

BARGAINING BETWEEN ISLAM AND KEMALISM:

AN INVESTIGATION OF OFFICIAL ISLAM

THROUGH FRIDAY SERMONS

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2011

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Thesis submitted to the

Institute for Graduate Studies in the Social Science

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Sociology

by

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BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY

2011

Thesis Abstract

Ceren Kenar, “Bargaining between Islam and Kemalism: An Investigation of Official Islam through Friday Sermons”

The main objective of this thesis is to explore the Turkish state’s attempt to regulate Islam through an analysis of the regulation of Friday sermons in Turkey. Drawing on the records of disciplinary measures implemented by the Presidency of Religious Affairs (PRA) and in-depth interviews conducted with *imams* in Turkey, the thesis argues that the Republic developed strategies to realize a state centralization of religion. This is corroborated by the high compliance rate of *imams* with the content of the sermons prepared by the PRA in the absence of serious inspection mechanisms until relatively recently. The compliance of *imams* to the sermons delivered by the state implies that a distinct (nation-)statist disposition has been approved by the *imams* themselves as well, and hence that the republic has managed to create the “republican” *imams*.

Tez Özeti

Ceren Kenar, “Bargaining between Islam and Kemalism: An Investigation of Official Islam through Friday Sermons”

Bu tez Cuma hutbelerini büyüteç altına alarak Türk devletinin İslamı düzenleme, kontrol etme çabasını anlamaya çalışacaktır. Tez, Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı tarafından yürürlüğe konulan disiplin cezaları ve imamlarla yapılan yüz yüze görüşmelere dayanarak, Cumhuriyetin kendi geliştirdiği resmi İslam anlayışını dayatarak dini nasıl devletin kontrolü altında tuttuğunu gösterecektir. Bu iddia, yakın zamana kadar sıkı bir denetim mekanizmasına tabii olmayan imamların Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı’nca hazırlanan hutbelere sadık kalma oranlarıyla da desteklenmektedir. Bir anlamda devlet, kendi “cumhuriyetçi” imamlarını yaratmayı başarmıştır. Bu cumhuriyetçi imamlar Kemalist ideolojinin temel değerleri, endişeleri ve duyarlılıkları ile dini-muhafazakar inançlarıyla aynı anda, birlikte taşımaktadırlar. Daha da önemlisi, bu (milli)-devletçi söylemi, dış faktörlerden değil, kendi kültürel değerleri ve içinde yeşerdikleri dini değer ve duyarlılıklardan türetmektedirler.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

O People, God is one. He is great. Let his benefaction, grace, and love reflect upon you. Our prophet was chosen as a prophet by God, to edify people regarding religious truths. His basic law, as it is known by all of us, is the verses of Qur'an, the meaning of which is clear. Our religion, which gives people the spirit of wisdom, is the final religion. It is the perfect religion. Because our religion is totally consistent with reason, logic, and reality. If it was not consistent with logic and reason, there should have been an inconsistency between our religion and natural laws. Because it is God that created all universal laws.

An extract from the sermon delivered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk on 07/02/1923¹

The passage above is an extract from the sermon delivered by Mustafa Kemal on February 07, 1923 from the mosque of Zagnos Paşa in Balıkesir. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is the first and only president who took on pulpit and delivered a sermon during his term in office. Concise and quotational, this performance epitomizes the Republic's intricate relation with Islam. This sermon is a preliminary step to build the campaign of the Turkification of religion, which can be considered as the zenith of the Republic's endeavor to reform Islam, which manifests the Republican elite's intention to incorporate Islam into politics in a *sui generis* way. As it has been

¹ “Ey Millet, Allah birdir. Şanı büyüktür. Allah'ın esenliği, sevgisi ve iyiliği üzerinize olsun. Peygamberimiz efendimiz hazretleri, Cenabı Hak tarafından insanlara dini gerçekleri duyurmaya memur ve elçi seçilmiştir. Temel kanunu, hepimizce bilinmektedir ki, yüce Kur'an'daki mânası açık olan ayetlerdir. İnsanlara feyz ruhu vermiş olan dinimiz, son dindir. En mükemmel dindir. Çünkü dinimiz akla, mantığa, gerçeğe tamamen uyuyor ve uygun düşüyor. Eğer akla, mantığa ve gerçeğe uymamış olsaydı, bununla diğer ilahi tabiat kanunarı arasında çelişki olması gerekirdi. Çünkü tüm evren kanunlarını yapan Cenabı Hak'tır” . Unless otherwise stated, all translations are mine.

frequently voiced by scholars investigating state-religion interaction in Turkey, the Turkish Republic since its foundation has not aimed to disestablish Islam, rather they have attempted to re-establish it through indoctrinating a revitalized, liberal, “protestant” type of Islam that is freed from its former “superstitious” or “outmoded accretions”. Rather than restricting Islam to the private realm and rendering it a private affair, the Turkish modernizers utilized Islam as a public religion, as long as it coincided with the aspirations of the Republican elite and was articulated as a national religion, namely Kemalist Islam – epitomized in an Atatürk-Mohammad synthesis.

Despite the consensus in the literature on Turkish laicism that the Turkish state had instrumentalized Islam in accordance with different political needs, it is striking to observe that there only a few studies, which focus on the institutions formed and policies adopted by the Republic to accomplish this incorporation, among the plethora of studies concentrating on different aspects of the Turkish experience with laicism. While issues like the veil arouse considerable scholarly interest, it would not be too daring to argue that the Presidency of Religious Affairs stands as an understudied institution in terms of its organizational structure, history, policies, and ideological framework. Here one need to mention the pioneering studies of İftar Gözaydın and İsmail Kara, which shed valuable light on the dynamics of the state-religion interaction in Turkey. The lack of such case studies obscures the discussions on Turkish laicism and reduces this complex phenomena into a tug of war between a frantically laic regime, hostile to any public expressions of religion, and an Islam desperately struggling to keep its hold on the daily lives of the citizens of the newly established republic.

The initial motive of this thesis is to conduct a research focusing on the Turkish state's attempt to regulate Islam through investigating the regulation of Friday sermons in Turkey. The Republican elite were adamant in taming Islam and exerted a notable effort in indoctrinating a particular interpretation of Islam. The Presidency of Religious Affairs, a body whose function was defined as the dissemination of this "official" understanding of Islam, became the *de jure* monopoly in the production of religion, and any possible alternatives – Islamic brotherhoods, sects, etc. – that may pose a challenge or threat against this monopoly were eliminated from the public sphere.

One of the most important duties of the PRA is to provide, disseminate, and monitor the sermons delivered in the mosques located all around Turkey since 1965. Sermons, in the felicitous phrase of Richard Antoun, are "cultural brokers", the media through which the *imam* interprets and rearticulates Islam to rapidly changing conditions in the modern world, conciliating between the great traditions of Islam and local practices and events.² Since 1980, upon the request of the junta government, extemporaneous sermon delivery is strictly prohibited and the *imams* are obliged to comply with the sermons prepared by the PRA.

This study seeks to make a modest contribution to the dynamic and complicated relation between the Turkish state and Islam, through focusing on the Republic's policy regarding the preparation, dissemination, and monitoring of the Friday sermons. With this, it intends to question whether the existing theoretical and historical literature on Turkish laicism is sufficient for clarifying what was/is going on in practice. An analysis of the policies on the control of sermons would explore

² Richard Antoun, *Muslim Preacher in the Modern World: a Jordanian Case Study in Comparative Perspective* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 12-14.

the changing attitudes and strategies, which are molded with different political needs, of the state in containing Islam. Additionally, drawing upon the records of disciplinary measures implemented by the PRA and in-depth interviews conducted with *imams* in Turkey, this study attempts to reveal whether *imams* comply with the advisory sermons disseminated by the central body and the motivations behind this obedience.

Accordingly, the first chapter of this thesis comprises a discussion of the literature on Turkish laicism. Through an analysis of the secondary literature on Turkish nationalism and its distinctive traits, which demarcates it from other cases, I will argue that the uniqueness of Turkish laicism stems from its monopolization of the production of religious knowledge. It will thus be contended that Islam played and continues to play a pivotal role in forming Turkish national identity and it has been used as a marker to determine which groups would be included in and excluded from the “imagined community”. However it will also be suggested that the visibility of a particular Islam was tolerated by the Republican elite and this Islam was a “tamed” version which did not clash with the vital concerns of the secular establishment. The Presidency of Religious Affairs, with its vast structure, is utilized to propagate the official Islam envisaged by the political elite. A brief comparison between other Middle Eastern experiences on controlling and producing religion is also included in this chapter. Through this comparison it will be demonstrated that while the state’s involvement in the control of religion is a worldwide phenomenon, the monopoly on the production of religious knowledge and the elimination of any alternative sources of production is a peculiarly Middle Eastern phenomenon – despite variations in the strategies involved.

The second chapter will focus on the establishment and the functions of the PRA. Since the founding of the PRA was accompanied by the abolishment of the Caliphate and the office of *Sheikh-ül-Islam (Fetvahane)*, the question whether the PRA represents rupture or continuity and the extent to which the PRA assumed the prerogatives of the institution of *Sheikh-ül-Islam* is significant. It is noteworthy that with the establishment of the PRA, Islam was institutionalized in the form of a government agency and was integrated into the government structure, keeping with the Ottoman pattern of including the *ulema* (ulama) within the state. Furthermore, this chapter traces the historical development of the institution throughout the Republican history. It will be demonstrated that during the single party era, the institution was a weak and relatively small one. The penetration of the Turkish state into the mosques through the PRA is a rather late development, which corresponds to the transition to multiparty politics in Turkey. This infiltration was accentuated by an increasing control of the central body by the junta government in the wake of the 1980 coup and in the late 1990s, during what has been commonly called the February 28 period. This chapter will utilize the relevant parliamentary proceedings, legal texts, issues of the newspaper and magazine published by the PRA, as well as the relevant secondary literature to substantiate these arguments.

The last chapter of the thesis will focus on the preparation and dissemination policy of sermons throughout Republican history. This chapter examines different sources of sermons, printed sermon catalogues, as well as the legal texts and regulations on sermons. I also attempt to determine the extent to which the central body of the PRA effectively carries out inspection of the *imams* and the extent of compliance with the advisory sermons distributed by the PRA. In this chapter, I

analyze the advisory sermon booklets, the PRA magazine and newspaper, interviews with *imams*, and the records of disciplinary actions taken against the *imams* for not complying with the guidelines of the PRA.

Through my examination of the inspection of the sermons of the PRA, I aim to demonstrate that apart from the exceptional period of the 28 February process, the presence of the state in the mosques located all around Turkey is far less than is conventionally assumed. I believe that this finding entails a reassessment of the state intervention into religion in Turkey, demonstrating that the “aggressiveness” of Turkish laicism is not the rule, but an exception. Moreover, the high compliance rate of the *imams* in delivering the sermons prepared by the central body, might pinpoint to the affinity between these supposedly contrasting perceptions and dispositions, or more broadly Kemalism and Islam. Not only was Republican imagery inspired from Islamic codes; more importantly, an Islamic *weltanschauung* was integrated into and assimilated by the Republican imagery via such Islamic teachings as advocacy of obedience to authority (the Republican state), which represents not only the nation and its interests but also the (Islamic) community. The PRA is an institution where these two supposedly contrasting cultures meet and coexist without overt dissonance. Thus, while the PRA responds to the needs of the pious to a certain extent, it was also highly regarded by the secular Kemalist establishment (before it became untenable in the context of the post-28 February “militant” laicism of the secular establishment). This is because the PRA advocated and practiced a traditional Islam which did not clash with the concerns of the secular establishment. While the PRA’s Islam was predominantly a “non-political” and tamed one, it was not so only because of the establishment’s suppression of the other alternatives and its imposition of this

particular interpretation by decree. It also stemmed from the congruence of this interpretation of Islam (as it was in the Ottoman Empire) with the value-system of the republic and “accommodationist” attitude *vis-à-vis* the political authorities. The PRA, then, is a site where the overlap between these two ostensibly opposing dispositions became apparent.

CHAPTER 2

PRELIMINARY NOTES ON STATE RELIGION INTERACTION

The *sui generis* character of Turkish laicism has always generated scholarly interest, and the exceptional case and aberrant nature of Turkish laicism has been examined by a cross-section of analysts. From the early Republican (Kemalist or quasi-Kemalist) social science literature³ to recent critical approaches,⁴ Turkish laicism has been demarcated from other experiences, especially from European ones. Turkey was the first Muslim country to encounter the challenge of laicism and the burden of westernization. This has made it stand out as an exceptional yet inspiring case for other Muslim countries⁵ attempting to emulate the modernization policies of the Turkish reformers despite heavy criticism faced at home.

The role of religion has always been a controversial issue for Turkish modernizers, who frequently equated modernization with westernization.⁶ The

³ For the legal development of secularism in Turkey, see Ali Fuat Başgil, *Din ve Laiklik*, (Fakülteler Matbaası, 1954); Bülent Daver, *Türkiye Cumhuriyetinde Layiklik* (Son Havadis Matbaası, 1955); Çetin Özek, *Türkiye’de Laiklik* (Baha Matbaası, 1962). Tunaya, Tarık Zafer. “Atatürkçü Laiklik Politikası”, In *Devrim Hareketleri İçinde Atatürk ve Atatürkçülük*, edited by T.Z. Tunaya (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2002), Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968). Those works refrain from developing a critical approach towards the Kemalist understanding of Kemalism; yet, both authors note that Turkish laicism has an exceptional pattern which is fundamentally different from European examples. However, the aberrant status of Turkish laicism is justified on the grounds of the “special conditions” of Turkey.

⁴ See Esra Özyürek, *Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Nilüfer Göle and Ludwig Ammann, *Islam in Public* (Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2006); Andrew Davison, *Secularism and Revivalism in Turkey* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) ; Yael Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Elizabeth Özdalga, *Modern Türkiye’de Örtünme Sorunu, Resmi Laiklik ve Popüler İslam* (İstanbul: Sarmal Yayınları, 1998).

⁵ The Turkish state became a model for state formation in much of the Muslim world in varying degrees yet especially in Iran during the Pahlavi period, Arab nationalist regimes, Indonesia, Pakistan. See Vali Nasr, “Lessons from the Muslim World”, *Daedalus* 132, no. 3 (Summer 2003), p. 68.

⁶ Şükrü Hanioglu and Şerif Mardin shed valuable light on how the late Ottoman intelligentsia had problematized Islam during this westernization project and imported the Orientalist approaches of

Kemalist founders of the Turkish Republic inherited the alleged tension between modernity and Islam, and imported the Orientalist assumption that condemns Islam as an obstacle hindering progress and modernization. Accordingly, the Turkish Republic formed a dynamic and complicated relation with religion through its employment of a double discourse towards Islam. On the one hand, the Republic has never abstained from imposing aggressive restrictions on religion; on the other, it has instrumentalized Islam by accommodating and incorporating Islamic politics into the system in various ways in order to perpetuate the legitimacy of its existence.⁷ The Republic sought to coalesce positivism, nationalism and Islam within a “Turkish” Islam that was supposed to be compatible with modernity, which was perceived as tantamount to the western way of life and exerted great energy to develop tools to inculcate this nationalized Islam in the masses. This seemingly contradictory characteristic of Turkish laicism engendered an uneasy relation between Islam and the state. Rather than assuming that there is an ultimate incongruence between Kemalist modernization and Islam, it is essential to pinpoint the contingent relation between the two.⁸

western intellectuals that grants Islam a fundamental role in explaining the “backwardness” of the East. See Şükrü Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Düşünür olarak Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi* (İstanbul : Üçdal Neşriyat, 1981) and Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought : A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000).

⁷ Ümit Cizre Sakallioğlu, “Parameters and Strategies of Islam-State Interaction in Republican Turkey”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28, no.2 (Spring, 1996), p. 231.

⁸ Talal Asad’s contribution to overcoming this essentialism is quite insightful; The secular I argue, is neither continuous with the religious that supposedly preceded it (that is, it is not the latest phase of a sacred origin) nor a simple break from it (that is, it is not the opposite, an essence that excludes the sacred). I take the secular to be a concept that brings together certain behaviors, knowledge, and sensibilities in modern life. To appreciate this, it is not enough to show that what appears to be necessary is really contingent-that in certain respects “the secular” obviously overlaps with “the religious.” See Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 25.

The first chapter of this thesis attempts to portray the theoretical debates regarding the state-religion interaction, particularly focusing on the Turkish case and utilizes the relevant secondary sources. Nevertheless, in order to realize the characteristics of Turkish laicism and the uneasy relation between the Turkish state and Islam, the Turkish case should also be placed in a broader picture. Hence, after a brief literature review on Turkish laicism, it will be suggested that state control over religion is a global phenomenon and a complete “disestablishment” between state and religion is hardly encountered. This will be followed with an investigation of the distinguishing traits of Turkish laicism that set it apart from other cases. In this section the ambivalent relationship between the Turkish state and Islam will be analyzed and the position of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, which stands at the crossroads of the discussions and controversies around Turkish laicism, will be elaborated. Finally, in the last section, especially through focusing on two cases, Egypt and Jordan, the uniqueness of the PRA will be discussed. With this, it is intended to demonstrate how different actors in different settings can mold state’s control on the majority religion.

Understanding the State-Religion Interaction

The ambivalent relation between the Turkish state and religion poses “the challenge of description”⁹ and apparently there is no consensus among scholars on the appropriate label characterizing the Turkish case.¹⁰ Some scholars use “laicism” and “secularism” interchangeably,¹¹ while others prefer to employ “secularization” and “secularism” to portray the Turkish experience.¹² Then there are those who opt for the term “laicism” instead of “secularism” for the Republican case.¹³ Unlike the earlier studies, which were based on the assumption that a differentiation between the usage of the terms “secularism” and “laicism” is not crucial and accordingly did not refrain from employing these concepts interchangeably, contemporary studies are intellectually sensitive to how these concepts are used. In fact, they have generated

⁹ See. Andrew Davison, “Turkey, a “Secular” State? The Challenge of Description”, *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 2/3 (Spring/Summer 2003).

¹⁰ I have retrieved the following classification from the valuable study of Sevgi Adak Turan. See Sevgi Adak Turan, *Formation of Authoritarian Secularism in Turkey: Ramadans in the Early Republican Era (1923-1938)* (MA Thesis, Sabanci University, 2004), pp. 4-6, for the details of this classification.

¹¹ See. Lewis; Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (New York The Free Press of Glencoe, 1958).

¹² Serif Mardin, *The Genesis Of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962); Mardin, Şerif. “Religion and Secularism in Turkey”, In *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State*, edited by A. Kazancıgil and E. Özbudun (London: Hurst&Company, 1981); Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997); Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London and New York; Routledge, 1993); Özbudun, Ergun. “Turkey: Crises, Interruptions and Reequilibrations”, In *Perspectives on Democracy in Turkey*, edited by E. Özbudun (Ankara: Turkish Political Science Association, 1988); Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (London: Hurst&Company, 1998); Yael Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

¹³ Tunaya, Tarik Zafer. “Atatürkçü Laiklik Politikası”, In *Devrim Hareketleri İçinde Atatürk ve Atatürkçülük*, edited by T.Z. Tunaya (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2002); Mete Tunçay, *T.C.’nde Tek-Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması (1923-1931)* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınları, 1992); Andrew Davison, “Turkey, a “Secular” State? The Challenge of Description”, *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no 2/3 (Spring/Summer 2003).

new terms, such as “assertive secularism”¹⁴ and “authoritarian secularism.”¹⁵ Though a theoretical debate on the usage of secularism or laicism is far beyond the scope of this paper, this study is inclined to use “laicism” rather than “secularism” for delineating the Turkish experience.

Broadly speaking, the term secularism implies:

(A) a jettisoning, divorcing, or dissociating from any kind of religious doctrine, practice, and especially the premise and idea of God from all aspects and levels of human experience and social organization, ranging from individual conscience and ordinary behavior to outlook on reality, symbolic experience, forms of art and inquiry, social norm, custom, education, administration, law, ideology, governance, and politics.¹⁶

Therefore a “secular state” implies a “religion-free” state,¹⁷ where the state stands detached from all systems of religious beliefs. However, laicization refers to the process of submitting something, such as governance, education, to lay control, which may entail a radical separating of religious and state affairs, as in French laicism after 1905. Consequently, laicist political relations distinguish religious affairs from those of the state to some extent and in some ways, but they may also preserve religion in a prominent, lay-defined, official role, something not anticipated in the meaning of secular practices or arrangements.¹⁸

¹⁴ See Ahmet Kuru, “Passive and Assertive Secularism: Historical Conditions, Ideological Struggles, and State Policies toward Religion”, *World Politics* 59, no 4 (July 2007).

¹⁵ Göle, Nilüfer. “Authoritarian secularism and Islamist Politics: The Case of Turkey”, In *Civil Society in the Middle East: Volume II*, edited by A. R. Norton (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996). For the usage of official secularism see Elizabeth Özdalga, *The Veiling Issue, Official secularism and Popular Islam in Modern Turkey* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998).

¹⁶ Andrew Davison, “Turkey, a “Secular” State? The Challenge of Description”, *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no 2/3 (Spring/Summer 2003).

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 336.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 337.

However, in reality, the relation between state and religion is far more complicated than those “ideal type” definitions. Therefore, rather than getting involved in a theoretical debate on conflicting definitions of “ideal types,” which may prevent the interactions of different modes and patterns of state-religion interactions from being portrayed fully, this study focuses on the parameters of state regulation and the production of religion.

State regulation and control of religion is widespread; it is a practice exercised in almost all laic, secular, or religious states, to varying degrees. However, the overcontrol of the state on the majority religion that results in the monopolization of religious production by a state agency is rather exceptional. Therefore, what makes Turkish laicism “aberrant” is not only its tendency to regulate religion in very strict and oppressive terms, but also the state’s *de jure* monopoly of the production of Islamic knowledge, which inevitably diminishes religious pluralism through excluding alternative perspectives on religion from the public sphere and even the private sphere.

Like any other concept in the field of social sciences, the term secularism is defined and rearticulated in different forms. In fact as Charles Taylor pinpoints “it is not entirely clear what is meant by secularism.” See Taylor, Charles. “Modes of Secularism”, In *Secularism and its Critics* edited by R. Bhargava (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 31. Generally the term secularism is analyzed in a tripartite categorization: an increase in the number of people with secular beliefs and practices, a lessening of religious control or influence over major spheres of life, and a growth in state separation from religion and in secular regulation of formerly religious institutions and customs. See Nikki R. Keddie, Secularism and its Discontents, *Daedalus* 132, no.3 (Summer 2003), pp. 14-30. Casanova makes a distinction between “the secular” as a central modern epistemic category, “secularization” as an analytical conceptualization of modern-historical processes, and “secularism” as a worldview. Going further he also elaborates on secularism by exploring the distinction between secularism as an ideology and secularism as statecraft principle. Secularism as statecraft principle refers to the basic principle of separation between religious and political authority, either for the sake of the neutrality of the state *vis-à-vis* each and all religions, or for the sake of protecting the freedom of conscience of each individual, or for the sake of facilitating the equal access of all citizens, religious as well as non-religious, to democratic participation. This kind of statecraft doctrine does not entail any substantive “theory”, positive or negative, of “religion”. For Casanova, when the state holds a particular view of “religion” and entails a theory of what “religion” is or does, secularism becomes an ideology. Jose Casanova, The Secular and Secularisms, *Social Research* 16 (Winter 2003), pp. 1049-1052.

The essentialist view that Islam encompasses all domains including law and the state, and stands as a blueprint for social order, rendering the relations between the Muslim states and religion fundamentally different from western societies is still the common view of many western and Muslim scholars of Islam.¹⁹ However, as Ira Lapidus appropriately states:

The European societies are presumed to be built upon a profound separation of state and religious institutions. This view ignores the variety and complexity of the European cases. It ignores the numerous examples of state control of religion, the phenomenon of established churches (such as the Anglican Church in England), and the concordats in Italy. It ignores the integral connection between religious and political nationalism in such countries as Ireland or Poland. It ignores the close identity between religious affiliation and nationality in Holland and Spain. Finally, it ignores the connection between religion and activist political movements, such as the liberation churches in Latin America. None the less, this presumed difference has commonly been used to account for the differing historical development of western and Islamic societies. Western societies, with their inherent separation of secular and sacred, church and state, civil and religious law, are said to have promoted an autonomous domain of secular culture and civil society which are the bases of modernity. Conversely, Islamic societies, lacking a differentiation of secular and sacred, have been tied to binding religious norms, inhibiting their potential for secularization and development.²⁰

In reality, almost every state across the globe, including the western established democracies, is involved in controlling religion and, in fact, in producing religion to varying degrees. Different historical experiences and political settings give rise to diverse types of relation between the state and religion. Some western democracies have established religions, whereas various western states have an “official”

¹⁹ For such an approach towards Islam, see Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon&Schuster, 1996); Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), and Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

²⁰ Ira Lapidus, “State and Religion in Islamic Societies”, *Past and Present* 151 (May 1996), pp. 3-4.

separation of religion and state.²¹ In fact, every branch of Christianity, with the exception of the Catholic Church, has privileged the establishment, which is not only a symbolic one: the Anglican Church in England, the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, the Lutheran Church in all Nordic countries (Denmark, Norway, Iceland, and Finland, with the exception of Sweden), and the Orthodox Church in Greece. Even in Catholic countries deprived of a “national” church, the state may be the major sponsor of religion: in laicist France, 80 percent of the budget of private Catholic schools is covered by state funds.²² To be more exact: Belgium, Denmark, Monaco, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxemburg, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Austria grant massive state subsidies for religious services. In Andorra, Portugal, Britain, Italy, Malta, Armenia, Poland, Netherlands, San Marino, Russia, Hungary, Romania and France there are limited state funds for religious services.²³

Though the interaction between religion, state, and society is complex, and not fully understood, the government regulation of religion is a common practice. The government regulation of religion is commonly defined as “the restrictions placed on the practice, profession, or selection of religion by the official laws, policies, or administrative actions of the state.”²⁴ Given that over 100 countries have

²¹ Jonathan Fox and Schmuel Sandler, “Separation of Religion and State in the Twenty-First Century: Comparing the Middle East and Western Democracies”, *Comparative Politics* 37, no.3 (April, 2005), p. 317.

²² Casanova, *The Secular and Secularisms*, p. 1061.

²³ John T. S. Madeley, “European Liberal Democracy and the Principle of State Religious Neutrality”, *West European Politics* 26, no. 1 (January 2003), p. 16.

²⁴ Brian J. Grim, and Roger Finke, “International Religion Indexes: Government Regulation, Government Favoritism, and Social Regulation of Religion”, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 2, no. 7 (2006).

government offices responsible for supervising or overseeing religious groups, government involvement in religion is a widespread phenomenon.²⁵

An enlightening comparative survey conducted by Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler demonstrates the complex interaction between religion and the state in western democracies and Middle Eastern countries. According to this survey, a large majority (84.2 percent) of Middle Eastern states have official religions, and the rest of them have strong state support for religion. Nevertheless, 34.6 percent of western democracies also have one or more official religions, and an additional 46.2 percent strongly support one or more religions. Only 19.2 percent of western democracies have full separation of religion and state.²⁶ The results of the survey regarding state attitude toward minority religions, or the extent to which states restrict minority religions, are similar. In the Middle East, 31.6 percent of states outlaw at least one religion, and the remaining states place legal or practical restrictions on minority religions. The survey suggests that no western democracy prohibits any religion, yet half do not give equal treatment and status to all religions. Therefore, more Middle Eastern states adopt a discriminatory approach towards religious minorities than western democracies. The most common forms of discrimination in the Middle East are restrictions on building or maintaining places of worship, bans on proselytizing, and bans on conversions away from Islam. Though religious discrimination seems to be less marked in western democracies, it is by no means non-existent; 61.5 percent of western democracies engage in at least some form of religious discrimination. The most common forms of discrimination among western democracies are the

²⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

²⁶ Fox and Sandler, p. 322.

requirement that minority religions (as opposed to all religions) should register to have official status, and the limits on proselytizing.²⁷

Another significant outcome of the survey is the extent of the regulation of the majority religion. Curiously enough, 89.5 percent of Middle Eastern states regulate Islam, while 15.4 percent of western democracies regulate Christianity. The government regulation of the majority religion in the Middle East frequently manifests itself through restrictions on speech by clergy, restrictions on religious parties, and the arrest, detention, or severe harassment of religious figures.²⁸

Secularism is considered by a number of distinguished political philosophers to be an essential component and prerequisite of a democratic system.²⁹

Nevertheless, as Jose Casanova aptly states, “One could advance the proposition that is the ‘free exercise’ of religion clause, rather than ‘no establishment’ clause that appears to be a necessary condition for democracy.”³⁰ As discussed above, several established democracies do not have a strict separation of religion and state, yet those democracies provide more religious plurality and free exercise than Turkey, where the religious sphere is monopolized by a single agency.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 323-324.

²⁸ Ibid., pp., 323-324.

²⁹ The emphasis on the importance of state neutrality has increased as a response to the strength and assertiveness of socially conservative movements. Rawls, for instance, is known for his emphasis on disestablishment and he suggests that states shall “take the truths of religion off the political agenda” See John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 153.

³⁰ Casanova, *The Secular and Secularisms*, pp. 1062.

Official Religion in Turkey: An Ambivalent Approach Towards Islam

One scale that examines state interaction with religion is based on 9 types of relations: 1- Hostile: Hostility and overt prosecution of all religions, 2- Inadvertent Insensitivity: Little distinction between regulation of religious and other types of institutions, 3- Separationist: Official separation of church and state and slight state hostility toward religion, 4- Accommodation: Official separation of church and state and benevolent or neutral state attitude toward religion in general, 5- Supportive: More or less equal state support of all religions, 6- Cooperation: State support (monetary or legal) of certain churches more than others without endorsing a particular church, 7- Civil religion: Without official endorsement of a religion, one religion as unofficial state civil religion, 8-More than one official state religion, 9-One official state religion.³¹

Regarding the Turkish case, the category of “civil religion” defined on this scale of the interaction between state and religion can be adopted. The category of “civil religion” on this scale also parallels Barrett’s *de facto* criterion for state religion. Barrett develops a commonly used classification, which is grounded on legal provisions, including statements about religion in constitutions, yet also takes the actual practice with respect to favoring the chosen religion or constraining alternative religions into consideration. There are easier cases for detecting a “state religion”: in many situations, the constitution designates an official state religion and restricts or prohibits other forms. However, it is also known that even without these provisions, governments sometimes favor a designated religion through subsidies

³¹ Fox and Sandler, pp. 320-321.

and tax collections or through the mandatory teaching of religion in public schools.

These considerations led Barrett to classify some countries as having a “state religion,” despite the absence of an official state religion in the constitution.³²

Since 1929, when the provision that Islam was the religion of the state was removed from the Constitution, the Turkish state does not identify any state religion in its constitution. In fact, in 1937 the constitution was amended to incorporate the principle of laicism.³³ Furthermore, there are articles in the Turkish Constitution that prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion,³⁴ protect religious freedom,³⁵ and emphasize religious tolerance by stating that even under emergency laws “no one may be compelled to reveal his or her religion, conscience, thought or opinion.”³⁶ Despite the provisions of the constitution, a particular understanding of Islam is the country’s *de facto* religion.³⁷ This “two-pronged”³⁸ policy of the Turkish state toward religion requires an in-depth analysis of both the discursive and legal practices of the Republic.

³² Robert J. Barro and Rachel M. McCleary, “Which Countries Have State Religions?” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 120, no.4 (November, 2005), pp. 1333-1335.

³³ It has been noted that Turkey and Senegal are the only Muslim countries that incorporate the principle of laicism or secularism in their constitution. See Niyazi Öktem, “Religion in Turkey”, *Brigham Young University Law Review* 2, no.2 (January, 2002), p.372.

³⁴ See 10th Article of the Turkish Constitution, Republic of Turkey, The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, *Başbakanlık Basın ve Yayın Enformasyon Genel Müdürlüğü*.

³⁵ See 24th Article of Turkish Constitution .

³⁶ See 15th Article of the Turkish Constitution.

³⁷ See Jonathan Fox, *A World Survey of Religion and the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 247.

³⁸ This term is used by Jonathan Fox. Ibid., p. 247.

In the Turkish case, the state, rather than severing its relation/ties with religion, attempted to accommodate religion as a “helping hand”³⁹ in order to attain solidarity among the nation and perpetuate its legitimacy. Therefore, while there were serious efforts to diminish the public visibility of Islam by imposing secularization policies on the masses as an elite initiative, the overall project of the Republic encompassed several strategies to “tame” Islam and to incorporate religion, monopolized under the rule of state, into politics. Hence, there exist various indicators demonstrating how the Republic utilized Islam as a public religion instead of relegating it to a matter of personal belief and restricting it to the private sphere. The Republic not only made being a “real” Turkish citizen contingent upon being a Muslim and aimed at creating a homogenous and united body of citizens that were unified under the Muslim-Turk identity, it also developed strategies to realize a state centralization of religion which constantly indoctrinated official Islam and preached guidance on how to be a proper Muslim.

When reading Turkish politics, the underlying assumption is that with the establishment of the Turkish Republic, Turkish society witnessed an “identity crisis” due to the new Republic’s bold attempt to remake Turkish identity. This remaking corresponds to a shift from Ottoman identity, which was predicated on the *millet* system, based on religious affiliations, to a new, secular, national identity. For the sake of modernization, this new identity was imposed on the masses, which held onto their Islamic affiliations. Accordingly, it is supposed that the Kemalist nationalist identity and Islamic identity are inherently opposed to one another and that there is a

³⁹ Ihsan Yilmaz, “State, Law, Civil Society and Islam in Contemporary Turkey”, *The Muslim World* 95, no. 3 (July 2005), p.388.

zero sum game between Islam and secularist nationalism.⁴⁰ Apparently, this kind of reading, which perceives secularism as well as nationalism, on the one hand, and religion, on the other, to be mutually exclusive, bears a double essentialism in its conceptualization of both religion and modernism. The notion that the Islamic idea of community as the political unit is not compatible with the modern nation-state is shared by both Islamic advocates in politics and scholars who adopt an essentialist approach.⁴¹ Within this framework, it is taken for granted that both religion and modernism have an “essence” which compels them to be mutually exclusive. Whether celebrated or not, secularism is closely associated with the emergence of the modern nation-state and treated as a constitutive component in modern national identity, which eventually replaced traditional and religious affiliations.⁴² This proclivity to depict nationalism and religion as mutually exclusive categories is not peculiar to the studies on Turkish nationalism. In fact, emanating from the predominance of the “modernist school”⁴³ in nationalism literature, the role of religion in the construction of national identities has been long neglected. Drawing upon the assumption that the importance of religion has declined with the modernization process that entails economic and technological development, the modernist school describes nationalism as the modern substitute for religion, and

⁴⁰ For an elaboration of this reading, see Dov Waxman, “Islam and Turkish National Identity: A Reappraisal”, *The Turkish Year Book of International Studies* 30 (Winter 2000).

⁴¹ See Sami Zubaida, “Islam and Nationalism: Continuities and Contradictions”, *Nations and Nationalism* 10, no. 4 (October 2004). For a discussion of how both Sayyid Qutb and Ernest Gellner perceive religion incompatible with each other.

⁴² See Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Harvard MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

⁴³ The only exception within the modernist school that emphasizes the role of religion in nation-building is Eric Hobsbawm. Citing the cases of Polish, Arab, Russian, and Irish nationalisms, Hobsbawm states that the links between religion and national consciousness can be very close. See Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 67-68 and pp.123-124.

thus overlooked the older cosmologies upon which nationalism is built. Anthony Smith made one of the rare and earliest contributions to delineating the interrelatedness of religion and nationalism. Tracing the pre-modern roots of modern national identities, Smith came up with the premise that religion may be one of the makers of nationalism and stressed the importance of the symbols and traditions provided by particular religions in the construction of modern national identities.⁴⁴

Over the past few decades, there has been a growing interest in studies investigating the actual and complex relation between nationalism and religion.⁴⁵ Contemporary studies demonstrate that religion, not being the antidote of nationalism, served as the cement of nationalism and national identity, especially in states where nationalisms developed with the active sponsorship of states.⁴⁶ British identity was forged as early as the seventeenth century with the notion of a “New Jerusalem” fighting against continental Catholics who were in the service of satanic forces.⁴⁷ Similarly, Dutch identity was molded through the Dutch struggle against the

⁴⁴ See Anthony D. Smith, “Nationalism and Religion: The Role of Religious Reform in the Genesis of Arab and Jewish Nationalism”, *Archives de Science Sociale des Religions* 35 (January-June 1973), pp. 23-43.

⁴⁵ See for instance Bruce Kapferer, *Legends of People, Myths of State* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), for demonstrating that an ancient, hierarchical Buddhist worldview has influenced both the doctrines and the practical expressions of contemporary Sinhalese nationalism. For an analysis on the symbiotic relation between Polish nation-building and the Catholic church and how religion served as a unifying factor in the Polish case, see Chris Hann, “The Nation-State, Religion, and Uncivil Society: Two Perspectives from the Periphery”, *Daedalus* 126, no. 2 (Spring 1997). See Madeley, John T.S and Enyedi, Zsolt ed. *Church and State in Contemporary Europe: The Chimera of Neutrality* (London: Frank Cass, 2003) for an evaluation of the role of the churches in the nation-building process in European countries.

⁴⁶ Van Der Veer, Peter. and Lehmann, Hartmut. ed, *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

⁴⁷ Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.36-65.; McLeod, Hugh. “Protestantism and British National Identity, 1815-1945”, In Van Der Veer, Peter and Lehmann, Hartmut, pp. 44-70. See also Liah Greenfeld, “The Modern Religion?”, *Critical Review* 10, no.2 (Spring 1996), pp.181-188.

yoke of Catholicism.⁴⁸ The Lutheranism of Prussia served the same function.⁴⁹

Catholicism was an indispensable element of the French national identity even in its Republican forms.⁵⁰ As Henry Munson puts it: “Religious and national identity tend to be fused in many parts of the world. To be really Irish is to be Catholic. To be really Serb is to be Orthodox, and to be really Indian is to be Hindu. These statements are not literally or legally true, but they are to some extent true when we examine how national identity is understood in the popular imagination. Religion is among its common marks.”⁵¹ In a nutshell, religion became the distinctive mark of the nations as well as their proof of being (morally) superior to other contending nations. In other words, religions baptized and consecrated nations. The constitutive role of religion in nation-building does not give nationalism an “un-secular” disposition; yet it also leads one to question whether the term “secular Muslim nationalism” stands as an oxymoron or not.

In a similar vein, a more in-depth examination of the construction of the Turkish state would reveal that Islam plays a pivotal role in the articulation of Turkish nationalism and official identity. This role consists of a twofold process;

⁴⁸ Groot, Frans. “Papists and Beggars: National Festivals and Nation Building in the Netherlands During the Nineteenth Century”, in Van Der Veer, Peter and Lehmann, Hartmut, pp.161-177; Van Rooden, Peter. “History, the Nation, and Religion: The Transformations of the Dutch Religious Past”, in Van Der Veer, Peter and Lehmann, Hartmut, pp.96-111; Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall 1477-1806* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.137-168.

⁴⁹ Helmut Walser Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Altgeld, Wolfgang. “Religion, Denomination and Nationalism in Nineteenth Century Germany”, in *Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany, 1800-1914* edited by Smith, H,W (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2001); Wolfgang Mommsen, *Imperial Germany 1867-1918*, (London; New York: Arnold, 1995); Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire 1871-1918* (Leamington Spa: Berg Publishers, 1985).

⁵⁰ Dale K. Van Kley, *The Religious Origins of the French Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 1-13; Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 91-107.

⁵¹ Henry Munson, “Islam, Nationalism and Resentment of Foreign Domination”, *Middle East Policy* 10, no.2 (Summer 2003), p.41.

firstly, Muslim identity became a prerequisite for being considered as a Turkish citizen and, secondly, the “cultural intimacy” of Turkish nationalism is grounded on the “root paradigms”⁵² which were obtained from the Islamic tradition and theology.

It is safe to assert that non-Muslims are not seen as a part of the modern “imagined community” by examining both the discursive and non-discursive practices of the Republic. For instance, it was the religious rather than the ethnic identity that was used as the criterion for differentiating nations during the population exchange between Greece and Turkey in 1923. Similarly the minority groups of Turkey were defined as non-Muslims with the Lausanne Treaty. With the 1934 Law of Settlement, “those who only belong to Turkish ethnicity and culture” would be granted permanent settlement in Turkey. It is obvious that what was meant with Turkish culture is Islam since while Muslim groups (Albanians, Bosnians, Pomaks, and Sandjak Muslims) were regarded as culturally “Turk,” the Gagauz Turks, who are Orthodox Christians, were not perceived as culturally Turkish.⁵³ The Capital Tax of 11 November 1942 was based on religious and ethnic identity; initially there were two lists, one for Muslims and one for non-Muslims.⁵⁴ This

⁵² I owe this usage to Şerif Mardin, who got his inspiration from Victor Turner. Mardin defines the “root paradigm” as the “clusters of meaning which serve as cultural “maps” for individuals; they enable persons to find a path in their own culture.” For Mardin, “root paradigms” operate at two levels: “as ‘maps’ which provided personal guidance in and projected a picture of an ideal society but also as items in a cultural knapsack which integrated the individual’s perception of social rules and positions with signifiers for images, sounds and colors”. See Şerif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 3-7.

⁵³ See Soner Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey : Who is a Turk?* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

⁵⁴ See. Hakan Yavuz, “Turkish Identity and Foreign Policy in Flux: The Rise of Neo–Ottomanism”, *Critique* 7, no.12 (Spring 1998), pp.1941. and Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and the Crescent* (London: Hurst&Company, 1997). See Chris Hann, “The Nation-State, Religion, and Uncivil Society: Two Perspectives from the Periphery”, *Daedalus* 126, no.2 (Spring 1997), pp. 27-45. for an anthropological inquiry on how this symbiotic relation between Islam and Turkish nationalism has penetrated into Turkish society.

perception that excludes non-Muslims from “Turkishness” was retained after the transition to democracy in Turkey and still structures the language of Turkish politics, from left to right. The Turkish state has always been hostile to missionary activities and has marked converts as potential threats; in fact, in 2001, the Turkish National Security Council prepared a report that listed evangelical missionaries as the third largest threat to Turkey after the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and Islamic fundamentalism. In the same vein, the Turkish Armed Forces prepared another report, entitled “Missionary Activities in Our Country and in the World,” in 2004. This report aimed to inform the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government about evangelical activities and exhorted it to enact new laws to curtail proselytizing. Missionary activities and missionaries are condemned as “dangerous” because it is alleged that they are attempting to divide the nation by converting ethnic and religious minorities such as Kurds and Alevis to Christianity and, accordingly, weaken citizens’ ties to the Turkish state. Apparently, the underlying assumption in this report is that only Muslims can be loyal citizens and the ties that link Turkish citizens to the state are nourished by Islam: the Muslim identity is seen as an indicator of commitment to the Turkish state, nation, and culture. Turkishness is unimaginable and incomprehensible in the absence of a Muslim identity. There have been court cases opened against the converted Christian Turkish citizens who are charged with “insulting Turkishness” due to their missionary activities.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the religious identity of each and every Turkish citizen is marked on the official identity cards from birth and this fact alone may say a lot about the pivotal role religious identity plays in determining the relation between the citizens

⁵⁵ Esra Özyürek, “Christian and Turkish: Secularist Fears of a Converted Nation”, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 29, no.3 (December 2009), p.399.

and the state. These examples can be multiplied through additional study of the legal and administrative structure of the Turkish state. Moreover, it is possible to conclude that the “imagined community” of the Kemalist reformers (and indeed the succeeding cadres) was composed of the Muslim Turks and neither the non-Muslims nor the non-believers were ever considered as a part of this “imagined community.”

Additionally, although the Republican history had witnessed several attempts to “expurgate” Turkish nationalism of Islamic themes and contrive a nationalist narrative that was solely based on Turkish ethnicity, the Islamic themes underlying the “social cement” of Turkish nationalism are patent. Michael Herzfeld draws attention to the metaphorical construction of the nation, which “brings together two superficially unlike entities – genetics as nature and national statehood as culture – and insists on their commonality.”⁵⁶ The “culturalization” of the nation is mostly conducted through the fabrication of norms that are associated with this ethnic identity. Consequently, the nationalist narrative juxtaposes the language of national or ethnic identity tantamount to a language of morality, an encoded discourse about inclusion and exclusion. Thus, the state not only co-opts morality as a function of the state, but also inserts its own identity in the canon of values.⁵⁷ The narrative of Turkish nationalism, except the few and abortive attempts at expurgating Islam from the national identity, came to terms with the authority of Islamic imaginary on the masses and utilized Islamic norms within the allegedly secular nationalist discourse. The Turkish national anthem is written by the “national poet,” Mehmet Akif Ersoy, whose stance is a perfect example of the intersection of the imaginaries of the secular

⁵⁶ Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 41.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 43.

Republic and Islamism. His piousness, anti-Western and anti-materialist views are in harmony with his adoption of nationalist themes. As will be discussed in the following chapters, Islam is used as a marker to divide natives – Muslim Turks – from the West not only in the discourse of the pan-Islamists but also in the discourse of the “secular” nationalists. Extracts from the national anthem of the Turkish Republic evidently manifest how Islam is employed in generating mass mobilization through articulating the rich reservoir of symbols obtained from the vocabulary of Islam.⁵⁸ The immense and powerful imagery of the National Anthem, nourished from both Islamism and Turkish nationalism, appeals to the heart of the nation and accomplishes to arouse national zeal.

