-1980) the PRA's gazette contained one reference to a hadith validating the biblical narrative that Hawwa had been created from Adam's rib. This type of narration was abandoned and replaced in the 1990s by an emphasis that the woman and the man created as spouses. However, from 1980 to 2002 Diyanet did not engage into any discussion regarding the order they were created.

Starting from the 1990s the Presidency introduced the concept of human rights into its publications. By the end of the decade, the term "yeast" was replaced

by “nafs” or “nefis” to describe creation story without specifying who was created first. Nevertheless, articles issued within this period continued to imply the man and the woman had been created from a single “self”. Besides, creation story in religious sources started to be discussed within human rights perspective. The concepts such as women’s rights and gender equality in terms of creation were emphasized. It can be claimed from the nuances that by the late 1990s Diyanet constructed relatively a more egalitarian and gender sensitive discourse with respect to the creation story. Diyanet’s gender-sensitive discourse can be explained by the progress of the Turkish feminist movement, which had increased its dialogue with the state throughout the decade; as well government’s initiatives to meet the EU criteria for membership.

In the 2000s the PRA explicitly denied the biblical story that describes God taking a bone from Adam and making him a woman. However, during the recent years it has introduced another ambiguous yet a more “Turkish” term “öz” which has been used to mean both as “self” or “essence”. Even though Diyanet has emphasized that the woman was not formed from man’s rib, it implicitly accepts she was formed from him, for him and his needs. Such narration not only assigns man a superior status within the union but also bestows a reproductive capability upon him. The man creates the woman out of his own body in other words “man appears as the mother of woman” (Berktaş, 1998, p. 37). Furthermore, by emphasizing that there is a chronological order between the creation of man and woman, Diyanet has promoted hierarchical relations between sexes.

Comparative study of the three periods also reveals that particularly within the last decade, creation story has been used for legitimating of the control over women’s bodies, as well as promoting covering. The use of the story of the Fall as a basis of justification for the promotion of headscarf is found as a novelty, which was

introduced during the AKP government. Another noteworthy novelty found in this period is the overemphasis on women's reproductive capacity, which seemed to be in line with AKP's pronatalist policies.

6.2 PRA's texts on the female body and sexuality

6.2.1 1968-1980 strict control over women's sexuality

Throughout this period, the Presidency of Religious Affairs preached the message that female sexuality is dangerous and threatening for social order so that it needed to be taken under control by restrictive regulations and certain dresscodes. The first article implied that women should be modest in their looks was published in December 1968 issue of *Diyanet Gazette*. The article compared modern Turkish women with Ottoman women to criticize the former in terms of modesty. According to the author, Ottoman women were modest to such extent that they used to cover their washed laundry with a cloth, so that they would not be visible from outside. The author then claimed that modern Turkish women "did not even bother to close their curtains at home" (Açıkgözoğlu, 1968, p. 15; Appendix D, 31). By citing the memoirs of a foreign ambassador, who visited the Ottoman Empire during Sultan Suleiman's period, the author described the treatment of women during the Ottoman era in a way that praising covering and segregation:

The Turks give importance to their wives' chastity more than all other nations do. For this reason, they keep their wives at home. Turkish women can only go out as covered and in case there is a necessity. None of the parts of a woman's body can be seen by men. (Açıkgözoğlu, 1968, p. 15; Appendix D, 32)

In Diyanet's perspective, women's reproductive capability was a source of pollution and hence women needed to be cleansed to perform her religious duties. For instance, an article published in August 1971 listed the religious practices that are prohibited for a woman during her menstrual period:

Menstruating woman cannot perform prayer; fast; and have a sexual intercourse; she cannot read Koran; touch the Koran or ayahs... She cannot enter the mosque... She can neither circumambulate the *Kaaba* nor enter it. (Ateş, 1971, p. 12; Appendix D, 33)

Diyanet generally suggested that Islam aimed to protect women by covering. As an example an article in Diyanet Gazzette in 1972 that discussed Islamic Golden Age asserted that modest dressing and the head cover protected women from male gaze and in chastity. Woman was likened to a child – delicate and needed protection. She was also portrayed as a weak-willed person, who would leave the path of goodness, if she did not have the right guidance;

You were *protected* from the blow of wind, *like a child* [emphasis added]. Your clean clothes and your cover were protecting you from sinister gazes and prevented you from going astray ... O woman! You had such sort of faith and life. You were valued and protected. You should give a God's slap to those, who want to pervert you from your righteous life and use you for their own desires. You should expel them and say "I can no more return to pre-Islamic age. I know why you pretend to praise me. I will live a moral and chaste life. My dignity is granted by the divine call of Islam, not by you. I became what I am by this call. I wake up by this call, with which I found myself". ("Bu Çağrı İslam'ın", 1972, p. 4; Appendix D, 34)

Similarly, in his article, one of the members of Diyanet's Higher Board of Religious Affairs, argued that the headscarf was a command of Islam, which served the goal of "protecting" women from the gazes of adulterous men. He also argued that the headscarf is necessary for ensuring peace in society:

...Islam's order about the headscarf aims at providing peace in the society against those who are inclined to do evil. By covering women, Islam aims to protect the woman from the wicked eyes and the sick people; glorify her preciousness, chastity and honor; and keep her worthy and respectable status within society. (Aydın, 1973, p. 9; Appendix D, 35)

In an article published in 1975, the Presidency for the first time overtly condemned abortion. It was reported that the Presidency had received a letter from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which called the Presidency to condemn abortion ("Doğum Kontrolü", 1975, p. 14). After discussing the Organization's views regarding abortion in detail, the Presidency announced that the Secretary General regarded abortion as "a plan of the enemies of Islam" to undermine opportunities and activities of Muslims. It was also emphasized, all Islamic clerics had confirmed abortion as a sin and crime. It was argued that according to ulama, birth control was a sin as well. To justify these announcements, Presidency referred to a hadith where the Prophet had allegedly stated, "A fertile woman is better than an infertile woman" ("Doğum Kontrolü", 1975, p. 14). Shortage of food and difficulties of childbearing were mentioned as "poor excuses" for abortion. Because according to the PRA, there were sufficient natural sources for everyone in Muslim countries and Koran stated, "those who fear Allah will be rewarded by abundance". Moreover, birth control was against faith, individual freedoms and human rights ("Doğum Kontrolü", 1975, p. 14; Appendix D, 36).

In PRA's discourse, woman's sexuality was presented as tempting for men, as well as dangerous for social order. Marriage was deemed as a safeguard against the danger of women's irresistible sexuality and hence it was continuously promoted through the texts. For instance, in an article published in 1976, the author recommended male readers to marry, because marriage was a way for men to protect

themselves from sexuality of other women and also adultery. To support this argument, he referred to a statement of the Prophet; “Whenever a stranger woman captures your mind and heart, you should immediately come to your own family to put out your fire. In this way, you can get rid of the one in your heart” (İlhan, 1976, p.2; Appendix D, 37).

On several occasions, women were likened to animals in terms of sexuality. For instance, an article discussing the harms of pork on health, argued that pig meat is not permissible in Islam because women, who eat pork, act like pigs, betray their spouses and “have sexual intercourse with other men” (Ataseven, 1978, p.8; Appendix D,38).

The analysis of the texts published throughout this period found that in several texts, Diyanet considered women as weak human beings with physical and psychological handicaps. Due to her weaknesses and disabilities, a woman lagged “behind” man in religious and social spheres (Yalar, 1978b, p. 10). Moreover, these weaknesses and disabilities were associated with her reproductive capability:

There are some peculiar feminine states of women; such as puerperium, pregnancy and birth; that exempt them from many religious duties. For example, women who gave birth and in postpartum period are exempt from ritual prayer and fasting until these periods come to an end and they are cleansed. At the same time, due to her feminine state she is excused from certain rituals of hajj. The fact that women have these physical and spiritual obstacles *leaves them behind men* [emphasis added] in their social activities, as well as in their religious duties. (Yalar, 1978b, p. 10; Appendix D, 39)

Chastity, morality, and honor were the themes that usually mentioned together with covering in Diyanet’s texts. In an article, for instance, the author provided the interpretation of An-Nur Sura (verse 31) as follows, “And say to the believing women that they cast down their looks from what is forbidden, guard their *chastity* [emphasis added]. They should not display their ornaments except what is

already apparent. And draw their head coverings over their collars” (Yalar, 1978c, p. 10; Appendix D, 40).

In addition to promoting covering as a requirement of chastity, Diyanet presented it as an instrument for ensuring women’s loyalty to their husbands. For example, same author wrote that women should protect their own *chastity* [emphasis added] and their men’s honor during their husbands’ absence (Yalar, 1978c, p. 10; Appendix D, 41). According to the author, “Koran orders women to cover in order to ensure their loyalty their husbands”, because in Al-Ahzab surah (33: 59) it is maintained, “O Prophet! Tell your wives, daughters, and the women of believers to bring down over themselves of their covers when in public; as this will make them recognized and prevent them from being abused” (Yalar, 1978c, p. 10).

In Diyanet’s interpretation, Islam require women to be covered and loyal to her husband because An-Nisa verse in Koran states “Men are in the charge of women by what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend for maintenance from their wealth” (Yalar, 1978c, p. 10). These claims were also justified by hadith literature. For instance it was suggested that the Prophet stated, “Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for your flock. The leader of people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects. A man is the shepherd of his family. A woman is the guardian of her husband’s home and his children and she is responsible for them” (Yalar, 1978c, p. 10; Appendix D, 42). In another example, the Prophet allegedly maintained, “When a woman is called by his husband, she must go to him even if she at the stove” (Yalar, 1978c, p. 10; Appendix D, 43).

Through such messages Diyanet promoted gender hierarchy and also reinforced women’s inferior and consumer position in family. Man was held responsible for maintenance of her wife. In turn, woman should meet her husband’s

sexual needs whenever he requests. In other words, woman body was presented as a sexual commodity offered to man in the exchange of material benefits.

Another theme that was frequently mentioned together with the headscarf was fitna. For example in 1979, it was claimed in an article that Islam required the headscarf in order to prevent fitna. According to the article, women should wear loose and thick clothes that would hide their bodies. Only exceptions to this rule are face and hands (Yadigar, 1979a, p. 8; Appendix D, 44). Similar to the previous text concerning the headscarf, it was advised that women should draw their head coverings over their collars. Furthermore, the article argued that women who are not covered will be destined to Hell by referring to a hadith, which is alleged to belong Prophet Muhammad. According to this hadith, he stated; “There are women from Hell who are clothed yet naked. They lean to both sides when they walk. They shall never enter Paradise or even smell its fragrance” (Yadigar, 1979a, p. 8; Appendix D, 45). It was further claimed that Prophet Muhammad cursed women, who were not covered or naked, by referring to a hadith in which he likened uncovered women to camels:

Our Prophet, may Allah’s peace be upon him, told that “In the last age of my ummah, *there will be open and naked women* [emphasis added]. The hair on the top of their heads will be *like a camel’s hump* [emphasis added]. Curse them, for verily they are cursed”. (Yadigar, 1979a, p. 8; Appendix D, 46)

It was also emphasized that scholars of Islam converged on the idea that wearing thick and loose clothes hiding body curves was an Islamic requirement and hence covering without fulfilling these requirements was not approvable. Covering or *tesettür* necessitated covering the whole body (Yadigar, 1979a, p. 8; Appendix D, 47).

On the one hand, the female body was considered as polluted due to her reproductive capability; on the other hand motherhood was praised and encouraged in Diyanet's discourse. An article published in 1979 suggested that, women who have given birth are favored more by Allah than women, who do not have any children: "Our prophet judges a woman who is a 'mother' to be superior to the others, and says, 'A lady giving birth to a child is more loving to Allah than a beautiful woman who does not give birth'" (Yadigar, 1979b, p. 5; Appendix D, 48).

6.2.2 1980 – 2002: The impact of political Islam and the feminist movement

During the early 1980s women's bodies, appearance, dress code, honor and chastity remained as recurrent subjects in Diyanet's publications. Similar to the earlier period, Diyanet conceived the female body to be sexually stimulating and hence dangerous for the social order. Diyanet's almost phobic attitude toward female sexuality can be exemplified by an article arguing that voice of a woman is among "several sounds that possess the power to . . . impress [us] deeply" (Akakuş, 1987, p. 9). The author likened the sound of a woman to that of a crow, nightingale, owl and donkey; and claimed, "all of these have different effects on human soul. Thus, Muslims should take a different attitude towards each of them" (Akakuş, 1987, p. 9; Appendix D, 49).

Diyanet promoted modest clothing for women as a measure to protect society from the "destructive power of female sexuality". To this end, women and girls were discouraged from wearing too feminine or too tight clothes that might be provoking for the opposite sex. In most cases, these ideas were based on religious dictates, while in some cases they were justified by medical reasons. For instance, in an article mothers were advised not to let their daughters wear tight pants as that might

cause serious health problems, such as cervix and ovarian inflammation. Instead, they should make sure that girls should wear “more appropriate” clothing (Tuncer, 1980, p. 14; Appendix D, 50). Moreover, women’s honor and chastity were deemed as essentials for ensuring peace and maintaining a peaceful society. According to an article published in 1981, current and future peace will be ensured if women are raised as chaste and responsible on all counts (Sevgin, 1981, p. 12; Appendix D, 51).

In 1985 in an article discussing the future of Turkish women, the author criticized and ridiculed women’s rights advocates by claiming that women and men can not be equal due to the differences between their physiological structures and functions, as well as their psychological traits, thoughts, skills and needs. From author’s point of view, advocates of women’s rights not only sought gender equality, but also uniformity in attire and appearance. “From this view, plenty of material has been acquired by humorists and comedians, but nothing has been obtained for women’s happiness” (Topaloğlu, 1985, p. 16; Appendix D, 52). This excerpt illustrated Diyanet’s attempts to regulate women’s looks and promote certain dresscodes in accordance with Diyanet’s preferences. In Diyanet’s perspective ideal dress code for women was neither too feminine nor too masculine, as former is provoking for men and latter was against “creational differences” between sexes.

In the early 1990s, Diyanet openly challenged secularist policies regarding the headscarf ban at universities. Those were the years when the headscarf issue deeply polarized the society and the protests of Islamist women took place. Furthermore, Erbakan, who had been banned since 1980 coup, returned to the political scene after the general elections held in 1991 and Welfare Party won 62 seats in the parliament. After doing well in local elections in 1994, it won nearly one-third of the seats (the largest single bloc) in the 1995 national legislative elections,

becoming the first religious party in Turkey to win a general election. It took office in 1996 at the head of a new coalition.

Rise of political Islam had implications for Diyanet's discourse. For instance, in an article published in *Diyanet* monthly in 1992, the Presidency supported headscarved girls at universities and claimed that head cover was Allah's order but also it was a part of freedom of religion as well as fundamental human rights. According to the Presidency, those who were in the favor of this ban by claiming secularism and fundamental pillars of the Republic necessitated the ban, in fact undermined the state and caused social resentment

The headscarf is Allah's command ... But on the other hand it is a part of right to belief and worship. A person covers first as a necessity of faith. . . . Every civilized person must obey and respect this reality in a secular country... Although he / she does not do it or even believe... The other side of the coin is that freedom to believe and worship is one of the inalienable fundamental human rights and freedoms... Even if some people do not believe or find it odd, all people are entitled to this basic right... *Such a simple matter creates victims and causes tension between the state and nation* [emphasis added], which are inseparable... Nation is offended and resented against the state. The headscarf issue is to be solved, but why then?!. (Mert, 1992, p. 7; Appendix D, 53)

In an article entitled "Never-ending suffering: The headscarf", Diyanet provided a detailed overview of the history of the ban. It was explained that the headscarf ban came into effect with a regulation announced in the Official Gazette on December 7, 1981. The new regulation banned students and teachers from wearing headscarves at all levels of schools. It was also noted that the Ministry of Education had asked Higher Council of Religious Affairs' viewpoint prior to the formulation of regulation. On December 30, 1980 Council declared its decision about the headscarf as an Islamic dictate. In this decision, the Council claimed that the principles of the Republic, national unity and security, as well as public good, did

not necessitate such ban. On the contrary, it was stressed in the Council's decision that the headscarf ban conflicted with the 10th Article of the Consitution, which ensured fundamental human rights and freedoms, in particular freedom of religion. Moreover, Diyanet argued that the headscarf was not in contradiction with Kemalist reforms and principles. To justify this argument, Diyanet referred to a Atatürk's following remark that was cited from Afet İnan's book on Atatürk and woman (1968); "If our women, dressed according to Shariah advice and religious dictates, participate in science, arts and social life of the nation in a virtuous manner; be sure that even the most conservative in the nation will appreciate" (as cited in Demir, 1992, p. 32; Appendix D, 54). In Diyanet's perspective, state's pressure upon the individual conscience resulted in social unrest and affected the state - society relations negatively.

In addition, the PRA suggested that the headscarf issue should be thought as matter of religious freedom, as well as that of freedom of education. In some cases, as the author narrated, university rectors refused to grant diplomas to successful female graduates, on the grounds that they were headscarved in their diploma photos. He wrote that there had been many others, who were not permitted to attend graduation ceremonies, even though they graduated with the highest grades. For Demir, this ban caused thousands of female students to be dismissed from universities (Demir, 1992, p. 35). As a result, a huge resented social group emerged he claimed. He also argued that the policy of showing religion and the state as opponents resulted in the hostility of religious segments of the society toward the state:

Imprudence to show the state and religion against each other has been costly. Our habit of humiliating our past and our religion, while talking about secularism and other reforms during commemorations of the Republic not

only caused resentment, but also hesitation on the part of some of our devout citizens. (Demir, 1992, p. 35; Appendix D, 55)

Furthermore, Diyanet harshly criticized secularist elite for making secularism, Kemalism and Kemalist reforms taboos, while neglecting religious sensitivities of people. The Diyanet stressed that they were concerned about perpetuity of the state, rather than that of religion, as they believed the latter would endure forever. To Diyanet's point of view, the students with headscarves would not pose a threat to the state; on the contrary, violation of religious freedoms might undermine the state:

... We, as the rulers of the state, have perpetuated this mistake. When we talk about secularism, we condemned period prior to the secular rule. When we talk about Atatürk, we have told what he abolished, instead of telling what he did. This is the case when we talk about alphabet reform, hat reform and others... Instead of telling what we gained by these reforms, we have tabooed them. We have made a whip out of them and strike it on the back of the nation... We are not worried for religion, but for the state... Religion has a Protector and religion will endure as long as the Protector desires. In a strategic geography, creating sensitivities on religion, which is a matter of conscience, harms the state, not religion. A few headscarved students, here or there, never harm strong the Turkish state founded upon thousands of years of experience. (Demir, 1992, p. 35; Appendix D, 56)

Finally, parallel to previous texts, it was emphasized that the headscarf was Islam's command and there was a consensus among Islamic scholars that Muslim women should cover their body except face, hands and feet while they perform prayer (*namaz*) and relate with men outside the family. Women should not leave their neck open; and draw their headscarves over their collars so that hair, head, ears, and neck are fully covered:

Before the Islamic Age (in Jahilia Era) women who wore headscarf... left their neck area open. Allah strictly forbade this Jahilia custom by sending an ayah; and ordered Muslim women to draw their headscarves over their collars in a way that it covered hair, head, ears, and neck area... Islamic jurists converged on the judgment that Muslim women should cover their body - except face, hands and feet – not only during the prayer, but also while they

are with stranger men, with whom it is religiously permissible to marry (Demir, 1992, p. 31) . . . This is a dictate of Islam, not a custom or symbol that was invented by certain group of people, as some claim.(Demir, 1992, p. 32; Appendix D, 57)

Content analysis of the texts published within this period revealed that Diyanet's discourse intersected with that of feminists on certain issues. For instance, in an article Diyanet problematized exploitation of the female body by the advertising industry. The article challenged the presentation of the female body as a commercial commodity in adverts. As Diyanet pointed out "Despite all sorts of political and social pressures, publicists' viewpoint on woman did not change. The woman, who has been presented as an object of pure sexuality, is treated like a worthless creature" (Yaprak, 1992, p. 12; Appendix D, 58). Such statements came out in the early 1990s, when women's rights organizations in Turkey increased their dialogue with the state and involvement in policy making. On the other hand, Diyanet's discourse diverged from the feminist discourse, in the sense that they blamed the West for dissolution of the traditional family and commodification of the female body:

A woman is mother, sister, honor, and chastity in Turkish society; she is the rock of the family. She gives birth and shapes the society. However, in the Western societies woman has increasingly been moving away from the reality of family and involving in an ... uncontrolled and problematic process. Extra-marital relations are not questioned and the understanding of legitimacy leads to heresy... Our society is oriented toward this direction as well... Our women, whose sexuality has been presented as a commercial commodity, have never been insulted this much. Such direction will take us to a place that is similar to the depression and social fragmentation that the West is destined for. (Yaprak, 1992, p. 11; Appendix D, 59)

Throughout the 1990s, Diyanet's discourse concerning menstruation did not change. Woman's reproduction capability was still regarded as a source of pollution. For this reason, women were restrained from practicing prayer, fasting, and performing the

duty of hajj until they were cleansed. Moreover, menstruation was treated as a type of disease and hence men should stay away from women while they are menstruating. In this respect, Baqarah sura in Koran was cited:

And they ask about menstruation. Say to them: This is *a kind of disease* [emphasis added]. Stay away (do not have sexual intercourse with them) from women during the menstruation. Do not approach them until they become clean. When they have cleansed themselves, come to them from where Allah has commanded to you. (Şentürk, 1997, p. 41; Appendix D, 60)

The author of the article referred to a hadith that allegedly belongs to the Prophet. According to the story, Prophet and Aisah were travelling in order to do their duty of hajj. However on their way, Aisha got her period. The prophet approached her while she was crying and asked:

-What happened? Did you get *dirty* [emphasis added]? I said,
-Yes, I got *dirty* [emphasis added]. Our Prophet replied:
-This is something that Allah has written upon the daughters of Adam ...
Do not circumambulate the Kaaba while you are menstruating (Şentürk, 1997, p. 42; Appendix D, 61).

Same limitations are mentioned for puerperant women. The author claimed “it is wrong to see this issue as a matter of gender equality. This has nothing to do with gender equality” (Şentürk, 1997, p. 42). This is a different way of saying that absolute equality was not possible in Diyanet’s perspective because of biological and anatomic differences between sexes.

By the end of the 1990s, Diyanet’s discourse regarding the headscarf also remained stable. In an article published in 1997, Diyanet reiterated that pious women should protect their honor and chastity. “They should not expose their ornaments, except for the visible parts. They should draw their head covers over their

collars” (Şahin, 1997, p. 45). Welfare Party episode certainly played an important role in shaping Diyanet’s pronouncements regarding the headscarf controversy. Diyanet’s standpoint on the headscarf ban radically changed in the aftermath of the 1997 military memorandum.

After the Constitutional Court closed the Welfare Party in 1998 on the grounds that party’s activities were against the secularist principle of the Republic, President Demirel appointed Mesud Yılmaz, the leader of Motherland Party, as the new prime minister. In the general elections that were held in 1999, Bülent Ecevit’s Democratic Left Party emerged as the biggest party, although it failed to obtain an overall majority. Consequently, it formed a coalition government with the Nationalist Movement Party and Motherland Party. Welfare Party’s successor, Virtue Party, won 111 seats in the parliament. One of the MPs of the party, Merve Kavakçı, was banned from swearing her oath in the parliament as she wore a headscarf. The change in political milieu had implications for Diyanet’s discourse on the headscarf. Under the influence of the new government, Diyanet shifted its position from opposition to the headscarf ban to conformity with 28 February process. Within the period from 1999 to 2002, Diyanet avoided making any supportive statement about the headscarf and did not mention it as an Islamic dictate.

6.2.3 2002-2014: Politicized over the headscarf

The earliest article related to this category published within this period was penned by a member of the Higher Council of Religious Affairs. The author basically repeated previous statements concerning religious duties that cannot be performed by women while they are “unclean”:

Menstruating women cannot have sexual intercourse until they are cleansed. This is forbidden by an Ayah (Bakara 2/222). It is determined by sunna that a woman can not pray, fast or make *tawaf*, while she is menstruating... According to Hanafi and Shafii scholars, women who are menstruating and after childbirth, as well as those who are ritually *impure* [emphasis added] [due to sexual intercourse] can neither touch nor read Koran. (Karagöz, 2003, p. 70; Appendix D, 62)

Moreover, the author cited a hadith from the Prophet, which likened menstruation to a disease and compared menstruating women to “disabled” people:

Abi Hubaish’s daughter Fatima asked:

-I am on my period; my vaginal discharge does not stop. Should I forego prayer? Our prophet replied:

-No, that is not vaginal discharge; it is a disease of the blood that comes from the vessels. Forego prayer during your period days. After it is over clean yourself and perform *namaz*.... *Women in this condition, like disabled people* [emphasis added] due to lustration, perform ablution every time before they perform *namaz*. (Karagöz, 2003, p. 70; Appendix D, 63)

In *İlmihal*, which was published under the supervision of the AKP, the Diyanet declared that Islam forbade women from taking all actions that may be potentially stimulating for stranger men; such as using perfume, doing make-up, having body treatments and aesthetic surgery.

When they speak with stranger men, women should speak in a serious and solemn manner that will not cause any suspicion in the heart and will not persuade the other person to misunderstand. They should not show their ornaments and body and for this end, covering properly is ordered for women when they go out. To Prophet Muhammad, it is not appropriate for women to use perfume in a way that is felt by others when they are outside. (*İlmihal*, 2006, p. 78; Appendix D, 64).

Prophet Muhammad forbid hair implantation by stating “God curse the ones who make and have hair implantation” (*İlmihal*, 2006, p. 79; Appendix D, 65).

