

THE STATE ELITES AND SECULARISM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
THE MILITARY: THE CASE OF THE 1980 MILITARY INTERVENTION

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ABSTRACT

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The study aims to analyze the policies and attitudes of the military leaders of the 1980 Intervention towards religion. The state elites in the Ottoman-Turkish history have been the principal agents behind the secularization reforms and the maintenance of the established secularity tradition since the adoption of the modernization reforms in the nineteenth century, which initiated a process of social and political changes that culminated in the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Yet, the affirmative approach of the military leaders of the 1980 Intervention denotes a notable break from the previous tradition. The military leaders of the 1980 accentuated that religion was one of the indispensable components of national culture, and promoted it in cultural area through various policies and practices. This study tries to comprehend the implications of this change for the established secularity tradition in Turkey.

Keywords: The Turkish Military, Civil-Military Relations, Politics, Secularism, Islam, The 1980 Military Intervention in Turkey, The Policies of 12 September.

ÖZET

ORDU ÖZELİNDE DEVLET SEÇKİNLERİ VE SEKÜLARİZM: 1980 ASKERİ MÜDAHELESİ ÖRNEK OLAYI

Mehmet Yılmaz

Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

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Bu çalışma 1980 Askeri Müdahalesini gerçekleştiren askeri liderlerin din ve laikliğe ilişkin takındıkları tutumu ve uyguladıkları politikaları incelemektedir. Türkiye’de devlet seçkinleri ilk modernleşme hareketlerinin başladığı dönem olan on sekizinci yüzyılın sonlarından itibaren hem modernleştirici reformların hem de laikliğin arkasında duran en önemli güç olagelmıştır. Oysa 1980 Askeri müdahalesini gerçekleştiren askeri liderlerin uygulamalarına baktığımızda önceki gelenekten bariz bir şekilde ayrıldıkları görülür. Bu liderler dinin milli kültürümüzü oluşturan vazgeçilmez unsurlardan biri olduğunu vurgulayarak onu değişik yollardan kültürel olarak güçlendirmeye çalıştılar. Bu çalışma, bu değişikliğin mevcut sekülerlik geleneği açısından ne anlama geldiğini ortaya koymaya çalışmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk Ordusu, Ordu-Siyaset İlişkileri, Sekülerleşme, Siyaset, İslam, 1980 Askeri Müdahalesi, 12 Eylül Politikaları.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Military and Secularism in Turkey

This dissertation aims at understanding the attitudes of the military leaders of the 1980 military intervention towards secularism and religion with the precise implications of their policies for the established secularity tradition and the state-religion relationship in Turkey. One of the distinguishing characteristics of Turkish secularism has been the complete exclusion of religion from politics and the public realm. The elites, in the early republican era, took hard measures against the religious “establishment” in order to create a modern society in a Western form, from the one whose social fabric had been tinted with extremely religious colors. The state elites’ prime concern in religion led them basically not to the separation of state and religion, leaving religion intact, but to a kind of state-church model in which religion was subordinated to the state.¹ The Western model of state-church

¹ Richard Tapper, “Introduction,” in *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics and Literature in a Secular State*, ed. Richard Tapper (London, New York:

separation was extended to the religion-politics separation in Turkey which made it impossible for religion to articulate its interests politically. No religiously inspired political demand has been approved by the state elites. Despite the fact that the state declared itself as secular, and that a new official discourse was created with a novel and extremely secular vocabulary, in reality, it has not remained immune because it has officially organized religious institutions to provide people with religious services and reserved the right to interfere in the religious affairs, actions hardly compatible with the notion of a secular state. The state's chief concern with religion has been to control it by incorporating religious organizations into the state bureaucracy, which is an uncommon model of state-religion relationship in modern societies.²

Secularism in Turkey was developed as a response to modernity. When the Ottoman statesmen recognized that they had fallen behind the Western states in terms of the military strength, they adopted a secular modernization program through Westernization in the early nineteenth century. This initiated a process of

I.B. Tauris, 1991), 5; For a classification of the models of state-religion relationship and a critical evaluation of different experiences in the Ottoman-Turkish history, see, Ali Fuat Başgil, *Din ve Laiklik* [Religion and Laicism] (Istanbul: Yağmur Yayınları, 1991). Especially, pp. 191-226; For the proponent views of the interventionist secularism, see, Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Atatürkçü Laiklik Politikası* [Atatürkist Policy of Laicism] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1970); Bülent Daver, *Türkiye Cumhuriyet'inde Layiklik* [Laicism in Turkish Republic] (Ankara: Son Havadis, 1955); Doğu Ergil, *Laiklik* [Laicism] (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 1990).

² Binnaz Toprak, "Islam and the Secular State in Turkey," in *Turkey: Political, Social and Economic Challenges in the 1990s*, ed. Çiğdem Balım, et. al. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 91; On the basis of the state's concern in controlling religion, Sami Selçuk calls Turkish secularism as laicist [*laikçi*] which implies an enforcing application. Sami Selçuk, "Laikliği Tanımlama Denemesi ve Tanım Işığında Türkiye'nin Konumu" [An Attempt to the Definition of Laicism and the Position of Turkey Based on this Definition], *Yeni Türkiye* [New Turkey] 22-23 (1998): 2536-2541.

secularizing reforms which culminated in the establishment of the republic in 1923. Since religion was considered responsible for the backwardness and as a core of the value system of the *ancien régime* whose transcendence became the primary mission of the reformist elites, they preferred a kind of secular nationalism as a new ideology, which did not incorporate religion into the definition of new political community neither as a part of cultural identity nor as an attribute of the new members of the nation. Secular nationalism, constructed on rationalistic-scientific grounds, was offered as a new integrative social bond and a new moral source for the nation. However, it could achieve partial success for the new ideology lacked the symbolic power in comparison to Islam and an appropriate source of morality.³ That is why the liberalization of the politics in the early republican period resulted in participation crises, and as a result, the experiments in multi-party politics collapsed. Accordingly, the republican elites made deliberate efforts to break the hold of religion on society through various reforms which were vital in consolidation of the new political system. It was because of the unique nature of Turkish secularism that although the state's hold on politics was lifted after the consolidation of the new state and the liberalization of politics dominated the following decades, not unexpectedly, no similar developments took place in the state-Islam relationship. One could expect that after a gradual process of secularization, which was quite successful, the state's hold on religion would be abolished and religion would be allowed to participate in politics. Nevertheless, the historical dissension which developed between the state and Islam, coupled with both the religious reactions to

³ Şerif Mardin, "Religion in Modern Turkey," *International Social Science Journal* 29 (1997): 279.

the reforms at initial periods of the republic and the ambivalent attitudes of religious groups toward democracy, intensified the prejudices of the state elites; thus, religion remained within one of the state's reserved domains. Any liberalizing move in the state-Islam relationship was equated with a return to the *ancien régime*.

The claim that the permission for religious participation in politics would lead to the collapse of democracy seems to reflect the state elites' firm belief in the fragility of Turkish democracy and the whole political system. This claim, however, has not been confirmed historically. Turkish democracy has managed to achieve a notable institutional autonomization and the emergence of religious parties by the end of the 1960s did not lead to the collapse of democracy. Moreover, to what extent the position of religious currents in Turkey have been "fundamentalist," in the sense that this thesis has been used to describe the currents in the Middle East and Africa, is also open to question. The Islamists' strong commitment to the state and their firm belief in its unity and integrity, which inclined them to play the game within the legitimate boundaries, show not only the fact that there is a weak historical ground for the emergence of fundamentalism but also the fact that the existence of relatively open channels of participation in general politics has been functional in moderating radical demands.

It was no accident that the conception of Islam as a symptom of the *ancien régime* and a marker of an inferior culture⁴ inclined the republican elites to design a kind of public sphere in which no appearance of religiosity was allowed. Rather a monolithic conception of the public sphere was preferred which was open to

⁴ Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, "Rethinking the Connections Between Turkey's "Western" Identity versus Islam," *Critique* (Spring, 1998), 9

Western, “universal” and cosmopolitan visions and representations, but closed to those of the indigenous, traditional and the “particular.” Designing such a public sphere has turned out to be one of the ideological missions of the state, which was only a part of the general secularizing one. Expressions of particularism in this sense were regarded as expressions of a desire to retreat to the past and a challenge to the Western vision of the state, society and the individual. The same was true for the political sphere as well. Relying on the republican tradition which places the sole emphasis on the “common good” or the “public interest,” the republican elites opted a kind of nationalism which conceptualized society within the terms of unity and uniformity.⁵ Consequently, the state elites, particularly the military-bureaucratic elites in Turkey, opted for a sort of democracy which gave priority to the “ends of the state” rather than to the articulation of particular interests.⁶ Although the republican elites put great accent on modernity, they have failed to recognize two crucial aspects of modernization, i.e. social mobilization and increased demands of participation by different social groups.⁷ Their denial of societal divisions and stress on the unity and uniformity clashed with the rhetoric of modernity which also involved “the discourse of democracy and the rights of equality of citizens.”⁸ It was this paradox between the state’s expressed mission of modernization as Westernization which included democracy, on the one hand, and the state elites’

⁵ Ibid., 13.

⁶ Ibid., 14; Metin Heper, “Introduction,” in *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey*, ed. Metin Heper and Jacob Landau (London: I.B. Tauris, 1991), 2.

⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 33-34.

denial of the plurality of politics, on the other, which has produced immense tensions between state and society. But the political space was not widened to include these particularities. Thus, the project of modernity in Turkey has not proved well in absorbing the ethnic and religious particularities and in incorporating them into the general body politic. Not unexpectedly, Turkey faced serious crises during the 1970s.

The chief structural determinant behind the formation of such state of affairs between the state and society in general and state and religion in particular has been the elitist political culture, which has been the most enduring trait of the Ottoman-Turkish polity. The military and the bureaucratic elites have been the constitutive agents of this political culture; thus, neither the character of Turkish secularism nor the changes in the state-Islam relationship can be understood without looking at the role and the changes in the attitude of the civil and military elites. As will be explained below, the Turkish civil and the military elites identified themselves with the state and have acted as the guardians of the state, along with the central norms delineating the state's ideological set up, among which secularism occupied a central position. Needless to say, in historical terms, the military has occupied central position and it gradually became more independent from other factions of the elites. They intervened in politics three times. The military's conviction that the civilians had deviated from secularism played a prominent role in these interventions.⁹

⁸ Sakallıoğlu, "Rethinking the Connections," 13.

⁹ For the elitist political culture and the state tradition in the Ottoman Turkish history see, Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Walkington, England: The Eothen Press, 1985).

Yet, the policies and the way the military leaders of the 1980 military intervention approached to Islam manifest important changes in the military's understanding of secularism and their attitudes towards Islam. The claim by the military leaders that the politicians deviated from the principles of Atatürkism and their enormous efforts to reinstall Atatürkist ideology seem somewhat paradoxical if they are taken into account together with their policies encouraging Islam in society.

1.2 The Problem

As has already been pointed out, after the 1980 military intervention, the policies and attitudes of the military leaders regarding Islam changed radically. The military government initiated compulsory education in primary and secondary schools and promoted Islam as an indispensable element of national culture and social morality. As it was observed, the “official discourse articulated and tolerated Islamic elements in the public political realm that had until that point been under the monopoly of secular standards and criteria.”¹⁰ The ultimate implication of the changes in the attitudes of the military leaders of the 1980 Intervention towards religion and their policies for the previous conception of secularism is the main question that this study addresses to itself. Stating differently, this study primarily aims to answer the question of what were the principal implications of the affirmative attitudes of the military leaders of the 1980 intervention for the established secularity tradition in Turkey?

¹⁰ Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, “Parameters and Strategies of Islam-State Interaction in Republican Turkey,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28 (1996): 244.

As has already been noted, secularism in Turkey was developed as a response to modernity whose forerunners were the military and bureaucratic elites. The Ottoman state elites introduced a modernization program in the last decades of the eighteenth century in order to save the state from decline, which resulted in a series of secular Westernization reforms aiming at the strengthening of the central Ottoman state. Religion, as a prevailing element of the traditional culture, was considered as an impediment in attaining modernity, a conception that paved the way to an intellectual tradition which saw an incompatibility between Islam and modernity.¹¹ Thus, it became one of the chief targets of the reformers to decrease the role of religion in the state, society and the life of the individuals. The republican elites maintained this general outlook in conducting the reforms, which completely secularized the state and society. Religion was replaced by secular nationalism and it was offered as a new ideology and a source of morality.

In general, it can be argued that the religious policies and the affirmative approach to religion on the part of the military leaders of the 1980 intervention was a new answer to the fundamental problem that the republican elites had faced in the very early periods. As observed by Şerif Mardin,¹² the main problem that the republican elites had to overcome was not the popular sovereignty. It was easily captured. The problem was the ethical foundation of society. The Atatürkist elites had no answer such questions: what would be the ethical principles which would

¹¹ Metin Heper, "The State, Religion and Pluralism: The Turkish Case in Comparative Perspective," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 18 (1991): 46.

¹² Şerif Mardin, "Kollektif Bellek ve Meşruiyetlerin Çatışması" [The Collective Memory and the Conflict of Legitimacies], in *Avrupa'da Etik Din ve Laiklik* [Ethics, Religion, and Secularism in Europe], ed. Oliver Abel, Mohammed

regulate the social and individual relations? What would be transcendental principles from which legitimacy could be derived?

The above problem was closely related to the another one to which the modernizing elites sought to find an answer: what would be the role of the indigenous norms and values in the new set up of social morality? Within the circles committed to the reformist ideals of Atatürk there were two main groups with different answers. The radical republicans, who constituted the majority among those who were close to Atatürk, thought that none of the indigenous ingredients would have a place in the cultural and ideological bases of the republic. The advocates of the other group, which can be called as the traditional conservatives, were also the supporters of the Atatürk's republican ideals and reforms, but they were against the total rejection of the indigenous elements. Their aim was to reconcile the reformist ideals of Atatürkism and the tradition.¹³ According to the conservatives, the authenticity of the political regimes and national identity was a product of geography, religion, tradition and history. The history tells us that behind the revolutions there are no dead civilizations, but the bridges which bind the past to the

Arkoun and Şerif Mardin, trns., *Sosi Dolanoğlu and Serra Yılmaz* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1995), 10-11.

¹³ C. Nazım İrem, "Kemalist Modernizm ve Türk Gelenekçi-Muhafazakarlığın Kökenleri" [Kemalist Modernism and the Roots of Turkish Traditionalist Conservatism], *Toplum ve Bilim* [Society and Science] 74 (1997): 85. In fact no studies have been carried out on the conservative front of Atatürkism, which was shaped in the early republican period. The advocates of the conservative group included some members of the Republican People's Party (RPP), such as Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver and Fuad Köprülü, and some leading intellectuals of the time, like Peyami Safa, Hilmi Ziya Ülken and Şekip Tunç. They were also the defenders of Atatürk's reformist ideals but they had a conservative outlook. For an exceptional work, see C. Nazım İrem, "Kemalist Modernism and the Genesis of Modern Turkish Conservatism," Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis (Ankara: Bilkent University, 1996).

present.¹⁴ They criticized the radical interpretations of the reformist ideals of Atatürk in such a way that these bridges would not be devastated.

They were the radicals who consolidated the power after the death of Atatürk and radicalized the reformist deals of Atatürk through transforming Atatürkism into an official ideology. Their answer for the problem was a kind of secular morality rested on reason and science, and secular nationalism underpinned by scientific and rationalistic tenets.¹⁵ The advocates of this view were the heirs of the Westernists emerged in the Ottoman Empire in the last decades of the nineteenth century, who claimed that the Western civilization was a totality and should be taken totally in all fields of life.¹⁶ Consequently, society was divorced from its cultural tradition, and a new cultural identity was supposed to be constructed on the negation of historical memory.¹⁷ Yet, the republican social ethics had failed to provide an appropriate source of morality because, as Max Weber mentioned, the moral vacuum created by secularization at the public level can not be filled by science.¹⁸ Science had no relevance to the problem of morality. The problem was properly stated by Mardin:

¹⁴ İrem, “Kemalist Modernizm ve Türk Gelenekçi-Muhafazakarlığın Kökenleri” [Kemalist Modernism and the Roots of Turkish Traditionalist Conservatism], 89.

¹⁵ For instance, Ziya Gökalp, the prominent advocate of Turkish nationalism, saw nationalism as a product of positive science. See, Ergun Özbudun, “Antecedents of Kemalist Secularism: Some Thoughts on the Young Turk Period,” in *Modern Turkey: Continuity and Change*, ed. Ahmet Evin (Opladen: Leske, 1984), 32.

¹⁶ Kemal Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-Party System* (Princeton: N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1959), 21-22.

¹⁷ Kevin Robins, “Interrupting Identities: Turkey/Europe,” in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage Publications, 1996), 68.