The official history narrative of the Republic also reveals the syncretism of religion and nationalism. Portraying Atatürk as the “warrior for faith,” the “champion of Islam,” and the “bearer of salvation”,⁵⁹ the Turkish official history is based on the narrative that “true” Islam is only realized in the Turkish context. As Sam Kaplan observes, school children are thought to take pride in the glorious history of their ancestors, who spread Islam by the sword all over the Middle East. History and religion textbooks attribute the role of leadership to Turkey in the Muslim world. “Directives on Basic Instruction of Atatürk’s Reforms and Principles for Primary and Secondary Schools” urges teachers and textbooks to emphasize “how the Turks have

⁵⁸ Ismail Kara also suggests that the National Anthem stands as profound evidence of how Islamism and Turkish Nationalism can form a syncretic union. According to Kara, the founding fathers of the Republic were very much aware of the reality that Islam and Turkish ethnic identity formed an indispensable union. See. Ismail Kara, *Cumhuriyet Türkiyesi’nde Bir Mesele Olarak İslam* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2008), pp. 21. The Turkish National Anthem is officially adopted in 1921, during the National Struggle. The Anthem depicts the National Struggle as a national and religious resistance against the imperialist West.

⁵⁹ Adil Özdemir and Kenneth Frank, *Visible Islam in Modern Turkey* (London: Macmillan, 2002), p.17.

rendered military services throughout the history of Islam [and] how the Turkish War of Liberation was a victory for Islam.” An example provided by Kaplan from the eighth-grade history book explicitly demonstrates the endeavor to attribute the role of the defenders of Islam to the Turkish nation:

[s]ince the day the Turkish nation accepted Islam it has sacrificed itself for this religion. It had taken upon itself to promote and defend Islam; it had established this religion in all parts of the old world and gave millions of martyrs to this religion.⁶⁰

Remarkably enough, although the Turkish military assumes the role of being the bastion of laicism and “the Republican values,” it draws on Islamic terminology via its extensive usage of the notion of martyrdom. Fevzi Çakmak, the chief of the general staff during of the inception of the Republic, was concerned that the soldiers were “ignorant” about religion and asked the religious authorities to write a book for soldiers to help overcome this ignorance and fuel their religious feelings. Upon this request, the *Askere Din Kitabı* (*The Book on Religion for Soldiers*) was authored by Ahmet Hamdi Akseki, and reprinted several times throughout the history of the Republic. The main idea of the book was that it is Islam that is the religion of the Turkish nation; military service is not only a citizenship duty but also a religious one. In fact, it is a form of worship, and martyrdom is the highest status which promises entrance to heaven.⁶¹ Hence, the use of the notion of martyrdom not only establishes

⁶⁰ Sam Kaplan, “Din-u Devlet all over Again? The Politics of Military Secularism and Religious Militarism in Turkey” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no.1 (February 2002), p.122.

⁶¹ Extracts from the book clearly show how Islam is embedded within Turkish nationalism: “Every nation has a religion . . . but the most truthful one on earth is Islam. . . . Thank God we are Turkish and Muslim;” “Islam also has a sixth pillar, which is jihad, military service. . . . This duty is different from prayer, fasting, hajj, and zakat. Unless this duty is fulfilled, the others cannot be properly performed.” “A deserting soldier cannot avoid death by fleeing. . . . Since by deserting he is also rebelling against God and the prophet, the last place of such people is hell;”, “The status of martyrdom is just below that of the prophet. . . . A martyr is a soldier who dies on duty in defending the homeland from enemy assault for the sake of Allah.” See, Sinem Gürbey, “Islam, Nation-State, and the Military: A

religious homogeneity as the common denominator of the nation, but also demands self-sacrifice in the interests of the nation as a form of worship. Military service is crowned with religious legitimacy and the language of Turkish nationalism is augmented by Islamic themes. The funerals of martyrs, which occur as regular public events in Turkey, stand as both religious and national rituals, where the national and religious identity is reproduced in the everyday public life of citizens.⁶²

However, this is only one side of the story. Since its foundation, the Republic has imposed harsh restrictions on Islam and has attempted to control and regulate all kinds of religious expression. Not only non-Muslims, but Islamists as well were targeted as “others” and potential threats throughout the course of Republican history.⁶³ *Irtica* (religious reaction) is regarded as the worst peril to the Republic, posing the threat of separatism, and serves as the justification for all military interventions, including coup d’états, into Turkish politics. “Interference of the sacred religious feelings in State affairs and politics” is forbidden by the constitution and any alternative interpretation of Islam not in concordance with that sanctioned by the state has been labeled as the “abuse” or “exploitation” of religion. Unauthorized expressions of Islam were excluded from the public domain under the discourse and project of “production of civility”.⁶⁴ Although the Republic had never totally renounced Islam, nor adopted a “Bolshevik” model of secularism, it had assigned

Discussion of Secularism in Turkey”, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 29, no.3 (December 2009), p.311.

⁶² Ibid., 377-378.

⁶³ See Ismail Kara, *Cumhuriyet Türkiyesi’nde Bir Mesele Olarak İslam* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2008) for an evaluation on the harsh restrictions adopted by the Republic against religious orders and figures.

⁶⁴ Christopher Houston, “Civilizing Islam, Islamist Civilizing? Turkey’s Islamist Movement and the Problem of Ethnic Difference”, *Thesis Eleven* 58 no.1 (August 1999), p.85.

itself a mission to “civilize” the allegedly “backward” sections of the society and, in line with this premise, particular public manifestations of Islam were regarded as bigotry. Interestingly enough, the discourse adopted during this “civilization” project was not based on a propagation or advocacy of the elimination of the presence of religion in the public sphere but rather on a reformulation of Islam, which was presented as the “pristine,” “genuine,” and “authentic” Islam. In the quest for finding the “true” Islam, the Republic prohibited alternative sources of Islam that were supposed to inculcate incendiary values and beliefs. Rather than making Islam a private religion, the Turkish secularizers transformed it into a public one, so long as this Islam was a manifestation of its particular understanding of Islam, which was epitomized in an Atatürk-Mohammad synthesis. Through this articulation, the Republic aimed at reproducing the proper citizen, which was equivalent to a proper Muslim, and forming the “social cement” that incorporates citizens within the state. Hence, what constitutes the clash between the Republican elites and religious masses cannot be depicted as a conflict between religious and non-religious dispositions; instead, the clash is between different religiosities and different manifestations of religiosity. As Andrew Davison aptly states:

The separation of religion from its previous position of influence constituted a shift in Islam’s institutional and legitimation position, not its formal, full elimination. How to explain, for example, the new state religious establishment, the state religious educational interest, the marking of religious identity on state identity cards, and the like? Islam was not disestablished; it was differently established. Religion became a separate concern among other state concerns, not separate from politics or the state. Thus it may be said that the RPP removed Islam from the condition of being used as a political instrument in the way it was previously used, but not from the condition of being an instrument of politics as such, since they understood well the role that the state would

play in fostering a specific interpretation of Islam, support for which they have been quite explicit about over the years.⁶⁵

The Presidency of Religious Affairs: Bargaining between the State and Religion

This instrumentalization of Islam was to be achieved through the formulation of an official Islam which is reproduced through the institution of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*). The Presidency Office of Religious Affairs (PRA) is foremost in this uneasy relation between the Turkish Republic and Islam. The existence, functions, and ideology of the institution have been harshly criticized by both Islamists and secular groups or different religious sects.⁶⁶ This suggests that the aberrant nature of Turkish laicism fails to respond and satisfy the expectations of any of those competing groups.

The project of the nationalization of religion and the secularization reforms of the Young Republic to a certain extent represent a continuation of the mentality of the Young Turk era, yet at the same time signify a fundamental rupture from the modernization approaches of the Tanzimat and the Second Constitutional Period. While Ottoman modernization is marked by the notion of reforming the basic traditional institutions,⁶⁷ the Young Republic never abstained from taking zealous measures to institutionalize Islam so as to maintain control over it. One of the first moves of the young Republic was to outlaw certain practices and authorities of

⁶⁵ Andrew Davison, Turkey a “Secular” State?, p. 341.

⁶⁶ See Sonmez Kutlu, “The Presidency of Religious Affairs’: Relationship with Religious Groups (Sects/Sufi Orders) in Turkey”, *The Muslim World* 98, no.2-3 (April 2008). and Necdet Subaşı “Critical Approaches to the PRA”, *The Muslim World* 98, no.2-3 (April 2008).

⁶⁷ Berkes, p. 461.

Islam, including the Caliphate. Autonomous religious lodges (*tekke* and *zaviye*) and Sufi orders (*tarikât*) were banned, the *medrese* school system was abolished, and the PRA was founded.⁶⁸ This does not necessarily imply an attempt to secularize the public sphere, as many scholars claim; but rather may refer to the attempt of the state to monopolize religion under its own rule, eliminate potential “rivals” that function as intermediaries and appeal to people, and impose its own interpretation of Islam and rule out other possible alternatives.

The PRA was established in 1924 as an administrative unit to conduct “services regarding Islamic faith and practices, to enlighten society about religion, and to manage places of worship.” The details regarding the structure of the institution and its historical evolution are provided in the second chapter of this thesis.

The *raison d'être* of the PRA was to serve as a means through which the Republic could propose an interpretation of Islam that was in accordance with

⁶⁸ Alev Çınar, “Secularism and Islamic Modernism in Turkey”, *Etnografica* 10, no.1 (May 2006), pp. 88. The Young Republic had promulgated a package of reforms and implemented a series of policies for “reforming” Islam. Those policies were adopted gradually and shaped within the political tensions and social relations of the time. For instance, while the ruling elite had acknowledged commitment and loyalty to the Caliphate during the national struggle, the same elite did not hesitate to outlaw the Caliphate when it gained a confidence on the inviolability of its rule. Additionally the Republic had intensified the fierceness of the reforms with special measurements, like the maintenance of order, declared after certain uprisings, such as the Şeyh Sait uprising and the Menemen incident. The major moves of the Young Republic can be listed as such: the abolition of the Sultanate (1922), the establishment of the Republic (1923), the abolition of the Caliphate (1924), the abolition of the Ministries of *Şeriat* and *Evkaf* (1924), the unification of education under the authority of the Ministry of Education (1924), the dissolution of the office of Şeyh-ül-Islâm and its replacement with the Presidency of Religious Affairs (1924), the abolition of Religious courts (*Şer'iye courts*) (1924), the closing of tombs (*türbe*), shrines of the saints (*yatır*), and *tarikâts* (1925), the adoption of a law on the use of the hat which banned the fez and veiling (1925), the elimination of all traditional elements of measurement, like the calendar and the clock, and their replacement with the Western equivalents (1925), the adoption of the Civil Code (*Medeni Kanun*) from Switzerland and the Penal Code (*Ceza Kanunu*) from Italy (1926), the elimination of the article declaring Islam as the official religion of Turkish Republic from the constitution (1928), the elimination of the religious aspects from foreign missionary schools through the removal of Arabic and Persian courses as well as religious courses from the curriculum of primary schools and high schools (1929), the dissolution of religious schools (*Imam-Hatips*) and Istanbul University's Faculty of Divinity (1930), the official declaration and inclusion of the principle of secularism in the first program of the Republican People's Party (1931).

official ideology. The founding fathers of the Republic aimed at disseminating and inculcating this interpretation of Islam through this institution that was directly subordinated to political authorities. As Binnaz Toprak states, with the establishment of the PRA, all preachers (*imams*), orators (*hatibs*), preachers (*vaizs*), callers to prayer (*müezzins*) became the “paid employees of the state”.⁶⁹ The intention was to replace the Ottoman *ulema* (ulama) with a new Weberian type of bureaucratic institution: the PRA is not only authorized to conduct the religious services of the society but also empowered with producing and administering the knowledge of Islam in line with its own Islam interpretation that is based on a Sunni Hanafi orientation. The ideological framework of this knowledge of Islam is outlined in the hundredthirty-sixth article of the Constitution:

The Department of Religious Affairs, which is within the general administration, shall exercise its duties prescribed in its particular law, in accordance with the principles of secularism, removed from all political views and ideas, and aiming at national solidarity and integrity.

The PRA is supposed to stand aloof from all political views and ideas; yet it is obliged to function to maintain national solidarity and integrity. In line with this constitutional framework the current president of the PRA, Ali Bardakoğlu, acknowledges that the primary aim of the institution is “preventing religion from being used for political purposes. We should pave the way for individual religiosity instead”.⁷⁰ Keeping religion out of politics and promoting “individual religiosity” in order to maintain national solidarity and integrity are not considered to be the

⁶⁹ Toprak, Binnaz. “Islam and the Secular State in Turkey”, in Turkey, In *Political, Social and Economic Challenges in the 1990s* edited by Balım, C. *et al.* (Leiden: E. J. Brill 1995), p. 35.

⁷⁰ *Chicago Tribune*, 24 October 2004.

political aim or ideological stance of the Turkish state. This is because the official ideology of the Turkish state, Kemalism, dictates that maintaining and protecting the national solidarity and integrity of the Turkish state is the primary function of all citizens and institutions. Therefore, the state comes first, and the primary obligation of the preachers is defined as the “guardianship of the regime,” rather than disseminating religion.

The PRA claims to represent all Muslims in Turkey and professes to accomplish the mission of fulfilling the “religious needs and services” of the Turkish society.⁷¹ The institution is empowered to administer the knowledge and practice of Islam, to inspect all mosques, to appoint imams, and to produce and disseminate Islamic knowledge.⁷² It is possible to classify the functions of PRA into four main categories. First, the PRA manages services relating to worship, including the administration of places of worship and the organization of pilgrimages to Mecca. Second, the PRA organizes religious education in the form of Qur’an courses (under the supervision of the Ministry of Education). Third, the PRA is charged with enlightening the public on religious matters, which includes providing answers to religious questions, preaching, offering guidance, conducting conferences, and publishing religious texts with an aim to inculcate “true knowledge to people.” Fourth, the PRA provides religious services to citizens abroad, in order to strengthen their commitment to religious and national principles (as defined by the PRA). Additionally, it conducts ‘missionary activities’ through education and publications particularly in Central Asia, countering parallel activities conducted by Iranian Shia

⁷¹ Mehmet Aydın, “Diyanet’s Global Vision”, *The Muslim World* 98, no.2/3 (April/July 2008), pp. 164-165.

⁷² Çınar, pp.88-89.

and Saudi Wahhabi groups.⁷³ Administering more than 76,000 mosques and employing more than 74,000 personnel, the PRA is allocated between 0.5% and 1.23% of the national budget, surpassed in size and budget only by the educational system and the armed forces.⁷⁴

Other Experiences in the Middle East

Turkish laicism, thus, not only regulates and monitors all kinds of religious activities but is also involved in, in fact, monopolizes the production of Islam. However, Turkey is not the only case in the Middle East monopolizing the production of religion and maintaining control over religious activities. As one observer has noted:

In the Middle East over the past half-century, three religious processes have grown together. One, the growth of fundamentalism, has received worldwide attention both by academics and journalists. The others, the bureaucratization of religion and the state cooptation of religion, of equal duration but no less importance, have received much less attention. The bureaucratization of religion focuses on the hierarchicalization of religious specialists and state co-optation of religion focuses on their neutralization as political opponents.⁷⁵

Therefore, it is safe to generalize the apt observation of a prominent Egyptian intellectual Rifʿat Saʿid on the Egyptian case to other Middle Eastern countries: “On the one hand they [the Government] are fighting against the Islamists, while on the

⁷³ See Rusen Çakır and İrfan Bozan, *Sivil, Şeffaf ve Demokratik Bir Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Mümkün Mü?* (İstanbul: TESEV, 2005), pp. 63-71.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 105.

⁷⁵ Richard T. Antoun, “Fundamentalism, Bureaucratization, and the State’s Co-optation of Religion: A Jordanian Case Study”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 38, no.3 (August 2006), p. 369.

other they announce or pretend that they are more Muslim than the others”.⁷⁶ Islam becomes “...the language of power and resistance to power”,⁷⁷ Charles Tripp evaluates this instrumentalization of Islam in the context of the “crises of legitimacy”:

First, Islamic themes and symbols have been used to shore up patrimonial, authoritarian systems of rule, supposedly lending them a coloration that augments their authority among predominantly Muslim members of the associated societies. Second, Islam, variously interpreted, has been used by these regimes to give a distinctive character to the identity of the state in order to correspond to the notion that the state represents and speaks for a distinct ethical community.⁷⁸

Therefore, secularization in the Muslim world has commonly been carried out through subjugating religion to political control. Except for Turkey, Lebanon, Syria,⁷⁹ Israel, and Oman,⁸⁰ all Middle Eastern countries declare Islam as their official religion in their constitutions. Yet it is also noteworthy that even in states defined in Islamic terms, there is a *de facto* institutional differentiation of state and religion, and a great variety of relationships between the two. In states like Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Jordan, the Islamic religious establishment is brought under

⁷⁶ Steven Barraclough, “Al-Azhar: Between the Government and the Islamists”, *The Middle East Journal* 52, no.2 (Spring 1998), p. 236.

⁷⁷ Vatin, Jean -Claude “Popular Puritanism versus State Reformism: Islam in Modern Algeria” In *Islam in the Political Process*, edited by J. P. Piscatori (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p.98.

⁷⁸ Tripp, Chris. ”Islam and the Secular Logic of the State in the Middle East,” In *Islamic Fundamentalisms*, edited by A. S. Sidahmed and A. Ehteshami (Boulder, Col: Westview Press 1996), p. 66.

⁷⁹ Syria does not embrace Islam as an official religion, yet Islam stands as the civil religion in the country. For instance the third article of Syria’s constitution states that the President must be a Muslim and “Islamic jurisprudence is a main source of legislation”. See Fox, p.246.

⁸⁰ Oman does not have a constitution, yet its basic law serves the same purpose and the first article of this law declares Oman an Islamic state. See Fox, p. 230.

state control. All of these states have constituted secular educational and judicial systems which actually compete with, and even replace, the primary functions of Islam.⁸¹

The imposition of a particular understanding of Islam that is sponsored by the state is a widespread phenomenon in the Middle East and North Africa. The governments of Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen have government offices for dealing with religious affairs. These offices are responsible for financing most mosques in the country, paying the salaries of imams, monitoring Islamic institutions, providing guidelines for Friday sermons, and, thus, disseminating state-sponsored Islam.⁸² It is in this sense that I find an investigation of two different cases, Egypt and Jordan, particularly illuminating for assessing the status of the PRA, in particular, and state-religion interaction, in general, in Turkey.

Egypt

State intervention in Egypt in religion is carried out through the Ministry of Religious Endowments and the 1000-year-old institution, al-Azhar, which operates under the jurisdiction of this Ministry. The mosques in Egypt, like in many Middle Eastern countries, are composed of two main categories, *hukumi* (governmental or public) and *ahli* (popular or private) mosques. While the former are built by funds that are controlled by the Ministry of Religious Endowments, and staffed by imams

⁸¹ Lapidus, p. 27.

⁸² Fox, p. 223.

who are mostly al-Azhar graduates on the payroll of the State, the latter are established by private individuals or benevolent societies. Until recent times, imams in these private mosques may have been a pious local man, without any formal qualifications, who generally preached for free or for a symbolic remuneration.⁸³ However, as it will be mentioned later, recently the Egyptian state has imposed stricter requirements for those imams in order to increase its leverage *vis-à-vis* mosques.

Traditionally, Egyptian mosques have remained outside state control, but with the nationalization of waqf lands (conducted by Nasser during 1952-57), the government has increasingly captured their administration. Since private mosques outside the government's control could pose a serious challenge to the state, beginning in 1952 and continuing until today, the governments of Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak have each engaged in an ambitious program of subsidizing and nationalizing virtually all of Egypt's mosques. Its impressive scale illustrates the government's serious commitment to the nationalization project. In 1962, the state-controlled mosques numbered 3,006 and constituted 17% of the total mosques while the private mosques numbered 14, 212 and comprised 83% of the total mosques in Egypt. The percentage of state controlled mosques increased to 19% and numbered 6,071 in 1982, while the number of private mosques was 26,622. Between 1982 and 1994, there was a dramatic increase in state-sponsored mosques: their number increased to 50,000, while the private mosques numbered 20,000 and the percentage

⁸³ Tomas Gerholm, "The Islamization of Contemporary Egypt", In *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters between Sufis and Islamists*, edited by E. E. Rosander and D. Westerlund (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1997), p. 135.

of state-sponsored mosques constituted 71% of the total mosques.⁸⁴ The assassination of Sadat contributed to increased efforts to convert all the private mosques into state-controlled mosques; nevertheless, the state has experienced financial difficulty and a lack of human resources while trying to implement the laws obliging the transformation of private mosques into public ones. Not only the question of paying the imam and maintaining the mosque, but also supplying qualified al-Azhar imams for those mosques stands as an obstacle for the Egyptian state in realizing the aim of nationalizing all mosques.⁸⁵ Currently, it is estimated that there are over 120,000 mosques in Egypt, in addition to some 900,000 prayer areas. As of mid-2005, some 92,000 mosques were operated under the supervision of the State.⁸⁶ The independent position of the private mosques varies in relation to the state authority since they are often the sites of religious opposition: the religious establishment and the government-controlled media have been seriously undermined by fiery sermons delivered by charismatic preachers in private mosques.⁸⁷

The Ministry of Endowments builds and runs new mosques and also covers all management costs of privately-built mosques that come to fall under its auspices. The vast expenses of the Ministry are partially covered by endowments, but largely come from the general state budget. Employing more than 400,000 employees, the ministry is one of the largest institutions of the Egyptian state. The budget of the

⁸⁴ Tamir Moustafa, "Conflict and Cooperation between the State and Religious Institutions in Contemporary Egypt", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32, no.1 (February 2000) pp.7-8.

⁸⁵ Gerholm, p. 136.

⁸⁶ Adel Guindy, "The Islamization of Egypt", *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 10, no.3 (September 2006), p. 96.

⁸⁷ John Esposito, and John O. Voll, *Islam and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 176.

Ministry has grown forty times in twenty years, reaching 1.5 billion pounds (about US \$270 billion) in the mid-2000s.⁸⁸

The government issued special regulations for determining who could preach in state-owned mosques and the topics that should be addressed in the sermons by the imams. Until 1970, the selection of imams for state mosques and the monitoring of their activities were carried out by a network of district offices in all of Egypt's twenty-six governorates. In each district, a committee consists of the local directors of al-Azhar, and the Ministry of Endowments, and the director of education and social affairs decides among candidates wishing to be an imam. The committee screens the candidates for any radical religious or political sympathies. Imams who obtain the approval of the committee are bestowed with a license to preach and are assigned to a specific mosque. Recently, similar legislation has also passed through the People's Assembly to be implemented in all the remaining private mosques. Preachers in those mosques are obliged to be approved and licensed through the Ministry of Endowments. The topics addressed in the state controlled mosques are determined by another district committee, The High Council for Islamic Preaching. This committee is composed of the under-secretary of the Ministry of Endowments, the director of mosques, the director of the fatwa in al-Azhar, and senior ulama. Additionally, the High Council drafts a quarterly plan detailing acceptable topics for Friday sermons for distribution to all state mosques. Imams who divert from the outlined topics are supposed to be punished.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Guindy, p. 96.

⁸⁹ Moustafa, pp. 7-8. See also Charles Hirschkind, "Hearing Modernity: Egypt, Islam, and the Pious Ear" In *Hearing Cultures: Essays on Sound, Listening, and Modernity*, edited by V. Erlmann (Oxford: Berg 2004). for the manuals prepared by the state for determining the effective sermons.

The Sufi orders in Egypt, which have millions of members, have been brought together under a central organization to facilitate supervision and control by the state. The incorporation of the Sufi orders into the state system started in the early nineteenth century, when both al-Azhar and the Sufi orders were transformed into “a fully fledged bureaucratic system.” The activities and ritual practices of the Sufi orders began to be supervised closely by state law with the purpose of undermining their ability to pose an attractive alternative to official Islam.⁹⁰ It has been noted that, together with the former Yugoslavia, Egypt is the only country where such centralization is practiced. A religious brotherhood can only claim its legality through a membership of the Supreme Sufi Council. While there were twenty legal orders in 1848, in 1990, the number had risen to seventy-three. As expected, the growth was especially rapid during the Nasser years. One of the requirements for recognition as a legal *tariqa*, a brotherhood, is a clearly specified internal structure. The head of the order is called the Shaykh al-Saggada of the Prayer-Rug since the prayer-rug is a symbol of this authority. The sheikh is considered the national representative of the brotherhood and he may also be chosen to join the Supreme Sufi Council as one of then *tariqa* sheikhs. The other five members of this council are the representatives of the Ministry of Religious Endowments, the Mufti's office, and al-Azhar. There are frequent efforts at the meetings of the Supreme Sufi Council to limit the heterodox excesses of many *mawlid* (saint's day) celebrations.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Meir Hatina, “Historical Legacy and the Challenge of Modernity in the Middle East: The Case of al-Azhar in Egypt”, *The Muslim World* 93, no.1 (January 2003), p. 54.

⁹¹ For instance the president of the council recommends the other sheikhs to make sure that certain things do not occur: “no songs, no music, no percussion, no dancing during the *dhikr* (invocation) sessions, no mixing of the sexes during the meetings, no fire-eating, no swallowing of insects, no

The Ministry of Endowments is the main institution for regulating activities. Another prominent institution regarding the production of Islamic knowledge in Egypt is al-Azhar, which was placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Endowments in 1961. Established in 972 C.E., Al-Azhar is one of the oldest and best known madrasas in the Muslim World. Al-Azhar stood as the bastion of Islamic learning not only in Egypt, but also throughout the Muslim world for centuries. The most prominent religious post in Egypt is that of sheikh (rector/president) of al-Azhar. However, like many other Islamic institutions, its position of influence was challenged with the disruptive encounter between the Muslim world and Europe in the nineteenth century. This encounter with the West led to a dramatic restructuring of this traditional madrasa.⁹²

eating of glowing charcoal, broken glass or living snakes...and no hitting of oneself with swords.” Gerholm, pp. 138-140.

⁹² Under the rule of Muhammad 'Ali (and his successors), al-Azhar had turned into a bureaucratic arm of the government. Al Azhar served as one of the main opposition sources during the French rule and supported Muhammad 'Ali with the expectancy of the restoration of the traditional political system. However the reform scheme of Muhammad 'Ali was far from fulfilling the expectations of the ulama. In fact under his centralist rule and due to his sweeping reforms, al-Azhar had lost its traditional functions as arbiters between state and society. The autonomy of al-Azhar had been scattered during this period since their control over the waqf and the iltizam was abolished. With such amendments al-Azhar has been absorbed into the new state apparatus as civil servants and became totally dependent on the will of ruler. It has also been noted that contrary to their colleagues in the Fertile Crescent, the Egyptian ulama, mainly due to this sudden termination of the long and intimate relationship between the ulama and the political elite, positioned themselves outside the processes of change that was aimed at improving state functioning and enhancing Egyptian autonomy in the nineteenth century. Reforms of Muhammad 'Ali mainly concentrated on reinforcing the power of the state by strengthening its military and economic capabilities, rather than interfering in the daily lives of the masses. Therefore though the ulama declined in power, they were still perceived as the defenders of the faith and interpreters of the Shari'ah. The decline of the political power of the ulama can be best realized with their invisibility during the 1919 revolt. Though 1919 revolt was imbued with an underlying religious fervor and students and shaykhs (especially lower-level functionaries) were among the first to trigger protest against the British, Al Azhar's influence on Egyptian politics during the revolt was marginal, in contrast to the active role played by them in urban protests during the Mamluk-Ottoman era and the French occupation. The ulama ceased to be spokesmen of importance by the advent of the 1919 revolt and unrepresented in the political leadership of the movement for independence. Rather it was the new Westernized elite, constituted of landowners and professionals, that was on scene. See Hatina, pp. 51-56; The slogan of the Wafd Party, established in 1919, was *al-dib li-Lah wa al-watan li al-jami* (religion belongs to God, the homeland belongs to all) and it was called *Hizb 'Almani* (Secular Party). It has been emphasized that rather than opposing religion, the party simply confronted the ecclesiastical order in Islam and the King's attempt to employ religion to legitimize his authority. See

After the 1923 Constitution, despite the disdain of modernist intellectuals towards the established ulama, al-Azhar succeeded in maintaining its status as the bastion of orthodox Islam in Egypt thanks to the active support of the palace. The King actively supported al-Azhar as a strategic political ally during his battle against his rivals, especially the Wafd Party. However, at the end of the 1920s, the status of al-Azhar was threatened on two fronts; the government's reformist policy aiming at amending the country's religious and educational institutions, and the Muslim Brotherhood (*al Ikhwan al-Muslimun*). Ikhwan tended to refuse the religious authority of the ulama due to their "submission to the infidel regime".⁹³

With the establishment of Nasser's regime, there began a new phase in al-Azhar's history, which has been characterized by a steady loss of the institution's quasi-autonomy. Through abolishing the Shari'ah courts (1956), transforming al-Azhar into a state university (1961), introducing secular sciences into al-Azhar's curriculum (1961), appointing military figures to fill key positions in the al-Azhar administration, and intensifying the incorporation of Sufi orders, the regime sought to contain Islam and ensure its endorsement of government policy, Pan-Arabism and enjoy the ideological backing provided by the ulama.⁹⁴ The suppression of the

Fauzi M. Najjar, "The Debate on Islam and Secularism in Egypt", *Arab Studies Quarterly* 18, no.2 (March 1996), pp.2. See also Daniel Crecelius, "The Course of Secularization in Modern Egypt", *Islam and Development: Religion and Sociopolitical Change*, edited by J. Esposito (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1980) for a historical account on al-Azhar.

⁹³ It should be noted that the relation between Ikhwan and al-Azhar has never been a smooth one. For instance Hasan al-Banna chastised al-Azhar's submissiveness to the regime, yet still took care to maintain cordial relations with its leaders. The ideological strife between those two camps did not prevent them to agree on the view of Islam as a comprehensive framework for faith and conduct and to cooperate against "immoral" social conduct and dissident views perceived as deviating from Islam. *Ibid.*, pp. 56-58.

⁹⁴ The religious dimension may not come first in Nasser's hierarchy of political loyalties, yet Islam constituted a significant, in fact, essential component of the regime's political legitimacy and discourse. The organic unity between religion and state was the leitmotif of the regime's ideological restructuring and Nasser had utilized Islam during the crucial stages of his Pan-Arabist drive, such as

Ikhwan is also an aim of such policies. The transformation of al-Azhar into a symbol in the struggle for national viability can be best seen in the excessive growth of the budget of the institution: while the budget of the institution was £E 900,502 in 1948, it had increased to £E 7 million by 1966.⁹⁵ Hence, under the rule of Nasser, a corps of “men of religion” (*rijal al-din*), who, as civil servants, received regular salaries, was created to confer religious legitimacy on the regime's political decisions and to generate a state-controlled religious monopoly.⁹⁶ Functioning as an organ of the state, al-Azhar had always assisted the regime in its attempt to denounce the opposition, and issued statements justifying campaigns against Islamists and supported the introduction of certain legislation.⁹⁷

Anwar Sadat, like his predecessor, used religion to achieve political goals and included it in the construction of his political legitimacy; nevertheless, the political context of Sadat's rule was remarkably different from Nasser's. Sadat employed Islamic symbols generously: he referred to himself as the “believer-president”, turned his participation at the Friday prayer into a public show, promoted the building of mosques on an unprecedented scale, legitimated the 1973 Egyptian-Israeli war as

while declaring the nationalization of the Suez Canal from al-Azhar mosque in 1956, and explaining the Arab military defeat to Israel in 1967 as a message from Allah to the nation to purify itself from sin. Ibid., pp. 60. Other incidents evincing how Nasser had mobilized Islamic symbols can be listed as the pilgrimage of Nasser and the usage of Friday Sermons. See Barraclough, p. 237.

⁹⁵ Hatina, pp. 59-60. The new regime regarded the Sufi orders as an efficient tool to penetrate into society thanks to their popular networks in the countryside. The resistance of al-Azhar against the suppression of the political authority can be understood with the resignations of the three shaykhs of al Azhar – between 1952 and 1958 – as a protest against the extending interference of the state in the internal affairs of the institution. Ibid., p. 60.

⁹⁶ Malika Zeghal, “Religion and Politics in Egypt: The Ulema of al-Azhar, Radical Islam, and the State (1952-94)”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no.3 (August 1999), pp. 371-375.

⁹⁷ Barraclough, pp. 237-238.

jihad.⁹⁸ Moreover, moving away from Arab socialism and liberalizing the political arena to eliminate the leftist Nasserite wing, Sadat released Muslim brotherhoods from prison and allowed them to function in public life and created a relatively more open space for the ulama for expression and diversification, which ultimately mobilized them to break out of the rigid framework offered by state institutions. This liberalization also coincided chronologically with the upsurge of political Islam (in fact, the acceleration of political Islam was also a product of this political liberalization) and the ulema took advantage of this suitable environment by creating and taking part in Islamic associations.⁹⁹ The appearance of militant Islam on the political scene had drastic effects on the positioning of al-Azhar. Due to the infringement of its religious monopoly by the rising militant Islam, al-Azhar was pushed into the political arena and forced to take part in the public debates in order to regain its monopoly of religious authority.¹⁰⁰ However, even al-Azhar has sought greater autonomy due to its desire to be the sole authority to speak for Islam, believing that a more autonomous position would give the institution more credibility in the eyes of the masses and not be seen merely as an apparatus of the state, it provided Sadat with an Islamic justification for concluding 1978-1979 Camp David Accords, which can be considered as overt testimony to its adherence to the state policy.¹⁰¹

The assassination of President Sadat by members of the *Jihad* made the Egyptian state more wary towards Islamist movements; the regime severely

⁹⁸ Esposito and Voll, p. 174.

⁹⁹ Zeghal, pp. 380-381.

¹⁰⁰ Zeghal, p. 382.

¹⁰¹ Barraclough, p.238.

suppressed the movement and imprisoned its members following this incident. Husni Mubarak, in March 1982 appointed a sheikh, who was already well aware of how to answer to the needs of the regime, as the head of al-Azhar. The ulama of al-Azhar actively participated in the ideological campaign launched by the regime against the Islamist movements: propelling al-Azhar into the public sphere as a shield protecting society from the violence of militant Islam, the regime sought to perpetuate its legitimacy. In return, al-Azhar also took advantage of his bargain by acquiring greater leverage over Mubarak's government.¹⁰²

Positioning itself between the state and the Islamist movements, al-Azhar began enjoying power attained through significant administrative duties transferred to it by Mubarek. Al-Azhar continued to back the regime in the inter-Arab and international areas, yet was outspoken in its support of the Islamic opposition's goal of the Islamization of Egypt. Al-Azhar *ulama* started to use state channels, including the media and courts, effectively. The authority of al-Azhar is apparent especially in such areas as birth control and organ transplantation and censorship of films, plays, and books. In fact, a governmental decree declared state recognition of the absolute authority of al-Azhar in matters of faith in order to guarantee public order and social morality. The decree also made the Ministry of Culture bound by al-Azhar's decisions regarding books, television, and radio broadcast.¹⁰³

¹⁰² It should be noted that this support of al-Azhar of the Mubarek regime had not been a monolithic one. Some ulama refused to participate this fight against the militant Islam and accused others for acting as the civil servants of the regime. Zeghal, pp. 385-386.

¹⁰³ Hatina, pp. 62-63. Nevertheless there has always been red lines for the al-Azhar ulama and their autonomy is frequently violated when controversial issues are at stake. For instance in April 1993, a group of ulama, organized themselves into a "Mediation Committee" made up of "independent ulema." They published a statement in the media in which they rejected not only the violent actions of the jamda't, but also their repression by the regime. They asked the government to release the Islamist prisoners and to negotiate with the members of radical Islam, and they offered to be the political

Jordan

The Jordanian state is similar to other Middle Eastern countries in that it relies upon Islam to some extent for political legitimacy but determines which interpretations of Islam prevail in contests over religious discourse. Different interpretations of Islam that contradict or challenge state policy or legitimacy are precluded from public Islam space and the state utilizes the administrative apparatus to exclude opposition. In order to accomplish this, the state carefully regulates access to the mosque, the most important site of Islamic practice and ritual, to prevent the production, articulation, and dissemination of alternative religious perspectives that could undermine regime interests. This has been carried out through the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs. Mosques and mosque-related activities are incorporated into the state bureaucracy through this institution.¹⁰⁴

In Jordan, all the mosques are controlled by the government, regardless of whether they are state- or privately funded. This supervision of the government of all mosques is easier for Jordan than it is for Egypt due to the former's small population. There are 2,245 mosques in Jordan and it has been argued that there is no "independent" or "free" space in those mosques.¹⁰⁵

mediators in these negotiations. They represented themselves as "the third party" (al-taifa al-thalitha) between radical Islam and the regime. Twenty personalities signed this statement, of whom ten were Azharite ulama. Shortly after the statement became public, the government put an end to the committee and its demands and dismissed the minister of the interior, Abd al-Halim Musa, who supported and participated in the ulama's project. See Zeghal, p. 388.

¹⁰⁴ Quitan Wiktorowicz, "State Power and the Regulation of Islam in Jordan", *Journal of Church and State* 41, no.4 (Autumn 1999), pp. 677-684.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 685.

Imams in Jordan are civil servants hired under the civil servant laws as government employees. They are supposed to have a bachelor's degree in sharia (Islamic law), yet frequently community college degrees are accepted due to the low level of candidate quality. The majority of the imams receive their education at the Ministry of Awqaf's two-year College of Islamic Sciences or the four-year Da'wa and Basics of Religion College. Imams are also obliged to pass an interview process conducted by the Civil Servants in conjunction with the Ministry of Awqaf. This interview process tends to result in the hiring of moderate, apolitical imams. Furthermore, after being hired, all imams must continue to attend classes at the Center for the Rehabilitation of Imams, which holds seminars on various contemporary issues, such as drug use, water conservation, traffic accidents, and the environment.¹⁰⁶

It has been reported that, as in other Middle Eastern countries, control over preachers and the content of sermons has been intensified in Jordan. In 1964, the Department of Religious Endowments began sending out newsletters that suggested topics for sermons, although there is evidence that some preachers did not always adopt these suggestions and therefore retained some measure of independence. The department also required that all preachers maintain a written copy of the sermons, although again it is not clear whether this was strictly enforced or followed. This practice continued after the establishment of the Ministry of Awqaf in 1966. During the 1970s, the Ministry started sending preachers a monthly journal that contained complete sermons that could be used verbatim. The Ministry of Awqaf not only regulates imams, but also non-government preachers who are brought from outside

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 686.

the administrative apparatus. The growth of mosques has gone beyond the government's capability to staff them with qualified imams and preachers; in fact, in 1996, there was a deficit of 1,037 imams and preachers for the some 2,245 mosques in the country, leaving 46 percent of the mosques unstaffed by an imam or preacher from the government. The Jordanian state fills those vacancies by hiring preachers who are neither civil servants nor imams. For example, professors, religious judges, teachers, and anyone who is qualified can be brought in to deliver a sermon. The preachers are paid a nominal sum for their services, but it is a symbolic reward, not a real financial incentive. The director appraised that about 60 percent of all preachers are government imams whereas 40 percent are "outsiders." Under normal circumstances, individual preachers apply to deliver sermons, although the Ministry does advertise if it needs to fill in positions.¹⁰⁷

The fact that a significant number of non-Ministry preachers exists does not imply that the government has loosened its control over the delivery of sermons. On the contrary, the selection process and regulative techniques are designed to ensure that the imam remains supportive and uncritical of the regime. This has been guaranteed through several means. First, the Ministry often dictates the subject of the sermon: about once every two to three months, the Ministry obliges imams and preachers to recite on a certain subject. Second, while employing preachers, the government prefers imams who are not critical of the government or its policies. The Ministry deliberately abstains from choosing controversial figures who may espouse "radical" ideologies. Thirdly, the Ministry rotates outside preachers from mosque to

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 689-690.

mosque. Although this rotation procedure is justified by arguing that the congregation will not get tired of listening to the same preacher every week, it has more the controlling effect of preventing non-government preachers from cultivating a loyal following at one particular mosque or group of mosques. In some Middle Eastern countries, opposition figures may preach consistently at a specific private mosque, but in Jordan the fact that all mosques are government-controlled means that the regime decides which preachers can develop a loyal following. Imams who are qualified to deliver the khutba, on the other hand, remain at the same mosque, thus allowing government-employed preachers an opportunity to generate a clientele through the Friday sermon. Therefore, the state-employed imams, who are, by definition, less likely to be critical of the state and its policies, have a greater chance of fostering a loyal constituency at a particular mosque. Finally, and probably most importantly, the mechanism of control for preachers is a set of informal rules known as the “red lines,” a set of unwritten, but well-recognized, rules governing the political system and all social interactions, which are negotiated and understood by participants in the political and social game. Though they are not explicitly stated and only reluctantly discussed, those rules are extremely effective. Indeed the most significant “red line” that guides the content of the sermons is that “preachers cannot go against state policy,” otherwise they will be prevented from speaking. This “red line” stands as the “spirit” of the “Law on Preaching, Guidance, and Teaching in Mosques,” which states that, “The preacher shall be committed to wisdom and proper preaching and shall not attack, accuse, or instigate and go beyond the guidelines of the Islamic da'wa.” The Ministry of Awkaf draws the limits of preaching with the prohibition of criticism directed against the state. This authorization of censorship on preaching generally relies on the role of the

Department of Preaching and Guidance to maintain the “supervision of clearing the atmospheres in mosques of clearing agreements and conflicts”.¹⁰⁸

Conformity to those “red lines” are monitored and enforced by the government in different ways. First, the Department of Preaching and Guidance receives and reviews the names of prospective preachers before the Friday sermon and maintains the right to deny permission to any candidate without specifying a reason for doing so. This keeps oppositional figures away from the minbar (pulpit) and, hence, deprives him of an audience. Individuals who preach despite being barred from doing so are severely punished.¹⁰⁹ Another technique is to ban and punish preachers who obtain permission to recite, yet cross the red line by criticizing state policy. In theory, the Director of Preaching and Guidance recognizes that imams and preachers may disagree with state policies. However, when they do express opposition with the state, they must find an acceptable way to do so; if they don’t, they will have to face the consequences. When imams overstep the limits of acceptability, they are first warned. If they persist, they are banned for a period of two to three months. More outspoken or influential figures are banned for longer periods of time and there are cases where preachers are blacklisted from delivering the sermon for long periods of time. This practice of banning certain preachers becomes more common in times of crises. For instance, much like what happened in other Middle Eastern countries, mosques were more strictly monitored after at the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 690-692.

¹⁰⁹ This law, “Law on Religious Exhortation, Guidance, Preaching and Instruction in the Mosques of Jordan”, dated January 1986, was signed by twenty-three ministers, that is, by the entire government. It aimed at reining in preachers, who criticized government policies and officials, and more generally spread “dispute, dissension and confusion,” that is, factionalism. Imprisonment and fines were stipulated for repeated violations. The very general stipulations of the law allowed wide latitude for the government to exercise control. Antoun, p. 385.

time the peace treaty with Israel was being signed in 1994. Prior to the signing of the peace treaty, preachers openly condemned Israel; in fact, they were often actively encouraged to do so by the government. Nevertheless, once the peace process began, regardless of widespread grassroots opposition, preachers were prevented from criticizing the treaty.¹¹⁰

In a nutshell, the Jordanian state has succeeded in forming effective legal mechanisms, institutions, and moral codes to attain its leverage over the mosques all around Jordan and definitely has high visibility in the religious space. It imposes the definition of Islam and has successfully lessened the mobilizing potential of sermons. In fact, the sermons have become transformed into a reflection of state control rather than social concerns or community interests. However, imams still find “loopholes” and “ways to get around” the rules, so the regime does not enjoy complete hegemony over the mosques. Censorship of sermons and control of imams and preachers have led imams to disseminate their message in a more subtle format. Critiques are disguised in direct quotes from the Qur’an and hadiths, especially through hidden analogies to current circumstances and conditions. Condemnation of the regime is masked in the quotes from the Qur’an, so that preachers become immune to direct criticism since the regime simply cannot afford to contradict or punish the word of God. Creatively using religious symbols and analogies, preachers can discuss sensitive and controversial topics such as Jerusalem or the peace process.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Wiktorowicz, pp. 691-93.

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp. 694-695.

These two cases demonstrate how different historical experiences can mold the state-religion interaction and how the state's leverage on religion is contingent upon the contest between the actors. The relative power of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist movements in Egypt encourages the Egyptian state to be more oppressive on the alternative expressions of Islam and fortifies state control on mosques on the one hand, yet invigorates the anti-secular tendency in al-Azhar, on the other. Urging to protect its legitimacy and popularity among the Egyptian society, al-Azhar adopts a more reactionary stance on issues regarding westernization due to its struggle with Islamist movements on the claim of Islamic authority. Al-Azhar succeeds in protecting its semi-autonomous position mainly through a constant bargaining with the state authority, but also thanks to its historical legacy. In Jordan, however, firstly, due to the small population, the state is not confronted with difficulties in monitoring the mosques and increasing its tutelage in the religious sphere, in terms of finding the necessary human source and financial tools. Another factor that expedites the state control on religion in Jordan is the lack of any established autonomous ulama organizations and the relatively moderate stance of the religious movements. For instance contrary to Egypt, the Jordan Muslim Brothers has participated in the 1989 elections.¹¹²

Similar with other Middle Eastern countries (except the post revolution Iran where state is the active supporter of the anti-Israel discourse), the main conflict between the state and the preachers in determining the content of the Friday sermons remains the Israel- Palestinian conflict. During the peace processes between the Arab

¹¹² The Brothers formed the Islamic Action Front Party in 1992. See Mansoor Moaddel, *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism: Episode and Discourse* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 293.

states and Israel, the state amplifies its tutelage on the religious sphere and increases oppression on the outspokenly critical clergy.