All aesthetic and medical surgeries that are done for becoming more attractive and better looking, are against the creation and hence they are prohibited in Islam. (Din İşleri Yüksek Kurulu, 2003a; Appendix D, 66)

These statements aiming at keeping woman's sexuality and her public presence under strict religious control were in line with AKP leaders' sexist and misogynistic language. By referring to a hadith, the PRA further claimed that women should even take their husbands' permission to do make-up and pluck their eyebrows:

In a hadith the Prophet Muhammad stated that "God curse the women who pluck and have their facial hair be plucked". Women can legitimately shape their eyebrows and can make-up by taking permission from their husband. However, the ban in the hadith is related with women, who pluck their facial hair and tweeze their eyebrows while they are going out. (*İlmihal*, 2006, p. 81; Appendix D, 67)

Parallel to Erdoğan's attempts to penalize adultery, in this period the Presidency published several provisions condemning adultery and emphasizing that it is strictly forbidden in Islam. For instance, it was written that any sort of relation and flirtation with stranger men were outlawed. Diyanet further mentioned about "the adultery of organs", such as mouth, eye, hand, and foot:

In a hadith the Prophet Muhammad mentions about the adultery of organs such as tongue, mouth, hand, foot and eye. He declared that any illegitimate relation, flirtation and relation that may lead to adultery is immoral and hence prohibited. Because, chastity and honor are a unity, and can only be protected by staying away all sorts of evilness and errors that may distain it. (*İlmihal*, 2006, p. 132; Appendix D, 68)

Diyanet also declared the act of lustful gaze was even considered as an act of adultery:

In addition to the dictate about covering, a woman should not be looked with lust by men other than her husband, as this means adultery. Even the opinions in the classical literature that the voice of the woman will lead to a fitna and that it is not right for her to be heard by stranger men are directed towards this aim [the aim of ensuring woman and man to live a chaste life]. (*İlmihal*, 2006, p. 320; Appendix D, 69)

By citing hadiths, *İlmihal* urged men not to spend time alone with women, as it might lead them to commit sin. In Diyanet's perspective people of opposite sex must abstain from all interactions that may potentially violate their "purity":

In a hadith the Prophet Muhammad remarked "those of you, who believe in Allah and after-life, should not be alone with a woman unless they are married because in such a situation their third would be devil". Such a situation may seduce the opposite sex; it may lead to adultery and may harm the involved parties' purity.. (*İlmihal*, 2006, p. 132; Appendix D, 70)

İlmihal further emphasized Koran required "physical" penalty for those, who committed adultery and contained detailed stories on how people, who had committed adultery, were killed by stoning (*recm*) in the past Islamic societies (2006, p. 129). By such statements, Diyanet not only provided scriptural justification for government's attempts to criminalize adultery, but also promoted segregation of sexes.

Diyanet's instrumentalization for AKP's policies was particularly evident in the matter of the headscarf. In the early years of the AKP period, no explicit promotion of the headscarf was found in the texts published in *Diyanet* monthly journal. However, the headscarf was encouraged implicitly through pictures and images. In majority of the pictures complementing articles, typical woman figure was covered. The frequency of the pictures of headscarved women displayed in the journal increased in the later years as the AKP intensified its discourse and policies regarding the headscarf (See Figures E1 – E5).

In *İlmihal*, the headscarf has been highly encouraged. The book dictates that covering is obligation for Muslim women; "Women should cover *avret* area of their body from stranger men. This area is the whole body except face, hands, and feet." (2006, p. 71; Appendix D, 71). Diyanet called women to behave more carefully,

“because of their sexual stimulation capability” (2006, p. 78). It is argued that Koran dictates women to cover and avoid any clothing that may provoke male sexual desires. It is further claimed that women, who are not covered properly and hence attract attention in the public, will not be admitted into Paradise:

The Prophet Muhammad (May the peace upon Him) states “There are two types of the people of Hell: The first are those whipping people with whips, which look like the tails of oxen. The second are the women who are clothed yet naked, walking with an enticing gait. Their heads look like camels’ hump. These women will never enter Paradise and smell its fragrance too”. (*İlmihal*, 2006, p.73; Appendix D, 72)

In this hadith women, who are not dressed according to Islamic rules are likened to camels. Such offending references exemplified how Diyanet promoted misogynistic religious values concerning women’s bodies during the AKP period.

The then President of Diyanet, Ali Bardakoğlu, affirmed the provisions concerning covering in an interview held in 2006 and announced that Muslim women were required to cover their heads. He claimed, “This has been the requirement for adult Muslim women for fourteen centuries. Denial and opposition from certain circles do not change the fact that it has been a requirement and it will always remain so” (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 2006). Bardakoğlu’s emphasis on the headscarf as an Islamic dictate was in sharp contrast to former President’s discourse on the matter. In an interview conducted in 2008 with former President of Diyanet, Mehmet Nuri Yılmaz was asked to comment on the headscarf affair. That was when the issue was very high on the political agenda. The AKP had just proposed a constitutional amendment that would have allowed headscarved girls to get into universities. In response, Yılmaz criticized the government for using religion as an instrument and maintained that: “The headscarf is not *a sine qua non* condition for

Muslims. To argue the opposite would mean that women, who are not covered, are not Muslims. This is such an unacceptable argument” (“Eski Diyanet İşleri Başkanı”, 2008; Appendix D, 73). The stark contrast between two presidents on this matter revealed the radical politicization of the institution under the AKP authority.

After Bardakoğlu’s resignation, under Görmez’s presidency, the discourse of Diyanet has become highly reflective of the political agenda of the government. Diyanet has particularly involved in the political debates not only on the headscarf ban, but also abortion. In an interview, for instance Görmez sided with the government by stating “Turkey should put an end to the quarter century-old headscarf debate. When Turkey solves this issue, it will be freed from many concerns” (as cited in Bildirici, 2011, own translation). Upon the controversy on abortion, Görmez declared that the Higher Board of Religious Affairs was tasked with enlightening public on abortion, caesarean method of childbirth, and population growth, and they would make an official statement regarding these subjects (“Görmez: Kürtaj ve Sezeryan”, 2012). The awaited declaration came by the Presidency on 4 June 2012, whereby President Görmez announced that Diyanet opposed the act of abortion since it was conceived as a murder in Islam in the absence of a legitimate reason, such as rape. “The foetus or baby in mother’s uterus has a right to live as well. Neither mother nor father has ... the entitlement to end [its] life” he stated (“Diyanet’ten Kürtaj Açıklaması”, 2012, own translation). For this reason, he argued that a pregnant mother did not have a right to say “my body, my choice” since she was charged with looking after the baby, protecting and keeping him / her alive (“Diyanet’ten Kürtaj Açıklaması”, 2012).

Diyanet’s opposition to abortion was not surprising; after all it is a religious authority, which had made similar declarations earlier. However, the timing of the

announcement was critical in a sense that it clearly manifested how Diyanet has become the mouthpiece of the ruling party. By targeting “my body, my choice” campaign, Diyanet affirmed its recent role as the most trusted ally of AKP’s patriarchy.

Politicization of Diyanet regarding the headscarf issue was not only evident in *İlmihal* and successive Presidents’ differing discourses, but also in the articles that have been published throughout the AKP period. For example, an article denounced “Western mode of thinking”, mainly because it rested on the idea that people were fully entitled to the rights over their body and hence endorsed “My body, my decision” motto, which was unacceptable. Western value system, for the author “has even equalized women’s freedom to a complete permissiveness in this respect” (Karslı, 2013, p. 44). For this reason, as he argues, covering has been viewed as an obstacle against liberation of women. He claims, unlike the West, Islamic value system places great importance on the protection of privacy of body and hence does not approve the exposure of female and male bodies. The author stressed that the rules of covering are applicable regardless of sex, but he particularly discussed the “commodification of the female body” and blamed capitalism and media for turning female sexuality into a commodity. “Instead of her personality, her femininity has been brought into the forefront” (Karslı, 2013, p. 45; Appendix D, 74). However, he wrote “Islamic value system strives toward a chaste individual and a chaste society... It establishes a set of rules regarding relations between sexes. For instance it forbids casting illicit gaze and requires observance of the headscarf” (Karslı, 2013, p. 45; Appendix D, 75).

6.2.4 Comparative analysis

A comparative study of the texts published by the Diyanet during three socio-politically different periods reveals that body, sexuality and dress codes of women have always been popular subjects in Diyanet's texts. PRA's standpoint has mostly remained stable and consistent throughout the time, except minor shifts in certain time periods.

It is found that throughout the study period, the female body has been portrayed as unclean and polluted due to her procreative role. On the one hand, motherhood has been promoted and praised; on the other hand because of their fertility, women have been considered as polluted. Therefore, she has to be cleansed first in order to perform certain religious duties, such as *namaz* and *tawaf*. She must not read or even touch Koran while she is menstruating. In some cases, menstruation or postpartum bleeding have been called as "diseases" or a "disabilities" that have "left women behind men in social activities". On the other side of the coin, there are texts referring to the religious sources that value a fertile woman more than an infertile woman. There are also pronouncements that declare abortion and birth control as sins. Therefore, in Diyanet's perspective a woman's value comes from her reproductive role, which is paradoxically seen as the source of her pollution.

Diyanet has promoted covering and headscarf since the end of 1960s. Covering has been mostly presented as a means to protect women from male gaze and abuse. Women have been portrayed as weak and weak-willed human beings, who are in the need of protection and guidance from a higher authority to live a rightful life. This higher authority is certainly the Islamic doctrine, which assigns the men as the guardian of women's chastity and honor. Moreover, the study of the content of texts reveals Diyanet's distrust of human nature and woman's nature in particular. According to the Diyanet's interpretation of Islam, women are naturally

inclined to use their beauty to seduce men and hence lead them to commit sin.

Female sexuality is considered as very dangerous, as it may cause social unrest or so-called “fitna”. Men are also portrayed as adulterous and lacking the ability to resist female sexuality. Despite Diyanet has never credited the Biblical and Hebrew depictions of the first woman as evil and sinful, the creation story has recently been used as a justification of the command regarding covering.

Texts that are related with covering generally mention the headscarf together with concepts such as honor, chastity and most recently virginity. Covering has been presented as a precondition of living a chaste and honorable life. Therefore, in Diyanet’s perspective for the sake of familial integrity and social peace, Islam dictates women to hide their beauties and wear the headscarf. Another function of the headscarf is securing women’s obedience and loyalty to their husbands. Having discussed the headscarf by referring to hadiths, such as the one that contains “shepherd” analogy, the PRA has promoted gender hierarchy and strengthened woman’s inferior position vis-à-vis her husband.

Even though modest dress code has been advised from the beginning, the very first specific statement that “women should draw their head coverings over their collars” was made in 1978. It was also then the insulting hadith, which likened women to camels and damned those “who are clothed but naked”, obtained coverage in Diyanet’s newsletter for the first time. Meanwhile, Turkey was ruled by a government headed by Bülent Ecevit’s Republican People’s Party. However, as it is discussed in earlier chapters, 1970s was the decade in which public visibility of Islam increased. Erbakan’s MSP infiltrated into government cadres from time to time by forming coalition governments with centrist or leftist parties. It is observed that starting from the 1980s, as a reflection of these developments, the PRA shifted

toward a stricter discourse regarding the headscarf. Rules of covering became more explicit. Thick and loose clothing to hide woman's body silhouette was deemed necessary. Diyanet officials started articulating that women should fully cover their bodies, except face and hands. Moreover, in the early 1980s, women's chastity and honor were emphasized as requirements for ensuring peace and order, to a greater extent. By taking these into consideration, it can be argued that sociopolitical context characterized by the rise of Islamic movements and emergence of pro-Islamic parties had implications for Diyanet's discourse regarding covering.

As it was noted earlier, in the 1990s Diyanet overtly sided with headscarved university students and fiercely opposed the headscarf ban at universities. Diyanet officials penned several articles suggesting that the headscarf was a fundamental human right and freedom, as well as Allah's order. Diyanet called the headscarf issue "as never-ending suffering" and claimed that those, who wanted to uphold this ban, undermined the state and caused public resentment. They further harshly criticized the Kemalist elite for tabooing Kemalism and Atatürk's reforms, while neglecting religious sensitivities of pious citizens. It has been observed that, Diyanet has never been politicized to such degree and critical of the state policies earlier. Moreover, religious dress code for women became now more straightforward and it entailed covering of whole body including neck area but excluding face, hands and feet. Thus, Diyanet's discourse reflected the effects of Welfare Party episode. It is also found that the discourse of the Diyanet intersected with that of feminist movement in certain matters, such as "commodification of the female body".

After AKP's coming to power, the headscarf has been promoted more implicitly through pictures displayed on the *Diyanet's* pages and more explicitly through statements made by the Presidents. Politicization of the Presidency on the

matter was evident in the statements made by the three successive Diyanet's Presidents, which sharply contradicted with one another. Parallel to AKP politicians' misogynistic statements, certain sections in *İlmihal* seriously impeded gender equality and promoted segregation of sexes. Pronouncements regarding adultery also overlapped AKP's agenda. Timing of Görmez's statements regarding abortion revealed how the PRA has been instrumentalized to legitimize AKP's pronatalist policies and the alliance between AKP and PRA in the politics of intimacy.

6.3 PRA's texts on gender roles

6.3.1 1968-1980: Monopoly of conservative / patriarchal discourse: Motherhood and wifedom as prime duties of women

An in-depth study of the texts published throughout this period found that Diyanet had been dominated by a conservative discourse that promoted gender stereotypes and gendered division of labor. Diyanet's texts were preoccupied with patriarchal interpretations of Islam that legitimized and deepened gender - based asymmetries. Women were foremost considered as wives and mothers, whose primary roles were child raising and doing household chores. A woman was supposed to be subservient to his husband and do whatsoever to meet his needs. For instance, a text titled "Ten advices from a Mother to her Future-Bride-Daughter" dictated a to - do list for married women. Speaking from a mother's mouth, the text advised women to "be obedient" to their husbands. According to the article, an "ideal" Muslim wife should listen to her husband's words and follow his "orders", she should accept the clothes and food that her husband provides, and she should always keep the house clean and tidy. Moreover, she should wear her nice clothes and ornaments to look attractive to

her husband. She should make the table and bed ready on time. She should protect his husband's honor and wealth and she should never consume his money without his permission. Finally, women were advised not to argue with their husband (Düzdağ, 1971, p. 10; Appendix D, 76). As this list of advice manifests, Diyanet presumed that a woman's ideal place was home and her primary role was to serve his husband's needs. Moreover, woman was put into an inferior status in marriage and she was portrayed as a consumer, who was dependent on his husband for her basic needs. Because of her consumer and dependent status, she should not challenge his husband's authority and follow his "commands." The division of labor that is proposed here posits woman only as homemaker; and posits man as breadwinner.

In 1971, *Diyanet Gazette* referred to Shakespeare's famous play "The Taming of the Shrew". Following excerpt from the play was particularly quoted:

Your husband is your reward, your boss, your life, your master, your head, your ruler... In return, he expects nothing; but a sweet word, smiling face and true obedience. What a little return for such a big debt, right? Whatever the duty of the people owes to the ruler, is the same that a woman owes to her husband... When she acts in a bad-tempered, stubborn, resentful, unpleasant way and disobeys his rightful desires; who else will she be other than a wicked traitor, a plagued and a contentious rebel against her beloved master? (as cited in Özek, 1971, p. 9; Appendix D, 77)

The excerpt indicated Diyanet's tacit approval of the conservative / patriarchal worldview that advocates hierarchal marital relations and expects a woman to be obedient to his husband. The drawn analogy between ruler – ruled relationship and husband – wife relationship postulated that men should rule over women, as the king rules over his subjects. In other words, in Diyanet's perspective, the relationship between sexes should be ideally hierarchical. Woman's obedience was considered as a "debt" to be paid in return of her husband's goodness. Disobedient wife, in turn,

was labeled as “wicked”, “traitor”, “plagued” and “rebellious”. According to Diyanet, a woman should be subordinate to her husband’s dictates even when it came to performing her religious duties. “It is abominable [*mekruh*] if a woman fasts even though her husband does not approve” declared the Diyanet in 1974 (Kasaboğlu, 1974, p. 7; Appendix D, 78).

In Diyanet’s publications, division of labor between man and woman was justified by judgments about certain characteristics or traits that apply to each gender. For example in 1971, Diyanet wrote, “Due to her innate nature, every woman needs the protection of a man”. For this reason, a woman should stay at home and “be in the charge of household work at home”. For Diyanet, the duty of a married woman “is to respect elder people at home. Woman should take care of her room and her personal items; in case she has children, she should take care of them first. If she is at her husband’s service, she takes care of him. Apart from these, taking care of the elders of the house depends on her marriage” (İz, 1971, p. 6; Appendix D, 79).

In an article published in 1973, by referring to the Prophet’s farewell sermon, the Presidency claimed, “women and men are created in different ways. These differences determine their working fields and duties. Woman is a symbol of grace and elegance in every respect. She should be protected in public sphere. Giving her free rein would be the greatest disaster for a society” (Uslu, 1973, p. 4; Appendix D, 80). As this excerpt manifested, women were stereotyped as fragile and weak, hence they needed protection. Paradoxically they were also regarded as dangerous for social life. These types of stereotypes about woman nature were often followed by the arguments that women were naturally inclined to perform certain types of works and their participation in public realm should be subject to male control.

Similarly, through another article published in 1973, Diyanet argued that due to the differences in physical, psychological and creational respects; men and women were destined to perform different tasks. “Man is the head of the family, whereas woman is his closest assistant and consultant. Woman is in the charge of childcare and housework. Man justly manages the house in consultation with his wife”. Moreover, Diyanet essentialized not only woman’s nature, but also man’s nature as it claimed in social life “man is in the need of a woman’s love and affection, whereas woman is in the need of a man’s guardianship, protection, and management. Man is created as stronger and braver; more determined and stronger-willed in order to be more resilient to hardships of social life. However, all these never downgrade woman’s status . . . Such differences are natural results of certain physiological, psychological, and social circumstances”. (Aydın, 1973, p. 8; Appendix D, 81)

In Diyanet’s perspective, the most important role and duty of a woman was motherhood. Motherhood had been emphasized excessively and praised throughout this time period. Through its publications, Diyanet had dictated its own understanding of motherhood and pushed women to comply with their idealized prototype. Diyanet’s “ideal mother” was altruistic in the sense that she had to commit herself only and fully to her family and she had no life of her own. She was self-sacrificing and prioritized her children over everything else. For instance, an article written in 1974, proposed the idea that motherhood entailed tolerating any kind of hardships and sufferings. According to the author, a good mother necessarily dedicates all her beauty, health, youth, and ambitions to her children:

... a mother gives her beauty first, she is worn-out, sometimes she becomes disabled; in addition to all the beauties she loses because of the deprivations

and hardships she has suffered for her kids, she buries all her ambitions at a young age by her own hands. Despite all these, sufferer mother does not get offended and resented; she is eager to embrace her child with a deep compassion, just as she did when he / she was a baby. (Saraç, 1974, p. 7; Appendix D, 82).

The Presidency problematized women's employment outside the home as a major reason that distracted women from their "main" duty. For example, an article series penned by a female author in 1976, problematized women's work outside the domestic sphere, as follows:

The Creator tasked woman to dedicate all her energies and labor to her home and children. Certainly, in some exceptional cases, woman does the work of man; helps him, and sometimes becomes the leader. For example, during the war, when a natural disaster occurs or when there is no man. . . However, like I stated, these are exceptional cases. . . . But if she wants to earn money only for luxury; . . . no! Only for such a ridiculous goal, for showing off, she does not have the right of neglecting her home and her children. She cannot be excused. . . . Yes, woman can get education, get their diplomas; but they must not work if they do not need to. The contribution of the confidence they earned by education and diplomas, in nurturing and educating their kids, should be considered as sufficient. (Abla, 1976a, p. 12; Appendix D, 83)

In her next article, same author argued that women could work, only if they were required to provide financial support to her family. "She should not work, if she is in pursuit of more money for showing off, because Almighty Allah has adorned her with qualities of wifehood and motherhood; and given her the ability, power and instinct in this direction" (Abla, 1976b, p. 12; Appendix D, 84). Through such pronouncements, Diyanet discouraged women from pursuing careers and participating in the labor force. Education was valued only to the extent that it contributed into their motherhood role. Women could only work under exceptional circumstances. Otherwise, it would be a source of distraction from her core duty, which is motherhood.

According to Diyanet, due to their physical and biological differences, men and women could not be absolutely equal. Therefore, they could not have equal rights. In 1978, a male author claimed that gender equality was indeed an illusion, “Those who advocate that women should have one hundred percent equal rights with men are under a great illusion that completely conflicts with scientific facts” (Yalar, 1978b, p. 10; Appendix D, 85). As the author claimed, some tasks and jobs were impossible for woman to perform because of their physical traits. “For instance, woman does not have the physical strength to work at certain industrial fields; such as coal and mine sites. In addition to her biological [disadvantages]; woman is psychologically weak, fragile and emotional. Therefore, she cannot be as successful as man, in the fields that require courage and boldness” (Yalar, 1978b, p. 10; Appendix D, 86). By referring to the Age of the Prophet, the author suggested certain types of jobs had suited women most; such as nursing, teaching, hairdressing, cooking, etc.

Thus, men must perform the jobs for men, and women must perform the tasks for women. Ideal place for the woman is family; while for the man, it is the battlegrounds of life. Societies, where men and women work together in factories and markets, have gone out of the creational balance, lost the stability among their young women and men; and made one to watch this social wreckage. . . For this reason, women are incapable of raising generations; society is unaware of the depression it has been going through. Because women, who have miserable life in the streets and factories, are incapable to disrupt their night sleep to perform their motherhood duty. (Yalar, 1978b, p. 10; Appendix D, 87)

As these excerpts manifest, the Presidency of Religious Affairs, promoted the idea that the notion “gender equality” was indeed a fallacy and claimed that family was the ideal place for women. Women’s employment outside the home was regarded as an underlying cause of social degeneration and decline of the traditional family.

Moreover, women were encouraged to perform traditional female occupations as they were regarded as too weak and fragile to perform other jobs associated with men.

In the late 1970s, motherhood concept emerged as a religious duty. It was repeatedly stressed that in Islam, motherhood was heralded with paradise by referring to the Prophet's famous statement "Heaven is under the feet of mothers" (Yadigar, 1979, p. 5; Appendix D, 88). In Diyanet's perspective, motherhood was a "sacred duty" in the sense that women played a substantial role in religious education, as children initially learnt religious values from their mothers:

Motherhood duty is undoubtedly one of the most sacred duties in family and social life...A child must earn certain values at an early age so that he / she can grow up as a good individual for his / her nation, country and family. These are the values that will provide that individual with help and spiritual support for his / her entire life. Of course, among these values religious belief comes first... Mother must be the first person to plant the seeds of these beliefs in child's heart and instill the related thoughts in the child's brain. Child will learn the love of Allah, the respect for Him, and fear of Him in case of necessity; faithfulness to the Highness Prophet and his relatives, first from his / her mother (Cunbur, 1979, p. 12; Appendix D, 89).

In Diyanet's narration, every mother is a potential teacher, who could inculcate certain values upon her children and provide them with primary religious education. In line with this understanding, "raising religious generations" was imposed on women as a crucial religious duty that would be rewarded with Paradise in the life after.

6.3.2 1980 – 2002: Toward a more liberal / egalitarian discourse on gender roles?

Wifhood and motherhood had been recurring themes throughout the 1980s. Diyanet officials continued to take traditional division of labor between sexes for granted.

Parallel to the Turkish Civil Code, Diyanet emphasized that the man was the head of household; who deserved respect, good service and obedience from the woman. It claimed “Islam wants to see woman as an obedient wife first and then as a compassionate mother” (Öztürk, 1980a, p. 12; Appendix D, 90). In Diyanet’s texts, it was underlined that a woman’s foremost duty was being obedient and respectful to his husband.

Diyanet claimed that obedience to the husband was to be rewarded with Paradise. It was further claimed that obedient wives would earn equal rewards as martyrs and veterans in the life to come:

A woman should fulfill her husband’s legitimate wishes immediately... It is so important for a woman to obey her husband that on the Day of Judgment, the woman will be questioned about her prayer first and then obedience to her husband... Our Prophet’s hadith tells us that women, who obey their husbands will be admitted to *Paradise* [emphasis added] and they will earn rewards as much as the martyrs, who died on the battlefield and the veterans, who won victories. (Öztürk, 1980b, p. 12; Appendix D, 91)

Another article written by the same author provided several advices for the girls who were to marry. One of these advices was “doing whatever the husband says”. A woman should always wear clean and good clothes, otherwise she would “disgust” his husband and would be fallen out of favor. Besides, a woman should “never rebel against her husband. Because, he will bear a grudge against [her]. Grudge destroys the family union” (Öztürk, 1980c, p. 12; Appendix D, 92).

Similarly, in an article titled “Letter To My Daughter”, a male author advised his daughter to be obedient to her husband, follow his “commands” and gladly accept whatever he asked for:

When you become a bride, you know my advices about how to obey your husband and how to keep your house in order... Do not be upset because *you*

are under your husband's command [emphasis added]... Gladly accept what he says... Smile. Tolerate the defects that may arise from creation and temperament.... What you need is to obey your husband. (Hakkioğlu, 1981, p. 20; Appendix D, 93)

Gender based division of labor was mostly justified by the claim that men and women are biologically and psychologically different. In Diyanet's account, gender roles were fairly allocated by God according to biological and psychological traits and skills of each gender. These roles are absolute and cannot be challenged. For instance, in an article penned in 1981, the author argued, science proved that men and women are created different and hence their roles in life should be parallel to those differences:

A woman, compared to a man, is created more gentle and weaker. She is less resilient against external influences. Her neural system is easily affected... Because of this, in a verse Allah gave the dominion of the family by making man superior to woman and allocated their duties in accordance with their creational qualities. (Erden, 1981, p. 12; Appendix D, 94)

Moreover, it was claimed that due to his superior capacities, the man was not only the leader of the family, but also the leader of the nation. "A nation rises with men. Yet, women complement this rise. Thus, men are the constructors of the rise and women are its completer" (Erden, 1981, p. 12; Appendix D, 95). As the author continues, the man provides for family and he is responsible for protecting them from external threats. The woman in contrast should stay at home and take care of the house and children. If she seeks career opportunities and attempts to perform masculine jobs, as the author argues, she will lose her femininity:

...Whereas, the woman in accordance with her creation, is tasked with household management, her husband's care and felicity, nurturing and educating the children... If a woman neglects these duties, goes beyond the

borders of the duties required by creation and does man's work outside the house, her feminine qualities will be eroded. The man, the founder of the society, will lose work efficiency that he needs. Especially, the upbringing and moral education of the children, who represent the future society, will be hindered. (Erden, 1981, p. 12; Appendix D, 96)

As this example illustrated, during the early 1980s, the Presidency of Religious Affairs preserved its patriarchal attitude towards women's employment outside house. For Diyanet cadres, women's participation in public sphere and work force would eventually result in chaos and degeneration in the society. They harshly criticized Western women, who were seeking opportunities outside home and implied that those women were losing their dignity and honor:

If you are going to examine the real face of the progress that women made by leaving their home behind and working outside, you will mostly come up with the conclusion that ends in misery. Western women poured into the streets in order to earn their living in markets, bazaars, workplaces, dance halls, and so forth. By doing so, what dignity and honor did women earn? . . . Undoubtedly, our religion has not forbidden women to work. Islam has recognized all legitimate rights of woman, however it has shown family and household duties are the most suitable tasks for woman's nature. (Beşoğul, 1983: 18; Appendix D, 97)

Therefore, the Presidency maintained its negative stance against women's participation into workforce by the end of 1980s. Wifhood and motherhood were reaffirmed as the single most significant tasks for women. Women should not work outside the home, as it would lead to the destruction of family and society. In Diyanet's account, those who "dragged woman into the streets" in the name of woman's rights, were "the enemies of humanity" who aimed to generate "corrupt generations by pulling her away from her husband, hearth and home" (Selim, 1989, p. 19; Appendix D, 98). "Turkish Muslim ladies should not be fooled by these games and get trapped, they should aspire to the task of motherhood". Moreover,

For a woman, the most important duty was to live a chaste and honorable life. Woman should be respectful to his husband. They should bring up children, who are the foundation stone of the society as decent, moral kids that respect their elders, love their homeland and nation, and if necessary give life for the country and the nation. Undoubtedly, those who fulfill these duties are the women of Heaven” . (Selim, 1989, p. 19; Appendix D, 99)

As this quote revealed, in Diyanet’s discourse, advocates of women’s rights were labeled as “the enemies of humanity”, who have aimed to destroy family cohesion and generate perverted generations. Moreover, by assigning tasks such as raising patriotic children to women, the PRA promoted motherhood as a civic duty that was to be rewarded with Paradise.