The consciousness of the new Turks was to be rooted in science (“Western civilization”) which Atatürk repeatedly mentioned as the source of all-valid knowledge and behavior. But then the matter was not so simple, because “consciousness rising” aimed to elicit a set of characteristics which one expected the citizens of the new republic to possess. “Science,” as such, had no answer to questions regarding the building of national identity; nor did it tackle the issue of social identity, the orientation of the individual towards social ideals.¹⁹

What offered by the military elites of the 1980 intervention was a new social morality rested upon the indigenous social and historical values including religion. Like the traditionalist conservatives, they took a critical attitude towards the modernity as total Westernization, and pursued a new articulation of modernity and the tradition. They thought that society could not be founded on a total rejection of the historical memory. Consequently, Atatürkism was reinterpreted in such a way that its pragmatist aspects rather than the prescriptive ones were strongly emphasized, which enabled to soften strict etatist and secularist tenets. They resorted to an understanding of Atatürkism as a scientific outlook for worldly affairs, a *weltanschauung*, which was at work during the time of Atatürk.²⁰ Accordingly, the fundamental concepts and the ongoing policies underwent a radical change, though there was no backward move from the modernization reforms and ideals of Atatürk. The military leaders regarded religion as an indispensable part of moral and cultural

¹⁸ Bryan S. Turner, *Weber and Islam: A Critical Study* (London, Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 153-154.

¹⁹ Şerif Mardin, “Religion and Secularism in Turkey,” in *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State*, ed. Ali Kazancigil and Ergun Özbudun (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1981), 211.

²⁰ Metin Heper, “A Weltanschauung-turned-Partial Ideology and Normative Ethics: “Atatürkism” in Turkey,” *Orient* 25 (1984).

source of society The underlying assumption of the present study is that by resorting to the Turkish social and historical values, and by incorporating religion into the new conception of modernity and social morality the military leaders of the 1980 Intervention radically differed from the post-Atatürkian state elites and took a qualitative step from “maximal secularity” to “mere secularity.”²¹ They treated Islam in a more affirmative manner and discerned that a new *modus vivendi* was needed between the state and Islam.

On the other hand, the military leaders’ affirmative approach do not conjure up that they lifted their reserve on politicization of religion or approved its political use in any means by the political parties or religious groups. Rather, their prime concern in religion was in ethical terms, which also reveals the limits of this new conception. Although religion was emphasized and encouraged by the hand of the state, the public expression of religiosity was not approved. The problem became more apparent after the transition to democracy in 1983, when Turgut Özal, the head of the Motherland Party and the prime minister, wanted further softening secularism and made religion a part of civil society. Evren, the then president and the leader of the coup criticized Özal for giving concession to the reactionary groups.

Part of the suspicious attitudes of the state elites toward public appearance of religion is a result of the endurance of the traditional conception of the relationship between religion and modernity. As has already been noted, the modernizing elites of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century formulated a reverse relationship between religion and modernity which shaped the spirit of the subsequent reforms. Their philosophy of state-religion relationship in particular and religion-modernity

²¹ For the conceptualization of different secularity traditions see pp. 77-86 of

relationship in general was based on the assumptions of the “secularization thesis,”²² which contains strong imprints of the Enlightenment’s ideological critique of religion. The fundamental assumption of the secularization thesis is that with the development of modernity the role and influence of religion declines, even eventually disappears.²³ It becomes a marginal phenomenon due to the process of privatization. But, the expectations of the advocates of the secularization thesis can not be confirmed on historical and social grounds, despite the fact that there was a sharp decline in social significance of religion because, as Callum B. Brown noted, “religion can and has retained its social significance across the change from pre-industrial to industrial society.”²⁴ Moreover, since the 1980s the public visibility of religion has become more apparent throughout the world,²⁵ which has also been the case in Turkey. It was also the process which, as Andrew Davison points out, produced perplexity among the social scientist due to the rise of theopolitics in modern world.²⁶

the present study.

²² For a detailed elaboration of the “secularization thesis,” see Steve Bruce, ed., *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

²³ For a critical approach, see José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 9.

²⁴ Callum G. Brown, “A Revisionist Approach to Religious Change,” in *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis*, ed. Steve Bruce (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 38.

²⁵ Casanova, *Public Religions*, 3.

²⁶ Andrew Davison, *Secularism and Revivalism in Turkey: A Hermeneutic Approach* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1998), 2-3.

The most important weakness of such a conceptualization is that it precludes the understanding of the public character of religion. Furthermore, it fails to capture the dynamic relationship between religion and modernity, which is vitally important to understand its public forms. In other words, the recent role of Islam in politics and its probable future trends can not be understood unless the interaction between Islam and the main aspects of modernity, especially those of the modern state and public sphere, is taken into account. As argued by José Casanova;

[W]e are witnessing the deprivatization of religion in modern world. By deprivatization I mean the fact that religious traditions throughout the world are refusing to accept the marginal and privatized role which theories of modernity as well as theories of secularization had reserved for them. Social movements have appeared which either are religious in nature or are challenging in the name of religion the legitimacy and autonomy of the primary secular sphere, the state and the market economy.²⁷

What happens when religion goes into public? In order to answer this question we need to comprehend the nature of “the public” or public sphere. In Casanova’s words, “the novelty of modernity derives precisely from the emergence of an amorphously complex, yet autonomous sphere, “civil society,” or “the social””²⁸ which has an expansionist capacity to penetrate and transform both what is public, i.e. belonging to the state, and the private. In fact, what is lacking in the existing literature that tries to grasp the political nature of Islam is that it is unable to appreciate the impact of the development of this autonomous, transformatory and penetrating modern public sphere upon the religious domain. The modern public, as a product of the Enlightenment, was first shaped in the eighteenth century English,

²⁷ José Casanova, *Public Religions*, 5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

French and German states as a strong ideological construct which played transformatory and progressive role in dissolving the absolutism.²⁹ The same is true for the present state-society, private-public and religion-society interaction. It is the place where the private norms, values and manners meet with those of the so-called cosmopolitan. It is the place where, what Brian R. Wilson called as “internal secularization,”³⁰ or “hybridization”³¹ takes place. This is why politicized Islam is far from being a monolith.³² There is a strong drive within the closed universe of the “community” to transfer to the public sphere and to share its symbolic universe. The development of an Islamic “sector” in Turkey after the 1980s, accompanied by the internalization of the secular public norms and manners, denotes that a deep change whose consequences will be determining the future course of Islamic communities is at work. For instance, the *Tesettür* [religious style wear] fashions organized by firms producing religious dress became a daily and accepted phenomenon among the Turkish Muslims.³³ It is hard to legitimize all these practices within the puritan

²⁹ Anthony J. La Vopa, “Conceiving a Public: Ideas and Society in Eighteenth-Century Europe,” *Journal of Modern History* 64 (1992): 79-116.

³⁰ Brian R. Wilson, “Reflections on Many Sided Controversy,” in *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis*, ed. Steve Bruce (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 203.

³¹ Hybridization was introduced by Nilüfer Göle to portray the interaction between the norms, styles and the manners of modernity and Islam, which, as she sees, is the dominant trend in Turkey. See Nilüfer Göle, *Melez Desenler: İslam ve Modernlik Üzerine* [Hybrid Patterns: On Islam and Modernity] (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2000); Nilüfer Göle, ed., *İslam’ın Yeni Kamusal Yüzleri* [New Public Faces of Islam] (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2000).

³² Robin Wright, “Two Visions of Reformation,” *Journal of Democracy* 7 (1996), 65.

³³ *Aktüel* [Actual] (Istanbul Weekly), 19-25 May 1994.

ethics of religions, but, in practice, they have become accepted realities. It was noted that after transferring to the public sphere, the content of religious symbols, styles and manners were infused with those of the secular, albeit their forms remained religious.³⁴ Similar changes also took place in the “idealized representations” of the religious advertisements, whose idealized worlds are just a symmetrical as their secular counterparts with some minor modifications of extreme points.³⁵ These are neither just simple symbolic changes, nor superficial ones. Rather, they are the symptoms of radical changes taking place within the “community.” Thus, what we face today as Islam is difficult to understand within the traditional framework, and a careful examination of these changes is needed. The developments noted above confirm the hypothesis posed by Casanova that, “the more religion wants to transform the world in a religious direction, the more religion becomes entangled in “worldly” affairs and transformed by the world.”³⁶ It tends to relinquish its totalistic claims and moves to the realm of civil society. Such developments took place in Spain, Brazil and Poland³⁷ where the church was previously an establishment of the

³⁴ Abdurrahman Arslan, “Seküler Dünyada Müslümanlar” [Muslims in Secular World], *Birikim* [Accumulation] (July 1997): 30-37; For similar observations, see, Sakallıoğlu, “Rethinking the Connections,” 18.

³⁵ For these changes and their consequences, see, Ümit Kıvanç, “İslamcılar ve Para-Pul: Bir Dönüşüm Hikayesi” [Islamists and the Money: A Story of Transformation], *Birikim* [Accumulation] (July 1997): 39-58; An interview with Nuray Mert, “İslamcılık Yoluyla Gelen Sekülerleşme, Devletin Laiklik Dayatmasına İhtiyaç Bırakmayacak,” [There Will Be no Need for State’s Secular Impose after the Secularization Realized by the Hands of Islamism] *Matbuat* [Published Materials] (May 1995).

³⁶ Casanova, *Public Religions*, 49.

³⁷ *Ibid.* Casanova analyzes five cases, namely Spain, Poland, Brazil, Evangelical Protestantism, and Catholicism in the United States, in which the

authoritarian-totalitarian state, but later was transformed into an agent promoting the development of civil society and democracy. Similar developments can be observed in Turkey too. Nilüfer Göle described the process of the transformation of religious groups in Turkey as following:

After twenty years, we are witnessing the differentiation of the paths followed by the Islamists in different national settings. A process of change is at work which is transforming these movements from a radical position to a more cultural oriented tendencies... It can be said that the Islamic actors, who owe their existence and power to the collective Islamic movement, have entered in interaction and exchange with the environment after they faced with the modern urban spaces, global communication networks, public discussions, consumption patterns and the rules of the market.³⁸

Therefore, despite the fact that there are some groups whose outlook can be described as “fundamentalist,” this label can not portray the dominant character of religiosity in Turkey. What we witness today is the “public Islam”³⁹ in close interaction with the cosmopolitan universe of the public realm. Open democratic channels also have encouraged this process because the democratic practice itself has training effect on the actors. As observed by Guillermo O’Donnell, the existence of a majority of democrats among the population necessitates a long period of practice in political democracy, and “in no known case does there appear to have been a majority of democrats before the advent of democracy.”⁴⁰

religious establishments work as elements of civil society and contribute to the consolidation of democracy. In the former three cases, the church previously supported authoritarian states, but later they were transformed into civil societal elements. It is important to notice that religion does not inherently act in authoritarian manner. Rather the way that the religion acts vary in relation to the social and political environments in which it resides.

³⁸ Göle, *Melez Desenler* [Hybrid Patterns], 34-35.

³⁹ Göle, *Ibid.*, 13.

1.3 The Subject-Matter and Methodology

As Ergun Özbudun aptly observed, “no picture of contemporary Turkish politics would be complete without a discussion of the military, which since its first intervention in 1960, has been one of the most important actors in the country’s politics.”⁴¹ In fact, the military has been the most important actor in the modernization of Ottoman-Turkish society and in setting up of the Republic. Thus, to study the relationship between the military and religion or secularism is crucially important to understand not only the role of the military Turkish politics and the character of Turkish secularism, but also the whole course of political development or modernization in Turkey because these two agents have always been at the center of this process. Such a study is also important because without looking at the role of the military, it is hardly possible to grasp the trajectory of the change in this regard.

As has already been noted, one of the permanent features of Turkish politics has been the presence of the military in politics. During the republican period there were three direct military interventions in politics, and two of them included a new ordering of the state in a radical manner. In addition to these interventions, the military’s position within the general administrative structure of the state has gradually been extended through the legal arrangements made by the military leaders after each intervention. The most important change was the establishment of the

⁴⁰ Guillermo O’Donnell, “Transitions, Continuities, and Paradoxes,” in *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O’Donnell and J. Samuel Valenzuela (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 19-20.

National Security Council (NSC) after the military intervention of 1960. The NSC is made up of the five top military commanders, four civilian members, and the President (namely the Chief of the General Staff, the commanders of Land, Air, Navy and the Gendarmerie, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense, the Minister of the Internal Affairs and the Minister of the Foreign Affairs). The position of the NSC within Turkish politics has been critical because after a gradual process of role expansion, it has become an agent with the ability to impose its policy preferences upon the civilian political actors.

The actual presence of the military in Turkish politics has had far reaching consequences on conducting of politics in Turkey. Although the Turkish military did not intend to establish enduring authoritarian military regimes and each intervention was followed by a quick return to the barracks after restructuring democratic rules and procedures, “an unusual phenomenon in civil-military relations,”⁴² the military leaders have always been suspicious of the civilians and local political demands. The civilian supremacy in Turkey remained in an *ad hoc* manner, and the military has exercised high level of political autonomy within the Turkish political system.⁴³ The autonomy of the military worked *vis-a-vis* the civilian political leaders and against the articulation of the peripheral demands to the general body politic. The military’s political concern was not conditioned by its self-interest but rather it was a result of

⁴¹ Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation* (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 105.

⁴² James Brown, “The Military and Politics in Turkey,” *Armed Forces and Society* 13 (1987): 233.

⁴³ Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, “The Anatomy of the Turkish Military’s Political Autonomy,” *Comparative Politics* 29 (1997): 151.

identification with the national interest,⁴⁴ an identification which has a long historical tradition. Having imagined itself as the unmovable core of the state, the military began to consider itself as the sole guardian of state principles without any possibility of compromise. Consequently, the military, as the principal guardian of the principles of the state, adopted an elitist outlook on policy making in Turkey, and kept its hold on the whole polity.

The underlying characteristic of the central norms and principles in question was their central and impersonal nature filtering those of the local ones. These norms have constituted an autonomous domain of the state, and on the basis of these norms the state has maintained a conception of the public sphere with narrow boundaries defining not only the content of whole policy making, but also the basic attributes of those who have the right or legitimacy to be represented in the public realm. In this sense, the state, which has been structured by the military-bureaucratic elites, turned out to be an agent defining the hallmarks of a wide range of issues such as politics, culture and identity. This narrow definition of the public and political space in Turkey has created important difficulties in the articulation of the local-particular interests to the public-general interests, which is vital for the consolidation and smooth functioning of democracy.

Secularism occupies a core place in the norms in question. Secularism and the military are close phenomena in Turkish politics. The close relationship between these two was established through a long period of reforms aiming at modernization

⁴⁴ Ergun Özbudun, "Development of Democratic Government in Turkey: Crises, Interruptions, and Reequilibrations," in *Perspectives on Democracy in Turkey*, ed. Ergun Özbudun (Ankara: Turkish Political Science Association, 1988), 1.

of the Ottoman-Turkish state and society from the top down. Due to certain historical developments that will be explained in detail in the following chapters, the two central constitutive agents of the Ottoman state, namely Islam and the military were split and the relationship between them was reversed. The military, once a defender of the religious ideology, turned into a principal initiator and guardian of secularism, which eventually gained an extreme character. Not surprisingly, the military's conviction that the civilians had deviated from the principle of secularism was an important motive behind the three military interventions.⁴⁵

In terms of methodology, a historical approach is necessary because the invention of such a kind of secularism has a long historical past and it is difficult to conceive of its recent character without looking at its past. The issues of secularization and secularism have been the most prominent topics of Turkish modernization since the nineteenth century. The modernization reforms in the Ottoman Empire started to save the state from decline above all by modernizing the military institution. Although at the beginning the military was an object of modernization, in due course, it turned out to be the subject of modernization.⁴⁶ When the Ottomans recognized that they had fallen behind the Western states, the military and the bureaucratic elites, which were close associates, began to think that

⁴⁵ Egun Özbudun, *The Role of the Military in Recent Turkish Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Center for International Affairs, 1966), 13; Muhsin Batur, *Anılar ve Görüşler Bir Dönemin Perde Arkası* [Memoirs and Views: The Hiddenground of Three Periods] (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1985), 187; Kenan Evren, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devlet Başkanı Orgeneral Kenan Evren'in Söylev ve Demeçleri: 12 Eylül 1980-12 Eylül 1981* [The Speeches and Statements of the President of Turkish Republic Kenan Evren: 12 September 1980-12 September 1981] (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1981), 17.

in order to save the state from decline, it was necessary to introduce new techniques and methods in the military and administration inspired by a Western secular outlook. Thus, secularism was adopted by the Ottoman ruling strata as a principal policy choice and an instrument of modernization through Westernization. The historical antagonism between Islam and modernity, which marked the state elites' approach towards Islam and the dominant intellectual tradition, was established in this initial period, and has remained alive up to now. As noted before, the Ottoman westernized reformers saw an incompatibility between modernization as Westernization and Islam.⁴⁷ From that point of view, it can be firmly claimed that the meaning of modernization in the Ottoman-Turkish context has been very close, if not the same, to that of secularization. Once formulated in this way, modernization was assumed to be successful to the extent that secularization was achieved on social, cultural, political and individual levels. In essence, secularization became a concomitant part of modernization, and the project of modernity was transformed by the state elites into a project of civilization.

Consequently, the place of religion in the state and society was the main problem which drew the demarcation line between the Westernists and the Traditionalists, the two dominant intellectual currents throughout the history of the Turkish modernization process. The Westernists who were influenced by the Enlightenment tradition, particularly by its extreme rationalist French version, claimed that civilization was a totality, and therefore, should be adopted totally, a

⁴⁶ Metin Heper and Aylin Güney, "The Military in the Third Turkish Republic," *Armed Forces and Society* 22 (Summer 1996): 1.