Drawing upon this brief summary, the uniqueness of the PRA may be questioned. As it is demonstrated above, the PRA, as a site of incorporation, has its counterparts in the Middle East, where Islam is considered as a notion to be governed rather than a notion that governs. The majority religion is produced, controlled, and regulated through these agencies, which are *de jure* monopolies in the religious sphere. The intended or unintended consequences of this state control and support of religion on religious freedom and the level of religiosity are open to question. Certain studies evince that state regulation on religion violates religious freedom and increases religious persecution.¹¹³ However the possible effects of this state regulation and support on the level of religiosity is a more controversial question: while some scholars argue that the presence of state intervention and support on religion increases religious participation and belief,¹¹⁴ others suggest the contrary and assert that religious regulation have significant negative effects on attendance to religious services.¹¹⁵

It would not be too daring to argue that rather than being an exception, the Turkish case of state-religion relations fits into the general pattern of Muslim polities with its certain particularly distinct features deriving from its unique historical,

¹¹³ Brian J. Grim, and Roger Finke, "Religious Persecution in Cross-National Context: Clashing Civilizations or Regulated Religious Economies?" *American Sociological Review* 72, no.4 (August 2007), p. 72.

¹¹⁴ Robert J. Barro, and Rachel M. McCleery, "Which Countries Have State Religions?", *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 120, no.4 (November 2005), pp. 1333-1335.

¹¹⁵ Charles M. North, and Carl R. Gwin, "Religious Freedom and the Unintended Consequences of State Religion", *Southern Economic Journal* 71, no.1 (July 2004).

cultural and political background. The difference between these three cases is the self-definition of states: Turkey is a laic state whereas Jordan and Egypt identify Islam as their official religion. Therefore once again it should be noted that rather than engaging in a discussion on the theoretical formulations of laicism or secularism, real practices and institutions should be examined more carefully in order to shed light on the state-religion interaction. The rest of this thesis is a modest attempt to detect the position of the PRA through investigating the preparation, dissemination, and monitoring of the Friday Sermons.

CHAPTER 3

FROM THE OFFICE OF ŞEYHÜLİSLAM TO THE PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

The alleged autonomy of religion in pre-modern states and the supposed near-identity of religion and the state in Islam is, as Keddie states, “more a pious myth than reality for most of Islamic history”.¹¹⁶ Islam, being more a social and political phenomenon than simply a faith-based one, cannot be disassociated from the social and political visions of the political authorities, and thus, Classical Ottoman Islam was, to a large extent, formulated in accordance with the concerns and ideological needs of the state throughout the Ottoman centuries. With the onset of modernity and the encounter with the Enlightenment, this relation became even more intricate. It will be suggested that the Republican elite inherited the late Ottoman modernizers’ attempt to reformulate Islam compatible with a “modern” and secular worldview and the endeavor to contain Islam within a laicist rule. Islam was institutionalized in the form of a government agency in the Turkish Republic, and was integrated into the government structure, keeping with the Ottoman pattern of including the ulama within the state.¹¹⁷ However, there had been a shift in the understanding of what was considered “proper” Islam, and thus, while the tradition of incorporating Islam into the affairs of state was inherited, the Islam that was incorporated has changed. In this regard, the etymology of the value-loaded word *diyanet*, through which a new mode

¹¹⁶ Nikki R. Keddie, “The Revolt of Islam, 1700 to 1993: Comparative Considerations and Relations to Imperialism”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 36 no.3 (July 1994), p. 463.

¹¹⁷ Madeline C. Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety, The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988), pp. 28-29.

of state-religion interaction was enabled, is essential. This word is a neologism of Ziya Gökalp, who also prepared a memorandum on a reform of religious institutions in the Empire, which was discussed at the 1916 congress of the Committee of Union and Progress. Gökalp's efforts were a groundbreaking move to reinstitutionalize Islam, one that would create a fundamental transformation of the understanding of official Islam, and thus, a novel form of incorporating Islam within the state mechanism.

The first part of this chapter is an attempt to examine the evolution of the PRA and, thereby, trace certain continuities and ruptures within the tradition of incorporating religion in state, from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic. The attempt is made to find an answer to the question of whether or not the PRA, a government body operating under the supervision of the laicist state, yet also involved in the production of religion, was a novel invention of the Republic.

In this regard, the proposal of Ziya Gökalp regarding religious institutions of the Empire, which is discussed in the 1916 Congress of the Committee of Union and Progress, stands as a groundbreaking attempt to reinstitutionalize Islam and create a new Islam. In order to show how this attempt poses a rupture in the incorporation of Islam in the Ottoman tradition, the history of the Office of *Şeyhülislam* will be briefly summarized. An investigation of Ziya Gökalp's proposal and his reconceptualization of Islam will follow this part.

The second part this chapter is devoted to an analysis of the PRA and its institutional history. Through depicting the institutional restructurings of the PRA, the intention is to shed light on the dynamic process of state-religion interaction in Turkey.

However, not only should an essentialist reading of religion and modernism be

avoided but an essentialist reading of Kemalism, as well. Kemalism has been shaped within an historical juncture and has been articulated by different notions under different circumstances. Turkish politics is marked by temporary, conjunctural, and uneasy political alliances, rather than a fixed cleavage between the center and periphery.¹¹⁸ As an alternative to the assumption that Turkish politics is a zero-sum game that takes place between a monolithic, fixed, and conflict-free establishment and periphery, it is crucial to notice that both the center and periphery exist in a constant state of repositioning. Examining the historical transformation of the PRA makes it possible to trace how Kemalism was articulated and transformed during its inception. This will clarify what is at stake when “varieties of Kemalism” are considered rather than “*the* Kemalism.” These variations have been shaped by both domestic political tensions and global conjunctures. Accordingly, I break Kemalism down into three phases of Kemalism in terms of its relation with Islam through the PRA; the classical Kemalist period (1923-1965), the Age of Politics (1965-1980), the post-1980 coup period (1980-mid-2004). The objective of such a categorization is not to mark clear alliances or homogenous dispositions within these periods. They are designed to demonstrate how Kemalism articulates Islam as a response to new challenges and new “others”.

It will be shown that the organizational structure, the scope of jurisdiction and the leverage of the central body on the provincial units of the PRA display different

¹¹⁸ Şerif Mardin’s center-periphery analysis has been widely used for delineating the structure of Turkish politics. According to this analysis, the structure of Turkish politics is marked by a clash between the modernizing elite and the masses attached to their traditional affiliations. Though this model is quite insightful for understanding the main contours of Turkish politics, it may also tend to take this cleavage as fixed and, therefore, overlook “the varieties of Kemalism”. See Şerif Mardin, “Center-Periphery Relations: A Key To Turkish Politics?”, *Daedalus* 102, no. 1 (Winter 1973).

patterns during these periods due to the adjustment of the state to changing circumstances and the complex interplay between different actors. Accordingly, while the Classical Kemalist period attempted to contain Islam through a policy of willful neglect of the PRA, in the Age of Politics the institution was enlarged dramatically. The penetration of the Turkish state into the mosques throughout the country proceeded at this period. It attained leverage over the mosques by increasing the monitoring of the central body of the PRA in its provincial units during the post-1980 coup period, which is epitomized by the consolidation of an authoritarian rule in Turkish society.

The Transformation of the Office of Şeyhülislam in the Ottoman Empire

While the title of Shaykh Al-Islam (Şeyhülislam), from its inception, was an honorific title which did not necessarily refer to an official position,¹¹⁹ it is generally associated with the Ottoman office of the Mufti of the Capital, which meant, for, by far, the greater proportion of its existence, the Mufti of Istanbul. It is assumed that the earliest use of the term as a title of the Mufti of the Capital is found in the so called *kanun-name* of Mehmed II.¹²⁰ The Ottoman state was both an Islamic empire and a bureaucratic state. Assuming the role of the Caliph of all Muslims, the Ottoman Sultan, at least symbolically extended his sovereignty over all Muslims and

¹¹⁹ See Richard W. Bulliet, "The Shaikh al-Islam and the Evolution of Islamic Society", *Studia Islamica* 35 (1972), pp. 53-67. for the historical evolution of the office.

¹²⁰ There is an unsettled debate on the origin of the Office of the *Şeyhülislam* in the Ottoman Empire. Some sources maintain that the Office was established during the reign of Murat II and Molla Fenari was the first Şeyhülislam, whereas there are other scholars claiming that the Office had been in existence earlier. See Richard Cooper Repp, *The Müfti of Istanbul: A Study in the Development of the Ottoman Learned Hierarchy* (London: Ithaca Press, 1986), pp.22-28 and Abdulkadir Özcan, "Fatih'in Teşkilât Kanunnâmesi ve Nizâm-ı Âlem İçin Kardeş Katli Meselesi", *İ.Ü. Ed. Fak. Tarih Dergisi* 33 (1981-1982), p.34.

not simply to the *reaya* living within his domain. The role of the ulema was prominent in perpetuating the Islamic claim of the Empire. Ulema, a religious elite group headed by the Şeyhülislam, were vested with the authority to express and apply Islamic rule (*Şeriat, shari'ah*) and functioned as officials in the fields of education and jurisprudence. The *Şeyhülislam* enjoyed significant political, as well as symbolic, power. Accepted as the leader of all *muderrises* (professors), *muftis* (religious administrators), *kadis* (judges), and *kadiaskers* (chief judges), the *Şeyhülislam* would petition the Grand Vizier for the appointment of these dignitaries. Under the jurisdiction of the *Şeyhülislam*, the administration of justice, religious counseling, and educational services were combined. The *Şeyhülislam* had a rank equal to that of the Grand Vizier, the Sadrazam, beginning with the rule of Süleyman. These two were the only officials that could receive their investiture at the sultan's own hands. Additionally, when the *Şeyhülislam* came into his presence, the sultan would meet him by standing up. During the special ceremony of the enthroning of a sultan, it was the *Şeyhülislam* who would hand the sultan's sword to him.¹²¹ In fact, in theory, the office of Şeyhülislam was, in a sense, superior to that of the sultan, since the *Şeyhülislam* enjoyed the power of issuing a *fetwa* declaring a sultan's deposition, as required by the exigencies of the *shari'ah*.¹²²

However, the privileges and power of the office of *Şeyhülislam* should not be interpreted as authorizing this office to act independently of the political power. The *Şeyhülislam* was dependent on and responsible to the political administration, which

¹²¹ Gazi Erdem, "Religious Services in Turkey: From the Office of Şeyhülislam to the Diyanet", *The Muslim World* 98, no.2-3 (April 2008), pp. 201-204. See Repp, *Ibid.*, for a detailed analysis on the development of ulema during the empire.

¹²² David Kushner, "The Place of the Ulema in the Ottoman Empire during the Age of Reform (1839-1918)", *Turcica* 19 (1987), p.54.

was granted the right to investigate all activities of the office. It was the sultan, who appointed the *Şeyhülislam* and the sultan could also dismiss the *Şeyhülislam* of his duty. The authority of the *Şeyhülislam* was vested by the sultan just as a state official.¹²³ Plenty of evidence demonstrates that sultans frequently ignored the advice of the *Şeyhülislam*.¹²⁴ In fact, among 126 *Şeyhüislams* that came to power during the history of the Empire, 49 of them were dismissed from the office and 21 of them resigned. A general pattern can be discerned reflecting the vicissitudes of the office: the overall increase in the dismissals of the *Şeyhüislams*, combined with phases of erratic fluctuations in the duration of terms, implies the increasing political involvement on the part of the *Şeyhüislams*.¹²⁵ Despite the exceptional incidents and some riots, it would be safe to conclude that the office of *Şeyhülislam* was used as a

¹²³ Erdem, p. 203.

¹²⁴ Kushner, p. 54.

¹²⁵ I have retrieved these numbers from the list of *Şeyhüislams* in Yakut's study. See Esra Yakut, *Şeyhülislamlık. Yenileşme Döneminde Devlet ve Din* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2005). A more detailed investigation on the tenures of the *Şeyhülislam* may reveal the unstable nature of the Office. In the early period, between 1424-1574, there were fifteen tenures, for an average tenure of ten years. While the shortest tenure during the period was for three months, the longest one was twenty-eight years eleven months. During the 225 years from 1574 to 1789, there were 103 tenures held by seventy- eight men for an average term in Office of 2.2 years. Fifty-seven men held Office once, whereas twenty- one men held Office two or more times. Out of the total of 103 tenures, those less than one year constituted 35.9 percent, while those less than one and a half years made up 62.0 percent. In these 103 tenures, there were seventy two dismissals, five resignations, two executions; the remaining twenty three *Şeyhüislams* died, presumably of natural causes, while they were in Office. Salch 27-31. During 1789 and 1839, there were twenty five separate tenures held by seventeen men from the first appointment made by Selim III until Mahmut II's death in June 1839, for an average of two years. Sixteen tenures (64 percent) were for two years or less (half of this was actually less than one year). There were three tenures over four and a half years in length, for a combined total of more than seventeen years. During this period, only one man died while in Office, the remaining were dismissed. The summary of the statistics of this fifty year period can be summarized as follows: nine men served during Selim III's eighteen year reign for an average term of 2.0 years; three men served for a total of one-year twenty-six days in the interim period under Mustafa IV; nine men served in the thirty-one years during Mahmut II's reign, for an average term of 2.56 years. 57-58 men served during the Tanzimat period, for the thirty eight years between 1839 and 1877, ten *Şeyhüislams* served for twelve terms for an average of 3.17 years. 25 percent of the tenures were less than one and a half years, while 50 percent were over two and a half years. Karon D. Salch, *Şeyhülislam and the Tanzimat* (Master's Thesis, McGill University, 1980), p. 98.

tool for legitimizing the rule of the sultans. Religion was of secondary consideration to the social and political realities of the Empire.

Furthermore, most of the *Şeyhülislams* were the trusted appointees of the sultans or the sadrazams and nominated due to their potential to follow and sanction the policies of the sultans or the sadrazams.¹²⁶ The relation between the ulema and the state was a mutually supportive relationship, and this relationship was very much molded with the needs of the political authority. The office of the *Şeyhülislam* was endowed with certain privileges, such as a semi-autonomous control over judicial and educational institutions, a vote on policies affecting the religious establishment, and a share of the country's wealth. In return the office of *Şeyhülislam* provided an acknowledgement of the legality of the rule of the sovereign, generated an ideology, an "Islam," to legitimize the rule, and serve as an intermediary between rulers and ruled, especially to calm restive elements and win acceptance for unpopular measurements.¹²⁷

With the onset of the modernization period of the Empire, various institutions of the Empire underwent sweeping changes.¹²⁸ The position and institution of *Şeyhülislam* was no exception. The centralization policies of the Mahmud II era involved a reorganization of the office of *Şeyhülislam*: a permanent office was

¹²⁶ For instance, Mehmed Cemaleddin Efendi was a very close ally of Sultan Abdülhamid II, and served as *Şeyhülislam* between 1891-1908, for 17 years, See Cemaleddin Efendi, *Siyasi Hatıralarım* (İstanbul: Nehir Yayınları, 2005) for the memoirs of the Cemaleddin Efendi.

¹²⁷ Seyfettin Ersahin, "The Ottoman Foundation of the Turkish Republic's Diyanet: Ziya Gokalp's Diyanet İşleri Nazaratı", *The Muslim World* 98, no.2-3 (April 2008), p.184.

¹²⁸ See Carter Vaughn Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789–1922* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), and Ali Akyıldız, *Osmanlı Bürokrasisi ve Modernleşme* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004) for the impacts and repercussions of this wave of modernization on the different institutions of the Empire.

allocated to the him, the *Bab-ı Meşihat* or *Fetvahane*, and a permanent place in the cabinet, which inferred the right to participate in the decision making process.¹²⁹

Mahmud II also devoted great effort in retaining the ulema's support and to neutralize their political opposition to his reforms. Those tactics involved creating new jobs for the ulema within the military, publicly deferring to their elevated social status, by conferring with them on a regular basis, participating in Ramadan activities, constructing and endowing mosques and religious schools, and avoiding governmental violations of religious conventions.¹³⁰ With the double aim of facilitating the reform schemes and gaining more control over the ulema, Sultan Mahmud II elevated the position of the office of Şeyhülislam.¹³¹ However, this period has also witnessed attempts to impose restrictions on the financial and administrative autonomy of the office: the Şeyhülislam was held accountable by the lower ulema and the government for his actions.¹³²

The wave of modernization and centralization had intensified during the Tanzimat period, a period that is marked by a massive and intense bureaucratization process in various fields, including governance, military, and education, of the Empire. The office of *Şeyhülislam*, the authority of which had encompassed the judiciary, education system, governance, and religious affairs, was also affected by this wave of bureaucratization. The governments of the Ottoman Tanzimat applied

¹²⁹ This move is generally seen as a reward for the support of the *Şeyhülislam* for the destruction of the Janissaries. See Kushner, p. 55.

¹³⁰ Ersahin, p.184.

¹³¹ Kushner, pp. 55. and Avigdor Levy, "The Ottoman Ulema and the Military Reforms of Sultan Mahmud II", *Asian and African Studies* 7 (1971), pp. 13-39.

¹³² Salch, pp.73. Additionally the newly formed Nezaret-i Evkaf was held responsible for administering all imperial foundations which led to a severe limitation on the financial resources of the ulema. See Salch, p.74.

this bureaucratization by using a diversionary tactic of building “parallel institutions” and keeping the traditional ones intact. The introduction of western education, the establishment of new *nizami* (secular) courts and the restriction of the shari’ah courts to personal status matters are some of the developments that eventually led to a decline in the status of the office of *Şeyhülislam*.¹³³ Nevertheless, it should be noted that those parallel institutions never stood as mutually exclusive spheres; therefore, the state did not create two distinct secular and religious systems. Particularly in terms of personnel, there was significant overlapping between the religious establishment and the civil bureaucracy. Consequently, state and religious institutions increasingly became interwoven within the expanding bureaucracy.¹³⁴ Thus, the ulema were given representation on a variety of councils and committees that were set up to initiate reforms and to control government activities. Though the number of the ulema in most of those councils was small in comparison to the military or civil officials, their representation on those councils, which were not relevant with their own specialized domains, was noteworthy.¹³⁵

¹³³ Ersahin, pp.184. The reforms of the Tanzimat had restructured the position of the traditional judicial system. The administrative functions of the provincials were transferred to the civil administration. Additionally, the adoption of secular codes of law that are started to be applied in new secular courts curbed the authority of the kadi’s mahkeme. Ultimately, the kadi’s Shari’a mahkeme was consigned to intervening into the cases of personal status affecting members of the Muslim community alone. However, this process had not been a comprehensive and clear cut transformation; kadis were still influential in the secular courts. Kadis, and even muftus, were represented in the provincial councils, where criminal cases were settled. The presidents of Divan-ı Ahkam-ı Adliye, which was established as the highest court of appeal in 1868, were elected among kadis. Therefore, it is not possible to suggest that with the establishment of the Ministry of Justice and the spread of secular courts, the influence of ulama was abolished: members of the ulama were employed in a significant number of positions in the Ministry of Justice, and they were also among the members of the appointment commissions. See Kushner, pp.59-62.

¹³⁴ Amit Bein, *The Ulema, Their Institutions, and Politics in the Late Ottoman Empire (1876-1924)* (PhD Dissertation, Princeton University 2006), pp. 8-9.

¹³⁵ The councils in which ulama were represented can be listed as; Military Council (Dar Şura-yı Askeri), the Council of Public Works (Meclis-i Nafia), the Council of Finance (Meclis-i Maliye), the Council of Agriculture (Meclis-i Ziraat), the Council of the Navy (Meclis-i Bahriye), the Council of

Nevertheless, the ultimate result of the state-led reforms of the nineteenth century and the reorganization of the state administration was a decline in the power of the office of *Şeyhülislam*. The office of *Şeyhülislam*, though like other state agencies, underwent a process of centralization and bureaucratization, did not expand as rapidly and significantly as other newly organized ministries. The number of ulema directly associated with the central government increased in absolute terms, yet their relative weight within the state administration steadily decreased during this period.¹³⁶

Abdülhamid II employed an elaborate approach towards the office of *Şeyhülislam* in particular, and the *ilmiye* group in general. On the one hand, due to his quest for stability, he made an effort to maintain good relations with the ulema. His pan-Islamist policies also required such an endeavor and he was keen to present the religious establishment as the central pillar of the state. On the other hand, under Hamidian rule, the office of *Şeyhülislam* and ulema had deteriorated in both repudiation and position vis-à-vis the competing interest groups in the Empire. This was mainly related with the “benign neglect” of Abdülhamid II in implementing necessary reforms that could prevent the downfall of the ulema. Despite the urge of the ulema for an amendment and reform in the medrese system in order to ameliorate the marginalization of the ulema, Abdülhamid II was in favor of the status quo and overlooked the proposal to begin a gradual reorganization of the medreses in Istanbul. Furthermore, launching a dramatic initiative in 1892, Abdülhamid II reduced the number of medrese students, from more than 10,000 down to a few

Police (Meclis-i Zabtiye), and the Council of the Arsenal (Meclis-i Tohane-i Amire). See Kushner, pp.56-57.

¹³⁶ Bein, p.8.

thousand, in a fortnight, and the imposition of stricter government supervision of the registered students.¹³⁷ Additionally, in line with the general oppressive policy of the Hamidian period, Abdülhamid II imposed a strict control and supervision over the people employed in the office of the *Şeyhülislam*. Two officers were assigned to control and monitor the visitors coming to its office. The places that the *Şeyhülislam* could visit were restricted to Yıldız Palace, Meşihat Dairesi, Babı-Ali, Dolmabahçe Palace and Topkapı Palace.¹³⁸ Accordingly, the ulema played an important role during the establishment of the constitutional regime in 1876, which resulted with the virtual overthrow of the Hamidian rule.

Therefore, it is possible to make certain conclusions regarding the position of the office of *Şeyhülislam*. Until the Second Constitutional period, it was relatively stable. With the start of a new age, when the Empire was heading toward modernization and rejuvenation, the office of *Şeyhülislam* declined steadily in influence and importance. This was due to being deprived of its earlier financial and administrative autonomy, lack of military support after the destruction of Janissaries, its inability to compete with the rising civil bureaucracy, and the establishment of new schools.¹³⁹ Ultimately, a new intelligentsia, educated in the secular state-sponsored schools of the Tanzimat, took the place of ulama and broke the monopoly

¹³⁷ Bein, pp.120-143. In a proclamation issued by The Ulema Association (Cemiyet-i İlmiye) in 1909, it has been stated that “The Age of Absolutism left [the ulema] particularly moribund. Haven’t you seen the ruins that are called medreses? We were buried in these graves for thirty-two years. Our resurrection from the dead has only recently begun. Similarly İbnürrahmi Ali Tayyar, a member of ulama, once noted that during the Hamidian rule the ulema was regarded as a source of treachery. Tayyar also labels Abdülhamid II as the dragon of oppression (İstibdat Ejderi). See Yakut, p.53.

¹³⁸ Yakut, pp.184-186.

¹³⁹ Chambers, Richard L. “The Ottoman Ulema and the Tanzimat”, In *Scholars Saints and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions Since 1500*, edited by Keddie, N.R. (Berkeley and Los Angeles : Peter Smith Publications, 1972), pp. 33-46.

of ulema in interpreting Islam.¹⁴⁰ However, the Ottoman modernizers, not only the sultans but also influential intellectual groups such as the Young Ottomans, never confronted the ulema in particular and emphasized the importance of Islam in general.¹⁴¹ The discourse of the Mahmud II and the Hamidian eras and the position of the Young Ottomans are characterized by an interrelatedness of Islam and efforts at modernization, which ultimately paved the way for secularization. Even secular laws were justified on the grounds of being necessary for the well-being of the Islamic community. The members of the Young Ottomans were strong advocates of modernization, yet they also urged fitting those reforms within an Islamic framework. Therefore, Islam was always embedded in the reform movements of the Ottoman Empire, unlike some scholars' depiction of the Ottoman modernization process as a constant struggle between the dichotomy of secular modernizers and the traditional reactionary forces.¹⁴² Until the CUP rule, reforming religious institutions and bringing alternative interpretations of Islam was not the central issue of

¹⁴⁰ Şerif Mardin, "Turkish Islamic Exceptionalism Yesterday and Today: Continuity, Rupture and Reconstruction in Operational Codes", *Turkish Studies* 6, no.2 (June 2005), p. 151.

¹⁴¹ See the monumental study of Şerif Mardin for the disposition of the Young Ottomans. Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962). See Christoph K. Neumann, *C. Araç Tarih Amaç Tanzimat Tarih-i Cevdet'in Siyasi Anlamı* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999). for the modernization project of the Tanzimat.

¹⁴² See İnalçık, Halil. "The Nature of Traditional Society", In *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, edited by Ward, R.E. and Rustow, D.A. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), and Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (London: Routledge, 1999). The profound study of Uriel Heyd, which stands as pioneering study in terms of demonstrating the fractions within the Ottoman ulema is worth mentioning. Contrary to the general belief that is based on the assumption that the Ottoman ulema acted as a monolithic power in Ottoman politics, Heyd disclosed the complex structure of the Ottoman ulema and argued that the close integration of the Ottoman ulema into the state agency, the character of the hierarchy, and the socio-economic conflicts within the ulema rendered a fractious structure in the Ottoman ulema. Accordingly, the Ottoman ulema was composed of different interest groups and different fractions that also competed among each other. Heyd asserts that the high ranking ulema members cooperated with the sultans in their reform efforts mainly due to their inability to realize the far reaching implications of those reforms on their status. See Uriel Heyd, "The Ottoman Ulema and Westernization in the Time of Selim III and Mahmud II, *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 9 (1961), pp.63-96.

westernization. Rather, those issues were seen as an auxiliary discussion: modernization was not intended to reform Islam, but Islamic justification was needed to enable modernization that had not yet been seen as indispensable and compulsory.¹⁴³ In a nutshell, the reform efforts prior to the CUP rule aimed at keeping a delicate balance within the traditional socio-political structure and the wave of modernization.

The Neologism of Diyanet: (A)a Fundamental Rupture

Rather than assuming that there had been an ultimate path of Ottoman modernization that paved the way of the radical reinstitutionalization of the office of Şeyhülislam, it should be pointed out that the proposal of Ziya Gökalp, in particular, and the mindset of the CUP, in general, poses a fundamental rupture. This rupture was deepened with the foundation of the Republic, which due its authoritative rule and silencing policies, found a suitable environment for realizing the reforms that had been proclaimed but not yet actualized. CUP did more than leaving a secular legacy to the founding elites of the Republic. Curbing the semi-autonomy of the ulama and employing a divisive strategy towards the ulama through incorporating a group of it in party politics, CUP also left a “usable” ulema, which will be later employed in the establishment of the PRA.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Kara, İsmail. “Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı”, In *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: İslamcılık*, edited by Aktay, Y. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), pp. 179. See also Kara, İsmail. “İslâm Düşüncesinde Paradigma Değişimi”, In *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Cumhuriyet’e Devreden Düşünce Mirası Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet’in Birikimi*, edited by Alkan, M.O. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), pp.234-244.

¹⁴⁴ Bein, pp. 62. A comparative account on Iran and Turkey is insightful in this sense for demonstrating that how the ulema can play an important in aborting secularization reforms. The

Gökalp was one of the contributors of the journal, *İslam Mecmuası*, which had been established by the CUP to show that “nationalism was not contrary to Islam.” The contributors of this journal were critics of excessive westernization on the one hand and “degenerated” Islam on the other. With the intention of rescuing Islam from the “alien elements” and superstitions, the journal aimed at revitalizing Islam by bringing to light the “original” and “real” Islam.¹⁴⁵

Gökalp, who had also acted as a cultural and educational adviser to the Young Turk government, issued a memorandum on religious institutions that was discussed and accepted at the 1916 Congress of the Party of Union and Progress.¹⁴⁶ This memorandum was only partially enacted, mainly due to the war conditions. The relevant compilation of the codes of the time demonstrates that some of the propositions mentioned in this memorandum were endorsed by parliament. For instance, on 6 March 1917, all the legal units operating under the jurisdiction of the *Şeyhülislam*, the shari’ah courts and charity administrations, were transferred to the

sweeping reforms of Atatürk could only be attained with a weak clergy and Reza Shah’s reforms were more difficult to achieve since the ulema, in contrast to Turkey continued to play an important role in the political life of the country. See Atabaki, Touraj. “The Caliphate, the Clerics and Republicanism in Turkey and Iran: Some Comparative Remarks”, In *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah*, edited by Atabaki, T. and Zürcher, E.J. (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), pp.44-65.

¹⁴⁵ Andrew Davison, *Secularism and Revivalism in Turkey: a Hermeneutic Reconsideration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), pp.106. On *İslam Mecmuası* and its place in the late Ottoman thought see Masami Arai, *Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992) and Yıldız Akpolat-Davud, “II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi Sosyolojisinin Kaynakları: *İslam Mecmuası*”, *Türkiye Günlüğü* 45 (Mart-Nisan 1997).

¹⁴⁶ Berkes, p. 415.

Ministry of Justice and the partial effectiveness of the office on the legal system was eliminated.¹⁴⁷

This new conception of Islam was epitomized in the term *diyanet* (piety). Although, according to Berkes, the word *diyanet* is a neologism created by Gökalp,¹⁴⁸ it is likely that Berkes did not mean that Gökalp had actually invented the word *diyanet* given that it is an Arabic word available in Meminski's "oriental thesaurus" in 1680¹⁴⁹ and present it in earlier Ottoman texts. We may assume that Berkes was referring to the emergence of a new connotation attributed to the word and employment of it as a specific technicalized term. Gökalp contrasts *diyanet* with *kaza* (qada, jurisprudence): "...the fact that Islam, from the beginning, had differentiated matters of piety from the affairs of jurisprudence".¹⁵⁰ The new view of religion developed by Gökalp, and the repercussions of its secularism-laden connotation that was embraced by the Republic will be discussed in the following parts of this chapter.

Drawing upon this conceptualization, Gökalp asserted that the function of the office of Şeyhülislam should be limited to the affairs of piety (*umur-ı diyaniye*), which was composed of belief and worship.¹⁵¹ The office ought to be reorganized

¹⁴⁷ The first article of the enactment is: "Kazaskerlik, muhalefet ve varidat mahkemeleri dahi dahil olduğu halde bircümle mehakim-i şeriye ile emval-i eytam gibi merbutatının makam-ı meşihata olan irtibatı Adliye Nezaretine tahvil edilmiştir". See Republic of Turkey, *Dustur*, 2nd Tertip, 270, no: 177.

¹⁴⁸ Berkes, p. 437.

¹⁴⁹ Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski, *Thesaurus Lexicon: Linguarum Orientalium -Turcico, Arabico, Persicum* (Ankara: Sanat Kitabevi, 1999).

¹⁵⁰ Ziya Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp*, trans.Niyazi Berkes. (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1959), p.200.

¹⁵¹ Ziya Gökalp, "İttihat ve Terakki Kongresi Münasebetiyle", *İslam Mecmuası* 49 (1335/1919), pp. 1002 -1003.

into a body that would be solely responsible for conducting religious services and disseminating religion. Therefore, the office of Şeyhülislam was to be totally divested from its duties and authorization over the fields of judiciary, education and administration.¹⁵²

Berkes notes that drawing upon this memorandum, a series of reforms rendering sweeping changes in terms of state-religion relations were initiated in 1916. He lists those reforms as: the elimination of the Şeyhülislam from the cabinet; the removal of the Shari'ah courts from the jurisdiction of the Şeyhülislam to that of the Ministry of Justice; the transfer of the *evkaf* (endowment) administration from the jurisdiction of the Şeyhülislam, its total secularization and redeployment as a newly formed financial-commercial department of the state under a cabinet minister, and the allocation of all financial matters pertaining the religious institutions (mosques, medreses, etc.) to the jurisdiction of the new Ministry of Endowments; and the transfer of the medreses from the jurisdiction of the Şeyhülislam to that of the Ministry of Education.¹⁵³ Therefore, the reform intended to rescue Islam from backwardness and superstitions by subjecting the legal aspects of Islam to secular legislation.

This kind of rupture within the incorporation of Islam could only be rendered with a transformation of the understanding of “proper” Islam, which makes a transformation of the relation between state and religion possible. Gökalp proposed a “reformed” version of Islam by developing this concept of *diyanet*. The context for

¹⁵² Ibid. This conceptualization of Gökalp came under heavy criticism by especially the Islamists. See Ismail Hakkı, “Diyanet ve Kaza”, *Sebilürrreşad*, XV/373 (1334/1918). See M. Sait Özervarlı, “Transferring Traditional Islamic Disciplines into Modern Social Sciences in Late Ottoman Thought: The Attempts of Ziya Gökalp and Mehmed Serafeddin”, *The Muslim World* 97, no.2 (April 2007), pp. 182-195.

¹⁵³ Berkes, pp. 415-416.

Gökalp is marked by the dissolution of the culturally, ethically, and religiously heterogeneous Ottoman Empire and the rise of nationalism among both Muslim and non-Muslim populations. His attempts to juxtapose Islam in the promulgation of a distinct Turkish national identity that is supposed to have a modern, scientific-rational character should be considered in such a setting. The contours of the understanding of Islam that lies beneath the concept of *diyanet* and its pivotal role in the construction of the Republic's approach towards Islam will be discussed in the following chapters of this thesis.

The Republic's Encounter with Islam

Expurgating superstitious beliefs from Islam and producing a real, pristine, and genuine Islam was not only the dream of the Young Turks. These ideas, which were seen as utopian in 1900s, could be implemented in the following decades. The project of the nationalization of religion and the secularization reforms of the Young Republic were the culmination of the projects of Young Turk era. However, they also signify a fundamental rupture from the modernization approaches of the Tanzimat. While Ottoman modernization was marked by the notion of reforming basic traditional institutions,¹⁵⁴ the Young Republic did not abstained from taking zealous measures to institutionalize Islam so as to maintain control over it.

During the national resistance, the Ankara government formed parallel institutions that would ultimately replace their equivalents located in Istanbul. The Ministry of Pious Affairs and Endowments (Şer'îye ve Evkaf Vekaleti), which was

¹⁵⁴ Berkes, p. 461.

established on May 4, 1920, was designed as the counterpart of the office of Şeyhülislam. The jurisdiction of this ministry was limited to regulating and monitoring religious affairs and managing endowments.¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the ministry was also endowed with a symbolic importance: Mustafa Fehmi Efendi had been the acting minister for Mustafa Kemal, who was the president of the assembly, on 25 November 1920; and Mustafa Fevzi Efendi was the acting minister of İsmet Paşa, the Prime Minister, on 9 February 1924, with the approval of Mustafa Kemal, the president of the time.¹⁵⁶

The symbolic importance vested in the Ministry could be explained by the strategic use of Islam. During the national resistance Mustafa Kemal had heavily relied on Islamic themes such as jihad and used Islam as a political weapon to mobilize masses for the liberation struggle. In fact, it was not only the support of the Anatolian Muslims that was expected. Nationalist leaders also desired to gain moral support from Muslims throughout the world. In a nutshell: “To the contemporaries of this early period Kemal’s resistance was as much a religious as national movement”.¹⁵⁷

The use of Islam as a political weapon during the resistance movement can be illustrated by several incidents. The resistance movement was instigated by the

¹⁵⁵ İstar Gözaydın, *Diyanet: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Dinin Tanzimi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009), pp. 15. This ministry was comprised of three main subunits; Merkez İdaresi, Medreseler İdaresi, and Vilayetler İdaresi. The list of the ministers during the four year period can be listed as: 1- Mustafa Fehmi Efendi (Gerçekler)- (Bursa MP) 3/05/1920-11/05/1922, 2- Abdullah Azmi Efendi (Torun) – (Eskişehir MP) 11/05/1922-6/11/1922, 3- Mehmet Vehbi Efendi (Çelik)- 06/11/1922-15/04/1923, 4- Musa Kazım Efendi (Konya MP) 15/04/1923-1/09/1923, 5- Mustafa Fevzi Efendi (Saruhan) 21/09/1923- 03/03/1924. See Bozan and Çakır, p. 48.

¹⁵⁶ Mehmet Bulut, “I. Meclis Döneminde Din Hizmetleri”, *Diyanet Aylık Dergisi* 28 (April 1993), p. 30.

¹⁵⁷ Rustow, Dankwart A. “Politics and Islam in Turkey 1920-1955”, In *Islam and the West*, edited by Frye, R.N. (Hague: Mouton & Company, 1957), pp. 71-73.

ulama through several fatwas, compelling the people to fight for their faith. In fact, of the 56 delegates to the Congress of Erzurum, 21 were either directly or indirectly connected to the medreses. The Müftü of Erzurum opened the first session of Congress with a prayer, and the Congress ended with a prayer by Mustafa Kemal, calling upon God to “save the Sultanate and the Caliphate.” The opening ceremonies of the First Grand National Assembly in 1920 reflected a similar fashion in the use of Islam. To emphasize the religious significance of the day, verses of Qur’an would be recited in the mosques throughout the country. The opening of the Assembly started with a religious ceremony and ended with the pronouncement of its duties, including the liberation of the Sultanate and the Caliphate. When the Assembly was first held, 57 out of 437 members held official religious duties and 59 members belonged to the ulama, which means that close to one-fourth of the First Assembly’s membership had a religious background. It is striking, however, that no new deputy having a clerical background was elected to the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Assemblies.¹⁵⁸

Nevertheless, with the establishment of the Republic, The Ministry of Pious Affairs and Endowments was replaced by the PRA, through a sweeping reform that involved a curtailment of certain functions within the jurisdiction of the ministry, assigning the management of the endowments to a newly organized institution, and relegating the institution from the status of ministry to an administrative bureau. Moreover, the administration of the foundations was transferred from the Ministry to a newly formed body, the Directorate of Foundations, *Evkaf Umum Müdürlüğü*. The annulment act of the *Şer’iye ve Evkaf Vekaleti*, also included the annulment of the Ministry of War (*Erkan-ı Harbiye-i Umumiyeye Vekaleti*). The preamble of the law justifies these two annulments as “The political involvement of the religion and army

¹⁵⁸ Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey* (Leiden : Brill, 1981), pp. 64-65. .

leads to many problems. This fact is accepted by all the civilized nations and governments as a fundamental principle”.¹⁵⁹

The abolishment of Caliphate and the establishment of the PRA did not create significant bedlam among the opposition or society due to the repressive policies of the early Republic. Only a few figures, such as Lutfi Fikri Bey and Hüseyin Cahid (Yalçın), showed any reaction to the newly established Republic’s measures on religious institutions. Lütfi Fikri, the President of the Istanbul Bar Association, and Hüseyin Cahid, journalist, were known by their liberal-conservative views; and they were both tried and convicted on charges of high treason because of their support of the Caliph.¹⁶⁰ Parliamentary records evince that the establishment of the PRA and dissolution of the Caliphate was accepted unanimously, with no member of parliament opposing the reforms.¹⁶¹

The PRA, like the office of the *Şeyhülislam*, has undergone changes during the history of the Republic. The institution has merged, recast, and reestablished according to shifting policies over religion and upon the changing political needs. The institutional history of the Diyanet can be examined in three phases.

¹⁵⁹ The name of the annulment act is: “Şer’iye ve Evkaf ve Erkan-ı Harbiye-i Umumiyeye Vekaletlerinin İlgasına Dair Kanun”. The preamble of the act: “Din ve Ordunun Siyaset cereyanları ile alakadar olması bir çok mezhiri daidir. Bu hakikat bütün medeni milletler ve hükümetler tarafından bir düsturu esasi olarak kabul edilmiştir”. See Omer Uluçay, *Tartışmalı Kurum Diyanet* (Adana: Gözde Yayınevi, 1998), p. 17.

¹⁶⁰ Rustow, pp. 76-77. For a detailed investigation on the abolition of the Caliphate see Nurullah Ardiç, *Islam and the Politics of Secularism: The Abolition of the Caliphate (1908-1924)* (PhD Dissertation, University of California Los Angeles, 2009).

¹⁶¹ Kazım Öztürk, *Türk Parlamento Tarihi : TBMM II Dönem 1923-1927* (Ankara: Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Vakfı, 1993-1995), pp.112-155.

Containing Islam through Willful Neglect: The PRA between 1924-1965

The PRA was established in 1924 as an administrative unit “to conduct services in the area of Islamic faith and practices, to enlighten society about religion, and to manage places of worship,” under Act no. 429/03.03.1340 (1924) concerning the abolishment of the Ministries of Religious Affairs and Endowments. Through this act, which was proposed by Siirt MP, Halil Hulki Efendi,¹⁶² the management of religious affairs was placed in the hands of an administrative bureau, not to a ministry in the cabinet. According to İřtar Gözaydın, this amendment reflected the overall policy of the founding political decision-making elite of Turkey, who did not want to have a ministry dealing with religious affairs located in the cabinet. The PRA was placed under the supervision of the prime ministry. The head of the PRA is appointed by the president of the Republic upon being nominated by the prime minister.¹⁶³ The first president of the PRA was Rıfat Börekçi, who had previously been the Mufti of Ankara since 1907. Börekçi had been a staunch supporter of the national resistance movement in Anatolia; in fact, he was among the founders of the Ankara chamber of the Müdafa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti and had issued a fetwa to counter the fetwa of the Şeyhülislam declaring the nationalist troops to be infidels, the killing of which should be the goal of every believer.¹⁶⁴ Börekçi remained in office for 17 years, from 1924 to 1941.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Gözaydın, p. 59.

¹⁶³ Gözaydın, *Diyanet and Politics*, pp. 218-210.

¹⁶⁴ There are some scholars suggesting that the appointment of Börekçi, who was an “ordinary” Müfti, as the president of Diyanet was an overt infringement of the Ottoman tradition. For the position of the Şeyhülislam the appointment of a Müfti was out of the question, only the men who became kadı asker

As noted above, the dissolution of the Ministries of Religious Affairs and Endowments and the establishment of the PRA were unanimously approved by the parliament. The only debate over this abolition occurred with respect to the naming of the new institution. Some MPs suggested coining the word *umur-u diniye* rather than *umur-u diyanet*,¹⁶⁶ whereas others, including Tunalı Hilmi Bey, insisted on using the word *diyanet*. Samih Rıfat Bey explained his emphasis on employing the word *diyanet* instead of *diniye* as follows:

There is a difference between *diyanet* (piety) and *din* (religion) in terms of Islamic legal understanding. Religion encompasses all legal matters, jurisprudence, rituals, morality, codes and beliefs. However, there is a term in Islamic law that encompasses all matters of religion such as morality, rituals, codes and beliefs except law and jurisprudence. This word is *diyanet*.¹⁶⁷

While this debate appeared to be over naming, it was much more than that. As discussed above, the word *diyanet* was introduced to the political vocabulary as a term charged with a particular connotation. It had been proposed by Gökaltıp to identify a new understanding of Islam divested of its legal and social relevance. With the word *diyanet*, Islam is contained within the individual sphere to a very limited extent; it is comprised only of belief and worship, strictly excluded from the political realm. Hence, this very deliberate and conscious choice of the usage of the term reflects the positioning of the religion in the newly formed state.

could be appointed as Şeyhülislam during the Empire. See Davut Dursun, *Yönetim -Din İlişkileri Açısından Osmanlı Devletinde Siyaset ve Din* (İstanbul: İşaret Yayınları, 1989), p. 182.

¹⁶⁵ Kara, *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, p. 193.

¹⁶⁶ It was the Konya deputy Mustafa Feyzi Bey who made this suggestion.

¹⁶⁷ Öztürk, pp. 268-269.

This debate was also echoed in the press. The abolition of the Ministries of Religious Affairs and Endowments and the establishment of the Diyanet were reflected with different emphasis in the newspapers of the time. *Tevhid-i Efkar* stressed the debate between Tunalı Hilmi Bey and Mustafa Fevzi Efendi on the name of the newly formed institution, in an article entitled “A Riotous Assembly” (*Gürültülü Bir Oturum*). The newspaper account concentrates on the dissolution of Caliphate, which occurred on same date as the establishment of the PRA. Focusing on the deliberations of the MPs who were opposed to doing away with the Caliphate and, quoting from Zeki Bey (Gümüşhane MP), the newspaper highlighted the argument that the elimination of the Caliphate was unacceptable, since the legitimacy of the national struggle was based on the promise to fight in the name of the caliphate.¹⁶⁸ *Tanin* adopted a totally different approach toward this move of the Republic. Significant space was allocated to the remarks of İsmet Paşa (İnönü) on the abolition of the caliphate, with the views of the opposing MPs barely touched upon. The parliament speeches of the MPs who argued that the abrogation of the Caliphate was perceived as a necessary and inevitable act, since the office was redundant in a civilized state where the national assembly is the genuine representative of the nation were highlighted. The establishment of the Diyanet was mentioned in one sentence, without any comment.¹⁶⁹ *İkdam* employed a more balanced approach towards the reforms of the Republic than did the previously mentioned newspapers. The headline of the daily, “The Parliament Promulgated Four Acts that Open New Chapters in Our History,” reflected the emphasis on the awareness of having entered a new phase. The statements of the opponents, such as MP Zeki Bey and Halid Bey (Kastamonu)

¹⁶⁸*Tevhid-i Evkar*, 4 March 1324/24.