In addition, Diyanet claimed there were certain privileged titles that could not be granted to women, due to the challenging and difficult nature of these tasks. Above all, Diyanet declared that women were not capable to become “prophets”, as maleness was one of the requirements of prophecy:

According to a great majority of Islamic scholars, maleness is required, like other five adjectives assigned to the prophethood, because of the hardships and difficulties of the task. For this reason, there has not been any female prophet. (Yücel, 1989, p. 7; Appendix D, 100)

The texts published in the early 1990s conveyed almost same sort of messages regarding women’s nature. The PRA reproduced old gender stereotypes and generalizations about the roles of each gender. In PRA’s account, man was strong and rational; whereas woman was a weak and emotional creature, who needed continuous male protection and guidance (Duman, 1991; Hatipoğlu, 1993). Since he had to provide for his spouse and his family, where he had a superior status. Prophet’s hadith that likened the man ruling the family to master or a shepherd was

referred in several texts to justify hierarchical division of labor between males and females;

In a hadith, our beloved Prophet pointed out that everybody has a responsibility in the society and that everybody has to fulfill the requirements of their responsibilities by remarking; “Every one of you is a *shepherd* [emphasis added] and is responsible for your flock. The ruler of the state is responsible for his nation. The ruler of the family is responsible for the members of the family. The woman is responsible for protecting her husband’s home, property and his children. The servant is responsible for protecting his/her *master’s* property [emphasis added]...” (Öztürk, 1993, p. 31; Appendix D, 101)

Even though with a pronouncement, the President of the PRA underlined that this hadith should not be interpreted as the enslavement of women (Yazıcıoğlu, 1991, p. 4; Appendix D, 102), it clearly proposed a hierarchical form of relation, in which men rule over women.

The texts published at the beginning of the 1990s, were still promoting the idea that an ideal Turkish Muslim woman should stay within domestic sphere and commit herself to her husband and children. Woman’s education was desirable, “because, the child of an uneducated mother will not do any good. That child will be successful neither at school nor in real life” (Hatipoğlu, 1993, p. 17; Appendix D, 103). Therefore, women’s right to education was deemed important not for the sake of women themselves, but for the sake of next generations. In other words, women’s education was essential, to the extent that it serves her maternal functions.

In this decade, Diyanet emphasized mothers’ critical role in raising not only “patriotic and self-sacrificing citizens” for the nation; but also “religious generations” for the Muslim community. Several texts published during this decade touched upon the necessity of expanding “religious youth/generations” (Öztürk,

1993; Ateş, 1993; Ateş, 1997). For instance, in an article titled “The Reality of Youth” it was claimed that,

Our society is indeed religious... However, there are still those, who view a religious youth as a threat to the regime. In fact, a pious youth is a life insurance for them, as well. In case a pious youth becomes apparent, not only societal peace will increase, but also everyone will take his / her place in the system... In contrast to what is supposed, these cadres cannot be trained by an educational system that ignores the religious and moral dimensions. A person can be educated only by an educated person. (Ateş, 1993, p. 36; Appendix D, 104)

Therefore, women as primary educators for next generations were called by the PRA to serve for this new social engineering project.

In Diyanet’s account, a good mother should fill her children’s heart with the love Islam and country. She should raise soldier sons who will protect their country at the cost of their lives. She should also raise chaste and obedient daughters for the male population, because they would eventually become housewives. As Diyanet claims, such a mother would guarantee Paradise:

She raises her baby, who is yet in a swaddle, by inseminating him/her with the love of Allah, Prophet and country. If her baby is a girl, [a Turkish mother] will raise the baby by saying “if she dies, may ground like her, if she survives, may her husband love her. Again, she will say to her son “Come on son, you are born for today. I kneaded your dough with bravery. The son of Turks does not let enemies’ flags fly onto his motherland”. Girls and ladies, who are the exemplars of morality and chastity, grow up in this way. Paradise lies beneath the feet of such heroic chaste women (mothers) whose hearts are full of love for the motherland. (Otyakmaz, 2001, p. 48; Appendix D, 105)

PRA’s emphasis on mothers’ new duty in raising religious and patriotic generations for the Turkish nation, was consistent with its self-perceived identity and goals. In 1999, Diyanet’s President Mehmet Yılmaz identified PRA’s goals and targets as follows;

First of all, religious service based on the Tawhid principle; love of wisdom, love of the country and the nation; spirit of martyrdom and veteranism; the sense of fraternity; the endeavor to raise moral, virtuous, and civilized people; the ambition of moving forward in all fields and advancing the society are the values that have blessed the life and honored the past of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. (Yılmaz, 1999, p. 23; Appendix D, 106)

By the end of 1990s, attitudes toward traditional gender roles began to shift. In spite of the fact that the dominant discourse that emphasized a woman's foremost duty as motherhood endured, a more egalitarian/liberal discourse that called for more female visibility and activism in public sphere started to crystallize. This was particularly evident in the texts, referred to the wives of the Prophet, who have been presented as role models. For instance, an article penned by a male member of the Higher Board of Religious Affairs, praised Aisha's intelligence, skills, eagerness to learn, and exceptional memory. Aisha's contribution into hadith literature and women's religious education were underlined. From Aisha's story, the author came to the conclusion that a woman had the capacity to achieve any challenging task, including social and political ones:

Aisha was at the top of those who knew, understood and preserved Koran and the Sunnah of our Prophet best, even though she was very young at the time our Prophet passed away. At her father's house and next to the Prophet, she was raised as the best and acquired the knowledge that is unknown by others; thanks to her intelligence, ability to understand, desire to learn, strong memory, love and faith... Enlightened by the Prophet, she became the most distinguished teacher of the fundamentals of Islam. She interpreted Koran. She was one of those who had the best understanding of Koran... She narrated 2210 hadiths, and she narrated most of these directly from the Prophet... Starting from our Prophet's time she took a close interest in women's education and training . . . Aisha's contributions into womanhood are great. We could only mention a little bit. A woman can accomplish all religious, scientific, social and political tasks and duties, just like man. Aisha proved this by her life. (Özbuğday, 1997, pp. 39-40; Appendix D, 107)

Another article emphasized that Aisha participated in the wars and she was competent in many subjects, such as literature and medicine. In author's view, these

proved that Aisha and other spouses of the Prophet had actively involved in all aspects of social life during the Prophet's Age;

Aisha had been a model personality, who played a role in all phases of life with other blessed spouses. She became an example for other women in particular with her life and practices, and proved without question that women existed within the entire social life. All sources noted that she had joined the Battle of Badr, served as a nurse and handed out water in the Battle of Uhud. (Baş & Alpaslan, 1999b, p. 65; Appendix D, 108)

Likewise, Prophet's first wife was depicted as a respected businesswoman and a self-confident woman, who had approached and proposed to Prophet Muhammad herself (Baş & Alpaslan, 1999b, p. 65). Depictions of the "Mothers Believers" have symbolic significance, as they have always presented as role models for women. Presentations of gender relations throughout the Islamic Golden Age also provided important insights into Diyanet's perspective on gender roles. On the hand, Muhammad's wives were narrated as intelligent, talented, self-confident and courageous enough to perform many challenging tasks. Such narrations contained the message that looking up to these ideal models, contemporary women might and could perform any challenging task. These clearly illustrated a radical change in Diyanet's standpoint regarding roles of women.

On the other hand, certain narrations of Muhammad's wives revealed Diyanet's adherence to the Islamic sources that contained negative depictions of women. In such narrations women were paradoxically described as emotionally and rationally incapable of performing serious tasks. For instance, Aisha was described as the most jealous wife of the Prophet. It was asserted that she even envied Khadija, from whom the Prophet had children and who had already passed away;

She was the most jealous, as well as the one who made the most effort to win Prophet's heart. She even envied Khadija, whom the Prophet loved much and always kept her memory alive, and she did not hesitate to express these feelings. (Özbuğday, 1997, p. 38; Appendix D, 109)

In one incident it was described that, while talking about Khadija's memory, Aisha got frustrated and asked Prophet "Is no else in this world, except this beldame? Has not Allah granted you a better lady than her?" (Baş & Alpaslan, 1999a, p. 65; Appendix D, 110)

Interestingly, issues published in the same year contained references not only to the lives of Prophet's wives, but also some of the patriotic Kemalist / Republican Turkish women who had actively involved in the War of Independence, such as Halide Edip Adivar, Nakiye Elgün, Nene Hatun and Fatma Seher Erden (as known as Kara Fatma). This signified a shift in Diyanet's discourse in terms of the role models that it had hitherto promoted. Diyanet praised Republican women's patriotism, activism, courage, and skills of leadership. For example, in an article titled "Women of the National Struggle", it was maintained these women took part in every stage of the War of National Independence and the foundation of the new Turkish Republic, just as their male peers. It was told that these women formed associations, organized meetings, mobilized people, joined the troops led by Mustafa Kemal and many of them lost their lives for the country. Endeavors of Halide Edip, who was a notable feminist, were discussed in particular. Author quoted following excerpt from Halide Edip's speech on May 19, 1919 to point out that the War of Independence had been fought and won collectively as a nation, regardless of gender:

Ladies, we do not have cannons and guns today, but we have a weapon, larger and more powerful than these: *Haqq* [truth] and Allah. Cannon and

gun may fall down, but *Haqq* and Allah are eternal. We have sons and mothers who can spit on the cannons; we have love and faith, national sentiments in our hearts. We have proved that we are a nation worthy of the class of nations in the world with our men, women and even children (as cited in Can, 1999, p. 62; Appendix D, 111).

6.3.3 2002-2014: Oscillating between conservatism and egalitarianism

Throughout the AKP period, the PRA conveyed contradictory messages with regards to the division of labor between sexes and women's roles outside the domestic realm. On the one hand, the Presidency continued to talk about necessity of preserving the traditional family. In majority of texts published in *Diyanet* journal and the book of *İlmihal* emphasized woman's primary role as wife and mother. On the other hand, in some occasions Diyanet denounced traditional gender roles, demanded a better and just distribution of domestic duties, and pronounced that women have the capacity and eligibility to assume any role in social and political life. Therefore, conflicting viewpoints regarding gender roles have been represented and voiced through publications. This has led to the dichotomization of Diyanet's discourse within this period. Even though conservative / patriarchal discourse was still dominant and more powerful; the liberal / egalitarian discourse, which had become apparent at the end of the 1990s, now gained greater visibility. This new discourse questioned the viability of upholding traditional gender roles in contemporary societies and demanded greater gender equality both within domestic and public spheres. As a result, PRA's discourse has oscillated between conservatism / patriarchy and liberalism / egalitarianism. Interestingly, inconsistent and contradictory nature of discourse overlaps with AKP's new mode of patriarchy, which is formed through a contradictory combination of conservative and neoliberal discourses.

For instance, an article discussing women's roles in family criticized traditional gender roles by stressing the amount of burden that women had to shoulder within domestic sphere. By addressing several inequalities that women had to face; the PRA suggested that women's quest for equality was "natural";

Women, who are forced to deal with children's education, meet the needs of male spouse and house, and carry out many responsibilities at the same time, try to show compliance, reconciliation and cooperation in family problems and conflict . . . Men on the other hand may tend to resort to force and avoidance . . . Particularly among women, who are economically independent, educated and working, demands for equality and reconciliation within the family are more evident. Women question if men are physically stronger and challenged men's superiority in family relations and in the distribution of responsibilities and roles. In fact, *women's struggle for social respect and gender equality despite all inequalities in terms of opportunity, salary, status and duty; should be seen as natural* [emphasis added]... Being expected to compromise all the time is a consuming process for the woman, who has to bear duties associated with motherhood and wifhood, as well as responsibilities outside the house.(Aktaş, 2003, p. 41; Appendix D, 112)

In the same year a female author broke a taboo by writing some of the topics that had been never mentioned earlier, such as male oppression. The author maintained that women needed to stand up against male oppression in domestic sphere. Author also emphasized the necessity of political activism for obtaining women's rights. By referring to an example of a woman from Prophet's Age, who had refused being oppressed by his husband, author put forth that women should be bold and make all efforts to obtain their rights from the political authority. Otherwise, as she suggested, women would be restricted by customs imposed by society:

Al-Mujadila in Koran, as its name suggests, is a surah that describes the efforts of an exemplary Muslim woman to attain her right from the political authority. Despite the appeal of the political authority, the woman insisted on her rightful claim and complained to Allah about the oppression she

experienced. The exemplary effort that this woman showed to attain her rights earned the appreciation of Allah. This woman found the path to Allah by the power of reason, she was not subject to his husband's rampage, she did not care the habits of her society by breaking away from their traditions ... As it can be clearly seen in this example and others, *women can break away from the customs and traditions, only if they seek and strive for their rights* [emphasis added], otherwise they will be subject to the restrictions imposed by customs and traditions of the society. (Köksal, 2003, p. 42; Appendix D, 113)

On the other hand, the predominant conservative / patriarchal discourse carried on propagating patriarchal interpretations of religious sources and strengthening traditional gender roles. On many occasions the PRA repeated the cliché that a woman's proper place was private sphere and motherhood was her primary responsibility. In line with this conservative mindset, the PRA preserved its hostile stance toward feminism as it persistently considered the movement weakening the sense of motherhood and hence loosening family ties. Feminism in Diyanet's perspective is an underlying cause that have led to a wide variety of problems such as; erosion of moral values, divorce, drug-addiction, etc.

... Weakening of the feeling of motherhood in turn causes the weakening of family ties. The misunderstanding of sexual liberation and feminist movements that emerged in the 1960s weakened the sense of motherhood. As a consequence, the attempts at sexual liberation with the discourse of "freedom for women!" have led to serious problems such as drug addiction, erosion of moral values, violence, single parent family, divorce, alienation, identity crisis, etc. (Demirkan; 2007, p. 49; Appendix D, 114).

Several texts revealed how conservative / patriarchal mode of thinking have been internalized by female authors. For instance, a female author claimed that father was responsible for external affairs of the family, whereas the mother was primarily charged with domestic affairs:

A father's prime duty to his family is to provide basic needs, such as food and shelter... Mother, who acts like a minister of internal affairs of the family, undertakes her own responsibilities. Even though there are times that mother change the roles with the minister of external affairs, this does not change general rules of conduct. (Fidan, 2004, p. 59; Appendix D, 115)

Conservative / patriarchal discourse has also been disseminated within the upper cadres of the Presidency. Karagöz, who was a member of the Higher Board of Religious Affairs, claimed that integrity and continuity of family very much depended on mother. For him, women were mainly responsible for housework, childcare, communication within the family, and so forth. In addition to being a "good mother", a woman was also expected to be a "good wife" by appreciating her husband's services. This was what God and the Prophet had wanted from women:

In a hadith our prophet remarked, "Woman is the manager of her husband's house and her children". By this hadith the prophet assigned women domestic tasks. Woman is supposed to do her best to do these tasks; such as housework, childcare, communication within family, education, healthcare, clothing, food and so forth. This would bring about peace and continuity to the family... Woman should be positive towards her husband's legitimate demands. This is the wish of God and the Prophet. Woman should be nice to her husband and thankful for his goodness and services. (Karagöz, 2006, p.16; Appendix D, 116)

Dominant traditional / patriarchal discourse within the PRA has promoted traditional gender roles between men and women not only through *Diyanet* periodical, but also through the book of *İlmihal*. For instance, it was noted that the Prophet Muhammad had assigned the housework to his daughter Fatima whereas he had assigned other tasks to his son-in-law:

The prophet advised her daughter Fatima that she is assigned with the housework, whereas her husband is assigned with tasks outside the house. This helps us to determine the general rule of conduct. Therefore, doing the

housework should be regarded as a basic duty of the woman as a wife. (*İlmihal*, 2006, p. 221; Appendix D, 117)

İlmihal promoted gender hierarchy by declaring that man was the head of family.

According to the guidelines provided by *İlmihal*, woman was supposed to be subservient to his husband and to be a “good wife” to him:

For the preservation of family life and for maintenance of peace and happiness, the right to be the head of family is granted to men. Thus in several verses and hadiths it is emphasized that women are required to respect their husbands. (*İlmihal*, 2006, p. 323; Appendix D, 118)

Moreover, a woman’s obedience to her husband would guarantee her entry to Paradise;

If a woman performs prayer five times, fasts in Ramadan, preserves her honor, and respects her husband; it will be said to her “You are allowed to get into *Paradise* [emphasis added] through the entrance you wish”... Any woman having her husband’s consent will make it into the Heaven after she dies. (Yazıcı, 2003, p. 136; Appendix D, 119)

When it comes to women’s participation in the work force and social life, Diyanet officials have provided noteworthy support in various texts. For example, through a decree issued on June 02, 2003, the Higher Board of Religious Affairs approved women’s involvement in workforce and stated “men and women can exchange the traditional roles assigned to them in accordance with needs and circumstances”. The decree also referred to a repeated hadith about Prophet’s advice to her daughter and explained that such division of labor between men and women could not be thought as a binding model for the present Muslim community, but rather as a suggestion. The Board further put that women were capable of holding any public office, including even state presidency:

Since state presidency is merit-based, as every public post, the gender of the person does not matter, but whether that person deserves this position does. In Islam there is no explicit, absolute and binding rule that forbids women to perform public service. Therefore, there is no religious reservation that restricts qualified and capable women from holding public office, including state presidency. (Din İşleri Yüksek Kurulu, 2003b; Appendix D, 120)

This decree is important in the sense that it was the first time - ever official and institutional pronouncement by the Presidency that explicitly recognized women's religious entitlement to work and capability of holding the highest positions in state cadres. Likewise, in an article published in 2005, vice-President Fikret Karaman, maintained that women could work both inside and outside home. He also noted that they could perform some demanding jobs and contribute into national wealth and progress:

In fact women can contribute into their country's development and welfare by working as civil servants, teachers, nurses, doctors and by doing many other jobs in private and public sectors. (Karaman, 2005, p. 41; Appendix D, 121)

During the early 2010s, the Presidency of Religious Affairs placed an emphasis on the social transformation and the necessity of changes in traditional gender roles of marriage. In response to the consequences of modernity and its impact on family life, Presidency reported that Family Bureaus have been tasked. Through these bureaus, as Presidency reported, public demands for a religious interpretation of the changes in family roles have being met:

As traditional presumptions regarding woman's social roles have been challenged, issues such as woman's position vis-à-vis man, her social status, her existence in the public sphere, etc. have a remarkable place within the questions addressed to the Family Bureaus. Various *problems* [emphasis added] that have arisen with woman's exit from the domestic intimate sphere (whether she can work or not, in which circumstances she can work, her dress codes, her duties and responsibilities as a wife, her liabilities to her children, etc.) are mentioned by both men and women; in the face of expansion of life

chances, religious interpretations of the new opportunities offered by modernity to women are demanded. (Toprak, 2011, pp. 34-5; Appendix D, 122)

Even though above excerpt talked about the transformation of gender roles, it also uncovered how Diyanet tended to perceive these new opportunities available to women as “problems” that require religious guidance. This is also a good example illustrating how conservative/patriarchal and liberal/egalitarian discourses have been entangled to each other throughout this period.

On the one hand, those who uphold conservative/patriarchal discourse persistently claimed that it is fathers’ responsibility to meet economic needs of the household. “Whereas mothers’ first and fundamental responsibility is mothering. As long as father works, she is not obliged to work in order to earn money and provide for the family” (Karacoşkun, 2012, p. 45; Appendix D, 123). On the other hand, those who hold a more liberal/egalitarian worldview, announced that woman’s role in life is no longer limited to motherhood and housework, and hence man has to share woman’s burden at home:

In the past, men were responsible for providing for the household, and women were responsible for housework and raising children. In today’s society, women are increasingly involved in the working life, and as a result the role of women is not only home management and motherhood. In most families women share economic responsibilities with their husbands and as a result, they spend limited time at home. Therefore, dads must share more about home life and children’s issues. (Arslan, 2014, p. 6; Appendix D, 124)

Parallel with Diyanet’s contradictory approach with respect to gender roles, wives of Muhammad have been portrayed in texts in conflicting ways. On the one hand, in large part of the narrations Muhammad’s wives emerged as perfect exemplars of their sex in terms of modesty and righteousness. Their attitudes, dress,

ways to worship, their knowledge on religious matters, etc. have been described in detail and their sum reflected ideal categories of female behavior. On the other hand, in certain accounts Prophet's wives were portrayed as jealous, rebellious, petty, greedy, power hungry and untrustworthy. For example, an article described how Aisha and Hafsa had formed an alliance and acted together against their rivals (Apak, 2011a, p. 62; Appendix D, 125). It was also reported that they spied on the Prophet and protested him when he had stayed longer with another wife. In the same account, it was further noted that Prophet was quite offended and even thought of divorcing Hafsa, when he found out that she had disclosed his secret to Aisha (Apak, 2011a, pp. 63-4; Appendix D, 126). In other accounts, Zaynab was described as jealous and egoist woman, who look down on other wives (Apak, 2010c, p. 62, Apak, 2011b, p. 62; Köksal, 2012, p. 43; Appendix D, 127). As it is discussed earlier in the theory chapter, such labels attached to womankind (i.e. weak, emotional, jealous, irrational, etc.) from which gender roles originate, become the foundation for the inequality between sexes.

Contradictory nature of Diyanet's discourse was also evident in the way that political activities of Muslim role models were presented. In contrast with earlier pronouncements that encouraged women to participate into political sphere, subvert messages transmitted through the accounts of Muslim role models have been discouraging. To give an example, an article published in 2010 described how Aisha had regretted of her political activities after her failure in the Battle of Camel and never got involved in politics again:

Even though there had been various correspondence and negotiation between Aisha and Ali, in the 36th year of migration the first bloody conflict between the Muslims could not be prevented. It was called as the "Battle of Camel" because Aisha led the war on her Camel. Eventually Aisha's side lost... Her

political activities, which had started during the latest years of the Uthman's Caliphate and ended with the Battle of Camel, pretty much upset her later on. She stated that she would rather die early than to see such tragic events causing the death of many Muslims. (Apak, 2010, p. 231; Appendix D, 128)

In addition, it was claimed that a verse in Koran had ordered the wives of the Prophet to stay at their homes and further told that due to her failure Aisha poured tears every time she read that verse (Apak, 2010, p. 231). In a different text, Prophet's wife Umm Salamah was appreciated because she had never gotten involved in politics or public affairs, and in this way "she maintained her dignity and high status in the society until the end of her life" (Apak, 2010, p. 64; Appendix D, 129).

Such biased accounts of lives, social activities and personality traits of female exemplars contradicted with egalitarian statements and revealed patriarchal side of Diyanet. References to political failures and political apathy of Muhammad's wives reflect a patriarchal worldview that envisions a male dominated political sphere. Even though they represent past women's experiences, the stereotypes associated with Koranic female models provide religious justification for current gender asymmetries and hence restrict women's opportunities outside the domestic sphere.

Diyanet's emphasis on the urgency of raising patriotic generations during the 1980s shifted onto the urgency of raising religious generations in this period. Thereby, women's religiosity and their relations with mosques gained greater significance in Diyanet's texts. An article, which discussed Diyanet's policies for increasing women's attendance to mosques, demonstrated that women were considered as critical actors for construction of religious society;

Today, half of the population is women. Pointing out the importance of women in the construction of the community, Our Prophet said, "Let your ladies go to the mosques, if they ask your permission... Women have a very important place in the construction of the society and hence all endeavors for

their advancement in terms of science, culture, art, etc. are at the same time valuable investments for future. (Salman, 2013, p. 3; Appendix D, 130)
Furthermore, in line with the AKP's emphasis on mothers' role in in

population growth, as well as Erdoğan's reiterated calls to Turkish women for having at least three children, Diyanet published several articles that implicitly encouraged women to have more children. For instance, an article titled "Is Single Child, Problem Child?" discussed various emotional and behavioral problems that a single child tends to have and hence implicitly encouraged parents to have more children:

They are pretty much closed to criticism... He/she tries to please everybody except himself / herself... He/she cannot articulate his /her needs. He/she has difficulty in saying "no" and setting limits. He/she criticizes himself/herself mercilessly, and set very high standards for him/herself. He/she expects so much from others as well. . . His/her ability to cope with anger and conflict is not developed enough... He/she shares less...He /she may show dependency and jealousy in his/her emotional relations. It is not easy for him /her to accept failure... It is difficult for them to accept that they will not own everything... They may be over-demanding for their beloved ones... They tend to control continuously. (Karaköse, 2014, p. 61; Appendix D, 131)

6.3.4 Comparative analysis

A comparative analysis of the three periods finds that until the 1990s, Diyanet's texts had been dominated by a conservative / patriarchal worldview that promoted and reinforced traditional gender roles that rested on gender stereotypes in Islamic tradition. From 1968 until the early 1990s, the Presidency of Religious Affairs published texts that made very clear that ideal place of woman was home and family. Throughout this period, Presidency continuously stressed that women and men are biologically and psychologically different. In Diyanet's perspective all women by nature were weak, vulnerable, emotional and irrational; thus they needed constant male guidance and protection. Due to their reproductive capabilities, God primarily tasked them with childbearing. Men, in contrast, were strong and rational; thus they

deserved to be the head and provider of family. Because of her consumer status, woman had to be obedient and respectful to her husband. An ideal wife was supposed to do whatever necessary for her husband's pleasure and comfort. Through references to certain religious scriptures, Diyanet imposed a hierarchical marital relationship, in which men rules over women in the same way that a ruler rules over his subjects, or a shepherd rules over his flock. Moreover, an obedient wife, as Diyanet announced, would be rewarded by Paradise.

In the traditional model promoted by the Presidency, public and political sphere belonged to men; whereas women were assigned to the apolitical private sphere. While men were tasked with money making and policy making; women's primary responsibilities were housework, raising next generations and providing emotional support to her male mate. Diyanet long argued that women should not work outside of the house unless they were required, otherwise that would lead to their misery and masculinization; as well as the dissolution of family and degeneration of society. These arguments provided a scripture-based justification for women's segregation and perpetuated the gendered division between public and private spheres.