⁴⁷ Heper, "The State, Religion and Pluralism: The Turkish Case in Comparative Perspective," 46.

view which clashed with that of the Traditionalists who claimed that spiritual and material aspects of civilization, i.e. culture and religion, and scientific and technological achievements should be separated, and the scope of the reforms should be limited to the scientific and technological achievements.⁴⁸

The battle between the Traditionalists and the Westernists who were made up of the military-bureaucratic elites and the intellectuals was won by the Westernists. This battle has deep historical roots closely associated with the highly bureaucratic state tradition and with the norms around which the state was structured in the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman state which was established by *ghazis*, the religious warriors, was a militant entity which, in turn, shaped its political culture. Based on the idea of conquest, there emerged a state which was structured in the military-bureaucratic elite whose primary aim was to represent and preserve the interests of the state *vis-a-vis* that of society.⁴⁹ In this highly autonomous state, no privilege had existed similar to the Western aristocracy and nobility except for the military. As Halil İnalcık aptly observed, “it was the fundamental rule of the Empire to exclude its subjects from the privileges of the military.”⁵⁰ The transition to modernity also differed radically from the experiences of the Western countries. As pointed out by

⁴⁸ Nilüfer Göle, “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics: The Case of Turkey,” in *Civil Society in the Middle East*, ed. A. R. Norton (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 22.

⁴⁹ Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 21; Halil İnalcık, “Empire and Population,” in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire: 1300-1600*, ed. Halil İnalcık with Donald Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 11.

⁵⁰ Halil İnalcık, “The Nature of Traditional Society,” in *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, ed. Robert E. Ward and Dankwart A. Rustow (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 44.

Ergun Özbudun, “neither mercantile bourgeoisie nor the landowners developed into a class that could effectively control and limit, much less capture, the state.”⁵¹ Therefore, the Ottoman-Turkish modernization project remained as an elite modernization, and this elitist character has been the most enduring trait of the Ottoman-Turkish polity.⁵² In the absence of intermediary autonomous elements of civil society, which marked the feudal tradition and transition to modernity in Western Europe, central bureaucracy has remained the only agent with an ability to determine the whole course of change in the Ottoman-Turkish society.

At the beginning, i.e. in the classical period, the two core institutions of the Ottoman state, i.e. Islam and the bureaucracy, which in the succeeding centuries went separate ways, were at the center of administration, and both enjoyed similar privileges. As observed by Şerif Mardin,⁵³ the Ottoman state was both religious and bureaucratic. The Islamic character was derived from the fact that the primary aim of the sultan was to preserve the Islamic community, and Islam was the official religion. The bureaucratic character stemmed from the bureaucracy’s chief concern in preserving the state. Moreover, the military’s basic aim as the preservation of the state shaped their attitude in conducting governmental affairs in an pragmatic and empirical manner, an ideology which can be defined as “reason of the state.”

⁵¹ Ergun Özbudun, “The Continuing Ottoman Legacy and the State Tradition in the Middle East,” in *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*, ed. L. Carl Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 136.

⁵² For the elitist character of the Ottoman-Turkish polity and of the reform policies, see, Frederick W. Frey, “Patterns of Elite Politics in Turkey,” in *Political Elites in the Middle East*, ed. George Lenczowski (Washington, D.C.: America Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975), 41-82.

The pragmatism of the bureaucratic strata paved the way to a secular tradition in the Ottoman Empire. Unlike the situation in the sixteenth century in which the *ulema* was in a powerful position, by the eighteenth century the power shifted to the secular bureaucratic strata of the Ottoman government. Since their principal concern was to preserve the state, they gained a kind of secular mentality.⁵⁴ As noted by İnalcık, by the eighteenth century, “devoted extremely to secular interests of the state and free from formalism and the bonds of tradition, they were ready to become faithful instruments of radical administrative reforms.”⁵⁵ They were the faithful reformers who initiated radical secularizing reforms in the nineteenth century in the Ottoman Empire which culminated in the proclamation of the Tanzimat in 1839. For the purpose of the present study, some peculiar characteristics of the Ottoman reforms could be identified as follows: in the reform period, the initiative remained in the hands of bureaucracy which was passed into the hands of the military in the last period of the Ottoman Empire; the reforms gradually displaced mainly two important components from the state and bureaucracy, namely Islam from the state and the *ulema* from the bureaucracy; by extending the power of the center towards the periphery through military and administrative reforms, the periphery was further penetrated by the center, which meant that the modernization or Westernization policies went parallel with centralization; as a natural result of the bureaucratic pragmatic and rationalist outlook, the Ottoman elites found positivism as the best

⁵³ Şerif Mardin, “Religion and Secularism in Turkey,” 194-195.

⁵⁴ Şerif Mardin, “Religion and Politics in Modern Turkey,” in *Islam in the Political Process*, ed. James P. Piscatory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 140.

⁵⁵ İnalcık, “The Nature of Traditional Society,” 55.

realizable solution to the decline of the state, from which a kind of scientifically constructed secular nationalism was derived in the beginning of the twentieth century.⁵⁶

At the end of the World War I, which was also the end of the Ottoman state, only the military remained capable of coping with the serious problems faced by the country. After the War of Independence, a new state was established on a completely new and radically different legitimacy basis. Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, the military leaders of the War of the Independence did what the previous state elites had imagined to be a solution to save the state. They completely secularized the state and implemented important policies to initiate secularization at the societal and individual levels. The most important reform at the institutional level was the proclamation of the Turkish republic in 1923 along with the abolishment of the sultanate and caliphate. This was followed by cultural reforms. The education was unified and secularized. The dress was changed. The religious orders were closed down. Yet, the radical aspects of the republican reforms could be found in the republican imagination of political community and political ideology employed to define a new identity for that community. The concept of *umma*- the religious community-was replaced with that of the nation defining new boundaries of political community, and secular and rationalist nationalism was adopted as the new ideology.

⁵⁶ For the development of pre-republican nationalism in the Ottoman Empire, see, Ergun Özbudun, “Antecedents of Kemalist Secularism: Some Thoughts on the Young Turk Period,” in *Modern Turkey: Continuity and Change*, ed. Ahmet Evin (Opladen: Leske, 1984), 27-28.

The secular nature of Turkish nationalism also illuminates not only the ground on which the republican elites imagined a new collectivity, but also the normative framework from which they were inspired. This ground was Western science. As Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu observed, “the modernist position of Mustafa Kemal and his cadres involved a firm belief in nationalism as a specifically “modern” phenomenon, which was best represented by European rationalism.”⁵⁷ Thus, science, as the underlying motive and formative force of republican philosophy, was offered as a new source of morality.⁵⁸ Consequently, the republic aimed at constructing a kind of individual who was “rationalist, ant-traditionalist, anti-clerical person approaching all matters intellectually and objectively.”⁵⁹ Religion played a marginal role in this individual’s life. By looking at the central place of science in the early republican ideology, i.e. in Atatürk’s time, it can be argued that the early republican state had a scientific mentality with a strong emphasis on the practical requirements of life and pragmatism, but not a hard ideology.⁶⁰ Although the authoritarian policies of the early republican state compel us to think that its actions were directed by some definite and systematized set of ideas, its authoritarian measures stemmed from the character of the modernization

⁵⁷ Sakallıoğlu, “Parameters and Strategies of Islam-State Interaction in Republican Turkey,” 234.

⁵⁸ Mustafa Erdoğan, *Liberal Toplum, Liberal Siyaset* [Liberal Society, Liberal Politics] (Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1993), 196-197.

⁵⁹ Kemal Karpat, *Turkey’s Politics: Transition to a Multi-Party System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 53-54.

⁶⁰ Ergun Özbudun, “The Nature of the Kemalist Political Regime,” in *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State*, ed. Ali Kazancigil and Ergun Özbudun (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1981), 89-90.

policies. As a continuum of the Ottoman tradition, the republican modernization was an elite modernization,⁶¹ and its declared aim was to reach and even surpass contemporary civilization. The state intervention in social affairs can be clearly observed by looking at the understanding of statism, one of the principles of Atatürkism. Levent Köker argued that the principle of statism in the republican context has a wider meaning than simply being an economic principle. It contained an attainment of an ultimate goal: contemporary civilization which was conceived through the norms of the Western civilization. Thus, it is an expression of an interventionist bureaucratic-authoritarian state.⁶²

It was after Atatürk that the military-bureaucratic elites transformed Atatürkism into a state sponsored ideology made up of prescriptive tenets.⁶³ The process started after the death of Atatürk, whose place was occupied by the hardliners of the Republican People's Party, the only political organization at that time established by Atatürk. The policies of secularism gained "excessive anti-clerical positivistic characteristics which were labeled later as an official dogma of irreligion."⁶⁴ The move of the military to the central position of the state has had a strong impact on the maintenance of such a kind of secularism. Atatürk was careful in keeping the military out of politics, and there was also no worry on the part of the

⁶¹ Frey, "Patterns of Elite Politics in Turkey," 59.

⁶² Levent Köker, *Modernleşme, Kemalizm ve Demokrasi* [Modernization, Kemalism and Democracy] (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1993) 208-209.

⁶³ For this transformation see, Metin Heper, A Weltanschauung-turned-Partial Ideology and Normative Ethics: "Atatürkism" in Turkey," *Orient* 25 (1984): 83-94.

⁶⁴ Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, 271; See also, Metin Heper, "Islam, Polity and Society in Turkey: A Middle Eastern Perspective," *Middle East Journal* 35 (1981), 352.

military because of Atatürk's presence. After Atatürk, the military placed its belief in İnönü. But, when the government changed due to the transition to multi-party politics, the military along with the bureaucracy began to identify itself with the state, which was not an alien phenomenon to the Turkish polity. Not surprisingly, one of the main reasons behind the military intervention of 1960 was the attempt of government to take some liberalizing measures concerning secularism. The military intervention took place because the military thought that the Democrat Party government had deviated from the principles of Atatürkism, especially those of secularism. The same was true for the 1971 Memorandum and for the intervention of 1980 as well. Besides these interventions, the military has always been in a deterrent position to any compromise on secularism. Yet the 1980 intervention brought a new perspective in approaching to religion and understanding of secularism.

Along with the basic question outlined before, the following questions will be addressed in the present work.

- i. From which particular perspective can we understand the political role of the military in Turkey?
- ii. Under what historical conditions was the "maximal secularity" established, and what was the role of the military?
- iii. What were so particular to the 1980 Military Intervention in terms of understanding of secularism and the state-Islam relationship?
- iv. What were the implications of the new conceptualization of secularism and the role of religion in society for the established secularity tradition that was at work until 1980 in Turkey?

1.4 The Organization of the Work

This study consists of five chapters. The following chapter, Chapter Two, aims at analyzing the historical roots of political activism of the military and maximal secularism tradition in Turkey. It is argued that the chief determinant motive behind the maximal secularism in Turkey is the elitists political culture of the Ottoman-Turkish polity. Since the elitism stems from the historical state tradition, the political activism of the Turkish military can hardly be understood in the light of the literature developed on civil-military relations. In other words, the existing literature is not appropriate to explain the political activism of the Turkish military because, as pointed out by students of the Turkish politics, the Turkish case is very exceptional. Its exceptional nature springs from the existence of a high level of institutionalization patterns which, unlike the cases in other “developing” countries, is the chief factor explaining the presence of the military in Turkish politics and the exceptionalism in question.⁶⁵ Since the excessive institutionalization is a peculiar characteristic of the Ottoman-Turkish tradition, a historical and comparative analysis is needed to understand the case in question. Chapter Two compares the Turkish case with the European states which have state traditions and offers an alternative framework to understand the institutionalization patterns and the role of the military in the process of the formation of these patterns. It is argued that the role of the military is central not only to any state tradition, but also to the development of the

⁶⁵ Metin Heper, “Transition to Democracy Reconsidered: A Historical Perspective,” in *Comparative Political Dynamics: Global Research Perspectives*, ed. Dankwart A. Rustow and Kenneth Paul Erickson (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 196; Ergun Özbudun, “How Far from Consolidation,” *Journal of Democracy* 7 (1996): 125.

politics either in a democratic or autocratic way. The state tradition illuminates the role of the military and the nature of the Turkish secularism as well.

Chapter Three dwells upon the development of secularism in the Ottoman-Turkish context. Along with the course of Turkish secularism, it tries to provide an answer to the question: “Why has the Turkish secularism been developed along an authoritarian line?” The answer could be found in the Ottoman-Turkish political culture which is colored by an autonomous state tradition, coupled with the elitist nature of the Turkish modernization project. It also delineates the historical stages of development of Turkish secularism along with the changing attitudes and roles of the state elites.

Chapter Four aims to ascertain the changes that occurred after the 1980 military intervention. Why did the military leaders change their attitude towards religion? This chapter also analyzes the way in which the military leaders of the 1980 intervention interpreted secularism and articulated modernity and religion with precise implications for the established secularity tradition.

Chapter Five focuses on the relationship between the Özal government, which was formed after the transition to democracy in 1983, and the military leaders who constituted the Council of Presidency, particularly the relationship between the Prime Minister Özal and the President Evren regarding secularism and Islam. It also questions the limits of the changes brought by the 1980 intervention.

I hope that this work will contribute to understanding the role of the military in politics, the state-religion relationship and the Turkish politics as well.

CHAPTER II

THE STATE AND MODERNIZATION: THE HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF THE POLITICAL MILITARY AND SECULARITY TRADITIONS

The aim of the present chapter is to conceptualize the civil-military relations and the secularism tradition in Turkey within a historical and comparative perspective. Secularism in Turkey was developed as a response to modernity whose forerunners were the military and bureaucratic elites; thus, in order to understand the secularism tradition and the relevance of the bureaucratic and the military elites to this tradition, it is necessary to investigate the in which the formation of modernity took place in Turkey. What kind of social and historical dynamics have shaped the civil-military relations and secularism tradition in the process of formation of modernity in Turkey is the central question that the present chapter also addresses.

The prominent assumption of this chapter is that the political activism of the military and the maximal secularism tradition in Turkey are closely related to the historical state tradition, which has been the main actor in shaping the political culture in Turkey. Therefore, it is necessary for the problem in question to trace the genealogy of this highly autonomous state by focusing particularly on historical, social and political dynamics. In political terms, when the autonomy of the state is

concerned, the critical question is centralization, which includes a radical redefinition of the relationship between center and periphery.¹ Centralization, which is a concomitant feature of modernity, is the process in which the center, i.e. state, extends its sphere vis-à-vis the periphery. The state elites, made up of the military and the civil bureaucracy, were central to this process that was experienced first as the process of formation of the national states in Western Europe.² The ways that societies came to terms with modernity and resolved the center-periphery cleavage had far-reaching consequences for the subsequent polity traditions, variations within polities, and particularly for the formation of the relationship between the central elites as the representatives of the state and the local elites representing the people or society. In other words, different social and historical dynamics paved the way to different polity outcomes and, although in some societies a smooth reconciliation of the center and periphery occurred along with the well-functioning liberal democracies, as in England, in some societies a kind of tension has developed between the representatives of the center and those of the periphery that made the establishment of democracy a difficult task. The latter was particularly the case in France where the Revolution was followed by a series of social and political upheavals, and the conflicts could not be resolved in a smooth way, which led to sharp divisions within society.³

¹ S. N. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolution: The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 62-68. Eisenstadt conceptualizes this process as "the charimatization of the center."

² Anthony Giddens, *The Nation State and the Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 103-116.

³ For a comprehensive elaboration of the role of social classes and social conditions in formation of modernity in different social settings see, Barrington Moore, *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).

The prominent assumption of this chapter is that there are two crucial social and historical dynamics in the formation of modern polities that led to the variations. These were the primordial political structures and the scope of the military modernization in the process of state formation. As will be explained in detail below, in societies where the medieval representative assemblies that characterized the feudal societies of Western Europe existed and possessed considerable autonomy, the transition to modernity did not generate serious political conflicts and relatively well-functioned liberal democracies were established, unless these representative institutions were destroyed by the military modernization. Yet, in cases where the representative assemblies were either absent or weak, or were destroyed by the military modernization, the outcome was either autocracies or unstable democracies. The main difference between these two cases is that, unlike the first group of societies, in the latter societies there emerged a highly autonomous center, i.e. the state vis-a-vis the periphery or society. A lasting tension between central interests and local interests, between central-peripheral norms and between the central and the particular wills is the distinguishing feature of the polities in these societies. There is a strong tendency towards elitism in these societies, which, in turn, leads to a kind of centralist approach to policy-making without infiltrating the local or peripheral interests, norms and values. The state in these societies is structured in the civil and military bureaucracy, so they enjoy the political right to interfere in the sphere of the civilians. As such, they are not only the locus of the state but also the representatives and guardians of the state interests vis-à-vis those of the societal.⁴

Accordingly, the types of secularism and/or secularization processes are closely related to the polity traditions. In historical terms, the separation of the state

⁴ For the polity variations and the role of the primordial political structures in variation of the polities in different contexts, see Metin Heper, ed., *The State and Public Bureaucracies: A Comparative Perspective* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987).

and the church, which pushed religion towards the periphery, was a decisive step in the formation of the modern states;⁵ and like center-periphery relations, different models of state-church separation have emerged in accordance with the degree of the autonomy of the state. As will be further analyzed below, in state societies a sharp separation of state and religion took place after a process of bitter political confrontations. Thus, once established, secularism in such societies gained an excessive character bestowing high autonomy on the state vis-à-vis religion; however, in stateless societies, a smooth separation of the state and church occurred as a result of a gradual process of secularization.