¹⁶⁹*Tanin*, 4 March 1324/24.

are mentioned and the debate over the naming of Diyanet is emphasized. Quoting from Salih Rifat Bey, who attempts to justify the use of *diyanet* instead of *diniye* by explaining the meaning of diyanet in detail, the daily presents the details of the session of parliament.¹⁷⁰

This debate regarding the naming of the newly founded institution and its reflection in the press demonstrates the vestiges of the opposition and the blatant intentions of the Republican elites with respect to Islam. It is clear that the Republican leaders, with the dissolution of caliphate, had abandoned their discursive strategy of using Islam as one of the main pillars of legitimacy and manifested their real intention regarding the role of Islam in the newly formed Republic. From then on, the Kemalist policy on Islam would be “favorable to whatever in Islam is consistent with republican ideals, relentlessly opposed to anything which might endanger Kemalist success, and, for the rest, more or less neutral”.¹⁷¹ The PRA was formed in order to satisfy and accomplish this policy: namely, to contain Islam within the boundaries that was defined by the concept *diyanet*. Years later, Ali Bardakoğlu, as the President of the PRA, reiterated the significance of the usage of the word diyanet on the grounds that with the word diyanet the moral foundation of Islam is epitomized:

I would like to dwell upon the term *diyanet* (piety) that is used in the Turkish title of the Presidency in a few sentences. In classical religious literature *diyanet* is used as an antonym of *kaza*, i.e. the judiciary. *Kaza* expresses the judiciary and the process by which legal, political, and administrative relations among all people are regulated by worldly institutions through worldly sanctions, while *diyanet* expresses a higher value; the spiritual and moral aspects of life. In other words, *kaza* is a

¹⁷⁰ *İkdam*, 4 March 1324/24.

¹⁷¹ Rustow, p. 86.

judgment made by the judiciary in the present sense and *diyanet* is the process by which people discuss and evaluate their own actions within their hearts and also take heed of their responsibilities before God. Sometimes the decisions of the judiciary do not satisfy people. They can go beyond the strict and normative approaches of the judiciary in their internal world. So the term *diyanet* signifies the consistency, integrity and spiritual piety in a person's internal world. In that sense, the choice of the word *diyanet* in the Republican period, rather than simply using the term 'religious affairs' –*din işleri*– can be interpreted as an effort to provide for religiousness based on a moral foundation. Other interpretations can also be made, but this is the one I favor most.¹⁷²

The administrative structure of the central and provincial units of the PRA was first defined by the 1927 Budget Law. According to this law, the central unit of the PRA was comprised of a Consultative Council (*heyet-i müşavere*) and Koran Verification Commission. These two institutions operated under the Office of Şeyhülislam during Ottoman rule. Beside these units, which are a continuation from the old institution, new directorships were formed within the PRA.¹⁷³ The provincial units of the PRA are composed of Muftis, which numbered 391 in 1927, located in cities and towns.¹⁷⁴

In 1930, Budget Act no. 1827, which put severe restraints on the jurisdiction of the PRA, was issued. With this act, the administration of mosques and *mescits* was turned over to the Directorate of Public Endowments (*Evkaf Umum Müdürlüğü*) and all the personnel of the PRA working in the units of the Directorate of Religious Institutions (*Dini Müesseseler Müdürlüğü*) and Directorate of Equipment (*Levazım Müdürlüğü*) were moved to the Directorate of Public Endowments.¹⁷⁵ For 20 years,

¹⁷² Ali Bardakoğlu, *Religion and Society: New Perspectives from Turkey* (Ankara: Publications of Presidency of Religious Affairs, 2006), pp.10-11.

¹⁷³ See Gözaydın, *Diyanet: Türkiye Cumhuriyetinde Dinin Tanzimi*, pp. 64-65.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 64.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 65.

between 1930 and 1950, concomitant with the early Republic's approach towards religion, the PRA was rendered very weak institutionally because of the transfer of the administration of the mosques to the Directorate of Public Endowments.

From the establishment of the Republic till the end of the 1930s, the Turkish Republic undertook a series of secularization reforms that were guided by a very staunch and orthodox understanding of laicism. Aiming to subjugate religion to state authority and diminish the visibility of Islam, those reforms were designed as a top-down project and implemented with very authoritarian measures. Binnaz Toprak examines this secularization program in terms of four phases:

- 1) Symbolic (S)secularization: (C)changes in aspects of national culture or social life which had a symbolic identification with Islam, such as the change of the alphabet from Arabic to Latin script and the adoption of European numerals (1928), the introduction of a new official history thesis (the so-called "Sun-Language Theory"), the abolition of Caliphate (1924), the adoption of the western hat and clothing (1925), the adoption of the Gregorian calendar (1925), the introduction of western music in schools, the change of the weekly holiday from Friday to Sunday (1935), the adoption of the metric system in 1931, and the adoption of family names (1934);¹⁷⁶
- 2) Institutional (S) secularization: (O) organizational arrangements designed to destroy the strength of Islam: the establishment of the Presidency of Religious Affairs and the Directorate-General of Pious Foundations (*Evkaf Umum Müdürlüğü*);¹⁷⁷
- 3) Functional Secularization: (A) amendments in the functional specificity of religious and governmental institutions: the overall secularization of the court system (1924) (the abolishment of the Shari'ah courts, the unification of the court system under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice and the enactment of distinctly secular codes), the secularization of the education system (the introduction of the unification of the educational system bill, *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu* (1924), the closing down of medreses (1924), the establishment of a Faculty of Divinity and

¹⁷⁶ Toprak, pp. 40-45.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 46-47.

the creation of Prayer Leader and Preacher Schools (İmam-Hatip schools) [1924]);¹⁷⁸

- 4) Legal (S) secularization: (C) changes in the legal structure of the society: the introduction of secular codes (the adoption of Swiss Civil Code, the Italian Criminal Code, and the German Commercial Code)¹⁷⁹

The Classical Kemalist period is marked by the attempt to realize a “cultural transformation,” a grandiose project to eliminate all sources and signs of “backwardness” and “bigotry” in the public and private spheres. Mustafa Kemal was known for his abhorrence of all social control mechanisms inherited from the Ottoman-Islamic past, e.g., *mahalle* (neighborhood), *cami* (mosque), and *kahvehâne* (coffee houses), since he believed that these kinds of “archaic” networks were irrational and, therefore, needed to be transformed into their modern and rational counterparts.¹⁸⁰ In fact, the Republic had formed its own mediums through which its discourse could be propagated and hoped that they would eventually replace the former ones, especially the mosques. People’s Houses,¹⁸¹ People’s Rooms¹⁸² and

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 48-49.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁸⁰ Tanör, Bulent. “Laikleş(tir)me, Kemalistler ve Din”, In *75 Yılda Düşünceler Tartışmalar*, edited by Tunçay, M. (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1999), p. 184.

¹⁸¹ The purpose of the establishment of the People's Houses was to bridge the gap between the intelligentsia and people by teaching the former the national culture, the rudiments of civilization and an indoctrination of the nationalist secular ideas of the Republican regime. In short the Houses were the agents of the new regime, whose main objective was to uproot the vestiges of the Sultanate and its ruling group and familiarize the masses with the ideas and ideals of the Republic. The idea of the People's Hearths was again inherited from the late Ottoman modernizers, in fact the forerunners of the People's Houses were the *Türk Ocakları* (Turkish Hearths) established in 1911 to formulate and disseminate nationalism. Designed by the leading intellectuals of the time, Ziya Gökalp, Fuad Köprülü, Halide Edip Adivar, Yusuf Akçura, Ahmed Ağaoğlu, Mehmed Emin Yurdakul, Hüseyin Zade Ali, the Ocaks served as an ideological guide to the Union and Progress and gradually expanded with its assistance, opening branches in the main cities. *Türk Ocakları* were finally disbanded in 1931 and their property was transferred to the RPP. The Houses, on the other hand, were officially opened on February 19, 1932, with 14 branches. The establishment of the Houses was triggered with the multi-party experiment of 1930, which alarmed the Kemalist rule on the people's discontent with the Republican party and prompted Atatürk to generalize and broaden the reforms in order to assure the Republic's survival. The People's Houses were placed under the Republican Party's Secretary General,

Village Institutes¹⁸³ can be considered as the most important mediums through which the Republic aimed at “saving” the villages and creating “enlightened” citizens.

bureau one. All administrative officers and government personnel were generally instructed to support the Houses, in fact all school teachers and officials were urged to join the organization. The authority to open a People's House and to determine the general policy belonged to the Republican Party's Central Committee, yet the supervision of activities was given to the province organizations of the party. The heads of the Houses were appointed by the Republican Party provincial chairmen instead of being elected by the House members. A People's House could be comprised of nine sections: 1- Language and Literature, 2- Fine Arts, 3- Drama, 4- Sports, 5- Social Assistance, 6- Classes and Courses, 7- Library and Publications, 8- Village Development, and 9- History and Museum. The buildings and equipment of the Houses were provided via the Republican Party. The funds for the Houses were provided through the Republican Party budget, which in turn acquired them from the state budget. By the end of 1932 thirty-four Houses were opened, in 1940 this number went to 379 and the number of the Houses was 478 in 1950. All citizens, regardless of whether or not they are member to the Republican Party, could participate in the House activities and enjoy its facilities. In order to fuel the feeling of belonging, people were encouraged to use the House for weddings, circumcisions ceremonies, and other special activities. The membership profile of the Houses was marked with a majority of middle classes: in 1933 of 33, 626 members, 2,983 were classified as farmers, 3,339 as workers and the remaining (4,374) as teachers, doctors and other professionals. In 1940 the total membership in the Houses was over one hundred thousand of whom over 17,000 were government officials, over 10,000 teachers, and about 27,000 farmers and workers. In 1951, after the ascendancy of the Democrat Party to power, all the property of the Houses was confiscated and this put an end to the Houses' life. Nevertheless the idea of an institution with multiple purposes aiming at educating the masses survived and the RPP promised to rejuvenate them once it comes to power. In fact, after the military coup of May 27, 1960, the military government re-established them under the name of *Türk Kültür Dernekleri* (Turkish Cultural Associations) Kemal Karpat, “The People's Houses in Turkey, Establishment and Growth”, *Middle East Journal* 17, no.1/2 (Winter 1963), pp. 55-67. See also Zürcher, Erik Jan. “Institution Building in the Kemalist Republic: The Role of the People's Party”, In *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah*, edited by Atabaki, T. and Zürcher, E.J. (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), pp. 106-110.

¹⁸² People's Rooms (Halk Odaları) were established in September 1939 to expand the People's Houses movement into villages by means of smaller organizations. People's Rooms were opened in places outside the activity sphere and reach of the Houses. A Party member or a government official was appointed as the chairmen of the room and the responsibility for activities was placed on ex-soldiers, teachers and students. In short the People's Rooms were the extension of the Houses into the villages, supported directly by the Republican Party. The number of the Rooms was 141 in 1940, 2,338 in 1945 and reached a total of 4,322 in 1950. The geographical distribution of 2,668 Rooms in 1944-45 was as follows: 108 in district seats, 17 in neighborhoods, 643 in boroughs, and 1,920 in villages. Both People's Houses and People's Rooms were guided by modernist-secularist, nationalist principles and must be envisaged as part of the populist movement of the Republican regime. Karpat, pp. 57-62.

¹⁸³ Like People's Houses, the Village Institutions were designed as response to the growing necessity to broaden the mass base of the political regime throughout the country, which became more acute during 1930s. The Village Institutes is an educational attempt made in Turkey between 1937 and the mid-1940s to transform the Turkish countryside and sustain the development of rural Turkey through modernizing the social relations, bringing an end to poverty and ignorance among the peasants, creating peasant intellectuals, increasing agricultural productivity and helping the spread of the Kemalist Revolution in the countryside. It has been suggested that the Village Institutes can be seen as an embodiment of the peasantist ideology, which flourished in many parts of the world, such as Germany, Russia, and Britain, during the 1930s. Though the idea of founding Village Institutes officially arose in 1937, the notion had been discussed by the intelligentsia and the ruling elite in the early 1930s. After a three-year experimental period, they were officially established in 1940. The main objective of founding the Village Institutes was to educate the peasant youth in technical matters

Therefore, the Republic employed an approach based on a conscious neglect of mosques and the demands of the faithful. A press report dated 30 December 1928 states that it was decided to close around 85 to 96 mosques, the majority of which located in Istanbul, due to the lack of adequate community. This decision was based on a public statute dated 8 January 1928, which formed the basis to regulations entitled “Regulations governing the categorization of Mosques and Mescits” (*Cami ve Mescitlerin Sınıflandırılması Hakkındaki Nizamname*) on 25 December 1932, which enabled the closing down of mosques that had congregations of insufficient size. Code no. 2845 ordered the closing of mosques classified as inactive and making them available to other uses¹⁸⁴¹⁸⁵

In 1924, medreses were closed down and a Faculty of Divinity at the *Darülfünun* was formed in their place. Additionally, 29 Prayer Leader and Preacher Schools were founded to train personnel providing religious services. In 1933, the *Darülfünun* was abolished, as a result of which, the Faculty of Divinity also closed its doors. An Institute for the Study of Islam (İslam İncelemeleri Enstitüsü) was founded in its place at the newly established Istanbul University. However, the Institute functioned for only three years since it closed due to the loss of most of its

necessary to benefit the agricultural economy. The graduates of these schools were eventually recruited as teachers who would be employed in their own villages. This was designed as a remedy to the failures of the former village teachers who had been recruited from urban areas. Many believed that it was the alienness and indifference to village life of those students that accounted for their failure. Therefore, one of the most important goals of the Village Institutes was to educate peasant youth so that they could go back to their native regions to serve as village teachers. Another major aim of the Institutions was the project of Turkifying the peasants, who did not embrace enough loyalty to Turkish nationalism. In fact it has been noted that "Village Institutes are the first and last means 'to create a nation'." The new RPP governments between 1946 and 1950 made substantial changes in the Village Institutes as a response to the growing controversy on them and ultimately ended of the Institutes as they had been originally known. See Asim M. Karaomerlioglu, "The Village Institutes Experience in Turkey" *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 25, no. 1 (May 1998), pp. 47-73.

¹⁸⁴ Mete Tunçay, *T.C.'nde Tek-Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması (1923-1931)* (Ankara : Yurt Yayınları, 1981), p. 222.

academic personnel. The number of the İmam-Hatip schools gradually decreased between 1924-1930, and were abolished altogether in the 1929-1930 academic year. After all these measures, there remained no religious educational institutions receiving state support.¹⁸⁶ The number of the Koran courses was also very limited during this period. While there were ten Koran courses between the years of 1925-1931, this number had dropped to nine in 1934 and seven in 1935.¹⁸⁷

The PRA, which had been reduced to a weak institution during that time, was used only for the propagation of the regime's oppressive secularization policies, of which it stood as a docile observer. For instance, Börekçi, sent a declaration aiming to provide legitimacy for the introduction of the hat to the Muftis in 1926:

The hat is not a merely a tradition of Christianity and the symbol of Christians. It is only a head gear used for protecting one's head from sun and complementing clothing. Therefore, I would like to announce that praying with a hat is acceptable and ask our muftis to enlighten the people about this issue. Moreover there are those asking whether praying bareheaded [for women] is religiously permissible or not. Any believer can pray however they wish: either bareheaded or with hat.¹⁸⁸

The only exception to Börekçi's accommodating manner during the Republic and the concession he succeeded in acquiring was when the move was made to eliminate the Koran courses. With the Unification of Education Law dated March 3, 1924, all

¹⁸⁶ Toprak, pp. 49-50.

¹⁸⁷ M. Akif Kılavuz, "Adult Religious Education at the Qur'anic Courses in Modern Turkey", *The Journal of International Social Research* 2, no.6 (Winter 2009), p.410.

¹⁸⁸ Şapka başlı başına bir Hristiyan adeti ve Hristiyanların sembolü değildir. Sadece başı güneşten korumak için ve libası tamamlamak için kullanılan bir serpuştur. Binaenaleyh şapka ile namaz kılınabileceğini duyurur, müftülerimizin bu konuda halkı tenvir eylemesini rica ederim. Ayrıca başı açık olarak namaz kılmak caiz midir, diye soranlar olmaktadır. İsteyen her mü'min ister başı açık ister şapkalı bir şekilde namazlarını kılabilirler. Ahmet Faruk Kılıç, *Türkiye'de Din - Devlet İlişkilerinde Yönetici Seçkinlerin Rolü* (İstanbul: Dem Yayınları, 2005), p. 155.

educational institutions, including Koran courses, were transferred to the Ministry of Education. However in 1925, 17 Koran courses (*Daru'l Kurra*), started operating with the purpose of teaching the Koran and having it memorized in its entirety. They were not designed to be as comprehensive as their former versions. In accordance with the basic premises of the Unification of Education Law, some politicians maintained that the course should be supervised by the Ministry of Education. However, due to the efforts of Börekçi, they were located under the jurisdiction of the PRA and considered as a kind of vocational school. In fact, the Turkish government allocated 50,000 Turkish Liras to them.¹⁸⁹

This period of radical secularization ended with the transition to multi-party politics. Another turning point in terms of the organizational structure of the PRA is 1950, when an additional act regarding the PRA was passed in parliament. This act was the result the policy shift of the RPP toward incorporating Islam as a propaganda tool. The transition to the multi-party rule in 1945 raised alarm among the leading figures of the RPP, who were very much aware that their aggressive approach toward religion generated popular dissent. Recognition of this situation and the concern over the upcoming elections necessitated a more inclusionary approach towards religion, one that would reveal itself with a shift in the discourse and policy of the RPP towards Islam. RPP leaders were concerned that the Democrat Party,¹⁹⁰ a newly formed center-right party with a more benevolent attitude towards religion, would appeal to the masses and gain massive electoral success. With the transition to multi-party rule, the hardliners in the party were eliminated, Prime Minister Recep Peker,

¹⁸⁹ Gözaydın, pp. 24-25 and Kılavuz, p. 409.

¹⁹⁰ One article of the program of the Democrat party stated that “our party... rejects the erroneous interpretation of secularism in terms of enmity toward religion; it recognizes religious freedom like the other freedoms as a sacred human right” See Rustow, p. 91.

known for his uncompromising attitude towards religion, was forced to resign. In fact, on 16 January 1949, Şemsettin Günaltay, an unusual RPP member with strong religious-conservative credentials, was appointed as Prime Minister.¹⁹¹ This reappraisal of the party's secularization policies became apparent during the seventh Congress of the party, which was held in 1947. For the first time, the party's understanding of secularism came under heavy criticism: many of the delegates argued that RPP governments had long neglected the need for religious education and the RPP's secularization policies were blamed for the alleged lack of morality in Turkish social life, which was attributed to the absence of proper religious upbringing.¹⁹² Another leitmotiv of this congress was the newly emerging anti-communist sentiment. The religious opening up of the party coincided with the alarm felt with respect to a communist "threat," and religion was seen as the antidote to this threat. It was assumed that the introduction of a proper religious instruction would prevent the proliferation of Marxism.¹⁹³

A proposal on the religious question, which included the following policy changes, was submitted to the Congress:

- 1- The tombs of saints and other holy men (*türbe*) should be reopened;
- 2- An elective one-hour-a-week religion course, to be taken by students with written approval from their parents, should be included in the primary and secondary school curricula;

¹⁹¹ Hakan Yilmaz, "Democratization from Above in Response to the International Context", *New Perspectives on Turkey* 17 (Fall 1997), p. 16.

¹⁹² Toprak, pp. 76-77.

¹⁹³ Hikmet Bila, *CHP Tarihi 1919-1979* (Ankara: Doruk Matbaacılık, 1979), pp. 226-227. See also Rustow, pp. 93. The anti-Communist campaign frequently embarked upon Islamic themes. For instance in 1949, Prime Minister Günaltay, likened the Communists to the Batinis, an early Muslim heresy, and argued that they liked to appear in guise of a variety of Muslim religions. See Rustow, p. 102.

- 3- A clause indicating the RPP's concern with religious training should be included in the party program;
- 4- The party program should also include a statement of RPP's decision to permit elective religion courses in primary school;
- 5- The program of the Ministry of Education should state that elective religion courses are part of the school curriculum.
- 6- Post-secondary schools of divinity should be reopened.
- 7- Prayer Leader and Preacher Schools (Imam-Hatip Schools) should be opened¹⁹⁴

Following the Congress and this proposal, the party leadership decided to act in concordance with the suggestions of the members and initiated a series of measures to address the deficiencies in religious education. The Ministry of Education designed a program for the establishment of private religious courses to be attended by primary schools graduates and approved the textbooks to be used in them. Religious courses, of two hours a week were introduced into the formal curriculum of primary schools in 1949. These courses were designed to be elective, requiring the written approval of parents. Qualified teachers certified by the Ministry of Education were authorized to teach those courses and the textbooks were prepared jointly by the Ministry and Presidency of Religious Affairs. The Ministry of Education initiated a plan to establish private five-year schools of divinity for graduates of secondary schools and two-year religion courses were to be made available to high school graduates in 1947. In 1949, the Ministry set up Prayer Leader and Preacher (İmam Hatip) Programs, which started to offer classes in 10 cities. That same year, the University of Ankara decided to open a Faculty of Divinity (İlahiyat Fakültesi). In 1948, foreign exchange for the pilgrimage to Mecca was made available for the first

¹⁹⁴ Toprak, p. 77.

time. A year later, this was followed, by the reopening of sacred tombs (*türbe*) which had been closed down in accordance with the 1925 law.¹⁹⁵

With this amendment to the act, which was accepted in 1950, the name of the institution was changed to Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı from Diyanet İşleri Reisliği, in line with the process of Turkification of the names of the governmental offices throughout the 1940s. The most important change this act brought was the transfer of the administration of mosques, which had been assigned to the *Evkaf Umum Müdürlüğü* in 1931, to the PRA again. Moreover, certain subunits of the PRA were renamed, reorganized, and their personnel and obligations were enlarged.¹⁹⁶

During this period, curiously enough, Diyanet was not given much clout. Neither the Republicans nor the Democrats did anything to improve its financial status, ameliorate its general status, or solve its human resource problem. Compared to subsequent periods, the size of its staff was extremely limited. The discrepancy between the number of mosques and the number of Diyanet personnel was remarkable: while there were 28,705 mosques in Turkey, in 1927,¹⁹⁷ the number of the imams (*Hademe-i Hayrat*) employed by Diyanet was only 5,668. This dropped to 4856 in 1928.¹⁹⁸ In 1950, with re-assignment of the administration of the mosques to Diyanet, there were only 4,503 imams employed by the institution.¹⁹⁹ These numbers reveal a striking fact: only one in six imams needed, given the number of mosques,

¹⁹⁵ Toprak, pp.77-78.

¹⁹⁶ Gözaydın, pp. 68-69.

¹⁹⁷ Gotthard Jaschke, *Yeni Türkiye'de İslamlık*, trans. Hayrullah Ors (Ankara : Bilgi Yayınevi, 1972), p. 66.

¹⁹⁸ Uluçay, p. 50.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 52.

was appointed and salaried by the state. Hence, the Turkish state did not or could not infiltrate the periphery during this period.

Secondly, there was no comprehensive law regulating the function and scope of the jurisdiction of the institution. For instance, during this period, due to a legal loophole, the PRA was not authorized to prepare, distribute, or oversee the sermons recited in the mosques all around Turkey. Hence, during this period, at least in theory the imams were free to determine the content of their sermons and they were not guided with any rules or advisory sermons prepared by the central authority.

Therefore, the PRA lacked the tools to penetrate society; in fact, it was not organized to serve such a purpose. Its only function was to provide the basic minimum of religious services to the faithful. Ethnographic studies demonstrate that in the small provinces of Turkey during this period, many of the imams were not state employees and did not have a formal that would prepare them to perform their duties; in addition, their income was covered by the villagers.²⁰⁰ The interviews I conducted with the imams also reveal that until the mid-1970s, a significant number of imams were “informal,” in the sense that they were not registered with the PRA or employed and salaried by the institution. The interviews unveil that these imams were salaried by the village dwellers who individually donated in kind or in money.²⁰¹ In fact, one imam “confessed” to me that he was left no choice but to prepare amulets (*muska*) for women, in exchange for money to make a living.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ See for example Michael E. Meeker, *A Nation of Empire : the Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). Reed, Howard A. “The Religious Life of Modern Turkish Muslims”, In *Islam and West* edited by Frye, R.M. (Hague: Mouton & Company, 1957); Paul Stirling, *Turkish Village* (New York : Wiley, 1966), pp. 229-230.

²⁰¹ From an interview with a retired imam who used to work in a mosque in Çan, Çanakkale. Interview by the author, tape recording, Çanakkale, Turkey, 04 March 2010.

It is known that the Republic failed to bridge the chasm between the elite and the rest of the people. The secularization drive of the regime might have been celebrated and embraced in the urban centers, yet the visibility of those reforms and their impact on the country side is open to question: “Kemalism had brought the revolution to the towns and townspeople of Turkey, but it barely touched the villages”.²⁰³ In fact, when the Kemalist elite attempted to reach the villages, which constituted more than 70% of the overall population, they had to retreat. For instance, as Rustow argues, the Turkification of the prayer call and the government interference in the ritual caused more widespread popular resentment than any of the other secularist measures.²⁰⁴ In addition, the only retreat of Kemalist rule in terms of their ambitious secularization reformation was the lift of the ban on the recitation of Arabic prayer call through which they used to make their authority felt in even the remotest village in Turkey. Given this act was accepted with unanimity, even by RPP members, it is clear that after a certain point the hard-line Kemalist secularizers accepted the fact that they had to be content with what they had accomplished in the urban center. In that sense, the Republican project of cultural transformation is incomparable to the Bolsheviks, where a total elimination of religion was accomplished through extraordinary means:

²⁰² From an interview conducted with an imam who is still working in a mosque in a village between the border of Ankara and Konya. 15/02/2010. Interview by the author, tape recording, Ankara, Turkey, 15 February, 2010.

²⁰³ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 2nd edn. (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 479. See also Donald Everett Webster, *The Turkey of Atatürk: Social Process in the Turkish Reformation* (New York: AMS Press, 1973), pp. 169-170; Richard D. Robinson, *The First Turkish Republic: A Case Study in National Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 35-85.

²⁰⁴ Rustow, p. 84.

Supposedly at the initiative of the masses, a 'Godless Five-Year Plan' was proclaimed. Closing of churches became widespread, priests were arrested and exiled. By the mid-1930s the number of Orthodox sanctuaries was reduced to one-quarter of that pre-revolutionary times. Quite often at church closings there were fights between Komsomol members and believers, and cemeteries and grave markers were destroyed. Churches were converted into storehouses and clubs. In one a shooting gallery opened, the icons serving as targets. A defining moment of the fight against religion was the blowing up of the Church of Christ the Savior in Moscow in December 1931. It was one way of liquidating symbols of the 'hated old times' and starting the 'socialist reconstruction of the capital'. Monasteries were closed, their elaborate compounds reverting to prisons, reformatories for minors, and exclusive Soviet institutions.²⁰⁵

The grandiose project of the Turkish Republic to convert the “folk” into enlightened citizens fell short and most traditional practices and beliefs continued in quieter and less popular form. As one Turkish scholar observed in despair: “The town is the cradle of dogmatism, of ossified Islamic concepts, which make it an almost invulnerable fortress of conservatism”.²⁰⁶

The question why the Republic failed to achieve its cultural revolution is far beyond the scope of this thesis. Yet, the glaring absence of the early Republic around the mosques, which could have served as fertile grounds for spreading its ideology, is noteworthy. Why did the Young Republic reduce the power of the PRA instead of

²⁰⁵ Lewis Siegelbaum and Andrei Sokolov, *Stalinism as a Way of Life* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 63. It is further noted that while this radicalism has loosened in the following decades, “for several years the Bolshevik government would undertake no new assaults on the church, and the latter would exist unasily alongside the hostile Soviet state. Persecution of the church did not cease, but it would not reach its paroxysm until the collectivization drive and the Terror of the 1930s. The 1922 Bolshevik assault on the church weakened and chastened the institution, leaving no powerful centers of potential opposition in the Soviet Russia.” See Daly, Jonathan W. “‘Storming the Last Citadel’: The Bolshevik Assault on the Church, 1922” In *The Bolsheviks in Russian Society*, edited by Brovkin, V. N. (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2004), pp.235-268.

²⁰⁶ Robinson, p. 61.

effectively utilizing it as a medium for inculcating its ideology? Why didn't the Republic utilize the mosques for propagation and kept only loose control over them, which could have possibly engendered spheres of opposition? This is open to speculation. One reason may be the endeavor of the Republic to penetrate society with its own institutions, which were believed to replace their "archaic" counterparts. Accordingly, the Young Republic might have made an effort to create its own network through "secular" mediums such as the People's Houses, People's Rooms, and Village Institutions and exerted its energy to spread those institutions. The Young Republic might have envisaged creating a civic religion through these mediums, and assume that this civic religion would be destined to outdo the Islamic faith. Another reason may be the belief that this neglect of the mosques would ultimately diminish the religiosity of the society. The elite in the Young Republic had thought that by withholding state support to religion and, thereby, depriving society of mosques, imams, and preachers, religious institutions would decline, the mosque activity stagnate, and eventually disappear since support by the people would not be sufficient. Lastly, this reluctance of the Republic to enlarge its leverage over the mosques in Turkey may simply be interpreted as incapability. It may be argued that the Young Republic, inheriting an exhausted society that had suffered an almost unbreakable series of disastrous military defeats, lacked the necessary financial and material sources to increase its visibility around the mosques in Turkey.

As noted above, all those answers are speculative and they are not substantially grounded. However, what is certain is that the PRA was not an actor on the Turkish political scene until the mid-1960s. It may be argued that the subsequent organization of the PRA was not a product of the "original Kemalism" of the single-

party regime but a product/consequence of the embedded Kemalism²⁰⁷ of the multi-party regime and probably emerged as a necessity in the age of popular politics. The penetration of the Turkish state around the mosques in Turkey, in fact the spread of the mosques around the Turkish landscape, is a very late phenomenon, which will be described in the following parts of this chapter.

Expansion in the Age of Politics: The PRA between 1965-1980

The 1961 Constitution is the first constitution that mentions the status of the PRA. The hundredfiftyfourth article of the constitution, through which the PRA became a constitutional institution, defines the status of the institution as follows: “The Office of Religious Affairs, which is incorporated in the general administration, discharges the function prescribed by a special law”.²⁰⁸

On 22/06/1965 a new act²⁰⁹ numbered 633, regarding the status of the PRA, was promulgated. With this new act the organizational structure and scope of jurisdiction of the PRA was enlarged extensively. The number of the departments under the PRA was increased from four to eleven²¹⁰ and the number of vice

²⁰⁷ See Bora, Tanıl. and Taşkın, Yüksel. “Sağ Kemalizm”, In *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Kemalizm*, edited by Bora, T. and Gültekinil, M. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), pp. 529-545. For the embedded Kemalism within the right wing political actors in Turkey.

²⁰⁸ The 1961 Turkish Constitution, trans. Sadik Balkan, Ahmet E. Uysal and Kemal Karpaz Available [online]: "<http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Turkeyconstitution1961.pdf>" [29 November 2009]. Gözaydın notes that there had been different views regarding the status of the PRA in the constituent assembly. Gözaydın, pp. 106-109 and pp. 111-113.

²⁰⁹ This act was a culmination of a draft bill that was submitted to the parliament in 1963. See Gözaydın, pp. 71-72.

²¹⁰ These eleven departments can be listed as; Advisory Board (*Danışma Kurulu*), Inspection Board (*Teftiş Kurulu*), Legal Consultancy (*Hukuk Müşavirliği*), Management of Enquiry and Research

presidents was multiplied.²¹¹ Not only the establishment of new departments, but also the formation of new councils was realized with this act. “The High Council of Religious Affairs” (Din İşleri Yüksek Kurulu), the “Council of Religion” (Din Şurası) and an “Inspection Board” (Teftiş Kurulu) are among these newly formed units.²¹² The mission to “edify the society on religious affairs” was bestowed on the High Council of Religious Affairs, which was also responsible for preparing sermons. Thus with this act and this article, the PRA became obliged to prepare sermon samples for the first time in its history. This comprehensive act stands as the constitution of the institution, and it is still the backbone of the organization. In order to understand the spirit of this law, the mentality of this act should be highlighted. The principles of this act are stated as:

1. To state the duties and responsibilities of the Presidency of Religious Affairs as a part of the state administration in accordance with the principals of secularism, freedom of conscience, and freedom of religion as stated in our Constitution.
2. To unify under a single code all the different legislation concerning the Presidency of Religious Affairs which was previously regulated in various regulations, appendices, and amendments.
3. To ameliorate the financial conditions of the Presidency of Religious Affairs and the employees of the institution and to increase the number of employees of the institution while making employment with the Presidency of Religious Affairs attractive for young people who are trained in positive and moral sciences.
4. To increase the number of the religious experts who are proficient in pursuing scientific research in the different disciplines of religious matters enabling them to enlighten people by presenting the results of their research. This will rid Islam of superstitions and bigotry that are not

(*İnceleme-Araştırma Müdürlüğü*), Management of Library and Publication (*Kütüphane ve Yayın Müdürlüğü*), Management of Sects (*Mezhepler Müdürlüğü*), Management of Religious Tourism (*Dinsel Turizm Müdürlüğü*), Management of Personnel (*Personel Müdürlüğü*), Management of Supplies (*Levazım Müdürlüğü*), Management of Mosque Services, Management of Correspondence and Archive (*Cami Hizmetleri Müdürlüğü, Yazı İşleri ve Arşiv Müdürlüğü*). Ibid., p. 71.

²¹¹ Ibid., p. 71.

²¹² Ibid., pp. 73-75.

permitted in Islam and consolidate the unity of the confessional and moral principles of our people.²¹³

As explicitly stated in the principles of the act, it was designed and enacted because of the incapability of the institution to meet the growing demand for religious services and in order to consolidate the state's influence over the mosques. There was a significant increase in the number of mosques during Democrat Party rule because of the party's more tolerant approach towards religion in particular and freedom of association in general. (Since 1939, freedom of association had been gradually eliminated until control over it began to be relaxed in 1948.) The number of private religious organizations (organizations for the construction of mosques or the founding of Qur'an courses) trended steadily upward after the Democrat Party came to power and continued to mushroom in the following decades. In 1946, the total number of religious organizations was 11, which was 1.3% of the total number of private organizations. This number reached 95 in 1949, 251 in 1951, and 1088 in 1955. In 1960, the number of religious organizations was 5104, amounting to 29.7% of the total number of private organizations.²¹⁴

This new act was not welcomed by either staunch secularists or pious groups.

Bahri Savcı, a hard-line Kemalist, asserted that, "the coalition governments after

²¹³ 1-Anayasamızın laiklik, din ve vicdan hürriyet anlayışına uygun olarak genel idare içinde yer alan Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı'nın görev ve yetkilerini belirtmek. 2- Kuruluşundan bu yana çeşitli ekler ve birçok değişiklikler görmüş olan Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı mevzuatını ve ihtiyaçlarını tek bir kanunda toplamak. 3- Devlet memurları seviyesinde kadro ve mali imkanlar sağlamak suretiyle Diyanet İşleri görevlilerini bir taraftan bugünkü sıkıntılı durumlardan kurtarmak, diğer taraftan da her türlü manevi ve müspet ilimlerle mücehhez olarak yetişen gençler için bu teşkilatı cazip hale getirmek. 4-Dini konuların çeşitli dallarında bilimsel araştırma ve inceleme yeterliliğine sahip din işleri görevlilerini arttırarak bunların çalışmaları sonuçlarını halkın aydınlatılmasına ve hizmetine arzetmek ve böylece İslam dini'bin asla tecviz etmediği taasup ve hurafeleri bertaraf etmek suretiyle halkımızın inanç ve ahlak ilkelerindeki birlik ve bütünlüğü sağlamlaştırmak. Ibid., p. 73.

²¹⁴ Toprak, p. 82.

1961 have extensively expanded the scope of jurisdiction, obligation, and authorization of the institution [the PRA] in order to satisfy public opinion which is teeming with religious sentiments. In this respect, the 1963 draft has gone too far”.²¹⁵ He added that a religious affairs administration that is based on an overcrowded organization is an outright violation of the principle of laicism and that this amendment had paved the way for the intrusion of religion into state affairs and had furthered the influence of Islam in society. This new bill did not satisfy the demands of the pious groups, either. A group that called themselves the Istanbul Preachers (İstanbul Vaizleri) expressed their resentment in a treatise, stating that this proposal could not meet the demands of a society in which 95% of the people are Muslim and added that people who were imbued with the Islamic spirit were in deep despair because of this act.²¹⁶

The constant enlargement of the PRA, both in the size of its staff and the proportion of its share of the budget, stands as a general trend during this period. There had been minor amendments to the structuring of the institution in 1971, 1973, 1978, and 1979. Those amendments mainly aimed at increasing number of personnel and widening the jurisdiction of the institution.²¹⁷ The wide expansion of the institution can be seen by examining the increase in the number of personnel: a comparison between the numbers of the personnel employed in the PRA would expose the prodigal development of the institution. In 1960, the total number of

²¹⁵ “1961 seçimlerinden sonraki koalisyon hükümetleri, din duygusu ile dolu kamuoyunu tatmin etmek için (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı’nın) örgüt, görev ve yetki alanlarını pek fazla genişlettiler. Bu konuda 1963 tasarısı pek ileri gitmiştir.” Gözaydın, p.71.

²¹⁶ Ibid., p.72.

²¹⁷ Uluçay, pp. 22-27.

employees of the institution was 10,630;²¹⁸ this number doubled in 1970 and increased to 25,236. In 1981, the number of the personnel of the PRA was 43,197.²¹⁹ The number of mosques in Turkey was 42,744 in 1971 and increased to 47,645 in 1981.²²⁰ This increase in the personnel number does not mean that the institution hired new imams, but rather that the imams who had been salaried by the villagers became state officers and were integrated into the state agency.

In the age of politics, the genie was let out of the bottle: the religious wishes of the society came to the surface, and no political party, even those that were considered the bastions of laicism, dared to confront these demands directly. İřtar Gözaydın observes that during each and every budget discussion in the parliament during this time issues such as the financial standing of the imams were raised and their strong commitment to ameliorate the conditions of the mosques and preachers. Speeches highlighted the importance and sacredness of religion in Turkish society, praised the virtues of Islam, and voiced gratitude to the preachers for performing this sacred duty.²²¹ Even Bülent Ecevit, who was the first prime minister that visited the office of the President of the PRA,²²² promised to develop the institution through employing more imams and subsidizing the construction of the mosques in a

²¹⁸ Ibid., p.54.

²¹⁹ Bozan and Çakır, p.26.

²²⁰ Ibid., pp. 24. In 1972 there were 42.744 mosques in Turkey and among those mosques 41,646 of them were available for praying. It was estimated that 5248 villages in Turkey lacked of a mosque in the same year. Kemaleddin Erdil, “Cami ve Mescidlerimiz”, *Diyanet Gazetesi* , 1 October 1972 .

²²¹ See Gözaydın, pp. 204-209. See also Sencer Ayata, “Patronage, Party, and State: The Politicization of Islam in Turkey”, *Middle East Journal* 50, no.1 (Winter 1996) and Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) for an analysis on how Islam was employed as a political tool during the multi-party rule.

²²² See Diyanet Gazetesi, 15 September 1978, p. 14.

government program that failed to receive a vote of confidence on 5 July 1977.

Ecevit said:

As a common value of our society and humanity, the Islamic religion is a sacred source in promoting national unity, achieving success in our efforts for development, establishing domestic peace, and developing and strengthening the feelings of brotherhood. (...) Our government will assist in the construction of mosques in low-income villages and settlements. The permanent appointments of the temporary imams and preachers will be immediately made. Our government will assume the task of ensuring the moral and material peace of all religious officials as a duty.²²³

The PRA, therefore, became a more powerful agency and consequently a more politically involved institution. İsmail Kara notes that, during the single party period, the presidents of the institution were appointed from among the respected pious men whose religious authority was not questioned by any religious sect in the society. According to Kara, the political center paid particular attention to the appointment of presidents, since it aspired to legitimize the institution by using these credible men and attempted to consecrate the PRA via the spiritual aura of these people. Accordingly, the presidents before 1960 had life-long tenure and all of them died while they were in the post, thereby replicating the pattern of pre-modern and personalized conduct of religious organizations (and brotherhoods). However, after the 1960 coup, the office was troubled by vicissitudes and political intervention.²²⁴

²²³ Toplumumuzun ve insanlığa ortak değeri olan İslam dini, milli birliğin sağlanmasında, kalkınma çabalarımızın başarıya ulaşmasında, iç barışın oluşmasında ve kardeşlik duygularının geliştirilip pekiştirilmesinde kutsal bir kaynaktır. (...) Hükümetimiz, köylerde ve dar gelirli yörelerde cami yapımına yardımcı olacaktır. Vekil imam-hatiplerin kadro intibakları ivedilikle sağlanacaktır. Hükümetimiz bütün din görevlilerinin manevi ve maddi huzurunu sağlamayı ödev bilecektir. Gözaydın, p.209.

²²⁴ Rıfat Börekçi (4/4/1924-5/3/1941), Şerefeddin Yaltkaya (14/1/1942-23/4/1947) and Ahmet Hamdi Akseki (29/4/1947-9/1/1951) are the presidents that served in the single party era and all of them lost their lives while in post. The Democrat Party have been loyal to the legacy it assumed about the PRA, did not remove Akseki from the post and did not remove E. Sabri Hayırlıoğlu either (12/4/1951-

All political parties sought to partake in the administration of this rapidly growing institution, which was gaining an extensive network that encompassed every region of Turkey. Not only political actors, but also the Turkish Armed Forces, engaged in the administration of the institution in a very explicit way: immediately after the 1971 memorandum in September 1971, Ahmet Okutan, who was an army officer, was appointed as the vice-president.²²⁵

Given that the increase in the number of mosques between 1950 and 1980 corresponds to almost 45.000, the expansion of mosques all around Turkey occurred during this period. Almost every village was furnished with a mosque, and the “Islamization” of Turkey in terms of the number of mosques is an accomplishment of

10/6/1960), who assumed the post after the death of Akseki. The first intervention to this custom came along with the 1960 military coup, Hayırlioğlu was replaced right after the coup with Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen (29/6/1960-6/4/1961), who was İstanbul provincial religious official and was going to be in the post of presidency only for 9 months. Assuming the post as the president after Bilmen, Hasan Hüsni Erdem (6/4/1961-13/10/1964) was retired ex officio, for objecting to the text against Nur religious order, which was prepared by the retired major general and order member, Saadettin Evrin, who was appointed as the Religious Affairs Deputy Director, and was requested to be published with the signature or name of the director. The next director, İbrahim Elmalı (17/12/1965-25/10/1966), was removed from the position due to his rejection of a request by State Minister Refet Sezgin, about an appointment. In short, all presidents after 1951, except the voluntary retirement of Tayyar Altıkulaç and the return of M. Sait Yazıcıoğlu to his post at the university because permission was not requested again (indirect removal) were removed or made to retire by the political authority and most of them in a very unpleasant manner. This situation displays the extent of political intervention to the presidents and the institution. Following the 1971 intervention, the party influence was added to the political influence. This influence was the influence of the National Salvation Party (MSP) influence, which became a partner of the coalition governments after the 1973 elections and assumed the state ministry responsible for the PRA. The removal of Dr. Lütü Doğan, who was known as the “most secular President of the PRA,” and the appointment of Süleyman Ateş to this post and the appointment of Tayyar Altıkulaç, who was the deputy director since 1971 but did not go along well with the MSP political line, to the General Management of Religious Education, accelerated this process. As a result, the effect and influence of the MSP political line after that date was used as a political tool with regards to the use of religion as a political tool together with other aspects. Altıkulaç was appointed as the president to the institution with the signature of Ecevit, who established the government following 1977 elections. One of the aspects that displayed the direct relation between the PRA and politics in another respect is that a sizable portion of the people who assumed the post of president in the institution were engaged with active politics before they assumed the post or after they left. Rifat Börekçi (Manisa deputy in the First Assembly), E. Sabri Hayırlioğlu (CHP deputy), İbrahim Elmalı (MP and Democratic Party deputy), Lütü Doğan (MSP, RP, FP, SP deputy), Dr. Lütü Doğan (CHP deputy), Tayyar Altıkulaç (DYP and AKP member), M. Sait Yazıcıoğlu (AKP deputy). Kara, *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, pp. 192-194.

²²⁵ Diyanet Gazetesi, 30 September 1971, p. 1.

the Republican Era rather than an accomplishment of the Ottoman State. An anecdote from Ahmet Cevdet Pasha (1822-1895) in Kozan, a middle scale town in Adana, is illuminating for demonstrating how the spread of the mosques around Turkey is a very modern trend.

The Friday prayers were not routine in Kozan, but since Yusuf Agha was a literate man, he used to take the pulpit sometimes, recite a sermon, and perform the Friday prayer. In this instance, a pulpit was built with stone and lime in the square outside the town of Sis. On Friday, one of the regiment imams recited a sermon, and all the army said the Friday prayers with the public. Even the local and mountain-dwelling people in Sis were present at these prayers. Since the people from Kozan were religious and good men, they became happy and were proud to be performing the Friday prayers, which they had not performed until then. They started to congratulate the citizens from Kozan and other places personally and in their absence. This prayer shook the Kozan mountains so much that the government buildings of the Kozan leaders shook to the ground. After that, we requested the Sublime Porte to send permission for sermons by the imam in the mosque in the town of Sis.²²⁶

The inhabitants of Kozan performed their first Friday prayer in the nineteenth century, and it is apparent that under the Ottoman rule, not only remote villages, but a middle-sized town lacked a pulpit. Due to the material scarcities, townsmen could not properly observe one of the most basic practices of Islamic belief. The consolidation of Islamic practices requires the equipment and literacy that is provided by the benefits of modernization. Strikingly, it was the modernization

²²⁶ “Kozan’da Cuma namazı kılmak mu’tad olmayıp fakat Yusuf Ağa okur-yazar bir adem olduğundan ba’zan minbere çıkıp ve hutbe okuyup Cuma namazı kıldırıldığı var imiş...Bu kerre Sis kasabası haricindeki meydanda taş ve kireç ile bir minber inşa olundu. Cuma günü alay imamlarından biri hutbe okuyup bi’l-cümle ordu halkıyla cuma namazı kılındı. Sis’de bulunan yerli ve dağlı ahali dahi bu namazda bulundu. Kozan’lılar müteyeddin ve salih ademler olduklarından şimdiye kadar kılmamış oldukları Cuma namazını kıldıklarından dolayı o kadar memnun ve mübahi oldular ki bu namazda bulunan Kozanlı’ları sair vatandaşları vicahen ve gıyaben tebrik eder oldular. Bu namaz Kozan dağlarını öyle sarsdı ki Kozan-oğullarının binay-i hükümetleri ta temelinden mütezil oldu. Bunun üzerine Sis kasabasındaki cami’-i şerif imamı için bir hitabet beratı gönderilmesini Babıali’ye arz ettik” Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, prepared by Cavid Baysun (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1986), p. 172.

process that enabled both the secularization and “Islamization” of the Turkish society.