Even though Kemalism has its own patriarchal bias and promoted motherhood; it encouraged women to join workforce and assume important tasks in life. As it is stressed in previous chapters, the Diyanet was established to "secure" Turkish model of secularism and promote a religion that is compatible with the Republican ideals. No systematic data available to determine the nature of Diyanet's discourse regarding women rights and roles under the Kemalist regime. However, it can be suggested that from the late 1960s until 1990s, Diyanet promoted its own

conservative / patriarchal perspective that had clearly contradicted with its foundational role in secularism.

The 1990s signified a shift within Presidency's discourse regarding gender roles. This shift can be explained by the social transformation that had already been taking place in Turkey since the beginning of the 1980s. As it was discussed earlier in detail, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a new wave feminist movement in Turkey, which challenged the public-private dichotomy and demanded reforms aiming at women's liberation. The 1980s and 1990s were also marked by the revival of political Islam. Islamist women protested the headscarf ban at universities and some channeled their protests through joining Islamist parties. Despite their ideological differences, both secular and Islamist women rejected the restrictions imposed upon them by male leadership and struggled to redefine women's social roles (İlyasoğlu, 2000; Arat 2000a). As a result, these women challenged the stark division between "public man" and "private woman". Through contestation and later collaboration with the state, activist women enabled state elite to carry out a series of reforms and policies aiming at gender equality.

All these developments in politics were intervening factors that reshaped Presidency's discourse. In spite of the fact that the predominant conservative discourse that emphasized women's foremost duty as motherhood endured, a new discourse, which I called as "egalitarian / liberal discourse" started to crystallize. This new discourse was characterized by liberal tenets in the sense that it called for greater gender equality in domestic and public spheres. Egalitarian / liberal discourse was particularly embedded within the texts concerning female role models. The publications contained narrations of the wives of Prophet, as well as Republican

patriotic women in order to affirm that women were competent enough to assume any social roles.

Nevertheless, conservative / patriarchal discourse maintained its predominance in Diyanet's texts. This resulted in a bifurcation of the Presidency's texts from the 1990s onwards. Throughout AKP's period the Presidency has oscillated between the two discourses. For this reason, conflicting and contradictory messages have been conveyed in texts. On the one hand, Presidency has carried on propagating traditional gender roles and stereotypes that are detrimental to women's empowerment. In majority of the texts published in the monthly journal and in the book of *İlmihal*, the Diyanet assigned primacy to family and emphasized motherhood. This discourse has been upheld not only by male cadres but also internalized and promoted by female cadres. On the other hand, egalitarian/liberal discourse, which is based on more women-friendly interpretations of religious sources, has encouraged women to enter the public realm of men and benefit the opportunities offered by modernity. The articles that reflected egalitarian/liberal way of thinking have demanded a more balanced distribution of domestic duties and suggested that women were capable to perform all sorts of tasks.

Contradictory and inconsistent nature of messages has been in line with the AKP's new mode of patriarchy, which is formed by contradictory alliance of conservatism and neoliberalism (Coşar & Yeğenoğlu, 2011). As it is discussed in earlier chapters, this conservative-neoliberal contradictory alliance simultaneously encouraged women's participation in the now flexible labor market and asked women to stay at home. During its first term, to fulfill the EU membership criteria AKP leadership launched a set of reforms that would increase employment opportunities of women. Meantime, the Presidency of Religious Affairs under

Bardakoğlu leadership initiated a set of policies complementing AKP's reforms on gender equality; such as reciting sermons against domestic violence and honor killings, organization of joint campaigns with international organizations for woman's education, commencement of a hadith project, appointment of female vice-muftis,⁶⁷ etc. These in turn moderated Diyanet's discourse with respect to roles of women in life, and their participation in business life and public sphere.

However, the leaders of AKP have undermined the implementation of the reforms as they have promoted maternal roles for women and a gendered division of labor. This was particularly evident in the reiterated calls by Erdoğan to women to give birth to more children, as well as in the restrictive policies regarding abortion and cesarean birth. President Görmez's subsequent comments on abortion and cesarean delivery in 2012 provided a religious backing to the government's discourse. Through the publications, Diyanet implicitly encouraged women to have more children. These revealed to what extent the Presidency of Religious Affairs has been politicized during the AKP period.

As it is noted earlier in this chapter, in 2012 AKP officially announced its agenda about raising and expanding "religious generations". In line with this social engineering project, AKP leadership has emphasized the significance of mothers' role in population growth. AKP regarded women as essential agents for creation and perpetuation of a morally upright society. Because of their role in religious education, mothers could effectively contribute into the transmission of moral and religious values to the future. Qualitative textual study of Diyanet's publications throughout the AKP period found that, Diyanet has been used as an instrument for

⁶⁷ Please see Chapter 2 for details.

constructing of “the ideal Turkish - Muslim woman” which is an essential component of the AKP’s project of “building religious generations”. Several texts underlined women’s duty to bring up religious generations and claimed that mothers, who fulfill this duty properly, would be rewarded by Paradise.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Summary

This thesis has aimed to shed light on the transformation in the discourse of the Presidency of Religious Affairs concerning women. Deconstructing Diyanet's messages regarding women is crucial, as it is the highest official religious authority with a considerable capacity to shape religious values in Turkey. In a predominantly Muslim country where women still face major injustices in domestic and public spheres, norms promoted by the Diyanet do matter, as they provide religious legitimization of gender stereotypes and disparities.

Diyanet's discourse is a field where religious and political agendas are intertwined, as the Diyanet is a state institution operating under the supervision of the government holding political power. Dynamics between the state, society and religion in Turkey have always had implications for Diyanet's structure, budget, roles and functions. My study traced these implications in Diyanet's discourse by analyzing its publications. My goal from the outset was to reveal how Diyanet's discourse specifically on women and political context have been interrelated. As women are the focus of my study, I also examined the secular women's movement in Turkey as an influential social force that pushed the state to take important steps to address gender disparities. To determine the factors influencing Diyanet's discourse on women, I studied the relations between the state and women's organizations, as well as Turkey's bid to join the EU. In this dissertation, I mainly refer to the secular feminist movement, which has contributed to reshaping the state's agenda and hence had an impact on Diyanet's discourse on various aspects of gender equality.

Particularly in the late 1990s and early 2000s, secular feminist groups and institutions have greatly benefited from Turkey's EU membership process. Under pressure from feminist organizations and the EU, the Turkish government adopted significant reforms to improve gender equality. The more the Turkish state embraced norms associated with democracy and feminism, the more likely that the Diyanet's own discourse reflected these changes. My thesis studied the extent to which these dynamics between the Turkish state and feminist groups transformed religious values with respect to women.

In order to analyze Diyanet's writings on women-related issues, I benefited from the feminist literature on religion, from which I derived three major themes. Gender stereotypes emanating from creation stories, restrictions upon the female body and sexuality, and gendered division of labor in patriarchal interpretations of Islam were the most reiterated themes that have been problematized by feminist scholars. These themes have relevance for gender equality as they provide religious backing for discrimination against women in real life. Thus, I borrowed these themes to code Diyanet's writings on women's issues to showcase the nature of religious values transmitted by the institution. An eclectic qualitative textual analysis method, which combined the elements of Content Analysis and Discourse Analysis methods, was employed in the thesis.

The primary text under scrutiny is the periodical entitled *Diyanet*, which has been regularly published since 1968. It additionally examined PRA's most recent periodical *Diyanet Aile*, as well as the book of *İlmihal*, published by the Presidency. According the numbers obtained from the General Directorate of Religious Publications in the PRA's headquarters in Ankara, approximately one million copies of *Diyanet* are printed every year and distributed to religious personnel across

Turkey (E. Genç Yıldız, personal communication, December 28, 2009). Electronic copies of recent issues of the journals are also available, free of charge, to individual readers at Diyanet's official website (www.diyamet.gov.tr), which is visited by about 1.5 million internet users each month. My thesis reviewed the content of 835 issues printed from 1968 until 2014. Among the 16,492 articles published, 693 articles were found to be relevant to the scope of this research. To verify my findings, I also collected data from press releases and official announcements publicized through the Presidency's official website, and lastly examined interviews with Diyanet notables that gained coverage in mainstream newspapers.

The thesis covered an extended period of time starting from 1968 until the Presidential elections of 2014, which marked a milestone in Turkish politics. In order to deal with the large magnitude of data published over this extended period of time, I developed a hybrid coding method that combined Holistic and Longitudinal types of coding. I utilized three broad themes / categories that emerged from my reading of the Feminist critique of religion in order to classify and make a critical and comparative assessment of Diyanet's publications regarding women: "depictions of the woman in Islamic creation story", "control over the female body and sexuality", and "gendered division of roles". Each major category in my coding scheme corresponds to a different aspect of gender equality. The first category deals with equality between sexes in terms of creation, as negative depictions of Eve / Hawwa in the scriptural creation story provide the basis of many gender stereotypes. The second category corresponds to gender equality in terms of bodily rights and sexuality, while the third one corresponds to the equality of choosing roles in life without the limitations set by gender stereotypes.

To contextualize PRA's discourse regarding women-related subjects, this thesis started with a historical overview of the relations between the Turkish Republic and the PRA: The Diyanet was established in 1924 by the Kemalist elite, to control religion and hence protect Turkish *laiklik*. Therefore, its fundamental mission was to defend the Kemalist state against the perceived threat of religion. However, as a result of democratization and Islamization, norms and values that the politicians in power expect the Diyanet to defend have changed over time. Diyanet's function shifted from protecting secularism to promoting the respective political goals of the ruling parties.

After the transition to multi-party politics in 1946, there was a moderation of radical laicist policies and hence a remarkable degree of relaxation of control over religion. In order to catch the votes of the conservative electorate, political parties showed greater interest in Islam. The PRA was one of the pivotal themes of parliamentary discussions after the transition to multi-party politics. In this political milieu, Diyanet's organization, budget, personnel and functions expanded considerably through new legal regulations. The constitutional regulation in 1961 turned the Diyanet into an "ideological tool" of the political elite (Gözyayın, 2009). As political Islam became more integrated into the mainstream of Turkish politics in the 1970s, Diyanet received greater interest from politicians. This was evident in the official visits made by top ranked statesmen to the institution. In turn PRA's budget, personnel and departments grew dramatically. Politicians sought to instrumentalize the Diyanet for their political goals. To exemplify, when Erbakan's National Salvation party became a partner of the coalition government in 1974, he attempted to use the PRA as a means to promote his own party ideology.

The textual study of the PRA's publications found that throughout the late 1960s and the 1970s, patriarchal norms were promoted through the Islamic creation story. In the early 1970s, it was claimed that the first woman, Hawwa was created from "Adam's rib" for his peace and comfort. Though the Diyanet denied and harshly criticized the depictions of the first woman in the Jewish and Christian traditions as seductive, sinful and cursed; by emphasizing a chronological order in terms of creation, it endorsed a hierarchy between sexes and provided scriptural support for gender inequality. Even though PRA sought to present Islam as the "savior" of women, it underlined Adam's superiority in receiving God's messages and Hawwa's subordinate status.

Throughout this period, the Presidency of Religious Affairs preached the message that female sexuality was dangerous and threatening for social order, therefore it needed to be taken under control by restrictive regulations and certain dress codes. The female body was considered to be "polluted" due to her reproductive capability. Thus, she needed to be "cleansed" and "purified" before she performed any of her religious duties. Parallel to the rise of political Islam and spread of Islamists throughout the state cadres a consequence of coalition governments formed with Erbakan's MSP, the PRA placed an increasing emphasis on the covering as an Islamic mandate. After the MSP took control of the state ministry responsible for the Presidency of Religious Affairs, modest dressing and the headscarf were promoted as means to "protect" women from men, secure their "loyalty" to their husbands, and prevent so-called "fitna" from the society. In Diyanet's perspective, women were weak human beings with physical and psychological handicaps; therefore in need of protection by men. Ironically, women's sexuality was considered so irresistible and destructive for the social order

that it needed to be suppressed by covering. By the end of the decade, the rules of covering gradually became more explicit and stricter, and eventually necessitated “covering whole body except face and hands”. In several texts, women, who were not covered were regarded as “cursed” and hence condemned to “Hell”. The impact of the political environment was also evident in Diyanet’s declarations regarding abortion as a “sin”.

Throughout the 1970s, the PRA had been dominated by a patriarchal/conservative discourse that promoted gender stereotypes and gendered division of labor. Through its publications the Diyanet legitimized gender hierarchy and reinforced women’s inferior consumer position in the family. In Diyanet’s account, men were in charge of women and family, because of his superior qualities given by God. Whereas, women’s utmost duties were motherhood and wifeness. An ideal woman should always follow the “orders” of her husband, never challenge his authority or decline his sexual requests. Thus, Diyanet imposed a hierarchical marital relationship, in which men rule over women.

In Diyanet’s texts, gendered division of labor was justified by biased accounts of women’s nature and gender stereotypes. Women were stereotyped as weak, fragile, emotional and intellectually deficient. The Diyanet discouraged women from pursuing careers and participating in the labor force, since it assumed they were the underlying causes of social degeneration and the decline of the traditional family. Women were to stay at home and not work outside unless the family budget required them to do so. These arguments had provided a scripture-based justification for women’s segregation and consolidated the gendered divisions of public and private.

The 1980 coup constituted a new turning point with respect to the relations between the state and Islam, with significant consequences for the role and functions of the Diyanet. Leaders of the military coup considered Islam as a panacea to “dangerous” ideologies and as unifying cement for a fragmented and polarized society. Therefore, they promoted the so-called “Turkish-Islamic Synthesis”, fusing Turkish nationalism with Islamic identity. For the leaders of the coup, the PRA was an ideal instrument for dissemination of this Turkish-Islamic synthesis to society; and hence the production of a unified, harmonious state. During those years, there was a close relationship between the PRA and leaders of the coup. As a result of such political milieu, Diyanet bureaucracy expanded. There was a substantial increase in the number of mosques in the country. The number of imam-hatip schools and Koran courses increased rapidly. The Diyanet propagated Sunni Islam through the mosques all over the country, as well as the newly introduced compulsory lessons on religion. In line with the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, a new department within the Diyanet was established to combat Kurdish separatism. During those years, through a series of conferences and publications, the Diyanet disseminated the state’s official hostile standpoint towards Communism and the Kurdish nationalism. Since the 1980s, Diyanet has also been used by the Turkish state as a foreign policy instrument, through its representations abroad.

In the Turkish context, Islamism and feminism emerged simultaneously in the 1980s as significant social movements. The political vacuum emerged after the suppression of the left provided opportunities for both movements to mobilize and organize. The new feminist movement that emerged in the post-1980 Turkey was critical of the “state feminism” of the Republican period. Secular feminists argued that Kemalist reforms provided emancipation in the public field, but did not actually

liberate Turkish women. New generation of secular feminists articulated sexual freedoms, demanded government action to address domestic violence, and called for reform of the civil and penal codes. As a domestic pressure group, they also played a significant role in Turkey's ratification of the CEDAW in 1985, even though it was not implemented for years.

The 1990s witnessed institutionalization and diversification of the feminist movement. Attempts to organize and build institutions against domestic violence were a central platform of feminist activism. Moreover, during this decade feminists built a more cooperative relationship with the Turkish state. As the dialogue between secular feminists and the state increased, so did feminists' involvement in public policy making. Islamist feminists, on the other hand, challenged the limits of the secular Turkish state by demanding an end to the headscarf ban. The discourses of the secular and Islamist feminists intersected in the sense that they both protested objectification of the female body and emphasized gender equality in different aspects. As a result of the strengthening of the women's movement, women's issues became a visible aspect of the campaigns and party programs of all major parties, including the religious Welfare Party.

Throughout the 1990s, Diyanet's staff membership continued to grow. New cadres were added to the institution's provincial organization. The institution's annual budget grew to the extent that it became larger than those of many state ministries. Political and economic liberalization in the post-1980 period and the rise of an Islamic bourgeoisie brought about the electoral success of political Islam. The Welfare Party's anti-secular discourse and policies led to the party's closure and so-called "28 February process", which had noteworthy consequences on the Presidency of Religious Affairs. Shortly after the post-modern coup, all the mosques around

Turkey that had been built by individuals were officially attached to the PRA and put under its control. An ex-colonel was appointed as the chief advisor to the President of the Diyanet. Moreover, the Diyanet centralized the writing of Friday sermons, the content of which the ex-colonel took an active role.

The analysis of the texts published during the late 1980s and 1990s validated the effect of the political context on Diyanet's discourse regarding women. It can be noted that, particularly from the 1990s onwards, the Diyanet reconstructed its narration of the creation and shifted to a relatively more gender-sensitive discourse. It abandoned its former narrative that Eve was made from Adam's rib and criticized gender stereotypes emanating from Biblical presentations of Hawwa. As human rights and women's rights became more eminent in the Turkish political agenda of the late 1990s, the Diyanet started to discuss the scriptural story on creation within the context of human rights and emphasized the equality of sexes on the basis of creation. By introducing ambiguous terms and using careful wording, it avoided ascribing gender to the first human and specifying the order of creation.

However, from the 1980s until the late 1990s, the PRA maintained its orthodox approach with respect to female body and sexuality. Female sexuality was still deemed dangerous for social order; hence the control aspect was evident in Diyanet's texts when it came to discussing dress codes for women. Diyanet's phobic attitude towards female sexuality was exemplified with insulting quotes, in which women were likened to animals; such as pigs, crows, donkeys, etc. To preserve "social order" Diyanet sought to regulate women's looks and dictate certain dress codes for women. In Diyanet's perspective, the ideal dress code for women was neither too feminine nor too masculine, as the former was provoking for men and the latter was incompatible with "creational differences" between sexes. During the

1980s women's chastity and honor were emphasized to a greater extent as requirements for ensuring peace and order. The electoral successes of the Welfare Party in the 1990s reshaped Diyanet's discourse on the headscarf issue. The study of Diyanet's texts during this decade illustrated the extent to which Diyanet had been politicized in the matter of the headscarf ban. During the years when the headscarf controversy deeply polarized society and prompted protests by headscarved university students, the PRA overtly sided with covered women and fiercely criticized secular elite for making secularism and Kemalism "taboos" and undermining the state by causing social resentment. As well as stressing the headscarf as "God's order", the Diyanet presented it as a fundamental human right. In sharp contrast, in the aftermath of the 1997 postmodern coup, the PRA opted for conformity with the ideology of the secular establishment on the headscarf issue and refrained from getting involved..

In general, the Diyanet had a hostile standpoint against secular feminism, which sought to expand women's sexual freedoms in the 1980s and 1990s. The feminist movement was perceived as a major threat against social morality as well as the traditional family structure. However, Diyanet officials were attracted to feminism's challenges to the objectification of women, and the commoditization of the female body and sexuality.

Until the end of the 1990s the monopoly of conservative discourse with respect to gender roles had endured. The PRA reproduced old gender stereotypes and generalizations about gender roles. The texts published at the beginning of the 1990s reaffirmed wifhood and motherhood as the most significant tasks for women. In Diyanet's perspective men were born as breadwinners and leaders of the nation, whereas women were born to raise men's offspring. However, effects of the Turkish-

Islamic synthesis and the Islamization process were evident in Diyanet's new conception of motherhood. Several texts published during this period underlined the necessity of expanding "religious youth/generations", which was deemed as "insurance" of the societal peace, as well as mothers' key role in this process. Thus, through the Diyanet, ruling cadres emphasized and called on women to raise not only "patriotic and self-sacrificing citizens" for the nation; but also "religious generations" for the Muslim community. Moreover, a good mother, who performed this new duty well, would be rewarded by Paradise. A woman's education was regarded as essential to the extent that it served her key role in raising the next generations.

By the end of 1990s, as the state's dialogue with secular feminist organizations increased, Diyanet's approach toward traditional gender roles began to shift. Despite the predominant discourse that had emphasized a woman's highest duty as motherhood endured, a more egalitarian and woman-friendly discourse that called for more female visibility and activism in the public sphere started to crystallize. This new egalitarian discourse was mostly submerged in the texts referring to the Islamic and Republican female role models. Personal traits, courage and activism represented by these role models challenged the traditional gender roles and gendered division of public and private that had been hitherto endorsed.

During the early 2000s, one of the foremost issues on the Turkish government's political agenda was Turkey's relations with the European Union. In the Helsinki Summit that took place in 1999 Turkey was granted a formal candidate status, which required a set of legal and institutional reforms to meet the Copenhagen criteria for full-membership. The pursuit of EU membership provided a strong incentive for the government to take major steps to improve fundamental human

rights. During this process, the women's movement accumulated substantial leverage in bargaining with governmental authorities. The government felt the necessity to respond to the demands of secular women's NGOs to increase its international legitimacy and reputation. Thus, during this process the dialogue between the state and the feminist movement was mutually beneficial to both parties.

It is in this political context that the Diyanet was tasked with a new goal of "contributing into the EU harmonization process". As a result, the early 2000s witnessed an egalitarian tilt in the Diyanet's actions and declarations. For instance, for the first time in the PRA's history, a female member was appointed to the Higher Council of Religious Affairs. Several projects were initiated to address fundamental women's problems, such as domestic violence and honour killings. Family bureaus were opened to provide consultation for women on these matters. Women were encouraged to attend mosques and perform prayers with men.

During its first term, the AKP adopted a careful and pragmatic policy. It liberally engaged in dialogue with the women's movement and carried out a crucial set of reforms aimed at legal gender equality in the pursuit of EU membership such as the amendment of Penal Code, the new Labour Law and the Law on Social Security. Additionally, the party initiated a campaign against gender-based violence and took some important steps toward the elimination of violence against women. However AKP's persistent conservative approach was evident in a failed attempt to criminalize adultery as well as Erdoğan's negative discourse regarding women's employment outside the house. The party increased its sexist and Islamist tone in its second term. As Arat (2009) noted unlike the first term, the second term did not provide opportunities for women. Instead, the party's second term of the government was shaped by its efforts to lift of the headscarf ban in public offices.

The dialogue between women's NGOs and the AKP government during the first period, as well as the favorable political context due to the EU harmonization process, facilitated major change in Diyanet's activities and discourse with respect to women-related issues. The personal approach of the Diyanet's then-President, Bardakoğlu was also a crucial factor contributing to the Diyanet's transformation. During the 2000s, under President Bardakoğlu, the number of female personnel, particularly preachers dramatically increased. In 2005-2006, for the first time in Diyanet's history, female vice-muftis were appointed in several major cities. Women's inclusion into Diyanet's predominantly male ranks as preachers and vice muftis signified a major transformation in its hitherto standpoint. In cooperation with international organizations, the Presidency undertook a series of projects and campaigns to address domestic violence. A hadith project was launched to eliminate misogynistic and inauthentic hadiths. Gender equality and women's rights began to be articulated in the sermons as well as the statements of Diyanet notables. The ethnic twist in gender-sensitive sermons recited in the southeast region (Tütüncü, 2010, p. 595) exemplified how the Diyanet was instrumentalized for political ends. Moreover, Diyanet offered scholarship programs to girls for their education. Thus, the Diyanet has been highly involved in AKP's "women initiative". This, in fact, reveals how the institution has been used as an instrument for social engineering by the government.

Turkey's 2010 constitutional referendum on judicial reform was a turning point in the AKP's growing authoritarianism. Constitutional amendments following the referendum expanded AKP's control over the Turkish judiciary. AKP's control over the judiciary facilitated the arrest and repression of its political rivals and opponents at all levels. Centralization and authoritarianism of the party heightened

when Erdoğan became the president after the first-ever direct elections in 2014, which granted him new powers and brought the country closer to one-man rule. The Gezi Park protests, corruption probes, and the AKP's broken alliance with the Gülen movement all brought about a further crackdown on various opposition groups and hence accelerated violations of freedoms.

Since the 2010s, the AKP government has been drifting toward conservative authoritarianism. The government openly announced its social engineering project of "raising religious generations", where women were to play a key role. It replaced the "Ministry for Women and Family" with "Ministry of Family and Social Policies", which symbolized a reduced emphasis on women's rights. While women's empowerment has been one of the recurrent themes in the party's discourse, it is located within the context of family, which is a corollary of conservatism. The family is the primary unit within which women's rights are considered.

For the leaders of AKP, women play a key role in the creation and continuation of a morally upright society due to their capacity as mothers, and will raise generations with high moral values, and hence contribute to the transmission of moral values to the future. Thus, AKP leaders, particularly Erdoğan, promoted maternal roles for women and pursued pronatalist policies. AKP's conservative mindset based on patriarchal interpretations of religious sources led to a growing interference into issues of women's bodies and sexuality through a set of new regulations such as restrictions on abortion and caesarean birth. The misogynistic statements made by party leaders hindered implementation of the legal reforms addressing gender empowerment and provoked feminists' reactions. The party's reluctance regarding gender quota was another major source of dispute with the feminist groups. Even though the AKP abolished the headscarf ban at universities as

well as public offices, it applied double standards in regards to addressing other women's rights demands vocalized by secular feminist groups.

As Coşar and Yeğenoğlu (2011) suggest, the AKP period in Turkey overall represents a new mode of neoliberal-conservative patriarchy, which manifests itself in the contradictions between the liberal tenets in the party program and party leaders' conservative approach in addressing women's issues. In spite of the women-friendly party program, through public statements, the leaders of the AKP have promoted patriarchal norms, the segregation of sexes, and control over women's bodies. AKP's neoliberal patriarchy simultaneously encouraged women's participation in the now flexible labor market and promoted maternal roles for women. Even though, the party launched a set of important reforms aimed at women's empowerment and legal gender equality, female inactivity in the labor market has been the norm during AKP's rule due to their limited enforcement and careless implementation. In the absence of initiatives to change the existing gender roles, where women are still expected to assume traditional domestic roles, new regulations in the economic sphere ended up discriminating against women and pushing them further out of the labor market. Under AKP's contradictory type of patriarchy, like pendulum, Diyanet's discourse regarding gender roles has swung back and forth between egalitarianism and patriarchy.

During the AKP era, the total number of articles published in *Diyanet* monthly concerning women's issues dramatically increased. The total number of such articles during the AKP period is by far the largest throughout the entire study period. Compared to previous political period, the number of articles concerning women published by the Diyanet increased by 164 percent during the AKP period (See Figure A3). This increase can be explained by the increase in the size of female

personnel since 2005 onwards. As more women joined Diyanet's ranks, topics concerning women gained greater coverage in its publications. The increase in number of female personnel can also be regarded as a consequence of Diyanet's involvement in AKP's "social engineering project". Shaping women according to their own terms has been crucial for the party leaders to fulfill their desired political transformation. As women assumed pivotal roles in AKP's project of transforming society, the coverage of women-related topics expanded in Diyanet's publications.