Turkey is the *par-excellence* for the state-society since, as will be elaborated in detail below, there has been an autonomous historical state heritage in the Ottoman-Turkish society, which was embodied in civil and military bureaucracy.⁶ Therefore, the political activism of the military and the secularity tradition in Turkey have to be understood in relation to such a state and polity tradition, which is almost absent in the so-called "developing countries." In the Ottoman-Turkish tradition, the military and bureaucratic elites have been the representatives of the center acting on behalf of the state, and an understanding of their historical and present role in the political system necessitate a historical approach that traces the formation of this tradition to its very origins. Thus, it is hardly possible to understand civil-military relations in Turkey by addressing the existing literature, which has extensively been developed on the basis of political experiences of the developing countries. Rather a comparison of Turkey with the societies of the Western Europe with state tradition gives us a more definite picture of the problem in question.

⁵ Pierre Birnbaum, "State, Center and Bureaucracy," *Government and Opposition* 16 (1981); 58-77.

⁶ Metin Heper gives a well-elaborated account of the state tradition in the Ottoman-Turkish context. See, Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Walkington, England: The Eothen Press, 1985).

On the other hand, the state in the Ottoman-Turkish context has been more dominant than it was in the West European tradition since Turkey had neither a feudal past, in which there existed countervailing powers limiting the power of center, nor experienced a bourgeoisie revolution which, generally speaking, led to the formation of democracies in Western Europe. In the absence of these social formations, the modernization in the Ottoman-Turkish context was carried out by the military-bureaucratic elites, which resulted in total penetration of the periphery by the center paving the way for the emergence of a strong state. Consequently, the state elites in the Ottoman-Turkish political life maintained privileged position vis-à-vis the political elites who were the representatives of the periphery. They set the fundamental boundaries within which the political game would be played.

Not surprisingly, secularism in Turkey went beyond the boundaries of the common pattern, i.e. simply separation of the state and the church, and it has turned out to be an instrument not only to secularize the nation as a whole but also to put religion under the control of the state. The creation of a monolithic public sphere, where no religious visions and representations were allowed, became one of the main ideological and political priorities of the state elites; thus, no affiliation between religion and attributes of the so-called “modern life” was approved. Since the transition to democracy, it has been the main subject of contention between the military-bureaucratic elites as the representative of the state and the political elites representing the people.

This chapter also attempts to provide a theoretical account for the understanding of the political activism of the Turkish military and secularism within the above framework. It begins with a literature survey on the civil-military relations through a critical perspective because when the political activism of the military or the civil-military relations is concerned, there is a huge literature, even an orthodoxy, and most of the studies on the political role of the military in Turkey share, to a certain degree, the main assumptions of this so-called “orthodoxy” developed on the

political experiences and civil-military relations of the developing countries. Although, the problem in developing countries stems from the absence of an autonomous “public” in general, in Turkey it springs from the highly autonomous nature of the public,⁷ therefore, an explanation on what is meant from the autonomy of the state in political theory is given in the subsequent part along with an elaboration of social, political and historical conditions under which the weak and strong or autonomous institutionalization patterns have emerged. Following this, the corresponding patterns of secularization are analyzed with an explication of the Ottoman-Turkish case within the outlined framework.

2.1 An Overview of the Problem of Civil-Military Relations

Literature which aims at understanding the political activism of the Turkish military developed more or less under the influence of the perspectives which have dominated the political science literature throughout the world. The studies on the political role of the military were activated by the breakdowns of the civilian regimes and military interventions in the non-Western world, especially after the Second World War. Although the pioneering studies of Samuel P. Huntington and S. F. Finer address civil-military relations in general regardless of the particular polities like developed or underdeveloped ones, in due course the interest has shifted to the so-called “developing polities” because the military interventions became a common characteristic of these polities.⁸ The military interventions and the rise of

⁷ Metin Heper, “The Strong State as a Problem for the Consolidation of Democracy: Turkey and Germany Compared,” *Comparative Political Studies* 25 (1992): 171-173.

⁸ The pioneering studies referred here are the following: S. N. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1988). This book originally appeared in 1962 from Pall Mall Press, and in the 1981 edition, Finer added a new chapter entitled “The Man on Horseback-1981.” In this chapter, he evaluated the former expectations and re-examined his views within the framework developed on the subject since 1962; Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959).

authoritarian regimes in Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East undermined the optimistic expectations of the Modernization Theory whose basic assumptions developed on the belief that the experiences of the developing polities would be similar to those of the developed world.⁹ As a consequence, a sharp distinction between developed and underdeveloped polities has appeared in the studies trying to find out the reasons behind the breakdown of the civilian governments and the military interventions.

Four main lines can be identified in the literature concerning the problem of civil-military relations focusing on what motive(s) lead(s) the military to intervene. The first approach tries to explain the military interventions by looking at peculiar institutional characteristics of the military. According to the advocates of this approach, there are certain institutional features peculiar to the military that make it prone to intervene to politics. Huntington in his seminal study argues that the modern problem of the civil-military relations lies in the professionalism of the military.¹⁰ The professionalism of the officer corps with its different ethics and the Hobbesian conception of man necessitates a different and autonomous sphere of competence different from that of the civilian which creates the problem in civil-military relations and in civilian control of the military.¹¹ The increase of the

⁹ The Modernization paradigm is one of the main approaches in the study of the “development” of the non-Western world and is made up of a huge body of literature. For a comprehensive and critical study of the theories of development and modernization see, Ronald H. Chilcote, *Theories of Comparative Politics: The Search for a Paradigm* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1981); Irene L. Gendzier, *Managing Political Change: Social Scientists and the Third World* (Boulder, London: Westview Press, 1985).

¹⁰ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 7

¹¹ Ibid., 32-63; Huntington was also aware of the weak points of this perspective. In one of his relatively recent articles, he pointed out that the developments in the civil-military relations of the authoritarian regimes significantly differed from this model. See, Samuel P. Huntington, “Reforming Civil-Military Relations,” *Journal of Democracy* 6 (1995): 10.

professionalism is also a way of keeping the military from the civilian affairs since it makes the military less interested in civilian matters. The criticisms to this approach have been made on the basis of the fact that it is possible to co-exist both a high level of the professionalism and the military's involvement in politics. In order to clarify this problem, for instance, Alfred Stepan differentiates the old professionalism from the new one which has arisen from the internal use of military power to control the domestic revolutionary movements in different parts of the world.¹²

The fact that in developing countries the most modernized institution has been the military has been taken as another institutional feature leading militaries to intervention. Since the militaries are the most "westernized" and "scientifically minded" institution in society, they are more development oriented and they intervene into politics to initiate modernization policies, the policies that dominated the agenda of the developing nations during the World War II and the Cold War periods. The reform oriented interventions were viewed a healthy mechanism of change since they were carried out against the traditional and conservative governments.¹³

¹² Alfred Stepan, "The New Professionalism of Internal Warfare and Military Role Expansion," in *Authoritarian Brazil: Origins, Policies, and Future*, ed. Alfred Stepan (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), 51-58.

¹³ Samuel P. Huntington, ed., "Introduction," in *Changing Patterns of Military Politics* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1962), 13; Samuel P. Huntington, ed., "Patterns of Violence in World Politics," *Changing Patterns of Military Politics* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1962), 40; Lucien W. Pye, "Armies in the Process of Political Modernization," in *Political Development and Social Change*, ed. J. L. Finkle and R. W. Gable (New York, London: John Wiley and Sons, 1966), 277-283; The professional rationality, the influences of military technology upon society, and the modernizing influences of the military bureaucracy are the most emphasized factors in the analysis of the role of the military in the modernization process and the problem of civil-military relations from an organizational perspective. For a good account of this point of view see, Marion J. Levy, JR., "Armed Forces Organizations," in *The Military and Modernization*, ed. Henry Bienen (Chicago, New York: Aldine Atherton, 1971), 41-78; Eric A. Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977), 38;

Finer, in his classical work,¹⁴ compares the organizational peculiarities of the armed forces to the civilian organizations, and claims that the armed forces have three massive advantages in comparison to the civilian organizations. Their organization enjoys higher superiority; when compared to the civilian organizations, they have a highly emotional symbolic status, and they enjoy monopoly over the use of the arms. Therefore, the problem is not that why they rebel, but why they ever obey the civilians.¹⁵ The reason behind their obedience is that they are trained for the security purposes; thus they lack the capability to administer the civilian matters, especially the economic ones. But the main weakness is that they lack the legitimacy. The military interventions take place where the public attachment to the civilian institutions is weak or non-existent, whereas in polities where it is high the possibility of intervention is weak.¹⁶

The second approach accentuates the class origin of the officer corps in explaining the military interventions. The officer corps all over the world is recruited from the middle or lower classes. As Nordlinger notes; “All student of the military intervention agree on one proposition if no other; the officer corps is recruited from the men who come from middle-class background.”¹⁷ In this approach the military is analyzed in two ways: either they are taken as the representative of the middle class

For a critical account on the modernizing role of the military see, Ali Mazrui, “Soldiers as Traditionalizers: Military Rule and the Re-Africanization of Africa,” *World Politics* 28 (1976): 246-272. For Mazrui, it is not necessarily the case that all actions of the military take places along the modernizing line. Some may result in traditionalization.

¹⁴ S. E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback*.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁷ Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics*, 32.

and the principal supporter of that class or are considered as an independent organizational entity seeking the corporate interests of its own.

In the process of the decline of the traditional landowners the only way to get security and prosperity is to find a place in state bureaucracy. The military along with the bureaucracy constitutes a new class pursuing its interests. The reason behind the military interventions is the group orientation of the army, the groups that the army speaks for and the interests it represents.¹⁸ Manfred Halpern and José Nun see the military's involvement in politics, especially in the Middle East and Latin America, as the military's attempt to protect the middle class interests which suffer from the political conflicts.¹⁹

The third approach, developed by Guillermo O'Donnell, relates the military interventions and authoritarianism to the economic development strategies that were adopted by Latin American countries, particularly to the import substitution industrialization.²⁰ This approach is merely societal because it aims to find out the causes of the military interventions and authoritarianism in society, not in the

¹⁸ Manfred Halpern, "Middle East Armies and the New Middle Class," in *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries*, ed. John J. Johnson (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981). This book was first published in 1962.

¹⁹ Halpern, "Middle East Armies and the New Middle Class,"; José Nun, "The Middle Class Coup," in *The Politics of Conformity in Latin America*, ed. C. Veliz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 66-118; Henry Bienen notes that the debate on the military in post-World War II Europe and United States was about the interests of the military within the framework of interest group politics rather than the modernizing aspects of the military institution which was considered as an aspect of militaries in modernizing countries. For a different treatment of the military in developed and developing polities and the modernizing role of the military in developing countries see, Henry Bienen, ed., "The Background to Contemporary Study of Militaries and Modernization," in *The Military and Modernization* (Chicago, New York: Aldine, Atherton, 1971), 37-39.

²⁰ Guillermo A. O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics* (Berkeley: University of California, Institute of International Studies, 1979).

organizational characteristics of the military. The main argument in this approach is that until the year 1930, the economically dynamic and politically effective groups in agrarian areas were producing exportable goods in Argentina and Brazil. But the crisis of 1930 affected their economies and accelerated domestic industrialization, which in turn created new political forces. These new forces, which agreed upon developing domestic market and industrialization, formed a coalition against the landed oligarchy, foreign-owned industry, and free trade. This coalition, which was also a ground of the populist policies, was maintained until the easy phase of the import substitution strategy was exhausted.

The strategy was based on the specialization in the production of the finished consumer goods (light and non-durable). It made them heavily dependent upon the foreign intermediate and capital goods, and technology. When the easy phase of the import substitution industrialization came to an end, it generated various problems such as the foreign exchange shortage, unsatisfied demands of societal sectors for consumption and that of industrial sector for the intermediate and capital goods. At the end, it dissolved the coalition, and a new strategy was needed based on the exclusion of the popular sectors from accessing to politics. This is what the military regimes have done in Latin America. The military intervened and set up a new bureaucratic authoritarian state, whose characteristics were the exclusion of popular sectors from politics for the benefit of the upper classes, restoration of order, normalization of economy and depoliticization of the masses and policy issues.²¹

²¹ Ibid. 55-68; Guillermo O'Donnell, "Tensions in the Bureaucratic Authoritarian State and the Question of Democracy," in *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*, ed. David Collier (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), 292-293; In addition to O'Donnell, see, David Collier, ed., "Introduction," in *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), 4; *idem.*, "Overview of the Bureaucratic Authoritarian Model," *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979). Collier's book provides a good insight to understand the Bureaucratic Authoritarian model and its development in Latin America, including some critical essays, such as Fernando Henrique Cardoso's "On the Characterization of Authoritarian Regimes in Latin America." This article sees bureaucratic

The fourth approach, which is a societal one, looks at the political cultures of the countries where military's involvement in politics is a common aspect of politics. As already been pointed out, military interventions are found in *certain* countries, i.e. developing countries that share some fundamental sociological features. This theoretical framework was offered by Huntington,²² partly in his analysis the political experiences of Latin American countries. This was partly a response to the modernization theory,²³ which claimed that the economic development in less developed or "underdeveloped" countries would inevitably lead to the political development and eventually democracies would be established. However, the political experiences undermined this expectation because military interventions, authoritarianism, and the breakdown of the civilian regimes dominated the scene after the World War II. Huntington argued that there were substantive differences

authoritarianism as a kind of "regime" rather than a state. Cardoso sees the authoritarianism in Latin America as a phenomenon stemming from developments in the international capitalism. Due to the division of labor in the international capitalist economy, there has been an associated dependent development in the periphery, namely in Latin America, which forced the internationalizing bourgeoisie and the state (i.e. the military) to reach an agreement on restructuring of the domestic markets. Although, they incorporated the middle class when they needed it, the basic strategy was the exclusion of already activated popular sectors from politics in order to maintain stability. The military was decisive in the system. For the associated dependent development and its relation to authoritarianism, see, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, "Associated-Dependent Development: Theoretical and Practical Implications," in *Authoritarian Brazil: Origins, Policies and Future*, ed. Alfred Stepan (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1973). Cardoso is a prominent student of so-called dependency theory which tries to explain the authoritarianism in Latin America in terms of the dynamics of international capitalism, giving emphasis on center-periphery relations. He revised the classical theory to avoid determinism. For more details, see, Chilcote, *Theories of Comparative Politics*, 308-309.

²² Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968).

²³ For a comprehensive discussion of the origins and of the prominent assumptions of the modernization theory and its intellectual roots in the history of Western thought see, Reinhard Bendix, "Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 9 (1967): 292-346.

between these countries and the developed countries, which stemmed from the gap between participation and institutionalization. The main problem that these countries faced was the incompatibility between participation and institutionalization. In these praetorian societies,²⁴ “The rates of social mobilization and the expansion of political participation are high; the rates of political organizations and institutionalization are low. The result is political instability and disorder.”²⁵ Since the existing political institutionalization is unable to moderate the participation, the political system breaks down, and the military intervention comes out as the only way to provide political stability.

The most important contribution of Huntington, which also made his theory the most durable one in the analysis of the military interventions and the political conditions in the developing countries, was his accentuation on the role of the institutionalization in the political stability. As will be elaborated in detail below, the states in most of the developing nations share the features that characterize the patrimonial societies, i.e., weak institutionalization patterns. Given the fact that these states were established after the independence wars, they lack an "autonomous public," which requires the institutionalized norms defining the fundamental rules of the game. Yet, the political activism of the military in Turkey stems not from the weak institutionalization patterns, but from strong institutionalization patterns, i.e. strong state; thus, a state-centered approach is needed. Before the discussion of the state tradition and its relation the political activism of the military, and

²⁴ Praetorian societies are characterized as follows: “In such societies, politics lacks autonomy, complexity, coherence, and adaptability. All sorts of social forces and groups become directly engaged in general politics. Countries which have political armies also have political clergies, political universities, political bureaucracies, political labor unions, and political corporations. Society as a whole is out-of-joint, not just the military.” Ibid. 194.

²⁵ Ibid., 5.

corresponding traditions of secularization, a review of the literature on the Turkish military is given in the following part.

2.2 Perspectives on the Civil-Military Relations in Turkey

As has already been pointed out, the literature on the political activism of the Turkish military has been developed under the influence of the above perspectives, or at least it shares their prominent assumptions. At the general level, it can be argued that in these works the matter is seen either from the societal or from the organizational perspective. Some works are rather eclectic while combining the two main perspectives.

The early works on the Turkish military point out its modernizing role and see its involvement in politics as a phenomenon stemming from the modernizing mission of the military, which is the most and sole modernized institution in society. Dankwart A. Rustow argued that “for nearly two hundred years, the soldier has been Turkey’s foremost modernizer.”²⁶ The whole course of the Ottoman-Turkish modernization that started in the nineteenth century and resulted in the establishment of republic was carried out under the leadership of the military.²⁷ Daniel Lerner and Richard D. Robinson also made similar observations. The military’s modernizing role was not only seen in historical terms, but also their role in socialization of the rural population was emphasized. The people coming from the rural areas first meet

²⁶ Dankwart A. Rustow, “Political Modernization and the Turkish Military Tradition,” in *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, ed. R. E. Ward and Dankwart A. Rustow (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 352.