Therefore, the Turkish state managed to infiltrate the mosques that mark the Turkish landscape by employing their imams in this period. The control of the central body over these imams and the visibility of the Turkish state in the mosques, however, was not accomplished fully. Although there had been attempts to do so, mainly through the circulars sent by the Ministers and President of the PRA to the muftis, district governors, and governors,²²⁷ the zenith of the state influence on the mosques would be experienced in the following decades.

Caught between State and Religion: the PRA between 1980-2002

The 1980 takeover by the military mainly targeted leftist groups. However, the literature regarding the 1980 coup commonly slights a major incident that paved the way for the takeover and helps explain the hostile attitude of the generals toward Islamist movements.²²⁸ On the sixth of September, 1980 –6 days before the coup- a

²²⁷ For instance the State Minister İsmail Hakkı Tekinel sent a circular, titled “Religion would not be Abused for Politics “Politika için Din İstismar Edilemeyecek” to the governors to prevent the “abuse” of religion in the August of 1973. See Diyanet Gazetesi, 15 August 1973. In 1978, 150 muftis prepare a declaration in which they state that “We will never tolerate those who use religion for the sake of politics” “Din Görevlilerinin Omuzlarında Yükselerek Politika Yapmak İsteyenlere Asla Fırsat Vermeyeceğiz” Diyanet Gazetesi, 1 May 1978.

²²⁸ See Bozkurt Güvenç, Gencay Şaylan, İlhan Tekeli, and Serafettin Turan, *Türk-İslam Sentezi Dosyası* (İstanbul: Sarmal Yayınları, 1994); Emre Kongar, *12 Eylül Kültürü* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1993); Hifzi Veldet Velidedeoğlu, *12 Eylül: Karşı-Devrim* (İstanbul: Evrim Yayınları, 1989); Cetin Yetkin, *12 Eylül ve İrtica* (Ankara: Ümit Yayıncılık, 1994). for the left-Kemalist analysis of the 1980 coup., which suggest that the 1980 coup chastened only the leftists and there had been unconditional support of the junta towards the Islamic groups in Turkey. In fact these analyses imply that the Islamic revivalism of the next decades was a direct consequence of the policies of the junta rule that promoted the Islamic activities. See Necdet Subaşı, *Ara Dönem Din Politikaları* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2005), pp. 77-113 for a critical reassessment of this analysis and an evaluation on how the junta government had instrumentalized Islam under the subjugation of state and laicism.

mass demonstration was staged by 100,000 protestors. This “Save Jerusalem” rally was organized in Konya by the National Salvation Party (NSP). Marching in long robes and fez caps, carrying green flags, and shouting slogans demanding the restoration of an Islamic state, the demonstrators stirred the fears of the secularists. The Konya rally is considered the ultimate incident that triggered the military intervention. Kenan Evren, then the Chief of the General Staff, noted that:

...the incidents at Konya indicated the extent of the dimensions of [religious] reactionism. Our nation was awakened by these incidents and realized all aspects of the danger. Careful study of the statement by a party leader [a reference to the NSP'S Necmettin Erbakan] during a congress will demonstrate the nature of his opinions. That party leader saw university students becoming anarchists due to their sitting at their desks and was able to say: if these children had studied by kneeling in front of their teachers-as is the case in certain [Islamic] schools and universities-they would not have grown into anarchists. Even 100 years ago we did not have such an education system. So far there have been numerous statements along these lines. However, all the applications by the public prosecutors failed to secure the annulment of the relevant person's [parliamentary] immunity.²²⁹

As was widely proclaimed, Kenan Evren introduced a new version of Kemalism, the so called Turkish-Islamic synthesis, in order to fuel solidarity and unity among the polarized society. The military junta believed that it was the lack of religious instruction that caused the proliferation of the anti-establishment ideologies like

This mainstream analysis on the 1980 coup and the scarcity of the sources on the persecution of Islamists during this period, lead me to assume that this scholarly neglect on the repression of the junta government on the Islamic groups in Turkey is due to the bias of the secular intellectuals against the Islamist movements and Islam. See Ahmet Yasar Ocak, *Türkler, Türkiye ve İslam* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999) and Necdet Subaşı, *Türk Aydınının Din Anlayışı* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi, 1996) for a reappraisal on this “bias”.

See "Soruşturma: 12 Eylül ve Müslümanlar", *Haksöz*, 126 (September 2001), pp. 17-38 for an elaboration of the 1980 coup from the Islamist point of view. Contributors of this issue claimed that the junta government, which is guided by the United States, used a “pseudo” Islam (the Turkish Islamic Synthesis) as a bulwark against “genuine” Islam.

²²⁹ Feroz Ahmad, “Islamic Reassertion in Turkey”, *Third World Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (April 1988), p. 750.

Marxism and fascism among the Turkish youth. Accordingly, this ideological restructuring involved a shift within the classical Kemalist discourse, a rapprochement with religion. Evren never refrained from employing Islamic themes in his speeches, and, in fact, he frequently quoted verses of the Qur'an in his speeches. This restructuring also extended to the discursive realm and certain policy approaches, such as the introduction of mandatory religion courses in the primary and secondary school curriculum. These actions make manifest Evren's quest for sustaining this new version of Kemalism. However, this should not lead to a misperception that the state's strict control of religion was loosened. For instance, the strategy of this compulsory religious and moral education was spelled out in a report to the military rulers in September 1981. The report stated that, 'the current negative and political currents (Ticanilik, Nurculuk, Süleymancılık, etc.) were caused by the transference of religious education into the hands of "irresponsible people"'.²³⁰

The mastermind of this so called "Turkish-Islamic Synthesis" was Ibrahim Kafesoğlu,²³¹ who was a leading ideologue of the "Hearth of the Enlightened" of the 1970s. The basic tenet of this discourse was the assumption that Islam had a special attraction to Turks owing to alleged resemblances between pre-Islamic Turkish

²³⁰ Poulton, pp. 181. The "General Aims of Religious and Moral Education" were given as "To learn basic and middle education enough basic knowledge of Islamic religion and morals in accordance with Atatürk's laicist and other principles, along the lines of the general aims of the Turkish national educational policies; thus the populace will obtain good morals and virtues to ensure in them a love of people, religion, morals, Atatürkism (Atatürkçülük), national unity and togetherness". Moreover the "Principles" state that "The aims of religious education will 1. Always take into consideration our state's secular basis and always defend this principle...4. Take care to inculcate by the instruction of religious knowledge into the pupils the exalted concept of the national value as a gazi, or martyr, and of the value of the standard, flag, nation, and fatherland, and to strengthen brotherly and friendly relations, respect, love, togetherness and national unity. 5. To always keep in mind the national worth of our traditions, customs and practices...6. Lesson subjects should always integrated with Atatürk's principles." See Ibid., p. 182.

²³¹ See Ibrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Meseleleri* (Ankara: Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1970) and Ibrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milli Kültürü* (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 1977).

society and Islamic civilization. Those resemblances were listed as a sense of justice, monotheism, belief in the immortal soul, and a strong emphasis on family life and morality. Therefore, the Turks were to be “the soldiers of Islam.” Peeling away the “false Western veneer” which was seen as the source of the ills of modern society, this ideological restructuring aimed at realizing a national synthesis of fundamental values under the labels of “Turk” and “Islam.” The propagation of this new version of Kemalism was carried out on a wide spectrum. Indeed, specific institutions that were intended to be the carriers of this indoctrination were established, such as YÖK (Board of Higher Education) and RTÜK for the purpose of overseeing education and culture.²³²

Nevertheless, as Richard Tapper accurately observes:

Proponents of the TIS [Turkish Islam Synthesis] wanted an authoritarian but not an Islamic state: religion, the essence of culture and social control, must be fostered in schools, but it must not be politicized. They wished to re-personalize social relations, and to use religion much as Sultan Abdülhamid did.²³³

The Turkish military perceived three dangers threatening the Kemalist state: communism, Kurdish separatism and Islamic radicalism. Sponsoring moderate Islamic activities and an extravagant employment of a “tamed” version of Islam seemed to them the best way to fight the former two dangers and to prevent the

²³² Poulton, pp. 183-184. See Tanil Bora *Türk Sağının Üç Hali* (İstanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 1998); Taşkın, Yuksel. “12 Eylül Atatürkçülüğü ya da Bir Kemalist Restorasyon Teşebbüsü Olarak 12 Eylül”, In *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Kemalizm*, edited by Bora, T and Gültekingil, M. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), pp. 570-583. Yuksel Taşkın, *Milliyetçi Muhafazakar Entelijansiya* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007); Etienne Copeaux, *Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk-İslam Sentezine* (İstanbul: Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1998) for detailed accounts on the ideological structuring of the 1980 coup government.

²³³ Tapper, Richard. “Introduction” In *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics, and Literature in a Secular State*, edited by Tapper, R. (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 1991), p. 16.

radicalization of the third.²³⁴ This strategy was carried out with authoritarian measurements. An authoritarian regime was established and consolidated with the 1980 military coup in Turkey. The September 1980 regime systematized the authoritarianism that was one of the innate characteristics of the Turkish Republic and institutionalized the transfer of the administrative center of this authoritarianism from the civil to the military bureaucracy with the objective of realizing a politically and socially stable, but economically dynamic new regime. Ahmet İnsel precisely summarizes the state-centered character of this new regime: "...it [the September 12 regime] had the state at its center, saw the society as the threat besieging this center, and considered authoritarian methods legitimate in defending itself against that threat".²³⁵

Hence, promoting Islamic themes in propagating a political ideology may necessitate more control over religion in order to prevent the popularization of any alternative Islamic discourses that may render a more "competitive market" on Islam. This may be exemplified through the Islamic states, such as Saudi Arabia, where Islam stands as the sole legitimization source for those regimes and where the state holds a virtual monopoly on the production and control of Islam. Furthermore, the articulation of Islam and the approach toward Islamic figures exemplified by certain political figures, such as Abdulhamit II or Gamal Abdel Nasser, is a manifestation of how political figures employing Islam as a tool for propagation might increase religious persecution. During his Pan-Islamist campaign, Abdulhamit II harshly

²³⁴ Martin Van Bruinessen, *Mullas, Sufis and Heretics: The Role of Religion in Kurdish Society* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2000), p. 33.

²³⁵ Ahmet İnsel, "The AKP and Normalizing Democracy in Turkey" *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no.2/3 (Spring/Summer 2003), pp. 293-295.

chastised Islamic figures by. His repressive policies caused him to become an object of abhorrence in Islamist circles.²³⁶ Similarly, Nasser perceived the religious dimension as an essential component of the regime's political legitimacy, especially in times of crises, such as the declaration of the nationalization of the Suez Canal, and he depicted the Arab military defeat by Israel (1967) as a message from Allah to the nation to purify itself from sin.²³⁷ However, at the same time, it was Nasser who employed the most repressive policies towards the Islamist movements in the Egyptian history. In fact, the cordial relations between Nasser and the Muslim Brotherhood had deteriorated at the start of 1950s, and the alleged attempt by the Brotherhood to kill Nasser in 1954 resulted in the outlawing of the organization, the imprisonment of 4,000 of its members, and the execution of six of its leaders. In 1965, Nasser again claimed that a plot to overthrow government had been detected and accused Sayyid Qutb of being the leader of this plot. After a rapid trial, Qutb was sentenced to death with two other men.²³⁸

With the 12 September regime, almost all of the government agencies were designed to solidify these state-centered policies and served as the tools to consolidate the power of the military rule. In that sense, the PRA became an indispensable institution: the regime sought to combat the religious brotherhoods and aspired to its ultimate aim to maintain the unity and solidarity of the society through utilizing the PRA. Hence, this period is epitomized by the increasing control of the central body of the institution on the mosques and the empowerment of the tools that

²³⁶ Sukru Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 140-141.

²³⁷ Hatina, p.60.

²³⁸ Gerholm, pp.148-149.

are necessary for accomplishing this total supervision. The PRA, from its inception, was designed as an institution with the purpose of indoctrinating people with a proper Islam that is compatible with the needs and preferences of the state, and thus never positioned as an autonomous or even semi-autonomous institution. However, the efforts exerted in maintaining this control on the provincial units of the institution vehemently increased and intensified with the new regime.

Article one hundred thirty sixth of the 1982 constitution delineates the status of the institution as follows:

The Department of Religious Affairs, which is within the general administration, shall exercise its duties as prescribed in its particular law, in accordance with the principles of secularism, removed from all political views and ideas, and aiming at national solidarity and integrity.

Different from its equivalent article in the 1961 Constitution, this article emphasizes the ideological framework of the production of Islam : “...in accordance with the principles of secularism, removed from all political views and ideas, and aiming at national solidarity and integrity.” The PRA is supposed to stand aloof from all political views and ideas; yet, it is obliged to function to maintain national solidarity and integrity. This additional statement gives a clue as to how the new regime exhibits its authoritarian tendency, and the notions of national solidarity and integrity are impelled to be perceived as norms rather than political views.

Although the institution continued to expand during the junta government and the number of mosques reached 75,941 in 2002 from 47,645 in 1981,²³⁹ the

²³⁹ There had been minor amendments in the following years; 1983, 1984, and 1989. See Gözaydın, pp. 85-87 and Bozan and Çakır, pp. 73. See also Reşat Kasaba and Sibel Bozdoğan, “Turkey at a

distinctive feature of this period is the increasing control and monitoring of the institution over its central and provincial units. Although during this period it is not possible to detect a drastic re-institutionalization of the institution in legal terms, we can learn, especially through secret reports and close correspondence, that the supervision by the central body of the institution has increased over the provincial units. For instance, the centralization of the sermons was achieved by a secret report,²⁴⁰ which monitored the regular meetings of the central body with the provincial units to maintain unity within the institution.

The in-depth interviews conducted with imams clearly demonstrate the pressure and control established over the imams in this period. For example, several imams said that the district governors and officers came to the mosques in the mornings to conduct beard checks in this period.²⁴¹ Obviously, the beard checks were a practice, as argued by an imam, meant to reinforce the intimidation of the imams by the newly-founded regime and to maintain a constant feeling of supervision.

On October 4, 1983 the Code regulating associations was amended, and the administration of the religious associations was transferred to the jurisdiction of the PRA. Thereby, the PRA became responsible for monitoring the activities of the religious associations. With this act, these associations were obliged to submit their regulatory statutes and the names and addresses of the members of their boards to the

Crossroad” *Journal of International Affairs* 54, no.1 (Fall 2000), pp. 16. for an evaluation on the political significance of the proliferation of the mosque number after 1980s.

²⁴⁰ This report was prepared by Mehmet Özgüneş (Minister of State), Cevdet Menteş (Minister of Justice), İlder Türkmen (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Selahaddin Çetiner (Minister of Internal Affairs), Hasan Sağlam (Minister of National Education), Münir Güney (Minister of Rural Affairs and Cooperations), Vecdi Özgül (Minister of Youth and Sports), and Tayyar Altıkulaç (President of the Presidency of Religious Affairs). See Kara, p. 46.

²⁴¹ This practice was confirmed by an officer of the PRA as well.

PRA.²⁴² The ultimate purpose of this amendment was to increase the supervision of the activities of associations through enhancing the control of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and to hinder civic participation. The activation of the PRA in this attempt reveals the intention of the state to use the PRA more aggressively as a control mechanism.

This control continued to be intensified in the following decade. The perpetual threat haunting the Republican regime became more apparent on the horizon. In the 1990s, one of the most noteworthy developments in Turkey was the rise of the Islamist Welfare Party (Refah Partisi), which was the successor to the National Salvation Party.²⁴³ The rise of the Islamist party was made possible by the highly unstable and fragmented nature of the political scene in the mid-1990s. After its victory in the 1995 elections, the Welfare Party became a major partner in the coalition government, Refahyol, which it formed with the center-right True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi, or DYP). The accession of the RP into the government stoked up the perennial anxieties about Islamism among the military, which determined that Islamist reactionism, *irtica* in Turkish, had become an immediate threat to the secular character of the republic. On February 28, 1997 the military-

²⁴² See Dernekler Kanunu, Resmi Gazete, 7 October 1983.

²⁴³ For the rise of Welfare Party, see Hakan Yavuz, "Political Islam and the Welfare (Refah) Party in Turkey", *Comparative Politics* 30, no.1 (October 1997), pp. 63-82. Also see Haldun Gülalp, "Globalization and Political Islam: The Social Bases of Turkey's Welfare Party", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33, no.3 (August 2001), pp.433-448; Ziya Öniş, "The Political Economy of Islamic Resurgence in Turkey: The Rise of the Welfare Party in Perspective", *Third World Quarterly* 18, no.4 (December 1997), pp. 743-766. Nevertheless, Ruşen Çakır's book remains the best source on the Welfare Party. Ruşen Çakır, *Ne Şeriat Ne Demokrasi* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1994).

For Welfare Party's policies and dispositions in power, see Jenny White, "Pragmatists or Ideologues? Turkey's Welfare Party in Power", *Current History* 96 (January 1997), pp. 25-30.

dominated National Security Council (NSC) issued a memorandum to the Refahyol coalition government which included a list of measures designed to halt the alleged Islamization of Turkey and to reinforce the secular system. Subsequent pressure from the NSC, accompanied by similar pressure from the civilian component of the secular establishment, led to the collapse of the coalition government, and a new ideological campaign aiming at refashioning Turkey's political landscape along Kemalist lines was launched. The phrase "February 28 process" was coined to indicate this process implicating not only the far-reaching implications of the NSC decisions, but also the suspension of normal politics until the secular correction was completed. The mindset of this process was delineated by radical secularism of the Classical Kemalism, and the implications of this mindset drastically altered the formulation of public policy and the relationship between state and society. The policy measures introduced with the active involvement of the Turkish Armed Forces had an impact on the education system. Various measures were introduced concerning the education system. For example, all primary and secondary school curricula were transformed to highlight the secularist history and character of the republic, and a special emphasis was put on the allegedly new security threats posed by political Islam and separatist movements. Additionally, indoctrination in Atatürkism was stretched out to all courses taught at all levels and types of schools. The secondary school system for prayer-leaders and preachers (imam hatip) was reorganized to prevent those students from entering any department other than theology when they entered university. An eight-year mandatory schooling system was initiated. Staunch Kemalists were appointed as university presidents. Hundreds of Qur'an courses were closed down. The bureaucratic system was restructured, as well. Top bureaucrats were exposed to teaching programs, designed by the military

institutions and its personnel, on Kemalist principles, the struggle against reactionarism, and issues of national security. And lastly, the political sphere was highly militarized with the closing of the Islamic parties and the banning of their key policy makers from political activity.²⁴⁴

As Necmi Erdoğan notes, in such a setting, the official Kemalist discourse, which has secured unity and consistency within the state apparatuses, is restructured in a more reactionary and authoritarian form. However, this restructuring was not limited to the increase in the tone of the official discourse. The Kemalist discourse also gained a “civil” character with the rapid increase of the number of the Kemalist NGO’s.²⁴⁵ This new ideological campaign launched in the 1990s was triggered by ideological manipulators who used emotions, fear, and a state of panic to unite the public against the new sources of threats that were allegedly undermining national unity and Republican values. This “moral panic”²⁴⁶ may not have necessarily been an

²⁴⁴ Umit Cizre and Menderes Çınar, “Kemalism, Islamism, and Politics in the Light of the February 28 Process” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no.2/3 (Spring/Summer 2003), pp. 309-312. See also Ahmet Kuru, *Secularism and State Policies toward Religion*, pp. 161-163; Jenny B. White, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey : A Study in Vernacular Politics*. (Seattle : University of Washington Press, 2002) pp. 116-119. Özlem Demirtaş Bagdonas, “The Clash of Kemalisms? Reflections on the Past and Present Politics of Kemalism in Turkish Political Discourse”, *Turkish Studies* 9, no.1 (March 2008), pp. 99-114. For the published text of the public attorney’s bill of indictment demanding the banning of the Welfare Party, *Refah Partisi Kapatma Davası* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1998).

²⁴⁵ Erdoğan, Necmi. ““Kalpaksız Kuvvacılar”: Kemalist Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları”, In *Türkiye’de Sivil Toplum ve Milliyetçilik*, edited by Yerasimos, S. et al. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2001), p. 235.

²⁴⁶ I derive this term from the excellent work of Stanley Cohen,. Cohen defines moral panic as such “Societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible. Sometimes the object of the panic is quite novel and other times it is something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight. Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except in folklore and collective memory; at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way the society conceives itself.” See Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 14.

illusion, but it is a state of exaggeration that was pioneered with the active participation of the media, the leaders of the military, political leaders, and other actors.

The implication of this secularist craze on state-religion relations was, as expected, an increase in the control of religious expression and a surge in the state's leverage on the mosques. With an amendment in the act numbered 633, new, strict restrictions were introduced concerning mosque construction.²⁴⁷ The number of circular orders decreeing that the muftis and governors pay more attention to the activities of the imams increased.²⁴⁸ With a circular issued by the President, performing dhikr (*zikir*) in mosques was strictly prohibited.²⁴⁹ The public became more vigilant with regard to the activities of the PRA, and the PRA became a more controversial institution among both the secularists and the Islamists.²⁵⁰ The PRA personnel, employed in both the central and provincial units, were subject to seminars conducted by the military officers on Kemalist principles, the struggle against reactionarism, and issues of national security.²⁵¹ A retired army officer, who

²⁴⁷ Gözaydın, pp. 121. This act was also figured in the press, a pro-Kemalist daily heralds this amendment with the headline "Tarikat Camilerine Gözaltı". Quoting from Emrullah Aksarı, the head of personnel affairs department, the news item highlights that there were 72,300 mosques in Turkey and among those mosques 8,400 of them were not appointed with an imam. The reports prepared by the Turkish Armed Forces were also referred. See Tarikat Camilerine Gözaltı, Cumhuriyet Gazetesi, 01 August 1998.

²⁴⁸ The details regarding this increase in the number of circulars are provided in the next chapter.

²⁴⁹ Diyanet İşleri Başkanı Mehmet Nuri Yılmaz Camilerde Bir Takım Çalgı Vaitalarıyla Yapılan Toplu Gösterilere Karşı bir Genelge Yayınlandı, *Diyanet Aylık Dergi* (April 1996), p. 64.

²⁵⁰ The activities of the institution came under a heavy criticism of the Islamist press, which tends to see the institution as a collobator of the infidel state. For instance Beklenen Vakit (the predecessor of the current Vakit), a radical Islamist daily, chastised Mehmet Nuri Yılmaz due to his remark supporting the state intervention into the PRA. Yılmaz replied to the daily through issuing a press release. See *Diyanet Dergisi* (November 1993), p. 33.

²⁵¹ In the Ankara meeting of muftis a retired officer conducted a seminar on "The Jeopolitic Position of Turkey in 1999". "İl Müftüleri Semineri Ankara'da Yapıldı", *Diyanet Dergisi* (August 1999), p.75.

was formerly employed in the Psychological Warfare Department (Psikolojik Harb Dairesi), was appointed as the top advisor of the President.²⁵² All the mosques constructed in the year of the seventyfifth anniversary of the Republic were named as “The Republic Mosque” (Cumhuriyet Camisi).²⁵³ For the first time in its history, the journal of the institution frequently prepared special issues to warn the society of the threat of religious reaction (*irtica*).²⁵⁴ Extravagant articles extolling Atatürk regularly appeared in the journal of the PRA, as well as essays praising the virtues of the Republican regime. A former army officer was appointed as one of the members of the sermon preparation committee. A protocol allowing the PRA to prepare a TV program in order to edify the society on “genuine” Islam was signed between the PRA and TRT, the state owned TV channel.²⁵⁵

Although the account given above might have led one to assume that this takeover of the PRA had been a rather smooth process, it was not free from conflict. Tayyar Altıkulaç, the president during the 1980 coup, resisted issuing a fatwa that the headscarf is not a necessity in Islam even though the military regime urged him to do so with the purpose of legitimizing the newly-imposed ban on the headscarf in educational institutions. Though Altıkulaç was cooperative with the regime on several issues, he never compromised on this one issue.²⁵⁶ In 1992, a special issue of

²⁵² Kenan Alpay, “Diyanet İşleri mi, Psikolojik Harp Dairesi mi?” *Haksöz Dergisi* (August 1998), p.89.

²⁵³ *Hürriyet*, 14 June 1998.

²⁵⁴ “İrtica”, *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, February 2000, pp. 6-26.

²⁵⁵ See *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, September 1997, p. 54.

²⁵⁶ Altıkulaç also did not compromise on the legalization of the abortion and condemned this act as a great sin. See *Diyanet Gazetesi*, 1-15 September 1981, pp. 268-269.

the journal of the PRA, a special issue titled “The Unceasing Suffering: Headscarf Issue” (Bitmeyen Çile: Tüban) was published. Representing headscarved women as the victims of obstinate laicist rule, this report posed an explicit confrontation to the state policy at that time.²⁵⁷ This issue was published during the presidency of Mehmed Said Yazıcıoğlu, who later served as the Minister of State in the JDP regime. A year before, Yazıcıoğlu, in a speech presented during the annual assembly of muftis, noted that:

The struggle against “religious reactionism” requires strategy. The first step of this strategy is to determine clearly what “constitutes reactionism” If you target the religious citizens that are loyal to the state and nation, and official religious education and services in the name of the “struggle against reactionism,” only the circles that work against the “State” will benefit. Therefore, one should be careful about one’s “tone” while talking on behalf of “Religion,” and should not provide any opportunity to the ill-intentioned circles that aim to put a distance between the state and the nation. In recent years and months, there have been smear campaigns targeting not only the excesses of “reactionism” and “secret religious education,” but directly Islam, the Holy Koran, and Our Prophet Mohammed Mustafa (S.A.) in some known media institutions.²⁵⁸

Mehmed Said Yazıcıoğlu was not reappointed to the Presidency in 1992. Mehmet Nuri Yılmaz, who had become the vice president only a year before, assumed the post instead. In 2003, under the rule of JDP, Yılmaz applied for retirement, and Ali Bardakoğlu was appointed to his position.

As Ahmet Kuru notes, despite the claim of Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu, the Chief of the Turkish General Staff, that the “February 28 Process will continue a thousand

²⁵⁷ *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (February 1992), p. 30.

²⁵⁸ *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (September 1991), p.9.

years”, this process survived less than seven years.²⁵⁹ The JDP, founded in 2001 by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his followers, received 34.3 percent of the votes in 2002 and has continued to be the ruling party since then. The JDP was born out of a banned Islamist party, the Welfare Party, but permanently asserts that it has disavowed its Islamist roots and is committed to secular principles. However, this is not convincing for the staunch secularists who are keen to accuse the JDP of harboring a secret Islamic agenda. The clash between the JDP and the Kemalist establishment, whose power is waning under the rule of the JDP, might be read as a class struggle between the traditional upper-middle class and a new middle class, comprised of the small and midsize firms located in Anatolia²⁶⁰ or as a struggle between different conceptualizations of secularism characterized by the symbols of identity politics.²⁶¹ Whatever the causes of the conflict are, the results of this confrontation mark a new episode in Turkish politics. It is, indeed, too early to speculate on the long term implications of JDP rule and the commitment of the JDP elite to a democratic restructuring; yet so far this confrontation has yielded a shift in the axis of Turkish politics. Declaring its commitment to the EU accession process, the JDP undertook a series of groundbreaking reforms regarding the burning issues of the Turkish polity, such as the impasse in the negotiations on the Cyprus issue,

²⁵⁹ Kuru, pp.162-163.

²⁶⁰ See Insel, Ibid. Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Yıldız Atasoy, *Turkey, Islamists and Democracy: Transition and Globalization in a Muslim State* (London; New York; I.B. Tauris, 2005).

²⁶¹ See Kuru, Ibid. William Hale, “Christian Democracy and the AKP”, *Turkish Studies*, 6, no. 2 (June 2005), pp. 293-310; İhsan Dağı, “Transformation of Islamic Political Identity in Turkey: Rethinking the West and Westernization”, *Turkish Studies* 6, no. 1 (March 2005), pp.21-37. Pinar Tank, “Political Islam in Turkey: A State of Controlled Secularity”, *Turkish Studies* 6, no.1 (March 2005) pp. 3-19.

rapprochement with Armenia and Greece, a possible opening on the Kurdish issue in particular and minority rights in general, a more benevolent approach towards Islamic symbols, and the discussion regarding a new constitution.

The PRA has also been repositioning itself during this repositioning of Turkish politics. Under the Presidency of Bardakoğlu, it is clear that the institution brings a more self-reflexive attitude towards its organizational structure and activities, particularly by conducting several seminars where different perceptions and views are voiced. The institution is on the verge of a drastic reorganization, and a new and comprehensive organization law is still being discussed in the different committees of the parliament. The first and foremost signal of this transformation of the institution can be seen in the shift in the policy of sermon preparation, namely the de-centralization of the preparation of sermons from the central body to the local muftis.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, examining the last two military coups in Turkey in the same period and outlining the continuity between the 1980 and 1997 coups in terms of state religion interaction may be seen as inaccurate. The seemingly contradictory approaches of these two interventions towards religion may raise some doubts regarding the uniformity of their interaction with the PRA. However, I would argue that the 12 September regime and the 28 February process have more in common than their apparent differences as to their conceptualization of what proper Islam is and should be. The contours of their official understanding of Islam might be different, but the apparent policies of tolerance of these two regimes toward Islamic visibility differ

from each other. Yet, both regimes imposed repressive measurements against alternative interpretations of Islam and sought to indoctrinate people with their proper understanding of Islam by using the PRA in a more aggressive way. The degree of Islamic visibility changed from the 1980s to the 1990s because these two interventions responded to the changing others. While the September 12 regime attempted to consolidate unity with the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis which it perceived as a means for preventing political instability, the February 28 process had attempted to minimize the public visibility of Islam in response to the proliferation of Islamic movements that could have posed a challenge to the Kemalist rule. Both military interventions followed increases in the visibility of mosques in Turkey. The state's supervision of religion owing to its extensive usage of the PRA reached its zenith in the entire Republican history due to the policies of these two military interventions. Although the specific policies of the two military interventions may have differed as responses to two different realities in different historical conjectures, the guiding motivation and the ultimate concerns were the same: to domesticate and reorganize the content and practice of religion as sanctioned by the authorities.

There are cardinal issues, such as the hostile approach towards the non-Muslims, in which one may discern the affinity between the Republic and the mainstream Islamic culture, and realize that these seemingly contradictory perceptions and dispositions are not radically different from each other; in fact, they can join together and reproduce each other. It is not only that the Republican imagination was in certain contexts inspired by Islamic codes, but also that the Islamic perception can be integrated and assimilated to the Republican vision via Islamic teachings, such as the advocacy of obedience to the authority (the Republican

state) which represents not only the nation and its interests, but also the (Islamic) community.²⁶² The PRA used to be an institution where these two supposedly contrasting cultures met and coexisted without an overt dissonance during the multi-party rule between 1960 and 1980. However, with the consolidation of an authoritarian rule in 1980 and the exacerbation of this rule in the 28 February process, an exceptional period in the history of the institution began. The PRA was loyal to the ideological background associated with its name, “*diyanet*” and from its inception advocated and practiced a traditional Islam which did not overtly clash with the concerns of the secular establishment. While the PRA’s Islam was predominantly a “non-political” and tamed one, this was not only because of the establishment’s suppression of the other alternatives and its imposition of this particular interpretation by decree, but also because this interpretation of Islam (as it was in the Ottoman Empire) was in congruence with the value-system of the republic and accommodated the political authorities. Thus, the PRA was, for a while, a site where the overlaps between these two dispositions became manifest.

However after the 1980 coup and especially during the 28 February process, the increasing control of the imams and the turn in the conceptualization of “official Islam” created a breach in this alliance. The alliance became untenable, since the establishment couldn’t even tolerate this “non-political” and tamed version of Islam and overextend the PRA to go beyond the “language of Islam”. For instance, the imposition for the acknowledgment of the claim that headscarf is not a necessity of Islam is unbearable for the PRA personnel, whose wives, daughters, sisters are

²⁶² Nancy Lindisfarne, *Elhamdülillah Laikiz* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), pp. 25 and Carol Delaney, *Tohum ve Toprak* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), pp. 325-26.

headscarved. How the increasing control and the turn in the proper understanding of Islam posed a breach in the alliance between the State and the PRA will be demonstrated thoroughly in the following chapter, where the history of the preparation, delivery, and monitoring of the Friday Sermons is elaborated upon.

CHAPTER 4

FRIDAY SERMONS IN TURKEY

Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori describe the term “Muslim politics” as “the competition and contest over both the interpretation of symbols and the control of the institutions, both formal and informal, that produce and sustain them”.²⁶³ As discussed in previous chapters the Turkish state is actively involved in “Muslim politics” and utilizes the administrative apparatus to disseminate an unthreatening interpretation of Islam that reifies the state power.

Regulations regarding the preparation of Friday sermons unveil the ample attention the Turkish state gives to the regulation and control of religion. Although with the advance of technological developments, new media and channels that cater for religious expression flourished, the Friday sermon still serves as an important “cultural broker,” since the imam interprets and rearticulates Islam to rapidly changing conditions in the modern world, mediating between the great traditions of Islam and local practices and events.²⁶⁴ Through harnessing sermons for disseminating its message, the Turkish state accomplishes to access more than ten million men every week. This chapter focuses on the sermon regulation policies in Turkey. After providing brief information on some key concepts such as the mosque, imam, and Friday prayer, and analyzing their positions in the Turkish context, this chapter, drawing on legal regulations, reports, and circulars, will depict the Turkish

²⁶³Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.5.

²⁶⁴Richard Antoun, *Muslim Preacher in the Modern World: a Jordanian Case Study in Comparative Perspective* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 12-14.

state's policies on sermon preparation. This will be followed with an investigation of the control mechanisms on imams that are implemented for preventing imams to deviate from the sermons prepared by the PRA.

The Mosque

The mosque, *masjid* in Arabic, refers to a place of prostration in the Islamic faith, where the faithful perform their devotions, mainly the five daily prayers. The major mosques of cities and towns became generally known as *jami* or congregational mosques in time, distinguishing them from the smaller neighborhood *masjid*, or the mosque which was an adjunct to a tomb. The *jami* mosques – keeping up with the fashion of the Prophet's house – are enclosed with an open courtyard (*sahn*) and a covered sanctuary for prayer divided by rows of columns. The courtyard commonly comprises a large water basin at which the obligatory ablutions are made before prayer. The genesis of the mosque is to be espied in the house erected by the Prophet in Medina immediately after his safe arrival from Mecca. The structure of this house is marked with a primitive simplicity, yet it served as an all-purpose community center where, together with meeting for general instruction in the faith and discussions of a political or military nature, prayer took place. Still in contemporary Muslim societies, mosques serve more than a function to provide a space of worship. They are centers of learning, especially in the Qur'anic sciences and the law. Students and devout ascetics also live in mosques for lengthy periods. In fact, in

some places, the mosque kitchen offers food for the poor and needy.²⁶⁵ The multifunctionality of the mosque, its communal dimensions, and its centrality in neighborhoods serve the needs of the community, yet the mosque also engenders a potential for revolutionary action. Mosques can be utilized as sites for recruitment by religious groups, which spread their ideology through sermons, lessons, and informal interactions. The Iranian mosques played a pioneering role during the 1891-92 tobacco protest for mobilizing the people against the tobacco concession. Nationalist movements activated the mosques in the struggle for independence, organizing and linking religious symbols to anticolonial discourse in order to expand the movement's appeal in North Africa. In Egypt, private mosques have been used as recruitment grounds by violent groups, such as Islamic Jihad and the Gamiyya Islamiyya, evoking the state to increase its control of mosques throughout the country. Similarly in Algeria, the mosque became a site opposition to state, providing a forum for opposition figures and various Islamic groups excluded from public discourse.²⁶⁶ In Turkey, the major protests organized against the headscarf ban occurred after the Friday prayer in front of the monumental mosques such as the Beyazıd mosque, throughout the 1990s.

²⁶⁵David Waines, *An Introduction to Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 196-197.

²⁶⁶For the social and political role of mosques in communities, see Ahmed, Akbar S. "Mosque: The Mosque in Politics", In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, vol. 3, ed. by Esposito, J. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 140-43; Campo, Juan, Eduardo. "Mosque: Historical Development", In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, vol. 3, ed. by Esposito, J. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 133-35; and Gaffney, Patrick D. "Mosque: The Mosque in Society", In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, vol. 3, ed. by John Esposito (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 143-47. Fathi, Ashgar. "The Social and Political Functions of the Mosque" In *Encyclopaedic Survey of Islamic Culture*, ed.Taher, M. (New Delhi, Anmol Publications, 1997), pp. 337-339.

In Islam, the place of prostration need not be a sanctuary set apart for such worship; the prayer can express humility before Allah in any place. In fact the Prophet enunciated that “The earth is a *masjid* for you, so pray wherever you are at the time of prayer”. Nevertheless Islam encourages and celebrates congregational prayer meetings with the purpose of maintaining the communal spirit: the Prophet asserted that praying in the company of others was twenty-five times more meritorious than individual prayer at home.²⁶⁷

Hence, even though it is not neither necessary nor obligatory for the ritual prayer, the mosque has become the central element manifesting the physical presence of Muslims in a given place in the world, a source of identity for individual believers and a symbol and centre of purity for the Muslim community. The case of churches turned into mosques, for instance, provides an interesting illustration of the central elements of the physical manifestation of Muslim identity as connected to the mosque.²⁶⁸

Mosques in Turkey

In Turkey, unlike the other Muslim countries, there are no privately administered mosques, or state funded mosques: almost all mosques are built with private funds but on completion they must be handed over to the administration of the PRA. Thus

²⁶⁷Waines, pp. 196-197.

²⁶⁸Andrew Rippen, *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 109.

no allocations are done for the mosque construction from the PRA budget and all the mosques constructed in Turkey are subsidized by private donations, either from a single wealthy individual or an association with a religious purpose (*cami yaptırma dernekleri*). The only exception of this is the construction of the monumental Kocatepe mosque in Ankara which is funded by the grants of some Muslim countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Libya, as well as the contribution of the PRA.

However, the PRA is taking responsibility in the care and protection of mosques and allocates a budget allowance for the repair and environmental adjustment of the mosques. In addition, the directive on the “Regulation for the Care, Repair, Cleaning and Environmental Adjustment for Mosques,” which came into force after being published in the Official Gazette dated May 24, 1985, and numbered 18763, stipulates that the electricity consumed in the interior and exterior illumination as well as sound and light systems shall be provided by the Turkish Electricity Institution for free and the water need of the mosque and its outbuildings shall be provided for free under the Law on Waters.²⁶⁹

It is not possible to find the exact numbers of the mosques throughout Republican history, since the regular statistics regarding mosque numbers started to be kept in the year 1970. The only data regarding mosque numbers prior to this date can be found in Jaschke’s study, which detects 28,705 mosques in 1927.²⁷⁰ Till 1950, mainly due to the limitations on the freedom of associations, it can be estimated that new mosque construction is quite rare; on the contrary, during this period several

²⁶⁹Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, *Camilerin Bakım Onarım Temizlik ve Çevre Tanzimi Yönergesi*, (1986, May 28) Retrieved 04 April 2010, from <http://www.diyanet.gov.tr/turkish/mevzuat/mevzuaticerik.asp?id=2309>.

²⁷⁰Gotthard Jaschke, *Yeni Türkiye’de İslamlık* (Ankara : Bilgi Yayınevi, 1972), p. 66.

mosques were closed down. A press report dated 30 December 1928 states that it was decided to close down around 85 to 96 mosques, the majority of which located in Istanbul, due to the lack of adequate community. This decision was based on a public statute dated 8 January 1928, which set the scene to regulations entitled “Regulations Governing the Categorization of Mosques and Mescits” (*Cami ve Mescitlerin Sınıflandırılması Hakkındaki Nizamname*) on 25 December 1932, which enabled the closing down of mosques that had congregations of insufficient size. Code no. 2845 ordered the closing of mosques classified as inactive and making them available to other uses.²⁷¹ Therefore the number of mosques in 1950 should be less than 28,705, which is the number in 1927. Control over associational freedom began to be loosened in 1948 and the number of associations in general started to increase. The number of associations was 825 in 1946, 2,177 in 1950, 6,887 in 1955, 17,138 in 1960, 26,677 in 1965 and 37,806 in 1968. While the number of associations aimed at building mosques was only 8 in 1946, this number increased to 142 in 1950. In 1955, there were 1,003 religious associations aimed at building mosques, 4,821 in 1960, 6,370 in 1965, and 8,419 in 1968.²⁷² As discussed in the previous chapter, the spread of mosques around the Turkish landscape is a very late phenomenon, which is manifested in the increase in mosque numbers:

²⁷¹Mete Tunçay, *T.C.'nde Tek-Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması (1923-1931)* (Ankara :Yurt Yayınları, 1981), p. 222.

²⁷²David Shankland, *Islam and Society in Turkey* (Huntingdon : Eothen Press, 1999) pp. 58-59.

Table 1: Mosque Number by Year

Year	Mosque Number	Year	Mosque Number
1971	42744	1993	68675
1973	45152	1994	69523
1981	47645	1995	70213
1984	54667	1996	71293
1985	57060	1997	72418
1986	59460	1998	73772
1987	61532	1999	74356
1988	62947	2000	75002
1989	64675	2001	75369
1990	66000	2002	75941
1991	66674	2003	76445
1992	68202		

Figures taken from Bozan and Çakır, 73.

The Imam

The Friday prayer, in Islamic tradition, should be guided by an imam, who acts as a guide for the rest to follow to preserve the required precision and order of the service and delivers the sermon. However, this position is not a clerical one: any Muslim who conducts a moral life and has a sincere faith may serve as imam so long as that person is familiar with the procedure.²⁷³ Nevertheless in daily usage in Turkey, an imam refers to the individual who is employed by the state for overseeing and being in charge of the mosque.

Imams during the Ottoman Empire

In the Ottoman state, imams were divided into two as the neighborhood imams and imams with private and official identity cards, providing service at civil and military circles. Imams with official identities were considered part of the military class in the Ottoman state system since they were charged with the sultan certificate (*berat*). In this period, imams were paid their salaries (*vazife*) from the religious foundations governing the mosques or mescid they were working for. Tımar-owning imams could also be found and some of them were allocated the revenues generated from certain gardens and orchards, hamlets and fields. Particularly after foundations lost their real revenues in time, other sources were sought to meet the economic burden

²⁷³Frederick Denny, *An Introduction to Islam* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993), p. 108.

of *vazifes*, and in time the central administration had to allocate salaries from other sources. Imams seem to receive additional incomes in the month of Ramadan and in holidays as well as the wedding ceremonies and funeral activities. Apart from these, particularly the imams in the rural areas, could work on their own fields and gardens after fulfilling their imam services and probably ensured their income through such works, and it is known that they were engaged in other professions including commerce and artisanship.²⁷⁴

While the appointment of imams in general was realized through the recommendation of the foundation trustee or custodian and the submission of various officials, which could sometimes be the local *kadı*, it was important that the appointed imam, particularly for neighborhood and village imams, would be someone that the community can accept. There were also imams who undertook the service with the approval of the community and without the certificate; these people were known as “prayer leaders” and were not referred to with the official imam title. In imam appointments, the conditions to have the necessary knowledge level to undertake this service, thus to be knowledgeable about religious issues and to have a sound morality were sought, but a particular rule about their educational status was not always applied. Therefore, the post of imamate was transferred from father to son or to one of the family members recommended in general, in small settlements and rural areas in particular. In large settlement areas, the exams held for the candidates played a role in these appointments and as a result of the exams, the more knowledgeable candidates in religious issues could be chosen. A regulation dated 1888 about the appointment of neighborhood imams stated that the imams have to be

²⁷⁴Kemal Beydilli, *Osmanlı Döneminde İmamlar ve bir İmamın Günlüğü* (İstanbul : Tarih ve Tabiat Vakfı, 2001), pp. 1-6.

educated and virtuous, but whether these requirements were reflected in the appointments or not is uncertain.²⁷⁵ The village and neighborhood imams were exempt from military service until the regulations on soldier conscription for the new army established in 1826.²⁷⁶

The tasks of the neighborhood imams varied to a great extent. Before the Tanzimat, the imam was the primary official of the neighborhood representing the state. Imams were also natural deputies of the *kadıs* in most of the tasks they had. Ensuring the order, safety and discipline of the neighborhood, inspecting the places where people drank, identifying the women involved in prostitution and their banishment from the neighborhood, the continuation of life in the neighborhood in line with the necessary Islamic traditions and the fulfillment of religious conditions by the residents were monitored by the imams. Furthermore, imams were expected to have full information about the residents of the neighborhood, in a way similar to the *muhtars* in today's system: imams were responsible for determining the identities of the residents of neighborhood, ascertaining the visiting foreigners or the people who recently moved and their registration, the recording of the people recently arrived to the recognizance, determination of the residence place and durations for the residents of the neighborhood, arrangement of residence and identity documents and the like. Apart from these, some municipal affairs were also undertaken by the imams: besides the transactions for death and burial, birth records, marriage contract, imams also had the tasks of caring for the cleanliness of the neighborhood and ensuring the

²⁷⁵Ziya Kazıcı, "Mahalle İmamlarının Bazı Görevleri", *İslam Medeniyeti Mecmuası* 3 (1982), pp. 30-31.

²⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p. 67.

cleaning of the environment or that the ovens in the houses are carefully put down against a fire danger and cleaned properly. As the signature and seal holder of official documents and investigations, imams signed the documents arranging the resolution of conflicts among neighborhood residents, played a role in the civil registry, real estate and tax census transactions, accompanied the casting lots of the new conscripts, and carried out the transactions about these with the authority invested in them. Since the tasks of the imams were not limited to religious affairs and their tasks about the administration of the neighborhood were more dominant in the Ottoman period, imams were important personalities in the village life.²⁷⁷ Along with the neighborhood imams, military and palace imams were also employed under the Ottoman administration. The educational status of the military imams was like that of neighborhood imams, except the high ranking imams, and it is known that these imams did not receive a proper education. The requirement to get a proper education for military imams only started in the middle of the nineteenth century. Although it is usually indicated that the military and palace imams had a more regular income than the neighborhood imams, even the salaries of palace imams, which had the best conditions among these three, were quite low.²⁷⁸

Imams during the Republic

The legal tasks and duties of the imams under the Republican rule are limited with merely providing religious services: delivering exhortations and sermons, conducting

²⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 7-11.

²⁷⁸Ibid., p. 61.

lectures in Koran courses, and overseeing the mosque.²⁷⁹ Nevertheless imams also have a place in life-cycle rituals such as weddings, which often include a brief ceremony recited by an imam, or in funerals that take place at mosques.²⁸⁰

It is possible to argue that the imams in the Republican era are much better off than the imams in the Ottoman era in the financial sense. The imams who are integrated into the civil servants system by the state are naturally equipped with more financial resources than the opportunities provided by the foundations in the Ottoman era. As one PRA officer indicated:

Among the gains of the Republic, there is also the improvement of the financial situation of imams. The imams today are not miserable like the Ottoman imams, they get their salary on the fifteenth day of each month in their bank account; they have health insurance and retirement benefits.²⁸¹

The requirements set by the PRA for the recruitment of imams have varied in the Republican era. For instance, for the imam position openings in 2010, the PRA sought the candidates to be graduates of imam hatip high school or graduates of a school equivalent to high school and with preaching certificate, while it is known that in the previous decades such requirements were not set and imams who are primary school graduates were also recruited. Particularly when imams who are already paid by the village residents were recruited as civil servants, the requirement to be imam hatip high school graduate was not sought, and when these imams were recruited, the decisions were based on the results of written and oral examinations.

²⁷⁹See 633 Sayılı Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Kuruluş Ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun, Resmi Gazete, 02 June 1965, 12038.

²⁸⁰Shankland, *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁸¹Interview by the author, tape recording, Ankara, Turkey, 08 February 10.

Imam hatip high schools are institutions founded by the Republic, mainly aiming to educate imams. The original purpose of these schools was to meet the demand for educated religious personnel, yet in time this became to be of secondary importance. This is mainly due to the integration of the imam hatip schools into the secondary educational system in 1973 by the coalition government of the RPP and NSP. After this integration imam hatips were transformed into an alternative educational system that trains students to perform religious services, while also preparing them for higher education. The curriculum offers a blend of religious and secular courses allowing students to gain employment in areas outside the religious professions. With this, imamhatips became more than vocational schools that are bringing up religious personnel, since most graduates of these schools continued their education in various university departments for careers in engineering, law, and medicine. In fact, according to the statistics of the PRA, in 1990 only 10 percent of imam hatip graduates were employed as prayer leaders and preachers.²⁸² Imam hatip schools became a very contested institution during the early 1990s, especially after the TÜSİAD report, suggesting these schools to be turned into vocational schools confined to training imams and hatips. However, the marginalization of imam hatips occurred during the February 28 process with the introduction of two policies that curbed the demand for these schools. Firstly, by increasing the compulsory education from five to eight years, it closed down the sixth through eighth grades of the imam hatips. Secondly, with a revision in the university entrance system, the February 28

²⁸²Yıldız Atasoy, *Turkey, Islamists and Democracy : Transition and Globalization in a Muslim State* (London ; New York : I.B. Tauris, 2005). See also Mehmet Ali Gökaçtı, *Türkiye'de Din Eğitimi ve İmam Hatipler* (İstanbul : İletişim, 2005) and Ruşen Çakır, İrfan Bozan, İ, and Talu, B, "İmam Hatip Liseleri: Efsaneler ve Gerçekler" retrieved on 4 April 2010, http://www.tesev.org.tr/UD_OBJS/BirOkulBirKurum.pdf for an evaluation on the evolution of these schools.

administration made it almost impossible for the graduates of imam hatip schools to enter universities, with the exception of departments of theology. When the February 28 coup was staged, the imam hatip schools were at their peak with 511,502 students, comprising 10 percent of all secondary and high schools students. However by the 2002-2003 academic year, due to these two policies, the number of students of these schools decreased to 64,534, with an 87 percent drop.²⁸³

Table 2: Imam-hatip Schools by Year of Opening

Teaching Year	Schools Opened	Total Schools Active
1951-52	7	7
1953-54	8	15
1954-55	1	16
1956-57	1	17
1958-59	2	19
1962-63	7	26
1965-66	4	30
1966-67	10	40

²⁸³ Kuru, *Ibid.*, pp. 193-194.

1967-68	18	58
1968-69	11	69
1969-70	2	71
1970-71	1	72
1974-75	29	101
1975-76	70	171
1976-77	77	248
1977-78	86	334
1978-79	1	335
1979-80	5	340
1980-81	34	374
1984-85	1	375
1987-88	1	376
1991-92	7	383
1992-93	6	389
1995-96	3	394
1996-97	70	464

Taken from Shankland, pp. 27-28.

The fluctuating pattern of the number of imams till 1965 unveils the willful neglect policy of the early Republic to contain Islam through depriving the society of subsidies on religious services. With the transition to multiparty rule, the number of imams registered to the PRA increased slightly.

Table 3: Numbers of imams registered to the PRA between 1923-1965

Year	Number of Imams	Year	Number of Imams
1927	5868	1953	6750
1928	4856	1954	7500
1930	4264	1955	7750
1950	4503	1960	10500
1952	5750	1965	11354

Retrieved from Uluçay, pp. 50-53.

However, the leverage of the PRA on the mosques in Turkey expanded after the year 1965 as discussed in the previous chapter. This expansion is also revealed with the increase in the number of imams registered to the PRA in particular and the number of personnel employed by the PRA in general.

The Friday Prayer and Sermon

The prayer (*salat*) is the second pillar among the Five Pillars of Islam with the profession of faith (*shahada*), almsgiving (*zakat, sadaqa*), the fast of Ramadan (*siyam, sawm*), and pilgrimage (*hajj*) and is incumbent on all believers once they have reached puberty. Islamic practice is known with its rich diversity, yet the Five Pillars of Islam remain the core and common denominator, the five essential and obligatory practices all Muslims accept and follow. Five specific periods of the prayer (*salat*) a day, consisting of a set pattern of recitations and bodily movements repeated a pre-given number of times, are a ritual requirement in Islam. Additionally recitation of sections of the Qur'an is an integral part of the prayer. The prayer is performed in a ritually purified state while facing in the direction of the Ka'ba in Mecca, the holy city and center of Islam. Facing the Ka'ba reinforces a sense of belonging to a single worldwide community of believers. The times for the prayer and the ritual actions were not specified in the Qur'an; instead they were established by the prophet Muhammad. The times were set as day-break, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and evening. The prayer is preceded by ablutions, which cleanse the body (hands, mouth, face, and feet) and spirit, to bestow the ritual purity necessary for divine worship.²⁸⁴

On Friday, the noon prayer is a congregational prayer and should be performed preferably at the mosque and guided by a prayer leader, the imam. The function of the imam is to lead the community in the prayer, to keep the actions in

²⁸⁴ Andres Rippin, *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 130-131, John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 89-90. Paul Grieve, *A Brief Guide to Islam- History, Faith and Politics: the Complete Introduction* (London: Robinson, 2006), pp. 101-110.

unison, and to be called upon to deliver the sermon (*khutba*). Imam stands in front, facing the niche (*mihrab*) that indicates the direction (*qibla*) of Mecca. The congregation lines up in straight rows, side by side, behind the imam.²⁸⁵ Attendance at the Friday prayer was declared obligatory for all Muslims who were largely capable, with the exception of women, slaves, the sick, travelers, those tending the sick and those feeling oppression. Congregational Friday prayer is not an imperative for Muslim women, while there is no impediment to praying at the mosque for women, yet often tradition emphasizes that women should perform the Friday noon prayer at home.²⁸⁶ The PRA also acknowledges that it is more meritorious for women to perform the Friday Prayer at home than at mosque.²⁸⁷

The Friday prayer is a pious ostentation for the Islamic community. Even those who do not perform prayer five times a day regularly attend the Friday prayer in the mosque. In Turkey performing the Friday prayer is a cross-class habit: in villages and small towns performing the Friday prayer is almost an imperative; yet in urban centers mosques are overcrowded with the attendance as well. It is striking for one to observe the diversity of people entering into the mosque located in the Middle East Technical University campus in Ankara for performing the Friday prayer: young men wearing fancy cloths, long haired rockers, engineers working in the Teknokent (Turkish silicon valley), pious students mainly coming from a traditional background, all meet in the mosque to fulfill their duty to Allah. Currently, the PRA estimates that between 13 to 18 millions of men in Turkey perform the Friday prayer

²⁸⁵Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, pp. 89-90.; Rippin, pp. 130-131.

²⁸⁶Grieve, p. 107.

²⁸⁷Diyanet Gazetesi, 15 March 1979.

at the mosque. According to a survey, dated 1996, while 2,181,906 men attend the mosque for the regular noon prayer, this number is 9,266,775 for the Friday prayer.²⁸⁸ The same survey provides the age distribution of the congregation:

Table 4 Age Distribution of Friday Prayer Congregation

Age Groups	Total	%
12-20	1,403,345	15,1
21-30	1,542,874	16,6
31-40	1,715,722	18,5
41-50	1,786,413	19,3
51-60	1,654,780	17,9
Over 61	1,163,641	12,6
Total	9,266,775	100

Taken from Bozan and Çakır, pp. 25.

Sermons

The sermon is an essential part of the Friday prayer. Although ritual prayer normally consists of four cycles of prostration and Qur'anic recitation, on Fridays, the sermon has two cycles and listening to the sermon is obligatory in order for one's Friday

²⁸⁸ Bozan and Çakır, p. 25.

prayers to be considered valid. An Islamic sermon is composed of two sections. The first is known as the “sermon of exhortation”; this part includes a message on an issue that is relevant to the community. Following the first section, the imam prays for forgiveness and he begins the second and much shorter part of the sermon, to praise God and ask blessings on Muhammad and his family. After completing this section, the imam typically prays for the community, the nation, and Muslims around the world.²⁸⁹ Homily (vaaz) and Friday sermon should not be confused: the homily can be given any time during the week when a member of the clergy can gather around himself a group of listeners on the floor of the mosque, whereas the Friday sermon is delivered from the pulpit during the Friday noon prayer.²⁹⁰

Though neither the term *khutba* nor the verb *khataba* occur in the Qur’an with their technical meaning, there are several hadiths affirming that sermons form a constituent part of worship. Friday sermons have both a religious and political significance within the Islamic tradition.²⁹¹ Early in Islamic history, mosques came to be the center of the Muslim community where disputes and affairs were settled. They were places where the Prophet went and addressed his followers, discussing issues and problems with them. Accordingly, from the beginning, Friday worship had the character of a political meeting, which provided a framework within which the announcement of news pertaining to the whole group could be made and decision could be taken. Additionally, as Islamic tradition developed, it became customary to

²⁸⁹James Gibbon, “God is Great, God is Good: Teaching God Concepts in Turkish Islamic Sermons”, *Poetics* 36, no. 5-6 (October-December 2008), pp. 391-392.

²⁹⁰Bruce, M. Borthwick, “The Islamic Sermon as a Channel of Political Communication”, *Middle East Journal* 21, no.3 (Summer 1967), pp. 300. The word *khutba* in Arabic, refers to liturgical oratory and in its broadest meaning the word appertain to any sort of public address. John Renard, *Seven Doors to Islam: Spirituality and the Religious Life of Muslims* (California: University of California Press, 1996), p. 40.

²⁹¹Arend J. Wensinck, “Khutba”, *Encyclopedia of Islam* (2nd ed.). Vol. II (Leiden: Brill, 1965), p.841.

mention the ruling sovereign before the Friday prayer.²⁹² During Ottoman rule, the sermon was read in the name of the Sultan. With the establishment of the Republic, however, this custom was superseded by the exercise of praying for the whole nation.²⁹³

Sermons, throughout the Islamic history, served as a channel of political and religious communication. The sermon was used as a means whereby the ruling elite informed the public of its policies, programs and ideas. Muhammad was the first preacher, and while he was preaching, he acted in two capacities: the leader and spokesman of the Islamic community, and the Prophet or Messenger, bringing the revelation of God to man. Successors of Muhammad, the caliphs, inherited these secular and religious roles: two of the appellations given to them were “the commander in chief of the believers” and “the leader of prayer”. The Caliph, who was the chief preacher, assumed office by ascending the pulpit of the principal mosque in the capital and by delivering his first sermon. In contemporary politics, in Muslim societies, the ruling elite frequently intervene in the content of sermons and keep supervision on them. Sermons, therefore, are not only a symbol of sovereignty, but also, through delivering sermons, imams act as mediators between the ruling elites and the traditional masses. The Islamic sermon promises to bridge the communications gap between the modernizing elites of the Middle East and the traditional masses. Sermons provide a fertile ground for amalgamating the official modernist discourse with the Qur'an, hadith, and the Islamic tradition.²⁹⁴

²⁹²Fathi, pp. 337-339.

²⁹³Mehmet Baktır, “Hutbe”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: Diyanet Yayınları, 1988).

²⁹⁴Borthwick, p. 300.

On the other hand, sermons are also strong weapons of resistance to the central authority. During the pre-revolution Iran, sermons played had a crucial role in political mobilization. Khomeini's messages were spread through sermons. Dissidents of the Shah regime had carefully followed Ayatollah Khomeini's sermons and exhortations, recorded during the Ayatollah's Paris exile on tape cassettes and sent around the world by couriers and long-distance telephone circuits.²⁹⁵ In fact, the revolution was incited with fierce sermons recited by religious leaders:

In Isfahan in August, excitement was generated by the return from three months in exile of one of the town's leading religious figures, Ayatollah Taheri. Thirty thousand people went several miles out of the city to welcome the Ayatollah and to accompany him back to Isfahan. On the following day, he visited the bazaar. Two days later, he preached his first Friday sermon. When he renewed his attacks on the government in a sermon on the following Friday, he was arrested again. Several hundred protestors staged a *bast*, or a sit-in, in the home of the city's other leading religious figure, Ayatollah Khademi. For several days, the protestors heard speeches and sermons and took part in communal prayers. On the tenth day of the *bast*, violent riots broke out in the city. For two days, Isfahan was in the hands of the crowds, before tanks rolled in, martial law was imposed and a measure of quiet returned to the city again. It was after listening to mosque sermons, in a pattern that occurred again and again, that crowds emerged in large cities like Shiraz and Yazd, and small towns like Shahsavari, Jahrom and Behbahan to demonstrate, protest, clash with security forces and attack particular targets.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁵ John, K. Cooley, "Iran, the Palestinians, and the Gulf", *Foreign Affairs* 57, no. 5 (Summer 1979), p.1020.

²⁹⁶ Said Amir Arjomand, *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1984), p. 180.

Preparation of the Sermons in Turkey

Between 1924-1965

From 1924 to 1965, due to a legal loophole, the PRA was not authorized to prepare, distribute, or oversee the sermons recited in the mosques all around Turkey. Hence during this period, at least in theory the imams were free to determine the content of their sermons and they were not guided by any rules or advisory sermons prepared by the central authority. However during the project of Turkification of Islam, Ahmed Hamdi Akseki²⁹⁷ was asked to prepare a Turkish sermon catalogue and his book entitled “Turkish Sermons” was published in 1927. These sermons constitute a precedent and model for the sermons preached throughout the Republic. Till 1965, the PRA acknowledged that the sermons that can be found in the two sermon books authored by Akseki, “Turkish Sermons” and “My Sermons” should guide the imams as advisory sermons. In 1965, the first law regulating the dissemination and content of sermons was promulgated. For forty years, there was no direct intervention of the PRA in the preparation, dissemination, and supervision of sermons preached in the mosques located all around Turkey. It is not hard to guess that many imams were not

²⁹⁷ Ahmed Hamdi Akseki is considered as one of the mentors of the PRA and the official Islam. Kara labels Akseki as the representative of the “collaborator” type of *ilmiye* since, according to Kara, despite his Islamist disposition, Akseki had reconciled with the Kemalist political authority on the radical regulations regarding religion and served as an active official during the implementation of those regulations. Akseki had been involved in the Islamist movements during the 2nd Constitutional period and was a supporter of Union and Progress against the Hamidian rule, and constitutional monarchy against the sultanate. After working for the Şeriye and Evkaf Ministry, he assumed many positions in the PRA, during 1923-1951, and became the 3rd president of the institution. Authoring several books on Islam, Akseki also made intellectual contributions. His book titled “The Islam Religion” was used as the primary source in the religious vocational schools in Turkey. Despite the critics raised against his “collaboration” with the single party rule, Akseki was still acclaimed for his pious personality and endeavors to moderate the staunchly secular reforms of the Kemalist rule. See Kara, p. 202.

guided by the advisory sermons prepared by Akseki; in fact, only a very small proportion of imams had access to those books.

Between 1965-1980

After the code that was enacted in 1965, the PRA was empowered with arranging the defining principles of sermons and preparing exemplar sermons. According to the act of 1965, the duties of the High Council of Religious Affairs were determined as such:

- a) To conduct and to commission enquiries and research and present their results to the Directorate;
- b) To determine the short and long term main service policy and rules of procedures of the Presidency, to examine the proposals prepared in this regard by the related units and make comments on them;
- c) To compile and translate religious books and to commission such works; to prepare samples of preach and sermon;
- d) To examine printed, audio and video works requested to be published by the Presidency and to decide whether they will be published or not; (For the publication of the works, which are not decided on in the duration set by the President, the Board decision is not required.)
- e) To provide expert opinion on printed, audio and video works that are requested to be examined;
- f) To answer religious questions;
- g) To follow religious and scientific activities, literature and activities which have the nature of religious propaganda within the country and abroad, to evaluate such activities and present the results to the Presidency;
- h) To examine the texts requested by the Presidency among the draft laws, by-laws, circulars, plans and programs which are necessary for the operation of the Presidency and were prepared by the related units, and to present opinion on them;
- ı) To hold the preparatory work about the council of religion, to prepare the reports and Presidency opinion to be presented to the council, to present the council decisions to the President;

j) To examine other issues referred to by the President and to present expert opinion on them.²⁹⁸

This article regulates the responsibility of the council to prepare sermons, but does not provide any details on how sermons will be prepared, how they will be sent to imams and how they will be supervised. Such details were to be regulated by the circulars sent later and regulations to be prepared. In 1968, the biweekly Religious Affairs Gazette (*Diyanet Gazetesi*) started to be published and the imams working under the Presidency were subscribed to the newspaper. The Religious Affairs Gazette was designed as a newspaper aiming to provide news to imams about the developments within the institution, but also giving news about developments in the country and also having special sections towards women and children. Sermons expected to set an example to imams were published in this newspaper. In 1991, the newspaper was turned into a magazine and started to be published once a month. The sermons published in the newspaper and then the magazine were usually the sermons sent by individuals until the mid-1990s. These sermons bearing the signatures of the institution's personnel in various positions such as müftüs, rapporteurs, and imams, were published in the newspaper and magazine. In 1995, a sermon commission was

²⁹⁸ a) Dini konularda inceleme ve araştırmalar yapmak, yaptırmak ve sonuçlarını Başkanlığa sunmak;
b) Başkanlığın kısa ve uzun vadeli ana hizmet politikasını ve çalışma esaslarını tesbit etmek, bu konuda ilgili birimlerce hazırlanan teklifleri inceleyip görüş bildirmek;
c) Dini eserleri te'lif ve tercüme etmek ve ettirmek; va'z ve hutbe örnekleri hazırlamak;
d) Başkanlıkça yayınlanması istenen basılı, sesli ve görüntülü eserleri inceleyerek yayınlanıp yayınlanamayacağına karar vermek; (Başkan tarafından verilen süre içinde karara bağlanamayan eserlerin yayımı için Kurul kararı aranmaz.)
e) Tetkiki istenen basılı, sesli ve görüntülü eserler hakkında mütalaa vermek;
f) Dini soruları cevaplandırmak;
g) Yurtiçindeki ve yurtdışındaki dini, ilmi faaliyetleri, neşriyatı ve dini propaganda mahiyetindeki çalışmaları takip etmek, bunları değerlendirmek ve sonucunu Başkanlığa sunmak;
h) Başkanlık teşkilatının çalışmaları için gerekli olan ve ilgili birimlerce hazırlanan kanun tasarısı, tüzük, yönetmelik, plan ve programlar gibi metinlerden Başkanlıkça gerekli görülenleri inceleyerek görüş bildirmek;
ı) Din şurası ile ilgili hazırlık çalışmaları yapmak, şuraya sunulacak raporları ve Başkanlık görüşünü hazırlamak; şura kararlarını Başkan'a sunmak;
j) Başkan tarafından havale edilen diğer konuları tetkik etmek ve mütalaa vermek, Republic of Turkey, Resmi Gazete, 02 July 1965, 12038.

formed under the High Council of Religious Affairs and the commission members were selected among the members of the board. As of this date, the sermons prepared by the sermon commission were published in the magazine after being examined by the High Council of Religious Affairs – if they are considered appropriate to be read. The sermons found to be appropriate to be read were also posted on the PRA website under the heading “Monthly sermons” at the latest one week before the start of the following month, apart from being published in the Religious Affairs Monthly Magazine between 2001 and 2006.

During this period the only circular regarding the prevention of extemporaneous reading of the sermons I had encountered was, dated October 10, 1978, numbered 788, titled “Sermons to be Read in Mosques will be Examined by the Presidency or Müftü Offices”.

With the decision of the High Council of Religious Affairs on the sermons delivered by preachers in mosques, dated 02.10-1978 and numbered 105, it was agreed that the sermons, which have been usually read extemporaneously so far, cause the loss of focus on the subject in general and thus a decrease in the benefit expected from the sermon. In this regard, from now on, all personnel except officials from the Central Institution to be charged by the Presidency and the Provincial and District Müftüs or the preachers that will be authorized by these, will read the sermons from written texts.

In order to ensure that useful, substantial and instructive information is provided in the most effective manner in a limited time, the preachers should select the sermons they will read primarily among the texts that were published by the Presidency or passed the examination of the Presidency.

The sermons prepared by talented people and were not examined by the Presidency and the sermons to be prepared by the preachers themselves can be read under the permission and the responsibility of the related Müftü's Office.

I request that the practice will be made in accordance with the mentioned decision and the sermon subjects will be determined by the related Müftü offices and sermons on the same subject matter will be read in all of the mosques in the same müftü office authority zone every week, in order to

ensure that the community will be provided with religious information within a certain programme.²⁹⁹

This may be considered as the first step towards the centralization of sermons.

However despite this circular, another regulation, defining the work principles of the institution, issued in 11/03/1980, sets the guidelines for sermon delivery as such:

- a) A topic in line with the needs of the day and the environment is selected;
- b) The sermon selected is read a couple of times in advance;
- c) The preacher puts on the religious dressing, takes the pulpit, reads the sermon in line with the related rules and without melody;
- d) Unnecessary gestures are avoided and the tone is adjusted to the situation of the sermon while reading the sermon;
- e) The preacher tries to be sincere, emotional, giving religious excitement, balanced, warning, constructive, instructive, dearing, providing gospels, warning against religious bans, correcting the wrong beliefs and inciting thoughts during the sermon;
- f) The preachers who prepare their own sermons avoid excessive, offensive, personal words and being personal and political in the sermon, as well as words that may harm national and religious unity;
- g) The duration of the whole sermon should be short enough to avoid tediousness. (The whole sermon should not be more than 15 minutes under any circumstances.)³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹Hatiplerin camilerde okudukarı hutbeler hakkındaki 02.10-1978 tarih ve 105 sayılı Din İşleri Yüksek Kurulu kararı ile, bugüne kadar çoğu kere irticalen okunagelen hutbelerin, genellikle konunun dağılmasına ve bu yüzden hutbeden beklenen faydanın azalmasına sebep olduğu kanaatine varılmıştır. Bu itibarla bundan böyle, başkanlıkça görevlendirilecek Merkez Kuruluşu yetkilileri ile İl ve İlçe Müftülükleri veya onların izin verecekleri vaizler dışındaki bütün görevliler hutbelerini, yazılı metinden okuyacaklardır.

Kısa zamanda cemaate daha faydalı, özlü ve öğretici bilgilerin en etkili bir şekilde verilmesini sağlamak amacıyla hatiplerimizin, okuyacakları hutbeleri öncelikle Başkanlıkça yayınlanmış veya Başkanlığın tetkikinden geçmiş metinlerden seçmeleri gerekmektedir.

Yetenekli kimselerce hazırlanmış ve Başkanlığın tetkikinden geçmemiş hutbelerle, hatiplerimizin bizzat hazırlayacakları hutbeler ise ilgili Müftülüğün izin ve sorumluluğu altında okunabilecektir.

Cemaate belli bir program dahilinde dini bilgiler verilmesinin sağlanabilmesi için, hutbe konularının ilgili Müftülüklerce planlanmasının ve aynı müftülük çevresindeki camilerin tümünde her hafta aynı konuda bir hutbenin okutulmasının ve anılan karar gereğince uygulama yapılmasının teminini önemle rica ederim Circular dated 15 November 1978, numbered 201 1-9 Sermons to be Read in Mosques will be Examined by the Presidency and Müftü Offices, Diyanet Gazetesi, 15 November 1978.

³⁰⁰ a) Günün ve çevrenin ihtiyaçları dikkate alınarak bir konu seçilir;

b) Secilen hutbe önceden bir kaç defa okunur;

c) Hatip, dini kisvesini giyerek mimbere çıkar, usûlüne uygun ve tegannisiz olarak hutbeyi okur;

d) Hutbe okunurken gereksiz el-kol hareketlerinden kaçınılır, ses tonu cemaatin durumuna göre ayarlanır

e) Hatip hutbede samimi, duygulu, dini heyecan verici, ölçülü, uyarıcı, yapıcı, eğitici, sevdirci, müjdeleyici, dini yasaklardan sakındırıcı, yanlış inançları düzeltici ve düşündürücü olmaya çalışır;

Despite the circular attempting to prevent extemporaneous sermon delivery, this regulation openly enables imams to deliver their own sermons. Hence it is safe to argue that till 1980 the PRA explicitly allowed the imams to prepare their own sermons and did not intervene into the content of the sermons strictly. Between 1924 and 1965, the PRA did not have the authority to prepare and inspect the sermons because of the legal loopholes. Therefore, for these years, it is almost certain that the imams were reading their own sermons. However, it is not possible to detect efficient inspections between 1965 and 1980 either. The PRA was authorized to prepare the sermons in 1965, but the Religious Affairs Gazette, which was designed as the source to communicate these sermons to imams, started to be published in 1968. Between 1968 and the end of 1970s (1978-79), the sermons were published in an irregular manner in the magazine. For instance, the fact that only one sermon was published in most of the issues of the magazine published once in two weeks not only gives a clue on how “systematic” the working discipline of the PRA was, but also that the institution accepted *de facto* that there sermons other than the ones published by the institution were read and even tacitly allowed that.

Which sermons were read by imams in these periods? I believe, contrary to what would be expected, that spontaneous sermon reading was not very common. The sermon preparation policy that was initiated in 2006 indicates that the final aim of this policy is that each imam will prepare his own sermon in line with the level and needs of his own congregation. Considering that the most significant objection of

f) Hutbelerini kendileri hazırlayan hatipler, aşırı, kırıcı, hissi, sözler ile şahsiyat ve siyaset yapmaktan milli ve dini birliği zedeleyici sözlerden sakınırlar;

g) Hutbenin tümü itibariyle işgal edeceği zamanın cemaati bıktırmayacak bir ölçüde kısa tutulmasına dikkat edilir. (Hutbenin tamamı hiç bir surette 15 dakikayı geçmemelidir.) See Diyanet Gazetesi 15 April 1980,-. originally issued in the Resmi Gazete, 11 March 1980, 16926.

the imams is about the effort to prepare sermons, it can be claimed that imams prefer to read sermons from written texts apart from exceptional cases. Except those who have solid oratorical skills, imams used to read sermons from written texts in these periods as well. However, these texts were not produced by the PRA. One of the imams I interviewed said that until 1979 (the year when he started to get the magazine),³⁰¹ he used to read sermons from the sermon book he inherited from his father. Given that the profession of imams was usually inherited from the father in the rural areas of Anatolia and that most of the imams receive an informal imamate education from the early years of childhood, a practice that is common among many imams may be reading the sermons they have inherited from their fathers.

Another source of sermons was the published sermon books written by preachers renowned for their oratorical skills and considered as erudite Islamic scholars. The fact that the sermon book by Ali Rıza Demircan, a famous preacher of the time, was published in a few editions, gives an idea about its popularity. Kemal Güran, author of the book entitled “My Sermons from Kocatepe Mosque Pulpit,” had served in various ranks of the Presidency of Religious Affairs at the same time and his book entitled “Sermons for Preachers” was published by the Turkish Religious Affairs Foundation. The fact that the book “Advices from Pulpit Sermons” by Süleyman Ateş, a former president of the PRA, was published can be considered evidence that reading the sermons other than the ones prepared by the PRA was not regarded as illegal. The argument that the sermons of the PRA were not quite popular

³⁰¹From an interview with a retired imam who used to work in a mosque in Çan, Çanakkale. Interview by the author, tape recording, Çanakkale, Turkey, 04 March 2010.

in mosques until the 1980 coup, can be traced in the statement of an Islamist writer, whose article stands as a concise summary of the PRA's sermon preparation policy:

Before talking about the great change and transformation between the tones of famous preachers and orators before 1980s and after 1980s, it would be better to state a few reminders... The first book I read in this regard was the sermon book of Tahsin Yaprak, entitled, "Call Out." I guess the book was a collection of the sermons recited in Hacıbayram Mosque. Then, I read the three-volume sermon book entitled "Islamic Order" by Ali Rıza Demircan and "Addressing from Süleymaniye" by Ömer Öztıp. Among them, there was also "My Sermons" by Mehmet Emre. The books mentioned here, and particularly the books by Demircan and Öztıp, made references to the political and social developments of the day and were texts that made one gain a religious outlook (mentality) on the issue. These texts also touched upon phenomena like capitalism, socialism and imitating the West. Apart from the written culture, oral religious culture was also popular in the same years. The preachers that we have mentioned in this column before would speak in the same manner in the pulpits. Fethullah Gülen, Timurtaş Uçar, Abdullah Büyük were the most significant preachers of the time. These hodjas and many other preachers that were mentioned or not, before 1980s, used to prepare their Friday sermons on their own; this was the case at least in my environment, and the preachers used to speak freely. September 12 must have brought new regulations in this area, as well as all other areas, so that after the coup the hodjas started to read the same sermons everywhere. It is after this year that we started to encounter sermons advising to comply with the traffic rules in villages that had only village roads or no roads at all, and weird sermons talking about protecting the trees and not cutting them down in villages where the main livelihood is forestry.³⁰²

³⁰²Sözü, seksen öncesinin ünlü vaiz ve hatiplerin üslubu ile seksenden sonraki üslup arasında çok büyük değişim ve dönüşümün yaşandığına getirmeden önce birkaç hatırlatma yapsak iyi olacak... Bu bağlamda okuduğum ilk kitap Tahsin Yaprak'ın Sesleniş adlı hutbe kitabıdır. Galiba Hacıbayram Camii'nde okunan hutbelerin toplamı idi bu kitap. Daha sonra Ali Rıza Demircan'ın üç ciltlik İslam Nizamı adlı hutbe kitabı ile Ömer Öztıp'un Süleymaniye'den Hitap'ını okudum. Bunların arasında Mehmet Emre'nin Hutbelerim'i de var. Adı geçen bu kitaplar -özellikle Demircan ve Öztıp'un kitapları- günün siyasi ve toplumsal olaylarına göndermelerde bulunan, konu ile ilgili dini bir bakış açısı (zihniyet) kazandıran metinlerdi. Bu metinlerde kapitalizm, sosyalizm, Batı taklitçiliği gibi olgulara da değinilir. Yazılı kültürün yanında sözlü din kültürü de aynı yıllarda revaçta idi. Daha önce bu sütunlarda değindiğimiz vaizler de aynı minval üzere konuşurdu kürsülerde. Fethullah Gülen, Timurtaş Uçar, Abdullah Büyük zamanın en önemli vaizleri idi. Seksen öncesinde bu hocalar ve adları geçen geçmeyen birçok hatip Cuma hutbesini kendisi hazırlıyordu, en azından benim çevremde böyleydi- vaizler yine serbestçe konuşuyordu. 12 Eylül, her şeyde olduğu gibi bu alanda da yeni düzenlemeler getirmiş olmalı ki ihtilalden sonra hocalar her tarafta aynı hutbeleri okur oldu. Köy yolunda hatta yolu olmayan köylerde trafik kurallarından bahseden öğütlerle; geçimini ormancılıktan kazanan köylülerin ağaçları korumak, kesmemek gibi garip hutbelerle karşılaşması bundan sonradır. Kamil Yeşil, "Vaaz ve Hutbelerin Değişen Dili", *Milli Gazete*, 12 February 2009.

Hence, it is impossible to have a clue on the sermon delivery practices prior to the 1980 coup. Some imams might have complied with the circular issued in 1978 and delivered their sermons in line with the ones prepared and distributed by the PRA. Yet plenty of evidence suggests that this was not the general pattern. Given that even the PRA had implicitly allowed imams to deliver self-prepared sermons, it would be safe to argue that reciting the “official” sermons was not the common practice during this period. The uniformity of sermons could only been attained through the drastic measures implied after the 1980 coup.

The PRA Intervention into Sermons

The total prohibition of extemporaneous sermon delivery of the sermons was introduced through a secret report,³⁰³ titled “Religious Education in Turkey- Religious Abuse”:

To ensure an endearing, warming and uniting tone and content in the sermons and preaching by the Presidency of Religious Affairs; to avoid personal, political and ideological implications and teachings; to ban extemporaneous sermon delivery [preaching a sermon without looking at a written/prepared text] and to present the sermon to the public after getting the approval of the related religious official for the written sermon text and preaching plan; to circulate sufficient number of sermon texts and preaching plans from the center to the provinces, taking the circumstances in the region into account and to establish a textual unity throughout the country; to publish books that contain sermon and preaching texts.³⁰⁴

³⁰³This report was prepared by Mehmet Özgüneş (Minister of State), Cevdet Menteş (Minister of Justice), İlder Türkmen (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Selahaddin Çetiner (Minister of Internal Affairs), Hasan Sağlam (Minister of National Education), Münir Güney (Minister of Rural Affairs and Cooperations), Vecdi Özgül (Minister of Youth and Sports), and Tayyar Altıkulaç (President of the Presidency of Religious Affairs). See Kara, p. 46.

³⁰⁴“Diyanet İşleri Bankanlığı’nca hutbe ve vaazların sevdirci, ısıdırıcı, bütünleştirici bir üslup ve muhtevada olması; şahsi, siyasi ve ideolojik ima ve telkinlerden kaçınılması; irticali hutbe iradının [yazılı/hazırlanmış bir metne bakmadan konuşma usulüyle hutbe okumanın] yasaklanarak yazılı hutbe

With this report, the PRA took steps to ensure the unification of the sermons delivered by the imams. After four months of the coup, a meeting was held with the muftis with the aim to strengthen the relations between the central body and provincial units, through reorganizing the Qur'an courses and Islamic teaching (*irşat*), which comprises the sermons and homily (*vaaz*). During the assembly, two commissions, the commission of Qur'an courses and the commission of Islamic teaching were constituted. The issues raised in these commissions were announced as such:

What may be the measures to be taken about the problems that emerge in the relations between Koran course associations and the official education activities at these courses?

What may be the judicial (prosecutor's office) and administrative (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education, the Religious Affairs Presidency and public authorities) measures to be taken against the institutions that act under the name of associations, guesthouses, common education courses and conduct unofficial Koran course activities, outside their field of activity?

Do the Preaching and Guidance Boards prepare sermons properly? Are such sermons embraced by imams and preachers? Is this practice sufficient? What are your views about the sending of sermons from the headquarters?³⁰⁵

metni ve vaaz planının ilgili müftüye onaylatıldıktan sonra halka sunulması; bölgenin şartları da gözönüne alınarak, ülke çapında metin birliğinin sağlanması için, merkezden illere ihtiyacı karşılayacak sayıda hutbe metinleri ve vaaz planları tamim edilmesi; ayrıca hutbe ve vaaz metinleri ihtiva eden kitaplar yayınlanması” İsmail Kara, “Cami Ordu Siyaset: 27 Mayıs İhtilaline Dair bir Hutbe”, *Toplumsal Tarih* 17 (May 2008), p.45.

³⁰⁵“... Kuran kursu dernekleri ile bu kurslardaki resmi eğitim faaliyetleri arasındaki ilişkilerde ortaya çıkan problemler konusunda lınması gerekli tedbirler neler olabilir?

Dernek, pansiyon, yaygın eğitim kursu adı altında faaliyet gösteren ve amaçları dışına çıkarak gayri resmi Kur'an Kursu faaliyeti yürüten yerler hakkında alınması gereken adli (savcılık) ve idari (İçişleri Bakanlığı, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı ve Mülkiyer amirler) tedbirler neler olabilir?

Va'az ve İrşad Kurullarımız muntazaman hutbe hazırlamakta mıdır? Bu hutbeler İmam-Hatipler tarafından benimsenmekte midir? Bu uygulama yeterli midir? Hutbelerin merkezden gönderilmesi konusunda düşünceleriniz nelerdir?” See Diyanet Gazetesi, 15 February 1981.

The vice president of the PRA, evaluated the assembly in an article titled “Center and Provincial Units are in Harmony” (Merkez ve Taşra Uyum Halinde), which stands as a quintessential text summarizing the role defined for the PRA during the junta rule:

The “commonalities” vanished in the community due to the conceptual confusion of the recent years. The differences of opinion among the people who work in the same state institution, graduated from the same school and share the same profession unfortunately made us a community in which people do not understand each other and do not listen to each other. This chaos reached such an extent that it was seen that for years young people who shout the same slogans, with eyes drenched in blood, have fought because they do not sit together and listen to each other... The “PROVINCIAL RELIGIOUS OFFICIALS SEMINAR,” which was held between January 30 and February 2, 1981, at our Presidency, showed that the provincial religious officials at the head of the provincial institutions are in total harmony with the philosophy and tone of our Presidency... The service of religion is a common need of the community. The professional competence of the people providing this service and the total harmony between them not only in purpose but also in method is a requirement for the nature of the service. The imams who direct their followers to other directions and the guides who teach different things to their communities would take us to the “FETRET” (Interregnum) at the end of the fight between Timur and Yıldırım.³⁰⁶

In a similar vein, Tayyar Altıkulaç, the president, emphasized the measures that shall be taken for maintaining the unity among the central body and the provincial units in terms of determining the content of the sermons, in his concluding remarks of the assembly:

³⁰⁶ “Son yılların kavram kargaşası içerisinde cemiyette “müşterek”ler kayboldu. Aynı devlet dairesinde çalışan; aynı okulu bitiren; aynı mesleği paylaşan insanlar arasındaki kanaat farklılıkları, yazık ki bizi birbirini anlamayan; birbirini dinlemeyen bir topluluk haline getirdi. Bu kargaşa o hale vardı ki, atıkları sloganlar aynı, gözü kanlı; önünü görmez gençlerin, oturup birbirlerini dinlemedikleri için yıllarca dalaştıkları görüldü... 30 Ocak, 2 Şubat 1981 tarihlerinde Başkanlığımızda yapılan “İL MÜFTÜLERİ SEMİNERİ”, iller kuruluşlarımızın başı olan il müftülüklerimizin, Başkanlığımızın esprisi ve üslubu ile tam bir uyum halinde olduklarını gösterdi...Din hizmeti, cemaatin ortak ihtiyacıdır. Bu hizmeti sunanların mesleğinin ehli olmaları; sadece amaç değil aynı zamanda tam bir metot birliği içerisinde bulunmaları, hizmetin özelliği gereğidir. Peşindekileri ayrı istikametlere çeken imamlar; cemaatına ayrı telkinlerde bulunan mürşitler bizi Timur Yıldırım kavgası sonundaki “FETRET”e götürür Mert, Hamdi “Merkez ve Taşra Uyum Halinde” See, Diyanet Gazetesi, 15 February 1981.

- 1- It will be ensured that preachers will take the pulpit having been thoroughly prepared;
- 2- As always, no opportunity will be given to the people who aim to be political in the mosque pulpit from now on and the people acting otherwise will be subject to the provisions of Article 15 of the Law no. 633;
- 3- Extemporaneous reading of the sermons will not be allowed. Sermons will be selected among the sermons sent by our Presidency. The officials who try to develop themselves through preparing sermons will not be disallowed, but such sermons will be read under the responsibility of the related provincial religious official;
- 4- Personal affairs will not be involved in the sermons from the rostrum and the pulpit, which will be reserved for the purpose of teaching our religion;
- ...
- 2- The Koran courses will be thoroughly inspected in 1981 and the problems detected will be rapidly solved;
- .. 5- The provisions of the Qur'an Courses Regulation will be strictly implemented and arbitrary, undisciplined and disorderly activities will not be allowed in the functioning of these institutions;
- Arbitrariness and emotionality will not be allowed in administration and all transactions will take place in an objective manner within the framework drawn by the laws and the legislation;
- Our society will be enlightened about religion and our deeds will be in line with the light of the Book and Tradition and there will be no deviations from this line;
- Our work place is the Turkish Republic founded by Atatürk. All of our officials will be well aware of this fact.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁷ 1- Vazilerin Kürsülere ciddi şekilde hazırlanarak çıkmaları sağlanacaktır.

2- Her zaman olduğu gibi, bundan sonar da, cami kürsüsünde siyaset yapmak isteyenlere kesinlikle fırsat verilmeyecek, aksine hareket edenler hakkında 633 sayılı Kanun'un 25. Maddesi uygulanacaktır.

1- İrticalen hutbe okuyanlara izin verilmeyecektir. Hutbeler, Başkanlığımızca gönderilen hutbelerden seçilecektir. Hutbe hazırlayarak kendini yetiştirmeye çalışan görevlilerimize de engel olunmayacak, ancak bu gibi hutbeler, ilgili müftünün sorumluluğu altında okunabilecektir

2- Kürsü ve mimberden şahsiyat yapılmayacak, dinimiz öğretilenecektir.

...

2- 1981 yılı içerisinde Kur'an Kurslarımız ciddi bir denetimden geçirilecek, görülen aksaklıklar süratle giderilecektir.

.. 5- Kur'an Kursları Yönetmeliği hükümleri ciddi bir şekilde uygulanacak, bu kuruluşların işleyişinde keyfiliğe, disiplinsizlik ve düzensizliğe izin verilmeyecektir.

-İdarede keyifliliğe; hissiliğe yer verilemeyecek, her işlem kanunların ve mevzuatın çizdiği çerçevede içinde objektif olarak cereyan edecektir.

-Toplumumuz din konusunda aydınlatılırken, Kitap ve Sünnetin aydınlığında hareket edilecek, bu çizgiden asla sapılmayacaktır.

-Görev yerimiz, Atatürk'ün kurduğu Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sidir. Bütün görevlilerimiz, bunun idraki içinde olacaklardır. See, Diyanet Gazetesi, 15 February 1981.

Therefore, it is clear that with the 1980 coup, after the secret report prepared by the junta government, necessary measures to attain unity among the sermons recited all around Turkey were taken. The annual meetings with muftis were conducted regularly after the 1980 coup. The main message given in these meetings remained the same: the imams shall not use pulpits for politics and stay within the boundaries outlined by the central unit. In these annual meetings, the central body admonished the muftis for preventing the imams working under their jurisdiction to involve in political affairs and reminded the provincial units of the red lines that limit actions that are tolerated by the state. In some of the meetings, Ministers of State were invited to conduct the opening speech and ministers after declaring the importance of religious services, ask the imams to promote solidarity and unity among the society, refrain from involving in politics, and use the pulpit to indoctrinate “genuine” Islam.