Qualitative analysis of Diyanet's texts under the AKP's supervision manifested that there has been no major change in Diyanet's discourse regarding creation category, except for several nuances. However, one noteworthy novelty found in this category is the use of the scriptural creation story for endorsing modest clothing and the headscarf. The overemphasis on women's reproductive roles through the story of the Fall also appears to be in synchrony with AKP's pronatal policies.

Diyanet's growing emphasis on the headscarf as an Islamic dictate throughout AKP's term contrasted with the discourse under previous leadership. While former President of the PRA Yılmaz opposed the idea that the headscarf was an Islamic dictate, his successor Bardakoğlu argued just the opposite. Following Bardakoğlu's dubious resignation in 2010, under Görmez's presidency, the discourse of Diyanet became highly reflective of the political agenda of the government. Diyanet has particularly been politicized regarding the headscarf ban and abortion. Timing of the announcement on abortion, targeting "My body, my decision" campaign clearly manifested how Diyanet has become the most trusted ally of AKP's conservative patriarchy. Under the AKP, Diyanet's attempts to control women's bodies and sexuality grew. In line with AKP's attempts to criminalize

adultery, Diyanet emphasized adultery as a grave sin that required severe punishments in Islamic law and urged women not to be alone with men as that might lead to adultery. Other provocative declarations in *İlmihal*, such as Islam forbids women to use perfume and use makeup, or that they should ask their husbands' permission even for plucking their eyebrows, overlapped with misogynistic language of AKP politicians. Patriarchy and misogyny in Diyanet's discourse were by no means invented by the AKP, but under the AKP they have been articulated more explicitly than ever before.

Even though conservative/patriarchal discourse has remained dominant and become increasingly pervasive throughout the AKP's period; the liberal/egalitarian discourse, which became apparent at the end of the 1990s, also gained greater visibility. With the favorable political environment during the early 2000s and of the increase in female personnel, there has been a considerable shift in Diyanet's approach with respect to gender roles. This new discourse has criticized traditional gender roles, problematized male oppression and demanded greater gender equality both within both the domestic and public spheres. As a result, PRA's discourse regarding gender roles has oscillated between conservatism/sexism and liberalism/egalitarianism throughout AKP's term. The inconsistent and contradictory nature of Diyanet's discourse overlaps with AKP's new mode of patriarchy, and it has been particularly evident in the conflicting ways that Koranic female role models are presented.

As the textual analysis of PRA's publications illustrates, during the AKP era Diyanet has shown substantial support for women's participation in the workforce and in public life. In this regard, Diyanet's first official pronouncement in 2003 recognizing women's religious right to participate in work life clearly constituted a

revolutionary shift in Diyanet's discourse. In line with AKP's women initiative, religious norms that would enable opportunities for women's education and employment outside the house have been promoted in texts to a greater extent. On the other hand, there has been an ideological overlap between the Diyanet and AKP in several regards, which enabled the institution to hold onto its old patriarchal discourse. Parallel to AKP's pronatalist policies, Diyanet promoted maternal roles for women and hence perpetuated the traditional division of labor. A new conception of motherhood that serves AKP's pursuit of boosting "religious generations" has been imposed through the Diyanet. PRA's hostile stance toward feminism also overlapped with that of the AKP, as both perceived feminism as a major threat to the traditional family structure. Despite the recent egalitarian tone that calls for a more balanced distribution of roles in family and public life between sexes, when it comes to women's bodily rights and sexual freedoms the ideological alliance between the Diyanet and the AKP poses a serious threat to the prospects of women's liberation in Turkey.

7.2 Conclusions

In a nutshell, this thesis aimed to shed light on the complex relations between state, religion and women in Turkey, by focusing on the Diyanet's discourse regarding women. To fulfill this goal, it made a critical and comparative examination of PRA's publications between 1968 and 2014 from feminist perspective. Proceeding from historical overview of state-religion relations in Turkey, it demonstrated that the Diyanet's fundamental roles and duties have changed over time, as a result of multi-party politics, democratization and Islamization. Diyanet was initially founded by the Republican elite to control religion and hence secure Turkish secularism. Even

though the Diyanet was set up as an ideological tool serving the secular state; the ideology of those who hold political power has changed as a result of the democratization process. Shifting balances of power between “the secular center” and “religious periphery” in Turkey, led to the gradual expansion of Diyanet’s structure, size, budget, and the scope of its activities. Changing needs and ideologies of the governments in shifting political contexts have also had implications for Diyanet’s discourse concerning matters related to women. The core argument of the thesis is that Diyanet’s discourse on women has been predominantly patriarchal, yet it has transformed over time in accordance with sociopolitical context.

It should be emphasized, throughout the study period, the articles published in Diyanet’s periodicals concerning women constitute only about 4 percent of the entire population of articles. Although the number of articles written on women-related matters has recently increased, women still reserve a small space in Diyanet’s publications. Lack of interest in this regard is an indication of the patriarchal perspective dominating the institution over years.

Another noteworthy observation is that the volume of articles within each category does not have equal weight. The Diyanet produced the fewest texts on the creation story, while the texts pertaining to gender roles outnumbered those within the two other categories. This indicates that Diyanet places the greatest emphasis on the roles between sexes. Moreover, the number of articles associated with this category has tended to increase in recent years.

The Diyanet has been dominated by a patriarchal and conservative discourse throughout the entire study period and hence it has been mostly able to preserve its autonomy in promoting its own interpretation of religion on women-related issues. This clearly contradicted its foundational role in Turkish secularism. When the

Kemalist elite founded the Diyanet, they tasked the institution to disseminate a modern form of religion that overlapped with the Republican ideology. Despite its own patriarchal bias and emphasis on maternal roles, state feminism of the Republican era encouraged women to attend universities, pursue careers in the most challenging professions and assume new roles in society. Paradoxically, until the 1990s, the highest official religious authority in Turkey had been able to hold onto to its own patriarchal discourse, which discouraged women from education, pursuing careers, and assuming any tasks that might conflict with their role as mothers. From the late 1960s until the 1990s, the Diyanet was to disseminate sexist religious values independent of governments, in a context where the feminist movement had not yet accumulated sufficient power to challenge those values.

My study found that there have been two critical turning points that challenged this autonomy and reshaped Diyanet's discourse: First, from the 1990s onwards there was a considerable moderation within Diyanet's interpretation of Islam. Towards the end of the decade, Diyanet adopted a nuanced yet more gender-sensitive interpretation of the scriptural story on creation and emphasized gender equality in terms of creation. The most salient change is observed within the category associated with gender roles. Diyanet officials, who had hitherto promoted wifehood and maternal roles as the sole duties of women, started to encourage them to join the workforce and assume important roles in public life.

Moderation in Diyanet's discourse cannot be solely explained by the changing preferences of political parties. Instead, the thesis traced the factors behind this change in the broader sociopolitical climate, basically because political actors respond to the dynamics that surround them when determining their goals and agendas. The 1990s witnessed a strengthening of the women's movement, which

gained more leverage due to EU harmonization process. Despite its hostile stance toward feminism, Diyanet was indirectly transformed by the shifting relations between the state and secular women's organizations. Increased women's activism drew the state's attention to major problems related to women and pushed the state to implement reforms to address gender equality. The Diyanet was one of the institutions called upon by the state to involve in this process. Instrumentalization of the Diyanet by the Turkish state in the campaigns on elimination of violence against women and schooling of girls gradually altered the nature of the religious values regarding women-related issues. The impact of the dynamics between the state and the secular feminist movement on Diyanet's agenda was observable not only in increasing coverage of women-related issues in texts, but also in occasional references to feminist terms, such as "commodification of female body".

A more women-friendly mode of thinking infiltrated to Diyanet as a result of hiring more female personnel. Even though those women may not refer to themselves as "feminists" they challenged the monopoly of masculinist interpretations of Islam that hitherto dominated Diyanet's texts. Therefore, Diyanet's discourse was transformed to the extent that the women's movement and the EU harmonization process shaped Turkish sociopolitical context and hence transformed the state during the 1990s. The more the state absorbed values associated with feminism and western democracy, the more the Presidency gained awareness on women-related matters and promoted women-friendly religious norms. Nevertheless, Diyanet's old patriarchal discourse managed to co-exist with its new moderate and women-friendly discourse.

The AKP era constitutes the second critical turning point in Diyanet's discourse. In line with AKP's new mode of neoliberal-conservative patriarchy,

Diyanet preached inconsistent and contradictory messages, which exacerbated the bifurcation of Diyanet's discourse. During AKP's first term Diyanet undertook a series of women-friendly initiatives that complemented party's pursuit of EU membership. It made a substantial effort to eliminate major women's problems in Turkey, such as domestic violence and under-education. Meanwhile, the number of female personnel in its ranks increased dramatically. The total number of articles published concerning women-related issues also increased significantly. These indicated how Diyanet's scope and areas of activity have expanded in recent years. However, since 2010, as the government drifted toward authoritarianism, Diyanet's politicization has peaked, as it became a mouthpiece of party leaders on the most controversial matters that polarized society, such as the Gezi demonstrations and the government's restrictions on social media. Under the AKP period, Diyanet's primary role shifted to "expanding the realm of religion" and, parallel to this role, it provided a religious backing to the AKP's policies and ideological preferences regarding women.

Among the three categories examined, "body and sexuality" is the most resistant to change over time and Diyanet's discourse in this regard has been characterized by continuity. On many occasions, the Diyanet emphasized that the female body was polluted due to the reproductive capabilities of woman, and hence Islam forbade her from performing certain religious practice.

Throughout the entire study period, Diyanet persistently sought to control women's bodies and promoted modest clothing, as female sexuality is perceived as a major threat leading to so-called "fitna" and is responsible for a wide variety of social problems. However, with the rise of political Islam and the top-down Islamization process in the 1980s, rules of covering were more clearly defined.

Under the influence of Islamist parties, Diyanet has promoted the headscarf as an Islamic order and fiercely criticized the headscarf ban. Diyanet's politicization in the headscarf controversy and opposition to secularist policies during the 1990s were clearly at odds with its *raison d'être*; protecting the Kemalist state against the encroachment of religion. In contrast, within the post-28 February political environment, it avoided making any statements regarding the headscarf issue.

Under the AKP authority, however, PRA's attempts to regulate the female body and sexuality radically grew and reached a point where women were even advised not to wear make-up, use perfume, talk to strangers, etc. Increasingly oppressive about women's looks and sexuality, such discourse provides a religious justification for gender segregation. The Presidency also provided religious support for AKP's policies concerning adultery and abortion. Diyanet's radical instrumentalization has been most evident in the official statements of Diyanet's presidents copying Erdoğan's viewpoint in matters such as abortion, caesarean childbirth, and the dispute with feminists over women's sexual freedoms, as well as the ban on headscarf. Under the AKP supervision, the headscarf has been explicitly expressed as an Islamic dictate by the highest echelon of the PRA, even though it is still a controversial topic among Islamic scholars. *İlmihal*, published in the AKP period, contained several insulting hadiths, in which uncovered women were likened to animals. Headscarf has been increasingly promoted through the photos displayed in Diyanet's periodicals, where a certain image is dictated as a new role model for Turkish women.

Despite the fact that Diyanet has always promoted maternal roles for women and claimed that, due to the biological differences, their ultimate duty in life is motherhood there have been changes in the ways it constructed the "idealized

prototype". Parallel to sociopolitical context, during the 1980s and 1990s, Diyanet presented motherhood as "a patriotic and religious" duty and emphasized the mothers' role in preserving the nation and societal peace. Whereas, with AKP's new project of "raising religious generations", there has been greater emphasis on mothers' role in building moral and religious societies. Thus, a new understanding of motherhood has been promoted in line with the party's pronatalist policies and plans to boost Turkey's religious population.

This thesis illustrated how diverse political actors in Turkey have instrumentalized the PRA to legitimize their policy agendas and transform society in accordance with their respective ideologies through the religion-based authority of the institution. As a result of the attention it received by politicians, Diyanet's size, budget, roles and functions continued to grow over the years. Moreover, this thesis found that Diyanet's discourse on women remained predominantly conservative. Despite various governments with different ideological orientations, in the absence of powerful feminist pressure it was able to preserve its own patriarchal interpretation of religious doctrines. The Diyanet mostly reproduced traditional gender roles and women's inferior status, and sought to control female sexuality. Modest clothing has persistently been promoted except over short periods, such as following the February 28 postmodern coup. However, this does not mean that Diyanet's discourse on women has been static throughout time. Particularly after the 1990s it became more complex. Changing dynamics between the state and the feminist movement, as well as Turkey's pursuit of EU membership transformed state interests, which in turn shaped Diyanet's agenda and discourse. As a result of the winds of social and political change, Diyanet's discourse on women-related matters became relatively moderate starting from the late 1990s. Under reform-oriented political supervision,

Diyanet revised its traditional masculinist perspective and opted for a more gender-sensitive interpretation of Islamic sources.

However, during the last decade, the Diyanet has been reshaped to reflect and promote AKP's ideological goals, some of which overlapped with those of the PRA. Women stood at the intersection of some of the most common ground between the PRA and AKP, particularly when it comes to conserving the traditional family and raising pious generations. Conflicts of opinion between the leadership of the PRA and the AKP on controversial matters, such as the headscarf as an Islamic requirement, have been overcome by the AKP's purge of Diyanet presidents, who refused to echo Erdoğan's statements. As the party tilted more toward authoritarianism, similar to other institutions of the state, the PRA lost its autonomy in its pronouncements and discourse became indistinguishable from that of the AKP. With an expanded scope of activities preaching the government's neoliberal-conservative understanding of gender relations the Diyanet has recently turned it into a powerful and the most trusted-ally of the AKP's new mode of conservative patriarchy. The ideological alliance between the AKP and the Diyanet complicates religious discourse on women and impedes the progress that has been made toward a more egalitarian interpretation of religious doctrines.

The story of the Diyanet in Turkey is a fascinating case highlighting how politics and religious discourse regarding women are interrelated and intertwined. The transformation of religious discourse has been possible under the Turkish model of secularism, where the state has the power to control religion via the authority of the Diyanet. The shifting goals and interests of the state in certain political and social settings can play a significant role in reshaping religious norms that determine opportunities available to women. In the face of changing political circumstances

that are conducive to liberal democracy, core doctrines in a religion may be subject to change favorably for women in a way that challenge old gender stereotypes and the traditional division of labor. The social transformation that has been taking place in Turkey since the 1980s, particularly the pressure of secular women's groups as well as the Turkish governments' aspiration to gain international credibility transformed the state's goals and interests, which in turn gave the impetus to the Diyanet to moderate its former patriarchal discourse and attitudes regarding women. In contrast, within a political setting dominated by a patriarchal and conservative ideology, religious norms are more likely to be restraining for women. Alliance between conservative-minded political and religious elite, which has been the case in Turkey during the last decade, is critically detrimental to women's empowerment as patriarchal interpretations of religion can be widely transmitted with the support of state.

My thesis illustrated the state's critical role in regulating religious discourse that restrain women's rights and freedoms. It also illustrated that domestic pressure of women's groups, as well as the pressure of international organizations are important to transform the nature of religious norms pervasive in society, particularly when there is little incentive on the side of male political and religious elite.

Future research may cover a more quantifiable study of Diyanet's publications. By utilizing a software program, a quantitative assessment of Diyanet's texts can be done to provide the exact number of articles with respect to each category. It would also be interesting to know and compare the volume of articles representing patriarchal/conservative and egalitarian/liberal perspective. The categories used in this thesis to deconstruct and code Diyanet's texts were derived from the feminist literature on religion. Future study may additionally investigate the

most reiterated themes emerging from the Diyanet's texts independent of the literature.

APPENDIX A

QUANTITATIVE REFLECTIONS ON ARTICLES REGARDING WOMEN IN DİYANET'S PERIODICALS

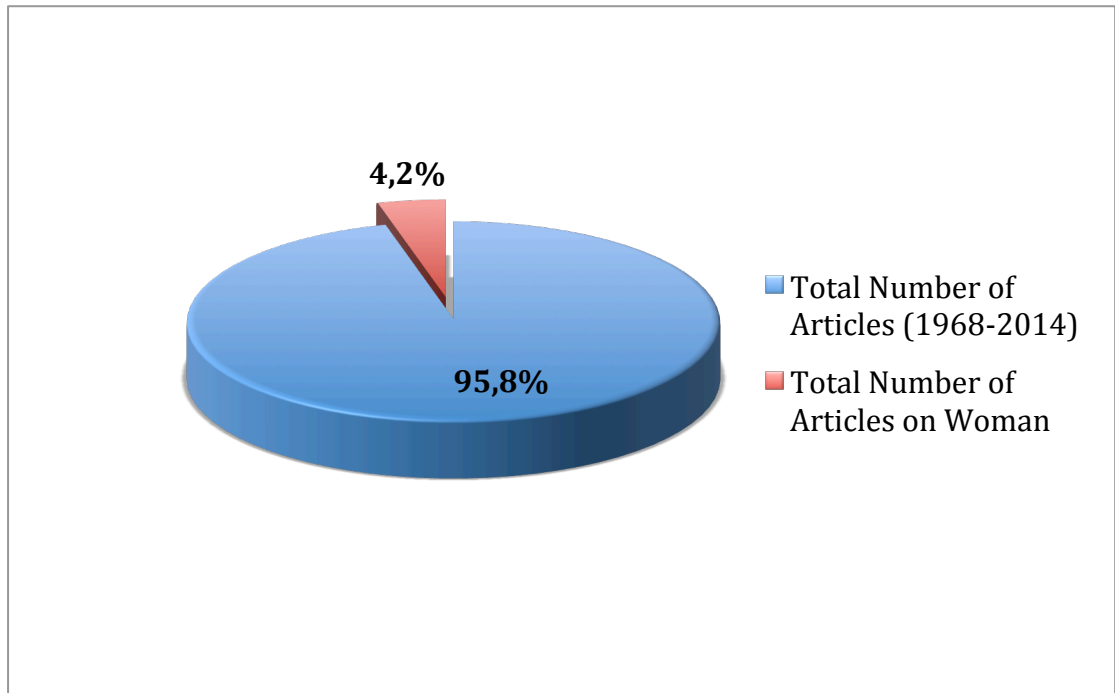
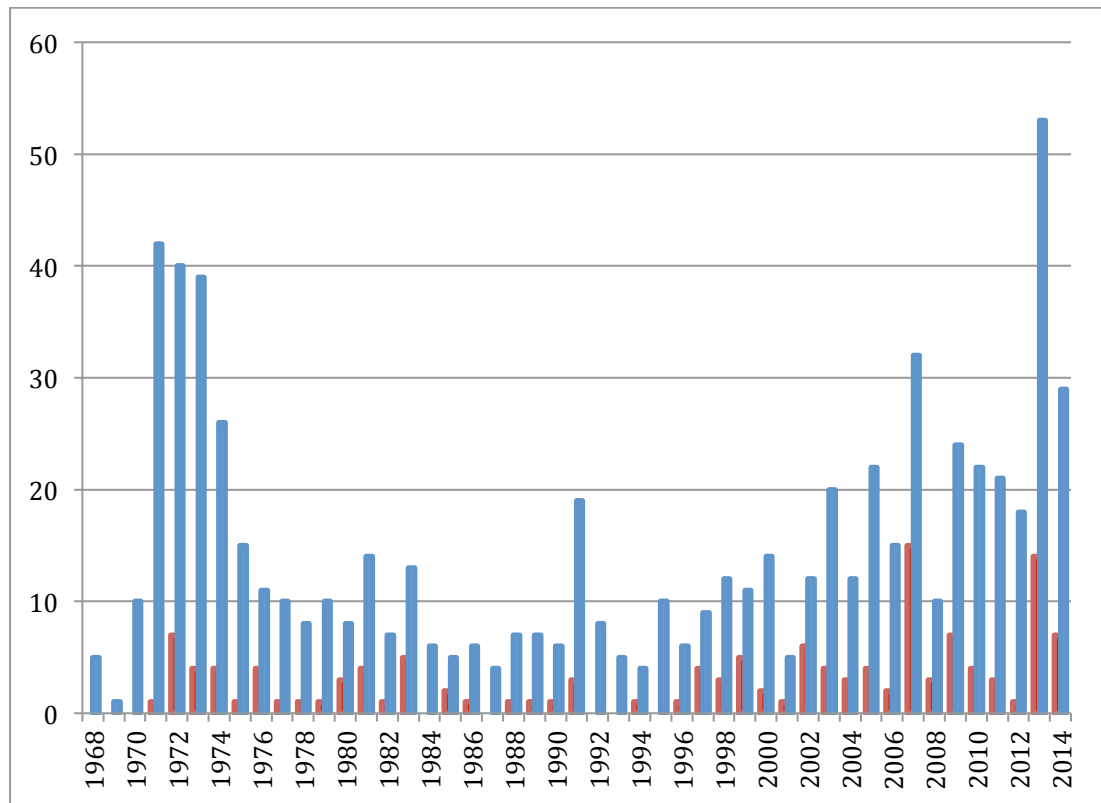


Figure A 1 Percentage of articles regarding women in Diyanet's periodicals (1968-2014)



- Total number of articles with titles containing the word “woman” and its synonyms
- Total number of articles with and without “woman” and its synonyms in their title but referring to women-related matters

Figure A 2 Annual number of articles on women in Diyanet’s periodicals (1968-2014)

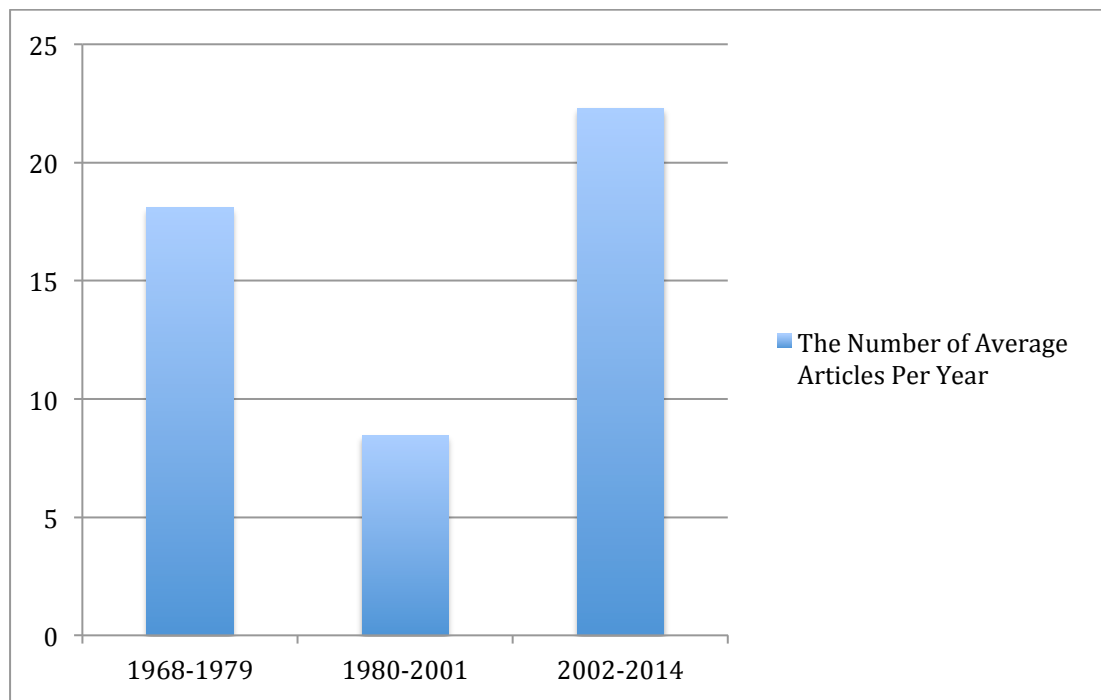


Figure A 3 Average number of articles on women per year published by the Diyanet in each political period

APPENDIX B

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PRESIDENTS
OF THE PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

#	Name	Start of the term	End of the term
1	Mehmet Rifat Börekçi	1 April 1924	5 March 1941
2	Mehmed Şerafeddin Yaltkaya	14 January 1942	23 April 1947
3	Ahmet Hamdi Akseki	29 April 1947	9 January 1951
4	Eyüp Sabri Hayırlıoğlu	17 April 1951	10 June 1960
5	Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen	30 June 1960	6 April 1961
6	Hasan Hüsnü Erdem	6 April 1961	13 October 1964
7	Mehmet Tevfik Gerçeker	15 October 1964	16 December 1965
8	İbrahim Bedreddin Elmalılı	17 December 1965	25 October 1966
9	Ali Rıza Hakses	25 October 1966	15 January 1968
10	Lütfi Doğan	15 January 1968	25 August 1972
11	Lütfi Doğan	26 August 1972	26 July 1976

12	Süleyman Ateş	28 July 1976	7 February 1978
13	Tayyar Altıkulaç	9 February 1978	10 November 1986
14	Mustafa Sait Yazıcıoğlu	17 June 1987	2 January 1992
15	Mehmet Nuri Yılmaz	3 January 1992	13 March 2003
16	Ali Bardakoğlu	28 March 2003	11 November 2010
17	Mehmet Görmez	11 November 2010	1 August 2017

Diyanet İşleri Başkanları. Retrieved September 5, 2017, from <https://www.diyamet.gov.tr/tr-TR/Kisi/Baskanlar//3/diyamet-isleri-baskanlari>

APPENDIX C

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF TURKISH GOVERNMENTS

No.	Prime Minister	Term of office	Party / Parties
1	İsmet İnönü	1 November 1923 – 6 March 1924	Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası / Republican People's Party
2	İsmet İnönü	6 March 1924 – 22 November 1924	Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası / Republican People's Party
3	Ali Fethi Okyar	22 November 1924 – 3 March 1925	Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası / Republican People's Party
4	İsmet İnönü	4 March 1925 – 1 November 1927	Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası / Republican People's Party
5	İsmet İnönü	1 November 1927 – 27 September 1930	Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası / Republican People's Party
6	İsmet İnönü	27 September 1930 – 4 May 1931	Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası / Republican People's Party
7	İsmet İnönü	4 May 1931 – 1 March 1935	Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası / Republican People's Party
8	İsmet İnönü	1 March 1935 – 25 October 1937	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / Republican People's Party
9	Celâl Bayar	25 October 1937 – 11 November 1938	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / Republican People's Party