²⁷ Dankwart A. Rustow, “The Army and the Founding of the Turkish Republic,” *World Politics* 11 (1959): 514-520. He also generalizes the modernizing role of the military to the Middle Eastern Armies. See, Dankwart A. Rustow, “The Military in the Middle East Society and Politics,” in *The Military in the Middle East Politics: Problems in Society and Government*, ed. Sydney Nettleton Fisher (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1963).

modern way of life, skills and concepts during their military services by which they acquire *psychic mobility*, which encourages national sentiments and identity.²⁸ The military intervention occurs, as in 1960, when the civilian leadership fails to satisfy the military's expectations in terms of the social change and dynamic growth, which reflects their modernizing mission.²⁹

In the same vein, Ergun Özbudun, in his seminal work,³⁰ explained the political activism of the Turkish military as a response to the conservative policies of the Democrat Party government. Although Özbudun criticizes the overall assumptions of the professionalist, political institutionalization and the military's modernizing role approaches, and points out the exceptional characters of the Turkish case, he sees the coup of 1960 as a reformist one and as response to Democrat Party's "(1) increased authoritarianism, (2) ambivalence toward modernity, and (3) ultra-conservative social and economic policies."³¹ In a sense, his approach is close to the one which sees the political activism of the military as an act originating from the military's insistence on the modernization policies and the politician's concessions from this program. Furthermore, Özbudun sees the military

²⁸ Daniel Lerner and Richard D. Robinson, "Swords and Ploughshares: The Turkish Army as a Modernizing Force," in *The Military and Modernization*, ed. Henry Bienen (Chicago, New York: Aldine-Atherton, 1971), 117-148; For the military's role in transmitting the republican modernization ideology to the masses, see, Serdar Şen, *Cumhuriyet Kültürünün Oluşum Sürecinde Bir Ideolojik Aygıt Olarak Silahlı Kuvvetler ve Modernizm* [The Role of the Armed Forces in the Formation Process of Republican Culture] (Istanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi, 1996); For a counter and unorthodox approach to the role of the Turkish military which conceptualizes military's interventions since the period of Tanzimat as "a reaction to the emancipation of Turkish people," see, Kurtulus Kayali, *Ordu ve Siyaset: 27 Mayıs-12 Mart* [The Military and Politics: 27 May-12 March] (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 146.

³⁰ Ergun Özbudun, *The Role of the Military in Recent Turkish Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Center for International Affairs, 1966).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

leftism, i.e. military's interest in economic and social reform issues, as an expression of its class interests. Relying on the hypothesis that "the armies recruited from the lower social strata tend to be more socially progressive and reform minded than the armies of feudal or upper-class origins," Özbudun argues that the military's concern in reforming national economy and social system could be explained by its class origins.³² Although he avoids the class determinism, he sees the military's social background as an influential factor in their efforts to create "a more balanced economic growth and a more equitable distribution of wealth, upon which alone a healthy democracy could be built."³³

The approaches which try to explain civil-military relations in Turkey on the basis of the military's autonomy within the political and administrative framework give priority to the military's organizational capabilities and features. For instance, Gencay Şaylan relates the military's political activism to military's special kind of conception of politics, which is a product of a certain kind of political culture dominated by an idea of strong state and specific conception of democracy.³⁴ Hikmet Özdemir considers military's political position as an outcome its strategic location within the general-political administrative machine.³⁵ By its very beginning the

³² Ibid., 29.

³³ Ibid., 42.

³⁴ Gencay Şaylan, "Ordu ve Siyaset: Bonapartizmin Genel Kültürü" [Military and Politics: The General Culture of Bonapartism], in *Bahri Savcı'ya Armağan* [A Gift to Bahri Savcı] (Ankara: Mülkiyeliler Vakfı Yayınları, 1988), 449-459; Pure praetorian approaches to the civil-military relations in Turkey are rare. Although the conditions before the 1980 military intervention were considered in various works similar to a praetorian society described by Huntington, the existence of a highly institutionalized state and autonomous public norms precluded the writers to adopt completely praetorian stand. For an exception, see, John H. McFadden, "Civil-Military Relations in the Third Turkish Republic," *The Middle East Journal* 39 (1985): 69-85.

³⁵ Hikmet Özdemir, *Rejim ve Asker* [The Regime and the Soldier] (Istanbul: Afa Yayıncılık, 1989).

primary task of the military in Turkey has been to maintain public security (*asayiş*) and it has extensively used for that purpose which gradually resulted in the legal-institutional autonomy of the military.³⁶ As a result, the military opposed to the religious policies of the DP government in 1950 after the transition to democracy. Later the “task” became to defend the country against the “communist challenge.” As a result of this neo-professionalism and the role expansion, the military has moved to the strategic positions of decision-making and gained substantive autonomy. Similarly Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu observes that the Turkish military, historically committed to preserve the general interest embodied in Atatürkism as official ideology and to a certain kind of democracy, has managed to extend its zone of influence by increasing its autonomy in a condition in which no other societal force was able to restructure order.³⁷ In this long tradition, the post-1980 developments, in regards to the military’s autonomy, represent a shift rather than the continuity.³⁸

The approaches that emphasize adopted economic development strategies in explaining the military interventions, like O’Donnell, point out the stabilizing role of the Turkish military, especially in the periods of crisis.³⁹ Çağlar Keyder, and Irvin C.

³⁶ Ibid., 19.

³⁷ Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, “The Anatomy of the Turkish Military’s Political Autonomy,” *Comparative Politics* 29 (1997): 151-166.

³⁸ Ibid., 162.

³⁹ The class interest is not only a rarely emphasized factor in explaining the political activism of military in Turkey, but also has a weak explanatory power. An exception is Feroz Ahmad who thinks that the main motive behind the 1960 military intervention was the deterioration of the economic conditions and prestige of the military under the DP government. After the intervention, military became an integral part of the socio-economic order by creating required institutions like National Security Council, through which the military has been able to impose its policy preferences upon the civilians and *OYAK* (Turkish acronym of Army Mutual Assistance Association) which has become one of the greatest groups in Turkish economy. His approach to 12 September, however, is O’Donnellian. See, Feroz

Schick and Ahmet Tonak argue that the military intervention of 1980 was a response to the economic strategy that aimed at the integration of the Turkish economy to the developed capitalist world economy through developing its internal market.⁴⁰ The strategy had worked well until the exhaustion of the internal market. However, by the beginning of the 1970s, when the internal market was exhausted, one faces two important results of the import-substitution industrialization strategy: a serious economic crisis which manifested itself especially as the foreign exchange shortage and a radicalized labor unions. The aim of the military interventions was to provide suitable conditions for the stabilization programs offered by the International Monetary Fund, which aimed at transforming import-substitution strategy into an export-led one. Particularly, the aim of 12 September was to complete the economic program framed by the 24 January 1980 decisions.

A vast amount of works trying to explain the political role of the Turkish military emphasize the military's commitment to the legacy of Atatürk and to the ideology of Atatürkism. For these works, the main reason behind the military interventions in Turkey is the civilians' deviation from the Atatürkism.⁴¹ The

Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge, 1993), 121-131 and 178-179. For a critique of the shortcomings of the "middle class" approach to the civil-military relations in Turkey, see, William Hale, "The Turkish Army in Politics: 1960-83," in *Turkish State, Turkish Society*, ed. Andrew Finkel and Nükhet Sırman (London, New York: Routledge, 1990).

⁴⁰ Çağlar Keyder, "İktisadi Gelişme ve Bunalım" [Economic Development and Crisis] in *Geçiş Sürecinde Türkiye* [Turkey in Transition], ed. Irvin C. Schick and Ertuğrul Ahmet Tonak (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1990); Irvin C. Schick and E. Ahmet Tonak, "Uluslararası Boyut: Ticaret, Yardım ve Borçlanma," [International Dimension: Trade, Assistance and Debt], in *Geçiş Sürecinde Türkiye* [Turkey in Transition], ed. Irvin C. Schick and Ertuğrul Ahmet Tonak (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1990).

⁴¹ James Brown, "The Military and Politics in Turkey," *Armed Forces and Society* 13 (1987): 234-252; George S. Harris, "The Causes of the 1960 Revolution in Turkey," *Middle East Journal* 2 (1970): 438-454; George S. Harris, "The Role of the Military in Turkey in the 1980s: Guardians or Decision-Makers," in *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, ed. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin

underlying argument in this approach is that the Turkish military is committed to democracy and reluctant to intervene unless the civilians make concessions from the legacy of Atatürk. Thus, the reason behind the interventions is not the military's selfish appetite, but civilians' irresponsible and ambivalent attitudes towards the principles of Atatürkism. The military's commitment to Atatürkism was evaluated along with the military's historical modernizing mission and its devotion to carry on the country in the line of modernity. Since Atatürkism and its principles means to reach contemporary civilization, the military's mission again appears as a guarantor of modernization. Thus, the approaches, which see the military as a guardian of the legacy of Atatürk, implicitly or explicitly, attributes a modernizing role to the military and theorize within the theoretical framework which explains the political role of the military in the developing nations on the basis of the military's modernizing role. The historical legacy and present position of the Turkish military fits the case better and makes these views more appealing.

The fact that military interventions generally have taken place in *certain* societies, i.e. developing societies, discards the institutionalist explanation since *all* armies share similar institutional characteristics but *some* armies intervene into politics. Thus, not the organizational features but societal conditions need to be investigated. As for the middle class approach, it may explain some interventions but

(Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988); Cristian Rump, "The Military, the Presidency and the Constitution: A Comparative Approach to Weimar Republic, France 1958 and Turkey 1982, in *Ibid.*, Kemal H. Karpat, "The Military and Politics in Turkey, 1960-64: A Socio-Cultural Analysis of a Revolution," *American Historical Review* 75 (1970):1654-1683; Kemal H. Karpat, "Army-Civilian Relations in Turkey Before and After 1980," in *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, ed. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988); Sydney Nettleton Fisher, "The Role of the Military in Society and Government in Turkey," *The Military in the Middle East Politics: Problems in Society and Government*, ed. Sydney Nettleton Fisher (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1963); William Hale, "The Turkish Army in Politics: 1960-83,"; Frank Tachau and Metin Heper, "The State, Politics and the Military in Turkey," *Comparative Politics* 16 (1983).

it is not the case that all interventions have been done on behalf of the middle class in which the social origin of the military is rooted. For instance, in Brazil the military acted against the middle class, and the traditional bureaucratic part of the middle class lost their influence as a result of the policies adopted by the military leaders.⁴² In Turkey the main consideration of the military has been the state without an affinity to class or sectional interests. The nature of the military interventions in Turkey has shown that it acted autonomously from the social groups.⁴³

The Bureaucratic-Authoritarian model may work in some Latin American countries but in Turkey, despite the fact that the military intervention of 1980 coincided with the stabilization program of 24 January Decisions, the main interest of the military was the restructuring the order. Moreover, the military leaders did not intend to institutionalize an authoritarian military regime, and “the initiative for withdrawal- a return to barracks- was undertaken by the armed forces themselves, a most unusual phenomenon in civil-military relations.”⁴⁴ The Turkish case poses further difficulties since the Turkish military differs from the most of the non-Western militaries with respect to its historical origin. Unlike the armies of the most of the non-Western countries, the Turkish military is neither an ex-colonial army, i.e. established in the struggle of national liberation, nor a post-liberation army which came into existence after the achievement of national liberation.⁴⁵ It is true that Turkey experienced a deadly War of Independence in which the military was partly

⁴² Cardoso, “Associated-Dependent Development: Theoretical and Practical Implications.” 146-147.

⁴³ Sakallioğlu, *AP-Ordu İlişkileri* [The Justice Party-Military Relations], 14.

⁴⁴ James Brown, “The Military and Politics in Turkey,” *Armed Forces and Society* 13 (1987): 233.

⁴⁵ These categories were borrowed from Morris Janowitz. See, Morris Janowitz, *Military Institutions and Coercion in the Developing Nations* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988).

re-established, but this was not a qualified break from its long historical tradition. The historical importance of this is that the military's conducts in politics has been bounded by some norms internalized by the military throughout its long historical experiences. On the established norms delineating the relationship between the military and people in Turkey Serif Mardin observed that there has always been a counter set of norms on the part of the people, namely "popular opinion" which prevented the military from establishing enduring military regimes, since these norms were also respected by the military.⁴⁶

The established norms and traditions imply high level of institutionalization, but how does the high level of institutionalization exist with a political army in a society at the same time? Huntington's contribution in this respect is important since he pointed out the political consequences of weak institutionalization patterns, but needs some supplements. Since it is impossible to establish strong institutionalization in a short span of time, the historical heritage becomes important in understanding the existence or non-existence of institutionalization. Moreover, not only the absence of institutionalization, but also the existence of a high level of institutionalization is important in understanding different polities. In other words, the critical variables in understanding different polities are the historically inherited political culture in general and the institutionalization level of the state and the norms and values around this state is structured in particular.

Huntington was aware of the importance of time in the process of institutionalization,⁴⁷ but he did not systematically analyze the historical background of the weak institutionalization patterns, partly because of his area of study, i.e. the

⁴⁶ Şerif Mardin, "Freedom in Ottoman Perspective," in *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, ed. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 6-8.

⁴⁷ Huntington, *Political Order*, 13.

newly established states of Latin America, Africa and Asia. Therefore, the generalizations which claim that the political military is a characteristic of weak states and societies⁴⁸ has no relevance to the Turkish case since, unlike the states in question, the state in Turkey has always been strong enjoying the capacity to impose its preferences upon society.⁴⁹ Therefore what is needed to understand the political role of the military, the dissension between state and religion and the role of the military in formation of such relationship is to trace the genealogy of strong institutionalization patterns.⁵⁰ In other words, the question of how have strong institutionalization patterns emerged becomes significant in understanding the whole polity and political culture that shapes the actions of political actors.

Strong institutionalization patterns, as used here, refer to the autonomous domain of the state vis-à-vis the society. In this conception, the general way of policy making does not take place as the pluralists conceptualize it, i.e. in a way that policies are made on the basis of the preferences of the different political groups or actors which are represented by their relative power. Rather, in societies having autonomous state tradition, there exist the preferences of the state, embodied in the civil and military bureaucracy as well. It is argued that the role of the military in formation of strong institutionalization patterns is vital especially at the initial level of the state formation. As Keith Krause argues, “the struggle to control the

⁴⁸ Amos Perlmutter, *Political Roles and Military Rules* (London: Frank Cass, 1981), 19.

⁴⁹ Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*.

⁵⁰ This approach was offered by Heper who analysis the impacts of strong institutionalization patterns upon the variation of the polities and the consolidation of democracy in Turkey. See, Heper, “The Strong State as a Problem for the Consolidation of Democracy,” 169-193; Metin Heper, “Transition to Democracy Reconsidered: A Historical Perspective,” in *Comparative Political Dynamics: Global Research Perspectives*, ed. Dankwart A. Rustow and Kenneth Paul Ericson (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 192-219.

institutions and instruments of the organized violence has been central to the emergence of the modern state, and its conception of representative political institutions, civil-society and civil-military relations.”⁵¹ It was in this process, i.e. the formation of the national state that the state and religion went into schism, i.e. into separate ways. Therefore, Turkey must be compared with the societies of Western Europe having state traditions, not the weak states of Latin America, Africa and Asia. A historical and comparative approach can illuminate the emergence of autonomous state and the role of the military in formation of such a state. Before the elaboration of the historical traditions, it is necessary to discuss here what is meant by the state tradition and state autonomy in political theory.

2.3 The State as an Autonomous Agent

As pointed out before, the tension between state and Islam in Turkey has been established throughout a long historical process, particularly in the process of modernization, and the role of the military-bureaucratic elites in the formation of modernity in Turkey has been determining. Therefore, in order to understand the contention between state and religion in Turkey, it is necessary to examine the role of the military-bureaucratic elites, which necessitates the explanation of the political activism of the military in Turkey. It has been argued that the political activism of the military in Turkey can not be understood by addressing the literature developed on the military interventions in developing countries, since unlike these countries, the problem in Turkey arises from the extremely autonomous state. Therefore, the genealogy of this extremely autonomous state needs to be traced to its antecedent origins.

⁵¹ Keith Krause, “Insecurity and State Formation in the Global Military Order: The Middle Eastern Case,” *European Journal of International Relations* 2 (1996): 320.

In the political and social science literature, a political conception of the state has widely been dominating the scene. In this conception, the state is not a legal entity that merely claims the monopoly over the violence as developed by Weber, but a political entity shaping the course of policy making and the content of the whole polity.⁵² In this formulation, the state is not a mere reflection or the totality of the sectional interests, rather a notion of the public interests developed independently of classes and different sections of society.⁵³ The pioneering study in this respect is J. P. Nettl's "The State as a Conceptual Variable," which more or less shaped the subsequent state-centered studies. With regards to the centrality of the state, Nettl declared that "the concept of the state is and ought to be treated as a variable in social science, as a reflection of the varying empirical reality within which social science concern itself."⁵⁴ In the same vein, Pierre Birnbaum argued that to the extent that the formation of an autonomized public area is concerned "the state is seen as an independent variable around which the entire system in all its aspects recognizes itself."⁵⁵

The state centered approach was developed partly as a response to the pluralist conception of politics in which the state is treated as an arena in which different

⁵² Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research," in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 22.