During the February 28 process, special attention was given to the prevention of deviations of the sermons recited by imams from the sermons prepared and published by the Presidency of Religious Affairs and the circulars issued by the presidency to achieve unity in this matter became more frequent. Secret reports, similar to the ones prepared following the 1980 coup by the General Staff in order to prevent reactionist activities, were prepared in the February 28 process as well. For instance, the document issued by Çetin Doğan, Lieutenant General Operation Director, dated April 16, 1997, entitled, “Activities against Secularism” stated that:

1. Various sources have indicated that sermons against laicism are recited in our mosques, that there are phrases which constitute crimes under the law in these sermons, and the documents issued by the Presidency of Religious Affairs for the sermons and preaching are not followed.
2. It is considered that the monitoring of the sermons and preaching be undertaken in precarious times, particularly the Friday and holiday prayers, by the garrison commanders through charging personnel for this task and the reporting of the matters detected indicating time and place

would be useful for the efforts to prevent anti-secular attitudes and behaviors.

3. Considering the sensitivity of the issue, it is found appropriate that the selection of the personnel to be charged and execution of the task should be personally monitored and controlled by the garrison commands.³⁰⁸

This alert on the mosques obliged the PRA to be more repressive over its provincial units. Mehmet Nuri Yılmaz sent a circular to müftüs on 11/08/1998, indicating that there should be no deviations from the sermon texts prepared by the PRA.

It is known that the preparation and reading of the Friday and *bayram* sermons, which have a very important place in the enlightenment of the society on religious issues, are conducted in line with the referenced approval.

In order to ensure uniformity in sermon subjects, the sermons published by the Religious Affairs Monthly Magazine will be read from now on. However, in extraordinary conditions that take place in certain regions of our country from time to time, it will be possible that the sermon texts on recent issues and prepared by the müftüs themselves or prepared by the sermon commissions set in the place in line with the referenced approval and examined by the provincial commissions are read as well.

Under no circumstances, the practice will deviate from these and people acting otherwise will be subject to legal prosecution.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁸ 1. "Muhtelif kaynaklardan camilerimizde laiklik aleyhtarı vaazlar verildiği, bu vaazların içeriğinde kanunen suç teşkil eden ibareler olduğu, hutbe ve vaazların verilmesinde Diyanet Başkanlığı'nca yayınlanan dokümana uyulmadığı gözlenmiştir.

2. Garnizon komutanlıklarınca öncelikle Cuma ve bayram namazları olmak üzere gayri muayyen zamanlarda verilen hutbe ve vaazların personel görevlendirmek suretiyle takibinin ve tespit edilen hususların yer ve zaman belirtilerek rapor edilmesinin laiklik aleyhtarı tutum ve davranışları önlemeye yönelik çalışmalar için faydalı olacağı değerlendirilmektedir.

3. Konunun hassasiyeti dikkate alınarak görevlendirilecek personelin seçimi ve görevin icrasının, garnizon komutanlıklarınca bizzat takip ve kontrol edilmesi uygun mütalaa edilmektedir. Ali Bayramoğlu, "Belgelerle Ergenekon'un ruhu olarak 28 Şubat", Yeni Şafak, 9 March 2010.

³⁰⁹ Toplumun dini konularda aydınlatılmasında çok önemli bir yer tutan Cuma ve bayram hutbelerinin hazırlanması ve okutulmasının ilgi onay çerçevesinde yapıldığı malumdur.

Hutbe konularında yeknesaklığı sağlamak üzere; bundan böyle Diyanet Aylık Dergide yayınlanan hutbelerin okutulması sağlanacaktır.

Ancak, zaman-zaman ülkemizin bazı bölgelerinde zuhur eden olağanüstü durumlarda, ise; güncel konularla ilgili ve bizzat müftülerce hazırlanan veya ilgi onay uyarınca, mahallinde kurulan hutbe komisyonlarınca hazırlanarak il müftüsünün tetkikinden geçen hutbe metinlerinin okutulması cihetine de gidilebilecektir.

Kesinlikle bu uygulamanın dışında çıkılmayacak ve aksine davrananlar hakkında yasal işlemler yapılacaktır. From the documents retrieved from the PRA upon personal request.

Two years later, Yılmaz warned the imams again through müftis with a similar circular:

There is no need to explain the importance of sermons and preaching in guidance services.

As a result of the inspections made by the PRA inspectors from time to time, it was determined that:

- 1- The sermons read on Fridays in some mosques are not the sermon texts sent as an annex to Religious Affairs Monthly Magazine or examined and agreed by the müftü offices;
- 2- Some of the employees reading sermons read the sermons without any practice in advance and any preparation;
- 3- Some employees do not read the Turkish prayers in the standard sermon texts found appropriate by the Presidency.

Moreover, some preachers doing the preaching take the pulpit without preparation and make the preaching long without interrupting it with the prayers and cause uneasiness within the mosque community through such behaviors.

I request, with special emphasis, that more attention be paid to the above-mentioned issues from now on and the referenced letters sent before on this issue be read once more with due care.³¹⁰

Not only did the frequency of the circulars warning the imams not to deviate from the sermons prepared by the central body increase, but also some amendments regarding the content of the sermons were made during this period. As the article quoted above from an Islamist writer states:

The uniform outfits introduced for hodjas (although there are exceptions encountered, wearing a tie is compulsory for hodjas) was supported with uniform sermons and preaching and the uniform call for prayers (ezan) in the February 28 process. There were other changes that are frequently

³¹⁰ İrşad hizmetlerinde hutbe ve vaazların ne kadar önemli olduğu izahtan varestedir.

Başkanlığımız müfettişlerince zaman zaman yapılan denetimler sonucunda;

1- Bazı camilerde Cuma günleri okunan hutbelerin Diyanet Aylık Dergi ekinde gönderilen veya müftülüklerce incelenip kararlaştırılan hutbe metinleri olmadığı,

2- Hutbe okuyan görevlilerden bir kısmının önceden alıştırma yapmadan, hazırlıksız olarak hutbe okudukları,

3- Bazı görevlilerin ise, Başkanlıkça uygun görülen standart hutbe metnindeki Türkçe duaları yapmadıkları,

Ayrıca, vaaz veren vaizlerin bazılarının da hazırlıksız olarak kürsüye çıktıkları ve ezanlarla birlikte vaazlarını kesmeyerek uzattıkları ve bu davranışları ile cami cemaati arasında huzursuzluğa sebep oldukları, tesbit edilmiş bulunmaktadır.

Bundan böyle mezkur konularda daha hassas davranılmasını ve konuyla ilgili olarak önceden gönderilmiş bulunan ilgi yazıların bir defa daha dikkatli okunarak gereğinin yapılmasını önemle rica ederim. From the documents retrieved from the PRA upon personal request.

overlooked in the February 28 process. The second sermon prayers were translated into Turkish. Another development that was overlooked and hidden with sleight of hand was, as a step with regards to inter-religious dialogue, that the verse read by hodjas before coming from the second sermon as “İnne'dine ındallahi'l İslam (The only religion is Islam before God, Allah katında tek din İslam’dır)” was removed and the hadith reading as “The person who repents his sin is a person that has never committed the sin.” I cannot claim that this was a deliberate change, I cannot prove even if I do claim. But we cannot argue that this change in the Friday prayers, which I attend every week, took place by itself. What we are witnessing is that the language of the religious is changing/changed. This in fact is not a claim, but a fact that we witnessed. One face of this development is pointing to the February 28 process and the other face to inter-religious dialogue. When this is the case, if the sermon I listened to in Ankara is read everywhere in Turkey, you must have heard this as well. The hodja reading the Friday sermon from the printed copy he was holding was talking about justice. On equality before justice, he said:

“During the time of our Prophet, one of the leading women of a clan committed a crime. Since the woman was a notable person, her relatives did not want her to get punished and sent a believer to the Prophet as an intermediary. Our Prophet told the believer, ‘Before you some clans perished because they did not punish when a strong person committed a crime and punished when a weak and unsupported person committed a crime. If my daughter Fatma committed a crime, I would even certainly punish her.’”

As you would remember, this is not the original hadith. The crime mentioned in the hadith is theft and the punishment for that is cutting of the hand. The Prophet (sav) said the following sentence about her daughter: “If my daughter Fatma had stolen, I would even cut her hand.” As can be seen, the Presidency of Religious Affairs refrains from reciting a Sharia provision; if this is not changing the religion, what is?³¹¹

³¹¹Hoca efendilere getirilen tek tip kıyafet - ki kural dışı örneklere rastlansa bile mesela kravat takmak hocalara zorunludur - tek tip hutbe ve vaazdan sonra 28 Şubat sürecinde tek tip ezan da eklendi. 28 Şubat sürecinde gözden kaç(ırıl)an başka değişiklikler de oldu. İkinci hutbe duaları Türkçeleştirildi. Yine el çabukluğu ile gözden kaç(ırıl)an bir başka olay özellikle dinler arası diyalog çevresinde atılan bir adım olarak ikinci hutbeden inmeden önce hocaların okuduğu "İnne'dine ındallahi'l İslam (Allah indinde din İslam'dır" ayeti kaldırıldı; yerine "Günahından tövbe eden kişi hiç günah işlememiş gibidir" Hadisi şerifi kondu. Bunun kasıtlı olduğunu söyleyemem, söylesem de ispatlayamam. Ama her gittiğim cumada bu değişikliğin kendiliğinden olduğunu da iddia edemeyiz. Bizim gördüğümüz şey, din dilinin değiştiği/değiştirildiği olgusudur. Bu, aslında iddia değil şahit olduğumuz bir olaydır. Bu olayın bir yüzü 28 Şubat sürecine, diğer yüzü dinler arası diyaloga bakıyor. Durum böyle olunca eğer benim Ankara'da dinlediğim hutbe Türkiye'nin her tarafında okunuyorsa bunu sizler de duymuş olmalısınız. Cuma hutbesini elindeki matbu nüshadan okuyan hoca efendi, adalet konusunu işliyor. Herkesin adalet önünde eşit olmasından bahisle şöyle diyor:

"Peygamber Efendimiz zamanında, bir kavmin önde gelen kadınlarından biri bir suç işlemişti. Kadın eşraftan biri olduğu için yakınları onun cezalandırılmasını istememiş ve aracı olarak bir sahabiye Hz. Peygambere göndermişti. Efendimiz o gelen sahabiye: 'Sizden önce bazı kavimler güçlü kişiler suç işlediğinde onu cezalandırmaz, zayıf, arkası olmayan kişiler işlediğinde onu cezalandırdıkları için helak olmuşlardır. Vallahi kızım Fatıma bile suç işlese onu cezalandırırım.'"

With the February 28 process, the monitoring over the sermons has increased. This had been, similar with the process experienced after the 1980 coup, triggered by the Turkish Armed Forces' active involvement into the activities of the PRA in the name of the prevention of reactionist activities. The sermon preparation policies run parallel with the institutional restructuring of the PRA, which is examined in the previous chapter. The measurements aiming at attaining the unification of sermons were taken under the supervision of the military. In fact from the report mentioned above, it is clear that the army personnel were dictated to monitor the sermons and open files for the imams who violate the sermon delivery policy.

After 2006: Decentralization of Sermons

By the end of May 2006, an amendment was made to the related regulation on sermons and the practice of preparing sermons by the central body presidency was ended. In June, the task of preparing sermons was assigned to the provincial mufti offices. No sermons were published after this date in the Religious Affairs Monthly Magazine or the website. It was made obligatory to send the sermons prepared by provincial müftü offices to the diyhizmetleri@diyanet.gov.tr address in the first working day of the month.

Hatırladığımız gibi bu hadis böyle değildir. Hadiste geçen suç, hırsızlıktır, bunun cezası da elin kesilmesidir. Peygamberimizin (sav) kızı için söylediği söz de "Vallahi hırsızlık yapan kızım Fatıma bile olsa elini keserim" şeklindedir. Diyanet İşleri görüldüğü gibi şer'i bir hükmü söylemekten özellikle kaçınmaktadır ki bu dini değiştirme değilse nedir? Kamil Yeşil, Vaaz ve Hutbelerin Değişen Dili, Milli Gazete, 12 February 2009.

The sermons prepared by sermon commissions set up under the provincial mufti offices, have to be prepared in line with the terms of the “Sermon Preparation and Evaluation Guide,” issued by the Presidency of Religious Affairs. With this guide, the criteria for sermon preparation were determined in a clear and systematic manner for the first time. According to this guide:

1.1. “Sermon Commission” is formed by a minimum of four and a maximum of seven people with the approval of the governor’s office in the country and of the embassy/chief consulate abroad.

1.2. In the domestic commission formed under the leadership of the provincial müftü, personnel that had advanced religious education such as deputy müftü, district müftü, preacher, branch manager, religious services expert, Koran course trainer and imam and hatip are the members. In case sufficient number of personnel with advanced religious education cannot be found, members can be selected among the graduates of other schools with similar subject. Having a graduate degree is an asset.

1.3. In the commissions abroad formed under the leadership of religious services undersecretary/attaché/coordinator religious official, the members are attaché and/or religious officials.³¹²

The same guide lists the tasks of the sermon commission as follows:

2.1. The commission identifies the subjects of the sermons through consultation meetings with the district müftüs within the country and with attachés/coordinator religious officials/religious officials and makes three-monthly planning and regulations.

2.2. It launches competitions of sermon writing among religious officials in the subjects determined.

2.3. The commission members may prepare sermons when necessary and may outsource this task through orders.

³¹² 1.1. “Hutbe Komisyonu” yurt içinde valilik, yurt dışında büyükelçilik/başkonsolosluk onayı ile en az dört, en fazla yedi kişiden oluşturulur.

1.2. İl müftüsünün başkanlığında oluşturulan yurt içindeki komisyonlarda, müftü yardımcısı, ilçe müftüsü, vaiz, şube müdürü, din hizmetleri uzmanı, Kur’a kursu öğreticisi ve imam-hatip gibi dini yüksek öğrenim görmüş personel görevlendirilir. Yeterli sayıda diniz yüksek öğrenim görmüş personel bulunmaması halinde tahsili buna en yakın olan diğer okul mezunlarından da üye seçilebilir. Lisansüstü eğitim yapmış olmak tercih sebebidir.

1.3. Din hizmetleri müşavirinin/ateşesinin/coordinator din görevlisinin başkanlığında oluşturulan yurt dışındaki komisyonlarda ise, ateşe ve/veya din görevlileri yer alır. From the documents retrieved from the PRA upon personal request.

Aynı kılavuza göre hutbe komisyonunun görevleri ise şu şekilde tanımlanmıştır.

- 2.4. It evaluates the sermons prepared and selects them.
- 2.5. It awards the owners of the sermons, found to be appropriate for reading, and determines the amount of the awards based on local resources. No award may be given for sermons prepared by the commission members.
- 2.6. It takes the “Sermon Preparation and Evaluation Criteria” into account in the preparation and evaluation of the sermons.
- 2.7. The head of the commission ensures that the sermons selected are sent to and read in all mosques in the area of his responsibility.
- 2.8. The head of the commission ensures that the inspection whether the sermons decided to be read are presented effectively or not.
- 2.9. The commission receives feedback about the sermons and evaluates them.³¹³

The sermons ought to be prepared in line with a certain plan set by sermon commissions. The aspects in this plan are listed as follows: subject of the sermon, problem of the sermon, aim of the sermon, gains of the community from the sermon, basic quality of the sermon, reference sources of the sermon. The aspects in the sermon texts are as follows:

- 2.1. The introduction part includes sentences referring to the problem and/or the gains.
- 2.2. Direct references are made to the religious source/basis related with the problem.
- 2.3. References to religious sources are multiplied based on the main quality (providing information, convincing, addressing to the emotions).

³¹³2.1. Komisyon, yurt içinde ilçe müftüleri, yurt dışında ise ataşeler/koordinatör din görevlileri/din görevlileri ile yapılacak istişari toplantıda hutbe konularını belirleyerek üçer aylık planlama ve düzenleme yapar.

2.2. Belirlenen konularda din görevlileri arasında hutbe yazma yarışması açar

2.3. Gerektiğinde komisyon üyeleri hutbe hazırlayabileceği gibi, sipariş yoluyla da hazırlatabilir.

2.4. Hazırlanan hutbeleri değerlendirerek seçimini yapar.

2.5. Okumaya değer görülen hutbe sahiplerini ödüllendirir ve ödüllerin miktarını mahalli imkanlara göre belirler. Komisyon üyeleri tarafından hazırlanan hutbeler için ödül verilmez.

2.6. Hutbelerin hazırlanmasında ve değerlendirilmesinden “Hutbe Hazırlama ve Değerlendirme Ölçütleri”ni dikkate alır.

2.7. Komisyon başkanı, seçilen hutbelerin sorumluluk alanındaki bütün camilere zamanında ulaştırılmasını ve okunmasını sağlar.

2.8. Komisyon başkanı, okunması kararlaştırılan hutbelerin etkili biçimde sunulup sunulmadığının denetimini sağlar.

2.9. Komisyon, hutbelerle ilgili geri bildirimler alır ve değerlendirir. From the documents retrieved from the PRA upon personal request.

2.4. The subject matter is explained through sample incidents and phenomena taken from daily life. In this respect, historical developments can be used as well.

2.5. In the conclusion part, a summary based on gains can be made.³¹⁴

In this respect, the sermons prepared by the commission members are evaluated

through an evaluation form with 25 questions.³¹⁵ The answers of the questions for the

³¹⁴ 2.1. Girişte problem ve/veya kazanımlara işaret eden cümleler yer alır.

2.2. Problemler ilişkilendirilerek, doprudan dini kaynağa/dayanağa atıf yapılır.

2.3. Dini kaynaklara atıflar, ana nitelik (bilgilendirme, ikna etme, duygulandırma) merkezli olarak çeşitlendirilir.

2.4. Günlük hayattan verilecek somut örnek olay ve olgularla konuya açılım kazandırılır. Bu bağlamda tarihsel olaylardan da yararlanılabilir.

2.5. Sonuç kısmında kazanımlar merkezli bir özet yapılabilir. From the documents retrieved from the PRA upon personal request.

1- Is the title of the sermon in line with its content? 2-Are the problem/sub-problems clearly stated? 3- Is the problem appropriate for a sermon? (a little/a lot) 4- Is the problem appropriate for the time and the recent developments? 5-Is the problem meeting the expectations and needs of the local people? 6- Is the content of the sermon able to ensure that the foreseen gains are gained? 7-Are the gains overlapping with the problem sentence? 8- Do the gains overlap with the dominant quality of the sermon? 9- Are the tone and style of the sermon compatible with this basic quality? 10-Is the conclusion of the sermon summarizing the gains? 11- Are the sources indicated in due form? 12- Are the verses and hadiths selected compatible with the gains? 13- Are the verses and hadiths in line with the dominant quality of the sermon? 14- Are the verses and hadiths provided in the right place? 15- Is the language of the sermon compatible with its dominant quality? 16- The dominance and appropriateness of the I/we, you, he/she/them language used in the sermon 17- Are the length of the sentences appropriate? (Between 6 and 8 words is the most appropriate length) 18- Is the language of the sermon as clear as can be understood by the community? 19- Is the length of the sermon appropriate for the clarity of the issue and the time? 20- Is the balance between gospels and warnings sought? 21- Are the orthographic rules respected in the sermon? 22- Is the content of the sermon compatible with Koran, sünnet and scientific facts? 23- Are opinions and evaluations that may harm the national unity and integrity, offending people and groups and are prejudiced and political, avoided? 24- Are unclear opinions, unnecessary controversies and issues that may cause uneasiness, avoided? 25- Is the sermon compatible with the task of Presidency of Religious Affairs of illuminating the society on belief, worship and morality issues? 1- Hutbenin içeriğine uygun bir adlandırma yapılmış mıdır? 2-Problem/alt problemler açıkça belirtilmiş midir? 3- Problem, bir hutbe için uygun mudur? (az/çok) 4- Problem, zamana ve gündeme uygun mudur? 5-Problem, yöre halkının beklenti ve ihtiyaçlarını karşılayıcı mıdır? 6-Hutbenin muhtevası, öngörülen kazanımları edindirecek nitelikte midir? 7-Kazanımlar problem cümlesi ile örtüşmekte midir? 8- Kazanımlar, hutbenin öne çıkan niteliği ile örtüşmekte midir? 9- Hutbenin ifade ve üslubu bu temel niteliğe uygun mudur? 10- Hutbenin sonucu, kazanımları özetler nitelikte midir? 11- Kaynaklar usulüne göre belirtilmiş midir? 12- Seçilen ayet ve hadisler kazanımlara uygun mudur? 13- Seçilen ayet ve hadisler hutbenin öne çıkan niteliğine uygun mudur? 14- Seçilen ayet ve hadisler uygun yerde verilmiş midir? 15- Hutbenin dili, öne çıkan niteliği ile uyumda mıdır? 16- Hutbede kullanılan ben/biz, sen/siz, o/onlar dilinin ağırlığı ve uygunluğu 17- Cümle uzunlukları uygun mudur? (6-8 kelime arası en uygun) 18- Hutbenin dili cemaatim anlayacağı şekilde açık mıdır? 19- Hutbenin uzunluğu konunun anlaşılabilirliği ve süre açısından uygun mu? 20- Müjde ve uyarı dengesi gözetilmiş midir? 21- Hutbede imla kurallarına uyulmuş mudur? 22- Hutbenin muhtevası Kur'an, sünnet, ve bilimsel gerçeklerle uyumlu mudur? 23- Milli birlik ve bütünlüğü zedeleyici, kişi veya grupları tahkir edici, önyargılı ve politik ifade ve değerlendirmelerden kaçınılmış mıdır? 24- Henüz netleşmemiş görüşlerden, gereksiz tartışmalara ve huzursuzluğa sebep olabilecek hususlardan kaçınılmış mıdır? 25- Hutbe, Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı'nın

sermons evaluated are selected among the options “completely” (3 points), “to a large extent” (2 points), “partially” (1 point), “no” (0 point). For a sermon to be read, the total points given should be at least 55. The sermons that did not have full points or cannot be corrected on the twentythird, twentyfourth and twentyfifth items (23- Are opinions and evaluations that may harm national unity and integrity, offending people and groups and are prejudiced and political, avoided? 24- Are unclear opinions, unnecessary controversies and issues that may cause uneasiness, avoided? 25- Is the sermon compatible with the task of the Presidency of Religious Affairs of illuminating the society on belief, worship and morality issues?) cannot be evaluated even if they get full points on other items.

With this amendment, the era of the centralization of sermons has ended. This step was mainly taken due to the increasing dissatisfaction with the policy of sermon preparation among both the PRA personnel and the congregation. In the seminars that have been organized by the PRA to ensure the efficient operation of the institution in recent years, the uneasiness with regards to the sending of the sermons from the central body and the obstacles this practice engenders that in turn prevent the effectiveness of the sermons were frequently asserted. It was voiced by both the PRA personnel and the researchers studying the activities of the PRA, that the sermons prepared in Ankara and delivered in all mosques around Turkey are not compatible with the needs and the knowledge level of the community, therefore setting a serious problem regarding the bond between religious officials and the

toplumu inanç, ibadet ve ahlak konularında aydınlatma göreviyle bağdaşır nitelikte midir? From the documents retrieved from the PRA upon personal request.

community. The most important aspect of the restructuring of the PRA within the EU process is the change in this policy on sermons. The final aim of this decentralization policy was determined as equipping all imams with the ability to prepare their own sermons. In this respect, it is said that the preparatory work of a comprehensive project including institutional training are carried out. A comparison of the content of the sermons prepared after 2006 with the content of the ones prepared in previous years shows that the sermons prepared currently by the commissions formed under the müftü offices are not quite different from the ones prepared by the PRA headquarters. A PRA official I interviewed on the issue said that the sermon commissions are “more royalist than the king” and have been very cautious to avoid any reactions about the content of the sermons. This critical task, which was previously the responsibility of the central administration, is currently transferred to the müftü offices and thus the responsibility to prepare the sermons and the possible risks were transferred to these commissions. In an environment where the vigilance about the sermons is quite high, it can be openly seen that the sermon commissions, as indicated by the religious affairs personnel, tend to prepare sermons similar to the ones prepared in the centralized sermon preparation process – even more “harmless” ones – to avoid responsibility and particularly to minimize the risk of being exposed by the media. Another reason why the sermons prepared after 2006 are in parallel with the previous sermons is that the process of preparing sermons is determined with a very detailed guideline. Technically, it is not possible for the sermons, the framework of which was determined by the guidelines, to be different from the previous ones. However, it is not certain what kind of a control mechanism will be implemented and to what extent and in what respects the sermons prepared in this process will be different from the ones prepared so far, following this interim stage

of the plan on preparation of sermons, which means, following the transfer of the task to prepare sermons from müftü offices to imams.

Control over Imams

Discipline Mechanisms

The PRA personnel are subject to Law no. 657, which regulates the affairs of all state personnel. Therefore, the disciplinary provisions in the Article 125 of the Law are applicable to all imams and PRA personnel.³¹⁶ Committing the crimes regulated by

³¹⁶ A- Warning: Warning is the written notification of the necessity to act more carefully in office and in actions to the civil servant.

The deeds and conditions that require the warning penalty are as follows:

- a) Acting indifferently or without due care in the carrying out of the orders and tasks given fully and in time, in the fulfillment of the procedures and principles set by the institutions in the place of duty and in the protection, use and care of the official documents, tools and equipment about the official tasks,
- b) Being late to the office, leaving early and leaving the place of duty without an excuse or permission.
- c) Not respecting the saving measures determined by the institution.
- d) Filing applications or complaints in violation of the due procedures,
- e) Having the attitudes and behaviors that are not compatible with the dignity of a civil servant,
- f) Being indifferent or careless about the tasks or the owners of the business,
- g) Acting in violation of the dressing and wear provisions set,
- h) Acting in violation of the principle of conducting the task in cooperation.

B- Reproach: Reproach is the written notification to the civil servant that he/she is at fault in his/her post and behaviors.

The deeds and conditions that require the reproach penalty are as follows:

- a) Acting faulty in the carrying out of the orders and tasks given fully and in time, in the fulfillment of the procedures and principles set by the institutions in the place of duty and in the protection, use and care of the official documents, tools and equipment about the official tasks,
- b) Failing to notify the institution about the income generating permanent activities of their spouses, underage or interdicted children, in the duration set,
- c) Acting disrespectfully to the superior with attitude and behaviors during the post,
- d) Acting in a way that will harm the dignity and the confidence in the Civil servant outside the office,
- e) Using the state-owned official tools, equipment and similar goods for personal aims,
- f) Losing the state-owned official documents, tools, equipment and similar goods,
- g) Mistreating his/her colleagues, the personnel working under him/her and the owners of the business,
- h) Attacking verbally or with action to his/her colleagues and owners of the business,
- i) Acting in violation of the general moral and politeness rules at the place of duty and writing texts as such and drawing and making signs, pictures and similar drawings,
- j) Objecting to the orders given,
- k) Failing to pay the loans on purpose and causing the initiation of legal proceedings against himself/herself,

l) Disturbing the peace, serenity and working order of the institutions.

m) (Additional paragraph: 17/09/2004 – Law no. 5234 / Article 1) Giving information or statement to the press, news agencies or radio and television institutions despite not being authorized.

C- Cutback on salary: Cutback on salary is a reduction in a range between 1/30 and 1/8 on the gross salary of the civil servant.

The deeds and conditions that require the cutback on salary penalty are as follows:

- a) Failing to carry out the orders and tasks given fully and in time on purpose, to fulfill the procedures and principles set by the institutions in the place of duty and to protect the official documents, tools and equipment about the official tasks and to conduct the care of them and to use them in a false way,
- b) Failing to come to the office without an excuse for one day or two days,
- c) Using to the state-owned official documents, tools, equipment and similar tools to generate personal benefit,
- d) Making misguided and false statements in issues about the post to the people he/she is responsible to,
- e) Acting disrespectfully verbally to superiors during the post,
- f) Assisting in the non-permitted use of any place within the boundaries of the work place for meeting, ceremony and similar purposes,
- g) Leaving the city resided without permission,
- h) Filing application or complaint as a group,
- i) Acting in a way that harms the dignity and confidence in civil servants during post,
- j) Having all kinds of banned publications at the work place.

D- Halting of rank advance: Halting of rank advance is the halting of the advance of the rank the civil servant has for 1 to 3 years, depending on the severity level of the deed.

The deeds and conditions that require the halting of rank advance penalty are as follows:

- a) Coming to work intoxicated, drinking alcoholic beverages at the work place,
- b) Not coming to work between 3 and 9 days uninterruptedly and without an excuse,
- c) Extracting advantage with regards to the task regardless of the way and method this is done,
- d) Acting and making deeds in a way humiliating or degrading way to superiors or subordinates,
- e) Using or making others use any place within the boundaries of the work place for meeting, ceremony or similar purposes without permission,
- f) Preparing false reports and documents,
- g) (Abolished sub-paragraph: 17/09/2004 – Law no. 5234 /Article 33)
- h) Being engaged with commercial business or any other income generating activity banned for civil servants,
- i) Making discrimination based on language, race, sex, political ideas, philosophical beliefs, religion and sect in the carrying out of the duty and acting in a way targeting the benefit or loss of certain people,
- j) Failing to make the declaration of property in determined circumstances and durations,
- k) Disclosing information that is forbidden to be disclosed,
- l) Insulting or threatening superiors, subordinates, colleagues or owners of the business,
- m) Taking credit above solvency abroad without showing a justifiable reason through benefiting diplomatic status and harming the State integrity in attitudes and behaviors in the repayment of the credits or coming back to the country without paying the credit without a compulsory reason,
- n) Failing to fulfill on purpose the orders and tasks given,
- o) Being actively engaged with activities for the benefit or harm of any political party.

E- Discharging from the civil servant position: Discharging from the civil servant position is discharging from the state personnel position not to be appointed as a civil servant again.

The deeds and conditions that require the discharging from the civil servant position penalty are as follows:

- a) Disturbing the peace, serenity and working order of the institutions for ideological or political purposes, participating activities such as boycott, invasion, prevention, slowdown and strike, or failing to come to work en masse for such purposes, incite and encourage such activities or aiding and abetting such activities,
- b) Printing, multiplying, distributing all kinds of banned publications or statements, posters, banners, strips or similar tools that have political or ideological purposes, or hanging these in some place of the institutions or displaying them,
- c) Being a members of a political party,
- d) Failing to come to work for 20 days in one year without an excuse (...),

the provisions of this article requires disciplinary punishment for imams. If the sanction against the crime committed is discharging from the civil servant post, the related imam cannot work in any other state institution. The disciplinary punishments about sermons are decided on the basis of paragraph A and B of this article, stating, “Acting indifferently or without due care in the carrying out of the orders and tasks given fully and in time, in the fulfillment of the procedures and principles set by the institutions in the place of duty and in the protection, use and care of the official documents, tools and equipment about the official tasks”.³¹⁷

However, apart from these, the imams and PRA personnel are bound with two other articles, unlike other civil servants. These articles cause not disciplinary action, but administrative penalties for imams. The imams conducting such faulty actions are discharged from PRA, but retain their right to become a civil servant and thus can be appointed to other state institutions if they wish to do so. The first of these articles is Article 25 of the Law on Religious Affairs numbered 633:

Personnel working at all ranks of the Presidency of Religious Affairs Institution cannot praise and criticize any political party or their attitudes and behaviors, under no circumstances, during his religious service or other than this post, apart from the political activity banned for civil servants by the Law on Civil Servants. If such activities are determined

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- e) Failing to fulfill the duties or orders given by superiors on issues such as war, state of emergency or general disasters,
 - f) Attacking superiors and subordinates,
 - g) Behaving in a shameful and embarrassing manner in nature and to the extent not compatible with the title of civil servant,
 - h) Disclosing confidential information without being authorized,
 - i) Hiding the people sought due to political and ideological activities at the work place,
 - j) Having attitudes or behaviors that will undermine the integrity of the State or harm the reputation of the post, abroad,
 - k) Violating the provisions of the Law on Crimes Against Atatürk numbered 5816.

³¹⁷ Republic of Turkey, Devlet Memurları Kanunu, Resmi Gazete, 23 July 1965, 12056.

as a result of inspection, the person conducting such activities will be discharged by related and authorized personnel.³¹⁸

With this article, imams, unlike other civil servants, are banned to engage in political activities even in their personal lives and make comments about political parties even when they are not on duty. Therefore the occupational limitations/restraints of the imams prevail even in their daily lives and prevent them from expressing any political involvement.

Another administrative sanction imams and PRA personnel is subject to is the requirement for a “common quality,” mentioned in paragraph b of Article 5 of the Presidency of Religious Affairs Appointment and Moving Regulation:

Carrying a common quality towards the reputation of compatibility with Islamic traditions in opinions, worship, attitude and behaviors in areas where appointments are based on religious education.³¹⁹

In line with this article, all personnel of the institution in Presidency of Religious Affairs, including the cleaners, must have a life style in line with Islamic traditions in opinion, worship and morality and must be known as such by the people around them. The people not having a common quality cannot be employed for any position at the PRA institution. The people who were found to be lacking such a

³¹⁸ Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Kuruluşunun her derecesinde görev alan personel, Memurin Kanununun hizmetliler için yasak ettiği siyasi faaliyetten başka, dinî görevi içinde veya bu görevin dışında, her ne suretle olursa olsun, siyasi partilerden herhangi birini veya onların tutum ve davranışını övemez ve yeremez. Bu gibi hareketleri tahkikatla sabit olanların, ilgili ve yetkili mercilerce işine son verilir.

³¹⁹ “Atanmalarında dini öğrenimi esas alan alanlarda; itikat, ibadet, tavır ve hareketlerinin İslâm törelerine uygunluğunun çevresinde bilinir olduğu şeklinde ortak bir nitelik taşımak”.

common quality after they were employed and those who lose such quality during their post as civil servant are discharged from their post at the Presidency in line Article 98/b of the Law numbered 657. The deeds and conditions that cause the loss of common quality can be listed as: having a defective religious faith (such as not believing in one of the preconditions of faith), failing to carry out the worship services, conducting one of the infamous crimes, drinking, gambling, adultery or deeds and conditions violating Islamic ethics.

Inspection of Imams

Drawing upon these legal limitations, the inspection of the imams is conducted by inspectors and auditors working under the Presidency of Religious Affairs. The inspectors are employed as part of the central institution and are authorized to inspect the presidency personnel at all ranks. Auditors, on the other hand, are employed as part of the provincial müftü offices and are authorized to conduct auditing activities only in the province they are employed. In 2010, there are 170 auditors and 58 inspectors employed. Numerically, in order to get an idea on whether it is sufficient for an institution employing a total of 81,851 personnel as of 2009 to be inspected by a total of 228 inspectors (auditor and inspector) or not, this number can be compared with the number of teachers and inspectors employed in formal training. As of the end of 2009, while the number of teachers employed in state and private schools in Turkey (pre-school, primary school and high school levels) was 942,117, the number of inspectors was 3,507. Therefore, with a rough calculation, while one PRA

inspector or auditor is responsible for 359 PRA personnel, including the central administration and periphery, one education inspector is responsible for 267 teachers.

The inspectors visit the peripheral institutions once in two years for a general inspection and inspect the quality of religious services carried out in the place they visit, ranging from the cleanliness of the mosque to the performance of the imams. As a result of these inspections, they provide reports to the headquarters about the performance of the imams and in line with these reports imams get disciplinary punishments or awards like appreciation and acknowledgement documents based on their performance. The auditors make continuous inspections in the province they are working, visit the mosques on a regular basis and listen to the sermons and preaching. When a disciplinary violation is in question, first the auditors in the province they are employed take action and if the quality of this disciplinary action requires technical information the inspectors have, the case is referred to the inspectors working in the headquarters. After the inspectors examine the case, they are required to prepare a report about the incident and submit this report to the inspection board. If the inspection board takes any action such as deciding for a disciplinary action after evaluating the report, the defense of the related imam is taken and the case is evaluated again in the inspection board and the final decision is made.

It was indicated that the records of the disciplinary actions before the year 2000 were not statistically kept. Since information about the registries of and the disciplinary actions against the imams are confidential, they are not shared. But verbal information about the statistics was given in the interviews I conducted. It was said that the number of total written and verbal complaints, through telephones, e-

mails, notifications and otherwise, about imams in 2009 was 2,700. Among these complaints, 150 were not processed, 1,800 were referred to the governor's offices, and 650 complaints of the total 2,700 complaints were referred to the Religious Affairs inspection board. In 350-400 complaints referred, no disciplinary rule violation was found. Therefore, it is possible to see that only 10 percent of the number of complaints filed against imams resulted in a disciplinary punishment and sanction.

During the interviews again, it was stated that since 2000, in the last 10 years, around 25 to 30 imams were imposed disciplinary punishments for reasons related to reading sermons. Therefore, only 2 to 3 imams annually out of the total 70,000 imams are imposed disciplinary punishment for reasons of violating the procedure about reading sermons. The disciplinary punishment about reading sermons are based on the following reasons: 1- the imam deviating from the subject matter of the sermon, 2-the imam reading the sermon extemporaneously, 3- the imam making additions to the sermon, 4-the imam not reading the Turkish translation of the prayers after reading the prayers in Arabic at the end of the sermon.

During the interview conducted with an official working in the disciplinary board, he particularly emphasized to me that the limited number of disciplinary actions regarding the delivery of sermons does not indicate that the imams are free from inspection. On the contrary, the official said that there is an excessive sensitivity about sermons and that there is a tradition about complying with the related circulars on sermons particularly after the February 28 process:

You can be sure that the inspections of the imams are carried out in a very careful manner by the inspectors and auditors. In fact, these inspections are not even necessary. The people have a high awareness

and sensitivity on these issues. In case of even a minor violation about sermons, they do not hesitate in filing a complaint. Therefore, the real inspectors are the people. Now, it is very easy to reach us; every village has telephone lines, everybody has internet connection. Let me tell you a very recent incident about these sermons. One imam said during the sermon that the soldiers in the eastern part cut the ears of the PKK terrorists, which is an unfounded allegation. They immediately reached us and the community filed a complaint. We took the necessary steps about it.³²⁰

Other Control Mechanisms

The sole inspection mechanism that prevents imams from stepping out of the boundaries set by the Republican regime is not the inspection of the PRA. There are three other more effective factors in this respect.

The first of these factors is through the apparatus of force of the state. In fact a PRA personnel noted to me that apart from other civil servants, imams could be arrested when they are on duty owing to the Code. From the inception of the Republic, the armed forces of the state were actively involved in the inspection of religious activities. In fact memoires unveil that particularly in the single party period, the Koran courses were frequently raided by the gendarmerie.

I started to attend the course in 1926. In those years, the gendarmerie used to stage raids often and exerted pressure on the teachers teaching Koran and their students. There were cases of beatings and imprisonment. Teaching Koran and Arabic was forbidden.

³²⁰Şundan emin olun ki imamların denetimlerinin müfettiş ve murakıplar tarafından son derece titiz bir şekilde yapılıyor. Zaten aslında bu denetimlere bile gerek yok. Halkımız son derece bilinçli ve hassas.. Hutbelerle ilgili en ufak bir ihlalde artık halkımız şikayet etmekten çekinmiyor. Baktığınız zaman asıl müfettiş halk..Şimdi bir de çok kolay bize ulaşmak; telefon her köyde mevcut, herkesin interneti var..Size bu hutbelerle ilgili çok taze bir olay anlatayım. Bir imamımız doğuda askerlerin PKK'lı teröristlerin kulaklarını kestiği şeklinde asılsız bir söz söylemiş hutbe sırasında. Hemen bize ulaşıldı, cemaat tarafından şikayet yapıldı. Biz de gereğini yerine getirdik. From an interview conducted with a PRA personel. Interview by the author, tape recording, Ankara, Turkey, 22 March 2010.

Administrative officials and the gendarmerie used to implement the orders from Ankara, maybe more harshly than they were expected to.³²¹

In a similar vein, the interviews with imams showed that they have the impression that they were monitored by the military and secret intelligence members particularly in extraordinary periods such as the 1980 coup and the February 28 period. It is naturally not possible to comment on the scope and the extent of systematic nature of such monitoring – though the secret reports prepared by the army officers were unfolded – the mere fact that imams have this feeling point to the efficiency of this inspection mechanism. Additionally as mentioned in the previous chapter, during the interviews conducted with imams it has been mentioned that the district governors and officers came to the mosques in the mornings to conduct beard checks during the post 1980 period.³²² Obviously, the beard checks were a practice, as argued by an imam, meant to reinforce the intimidation of the imams by the junta regime and to maintain a constant feeling of supervision.

Particularly the imams who work in the Southeastern Anatolia region feel this fear of forceful intervention more. An imam working in a district of Mardin said that all the imams are regularly called by the *kaymakam* himself, trying to get information about the community from the imam and interventions are made frequently about the content of the sermons they read and the preaching they make. For instance, the *kaymakam* asked the imams to declare that the PKK militants are infidels and that

³²¹Ben 1926 yılında kursa gitmeye başladım. O yıllarda jandarmalar sık sık baskın yapar, Kur'an okutan hocalara ve talebelerine eziyet ederlerdi. Dayak, hapis vakaları da olurdu. Kur'an ve Arapça okutmak yasaktı. Mülki amirler ve jandarmalar da Ankara'dan gelen emirleri, belki de istenenden daha sert tatbik ederlerdi. Kutuz Hoca, *Kutuz Hoca'nın Hatıraları: Cumhuriyet Devrinde bir Köy Hocası*, hazırlayan İsmail Kara (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2000), p.36.

³²²This practice was confirmed by an officer of the PRA as well.

since the PKK militants are socialist and infidels, the martyrs and the ones who fight on behalf of Islam in the war with the PKK are the Turkish soldiers. The reply by the imam provides a concise summary of the trouble the state intervention creates for the imams:

How can I follow this order, how can I say that PKK is infidel? In my congregation, there are people who are brothers, fathers, relatives of the young people who die in the mountains and there are also fathers of the martyrs. This does not mean that I approve of the PKK but in the end the young people in the mountains are the people of our region, we know who they are, they may create anarchy but they cannot be called infidels. They are not the sons of Greeks but the sons of Kurds... If I do what the state tells me to do, there is also the PKK factor there. It is as influential as the state in that region. If you do what the state says, the PKK will cause trouble for you, if you don't, then you will be stigmatized as the separatist imam.³²³

Another factor to ensure that the imams do not go beyond the state policy and remain within the official discourse of the state is the mosque congregation. I may even argue that, as one official from the PRA stated, the real inspector is the public and the most effective inspection mechanism is the complaints of the public. The efficiency of this mechanism can be seen through an anecdote told by a retired imam who served in Çanakkale.

On a Friday, I read the "Honesty" sermon sent by the Presidency of Religious Affairs. At the end of the sermon, there was the line saying that 'May God not let you divert from the true path'. Upon that, a retired judge in the community went to the *kaymakam* and accused me of making the propaganda of the True Path Party. The *kaymakam* called me

³²³Şimdi ben buna nasıl uyayım, nasıl diyeyim ki PKK kafır? Benim cemaatimde dağda ölen çocuğun babası, kardeşi, yakını da var; şehit babası da var. Yani PKK'yı onayladığımdan da değil ama sonuçta o dağdaki çocuklar da bizim bölgemizin çocukları, sonuçta kim olduklarını da biliyoruz, belki anarşi yapıyorlar ama kafır de denmez ki onlara. Bunlar Yunan'ın evlatları değil ki Kürt'ün evlatları.. E bir de şimdi hadi devletin dediğini yapsan bir de PKK var orda. Devlet gibi o da etkili bölgede. Devletin dediğini yapsan PKK başına bela olur, dediğini yapmasan ismin bölücü imama çıkar. From an interview conducted with an imam. Interview by the author, phone call, Diyarbakır, Turkey, 17 February 2010.

and informed me about the complaint, therefore I showed him the sermon sent by the PRA and said that the phrase at the end was exactly as I read it. The *kaymakam* did not tell me anything and sent me away. Later on I was informed that the judge had visited the *kaymakam* again to ask whether I was exiled to another city. The *kaymakam* showed the text of the sermon and asked him whether the imam said that, when the judge said yes, then he said he should write a complaint letter to the Presidency of Religious Affairs.³²⁴

As can be seen in this example, even the expressions of the imams, which do not have any emphasis on political Islam, can be considered objectionable by the community and can be the subject of the complaints. Stating that a man in the community (a soldier) filed a complaint against him at the *kaymakam* office, upon the sermon he read on the sinfulness of drinking alcohol, an imam underlined that this extreme sensitivity developed in the February 28 process:

Pulpits are of course not places to make political propaganda and imams should not be involved in politics. However, if our task is to tell Islam to the public, we should be allowed to do that. Drinking is strictly forbidden by the book, it is not like I will be able to change the God's words just because the garrison commander will be uncomfortable with them.³²⁵

Therefore, it is possible to observe that the community closely follows the imams and the imams are concerned about the reactions of the community. The words of an

³²⁴Bir Cuma Diyanet'in gönderdiği "Doğruluk" hutbesini okudum. Hutbenin sonu da Allah size doğru yoldan ayırmasın şeklinde bitiyor. Bunun üzerine cemaatten bir emekli hakim kaymakama gidiyor ve beni Doğru Yol Partisinin propagandasını yapmakla suçluyor. Kaymakam beni yanına çağırdı, ben de Diyanet'ten gönderilen hutbeyi gösterdim ve sonundaki ifadenin kelimesi kelimesine böyle olduğunu söyledim. Kaymakam bey bir şey demeden beni gönderdi. Daha sonra hakim tekrar gitmiş Kaymakam'a ve sürdürünüz mü bu imamı diye sormuş. Kaymakam da hutbe metnini göstermiş, imam bunu mu dedi demiş, hakim evet deyince, o zaman bu şikayetini Diyanet'e gönder demiş. Interview by the author, tape recording, Çanakkale, Turkey, 04 March 2010.