No.	Prime Minister	Term of office	Party / Parties
10	Celâl Bayar	11 November 1938 – 25 January 1939	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / Republican People's Party
11	Refik Saydam	25 January 1939 – 3 April 1939	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi/ Republican People's Party
12	Refik Saydam	3 April 1939 – 8 July 1942	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi/ Republican People's Party
13	Şükrü Saracoğlu	9 July 1942 – 9 March 1943	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi/ Republican People's Party
14	Şükrü Saracoğlu	9 March 1943 – 7 August 1946	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi/ Republican People's Party
15	Recep Peker	7 August 1946 – 10 September 1947	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi/ Republican People's Party
16	Hasan Saka	10 September 1947 – 8 June 1948	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi/ Republican People's Party
17	Hasan Saka	9 June 1948 – 16 January 1949	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi/ Republican People's Party
18	Şemsettin Günaltay	16 January 1949 – 22 May 1950	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi/ Republican People's Party
19	Adnan Menderes	22 May 1950 – 9 March 1951	Demokrat Parti /Democrat Party
20	Adnan Menderes	9 March 1951 – 17 May 1954	Demokrat Parti / Democrat Party

No.	Prime Minister	Term of office	Party / Parties
21	Adnan Menderes	17 May 1954 – 9 December 1955	Demokrat Parti / Democrat Party
22	Adnan Menderes	9 December 1955 – 25 November 1957	Demokrat Parti / Democrat Party
23	Adnan Menderes	25 November 1957 – 27 May 1960	Demokrat Parti / Democrat Party
24	Cemal Gürsel	27 May 1960 – 5 January 1961	Military Junta
25	Cemal Gürsel	5 January 1961 – 27 October 1961	Military Junta
26	İsmet İnönü	20 November 1961 – 25 June 1962	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / Republican People's Party
			Adalet Partisi / Justice Party
27	İsmet İnönü	25 June 1962 – 25 December 1963	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / Republican People's Party
			Yeni Türkiye Partisi / New Turkey Party
			Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi / Republican Peasants' Nation Party
28	İsmet İnönü	25 December 1963 – 20 February 1965	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / Republican People's Party

No.	Prime Minister	Term of office	Party / Parties
			Independents
29	Suat Hayri Ürgüplü	20 February 1965 – 27 October 1965	Adalet Partisi / Justice Party
			Yeni Türkiye Partisi / New Turkey Party
			Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi / Republican Peasants' Nation Party
			Millet Partisi / Nation Party
30	Süleyman Demirel	27 October 1965 – 3 November 1969	Adalet Partisi / Justice Party
31	Süleyman Demirel	3 November 1969 – 6 March 1970	Adalet Partisi / Justice Party
32	Süleyman Demirel	6 March 1970 – 26 March 1971	Adalet Partisi / Justice Party
33	Nihat Erim	26 March 1971 – 11 December 1971	Adalet Partisi / Justice Party
			Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / Republican People's Party
			Milli Güven Partisi / National Reliance Party
			Bağımsızlar / Independents

No.	Prime Minister	Term of office	Party / Parties
34	Nihat Erim	11 December 1971 – 22 May 1972	Adalet Partisi / Justice Party
			Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / Republican People's Party
			Milli Güven Partisi / National Reliance Party
			Bağımsızlar / Independents
35	Ferit Melen	22 May 1972 – 15 April 1973	Adalet Partisi / Justice Party
			Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / Republican People's Party
			Milli Güven Partisi / National Reliance Party
			Bağımsızlar
36	Naim Talu	15 April 1973 – 26 January 1974	Adalet Partisi
			Cumhuriyetçi Güven Partisi / Republican Reliance Party
			Bağımsızlar / Independents
37	Bülent Ecevit	26 January 1974 – 17 November 1974	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / Republican People's Party

No.	Prime Minister	Term of office	Party / Parties
			Millî Selamet Partisi / National Salvation Party
38	Sadi Irmak	17 November 1974 – 31 March 1975	Temporary Government
39	Süleyman Demirel	31 March 1975 – 21 June 1977	Adalet Partisi / Justice Party
			Millî Selamet Partisi / National Salvation Party
			Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi / Nationalist Movement Party
			Cumhuriyetçi Güven Partisi / Republican Reliance Party
40	Bülent Ecevit	21 June 1977 – 21 July 1977	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / Republican People's Party
41	Süleyman Demirel	21 July 1977 – 5 January 1978	Adalet Partisi / Justice Party
			Millî Selamet Partisi / National Salvation Party
			Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi / Nationalist Movement Party
42	Bülent Ecevit	5 January 1978 – 12 November 1979	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / Republican People's Party

No.	Prime Minister	Term of office	Party / Parties
			Cumhuriyetçi Güven Partisi (5 Ocak 1978 - 18 Eylül 1978)
			Demokratik Parti / Democratic Party (5 Ocak 1978 - 20 Eylül 1979)
			Bağımsızlar / Independents
43	Süleyman Demirel	12 November 1979 – 12 September 1980	Adalet Partisi / Justice Party
44	Bülend Ulusu	21 September 1980 – 13 December 1983	Military Junta
45	Turgut Özal	13 December 1983 – 21 December 1987	Anavatan Partisi / Motherland Party
46	Turgut Özal	21 December 1987 – 31 October 1989	Anavatan Partisi / Motherland Party
47	Yıldırım Akbulut	9 November 1989 – 23 June 1991	Anavatan Partisi / Motherland Party
48	Mesut Yılmaz	23 June 1991 – 20 November 1991	Anavatan Partisi / Motherland Party
49	Süleyman Demirel	20 November 1991 – 16 May 1993	Doğru Yol Partisi / True Path Party

No.	Prime Minister	Term of office	Party / Parties
			Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti / Social Democratic Populist Party
50	Tansu Çiller	25 June 1993 – 5 October 1995	Doğru Yol Partisi / True Path Party
			Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti / Social Democratic Populist Party
51	Tansu Çiller	5 October 1995 – 30 October 1995	Doğru Yol Partisi / True Path Party
52	Tansu Çiller	30 October 1995 – 6 March 1996	Doğru Yol Partisi / True Path Party
			Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / Republican People's Party
53	Mesut Yılmaz	6 March 1996 – 28 June 1996	Anavatan Partisi / Motherland Party
			Doğru Yol Partisi / True Path Party
54	Necmettin Erbakan	28 June 1996 – 30 June 1997	Refah Partisi / Welfare Party
			Doğru Yol Partisi / True Path Party
55	Mesut Yılmaz	30 June 1997 – 11 January 1999	Anavatan Partisi / Motherland Party

No.	Prime Minister	Term of office	Party / Parties
			Demokratik Sol Parti / Democratic Left Party
			Demokrat Türkiye Partisi / Democrat Turkey Party
56	Bülent Ecevit	11 January 1999 – 28 May 1999	Demokratik Sol Parti / Democratic Left Party
57	Bülent Ecevit	28 May 1999 – 18 November 2002	Demokratik Sol Parti / Democratic Left Party
			Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi / Nationalist Movement Party
			Anavatan Partisi/Motherland Party
58	Abdullah Gül	18 November 2002 – 14 March 2003	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi / Justice and Development Party
59	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	14 March 2003 – 29 August 2007	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi /Justice and Development Party
60	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	29 August 2007 – 6 July 2011	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi / Justice and Development Party
61	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	6 July 2011 – 29 August 2014	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi / Justice and Development Party

No.	Prime Minister	Term of office	Party / Parties
62	Ahmet Davutoğlu	29 August 2014 – 28 August 2015	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi/ Justice and Development Party
63	Ahmet Davutoğlu	28 August 2015 – 24 November 2015	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi/ Justice and Development Party
			Independents
			Halkların Demokratik Partisi / People's Democratic Party (28 Ağustos 2015 - 22 Eylül 2015)
64	Ahmet Davutoğlu	24 November 2015 – 24 May 2016	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi / Justice and Development Party
65	Binali Yıldırım	24 May 2016 – in term	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi / Justice and Development Party

APPENDIX D

LONG QUOTATIONS IN TURKISH

1. Kenan Paşa'nın en iyi tarafı kendisiyle tartışılabilir bir asker olmasıydı. Önce itiraz ederdi, ama sonra ikna olurdu. Yalnız açık ve dürüst olmanız gerekiyordu . . . Biz Diyanet olarak içimize sinmeyen konularda hep karşı görüş belirtmeye çalıştık. İtirazlarımız genelde makul karşılandı . . . Bakınız ben askerle sıkıntı yaşadım, ama hepsini de tartışabildim.
2. Sayın Sucu her kuruma, her cemaate, her siyasi partiye aynı mesafede durarak adeta siyaset üstü bir duruş sergilemiş ve cumhuriyetçi bir anlayışla kültürel geleneğimize sahip çıkmayı, kısaca çağdaş kadının da dindar olabileceğini göstermiştir. Burası, dini doğru anlamayı ve anlatmayı, demokratik ve cumhuriyetçi bir anlayışla kültürel geleneğimize sahip çıkmayı, kısaca çağdaş ve İslami bir aile yapısı oluşturmayı amaç edinmiştir.
3. Kardeşlerim! Günümüzde birçok hata, hürriyet kavramının yanlış anlaşılmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Zira çoğu kimseye göre hürriyet, kişinin her yapmak istediğine sahip olmasıdır. Ancak unutmayalım ki böyle bir anlayış hem kişiyi hem de toplumu esarete ve felakete sürükler. Kitle iletişim araçlarıyla dünyamızın küçüldüğü, geminin dibini delmek isteyenlerin çoğaldığı, teknik imkânları kullanıp tabiatın ekolojik dengesini dahi bozacak kadar ileri gittikleri günümüzde insanlık, Kur'an-ı Kerim'in ve Sevgili Peygamberimiz 'in özgürlük ve sorumluk konusundaki mesajlarına her zamankinden daha fazla muhtaçtır.
4. Özellikle son zamanlarda koparılan vaveylada demokrasi adına Ankara'ya yürüyenler oldu. Ama ben Türk kadınının geleneklerine ve ahlak anlayışına yakışmayan pankartları gördüğüm zaman Türk kadını adına çok üzuldüm. . . Bazı marjinal grupların Türk kadınının gücünü temsil ettiği bir anlayış söz konusu olamaz. Türk nüfusunun yüzde 52'sini kadınlar oluşturmaktadır. Bunların arasında gönüllerini AKP'ye vermiş olanlar da vardır.
5. İslam dininin evrensel mesajını, günümüz şartlarını da göz önünde bulundurarak, toplumun ihtiyaçlarına uygun bir şekilde halka duyurma amacıyla olan Diyanet Aylık Dergi; özgüveni yüksek . . . uzman din görevlisi kitlesinin oluşmasına katkı sağlamayı da önemli bir görev olarak değerlendirmektedir.
6. İlk Çağ'da yaşamış ünlü Yunan hikayecisi Hesiod'a göre ilk kadının adı Pandora'dır. Topraktan ve sudan yaratılmıştır. Kötülüklerin kapalı olduğu kutunun kapağını açmış ve bütün kötülüklerin Dünyaya yayılmasına sebep olmuştur...Bu da gösteriyor ki, Eski Yunan'da kadın kötülüklerin yayıcısı ve hamisi olarak bilinmektedir.
7. . . . madde ve mide, servet ve saltanat, mal ve mülk; masa ve kasa; aşırı istek ve kötü duygular, kadın, şeytan ve dünyanın esiri ve kulu olmayıp şahsiyet, şeref, hürriyet, saadet ve huzur kazanmaya çalışmak lazımdır.

8. ...İlk Çağ kadının çektiği çileyi bir tablo gibi seyredecek olursak, zihnimizde belirecek hüküm şu olur: Kadın bütün kötülüklerin anası ve bütün uğursuzlukların yegane sebebidir. Bu nedenle onu insan yerine koymak ve ona insandır hükmünü verebilmenin imkanı yoktur. O bir eşyadan farksızdır. İşte dünden habersiz ilk çağ erkeğinin kadına verdiği değer budur.
9. Ve Rab Allah, Adem'in üzerine derin bir uyku getirdi ve o uyudu ve onun kemiklerinden birini aldı ve yerini etle kapladı. Ve Rab Allah, Adem'den aldığı kaburga kemiğinden bir kadın yaptı ve onu Adem'e getirdi. Ve Adem dedi: Şimdi bu benim kemiklerimden kemik, ve etimden ettir; buna nisa denilecek, çünkü o insandan alındı". Kadının yaratılışı, muharref tevratta bu şekilde ifadesini bulmaktadır. Daha sonra kır hayvanlarından yılanı, en hilekar yaratık olarak vasıflayan muharref Tevrat, Havva anamızla yılan arasında geçen diyalogu şöyle hikaye etmektedir:
Ve Yılan kadına dedi: Katiyyen ölmezsiniz: çünkü Allah bilir ki, ondan yediğiniz vakit gözleriniz açılacak ve iyiyi kötüyü bilerek Allah gibi olacaksınız. Ve kadın... onun meyvasından aldı ve yedi; ve kendisi ile beraber kocasına da verdi ve o da yedi. Muharref Tevrat insanoğlunun Cennetten kovuluşunu bu şekilde izah ettikten sonra, kadının bu suçtan dolayı lanetlendiğini ve doğum esnasında çektiği sıkıntının sebebinin de bu olduğunu iddia eder.
10. Kuran-ı Kerim, kadının, erkeğin kaburga kemiğinden yaratıldığını zikretmemekle beraber, Resulullah'ın bu hususu açıkladığını, yani kadının, erkeğin kaburga kemiğinden yaratıldığını zikrettiğini görüyoruz... Memn-u meyvenin yenmesi ve cennetten kovulmanın suçu, muharref Tevrat'ta kadına (Hz. Havva'ya) yüklenirken, Kuran-ı Kerim'de bu suçtan Hz. Adem mesul tutulmuştur. Zira Hz. Adem Allah'tan emirleri doğrudan doğruya almaktadır. Halbuki Hz. Havva ona tabiidir... Halbuki Kuran-ı Kerim, Hz. Havva anamıza suç isnad etmediği gibi, suçun nesilden nesile akıp gittiğini de red etmektedir.
11. Bütün insanlar Adem'den, Adem de topraktan yaratılmıştır. Bu yönden kadın, erkeğin; erkek de kadının kardeşidir. Babaları, Hazret Adem anneleri Hazreti Havva, Rableri de Alemlerin yaratıcısı bir tek Allah'tır. Kuran-ı Kerim'de şöyle buyrulur:
"Ey İnsanlar! Sizi bir nefisten yaratan, ondan da yine onun eşini sonra ikisinden bir çok erkekler ve kadınlar türeten Rabbinizden korkunuz" (Nisa Suresi, ayet: 1).
12. "Ey insanlar! Sizleri bir tek şahıstan (Hz. Adem'den) yaratan, o şahıstan da eşini (Hz. Havva'yı) vücuda getiren, ikisinden bir çok erkeklerle kadınlar türeten Rabbinizden korkun!" (Nisa Suresi, Ayet 1).
13. Başından beri uygarlığın beşiği olarak kabul edilen Avrupa halkları ve diğer dünya halkaları yanında kadın, yabani bir hayvan veya şeytan tipi bir yaratık olarak kabul edilerek insanlık dışı çeşitli ceza yöntemleriyle cezalandırılırken, Müslümanlık kadının insan neslinin türemesine vesile teşkil

eden iki önemli unsurlardan biri olduğunu beyan ederek bunu insanlık alemi için nimet ve minnet vesilesi yaptı.

14. Yüce Allah, Hz. Adem ile Hz. Havva'yı yaratarak aralarında sevgi ve şefkat bağını koymuştur. Kuran-ı Kerim'in Rum Suresi 21. Ayetinde bu husus şöyle açıklanır: "Kaynaşmanız için, size kendi cinsinizden eşler yaratıp da, aranızda sevgi peyda etmesi de, onun (varlığının ve yüce kudretinin) delillerindendir".
15. İnsan ve kökenini hayvanlarla paylaşılan bir evrime bağlayan Darwin'in Evrim teorisi, zaman içinde pek çok darbeler almıştır. İşte bunlardan biri, evrim teorisinde büyük değişikliklere yol açan bilimsel bir keşif, 1987 yılında gerçekleşti. Modern bilim bir rumuz olarak da olsa ilk defa Hz. Havva'nın adını anmaya başladı ve son yıllarda tartışması gittikçe şiddetlenen Havva Hipotezini ortaya koydu... bazı bilim adamları, ABD'nin Kaliforniya Üniversitesi'nden Allan C. Wilson, Rebecca Cann ve Mark Stoneking, 5 değişik coğrafi bölgede; Avrupa, Asya, Afrika, Yeni Gine ve Avustralya'da yaşayan kadınların mitokondrilerindeki DNA'ları inceleyerek 1987 yılında çıkardıkları sonuçları duyurdular. Buna göre, alınan DNA örnekleri neredeyse birbirinin aynıydı. Bunun bir tek anlamı vardı; o da tüm insanların ortak bir "Anne"si olduğu gerçeği idi. İşte bilim adamları bu ortak anneye ister istemez "Havva" adını verdiler. Modern bilim, laboratuvarında yaptığı keşifler sonucu doğrulara biraz olsun yaklaştı... Şu anki çalışmalar Baba'nın yani Adem'in bulunması yolunda.
16. Görülüyor ki Cenab-ı Hak insanı... bir kadın ve erkekten yaratmıştır. Biri olmadan diğ erinin geleceğ inden söz edilemez. Her iki cinsin de yaratılıştan itibaren bazı temel hak ve sorumluluğ u vardır. Mutlak cinsiyetlerinden dolayı biri diğ erine göre daha faziletli kılınmış değildir.
17. Kadın ve erkeğ in yaratılışı aynı mayadandır.
18. Hristiyanlığ ın göya Havva ana vasıtasıyla kadına yüklediğ i olumsuz ve haksız yargıları ve suçlamaları bir ortadan kaldırmaya çalışmış, 'Onların kazandıkları onlara ait. Sizin kazandığ ınız size aittir. Siz onların yaptıklarından mesul olamazsınız. Kimse kimsenin günahından muaheze olunmaz (Bakara suresi, ayet 141).
19. İslam'dan önce gaddarlık çağının zalimleri onun güçsüzlüğüne, şefkatine ve inceliğ ine bakarak onu kaba kuvvetlerinin esiri zannettiler. Onu en adi mahluk olarak gördüler, horladılar, dövdüler, ve dışarı atıldılar. Kadını asırlardır horlamaktan bu bıkmayan bu zalimlerin elini İslam havada yakaladı, kadını kurtardı. Onun asırlardır örselenen vücudunu, şeref in timsalidir diye nadide kumaşlara sardı... Kadını içinde bulunduğ u yürekler acısı durumdan kurtardıktan sonra İslam'ın ona lütfettiğ i maddi ve manevi imkanları sırayla gözden geçirelim.
20. Kadını içinde bulunduğ u yürekler acısı durumdan kurtardıktan sonra İslam'ın ona lütfettiğ i maddi ve manevi imkanları sırayla gözden geçirelim... "Ey

insanlar! Sizi bir tek nefisten yaratan, onsan da yine onun eşini var eden ve ikisinden birçok erkekler ve kadınlar türeten Rabbinizden korkun”.

21. Adem ve Havva kadın ve erkek iyi niyetle ve ebedi kulluk arzusu ile bir anlık gafletle bu uyarıya yeterince kulak veremeyince yasak ihlal edilmiştir. Hemen akabinde pişmanlıkla Yaradan’a; “Rabbimiz! Biz kendimize zulmettik. Eğer bizi bağışlamaz ve bize acımazsan mutlaka ziyan edenlerden oluruz” diye serzenişte bulunmuşlardır (Araf 23).... Yüce Allah dualarına icabet etmiş ama yaşamlarına yeryüzünde devam etmek şartıyla şöyle seslenmiştir: “....Orada yaşayacaksınız, orada öleceksiniz ve oradan mahşere çıkarılacaksınız” (Araf 25). İşte bu vahyin ifadeleriyle Hz. Havva ve Hz. Adem, kadın ve erkek birlikte hayat yolculuklarına başladılar, birlikte yaratılarak, birlikte iman ederek, birlikte hata yaparak, birlikte pişman olup af dileyerek, sonuçta dünya yolculuğuna birlikte çıkarak.... Allah’ın yeryüzündeki ilk halifeleri olarak ve Allah’ın vahyini, dinini ilk kez tebliğle vazifeli olarak....
22. Bize sunulan sahih öğretilere göre ne Hz. Havva, Hz. Adem’in kaburga kemiğinden yaratılmış, ne şeytana ilk inanan, ne de Hz. Adem’i isyan ettiren o olmuştur. Ne de Tevrat’taki öğretilere binaen Hz. Adem’i kandırdığı için, erkekleri baştan çıkardığı için, ne de önce kendisi daha sonra da onun sebebiyle bütün kadınlar uğursuz ve günahkar kabul edilmiştir. Bu İslam’ın onaylayabileceği bir anlayış değildir.
23. Yahudi ve Hristiyanlara göre, Adem’i “asli günah” işlemeye eşi Havva kıışkırtmıştır. Yani kadın, daha başlangıçta suçlu olarak görülmektedir. Nitekim Tevrat’ta yasak meyveyı yılanın kadına, kadının da Adem’e yedirdiği belirtilmektedir (Kitab-ı Mukkaddes, Tekvin, bab: 3). Böylesi bir inanç ve anlayış, Kuran-ı Kerim’deki bilgilerle bağdaşmaz. Kuran’da “Şeytan ikisinin de ayağını kaydıldı” (Bakara, 2/36) buyurularak her ikisini de şeytanın aldattığı belirtilmektedir. Başka bir ayette, Havva’dan hiç söz edilmeyip, şeytanın doğrudan doğruya Adem’e seslendiği ve “Ey Adem! Sana sonsuz hayat ağacını ve dolasıyla, ebediyen yok olmayacak bir hükümlanlığın yolunu göstereyim mi?” dediği ifade edilir (Taha, 20/120).
24. Kadınsız Adem yarımır... İki erkekten bir şey çıkmaz. Kadın olmayınca ne Adem olur, ne cennet, ne de aile. Bütün insanlığın hayatı, hanımların rahimlerinde ve ellerinde başlar.
25. [Şeytanın] Amacı, yasak ağaçtan onlara yedirmek; elbiselerini soyup edep yerlerini kendilerine göstermekti... Netice de amacına da ulaştı (Araf, 7/20-22).
26. Görüldüğü gibi daha ilk karşılaşmada, cennette şeytan, insanın elbiselerini soymakta ve mahrem yerlerini açığa vurmaya başarmaktadır.
27. Dolasıyla, örtünme, kadının özgürlüğünün önünde bir engel olarak kabul edildi.... İslami değerler sistemi, iffetli fert, iffetli toplumu hedefler. Bu sebeple beden mahremiyetini korumaya büyük önem verir. Kadının da erkeğin de kendini sergilemesini onaylamaz... Cinsler arasında ilişkilerde bir

takım kurallar koyar. Mesala bakışların haramdan korunması ve tesettüre riayet edilmesi bunlardan bazılarıdır.

28. Hz Havva, ne Hz. Adem'in kaburga kemiğinden yaratılmış, ne de Hz. Adem'i isyan ettiren kişi olmuştur. Ne de Tevrat'taki öğretilere binaen Hz. Adem'i kandırdığı ve erkekleri baştan çıkardığı için, önce kendisi daha sonra da onun sebebiyle bütün kadınlar uğursuz ve günahkar kabul edilmiştir. Bu İslam'ın onaylayabileceği bir anlayış değildir. Çünkü İslam'da kadın kötülüklerin ve şeytani iğvaların kaynağı olarak görülmez .
29. Hristiyanlar Hz. Adem'in ve Hz. Havva'nın yasak ağaca yaklaşmakla büyük bir günah işlediklerine, Allah'ın gazabına uğradıklarına, bu günahın kıyamete kadar her yeni doğan çocuğa geçtiğine, ancak vaftiz edilmek suretiyle cehennemlik olmaktan kurtulabileceklerine inanmaktadırlar... Ancak bu düşünce, İslam'ın onayladığı bir inanç ve anlayış değildir. Çünkü İslam'da asli günah diye bir şey olmadığı gibi, kadın kötülüklerin ve şeytani iğvaların kaynağı olarak da görülmez.
30. Havva'nın yaratılışıyla Adem'in yalnızlığı giderilmişti.
31. Bir zamanların astığı çamaşırları görünmesin diye, üzerine ince tülbentle örtecek kadar iffet ve haya sahibi mazideki Türk anası... Ve oda perdelerini bile örtmeye lüzum görmeyen bugünün ev sahibesi....
32. Türkler zevcelerinin iffetine diğer milletlerin hepsinden ziyade ehemmiyet verirler. Bunun için onları eve kaparlar. Kadınlar sokağa çıkmaya mecbur oldukları zaman kapalı ve örtülü olarak çıkarlar. Kadınların vücutlarından hiç bir parça, bir erkeğin gözüne gözükmez.
33. Adet üzere bulunan kadın, namaz kılamaz; oruç tutamaz; münasebette bulunamaz; Kuran okuyamaz; Kurana veya ayete el süremez...Mescide giremez... Kabeyi tavaf edemez, içinde bulunamaz.
34. Sen bir çocuk gibi, esen rüzgardan korunuyordun. Tertemiz elbisen ve örtün, seni kem gözlerin bakışından, kötü yola düşmekten koruyordu... Ey Kadın! Böyle bir inanç ve yaşayış içindeydin, İslam hayatında değerliydin, korunuyordun. Şimdi seni bu temiz ve doğru yaşayışından çekip, nefislerine alet etmek isteyenlere, namus ve hak tokatını indirmelisin. Kovmalısın onları huzurundan. Ve onlara: “Artık dönemem, dönemem o İslam öncesi çağa. Bana niye çok iltifat ediyor görüldüğünüzü biliyorum. Ben namus ve şerefimle yaşayacağım. Bana değerimi siz değil, Hakk'tan gelen ses bir ses verdi. O ses İslam'ın ilahi sesidir. Beni, ben eden ancak o ses oldu. O çağrı ile ben uyandım. Kendimi onunla buldum” demelisin.
35. İslam'ın tesettür (örtünme) emri de kötülük yapma temayülünde olanlara karşı cemiyette huzuru sağlamak, kadını örterek kem gözlerden ve hasta tiplerden korumak, onun kıymetini, iffet ve vakarını yüceltmek, onu toplum içinde değerli ve hürmete layık bir mevkide tutmak hedefine matuftur.