⁵³ Metin Heper, ed., "Introduction," in *The State and Public Bureaucracies: A Comparative Perspective* (New York, et. al.: Greenwood Press, 1987), 3; Kenneth F. Dyson, *The State Tradition in Western Europe: A Study of an Idea and Institution* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1980), 275.

⁵⁴ J. P. Nettl, "The State as a Conceptual Variable," in *Comparative Politics in post-Behavioral Era*, ed. Louis J. Cantory and Andrew H. Zeigler, Jr. (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988), 305.

⁵⁵ Pierre Birnbaum, "States, Ideologies and Collective Action in Western Europe," in *The State in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Ali Kazancigil (Paris: UNESCO, 1996), 233.

social groups ally with one another,⁵⁶ and to the Marxist view of the state which sees the state as an *epifenomenon*, a reflection of class conflict found in class societies. However, in the pluralist and Marxist conceptions, the state has no independent existence from society or societal groups, and it is not a part of the game. But in the state-centered approach which is undertaken here, the state is formulated independently of society and social groups, an autonomous agent shaping social groups and imposing policies on society. As argued by Özbudun, “state autonomy refers to the insulation of the state from societal pressures and to its freedom to make important decisions.”⁵⁷ In other words, the state as formulated here is taken vis-a-vis civil society, and, as Metin Heper noted, to the extent that there is a state highly differentiated from society, we can talk of the phenomenon of the state and the levels of stateness corresponding to the different institutionalization patterns of various polities.⁵⁸ Since the institutionalization patterns show significant differences among countries, the level of “stateness” also differs regarding the polities of these countries. It is stated that “once we accept society as a pluralist entity made up of associations and collectivities, it may be the case that the greater autonomy of the state *vis-a-vis* other collectivities becomes an empirical question for each individual case.”⁵⁹ In other words, “in empirical reality there are states not *the state*.”⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In,” 4.

⁵⁷ Ergun Özbudun, “The Continuing Ottoman Legacy and the State Tradition in the Middle East,” in *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*, ed. L. Carl Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 134.

⁵⁸ Heper, “Introduction,” 3.

⁵⁹ Nettl, “The State as a Conceptual Variable,” 307.

⁶⁰ Heper, “Introduction,” 5.

The state autonomy or “stateness” as conceptualized here is not a fixed phenomenon. It shows significant differences among polities and within the same polity at different periods.⁶¹ To the extent that the goals and policies are formulated independent of society and implemented over actual resistance of society, one can talk about the capacity of states.⁶² It can be said that a society having an autonomous state tradition has a state high in capacity, whereas a stateless society is expected to have a state with low capacity. “A shift towards a “state” society involves a preference for bureaucratic and legalistic methods of conflict resolution and for technical criteria in decision-making. Both the presence of bureaucrats in politics and the form of institutions and procedures of policy making illustrate this phenomenon.”⁶³

Kenneth Dyson summarizes overall characteristics of the state societies and stateless societies as follows:

State societies exemplify strongly non-economic, non-utilitarian attitudes towards political relations, which attitudes deny that the public interest is simply the sum of private interests; a rationalistic spirit of inquiry; a stress on the distinctiveness of state and society, whether in terms of the special function of the state or in terms of the peculiar character of its authority; a consciousness of institutions which reflects the strength of legalism and codification within the political culture and reveals itself in the ubiquity of formal organizations and their detailed constitutions; a concern for formalization and depersonalization which lend a “republican” character to the political system.... an emphasis on impersonal political symbols of community; a stress on the unitary character of “public power”, whether the state itself is centralized or federal (the state is a generalizing and integrating concept); a moralistic view of politics which involves strongly collectivist and regulatory attitudes, a notion of the inherent responsibilities of the executive power and an active conception of the administrator’s role; and, even when parliamentary and party government is accepted, the idea that the executive power is a public

⁶¹ Ibid., 4 ; Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In,” 14.

⁶² Skocpol, “Bringing The State Back In,” 9.

⁶³ Dyson, *The State Tradition in Western Europe*, 51.

institution that is detached from, and has a basis of authority outside, Parliament.⁶⁴

By contrast, the “stateless” societies are characterized by the lack of the notion of the autonomous public interests, instrumental conception of government and pragmatic view of politics, the tradition of pluralism and debate, mutual respect and tolerance among citizens and high level of civility.⁶⁵

The historical, intellectual and cultural factors have been identified which are central to the existence of an autonomous state. If there is a historical tradition of an isolated sovereign state in a society, there emerges a strong state. Another is intellectual in such a way that if the political ideas and the norms of policy making in any society incorporate a sovereign state, the possibility of the emergence of a strong state is high. There is also a cultural element in terms of the ideas held by individuals of a country about a generalized concept and cognition of the state. If this concept of the state is active in the perceptions and actions of individuals, the probability of existence of a strong state is high.⁶⁶

In shaping modern institutional dynamics of societies, namely, in direction of either strong or weak institutionalization patterns, antecedent cultural traditions have special importance. S. N. Eisenstadt⁶⁷ identifies three types of societies with different antecedent political regimes that have produced different outcomes for subsequent regimes; the imperial, imperial-feudal and patrimonial societies. Imperial

⁶⁴ Ibid., 51-52.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 52.

⁶⁶ For the elaboration of the factors, see Nettl, “The State as a Conceptual Variable,” 312.

⁶⁷ S. N. Eisenstadt, “Comparative Analysis of the State in Historical Contexts,” in *The State in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Ali Kazancigil (Paris: UNESCO, 1996), 20.

and to a large extent imperial-feudal societies are characterized by a high level of distinctiveness of the center from the periphery both in structural-organizational and symbolic terms. In these societies the center is concerned with the periphery not only to extract resources but also to reconstruct it according to the postulates of the center. On the other hand, in patrimonial societies there is no symbolic and structural distinction of the center from the periphery. They also lack an autonomous elite formation, and the differentiation is based on status.⁶⁸

The variations between imperial and imperial-feudal societies in terms of the center and periphery relations and their subsequent political evolutions are important. Heper⁶⁹ notes that the imperial and imperial-feudal societies show important differences with respect to the degree of the autonomy of their centers and the level of incorporation of local elites to the central political structure. The main difference between imperial and imperial-feudal societies is that in imperial-feudal societies there are some peripheral forces, namely, the forces of civil society, acting *vis-a-vis* the center, hence, relatively decreasing the degree of autonomy of the center. But in imperial societies, the center totally dominates the periphery, and the level of autonomy of the central authority is high. Consequently, it can be argued that “stateness” is high in societies with an imperial heritage and low in societies with an imperial-feudal heritage. In addition to the particular structuration of the center and periphery, Heper claims that the previous forms of the relationship between central and local forces have significant effects upon the subsequent political developments, particularly upon the institutionalization of the state, and he divides imperial-feudal societies into two categories according to the nature of the relationship between the center and these countervailing peripheral forces: the

⁶⁸ Ibid., 23-25.

⁶⁹ Heper, “Transition to Democracy Reconsidered,” 197.

centralized feudalism and decentralized feudalism.⁷⁰ In the centralized feudalism, the conflict between central and peripheral forces was resolved through consensus, and consensus was established as a fundamental way of problem resolution, thus, there emerged a weak state. But in decentralized feudalism, the conflict in question was not resolved by using consensus as a fundamental mechanism of conflict resolution; thus, the state emerged above the society and set the ideological parameters for the politics.⁷¹ These different historical-political-cultural patterns led to different political outcomes in different settings, hence, different configurations of civil-military relations.

2.4 State Formation, the Role of the Military and Different Outcomes of Historical Traditions

Under the postulates of the above formulations, it is possible to understand comparatively different political experiences of the Western and non-Western countries including the Ottoman-Turkish society. Western countries represent the imperial-feudal societies in which some countervailing powers to check central authority existed. Since the center was not totally autonomous and there were intermediary structures between the state and society, the state formation in the process of the transition to modernity resulted in a smooth reconciliation of the periphery and a stable democracy. The power was gradually concentrated in the elected representatives of the people or nation accompanied by the decrease in power of the appointed officials. But the outcome of the imperial heritage was radically different. Instead of the smooth reconciliation of the peripheral forces into the central

⁷⁰ Metin Heper, "The State and Public Bureaucracies: A Comparative and Historical Perspective," in *The State and Bureaucracies: A Comparative and Historical Perspective*, ed. Metin Heper (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 13.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

political structure, the modernization efforts in these societies intensified the centralization and there emerged a strong state setting the ideological parameters in politics. In other words, the modernization efforts in imperial societies did not result in instituting a system in which the power was successfully transferred to the elected representatives of the people. There has always existed a tug-of-war between the elected representatives or the representatives of particular interests and that of the general interest. Yet, in the centralized feudalism, the incorporation of the periphery into the center did not generate the tension between center and periphery, but in decentralized feudalism the state extended its scope vis-a-vis the periphery, and the reconciliation produced serious tensions reinforcing the central norms which were manifested in republican radicalism. England is the best example of the centralized feudalism whereas France represents the ideal case for decentralized feudalism. The Ottoman Empire was characterized by the imperial heritage with no intermediary structures.⁷² As will be elaborated in detail in the following pages, the Ottoman-Turkish state had been extensively strong one which was structured in the military and bureaucracy, and there always existed a potential antagonism between the representatives of the state and that of the people.

In England, a relatively well-integrated society was established in the beginning of the fourteenth century. The local leaders and the English kings recognized each other's rights and social and political developments culminated in the polity of estates-*Standestaat*.⁷³ It gained its unity under one monarch in a very early period beginning in the tenth century, and by the fifteenth century a kind of national identity had emerged which made the English centralization experiences easy and different from the rest of Europe.⁷⁴ As pointed out by Bertrant Badie and

⁷² This classification was taken from Heper, see, *Ibid.*, 13-14.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

⁷⁴ Dyson, *The State Tradition in Western Europe*, 38.

Pierre Birnbaum,⁷⁵ the English aristocracy did not fight against the king to gain autonomy; rather, the aim of the English aristocracy was to put some checks on the king's power. Of the relationship between the crown and the local forces, Dyson notes the following:

The political system rested on a complex process of bargaining between the Crown and the great landed magnates which had, by the early seventeenth century, given way to a pattern of co-operation and conflict between "Country," which was represented in the Commons, and "Court". Monarchical authority was viewed as conditional. The monarch was not above or outside of the community, but was a member of the "community of the realm."⁷⁶

Consequently, the monarchy was not interested in establishing a strong authoritarian bureaucracy in the process of the establishment of the center. Moreover, the estates opposed to the centralizing efforts of the monarchy, and although the efforts continued after the fall of the Stuarts, the focus of these efforts was the Parliament.⁷⁷ The power of the parliament has been great since the monarchs adopted the model of the "king-in-the parliament" which meant that sovereignty rested upon the Crown-in-Parliament. In addition, parliament became the instrument of territorial representation and the articulation of various interests.⁷⁸

The principal consequences of these different traditions were also different in terms of the identification of the state, and the formation and training of elites. The

⁷⁵ Bertrant Badie and Pierre Birnbaum, *The Sociology of the State*, trans. A. Goldhammer (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 83.

⁷⁶ Dyson *The State Tradition in Western Europe*, 38.

⁷⁷ Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State: A Sociological Introduction* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1978), 58.

⁷⁸ Dyson, *The State Tradition in Western Europe*, 39; Reinhard Bendix, *Kings or People: Power and the Mandate to Rule* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1978), 314.

state in England has had a strong identification with individuals;⁷⁹ hence, the training of the elites in England, unlike its counterpart France, has addressed itself to society not to the state. The elite socializing institutions have legitimacy bases in society independent of the state and “the bureaucratic-state-conscious intelligentsia,” which is a prominent feature of the state societies, has been lacking in England due to its stateless tradition.⁸⁰

The French case, on the other hand, represents the opposite one in which decentralization of authority was very high in the ninth and tenth centuries. The local and central authorities were in continuous wars which resulted in the absolute rule of Louis XIV (1643-1715). Since it was difficult to establish consensus as a way of solving the fundamental conflicts due to the continuous tug-of-war between forces, the French State emerged as a strong and autonomous one imposing its norms upon society.⁸¹ The issue of centralization had already been on the agenda of the French political life. “From Hugh Capet to Louis XIV, from French Revolution to Napoleon III and the Gaullist regime, the French state has steadily expanded its control over civil society and constituted itself as an autonomous power, an immense and hermetic administrative machine capable of dominating all peripheral power centers.”⁸² For France and Prussia Charles Tilly observed that “the kings were able to undermine the Estates after considerable effort, and at the expense of erecting large administrative structure to supplant them.”⁸³ In France, the territorial ruling

⁷⁹ Nettl, “The State as a Conceptual Variable,” 312

⁸⁰ Dyson, *The State Tradition in Western Europe*, 249.

⁸¹ Heper, “The State and Public Bureaucracies: A Comparative and Historical Perspective,” 13-14.

⁸² Baide and Birnbaum, *The Sociology of the State*, 105.

dynasty dissolved the local estates and created a centralized state by establishing an apparatus of rule under the command of the monarch,⁸⁴ a process that worked against the power of civil society or the intermediaries. Thus, the Estates-General did not evolve in the same direction as the English Parliament, and its existence depended upon the central authorities.⁸⁵

The role of the bureaucracy and the norms under which the socialization of the bureaucrats took place were different from the stateless societies. Unlike the officials of England, they identified themselves with the state, cutting off their ties from and imposing their norms upon civil society.⁸⁶ They became the instruments of public power, and the state tradition included the narrow definition of the role of political parties.⁸⁷ The profound political conflicts were vivid phenomena of the nineteenth century France. The state in this century turned into an arena of unresolved conflicts, which reinforced the state elites to adopt the policies aiming at promoting their autonomy through establishing public institutions and keeping the state away from direct involvement in contradictions and upheavals.⁸⁸ The same trend continued during the twentieth century albeit in a relatively weak fashion. The bureaucratic reforms of the Gaullist regime increased the autonomy of the state, serving only the national interest through the reforms in the bureaucracy and by a limited

⁸³ Charles Tilly, "Reflections on the History of the European State-Making," in *The Formation of the National States in Western Europe*, ed. Charles Tilly (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 22.

⁸⁴ Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State*, 58.

⁸⁵ Bendix, *Kings or People*, 327.

⁸⁶ Birnbaum, "States, Ideologies and Collective Action in Western Europe," 232-233; Badie and Birnbaum, *The Sociology of the State*, 111.

⁸⁷ Dyson, *The State Tradition*, 256-259.

⁸⁸ Pierre Birnbaum, "France: Polity with a Strong State," in *The State and Bureaucracies: A Comparative and Historical Perspective*, ed. Metin Heper (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 73-74.

parliamentary system of the Fifth Republic.⁸⁹ The result was a strong state highly differentiated from civil society with a politically strong bureaucratic apparatus. Thus, the functioning of democracy in France was not as smooth as it was in England.

Most of the societies in the non-Western world fall into the category of patrimonial societies that failed to establish viable centers, which promoted the development of a relatively autonomous public, an apparatus needed for the smooth functioning of the state. “The capacity to create political institutions” says Huntington “is the capacity to create public interests.”⁹⁰ The weakness public or its total absence means also the absence of consensus among the groups seeking private interests and the lack of central norms defining the fundamental rules of the game. Governments in Latin American, Africa and most of the Asian societies are founded upon the unpredetermined consent⁹¹ lacking procedures to direct political debates and the rules to transfer political power. Alain Roquié notes on the political conditions of Spanish American nations that “the Spanish American nations were established in wars of independence. The new republic had an army even when they did not have a state.”⁹² The wars against the colonial powers destroyed the Spanish institutions and encouraged the fragmentation of territorial and administrative unity, which, in turn, resulted in total anarchy.⁹³ Political allies during the nineteenth

⁸⁹ Dyson, *The State Tradition*, 224.

⁹⁰ Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 24. “The public interest is the interest of the public institutions,” therefore the power of the public institutions means the strength of the notion of the public. 25.

⁹¹ Finer, *Man on Horseback*, 118.

⁹² Alain Rouquié, *The Military and the State in Latin America*, trans. Poul E. Sigmund (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1987), 47.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 48.

century took place along the patron-client relationship,⁹⁴ and there was the persistence of self-centered individualism which strongly involved distrust for other groups⁹⁵ and which prevented the development of autonomous political institutions. Consequently, all efforts towards modernization resulted in praetorianism, and authoritarian military regimes became the permanent features of these societies.

Among the above categories, the Ottoman Empire is best described as an imperial society⁹⁶ with a strong center without intermediary power structures. Although France has been described as the ideal type of state society and the French state as an ideal type of the state,⁹⁷ it can be claimed that the Ottoman-Turkish state fits this ideal type better than the French state since state has been stronger in the Ottoman-Turkish context than in France. The Ottomans developed a state tradition which was absent in non-Western or “so-called” Third World countries.⁹⁸

As has been noted before, the Ottoman state was established by *ghazis* (the holy warriors) as a militant entity, which, shaped its political culture. The military was an important factor in establishing the state that was based on the idea of conquest. The Ottomans fought against internal and external enemies which led the Ottoman statesmen to take negative attitudes towards the intermediary power holders. Although the Ottoman state and the role of the military, as the primary focus of the present study, will be elaborated below in detail within the context presented

⁹⁴ Heper, “Transition to Democracy Reconsidered,” 200.