³²⁵"Mimberler elbette siyaset yapmak yeri değildir ve imamlar siyasetle ilgilenmemelidir. Ancak bizim görevimiz İslamı halkımıza anlatmaksa buna da izin verilmesi lazım. İçki içmek kesinlikle kitabımız tarafından yasak kılınmış, garnizon komutanı rahatsız olacak diye, Allah'ın kelimasını da değiştiremem ya." Interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 02 May 2010.

imam imply that most imams read sermons taking the concerns of the community into account:

Of course, it is not possible to divert from the messages of Islam and Koran. However, in line with the status of the congregation, I pay attention to my language too. In our congregation, there are people supporting all political parties, people of all views. Being a religious official is a very honorable position and it is a very good deed. But there are some hardships as well in this task. In a country like Turkey, where everything can be misunderstood, unfortunately the mosques may be very strictly monitored because of a few imams who do not know much, both the National Intelligence Organization (MİT) and the military follow imams from time to time. However, worse than that, an evil-minded person within the congregation files a complaint sometimes, which is the beginning of a whole series of troubles...³²⁶

The media also plays an important role in this respect for the imams to be sensitive and cautious, since imams constantly face the threat of becoming the headlines in the newspapers and in the media due to the sermons they read. For instance, it is possible to observe the change in the official view of the PRA regarding the celebrations on the New Year's Eve. The PRA used to argue in the 1970s and 1980s that the New Year's Eve celebrations was a custom of Christianity that was borrowed from the Western pagan culture and objected to the new year's eve celebrations on the grounds that these celebrations epitomized all kinds of immoral behaviors and conspicuous consumption. Nevertheless this discourse has been altered under the

³²⁶Elbette İslam'ın verdiği mesajdan, Kuran'dan sapmamız mümkün değil. Ancak cemaatin durumuna göre de dilime dikkat ederim. Yine söyleyeceğimi söylerim ama dilime dikkat ederim. Bizim cemaatimizde her partiye sempati duyan var, her görüşte insan var... Din görevlisi olmak çok şerefli bir görev, bir kul için en büyük sevap. Ama aynı derecede bu işin zorlukları da var. Hele Türkiye gibi dediğiniz her şeyin yanlış anlaşılabilceği bir ülkede.. ne yazık ki birkaç bilinçsiz imam yüzünden camile son derece sıkı denetleniyor olabiliyor, mit de asker de imamları izliyor zaman zaman. Ancak bundan da kötüsü, cemaatin içinden kötü niyetli bir kişi çıkar şikayet eder, al başına belayı.. Interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 22 March 2010.

presidency of Ali Bardakoğlu and the perception that the New Year's Eve celebrations are religiously permissible (caiz) since those celebrations should be considered as a part of the common heritage of humanity became the official view of the PRA. However, there are imams arguing that New Year's Eve celebrations are immoral in their sermons and such imams are frequently reported in the national press. Such stories, as can be foreseen, emphasize that the imams are not modern and backward-minded.

The third reason why imams do not divert from the PRA sermons and comply with the official sermons is really simple. Many imams are content with PRA sermons and there is no disparity between the views of the PRA and these imams. A number of imams indicated in the interviews that imams should not be politically involved; moreover the sermons of the PRA are very carefully prepared and are in line with Islam. Condemning the imams that go beyond the PRA sermons and become political as "a few irresponsible men," these imams repined that such individual cases undermine the reputation of the PRA and other imams. This may be the "official view" of these imams and the imams may not be willing to take the risk of disclosing their "real views" to a researcher indeed. However, it would be also wrong to assume that over 70.000 imams working in Turkey are extremely politicized. In the final analysis, these imams are Republican imams: they have studied in Republican schools, have been exposed to this ideology like any other professional group, and have in a way internalized this ideology. As it has been noted about the pre-revolution clergy in Iran:

In a revealing speech made after the Iranian revolution, Ahmad Khomeini, the influential son of Ayatollah Khomeini, divided his fellow Iranian clergy in three groups. The first, he argued, had supported the

Shah to the very end because it has received generous subsidies from the state. In his estimate this group formed only a tiny minority. The second group, by contrast, had staunchly opposed the Shah because it had fundamental criticisms of his economic, social, political, and even international policies. In his estimate, this group also constituted a small minority. The third group, however, which formed the vast majority, had remained silent until 1976-77 because it had neither liked the Shah nor disliked him enough to speak out. According to Ahmad Khomeini, what had led these clerics to break their silence was not the realization that the Shah was destroying the country and selling Iran to Western imperialism, but rather the shock of seeing “moral decadence” flaunted in the streets and the double shock of finding that the authorities were unwilling, if not incapable, of cleaning up the “social filth.” Having no channels through which they could communicate the grievances to the political system, they reluctantly joined the anti-regime clergy to mount the final assault on the Shah.³²⁷

Even the main concern of the clergy of Iran, which is definitely more autonomous and politically involved than their colleagues in Turkey, was the decay in public morality, rather than the Shah’s excessive and authoritarian secularization policies or his collaboration with the Western powers. Although I had interviewed a limited sample of imams, the answers provided by those imams may be considered to be representative. Asked about the most important problem in Turkey, the imams did not give different answers from any other professional group; the problems that will be listed by the majority of the Turkish public such as unemployment, terrorism, income distribution, low education level were underlined by the imams as well. Many imams expressed support for the EU process. Although not supporting Israel policy of the United States and objecting to the Iraqi War, they indicated that the U.S. is a strategic partner and the policies of the governments should not stand against the U.S. Asked whether there is a moral degeneration in society, the answers

³²⁷ Ervand Abrahamian, “Structural Causes of the Iranian Revolution”, *Middle East Research and Information Project* 87 (May 1980), pp. 25-26.

of the imams varied, but none of the imams suggested an Islamic regime as a recipe to overcome this degeneration. Asked which problems in Turkey should be solved by the teachings of Islam today, many imams said that the Islamic call for brotherhood can prevent terrorism and play a role in the strengthening of social solidarity among citizens. Apart from that, suggestions such as an Islamic programme, banning of banking interest, clothing regulations and Sharia courts were not voiced, at least vocally. To the contrary, the imams emphasized that Islam is a personal religion, above all politics, and said that Islam does not recommend any state system but teaches people to live in a morally right manner. The answers to the question whether there is a pressure upon Muslims in Turkey, varied again but the imams who answered this question positively said that not the “secular” state, but a few individual “generals” are responsible for it. Many imams referred to Atatürk in their responses, and repeated the Republican narrative stating that Islam in Turkey can be freely practiced thanks to the Republican gains and that if the call for prayers can be freely echoed from the mosques in the country today, we owe this to Atatürk. Upon my insistent questions, they indicated that differentiation should be made between Atatürk and people using Atatürk politically, adding that true Kemalism has nothing to do with the February 28 process. Particularly the imams that I met through a certain reference and was advised to speak openly, gave the examples of figures like Menderes and Özal, indicating that true Kemalism were realized by these people and the country developed thanks to them.

Many imams underlined repeatedly that religion should not be a political tool under any circumstances and that such an instrumentalization would harm Islam and religious officials the most. After giving a long lecture about the history of Shiism

and Sunni traditions, one imam argued that Shiism can be summarized with the motto of “every day ashura, everywhere Karbala”, whereas the main principle of Sunni Islam is the philosophy of “if the order comes from one of you, obey it” as it is indicated in the Surah an-Nisa. He also underlined that since the Umayyad state, the Islamic movement has not been a forceful proponent of revolution, but has been addressing the existing problems in a reformist manner.³²⁸

In a similar vein, while interviewing a PRA personnel, who has taken part in the sermon preparation commissions and has a doctorate degree on sociology of religion in the U.K., I asked whether the mosque congregation is uncomfortable with praying for Atatürk. The response he gave was quite harsh. He said: “For what reason? Atatürk is a respected personality who has served religion in this country. What problem may there be about praying for Atatürk?”³²⁹ Upon that, when I said that many people in Turkey and in the world have served religion but none of them are mentioned in sermons, although a few other PRA personnel in the room nodded and seemed to approve my words tacitly, the respondent added, “If necessary, there will be prayers for them, too. I regard your question rather malevolent.”³³⁰

During the fieldwork for this thesis, I had the opportunity to listen to the PRA employees’ self-reflection on their institution as I spent some time at the PRA headquarters and through the informal contacts I had with the PRA personnel while

³²⁸ Interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 22 March 2010.

³²⁹“Ne münasebet.. Atatürk bu ülkede dine hizmet etmiş, mümtaz bir şahsiyettir. Atatürk için dua etmenin nasıl bir sakıncası olabilir ki?” From an interview conducted with a PRA personel. Interview by the author, note taking, Ankara, Turkey, 02 May 2010.

³³⁰“Gerekirse onlara da edilir. Bu sorunu art niyetli buluyorum.” Interview by the author, note taking, Ankara, Turkey, 02 May 2010.

having tea at the canteen or during lunch. For instance, the words of the personnel, who is a doctoral candidate on sociology of religion, after interrogating me to find out my political tendency, were quite striking in this respect:

The most important problem in this institution is internalized Kemalism in fact. You just mentioned the pressure exerted by the military tutelage. If, one day, the PRA tells imams that there are no conditions on writing sermons, that they should write their own sermons and guarantee them that they will not be inspected, these imams will continue to read the sermons that you had read and found to be Kemalist. We are talking about such a pressured group that this view has become more than fear and formed a part of their identity... For instance, did you ever hear a strong voice from the PRA on the headscarf issue? I accept that the institution never said that the headscarf is not compulsory under religious rules. But, imagine what an impact it would make if all imams would engage in some kind of civil disobedience activity one Friday and said that the women in headscarves are persecuted. Islam is a religion that teaches standing against all kinds of repression. If the PRA would fulfill its tasks and advocate real Islam, I cannot say that all the problems you listed [previously during the conversation I had talked about the injustices in Kurdish, non-Muslim and headscarf issues] would be solved but they may have been much better than they are now.... You are mistaken like most researchers in assuming that the PRA personnel, including imams, are not Kemalist, and then you are surprised to see that they are Kemalist. You think that it is the external pressure that makes the PRA to have a Kemalist disposition. This pressure is effective to a certain extent yet it does not explain the whole picture... You even ask me whether the things they tell you are the genuine views or the official views of these people. However, this is a place that is far from you imagine. A person working here is at least as Kemalist as anybody whom you would encounter walking in the street.³³¹

³³¹Bakmayın aslında bu kurumun en önemli problemi içselleştirilmiş Kemalizmdir. Siz biraz önce vesayet rejiminin kurduğu baskıdan bahsettiniz. Bir gün Diyanet olur da size hiçbir şart şurt getirmiyorum, kendi hutbenizi kendiniz yazın dese imamlara ve denetlemeyeceğinin garantisini de verse, bu imamlar sizin yine gördüğünüz ve Kemalist bulduğunuz hutbeleri okumaya devam edecek. Öylesine sindirilmiş bir gruptan bahsediyoruz ki artık korkunun ötesinde bu görüş kimliklerinin bir parçası olmuş... Örneğin siz başörtüsü meselesinde Diyanet'ten çıkan güçlü bir ses duydunuz mu? Tamam, belki kurum hiçbir zaman başörtüsünün dinen gerekli olmadığını söylemedi. Ancak düşünün ki bir Cuma tüm imamlar bir sivil itaatsizlik yapsa ve başörtülü kadınlar zulme uğruyordu dese nasıl bir etki yaratırdı. İslam her türlü zulme karşı durmayı gerektiren bir dindir. Eğer Diyanet görevinin hakkını verse, gerçek İslamın savunuculuğunu yapsa, sizin saydığınız [daha önce Kürt, gayrimüslüm, ve başörtüsü konusundaki adaletsizliklerden bahsetmiştim] sorunların hepsi çözüldü diyemem belki ama şu anki durumdan çok daha iyi olurdu... Siz de birçok araştırmacının düştüğü yanılgıya düşüyor ve Diyanet personelinin, imamlar dahil, Kemalist olmadığını varsayıyor, daha sonra Kemalist olduklarını görünce şaşıyorsunuz. Veya Diyanet personelinin Kemalist olmasını tamamen dış baskıya bağlı açıklıyorsunuz. Tamam dışarıdan gelen baskı da elbette etkili ama bu baskı her şeyi açıklamıyor.. Hatta bana bu söyledikleri insanların gerçek görüşleri mi yoksa resmi görüşleri mi diye

Compliance of Imams: An Overlapping Consensus between Islam and State?

Interviews conducted with imams provides tentative arguments that might shed light on the willingness of imams to corporate with the central body of the PRA. Drawing upon these interviews, I suggest that one should renounce the claim that the Republican ideology and Islamic discourse are mutually exclusive languages that are in a perennial contest to seize hegemony, in order to grasp the political stance of the imams who epitomize the disposition of the mainstream Islamic discourse in Turkey. Rather than portraying Islam and Kemalism as two distinct languages (in certain aspects they indeed are), it is possible to find particular instances where these two languages can turn into an authentic single language. The disposition of the PRA and local imams is posited at the liminal area between the state and society. Therefore the sermons provided by the institution expose the intersections of these imaginaries, the Republican and the Islamist, and reveal the possible reconciliations between the Republican ideology and the culture of the masses. Imams toe the line on the PRA's official sermons, because they are simply content with messages embedded in these sermons. Not only was Republican imagery inspired from Islamic codes, an Islamic *weltanschauung* was integrated into and assimilated by the Republican imagery via such Islamic teachings as advocacy of obedience to authority (the Republican state), which represents not only the nation and its interests but also the (Islamic) community. A quick glance at the depiction of certain themes in the sermons enables one to grasp this tacit consensus.

soruyorsunuz. Oysa ki burası sizin tahayyül ettiğiniz yer olmaktan çok uzak. Sokakta çevireceğiniz herhangi bir insan ne kadar Kemalist ise burada çalışan biri de en az o kadar Kemalist... Interview by the author, note taking, Ankara, Turkey, 02 May 10.

For instance, the sermons prepared on economic issues promise an alternative moral capitalism offering a third way between Western free-market model and the “Islamic economics”, arguing that while Western capitalism is presented and preached as a free-market economy by Islam, it also emphasizes the importance of charity and social justice. Asserting that the Prophet himself was a merchant, the sermons praise the virtues of trade and economic activity, yet urge the congregation to comply with the notions of “fair trade”. The sermons do not denounce earthly goods, neither do they acclaim an ascetic life. Nevertheless the sermons preach the importance of social order and social justice and remind the congregation that *zakat* is one of the main pillars of the Islam. However while emphasizing the importance of *zakat*, the sermons do not imply that *zakat* substitutes the modern tax system: on the contrary, the sermons frequently remind citizens to pay their tax regularly and assert that paying tax is not only a citizenship duty but also a religious duty. In fact in one of the sermons of Akseki, it was claimed that donating *zakat* to the Aviation Society (*Teyyare Cemiyeti*) is a holy duty. Thus the economic visions of Islam could be merged with the Kemalist visions of economics which espouse the avoidance of any class tensions, the centrality of the state as the ultimate economic arbiter and a regulated market economy in line with its solidaristic visions. As this solidaristic vision of economics is equally distanced from unregulated capitalism and socialism, and is hardly social democratic in terms of its premises and concerns (but derived from the vision of a well-ordered community), the Islamic vision of economics also espouses a capitalism which does not destroy social concerns and duties.

Similarly in the sermons pertaining to the sacredness of national unity and virtues of obedience to state authority, there is no difference between the Muslim

identity and the national identity; faith and nationalism are considered as synonyms and both notions can only become meaningful with reference to each other; religion, homeland, *namus* (honor), flag are all seen as the values that constitute the national identity. In fact, in the sermon on the War of Dardanelles, recited in each and every Friday that corresponds to March 18, the anniversary of the victory, the particular usage of *millet* is noteworthy; in this context, the term *millet* is used with a specific reference to the War of Dardanelles and today simultaneously. This usage refers both to the *millet* system of the Ottoman rule based on the religious identity and the *millet* understanding of the Republic based on ethnicity. Therefore it is possible to see that Republican ideology, in certain contexts, intertwines Islam with the national identity, rather than imposing an “imagined society” that is defined with secularist references. When the non-Muslims are at stake, the Republican ideology employs the very same idioms with the “periphery” and accomplishes to generate an “organic community”. The non-Muslims do not constitute a part of this organic community since they lack the “values that makes us”, namely Islam. When the hostile attitude of the PRA towards missionary activities in Turkey is considered,³³² it could be seen that the PRA does not only convict the non-Muslims who are attacking the society with troops, but also the non-Muslims who are “attacking” the “organic community” with their faiths. Many sermons promote this idea of an “organic community” by employing various “root paradigms” such as *gazi*, *şehit*, *namus*, *ana*, *bacı*, and *Mehmetçik*. All these notions define a code of conduct which is in accordance with both the Muslim and Turkish identity. The *Diyanet Newspaper* and *Diyanet Journal* provide rich sources for detecting this Muslim-Turk nationalism. There is ample

³³²“Sağcı da Solcu da Misyonerlik Alarmı Veriyor 10 Bin Kişi Hristiyan oldu Türkiye Korktu”, Radikal, 20/04/07, retrieved on 22/05/09, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=218964>.

evidence on the demonization of especially the Greeks and Armenians. In fact a sermon titled “Müminden başkasını Dost Edinme” dated 1 November 1978 openly preaches the Muslims not to form any personal relations with the non-Muslims.

Furthermore, in the sermons regarding obedience to nation-state, such as the ones on the War of Dardanelles, War of Manzikert, or the National Struggle, it is possible to observe the overlap between the Kemalist and Islamist historiography. In this narrative, the whole history of the nation (or Turkishness) is unified. From the heyday of the Ottomans to the secular/modern Turkish Republic, all the timeline was subsumed into the timeless organic community. The history of the nation is one and all the parts serve for the same single cause. The secular/modern republic is the natural manifestation and legitimate representative of the timeless and spaceless spirit of the organic community and therefore it is unified with the Ottoman/Islamic centuries preceding it. Mohammed and Atatürk are serving the same end goals. Images such as Fatih Sultan Mehmed and Osman Gazi serve as the intermediate stops between them, integrating the two. Additionally, this kind of a historiography and the articulation of the “root paradigms” are bolstered with a heroic narrative where religion, affection, and heroism intersect.³³³

Another example manifesting the hybridization of the Republican discourse and the Islamic notions is the “Republic sermon”. On the 50th anniversary of the Republic, the PRA announced a sermon competition in which the participants are expected to write sermons on the topic of “The Islamic Approach towards the Republican Administration” (İslam Açısından Cumhuriyet İdaresi). Throughout the

³³³Mardin, Şerif. “Culture Change and the Intellectual: A Study of the Effects of Secularization in Modern Turkey: Necip Fazıl and the Nakşibendi”, In *Cultural Transitions in The Middle East*, ed. by Mardin, S. (E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1994), pp. 207-208.

Republic, sermons praising the virtues of Republicanism, claiming that it is the Republican system in which Islam can be best realized, in fact holding the implication that Mohammad was a Republican, were recited seven times. With the February 28 process this sermon became popular again and evoked dissent among the Islamist circles. However, the argument emphasizing the notion of deliberation in Islamic tradition and deriving a political statement out of this notion is not the invention of the Republic. After the encounter with modern Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment Western political thought in early Tanzimat, the Islamic political thought and culture were accordingly revised. The Western early modern idea of political contract was Muslimized. The structures of Islamic political legitimization³³⁴ were deemed compatible with the creeping Western discourses. *Meşveret*, a concept which was one of the sources of Islamic jurisprudence was emphasized to correspond to political participation in the modern meaning.³³⁵ The Islamic community began to be imagined as a political community influenced from the political theory developed in the modern West. The encounter with the modern political thought has not led to the replacement of Islamic political thought and culture with modern Western political thought but led to the reformulation of it. The Young Ottomans (and especially Namık Kemal) derived their political discourses from traditional Islamic vocabulary and grammar. Islamic community emerged as a

³³⁴For the traditional Islamic structures of political legitimacy and political order, see Patricia Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005); Aziz Al-Azmah, *Muslim Kingship* (London; New York: I.B.Tauris, 1997); Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

³³⁵Mümtaz'er Türköne, *İslamcılığın Doğuşu* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1991), p.272.

political community rather than a moral community to be governed justly and in equity with righteous rulers.³³⁶

Whereas in the Tanzimat, the notion of *şura* and *meşveret* meant “opinion” meaning limitation of the absolute authority of the sultans and sharing it with the emerging political-bureaucratic Tanzimat elite, in the discourse of the Young Turks, *meşveret* meant constitutionalism. It was so much so that the two chief journals of Young Turks published abroad were named *Meşveret* and *Şura-yı Ümmet*. Although Young Turks were highly secularized and employed Islamic vocabulary chiefly to propagate their views among masses,³³⁷ one may argue that their perceptions of order, society, nation and justice were highly influenced from Islamic root paradigms.³³⁸

After the Revolution of 1908, given that Islamists were also vehemently anti-Hamidian, they also espoused constitutionalism. They argued that constitutionalism was the only legitimate Islamic polity given that *meşveret* was espoused and practiced by the prophet, his comrades and by the Four Righteous Caliphates (halifet-ül raşidun) before the Umayyads illegitimately imposed kingship.³³⁹ With the February 28 process, when Islamists became the staunch defenders of democracy,

³³⁶See Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 117-124; Serif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997). Also see Hüseyin Çelik, *Ali Suavi ve Dönemi* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1994).

³³⁷Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 200-203.

³³⁸See Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri* (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1964); Şerif Mardin, *Continuity and Change in the Ideas of Young Turks* (İstanbul: Robert College, 1969).

³³⁹For some views articulated by the post-1908 Islamists on constitutionalism and *meşveret*, see Sabri, Mustafa. “Meşrutiyet Üzerine”, In *Türkiye’de İslamcılık Düşüncesi*, v. II, ed. by Kara, İ. (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 1997), pp. 396-405; İskilipli Mehmet Atıf. “Meşrutiyet, Meşveret”, In *Türkiye’de İslamcılık Düşüncesi*, v. I, ed. by Kara, İ. (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 1997), pp. 325-331.

claims on the compatibility of Islamic notions with democracy and therefore the emphasis on the terms *şura* and *meşveret* were rejuvenated.

Thus, Islamic visions of politics were arguably constitutive in the emergence of modern Turkish political thought such as the emerging idea of nation and state. The Islamic political premises such as the centrality of a state charged with the maintenance of the moral and social order, the presence of a moral community in submission to the legitimate and righteous governance were components of the late Ottoman political visions and ideologies. For example, the notion of the republican duty of the secular Turkish Republic is very different from what the French Republic asked from its *citoyens*. Whereas in France the republican civil obligations were overtly secular and worldly, Turkish republic asks *sadakat* from its citizens. The notion of *sadakat* is derived from Islamic and patriarchal heritages in which the loyalty to the socially superior is unconditional and unquestioning. Likewise, *şeref*, a value the Republic regards highly is a value of a patriarchal society from which the Islamic imaginary was developed. This kind of an approach towards the society is not radically different from the Islamic culture. Simply put, not only the national imaginary of the Republic is organistic and understandable within the Islamic notion of millet, but also the supposedly republican values defining the qualities of the ideal citizen are patriarchal. Thus, the republican depiction of Islam by the Kemalist ideology built on these adaptations of the Islamic discourses to encounter the modern political language and vocabulary. Within this context, the age of the Righteous Caliphs and the age of prophet could be imagined as a republic and thus seen as the “genuine Islam” before the arrival of *bi'dat* with the Umayyads.

The ethnographic study conducted by Nancy and Richard Tapper provides an insightful account unfolding the repercussions of this intersection of the Kemalist codes with the Islamic ones and their reproduction of each other.³⁴⁰ The interviews conducted with imams can be evaluated in a similar vein. The pedagogic and didactic content of the sermons are one of the places where the concerns and efforts of the Republic to design a Turkish, (nation)statist and individualized Islam are exposed. The contentment of imams with these sermons stands for the Republic's success to indoctrinate this particular understanding of Islam. The accommodationist attitude of the PRA and the local imams towards the Republic does not only result from the establishment's suppression of the other alternatives and its imposition of this particular interpretation by decree, but also from the fact that this interpretation of Islam (as it was in the Ottoman Empire) was in congruence with the value-system of the Republic and accommodated the political authorities. Thus PRA has been long serving as a site where these two supposedly contrasting cultures meet and coexist without an overt dissonance. This has also been reflected in the content of sermons, penned on the basis of a delicate balance that never confronts the premises of Islam on the one hand and imbudes the tenets of Kemalism on the other hand.

Another reason that keeps imams to toe the line of the PRA is the effectiveness and prevailance of nationalism, in fact (nation)-statism in Turkish politics. It would not be an overstatement to argue that one of the most influential and abiding tenets of the constructive ideology of Turkish Republic has been nationalism. Nationalism, since its advent, had many different forms; rearticulated

³⁴⁰ Lindisfarne, p. 25.

and restructured by very different political discourses and thus has never been able to be monopolized by a single ideology in Turkish politics; yet as a mother ideology,³⁴¹ it maintains to be the most effective discourse in contemporary politics. Rather than treating nationalism as a conjunctural force or a temporary aberration, Umut Özkırımlı and Pınar Uyan Semerci emphasizes the ‘continual’ appeal of nationalism in the Turkish case:

“Nationalism is a deeper state of mind, constantly reproduced by the ideological apparatuses of the state (and through popular culture), which makes it an integral part of our everyday lives. It may thus become more visible or aggressive depending on conjunctural factors, but it never disappears; it continues to incubate inside society, waiting for the right moment to hatch out”.³⁴²

The illuminating research conducted by Özkırımlı clearly manifests the pervasiveness and popularity of Turkish nationalism among the Turkish society. When the respondents were asked how nationalist they label themselves, by locating their views on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 signifies ‘not nationalist at all’ and 10 signifies ‘completely nationalist’. 32 percent of the respondents of those who have responded to this question marked 10, which represents a ‘completely nationalist’ stance, 62 percent of the respondents located themselves between 7 and 10 which denotes a highly nationalist position; 22 percent to 5 and 6 which implicates a middle position, and 12 percent to 4 and less which signifies a more or less non-nationalist position. Furthermore 86,2 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement ‘Turkey’s interests are superior to that of other countries’; 83,7 percent agreed with

³⁴¹ Murat Belge, “Milliyetçilik ve Sol”, *Birikim* 165 (January 2003), p. 27.

³⁴² Umut Özkırımlı and Pınar Uyan Semerci, “Pater Familias and Homo Nationalis: Understanding Nationalism in the Case of Turkey”, *Etnicities*, Forthcoming.

the statement ‘Turkish culture must be dominant in Turkey’; 75,2 percent agreed with the statement ‘Turkey’s interests are superior to my interests’; 73,3 percent agreed with the statement ‘I prefer to use Turkish goods even if they are more expensive than foreign goods’; and 70 percent agreed with the statement made by the former Prime Minister Tansu Çiller ‘whoever shoots or takes a bullet for Turkey is honorable’.³⁴³

As Özkırımlı and Uyan accurately observe, this pervalance of Turkish nationalism among the Turkish society is due to the constant reproduction of the nationalist sentiments in the popular culture³⁴⁴ and more importantly in the family and the school which provide a fertile ground for creating a moral framework through which nationalism is internalized by ordinary people and accomplishes to become a hegemonic discourse. Family serves as the first unit through which notions such as loyalty to nation, conformity, and obedience are instilled. Özkırımlı and Uyan go further and highlighte the power of the concept of ‘family man’ that is introduced by Hannah Arendt to explain the pervasiveness and effectiveness of nationalism:

Society teaches us the important moral value of being the ‘family man’, a man who takes good care of his family, who works hard and who does what he is told within the ‘order and obey’ hierarchy. He is a good responsible man working for the sake of his family, and accordingly a good responsible citizen serving his country and his nation. In other words, being a ‘good’ citizen requires obeying and conforming, rather than using one’s own reasoning and value judgement.³⁴⁵

³⁴³Ibid.

³⁴⁴Ibid.

³⁴⁵Ibid.

Not only family but also the modern schooling system is a powerful medium through which nationalism is inculcated. In fact as Hobsbawm nationalism owes its emergence to the advent of devices like printing and mass schooling.³⁴⁶ With the introduction of modern schooling system in the Ottoman Empire, the effort to design the curriculum aiming to foster patriotism and Ottoman loyalty became overt.³⁴⁷ This had been intensified with the advent of Republic, whose founders were keen believers that mass education could play a vital role in creating a new nation based on a single national culture, inculcating the so called Republican values, transmitting the official Kemalist version of history and various topics, and therefore ‘enlightening’ society. Accordingly, the schooling system was seen as an instrument to indoctrinate the official ideology and form ‘proper’ citizens who internalize the official discourse throughout the Republican history. Studies on the primary and highschool curricula in Turkey clearly manifests how mandatory textbooks are imbued with nationalism and the formal education system had always been strictly centralised, carried out through a single curriculum since the foundation of the Republic.³⁴⁸

With the Democrat Party’s accession to government, the religious symbols began to be integrated more actively not only into the political culture of the country but also into the school curricula. As analyzed in the previous chapters this

³⁴⁶Hobsbawm, pp. 16-17.

³⁴⁷Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 243-244.

³⁴⁸Kenan Çayır, “Preparing Turkey for the European Union: Nationalism, National Identity and ‘Otherness’ in Turkey’s New Textbooks”, *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 30, no.1 (February 2009), pp.39-55. For a broader analysis of the ‘Studies in National Security’ course see Altınay, Ayşegül. “‘Human Rights or Militarist Ideals? Teaching National Security in High Schools.’” In *Human Rights Issues in Textbooks: The Turkish Case*, ed. Tarba Ceylan, D. and Irzik, G. (Istanbul: The History Foundation of Turkey, 2004). See also Ismail Kaplan, *Türkiye’de Milli Eğitim İdeolojisi ve Siyasal Toplumsallaşma Üzerindeki Etkisi*, Istanbul: İletişim, 1999).

employment of religion as a linchpin to unify different segments of the society was intensified with the military coup in 1980. The blend of nationalism and religion and the belief that Turkish-Islamic synthesis is the only salient means for nationalism became most blunt with this period and these themes were successfully inserted in the country's schools. For instance Kaplan observes that the religion textbooks penned during this period draw upon four main pillars: "First, that the Turkish people have an innate spiritual affinity to Islam; second, that the Turks contributed a great deal to both Islamic and world civilizations; third, that Atatürk successfully mediated and exemplified the relation between state, citizen, and religion; and fourth, that only the state-endorsed version of Islam is compatible with both nationalism and modernity".³⁴⁹ Hence it would be safe to conclude that the formal schooling system in Turkey has been constituted on a selectively amalgam of sacred and profane ideas in order to advance the changing political ideas and agendas.

The fact that Imams are obliged to graduate from imam-hatip schools to attain recruitment for the last few decades should not lead one to consider imams outside the Turkish formal schooling system.³⁵⁰ The curriculum of the imam hatip schools include all the must courses of the secular secondary education and combine this set of courses with additional religious courses. Therefore all the imams in Turkey, whether graduated from imam-hatip schools or other secondary or primary schools have been included into the Turkish formal education system and were exposed to the nationalist and statist curriculum that was discussed above. This has been evinced

³⁴⁹Kaplan, p. 117.

³⁵⁰The proportion of Imam-hatip graduates employed in the PRA over the whole personnel is 68% (51029 to 75043) in 1995 and 55% (40981 to 74374) in 2002. See, Ruşen Çakır, İrfan Bozan, and Talu, B, *İmam Hatip Liseleri: Efsaneler ve Gerçekler.*, p.34.

by a study conducted on imam-hatip graduates. The imam-hatip graduates assert that the values of a nationalist-conservative view are best supported by them.³⁵¹ A distinction between state and government is also made by those graduates.³⁵²

Obedience to the nation-state was and is not only preached by the nationalist ideology. It is a well known fact that several Sunni jurists had sanctioned obedience to those who hold the state power for Muslims a moral and legal, as well as religious, obligation. In fact as Gibb aptly states for many Muslim jurists: "rebellion is the most heinous of crimes, and this doctrine came to be consecrated in the juristic maxim, "Sixty years of tyranny are better than an hour of civil strife"". ³⁵³ According to Bernard Lewis, this tendency of the Muslim tradition is due to the Muslim historical observation which unlike the Christian civilization began with not with defeat but with triumph, not with the fall but with the rise of the empire. This heritage was perpetuated by the pious Muslim authors who even in times of decadence held firm to the principle that the authority to the Muslim ruler, however obtained or exercised, was a divinely ordained necessity.³⁵⁴ This imperative of jurists had been frequently used by the rulers who usurped power to gain political legitimacy on their domain. With this it is not intended to bring an essentialist reading to the Islamic history or theology and suggest that there had been no room for the notion of a right to rebellion in Islamic legal discourse nor neither Sunni or Shii jurists have not

³⁵¹Ibid., p. 36.

³⁵²Ibid., p. 37.

³⁵³Gibb, Hamilton, A.R. "Constitutional Organization: The Muslim Community and the State" In *Law in the Middle East*, ed. Khadduri, M. and Liebesny, H. Washington, D.C: Middle East Institute, 1955), pp. 15. See also Ira M. Lapidus, "The Separation of State and Religion in the Development of Early Islamic Society", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 6, no.4 (October 1975), pp. 363-385.

³⁵⁴Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam*, pp. 25-26.

discussed the issue of rebellion at any length. As Lewis reminds both the quietist and rebellious traditions are old and deeply rooted in Islam.³⁵⁵ Though Islamic heritage does not suffer from an absence of the notion of rebellion, mainly due to the historical relation between the ulema and political authority, the quietist tendency have been highlighted.

Qasim Zaman notes that from the early years of Islam, it was cooperation, patronage, and the sharing of religious and political authority that became the earmark of the relationship between the ulema and the rulers. By mutual agreement the ulema was asked to support the rulers and in return was awarded with some political privilege. This relationship of patronage and political repression determined the political stance of the ulema, which can be labeled as political quietism and urged the ulema to exclude the option of rebellion against rulers.³⁵⁶

The Ottoman case echoes the statement of Zaman. The notion of the higher authority and independence of the Ottoman ulema was a fiction and the *şeyhülislam* was never out of or above everyday politics.³⁵⁷ As Linda Darling, in another context, correctly observes: “the Ottomans were highly flexible in their use of legitimizing ideologies”.³⁵⁸ The strategic employment of religion in the Empire, which has been discussed in the previous chapters, endeavoured to consolidate an official interpretation of Islam that would best serve to the interest of the empire and, thus

³⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 91-92.

³⁵⁶Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Religion and Politics Under the Early 'Abbasids: The Emergence of the Proto-Sunni Elite* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 81-82, 98, pp. 105-106.

³⁵⁷Colin Imber, *Ebu 's-su'ud: The Islamic Legal Tradition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 58.

³⁵⁸Linda T. Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560–1660* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), p. 294.

always kept a concerned eye on the Islamic activities that had might threatened the claim. From the earliest days of their rule, the Ottoman Sultans have given the official status to the Hanafi school, which was already established in the cities of pre-Ottoman Anatolia. In the mainstream Hanafi tradition, the legitimate authority is simply granted to those who successfully seize and hold power. It is worth mentioning that nor even was justice a necessary quality for a legitimate sovereign: "It is power and not justice that legitimizes rulership".³⁵⁹ Moreover the Hanafi methodology, due to its openness for the accommodation of customary law, is known for its flexibility to incorporate local traditions into the shariah.³⁶⁰ In a nutshell, it would be safe to argue that a particular understanding of Islam that is inculcated by the state found support among the Republican imams. The Turkish State, through using different strategies, seized the spiritual and moral initiatives in Turkish society. Efforts by the Turkish state to rein in the PRA's capacity for independent action are recurring themes in the Turkish history. The threat of the state's punishments and the seductiveness of its rewards are, indeed, important factors for maintaining the adherence of imams to the state policy. Nevertheless the success of the Turkish state of obviating any mosque based dissidence can not merely explained with the proclamation of a carrot-and-stick approach.

³⁵⁹Imber, pp. 65-66.

³⁶⁰Etga Uğur, "Intellectual Roots of "Turkish Islam" and Approaches to the "Turkish Model"", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 24, no. 2 (October 2001), pp. 329-330.

Conclusion

The military tutelage set the ground rules of Turkish politics and the approach towards Islam and Islamic activities is no exception. The sermon preparation and control policy of the Turkish state was mainly designed by the military officers and implemented by the PRA personnel. The centralization of the sermons corresponds to a very late period in Turkish politics, after 1980s, due to the junta rule's quest to attain unification and solidarity among all segments of the society. This control has intensified with the February 28 process, again with the direct intervention of the Turkish Armed Forces.

Plenty of evidence suggest that despite the habit to deliver the sermons prepared by the PRA is relatively recent, a high percentage of the imams comply with the rules and regulations set by the PRA center. This phenomenon can not be merely analyzed with the strict supervision of the PRA on the mosques located all around Turkey. There are other indirect yet more effective mechanisms that ensure imams not to deviate from reciting official sermons. The force of the state and reaction of the congregation are two important factors that prevent imams transgressing the red lines drawn for them. However there is another factor that attains the compliance of imams. The consent of the imams to the sermons prepared by the PRA is noteworthy. The PRA and the local imams may be posited in the liminal area between the state and society. Arguably, they carry the values, concerns and sensitivities of both the Kemalist ideology and the religious/conservative dispositions. Hence, they merge distinct but not mutually exclusive ideological outlooks. They derive a certain (nation-)statist discourse not due to imposition from outside but from their particular cultural affinities the religious values and

sensitivities they were imbued with. The compliance of imams to deliver the sermons prepared by the central body of the PRA will be investigated in the conclusion section of this thesis.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

During my first visit to the PRA, I had an opportunity to interview an official who was responsible for the preparation and monitoring of the sermons. When I informed him about the topic of my thesis and my affiliation with Boğaziçi University,³⁶¹ his immediate reaction was remarkable. Admonishing me that foreign researchers in particular fail to grasp the function and status of the PRA fully, he noted that “the PRA is not an ideological apparatus of the state.” This was an unexpected reaction for me, since I had already decided to base my thesis on the assumption that the PRA was simply part of the state apparatus, whose sole function was to reproduce and disseminate the official ideology by instrumentalizing religion. Thus, the remark of the official did not mean much to me apart from giving a clue on the self perception of the PRA.

While writing this thesis, several occasions compelled me to reflect upon this statement. I have come to realize that except for the junta period after the 1980 coup and the following 28 February process, the control of the central body of the PRA on the sermons that are actually preached by the *imams* is quite loose. Though the central body used to prepare “advisory” sermons and guidelines for the *imams* preaching in the mosques located all around Turkey, it is hard to know whether the *imams* toe the line in adhering to these “advisory” sermons. Interviews with *imams* demonstrate that until the 28 February process, the inspectors of the PRA had not strictly monitored the actual sermons preached by *imams*, nor kept track of the extent

³⁶¹Boğaziçi University has a reputation for having a leftist orientation and a critical approach towards Kemalist rule in Turkey.

to which *imams* stuck to the texts prepared by the PRA. The fact that the control of the central body of the PRA on the mosques was less than is conventionally assumed led me to question what appears as obvious and to reconsider the remark of the officer I had interviewed earlier.

As mentioned in previous chapters, the republican elite has not sought to “disestablish” Islam, rather attempted to “re-establish” it through indoctrinating a revised, liberal and “protestant” type of Islam that is freed from its former “superstitious” or “outmoded” accretions. Rather than restricting Islam to the private realm and rendering it a private affair, the Turkish modernizers utilized Islam as a public religion, as long as it coincided with the aspirations of the republican elite and could be articulated as a national religion, namely Kemalist Islam – epitomized in an Atatürk-Mohammad synthesis. The republican elite was fortunate, in the sense that they inherited the late-Ottoman intellectuals’ legacy to formulate a “Turkish Islam”: the attempt of the republic to create a “Turkish” Islam versus an “Arabic” one is the culmination of the project of the late Ottoman modernizers to “reform” Islam. While using the Arabs as the reservoir of the “unwanted” parts of Islam, e.g., bigotry, superstition, backwardness, polygamy, the Ottoman intelligentsia aspired to merge positivism, nationalism and Islam within a “Turkish” form of Islam, which was supposed to be compatible with a modernity that was perceived to be tantamount to the Western way of life.

Therefore, it was the late Ottoman intellectuals who were the harbingers of the republican adventure to vernacularize Islam. It can be argued that the master-mind of this ambitious project was Ziya Gökalp, probably the most systematic thinker developing a detailed scheme for designing a new Islam whose ultimate

purpose is to serve the newly established nation. As discussed previously, in this sense the word *diyanet* and its rearticulation by Gökâlp stands as a groundbreaking attempt to contain Islam in a nation-state.

Inheriting the rich heritage of the late Ottoman intelligentsia, the republican elite were adamant in taming Islam and exerted a notable effort to inculcate this interpretation of Islam. The Presidency of Religious Affairs, a body whose function was defined as the dissemination of this “official” understanding of Islam, became the *de jure* monopoly in the production of religion, and any possible alternatives – Islamic brotherhoods, sects, etc. – that may pose a challenge or threat against this monopoly were eliminated from the public sphere. In the Turkish case, the state, rather than severing its relation/ties with religion, attempted to accommodate religion as a “helping hand” in order to attain solidarity within the nation and perpetuate its legitimacy. Therefore, while there were serious efforts to diminish the public visibility of Islam by imposing secularization policies on the masses as an elite initiative, the overall project of the republic encompassed several strategies to “tame” Islam and to incorporate religion, monopolized under the rule of state, into politics. Hence, there exist various indicators demonstrating how the Republic utilized Islam as a public religion instead of relegating it into a matter of personal belief and restricting it to the private sphere. The Republic not only made being a “real” Turkish citizen contingent upon being a Muslim and aimed at creating a homogenous and united body of citizens that were unified under the Muslim-Turk identity, it also developed strategies to realize a state centralization of religion, which constantly indoctrinated official Islam and preached guidance on how to be a proper Muslim.

This instrumentalization of Islam was to be achieved through the formulation of an official Islam, which is reproduced through the institution of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (PRA). The PRA is key to this uneasy relation between the Turkish Republic and Islam. One of the most important duties of the PRA is to provide, disseminate, and monitor the sermons delivered in the mosques scattered all around Turkey since 1965. Since 1980, upon the request of the junta government, extemporaneous sermon delivery is strictly prohibited and the *imams* are obliged to comply with the sermons prepared by the PRA. The institutional history of the PRA reveals that during the single party era it was not utilized by the state to infiltrate into the mosques. However following the transition to multiparty politics, the PRA became a site that is used for catering to different needs. Therefore, especially after 1965, there had been a drastic increase in the scope of the duties and institutional potential of the PRA. The Turkish state managed to infiltrate the mosques by employing the *imams* in this period. The control of the central body over these *imams* and the visibility of the Turkish state in the mosques, however, has not been accomplished fully. The total control of the central body of the PRA on the mosques and *imams* was attained after the 1980 coup and intensified with the February 28 period. This was the period when extemporaneous sermon delivery was prevented and an entire tutelage over *imams* was established.

There are several control mechanisms on *imams* aimed at preventing them from delivering sermons that might provoke political dissidence in particular, and from involving in politics in general. The inspection of *imams* is not only carried by the PRA personnel, *imams* also feel the pressure of other state officers – especially the armed forces – and the vigilant congregation. Nevertheless, the interviews

conducted with *imams* show that there is one further reason that explains the high compliance rate of *imams* with the sermons that are sent by the central body of the PRA. *Imams* simply express their content with the sermons and explain their compliance with their consent over the content of the sermons.

The consent of the imams on the content of sermons can be accounted for with reference to different factors. The sermons reflect a tamed version of Islam, which preaches good morality along with loyalty to the nation-state that is seen as tantamount to the unity of the Islamic community. In other words, the sermons are penned on the basis of a delicate balance which respects the fundamental premises of Islam on the one hand and imbuing these with the main tenets of Kemalism on the other.

Asserting that the sermons prepared by a state institution reflects the needs of the political authority and are chiefly designed with the purpose of disseminating and propagating state authority would be stating the obvious. Naturally the Turkish state, which employs a double discourse towards Islam, utilizing it as a source of legitimacy in certain contexts, seeks to ensure that the delivery of sermons enhances its monopoly on Islam and prevents any opposition that might be triggered by the sermons recited by dissident *imams*. However, what may be considered as unforeseen is the high rate of compliance with official sermons: only 2 to 3 *imams* of the total 70.000 are annually imposed disciplinary punishment for violating the procedure about reading sermons. This limited number of disciplinary actions regarding the delivery of sermons may be attributed to the paucity of inspection. Yet given the fact that besides the inspection mechanisms of the PRA, the apparatuses of the Turkish State – police and armed forces – and the vigilant congregation have

been vigorously involved in the monitoring of *imams*, the observation that the limited number of sanctions can be related to the lack of inspections cannot be considered as an accurate analysis. Why then do the *imams* adhere to the official sermons, rather than delivering their own sermons? Is the force factor or the fear of disciplinary punishment sufficient for explaining this collaboration?

Tentatively, it might be suggested that the Turkish Republic inherited the Ottoman pattern of containing Islam through keeping the clergy within the state apparatus. A particular Islamic disposition based on the Sunni Hanafi tradition, which is known by its accommodationist tendency, is inculcated into the masses by this ulama. The compliance of *imams* to the sermons delivered by the state implies that this kind of disposition has been approved by the *imams*, and hence that the republic has managed to create the “republican” *imams*. Not surprisingly, these republican imams carry the values, concerns and sensitivities of both the Kemalist ideology and the religious/conservative tendencies. In that sense, they merge distinct, but not mutually exclusive, ideological outlooks. They derive a certain (nation-) statist discourse not due to imposition from outside (or from above), but from their particular cultural affinities and the religious values and sensitivities they are imbued with.

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