36. [Dünya İslam Birliği] Genel Sekreteri bu kararı benimsemeyi ve İslamiyet düşmanlarının İslamiyetin imkan ve faaliyetlerini zayıflatmayı gaye edinmiş planlarına karşı uyanık bulundurmak amacıyla Müslüman Cemaat arasında en geniş bir biçimde yaymanızı dilemektedir” ... Büyük İslam bilginleri ve ilim adamlarının kanaatlerine göre doğum kontrolü, İslam kaidelerine göre bir günahtır... Üstelik Hazreti Peygamberin ‘Kısır olmayan kadın kısır olan kadından iyidir’ hadisi doğrulanmıştır... Bütün İlahiyatçılar embriyonun teşkilinden sonra yapılan çocuk düşürmenin bir suç ve günah olduğunu doğrulamışlardır.. Nüfus patlama korkusu, yiyecek yokluğu, bir çok çocuğa bakmanın imkansızlığı gibi mazeretler doğum kontrolünü savunanların sudan mazeretleridir. Kur’an’da bunun cevabı vardır: “Sizin ve onların rızkını temin edeceğiz”... İslam ülkelerinde herkes için yeterli tabii kaynak mevcuttur. Allah kendinden korkanlara bir çıkış yolu hazırlar ve onları hayal edemeyecekleri kaynaklardan müstefit kılar. Doğum kontrolü imana, kişisel hürriyete ve insan haklarına karşı bir teşebbüstür.
37. Efendimiz (S.A) “Yabancı bir kadın herhangi birinizin aklını başından alır ve gönlüne tesir ederse hemen kendi ailesine gelsin ve onunla ateşini söndürsün. Çünkü böyle hareket etmesi gönlündekini de defeder” buyurmuşlardır.
38. Binaenaleyh domuz eti yiyen insanların domuz meşrep oldukları ve garp ülkelerinde kıskançlık duygusunun olmadığı, kadınların başka erkeklerle ilişki kurdukları görülmektedir.
39. Öte yandan kadının lohusalık, gebelik ve doğum gibi bir takım kendine özgü kadınlık halleri vardır ki, bunların vuku halinde kadın , bir çok dini vecibelerinden muaf tutulmaktadır. Örneğin, doğum yapmış veya lohusalık halinde olan bir kadın, bu halleri geçip temizleninceye kadar namazdan tamamen, oruçtan da sonra kaza etmesi kaydıyla muaftır. Aynı zamanda o kadınlık vasfından dolayı haccın bazı merasimlerinden de muaftır. Kadının bu bedeni ve ruhi engellere sahip oluşu, onu dini görevlerinin ifasında olduğu gibi sosyal alandaki faaliyetlerini sürdürmek hususunda da erkekten geriye bırakır.
40. Bu sebeptendir ki Kuran-ı Kerim, erkekler hakkındaki sadakatlerini temin gayesiyle kadınların örtünmelerini emrettiği gibi, yabancı erkeklere süslerini göstermemelerini, bakmamalarını ve yabancı erkeklerin de kendilerine bakmamasını emretmiştir. “Ey Peygamber! Eşlerine, kızlarına ve müminlerin kadınlarına, dışarı çıkarken üstlerine örtü almalarını söyle; bu, onların tanınmamasını ve bundan dolayı incitilmemelerini sağlar”.... Mümin kadınlara da söyle: gözlerini bakılması yasak olandan çevirsınlar, iffetlerini korusunlar, süslerini kendiliğinden görünen kısım müstesna açmasınlar. Başörtülerini yakalarının üzerine salsınlar.
41. “Allah’ın kimini kimisine üstün kılmasından ötürü ve erkeklerin, mallarından sarfetmelerinden dolayı kadınların üzerinde hakimdirler”(4: 34)...Erkeğin kadın üzerindeki hakkı, onun , erkeğin namus ve şerefini titizlikler koruyup lekelememesi, kendisine hazır bulunmadığı hallerde de sadakat göstermesi ve meşru olan istek ve arzularını yerine getirmesidir.

42. Erkeğin kadın üzerindeki haklarını dile getiren hadis-i şeriflerinden bazıları şöyle: “Hepiniz çoban, yani muhafızsınız ve hepiniz de maiyetinizde bulunanların hukukundan mesulsünüz. Amirler maiyetindekilerin muhafızdır. Aile reisi, aile efradının çobanıdır. Kadın da kocasının evi ve çocukları üzerinde muhafızdır”.
43. “Kadın ocak başında olsa dahi erkeğinin davetine icabet etsin”.
44. Malumdur ki, İslam’ın nazarında tesettür etmekten, yani elbise giymekten maksat çevrenin fitnesini defetmektir. Fitnenin def’i ise ancak vücut hatlarını belirtmeyen kalın ve bol elbiseler giymekle mümkün olabilir... İslami giyiniş, Kuran’ın istisna ettiği yerlerden başka bütün vücudu örtmüş olup, altındakini gösterecek ve belli edecek kadar ince olmamalıdır. Kuran’ın istisna ettiği yerler de yüz ve ellerdir.
45. Peygamberimiz Efendimiz bir hadisi şeriflerinde şöyle buyururlar “Cehennem ehlinde bazı kadınlar vardır ki, örtülü fakat çıplaktırlar... Her iki tarafa sallanırlar.. Bunlar cennete girmeyecek ve onun kokusunu dahi duymayacaklardır.
46. Peygamberimiz (S.A.S) şöyle buyurmaktadırlar: “Ümmetimin son zamanlarında da açık ve çıplak kadınlar bulunacaktır. Başlarındaki saçlarının kıvrımları develerin hörgücü gibi olacaktır. Siz onları lanetleyin. Çünkü onlar mel’un kadınlardır”.
47. Bütün bunlardan dolayı İslam bilginleri kadınların vücut yapılarını ve saçlarını belirtmeyecek şekilde örtmelerinin vacip olduğunu, bunun da bol bir elbiseden veya sahtiyandan yahut da bunlara benzer şeylerden yapıp vücut hatlarını belli etmeyecek şekilde olmasını şart koşmuşlardır, örtmesine rağmen vücudu belli eden veya ince olup da gösteren her hangi bir kıyafeti giymek caiz değildir. Çünkü tesettür, vücut hatlarının belli olmaması ve ancak vücudun bütününün örtülmesiyle gerçekleşir.
48. Peygamberimiz (S.A.S.) “ANA” olan kadını diğerlerine nispetle daha bir başka, daha bir üstün değerlendirirler ve “Çocuk doğuran bir hanım, doğurmayan güzel bir hanımdan daha çok Allah’a sevgilidir” derler.
49. Bazı sesler . . . derin etkileme gücüne sahiptir. Söz gelimi: . . . kadın sesi, karga sesi, bülbül sesi, baykuş sesi, eşşek sesi . . . insan vicdanında değişik akisler bırakır. Bu nedenle Müslümanlar bu tür seslere değişik değişik tavır almalı.
50. Çok sıkı pantolonlarla dolaşan genç kızlarda özellikle kot gibi kumaşlardan yapılanlarda, tahriş dolasıyla kaşınmalar olmakta, zannedildiğinin tam tersine üşüterek rahim ağzı ve yumurtalık iltihapları daha çok görülmektedir. Bu sebepten annelerin kız çocuklarına pantolon giymeye alıştırmamaları, daha yerinde ve uygun giymeye alıştırmalarını tavsiye ederim.

51. Kadın kültürlü, iffetli ve her alanda sorumluluğunu müdrik, Peygamberimizin deyimiyle, salih olarak yetiştirilirse içerisinde yaşadığımız günler huzurlu ve geleceğimiz teminat altında olacaktır.
52. Kadın hakları savunucuları kadın-erkek eşitliğini tam olarak sağlamakla (!) yetinmemişler, kıyafet ve dış görünüş birliğini, daha doğrusu kıyafet ve şekil değiş-tokuşunu bile temin etmişler. Bu manzaradan gerçi mizahçılar ve komedyenler için bol malzeme elde edilmiştir ama kadının mutluluğu için ele hiç bir şey geçmemiştir.
53. Tesettür Allah'ın emri... Fakat bir yandan da kişinin inanç ve ibadet hürriyetinin gereği... Kişi, önce inancının gereği olarak örtünür... Buna saygı duymak- Laik bir ülkede- her medeni insanın uyması gereken bir realite... Kendisi yapmasa, hatta inanmasa bile... Madalyonun öbür yüzüne gelince: inanç ve ibadet hürriyeti, insanın vazgeçilmez temel hak ve hürriyetlerinden... Birileri inanmasa, hatta yadırgasa da her tür insan bu temel hakkını kullanacak... Bu kadar basit, bu kadar sade bir olayın hala mağdureler üretmesi, ancak Devlet ile milletin; bu iki ayrılmazın arasını açıyor... milleti rencide ediyor, devletine küstürüyor. Başörtüsü de mutlaka halledilecek... Halledilecek ama neden sonra?! “Laiklik” diyerek, “Cumhuriyetin temel ilkeleri” diyerek hiç de müstahak olmadığı halde devleti yıpratıcılar ve kendi kalelerine gol atanlara gelince: yarın, bugünlere dönüp baktıklarında, yasakladıkları başörtüsünü ve başörtülülere kendilerine dua ederken bulacaklar...
54. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı yazısında kadınların örtülü kıyafetlerinin “Atatürk ilkelerine tamamen aykırı” olduğu ifade edilmekte ise de, genel ahlaka ve kanunlara aykırı olmayan her türlü kadın kıyafetinin Atatürk devrim ve ilkelerine aykırılığı söz konusu değildir. Nitekim bizzat Atatürk “Eğer kadınlarımız Şer’in tavsiye ve dinin emrettiği bir kıyafetle, faziletin icap ettiği tavrı hareketle içimizde bulunur, milletin ilim, sanat ve içtimai hayat hareketlerine iştirak ederse bu hali, emin olunuz, milletin en mutaassıbı dahi takdir edecektir” demiştir.
55. Din ve devleti birbirine karşı gösterme ihtiyatsızlığı bize çok pahalıya mal oldu. Cumhuriyet kutlamalarında, laiklik ve diğer inkılaplardan söz ederken, geçmişimizi ve dinimizi komikleştirme alışkanlığımız, bazı dindar vatandaşlarımızı küstürmekle kalmadı, onları devlete karşı tereddütlere sevketti.
56. Bu hatayı devlete yön verenler olarak hep yapageldik. Laiklik adına konuşurken, laiklik öncesini zemmettik. Atatürk’ten bahsederken, şunları yaptı yerine, şunları yıktı dedik. Harf inkılabı, şapka inkılabı ve diğer yenilikler için de öyle... Bu yeniliklerin bize kazandırdığı müspetleri anlatmak yerine, onları tabulaştırdık, bir kırbaç yapıp milletin sırtında şaplattık durduk... Endişemiz din için değil, devlet için... Dinin koruyucusu var, ve din onu koruyanın murad ettiği yere kadar gidecektir. Stratejik bir coğrafyada, bir gönül işi olan din üzerine hassasiyetler meydana getirmek, dine değil, devlete zarar vermektedir. Kıyıda köşede üç-beş kız çocuğunun

başını örtmesi, binlerce yıllık tecrübe temeline oturan güçlü Türk devletine asla zarar vermez.

57. İslamiyet'ten önce (Cahilliyet Devri'nde) kadınlardan başlarını örtenler boyun ve gerdanlarını açık bırakırlardı. Cenab-ı Hak bu ayet-i celile ile Cahilliyet Devri'nin bu adetini kesinlikle yasaklamış, Müslüman kadınların başörtülerini, saçlarını, başlarını, kulaklarını, boyun ve gerdanlarını örtecek şekilde yakalarının üzerine salmalarını emretmiştir.... İslam müçtehit ve fakihleri, Müslüman kadınların sadece namaz kılarken değil, namaz dışında da vücudun el, yüz ve ayaklar dışında kalan kısımlarını, aralarında dinen evlilik caiz olan yabancı erkeklerin yanında açık bulundurmamaları gerektiği hükmünde ittifak etmişlerdir... [Bu] bazı çevrelerde sanıldığı gibi belli bir zümrenin sonradan ortaya çıkardığı bir adet veya işaret değil, İslam dininin bir hükmüdür.
58. Siyasi ve toplumsal her türlü baskıya rağmen reklamcının kadına bakışı değişmemiştir. Salt cinsellik objesi olarak sunulan kadın, pespaye bir yaratık gibi muamele görmektedir.
59. Kadın Türk toplumunda anadır, bacıdır, namus ve iffettir; ailenin direğidir. Toplumu doğurur ve şekillendirir. Oysa Batı toplumlarında kadın, giderek aile gerçeğinden uzaklaşmakta ve buna bağlı olarak ... kontrolsüz ve problemli bir sürece girmektedir. Gayri meşru ilişkilerin yadırganmadığı ve meşruluk anlayışının sapkınlığa yöneldiği görülmektedir... Bizim toplumumuz da yöneliş bu doğrultudadır... Cinselliği ticari bir meta gibi sunulan kadınlarımız, hiç bu kadar ayaklar altına alınmamıştı. Varılan noktanın bizi ulaştıracağı, Batı'nın içine düştüğü bunalım ve çözülme yazgısıyla paralellik taşımaktadır.
60. Ve onlar kadınların ayhalini sordular. De ki: O bir eza (bir çeşit hastalıktır. Ayhalinde olan kadınlardan uzak durun (onlarla cinsel ilişkide bulunmayın). Temizleninceye kadar onlara yaklaşmayın. Temizlendikleri vakit, Allah'ın size emrettiği yerden onlara yaklaşın.
61. Hz. Ayşe şöyle demiştir: “Hac niyetiyle (Medine'den) çıktık, Şerif (denilen yer)e gelince adet görmeye başladım. Peygamberimiz yanıma geldi. Ben (o halde hac görevimi yapamayacağım diye) ağlıyordum. Peygamberimiz:
-Nen var, yoksa kirlendin mi? Diye sordu. Ben:
-Evet kirlendim, dedim. Peygamberimiz:
-Bu Allah Teala'nın, Hz. Adem'in kızları üzerine yazdığı bir şeydir. Hacıların, hacla ilgili yaptıklarını sen de yap. Ancak adet gördüğün sürece Kabe'yi tavaf etme, buyurdu.
62. Kadınlar, adet dönemlerinde – temizleninceye kadar – cinsel ilişkide bulunamazlar. Bu husus ayet ile (Bakara 2/222) yasaklanmıştır. Adet halinde kadının; namaz kılmayacağı, oruç tutmayacağı ve Kabe'yi tavaf yapmayacağı sünnetle belirlenmiştir.... Hanefi ve Şafii bilginlere göre, adetli, loğusalı kadınlar ve cünüp olan kimseler Kuran'a el süremezler ve okuyamazlar.

63. Ebu Hubeş'in kızı Fatima'nın;
-Ben adetli bir kadını, hiç akıntım durmuyor, namazı bırakayım mı?
Şeklindeki sorusuna Peygamberimiz;
-"Hayır, o hayız akıntısı değil; damardan gelen hastalık kanıdır. Adet gördüğün günler sayısınca namazı bırak. (Bu sayı dolunca) yıkan ve namaz kıl" buyurmuştur (Müslim, Hayz 14; Ebu Davud, Taharet 109; Nesai, Hayz, 2). Bu durumdaki kadınlar, taharet yönünden özürli kimseler gibi, her vakitte abdest alarak namazlarını kılarlar.
64. Cinsî uyarıcılık özelliği esas alınarak, kadınların daha da dikkatli davranmaları istenmiştir. Yabancı erkeklerle konuşurken kadınların, kalpte şüphe uyandırmayacak ve karşısındaki kişiyi yanlış anlamaya sürüklemeyecek tarzda ciddi ve ağır başlı olarak konuşmaları, süs ve endamlarını yabancılara göstermemeleri, bunun için de sokağa çıkarken güzelce örtünmeleri bu gayeye matuf emirlerdir. Hz. Peygamber, kadınların kendi evleri dışında, başkalarına hissettirecek derecede koku sürünerek dolaşmalarını uygun görmemiştir.
65. Hz. Peygamber "Allah, saç ekleyene ve eklettirene lânet etsin" buyurarak bunu yasakladı.
66. Dikkat çekmek, daha güzel görünmek amacıyla, yaratılıştan verilmiş olan özellik ve şekillerin değiştirilmesi ve bu maksatla yapılacak her türlü estetik ve tıbbî müdahale İslâm dininde, fitratı bozma kabul edilerek yasaklanmıştır.
67. Hz. Peygamber bir hadislerinde, "Allah yüz tüylerini yolan ve yolduran kadına lânet etsin..." buyurmuştur...Kadının, kocası için ve onun izniyle yüzünde biten kılları alması, makyaj yapması, hatta kaşını düzeltmesi/inceltmesi câiz olup hadisteki yasak, kadının dışarı çıkmak için yüz kıllarını yolması ve kaş aldırması ile ilgilidir.
68. Bir hadiste Hz. Peygamber dil, ağız, el, ayak, göz gibi organların zinasından söz ederek zinaya zemin hazırlayıcı mahiyetteki her türlü gayri meşrû ilişkinin, flört ve beraberliğin de gayr-ı ahlâkî davranışlar olduğunu belirtmiş, bunlardan da sakındırmıştır. Çünkü iffet ve namus bir bütün olup, o ancak onu lekeleyecek her türlü kötülük ve yanlışlıktan uzak kalınarak korunabilir.
69. Kadınların örtünmesiyle ilgili dinî emirlerin yanı sıra, bir kadına kocası dışındaki erkeklerin şehvetle bakmasının haram kılınışı da bu anlamı [zina anlamını] taşır. Hatta kadının sesinin fitneye yol açacağı, bunun için de yabancı erkekler tarafından duyulmasının doğru olmadığı şeklinde klasik literatürde yer alan görüşler de bu amaca [kadın ve erkeğin iffetli bir hayat yaşaması] yöneliktir.
70. Bir hadiste Hz. Peygamber "Kim Allah'a ve âhiret gününe iman ediyorsa, yanında mahremi olmayan bir kadınla yalnız kalmasın; çünkü böyle bir durumda üçüncüleri şeytandır" buyurmuştur. Böyle bir durum karşı cins için tahrik edicidir, zinaya veya dedikoduya ve tarafların iffetlerinin zedelenmesine yol açabilir.

71. Kadının yabancı erkekler yani mahremi olmayan erkekler karşısında avret yeri yüzü, el ve ayakları hariç bütün vücududur.
72. Bir hadiste Hz. Peygamber (S.A.S.) şöyle buyurur: "Cehennemliklerden iki sınıf vardır ... Birincisi ellerindeki öküz kuyruğu gibi kırbaçlarla halkı kırbaçlayan kimselerdir. İkincisi giyinmiş çıplak, kalçasını oynatarak, kırılarak, salınarak yürüyen, başları deve hörgücü gibi kadınlardır. Bunlar cennete giremezler, onun kokusunu da alamazlar”.
73. Türban, Müslümanlığın olmazsa olmaz şartı değildir. O zaman başı açık kadınların Müslümanlıkla alakası yoktur. Bu kabul edilemez.
74. “Onun kişiliği değil, dişiliği öne çıkarıldı. Cinselliği, sermayenin metaı ve reklamların en önemli malzemesi olarak kullanıldı”.
75. İslami değerler sistemi, iffetli fert, iffetli toplumu hedefler. Bu sebeple beden mahremiyetini korumaya büyük önem verir. Kadının da erkeğin de kendini sergilemesini ve teşhir etmesini onaylamaz... Mesela, bakışların haramdan korunması ve tesettüre riayet edilmesi bunlardan bazılarıdır.
76. Kızım! Sen ananın ve babanın evinden, büyüüp yürüdüğün yuvadan çıkıp, bilmediğin ve ömründe ülfet etmediğin bir adamın evine gidiyorsun. O halde, o kimsenin rızasını gözetip, kendisine itaat eyle ki, o da sana aynı muamelede bulunsun.... Sana ben şimdi on şey bildireceğim. Onları ezberleyip gereğini yap. Ta ki, kocan ile güzel geçinmeye muvaffak olabilesin: 1- Sana giyecek ve yiyecek olarak her ne getirirse onu can-ı gönülden kabul eylemelisin. 2- Emir ettiği şeyleri yapmalı ve men edip yapma dediği şeyleri yapmayıp sözünü dinlemelisin. 3-Evin içini temiz tutmaya dikkat edip, ... etrafı tertipli bulundurmalısın. 4-... Ev işleri yaparkenki halinle ona çıkmayıp, kocan için giyinip süslenmelisin. 5- Uyuyacağı ve 6-Yemek yiyeceği vakitlere dikkat etmeli, yatağı ve sofrayı vaktinde hazırlamalısın...7-Kocanın şeref ve namusunu, itibarını dikkatle korumalısın...8-Kocanın malını ve parasını korumalısın. İzni ve haberi olmadan alma ve harcama. 9-Hiç bir zaman ona itiraz edip karşı gelme.
77. Kocan senin velinimetin, hayatın, efendin, başın, hükümdarındır... Bunlara karşı, tatlı söz, güler yüz ve hakiki itaatten başka bir şey beklediği de yok. O büyük borca ne küçük bir karşılık değil mi? Tebaanın krala borçlu olduğu vazifesi neyse, bir kadının kocasına borçlu olduğu vazifesi de tıpkı öyledir... Ne zaman terslik, inatçılık, dargınlık, tatsızlık eder, haklı arzusuna itaatsizlik gösterirse, sevgili efendisine karşı musibet, kavgacı bir asiden, adi bir hainden başka nedir?
78. Bir kadının kocası müsaade etmediği halde nafile orucu tutması da tenzihen mekruhtur.
79. Zira her kadın, her şeyden evvel bir erkeğin himayesine muhtaçtır, fitrat böyle tecelli etmiştir... Evin içişleri, kadının idaresi altındadır... Gelinin vazifesi, evdeki büyüklere hürmet etmektir. Kadın kendi oturduğu odayı, kendine ait eşyayı düzenler, çocuğu varsa, önce onun işlerini görür. Kocasın

ait hizmet varsa, onu yoluna kor. Bunun dışında kalan zamanda evin büyüklerine ait işleri görmek, mürüvvetine bağlıdır.

80. Erkeğin yaratılışı ile kadının yaratılışı arasında farklar vardır. Bu farklar, onların çalışma sahalarını ve vazifelerini ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Kadın, her bakımdan inceliğin ve zarafetin timsalidir. Onun cemiyet meydanında korunması gerekmektedir. Başboş bırakılması bir cemiyet için en büyük afettir.
81. Yaratılış, fizyonomi ve psikolojik sebeplerle erkek, ailenin reisi ise de, kadın onun en yakın yardımcısı ve müşaviridir. Kadın çocuk bakımı ve ev işlerinde söz sahibidir. Erkek, adaletle ve eşine danışarak evini idare eder...Sosyal hayatta, erkek kadının sevgi ve şefkatine, kadın da erkeğin himaye, koruma ve idaresine muhtaçtır. Yaratılış ve dış hayatın ağır şartlarına göğüs germek üzere erkek daha güçlü ve cesur, azimli ve iradeli yaratılmıştır. Bütün bunlar kadının değerini asla küçültmez... Bu gibi farklar, bazı fizyolojik, psikolojik ve sosyal zaruretlerin tabii neticesidir.
82. ... Ana ilkin canından ileri gelen güzelliğini verir, yıpranır, bazen sakat kalır; ana yavrusu için çektiği mahrumiyetler ve meşakkatler yüzünden kaybettiği güzelliklerle birlikte, bütün arzularını da genç yaşta kendi eliyle gömer...Bütün bunlara rağmen çilekeş ana yine de küsmez, darılmaz yavrusunu bebek yaşında olduğu gibi derin bir şefkatle har an bağrına basmaya can atar.
83. Yaratıcı, kadını, bütün gücünü ve emeğini, yuvasına, çocuklarına harcamakla görevlendirmiştir. Şüphesiz, bazı istisnai durumlarda, kadın da erkeğin işini görür; ona yardımcı, bazen de önder olur. Mesela savaş sırasında, herhangi bir tabii afette, erkeksiz kaldığı zaman... Fakat dediğim gibi bunlar istisnai durumlar.... Amma, sırf lüks için ... para kazanmak istiyorsa; hayır! Böyle gösteriş için, saçma bir gaye uğruna bir hanımın yuvasını, çoluk çocuğunu ihmal etmeye hakkı yoktur. Affedilmez... Evet hanımlar tahsillerini tamamlasınlar, diplomalarını alsınlar; fakat çalışmak mecburiyetinde değilseler, çalışmasınlar. O tahsilin, diplomanın onlara cemiyet içinde kazandırdığı kültür güveni; çocuklarının eğitim ve öğretimine şuurlu ve bilgili olarak yapacakları yardım, yeterli sayılmalı.
84. ...Eğer kadın yuvasına mali yardım yapmak mecburiyetindeyse çalışsın. Yok şuna buna gösteriş yapma uğruna daha çok para kazancı peşindeyse çalışmasın, çünkü Yüce Allah kadını, evinin hanımı, çocuklarının anası olma vasıflarıyla süslemiş; ona bu yönde kabiliyet, güç, ve içgüdü vermiştir.
85. Kadınların erkeklerle yüzde yüz eşit haklara sahip olmaları gerektiği görüşünü savunanlar, ilmi gerçeklere tümüyle ters düşen büyük bir yanılığa düşmüş olurlar.
86. Mesela, kadın kömür ve maden işletmeleri başta olmak üzere bir çok endüstri kurumlarında çalışabilecek bedeni güce sahip değildir. Kadın, biyolojik yönden olduğu kadar psikolojik yapısı itibariyle de ince, zarif ve duygusaldır.

Bu bakımdan cesaret ve atılganlık isteyen alanlarda erkek kadar başarılı olamaz.