⁹⁵ Huntington, *Political Order*, 29. Huntington says that the existence of weak institutionalization patterns or weak states is not only a characteristics of Latin American societies. It can be found in Arab, Iberian , African and Asian societies. For further elaboration, see, *Political Order*, 28-32.

⁹⁶ Heper, “Transition to Democracy Reconsidered,” 198.

⁹⁷ Badie and Birnbaum, *The Sociology of the State*, 105.

⁹⁸ Heper, “The Strong State as a Problem for the Consolidation of Democracy,” 172.

above here it will be meaningful to elaborate how did these primordial structures shape subsequent political developments in the process of transition to modernity, and what was the role of the military in this process?

2.5 The Military and the Evolution of Different Polities

So far the effects of the antecedent regime types on the existing polities have been investigated, and it has already been pointed out that different historical traditions produced different outcomes in the process of the formation of the modern state in terms of the degree of stateness. The role of the military both in the formation of the modern state and in the establishment of modern polities was not discussed. In other words, the given framework should be completed with a consideration of the military's role. What was the role of the military in the development of modern polities and in variations of these polities from each other? In which way did the military modernization determine subsequent courses of democratic consolidation? It is, here, argued that the military is central to any state tradition.⁹⁹ The crucial point in the relationship between state-making and the military found its apt expression in Tilly's aphoristic maxim: "War made the state, and the state made war."¹⁰⁰ Similarly, it is claimed that "warfare and military rivalry played a fundamental role in the origin and development of modern European states."¹⁰¹ Otto Hintze also argued that

⁹⁹ For the relationship between military and state tradition, see, Samuel E. Finer, "State and Nation Building in Europe: The Role of the Military," in *The Formation of the National States in Western Europe*, ed. Charles Tilly (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 84-163; Bruce D. Porter, *War and the Rise of the State: The Military Foundations of Modern Politics*; Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European State-Making," 3-83; Krause, "Insecurity and State Formation in the Global Military Order: The Middle Eastern Case," 319-354; Otto Hintze, "Military Organization and the Organization of the State," in *The State: Critical Concepts*, ed. John A. Hall (London, New York: Routledge, 1994)181-202.

¹⁰⁰ Tilly, "Reflections on the History of the European State-Making," 42.

“all state organization was originally military organization, organization for war... Out of this martial organization there first developed a more severe government with coercive power over individuals, and it increased in strength the more frequently wars were waged.”¹⁰² On the relationship between war and state making Krause argued, “The impact of war on state-making manifest itself in the political realm through the extension of territorial control and the acquisition of a monopoly of force, the emergence of centralized rule and administrative structures and the erosion of local autonomy of particularity.”¹⁰³ Similarly, Tilly argued,

It [the war] produced the means of enforcing the government’s will over stiff resistance: the army. It tended, indeed, to promote territorial consolidation, centralization, differentiation of the instruments of government and monopolization of the means of coercion, all the fundamental state-making process.¹⁰⁴

The initial phase of state formation was characterized by a coalition of state makers and war makers because the state-making necessitated to create new political and socio-economic institutions to extract resources in order to feed their expanding war machines and finance the wars.¹⁰⁵ After the consolidation of the power in favor of the state-makers, as observed by Stein Rokkan, a new stage came into scene

¹⁰¹ Bruce D. Porter, *War and the Rise of the State: The Military Foundations of Modern Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 2.

¹⁰² Hintze, “Military Organization and the Organization of the State,” 181.

¹⁰³ Krause, “Insecurity and State Formation in the Global Military Order,” 325.

¹⁰⁴ Tilly, “Reflections on the History of the European State-Making,” 42.

¹⁰⁵ Krause, “Insecurity and State Formation in the Global Military Order,” 326.

which included an extension of space of the state towards periphery.¹⁰⁶ It was the *nature* of this extension of the center towards the periphery that determined the ensuing patterns of different polities, and the military modernization was crucial in this process. Although the role of the military in the process of state-making has been emphasized in social and political science literature, its role in formation of different polities or political cultures was almost neglected. One exception is Brian M. Downing who has shown that the nature of the military modernization in the process of transition to modernity was crucially important in the political evolution of the western societies.¹⁰⁷ On the basis of his work, it was the *ways* of the military modernization in the process of transition to modernity that determined the path of subsequent developments both either in democratic or in autocratic directions throughout the world.

Downing¹⁰⁸ suggests that there are some peculiarities in Europe originating from the medieval past that brought liberal democracy. They also distinguish the European civilization from other civilizations. The existence of the representative assemblies, which were very important institutions in establishing liberal democracies, is something peculiar to Europe. The relationship between the military modernization and the medieval representative institutions is crucial to understand the origins of both liberal democracy and autocracy. In societies where military modernization destroyed the representative assemblies and relied on domestic resources to finance wars, there emerged strong and centralized monarchical states, and the monarchs established expansive autocracies. However, in societies, where

¹⁰⁶ Stein Rokkan, "Dimensions of State Formation and Nation-Building: A Possible Paradigm for Research on Variations within Europe," in *The State: Critical Concepts*, ed. John A. Hall (New York, London: Routledge, 1994), 32-33.

¹⁰⁷ Brian M. Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

the military revolutions did not take place and alternative methods of financing wars were developed, the establishment of liberal democracy proved to be an easy task. Through the military revolution or military modernization which took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, “the process whereby small, decentralized, self-equipped feudal hosts were replaced by increasingly large, centrally financed and supplied armies that equipped themselves with ever more sophisticated and expansive weaponry.”¹⁰⁹

Although Downing analyses a set of countries ranging from Europe to Asia, for the present purpose his analysis of England and France is enough to make a comparison between them and Turkey.

England’s relatively easy resolution of the center-periphery conflict, its smooth transition to liberal democracy and the establishment of a weak state with a self-functioning civil society spring from the endurance of its medieval representative institutions, since English society did not experience the military revolution to the same level as France and Brandenburg Prussia. In the mediaeval England the military organization was decentralized, and the control of the armed groups was local. These decentralized military groups had certain rights and immunities which gave the notables the right to negotiate with the crown. This state of affairs prevented the crown’s domination over the military, which in turn, prevented the expansion of the royal power too.¹¹⁰

During the Tudor period (1485-1609), England underwent radical changes such as the Reformation, governmental reform and economic growth. But the strong figures of the time who were interested in these issues neither intended to establish a military-bureaucratic absolutism nor destroyed the parliamentary processes. They made a coalition with the gentry and shared power with other social classes within a

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 10.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 159-160.

consensual framework. Moreover, the wars were financed by parliamentary subsidies. When England was involved in the continental wars in the late seventeenth century, the number of soldiers remained relatively small, and the Bank of England found required financial resources for war helped by the comparatively well developed economy of England. Consequently, the efforts towards state-building of that era experienced neither military revolution nor military centered bureaucracy.¹¹¹ The result was a smooth functioning liberal democracy.

France, on the other hand, followed a different trajectory in the process of state building. In a very early period, Philip Augustus (1180-1223) established both central and local institutions. The Hundred Years' War did not necessitate a large army, and the mobilization of resources remained small. Although from the fourteenth century to the early seventeenth century France was involved in numerous wars, none of them were as influential as the Thirty Years' War that led France to military modernization and to the destruction of the medieval constitutionalism. These wars showed the French statesmen that a modern, well-equipped standing army was necessary to do well in wars. This necessitated extra taxes, which were implemented without the consent of local parliaments and which sometimes exceeded the legitimate limits. The revolts coming from the estates were suppressed by 1653. This suppression cleaned the way for centralization,¹¹² and at the end, the French monarchs established a military-bureaucratic absolutism.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Ibid., 162-163

¹¹² Ibid., 113-127.

¹¹³ The French experience was a common phenomenon in the continent. For the war and the state in the continent Hintze noted: "In the continental states the army became the very backbone of the new centralized greater state. In order to enable the French crown to fight Spain and Austria, Richelieu suppressed with force the particularism of the provinces and thus created a unified absolutist state, such as was hitherto unknown... The Prussian state of the eighteenth century actually rested more on the army than upon its disconnected territories. Austria and Spain in general

Revitalized local assemblies were unable to provide stable bases for liberal democracy because of their exclusion from the Bourbon state of the eighteenth century, and the promise for democracy after the Revolution was followed by terror, chaos, and military intervention provoking old class, regional, and religious antagonisms. But the Revolution destroyed the military-bureaucratic absolutism, which opened the path to a liberal democracy, but with a state “intrusive and rather authoritarian or at least administrative.”¹¹⁴ Therefore, the state in France remained sharply differentiated from civil society and the functioning of democracy met various difficulties if it is compared with the democracy of England. Moreover, the bureaucracy, in France has politically been more autonomous than in England. There has always been the corporate interests of the state in the French political tradition or an autonomous domain of the state norms defining the rules of the game, which manifests itself in French Jacobinism. The military-bureaucratic elites have been the representatives of this Rousseauian general will of the state vis-a-vis the particular will of the people.

Accordingly, secularism and the role of religion in society is one of the most important subjects of controversy of these two wills. In other words, the sharp differences in the secularization traditions of different nations have been an outcome of their polity traditions. On the basis of the theoretical framework developed above, one may expect that the experiences of secularism and secularization in state societies might be different from the stateless societies. As Jose Casanova noted;

If the modern state in its own right is also carrier of process of secularization, then one should expect different patterns of state formation, let us say in

showed the same tendencies, if not with the same results... The colonels ceased being private military entrepreneurs, and became servants of the state. The sovereign, and not the colonels, henceforth appointed officers; he himself took the chief command.” Hintze, “Military Organization and the Organization of the State,” 193.

¹¹⁴ Dawning, *The Military Revolution and Political Change*, 135-139.

France, England and the United states should also have some effect on different patters of secularization.¹¹⁵

In fact, the institutionalized forms of secularism and the whole secularization processes are closely related to the state tradition, and in state societies we find an extreme secularism along with a traumatic process of secularization whereas the stateless societies have adopted minimal secularism, and experienced a relatively smooth secularization process.

2.6 Variations Within Polities and Different Paths to Secularization

In the following part the relationship between polity traditions or political cultures and the types of secularism will be analyzed. Some definitions will be given to illustrate the controversy around the concepts of secularism and secularization. David Martin,¹¹⁶ one of the prominent students of sociology of religion, claims somewhat in an exaggerated fashion that the term “secularization” is an obstacle to the developments of the sociology of religion and offers to erase it from the dictionary of sociology. Although such a view is open to discussion, it reveals the ambiguity behind these concepts. Here the definition of Peter L. Berger is borrowed. By secularization, Berger means “the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols.”¹¹⁷ The societal aspect of secularization manifests itself in the institutions as the notable decline of the influence of religion. In the Western history, this process was experienced as the separation of church and the state, expropriation of church lands, and secularization of education. When the cultural aspect of secularization is under

¹¹⁵ Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 25.

¹¹⁶ David Martin, *The Religious and the Secular: Studies in Secularization* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969).

¹¹⁷ Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 107.

focus, the reference goes beyond the socio-structural processes. It implies a gradual decline of the religious contents in arts, philosophy, literature and science. Moreover, science becomes the most important secular perspective on the world. So, an analytical distinction can be made between “objective” side of secularization as the secularization at the socio-structural level and the “subjective” side indicating the secularization at the consciousness level.¹¹⁸

On the part of politics, the most important subject in terms of secularization is the relationship between religion and the state. Particularly, separation of the state and church has a special historical significance since it has been the ultimate purposes of secularist movements. In the social and political theory, there have been different formulations of the relationship between religion and the state that more or less influenced the actual historical developments and paved the way for different traditions. This does not mean that these theoretical formulations were the principal determinants of different paths to secularization. Neither these theories nor the forms of secularization were independent of the political cultures of countries and of the political climate in which they were theorized.

With regard to the relationship between the state and religion, four main groups of theoretical views can be identified. The first group sees the state as subordinate to religion. The state has no independent existence from religion and the state is based on the norms derived from religion. The thinkers who were also the members of clergy, such as Calvin, Luther and Bossuet developed this view. The second group gives the privilege to the state and sees religion as a subordinate of state. This view was developed by the influential political thinkers, such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Montesquieu and Rousseau. They sometimes mention of a religion serving state, and sometimes claim that the state should determine religion. The Turkish separation between state and religion has been very close to this view.

¹¹⁸ This differentiation is taken from Berger, *ibid.*, 107-108.

The third group demands full divorce of state and religion. Particularly, Locke and Tocqueville have more liberal outlook on religion. They support the view which sees state and religion as different and independent domains. Moreover, they remark that religion and the church must be independent of the state. Tocqueville says the state has no competence on religion, and religion must be free and must have an autonomous area in society. This is the most liberal tradition of secularization developed especially in Anglo-American traditions. The last view developed by August Comte not only claims the priority of state over religion, but also offers a new religion for society. For him, the humanity had replaced God without forgetting his functions. What Comte offered was nothing than a secularized religion loaded by atheistic-humanistic tenets. The humanity religion of Comte excludes any transcendentality.¹¹⁹ This form of secularization differs from previous three views in some important respects. The most important one is that the aim is neither simple separation of the state and religion nor the subordination of the religion to the state. It includes the interference of the state into religious matters, and strongly implies that the state has the right to develop some judgments on religious issues and to impose it upon society. This is what has been called “laicism” developed particularly on the bases of the French political experience. The cases in which the state develops an alternative ideology and imposes on society fall in this category. As already been pointed out, the form of secularization, i.e. the nature of the state-church relationship depends upon the political culture, particularly the autonomy of the state vis-a-vis civil society. The more the state is weak, the more liberal form of secularization develops, and in such stateless societies the state-church separation took place relatively in a peaceful manner in the secularization process. This

¹¹⁹ The above classification of state-religion relationship was borrowed from Nur Vergin, “Din Devlet İlişkileri: Düşüncenin Bitmeyen “Senfoni”si” [The State-Religion Relations: Unfinished Symphony of Thought], *Türkiye Günü* [Turkey’s Agenda] 29 (1994), 5-23.

development characterizes the Anglo-American traditions. Conversely, it is highly possible to find an extreme secularity in state societies, and deep conflicts and confrontations in the secularization process, which is the case in France and to some extent in Turkey.

Within this framework, Martin E. Marty's classification of different experiences of secularization provides us with useful categories for understanding these traditions of secularization in different polities.¹²⁰ Marty differentiates the continental secularity from Anglo-American secularity tradition on the bases of the state's attitudes towards religion. In Continental Europe, particularly in France, we find "maximal secularity" which "involved a formal and unrelenting attack on gods and churches and a studied striving to replace them."¹²¹ In the Anglo-American historical experience, there was a gradual and increasing ignorance of gods and churches without attempts to replace them. There were no god-killers. This type of secularism was called "mere secularity."¹²² Marty differentiates American tradition from that of England, and calls it as "controlled secularity." The most important difference of America from England is that in America religion is an extremely private matter. In the United States institutional religion survived and continued to progress, but, it accepted a kind of a division of labor in society by addressing itself to personal, familial and leisured sectors of life renouncing its claims on public sphere. There is an accepted separation of public and religious spheres, and public sphere gained its autonomy independent of religion.¹²³

¹²⁰ Martin E. Marty, *The Modern Schism: Three Paths to Secular* (New York, Evanston: Harper and Row Publ., 1969).

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 10.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 98.

If the American, British and French traditions are looked upon together, it can be seen that there are no substantial differences between the American and British traditions, especially if they are compared with the French tradition. Marty was also aware of this similarity.¹²⁴ In England and the United States, a smooth reconciliation between the state and religion has occurred in the process of the formation of modernity. No serious confrontations between the state and church took place in comparison to the French secularity tradition. As an ideal form of the strong state tradition, the French state has always been suspicious of religion. The Reformation process produced deep conflicts that continued without resolution until the Revolution. Reformation was developed in a small minority Protestant sect called Huguenots demanding a kind of government limited by natural agreement and some religious guaranties from the absolute monarchy. But the center never preferred to resolve conflicts in a peaceful way. They were neither recognized by the absolute rule nor given any guarantee. A bloody war took place between the catholic center and the Huguenots in the marriage ceremony of Henry of Navarre, a Huguenot, on August 24, 1572 which resulted in the death of 6000 men, a 3000 of whom were killed in Paris only. The policies of Henry of Navarre, who came to power as a convert to Catholicism and announced a new decree called the Edict of Nantes in 1598 giving Huguenots religious tolerance, did not produce smooth reconciliation of conflicts between the state and the Huguenots. Rather, it created a state within the state since it allowed these groups to establish their own armies and cities. Soon after, Louis XIV revoked this Edict in 1685 in an attempt to abolish all intermediary structures between the state and society.¹²⁵ This was a state building process which was also a process of the penetration of the state into civil society.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 97.

¹²⁵ J. Bronowski and B. Mazlish, *The Western Intellectual Tradition: From Leonardo to Hegel* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1975), 99-105.