87. O halde, erkekler; erkeklere mahsus işleri, kadınlar da kadınlara ait görevleri sırtlamaları gerekmektedir. Kadının ideal yeri aile, erkeğinki hayatın direniş bekleyen meydanlarıdır. Fertleri fabrika ve pazarlarda erkek ve kadınlarıyla bir arada çalışan cemiyetler, yaratılış denge ve yörüngesinden çıkmış, genç kız ve oğulları arasında istikrar unsurlarını kaybetmiş; beşeri bir enkazı seyrettiriyor insana... İşte bu yüzdendir ki kadınlar nesil yetiştirmekten aciz, cemiyet düştüğü buhrandan habersizdir. Çünkü sokak ve fabrika köşelerinde süründürülen kadınlar geceleri uykularını bölerek annelik görevini tam olarak yapmaktan yoksundur.
88. Anayı Cennetle müjdeleyip “Cennet anaların ayakları altındadır” buyururken ana-kadının toplumdaki yerini ve annelerinin rızasının kazanılmasının insanın cennete girmesine sebep olacağına işaret etmişlerdir.
89. Aile ve toplum hayatındaki görevlerin en kutsallarından biri hiç kuşkusuz annelik görevidir... Milletine, memleketine, ailesine yararlı bir fert olarak yetişebilmesi için çocuğun bir takım değerleri daha çok küçük yaşlarda kazanması gerekir. Bu değerler, bütün ömür boyu o insana yardımcı ve manevi destek olacak değerlerdir. Tabii olarak bu değerlerin başında inanç gelir. Çocuğun yüreğine bu inanç tohumlarını ekecek, beynine bu inançlara bağlı fikirleri kazıyacak ilk kişi anne olmalıdır. Çocuk Allah sevgisini, saygısını, gerektiğinde korkusunu, Hazret-i Peygamber’e ve O’nun yakınlarına bağlılığını önce annesinden öğrenecektir.
90. İslam dini onu başta itaatli bir zevce, sonra şefkatli bir anne olarak görmek istemiş; “Hangi kadın olursa olsun, kocası kendinden razı olarak ölürse cennete gider” buyurularak kocaya itaatin önemine işaret edilmiştir.
91. Kadın her hususta kocasının meşru olan isteklerini derhal yerine getirmeye çalışacak... Kadının kocasına itaati o kadar önemlidir ki, kıyamet gününde kadın önce namazından, sonra da kocasına itaat edip etmediğinden sorguya çekilecektir... Kadınların kocalarına itaat etmeleri onların cennete girmelerine vesile olacağı gibi ayrıca kadınlara bu itaatlerin karşılığı olarak savaşlarda ölen şehitlerin ve zaferler kazanan gazilerin sevabı kadar sevap yazılacağını Peygamberimiz hadislerinde bizlere haber vermektedir.
92. Kocanın yap dediğini yap ve yapma dediğini yapma, ...Kızım, üstünü başını temiz tut ki, kocan görünecek veyahut kokusunu almak suretiyle iğrenecek bir hale tesadüf etmesin. Böyle hallerde kocanın gözünden düşerek, iğrenmesine meydan vermiş olursun. Bu hallerden sakın... Hiç bir işte kocana isyan etme. Çünkü ona isyan edersen sana kin bağlar. Kin ise aile yuvasının dağılmasına sebep olur.
93. Seni gelin ettiğimde, kocana nasıl itaat etmen, evinin nizam ve intizamına nasıl bakman gerektiği hususundaki öğütlerimi bilirsin. Kocanın itaati altına müteessir olma... Onun söylediklerini memnuniyetle kabul et... Güler yüzlü

ol. Yaratılış ve mizaçtan ... çıkabilecek kusurları tahammül et. Sana gerekli olan kocana itaat etmektir.

94. İlmen de sabit olduğuna göre kadın erkeğe nispetle yaratılış itibariyle daha nazik ve daha zayıf yapıya sahiptir. Harici tesirlere karşı mukavemeti azdır. Sinir sistemi çabucak müteessir olur... Buna binaen, Allah bir ayetinde erkekleri kadınlar üzerinde hakim kılarak aile reisliğini erkeğe vermiş ve bu surette fitri bünyelerine uygun olan vazifelere ayırmıştır”.
95. Bir millet erkeği ile yükselir. Fakat bu yüksekliği kadın tamamlar. Yükselmenin kurucusu erkek, tamamlayıcısı kadındır.
96. Kadın ise bünyevi yaratılışına uygun olarak, evin iç idaresi, kocanın bakım ve saadeti, çocuk yetiştirme ve terbiyesi ile vazifelendirilmiştir... Eğer kadın bu vazifelerini ihmal edecek ve fitri yaratılış icabı olan vazife hudutlarını aşarak evin haricinde erkeğin işlerinde çalışacak olursa kadınlık hususiyetleri yıpranır. Cemiyetin kurucusu olan erkeğin muhtaç olduğu iş verimi azalır. Bilhassa istikbaldeki cemiyeti teşkil edecek olan çocukların yetişmesi ahlak ve terbiyeleri geri kalır.
97. Kadının toplumda evini terk ederek dışa dönük çalışarak elde ettiği yükselmenin gerçek yüzünü araştırarak olursanız, çoğu kere perişanlıkla biten bir sonuçla karşılaşsınız. Garp’lı kadınlar, çarşı, Pazar, işyerleri, dans salonları ve benzeri yerlerden geçimlerini temin edebilme arzusuyla sokağa döküldüler. Böyle yapmakla kadın ne haysiyet ve ne şeref kazandı?...İslamiyet kadına meşru olan her hakkı tanımış, fakat kadın için fitratına en uygun olarak aile ve aile içindeki vazifeleri göstermiştir.
98. ... İnsanlık düşmanları, aileyi ayakta tutacak olan kadını moda ve israfa kaptırarak sokağa sürüklemeye, kocasından, evinden, ocağından ederek neslimizin iyi yetişmesini engellemeye, bozuk bir neslin meydana gelmesine sebep olmaya çalışmaktadırlar. Müslüman Türk hanımları bu oyunlara gelmemeli, bu tuzaklara kapılmamalı, annelik görevine talip olmalı ve sahip çıkmalıdır.
99. Kadın için en önemli vazife, iffet ve hayalî bir ömür sürmesidir. Kadın eşine karşı da saygılı olmalıdır. Cemiyetin temel taşı olan çocuklarını terbiyeli, ahlaklı, büyüklerine saygılı, vatan ve milletini seven ve gerektiğinde yurdu ve milleti için canını veren bir evlat yetiştirmelidir. Bu görevleri yerine getirenler, şüphesiz Cennetlik kadınlardır.
100. İslam bilginlerinin büyük çoğunluğuna göre, görevin ağır ve zor oluşu sebebiyle, peygamberlik için gerekli diğer beş sıfat gibi, erkek olmak da peygamberliğin şartlarındadır. Bu itibarla, kadınlardan peygamber gelmemiştir.
101. Sevgili Peygamberimiz bir hadislerinde: “Hepiniz çobansınız ve idarenize verilenlerden sorumlusunuz. Devlet Başkanı milletinden sorumludur. Aile reisi, aile fertlerinden sorumludur. Kadın, kocasından, evinden, malından ve çocuklarından sorumludur. Hizmetçi, efendisinin malını korumaktan

sorumludur...” buyurarak, toplumda herkesin bir sorumluluk taşıdığına ve herkesin taşıdığı sorumlulukların gereğini yapmak zorunda olduğuna işaret etmişlerdir.

102. Nitekim “Emriniz altındadırlar “ ifadesi “Sizin kölelerinizdir” diye kasıtlı olarak tahrif edilmiş, bir hadiste geçen “Hepiniz çobansınız, elinizin altındakilerden sorumlusunuz. Kişi çobandır, ailesinden sorumludur” ifadesine yer verildikten sonra hadisın kadınlarla ilgili bölümü... çıkarılmış, üstelik “Bakınız erkekten söz ediliyor ama kadından söz edilmiyor” manasında Hz. Peygambere bühanda bulunulmuştur.
103. Yetişmemiş bir annenin çocuğundan pek hayır gelmez. O çocuk ne okulda muvaffak olur, ne de hayatta”.
104. Bizim milletimizin mayasında dindarlık vardır... Fakat dindar bir gençliği rejim için tehlikeli görenler hala vardır... Halbuki, dindar bir gençlik, kendileri için de bir hayat sigortasıdır. Böyle bir gençlik geldiği takdirde sadece cemiyetin manevi huzuru artmakla kalmayacak, sistemin içinde herkes kendi yerini alacaktır... Bu kadro zannedildiği gibi, dini ve ahlaki boyutu bile ihmal eden bir eğitim sistemiyle yetişmez, yetişemez. İnsanı ancak, eğitilmiş insan yetiştirir.
105. “Yavrum büyür inşallah” diyerek, daha kundaktaki yavrusunu Allah, Peygamber ve vatan sevgisi aşılayarak büyötmeye çalışır. Türk anası... Şayet çocuk kız ise; “Ölürse, yer beğensin, kalırsa yar beğensin” diyerek yetiştirir. Yine erkek çocuğuna: “Haydi yavrum, ben seni bugün için doğurdum. Hamurunu yiğitlik duygusu ile yoğurdum. Türk Evladı o dur ki, vatan toprağını namus bilerek yurduna düşman bayrağı açtırmaz”. Edep ve haya örneği kızlar, hanımlar böyle yetişir. İşte böyle gönülleri vatan sevgisi ile dolup taşan, İslam edep ve haya timsali kahraman kadınların (anaların) ayakları altındadır Cennet.
106. Başta tevhid inancını esas alan din hizmeti olmak üzere; ilim aşkı, vatan ve millet sevgisi, şehitlik ve gazilik ruhu, kardeşlik duygusu, ahlaklı, faziletli ve çağdaş insan yetiştirme gayreti, bütün bu değerlere bağlı kalarak her alanda ileri gitmek ve toplumu kaldındırmak azmi, Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı'nın ömrün bereketlendiren ve geçmişini şereflendiren değerlerdir.
107. Hz. Aişe, Peygamberimiz vefat ettiği zaman çok genç olmasına rağmen Kuran-ı Kerim'i ve Hz. Peygamber'in sünnetini en iyi bilen, anlayan ve muhafaza eden sahabilerin başında yer alır. O, hem baba evinde, hem Peygamber'in yanında zekası, anlayış kabiliyeti, öğrenme arzusu, kuvvetli hafızası, aşk ve imanı sayesinde en iyi şekilde yetişti ve başkalarına nasip olmayan bilgiler edindi... Hz. Aişe, Resul-I Ekrem'den aldığı feyiz sayesinde İslam esaslarının en mümtaz öğreticisi oldu. Kuran-ı Kerim'i tefsir etti. Kur'an'ı en iyi anlayanlardan biriydi... Rivayet ettiği hadislerin sayısı 2210 olup, bu hadislerin çoğunu doğrudan doğruya Hz. Peygamber'den nakletmiştir... Hz. Aişe, Peygamberimiz zamanından başlamak üzere, kadınların eğitim ve öğretimiyle yakından meşgul oldu... Hz. Ayşe'nin kadınlık alemine hizmetleri çok büyüktür. Biz sadece bunlardan bir nebze

bahsettik. Kadın da erkek gibi, dini ilmi, içtimai, siyasi kısacası her türlü işi ve görevi başarabilir.

108. Hz. Aişe, mübarek eşleri ile birlikte hayatın bütün safhalarında rol almış örnek bir şahsiyettir. O özellikle kadınlara kendi yaşantısı ve uygulamaları ile örnek olmuş ve kadınların bütün sosyal hayatın içerisinde var olduğunu hiç bir tereddüde yer bırakmayacak şekilde ispatlamıştır. Bedir harbine katıldığı, Uhud harbinde hemşirelik görevi yapıp su dağıttığı, bütün kaynakların ifade ettiği hususlardır.
109. Hz. Peygamber'i en fazla kıskanan ve sevgisini kazanmak için en çok gayret sarf eden de o idi. Hz. Peygamber'in çok sevdiği ve hatırasını daima canlı tuttuğu Hz. Hatice'yi bile kıskanır ve bu husustaki hislerini Rasul-i Ekrem'e ifade etmekten çekinmezdi.
110. Bir başka sefer yine Hz. Hatice'nin anılması üzerine, Hz. Aişe "Dünyada bu kocakarıdan başka kimse yok mudur? Allah sana, O'ndan daha hayırlı bir hanım nasip etmedi mi?"
111. "Hanımlar! Bugün elimizde top, tüfek denilen alet yok; fakat ondan büyük, ondan kuvvetli bir silahımız var; Hak ve Allah. Top ve tüfek düşer, Hak ve Allah bakidir. Topun yüzüne tükürecek kadar evlatlar, analar, kalbimizde aşk ve iman, milliyet duygusu var. Biz dünyada millet sınıfına layık bir millet olduğumuzu, erkek, kadın, hatta çocuklarımıza kadar ispat ettik".
112. Aile içinde çocukların eğitimi, erkek eşin ve evin ihtiyaçlarını karşılamakla, pek çok sorumluluğu aynı anda üstlenerek yürütmek durumunda kalan kadınlar, aile içinde sorunlar ve çatışmalarda da sıklıkla uyum, uzlaşma ve işbirliği davranışı göstermeye çabalamaktadırlar... Erkek eşler ise zorlama ve kaçınma davranışını daha fazla gösterme eğiliminde olabilirler... Özellikle ekonomik açıdan bağımsız, eğitilmiş ve çalışan kadınlarda aile içinde eşitlik ve uzlaşma özlemine yönelik tepki daha belirgindir. Kadınlar, erkeklerin fiziksel açıdan daha güçlü olmasını, aile içi ilişkilerde, sorumluluk ve rol dağılımında da erkeğe güçlülük tanımamasını sorgulamaktadırlar... Gerçekte kadının fırsat, ücret statü, görev açısından eşitsizliklere rağmen sosyal ve insani açıdan saygın ve erkekle eşit olma mücadelesini doğal karşılamak gerekir....Fedakarlığın her zaman kadın eşten beklenmesi, annelik ve eşlik sorumluluğu ile ev dışı sorumlulukları aynı anda yüklenmek durumunda olan kadını tüketici bir süreçtir.
113. Kuran-ı Kerim'in Mücadele suresi, adından da anlaşılacağı üzere, örnek Müslüman bir kadının siyasi otorite nezdinde hakkını elde edebilmek için gösterdiği çabaları anlatan bir suredir. Siyasi otoritenin itirazına rağmen, kadın haklı davasında ısrar etmiş, uğradığı zulmü Allah'a şikayet etmiştir. Bu kadının haklarını elde edebilmek için gösterdiği örnek gayret ve çaba Allah'ın takdirine mazhar olmuştur. Bu kadın aklının gücü ile Allah'a giden yolu görmüş, kocasının azgınlığına tabi olmamış, hatta kavminin geleneklerinden kendini sıyrarak kavminin benimsemiş olduğu alışkanlığa önem vermemiştir... Bu ve diğer örneklerde açıkça görüleceği üzere kadınlar ancak aradıkları ve çabaladıkları sürece örf ve adetten sıyrılarak bir takım

haklara sahip olabilmekte, aksi durumda toplumda oluşan örf ve adetin getirdiği hak sınırlamalarına maruz kalabilmektedir.

114. ... annelik duygusunun zayıflaması aile bağlarını zayıflatmıştır. Annelik duygusunu zayıflatan da 1960’larda başlayan cinsel özgürlük ve feminizm hareketlerinin yanlış anlaşılmasıdır. Bunun sonucunda da kadına özgürlük! cinsel özgürlük girişimleri aile bağlarını zayıflatarak, günümüze kadar gelişerek, önüne geçilemeyen sorunlara (uyuşturucu, değerler erozyonu, şiddet, tek ebeveynli aile, boşanma, yabancılaşma ve kimlik bunalımı, vb.) yol açmıştır.
115. Babanın sorumluluk alması demek, aile fertlerinin yeme, içme, barınma gibi temel ihtiyaçlarını karşılaması demektir... Anne özellikle dışarı işleri ile ilgili sorumlulukları yüklenen babaya karşı içeri işlerini kendi yükümlülüğü altına alarak, âdeta ailenin içişleri bakanı gibi hareket etmektedir. Yer yer dışişleri bakanı ile rolleri değişseler de, bu genel davranış biçimini değiştirmez.
116. Peygamberimiz “Kadın, eşinin evinin ve çocuklarının yöneticisidir.” anlamındaki hadisi ile kadına da aile içinde yönetim sorumluluğu yüklemiştir. Kadın; hem ev işlerinde hem de çocuklar, aile içi iletişim, eğitim-öğretim, sağlık, giyim-kuşam, yeme içme ve benzeri konularda yönetim sorumluluğunu çok iyi yerine getirmelidir. Bu, ailenin huzurunu ve devamını sağlayacaktır.... Kadının eşinin meşru isteklerini makul ve olumlu karşılaması gerekir. Bu, Allah ve Peygamberin isteğidir. Kadın, eşine karşı güler yüzlü davranmalı, iyilik ve hizmetlerine teşekkür etmelidir.
117. Peygamber’in kızı Fâtıma’ya bir öğüt olarak evin içindeki işlerin kızına, dışarıdaki işlerin damadı Ali’ye ait olacağını söylemesi bize genel davranış biçimini belirlemede yardımcı olabilir. Buna göre kadının evin işlerini mâkul sınırlar içinde yerine getirmesi normal eşlik görevleri arasında saymak gerekir. Genel olarak vazife paylaşımında yaratılıştan gelen özellik ve farklılıkların da öncelik için bir ölçü olduğu söylenebilir.
118. Aile yapısının korunması, ailede düzenin, huzur ve mutluluğun sağlanması gibi maksatlarla kendisine yönetim ve aile reisliği hakkı tanınmış olan kocaya saygılı olmak kadının başta gelen görevlerindendir ve bu husus ayetlerde ve hadislerde önemle vurgulanmıştır.
119. Kadın, beş vakit namazını kılar, Ramazan orucunu tutar, namusunu korur ve kocasına itaat ederse, kendisine: “Hangi kapısından istersen cennete gir” denilir ... Herhangi bir kadın, kocası kendisinden razı olduğu halde ölürse cennete girer.
120. Her kamu görevinde olduğu gibi devlet başkanlığı için de liyakat şart olduğundan, devlet başkanlığına getirilecek kişinin cinsiyetine değil, bu göreve layık olup olmadığına bakılır Bu bakımdan İslâm’da kadının, kamu görevi yapmasını yasaklayan açık, kesin ve bağlayıcı bir nas yoktur... Bu itibarla, gerekli fitrî donanımı haiz, liyakatli kadınların devlet başkanlığı da dahil, her türlü yönetimde görev almasında dinî açıdan bir sakınca yoktur.

121. Gerçekten kadınlar memurluk, hemşirelik, öğretmenlik ve doktorluk gibi meslekler başta olmak üzere çeşitli özel ve kamu hizmetlerinde başarı sağlayarak ülkenin kalkınmasına ve gelişmesine katkıda bulunabilir...
122. Kadının toplumsal rollerine ilişkin geleneksel kabullerin sarsılmasına bağlı olarak, erkeğin karşısındaki konumu, toplumsal statüsü, kamusal alandaki varlığı gibi konularda yaşanan dönüşümün de Aile Bürosu başvuruları arasında dikkate değer bir yeri bulunmaktadır. Kadının mahrem alandan çıkmasıyla birlikte ortaya çıkan türlü sorunlar (herhangi bir işte çalışıp-çalışmayacağı, hangi koşullarda çalışabileceği, giyim-kuşamı, eşiyle ilişkilerinde görev ve sorumlulukları, çocuklarına karşı yükümlülükleri gibi) hem erkekler hem de kadınlar tarafından söz konusu edilmekte; genişleyen yaşam alanları karşısında modernliğin kadına sunduğu yeni imkanların dini açıdan yorumlanması talep edilmektedir.
123. Mevcut aile yapımızda, ailenin reisi yahut aileyle ilgili konularda birinci derecede sorumlu olan kişi, yine babadır. Bu durumda, evin ekonomik açıdan ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak da birinci derecede onun görevidir. Anneler ise, ilk ve temel olarak çocuklarına annelik etmelidir. Annelik görevi içerisinde baba çalıştığı sürece, çalışıp para kazanma ve ailenin geçimini temin etme zorunluluğu yoktur.
124. Geçmişte erkek evin geçiminden, kadın da ev işleri ve çocukların büyütülmesinden sorumluydu. Günümüz toplum yapısında kadınlar giderek daha fazla çalışma hayatında yer alıyor, bunun sonucu olarak da kadının rolü sadece ev idaresi ve annelik değil. Çoğu ailede kadın artık evin geçimi ile ilgili sorumlulukları eşiyle birlikte paylaşıyor ve eve ayırabildikleri zaman ister istemez daha kısıtlı. Böyle olunca babalar da ev yaşamı ve çocuklarla ilgili konuları daha çok paylaşmak durumundalar.
125. Her ne kadar zaman zaman aralarında rekabet hissinden doğan sürtüşmeler vaki olsa da Hz. Hafsa Allah Rasulü'nün hanımları arasında en çok Hz. Aişe ile anlaşmıştır. Bu nedenle ikisinin Rasulüllah'ı diğer hanımlarından kıskandıkları ve zaman zaman bu konuda iş birliği yaptıkları olmuştur.
126. Nitekim bir defasında Hz. Peygamber'in hanımlarının odalarını dolaştığı sırada Ümmü Seleme'nin (veya Zeynep bint Cahş) yanında diğerlerinden fazla kalmasının sebebini araştırmış ev sahibinin Rasul-i Ekrem'e bal şerbeti ikram ettiğini öğrenmişlerdi. Hz. Peygamber yanlarına geldiğinde üzerinde tuhaf bir koku bulunduğunu, bunun da yediği baldan kaynaklandığını ima edip, onun bazı hanımlarının yanında kalmasını adeta protesto etmişlerdir... Hz. Hafsa ile ilgili bir diğer olay da Allah Rasulü'nün ona bir sır vermesi, onun da bu sırrı saklayamayıp rivayete göre Hz. Aişe'ye haber vermesi... Sebebi kesin olarak bilinmemekle beraber muhtemelen sır saklamadaki kusuru yüzünden Hz. Peygamber'in Hz. Hafsa'yı ric'i talak ile boşadığı... bunun üzerine Allah'ı Teala'nın Rasul-i Ekrem'e Hz. Hafsa'yı boşamamasını emrettiği... [bunun] üzerine onu boşamaktan vazgeçtiği rivayet edilmektedir.
127. Yahudi bir aileden gelen Hz. Safiyye'nin devesi, bir sefer sırasında hastalanınca, diğer eşi Hz. Zeynep'ten ona bir deve vermesini istemişti.

[Peygamber] “Şu Yahudi kızına mı vereceğim?” diyen Hz. Zeynep’e iki ay kadar dargın kalmıştı (Köksal, 2012: 43).

128. Hz. Aişe ve Hz. Ali arasında çeşitli mektuplaşmalar ve müzakereler olmuşsa da hicretin 36. Yılı Cemaziyelahir’inde Müslümanlar arasındaki ilk kanlı çarpışma engellenemedi. Bu olay, Hz. Aişe’nin çarpışmaları devesinin üzerinde idare etmesinden dolayı Cemel Vak’ası diye meşhur oldu. Sonunda Hz. Aişe’nin tarafı savaşı kaybetti... Hz. Osman’ın halifeliğinin son yıllarında başlayıp Cemel Vak’asıyla sona eren siyasi faaliyetleri, sonraları onu çok üzmüştür. Bir çok Müslümanın ölümüne sebep olan bu acı olayları yaşamaktansa daha önce ölmeyi tercih ettiğini söylemiştir. Peygamber hanımlarının evlerinde oturmalarını emreden ayeti (Ahzab 33) her okudukça baş örtüsü ıslanıncaya kadar ağladığı rivayet edilir.
129. Ümmü Seleme Rasul-i Ekrem (s.a.s.) in vefatından sonra hiç bir idari ve siyasi faaliyete karışmayıp, toplum içindeki saygın ve üstün konumunu hayatının sonuna kadar muhafaza etmiştir.
130. Bugün nüfusun yarısını kadınlar oluşturmaktadır. Toplumun imarında kadınların önemine dikkat çeken Peygamberimiz, “Hanımlarımız mescitlere gitmek için sizden izin isterlerse onlara izin verin” buyurarak kadınların mescitlere gitmesine engel olunmamasını istemiştir...Toplumun inşasında oldukça önemli bir yere sahip olan [kadınların] ilim, kültür, sanat vb. her açıdan yetişmeleri husussunda yapılan her çalışma aynı zamanda istikbale yapılan değerli bir yatırımdır.
131. Eleştiriye oldukça kapalıdırlar. Kendine rağmen herkesi mutlu etmeye çalışır... Kendi ihtiyaçlarını dile getiremez. Hayır demek zorlanır, sınır koyamaz. Kendini acımasızca eleştirir, kendi için çok yüksek standartlar belirler. Başkalarından da çok fazla şey bekler... Öfke ve çatışmayla baş etme yetileri yeterince gelişemez... Paylaşımı daha azdır...Duygusal ilişkilerinde bağımlılık, kıskançlık görülebilir. Başarısızlığı kabullenmek kolay değildir... Her şeye sahip olamayacağını kabullenmek onlar için zordur... Sürekli kontrol etmek eğilimini taşırlar.

APPENDIX E

PHOTOS OF WOMEN IN THE *DİYANET MONTHLY*



Figure E 1 Woman walking with men

From "Kalp ameli, amelin kalbi samimiyet [Heart's deed, deed's heart, sincerity]" by A.Yüce, 2007, *Diyanet Aylık*, 194, p. 19.



Figure E 2 Women in front of Mufti Office

From "Dinin ve din hizmetlerinin bütünleştirici rolü [The integrative role of religion and religious services]" by A. Melek, 2010, *Diyanet Aylık*, 230, p. 16.



Figure E 3 Crying woman

From "Kadına karşı şiddetin önlenmesinde dinin rolü [The role of religion in preventing violence against women]" by B. Esen, 2011, *Diyanet Aylık*, 241, p. 3.



Figure E 4 Group of women walking on the street

From "Aile, irşat ve rehberlik büroları [Family guidance and counseling offices]" by H. K. Toprak, 2011, *Diyanet Aylık*, 241, p. 32.



Figure E 5 Old woman walking on the street

From "Ahlakla var olmak [Existing with morality]" by Aydın, M. Ş., 2012, *Diyanet Aylık*, 256, p. 29.



Figure E 6 Women praying in mosque

From "Diyanet hizmetlerinde kadınların yeri ve önemi [Women's place and importance in Diyanet's services]" by F. Karaman, 2005, *Diyanet Aylık*, 178, p. 39.



Figure E 7 Women waiting in front of tomb

From "Hurafelerin dayanılmaz cazibesi [Irresistible attraction of superstitions]" by H. Altuntaş, 2006, *Diyanet Aylık*, 186, p. 13.



Figure E 8 Woman praying at home

From "Duayı terk ettirme yüreklerimize ellerimize özlerimize [Do not make us abandon our prayers from our hearts, hands, souls]" by Z. Kayhan, 2007, *Diyanet Aylık*, 201, p. 39.



Figure E 9 Woman walking with her husband and kids

From "Eleştirinin aile ilişkilerine etkisi [The impact of criticism on family relations]" by S. Demirkan, 2006, *Diyanet Aylık*, 185, p. 46.



Figure E 10 Bride at wedding ceremony

From "Beyaz Rahmet [The White Mercy]" by I. Çalışkan, 2012, *Diyanet Aylık*, 254, p. 37.



Figure E 11 Woman serving the elderly women

From "Darülaceze [Darulaceze]" by E. Sağlam, 2008, *Diyanet Aylık*, 209, p. 43.



Figure E 12 Women weaving carpet

From "Kadın emeği, emeğinin değeri [Labour of the woman, its value]" by F. H. Liman, 2009, *Diyanet Aylık*, 216, p. 41.



Figure E 13 Women praying with men

From "Erdemli insan erdemli toplum [Virtuous people virtuous society]" by S. Arpaguş, 2005, *Diyanet Aylık*, 177, p. 34.



Figure E 14 Woman and her daughter on prayer rug (*seccade*)

From "Anneme mektup [A letter to my mother]" by Z. Demir, 2010, *Diyanet Aylık*, 229, p. 40.



Figure E 15 Woman entering mosque with her children

From "Merhamet ve eğitimi [Mercy and education]" by H. Hakelekli, 2011, *Diyanet Aylık*, 244, p. 15.

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