This autonomization process also worked against religion in France, which means that the process of state building went also parallel to the process of secularization. In Badie and Birnbaum's words, this process was experienced as follows:

The autonomization may also be seen at work in the growing separation of Church and state, the gap between the two widening steadily from the time of the French Revolution to the final break, which came in 1903-5 with the passage of a series of laws redefining the status of the Church, a milestone marking the state's achievements of legitimacy in its own right. Secularism may thus be seen as one of the primary indicators of the progress of state building in France, marking the step-by-step separation of the state from all other social systems. Since we are here reading France as an ideal of a state political system, it should come as no surprise that the French pushed secularism to its extreme limits.¹²⁶

Thus, it was not surprising that the Revolution took hard measures against the established religion and instituted legal secularization in decisive manner. The number of the clergy was reduced, the religious orders were banished, and the lands of the church went under state control.¹²⁷ Education was taken away from the control of the church. The intellectual climate was not different from the general picture. The intellectuals, who were the advocates of the Revolution, developed anti-clerical and often anti-religious outlook with new philosophical systems, which also dominated the scene in the post-Revolutionary France. In fact, as noted above, one of the most important differences between the French and Anglo-American secularity was related to the nature of these new ideas. The French philosophical systems were developed as alternatives to the religious thought systems. They were offered as new secular religions providing answers for everything, including alternative ceremonies for men through the ideas of Edgar Quinet, Ernest Renan, Edmond Scherer, Saint-Simon and August Comte.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Badie and Birnbaum, *The Sociology of the State*, 110-111.

¹²⁷ Marty, *The Modern Schism*, 23.

The main result of this pattern, which is a product of a confrontation between the religious dissent and a revolution with an explicit secular ideology at large, is that religion is a political issue. There is a massive confrontations between “massive secularism” and “massive religion” and “to the extent that secularism is successful there is a partial tendency to erode institutional adherence and belief *together*.”¹²⁹

The situation in England was entirely different. As an ideal example of a weak state tradition, in which the conflict between the center and local forces did not produce sharp confrontations, the English path of secularization did not produce a radical secularist attitude towards religion. Unlike the case in France, “the Protestantism of England has prevented any massive confrontation of religion with secular radicalism.”¹³⁰ The English secularists were not against religion; rather their claim was the separation of the state and the “church.” Their demand was to establish national churches, not to destroy the religious establishment. One of the most important differences between England and France was that the English secularists were nationalist; unlike their French counterparts, they did not formulate it as an ideology alternative and counter to religion.¹³¹ Moreover, the absence of a sharp conflict between the state and religion prevented the development of secular religions formulating secular vocabularies as a substitute for existing religion. Martin describes the attitudes of English intellectuals as follows:

[T]he most important aspect of English intellectuals is their capacity to absorb new ideologies within Christian categories. New knowledge, like that of the higher criticism or of the physical sciences after the mid-nineteenth century, tends to be reinterpreted without causing widespread collapse of faith. New

¹²⁸ Ibid., 29-31.

¹²⁹ David Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 6. Italics are original.

¹³⁰ Martin, *The Religious and the Secular*, 123.

¹³¹ Aytunç Altındal, *Laiklik: Enigmaya Dönüşen Paradigma* [Laicism: A Paradigm Turned into Enigma] (Istanbul: Anahtar Kitaplar, 1994), 30.

ideologies, liberalism, democratic socialism, existentialism, take on a variegated Christian coloring. Intellectuals select those aspects of Christianity which are closest to their intellectual attitudes, whether they involve world-weary pessimism, medieval nostalgia or the utopian optimism of a Kingdom of God on earth.¹³²

Consequently, in England the transition to modernity and the development of secularism were quiet and smooth leaving no issue of conflict between the state and religion. But the transition in France brought about various clashes after the Revolution. In England, unlike in France, the state does not define itself as “laic.” The king is also the head of the Anglican Church. Religious education is given in the public schools. The French laicism does not, however, accept an “unsecular” state. It defines itself as “laic.” The religious education is done outside of the public schools.¹³³ After the official separation of the state and Church, which was occurred in 1905, the Catholics and the laicists (read also the state) became more fearing and suspecting towards each other. It was after the Second World War that a notable mutual recognition was established between them. The Christian Democratic Party was allowed to establish, and the Church gained some initiatives on primary education.¹³⁴ Although the state still defines itself as laic in France today, hot debates on the share of religion in public sphere and the secularization of laicism itself¹³⁵ are

¹³² Martin, *The Religious and the Secular*, 118.

¹³³ Osman Turhan, *Türkiye’de Manevi Buhran, Din ve Laiklik* [Moral Crisis in Turkey, Religion and Laicism] (Ankara: Şark Matbaası, 1964), 42-43.

¹³⁴ Stuart Mews, *Religion in Politics* (U.K: Longman, 1989), 75-76.

¹³⁵ Oliver Abel notes that in extreme secular countries, particularly in France and Turkey, laicism has been transformed into a kind of civil religion and national identity, and if that kind of change occurs, laicism must also be subjugated to the principles of secularism. See, Oliver Abel, “Dinlerin Etiği Olarak Laiklik” [Laicism as the Ethics of Religions], in *Avrupa’da Etik, Din ve Laiklik* [Ethics, Religion and Laicism in Europe], trans. and ed., S. Dolanoğlu and S. Yılmaz (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1995), 29-30.

taking place which are all natural consequences of developments along the liberal democratic line after the Second World War. Today, the religious life is under the guarantee of the state, and the church is extending its space in society, albeit the state's counter claims.

It is not an accident that the picture in Turkey resembles to that of France, since both societies have similar state traditions. As has already been pointed out, the state in Turkey is even stronger than that of France; thus, one may come across a more extreme form of secularism, which is almost absent in Western countries. The relationship between secularism and the state tradition in Turkey will be mentioned in the end of the following part, and a detailed analysis of the historical development of secularism in Turkey, along with the role of the state elites, is the subject-matter of the third chapter, but it is necessary to elaborate comparatively the Turkish state tradition within the framework developed above, which enables us to understand the origins of elitism and the "maximal secularity" tradition in the Ottoman-Turkish context.

2.7 The Ottoman-Turkish Experience: A Comparative Perspective

So far the role of historical dynamics in formation of the modern polities, their principal effects upon the variations of polities and corresponding secularization traditions have been comparatively discussed, particularly by addressing the English and French cases. It has been argued that in shaping of modern polities, the antecedent regime types and the nature of the military revolution were crucial. The relatively smooth formation of democracy without serious troubles in England was a result of the centralized feudalism, which made it possible to reconcile the center-periphery cleavage in a consensual manner, and relatively undestructive military modernization, which remained small in scale. However, in France where the decentralized feudalism did not allow the reconciliation of the cleavage in question

in a peaceful way and centralization necessitated the massive mobilization of the military, the formation of modernity has faced serious crises and there emerged a strong state vis-à-vis civil society, which has manifested itself in the republican radicalism. Elitism, embodied in the military and bureaucracy, has been the most important characteristics of these polities. Accordingly, in stateless societies secularization process generated neither serious upheavals nor massive confrontations between rival forces and, at the end, there emerged “mere secularity,” whereas in state societies massive secularism confronted massive religiosity and religion remained as a political issue.¹³⁶ As a result, in state societies “extreme secularity” has developed with an explicit secular ideology. England and France were examined as the examples for stateless and state societies respectively. A comparison of the Turkish case with the English and French cases within the framework developed above gives important insights not only to understand the whole adventure of the Ottoman-Turkish political tradition, but also the difficulties that Turkey faced both in transition to democracy and in its overall adventure in coming to terms with modernity. In other words, it enables us to understand why has the formation of modernity in Turkey generated immense tensions between the state and society, the state and religion in Turkey?

As noted before, in terms of the autonomy of the state and the existence of the corporate public interest vis-a-vis the private or the societal one, Turkey is similar to France since in both cases the state extended its domain vis-a-vis the periphery in the modernization process. But in Turkey the state has been more autonomous than France because there were two main differences at the very

¹³⁶ Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization*, 6.

beginning, which differentiated the Turkish historical experience not only from France but from the whole Western tradition as well. First, there were no strong intermediary structures as compared to their Western counterparts. Second, at the very early stage of state formation, there was a standing central army which, unlike the situation in the feudal tradition, signified the existence of a highly differentiated center. In addition to these distinguishing features which worked contrary to the formation of an autonomous civil society, the process of military modernization has evolved in a way which produced a strong and autonomous state. In other words, the military modernization went together with centralization and further penetration of the periphery by the center which made the subsequent developments towards representative institutions more traumatic than its Western counterparts.

It has already been noted that the Ottoman empire was an imperial society showing substantive differences from the imperial-feudal societies of the medieval Europe in terms of the absence of intermediary power structures, i.e., the elements of civil society which decreased center's ability to penetrate the periphery. In the absence of such countervailing social forces, the Ottoman State succeeded to dominate the periphery and impose its own central norms upon it, which resulted in a particular idea and institution of the state.

The Ottoman state neither faced with the revolts coming from the periphery, as in decentralized feudal France, which necessitated the establishment of an autonomous yet not omnipotent state- because it was unable to dominate the periphery totally- nor was there the formation of the center in a consensual framework, which was the case in centralized feudal England. Rather, the Ottoman statesmen adopted a different outlook and absorbed different norms which, consequently, gave the way to a different, yet an omnipotent state tradition. Moreover, all centralization reforms directed to modernize the society, i.e., the

efforts to create a Western-like society, paradoxically, resulted in strengthening of the central power. The military along with the bureaucracy was the very backbone of this tradition and the subsequent developments.¹³⁷

The military character of the Ottoman state has a long history, and its origin could be traced from the beginning periods. The Ottoman state was formed around the fourteenth century in Asia Minor as a small Seljukid principality devoting itself to the ghaza, the holy war.¹³⁸ The former military character of the state has always been important for its subsequent institutionalization patterns. In Halil Inalcik's words,

Its initial *ghazi* frontier character influenced the state's historical existence for six centuries: its dynamic conquest policy, its basic military structure, and the predominance of the military class within an empire that successfully accommodated disparate religious, cultural and ethnic elements.¹³⁹

Although at the initial stage the Ottoman sultans made a kind of coalition with some aristocratic elements of society, they gradually deployed these centrifugal forces from the state, and the state bureaucracy was filled with servants cultivated from the royal slaves.¹⁴⁰ The rationale behind the power of the sultan and in central-local relations was based on the "old Oriental maxim that a ruler can have no power without soldiers, no soldiers without money, no money without the well-being of his subjects, and no popular well-being without justice."¹⁴¹ This was the *raison d'état* of

¹³⁷ Heper, "The Strong State as a Problem for the Consolidation of Democracy," 172-174.

¹³⁸ Halil Inalcik, "Empire and Population," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire: 1300-1914*, ed. Halil Inalcik with Donald Quataret (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 11.

¹³⁹ Inalcik, "Empire and Population," 11.

¹⁴⁰ Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 22.

the notion of the public interest which gave the ruler the right to formulate laws independent from the sacred law, despite the fact that in theory the sultan was the servant of god and these laws could not be in conflict with the sacred law. Called the *örf-i sultani*¹⁴² the *adab* tradition gave the way to a secular tradition which was later assimilated by the bureaucratic elites that brought a secular state-oriented tradition.¹⁴³

Under such state of affairs, the development of elements of civil society remained alien to the Ottoman-Turkish polity.¹⁴⁴ In general,

The Ottoman society was divided into two major classes. The first one, called *askeri*, literally the “military,” included those to whom the sultan had delegated religious or executive power through an imperial diploma, namely officers of the court and the army, civil servants and *Ulema*.¹⁴⁵ The second included the *reaya*, comprising all Muslim and non-Muslim subjects who paid taxes but who had no part in the government. It was a fundamental rule of the Empire to exclude its subjects from the privileges of the “military.”¹⁴⁶

Thus, there has always been a sharp distinction between the center and the periphery not only in political but in social and cultural terms as well; this has been

¹⁴¹ Halil Inalcik, “The Nature of Traditional Society,” in *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, ed. Robert E. Word and Dankwart A. Rustow (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 43.

¹⁴² The rules which were put by the sultan himself. The importance of the *örf-i sultani* in the Ottoman society stems from the fact that these rules sometimes were promulgated independently of the *Sharia*, the Holy Law, which in due course initiated a secular tradition.

¹⁴³ Heper, *The State Tradition*, 24-25.

¹⁴⁴ Şerif Mardin, “Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 11 (1969): 264.

¹⁴⁵ The *Ulama* or Doctors of Law: A cast of the state bureaucracy who had jurisdictional competence.

¹⁴⁶ Inalcik, “The Nature of Traditional Society,” 44.

the most prominent cleavage of Ottoman-Turkish political life which has remained influential until recent periods.¹⁴⁷

By the second part of the sixteenth century, the classical state structure faced serious bottlenecks originating partly from the economic and the military developments in Europe and partly from the internal disintegration of the Empire due to the financial crisis, a process which was accompanied by the development of alternative social forces, namely *ayans*.¹⁴⁸ But the *ayans* were far from to be transformed into an alternative civil societal element for the center. As Özbudun properly observed,

The rise of a class of local notables (*ayan*) in the eighteenth century, who often combined local social and military power with the connections to central government and tax-farming privileges, did not fundamentally alter this [center-periphery relations] state of affairs. The status of the *ayan* can in no way be compared to that of feudal aristocracy in Western Europe, since it remained essentially a de facto situation lacking the legal basis and political legitimacy of the latter. Besides, the effective centralization drive under Mahmut II (1808-1839) deprived the *ayan* of much of their political influence.¹⁴⁹

When the silent components of the Empire raised their voices against the center, i.e., when the traditionally stratified groups were politically aroused, the state-society dichotomy was developed in the following way. In Karpat's words:

Society developed and differentiated into new occupational groups with new thoughts and demands corresponding more or less to the technological and economic stimuli, and expected a change in government functions accordingly. But the government, consisting of the throne and the central bureaucracy and

¹⁴⁷ For a comprehensive account of the center-periphery cleavage in the Ottoman-Turkish political tradition, see, Şerif Mardin, "Center Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?," *Daedalus* 102 (1973): 169-190.

¹⁴⁸ *Ayans* were local notables who became an influential group by the end of the seventeenth century in the Ottoman political life.

¹⁴⁹ Özbudun, "The Continuing Ottoman Legacy and the State Tradition in the Middle East," 135.

considering itself synonymous with the state and subjects to its own traditions of authority was unable to understand and cope functionally with the problems created by change.¹⁵⁰

At the beginning, the center seemed to ally with them, but they did not evolve into nobility and aristocracy, and when the center found sufficient power, it replaced them with central agents.¹⁵¹ The government's eventual answer to this development was centralization.¹⁵² The reform movements, which culminated in the declaration of *Gülhane-i Hattı Hümayünü*, despite its radical claim to redefine the status of subjects *vis-à-vis* the state, aimed at the increase the power of the center and centralization in all aspects of society.¹⁵³ At the initial stage, the subject of the reforms was bureaucracy, but in the following decades, the military took the initiative and to a large measure determined the course of modernization reforms. The power and position of the bureaucracy within the state composition were strengthened from the eighteenth century, and in due course, the bureaucracy, which devoted itself to the secular interest of the state without traditional bounds, became the faithful instrument of radical secular administrative reforms.¹⁵⁴ Unlike the previous periods, "it becomes difficult, however, to see an identity between the sultan and the state in later centuries... The ruling groups in time became the servants of the state rather than those of the sultan."¹⁵⁵ In other words, by the Tanzimat period (1839-1876) one

¹⁵⁰ Karpaz, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State: 1789-1908," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (1972): 264.

¹⁵¹ Heper, *The State Tradition*, 29-37.

¹⁵² Karpaz, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State," 224.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 258; Engin Deniz Akarlı, "The State as a Socio-Cultural Phenomenon and Political Participation in Turkey," in *Political Participation in Turkey: Historical Background and Present Problems* ed. Engin D. Akarlı with Gabriel Ben-Dor (Istanbul: Bogaziçi University Publications, 1975), 142.

¹⁵⁴ İnalçık, "The Nature of Traditional Society," 55.

could face the state elites in its modern sense, composed of the military and the bureaucracy striving to save the state from decline.¹⁵⁶ Consequently, when the modernization efforts were introduced, the Ottoman society lacked the principal social forces that marked the whole course of modernization in Western Europe such as the bourgeoisie, aristocracy, peasantry, working class and the like.¹⁵⁷ In the absence of these forces, the whole initiative in the modernization project was taken by the civil and military bureaucracy; thus, it generated no social upheavals or multiple confrontations of different social groups and state and society at various levels, which would brought the power change. In other words, it remained as an elite modernization project which took place as a further widening of the control of the center over the periphery indicating that the tension between center and periphery was not resolved.

2.7.1 Centralization and the military modernization in the Ottoman Empire and the Establishment of the Republic

When the political center of the Ottoman Empire felt that their power was in decline against the internal and external enemies, their initial response was centralization by initiating some reforms in administrative structure of the state and in the military, a point that has already been made. The most important reforms were taken along the military lines to introduce new and modern technology and to create a modern western military organization, which “were part of sporadic efforts to re-establish a strong central authority.”¹⁵⁸ For that purpose, as early as 1720, Çelebi Mehmet was

¹⁵⁵ Heper, *The State Tradition*, 35.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 44. Heper notes that by the Tanzimat period the bureaucrats gained some legal safeguards which opened the way for the civil bureaucrats to become state elites.

¹⁵⁷ See, Moore, *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Particularly Part One and Part Three.

sent to Europe to pursue whatever could be taken from them. However, the actual reforms started in the eighteenth century in the army by establishing some military schools staffed by the foreign teachers (mainly French) with non-religious books spreading information about the West.¹⁵⁹ The eighteenth century military reform came to its culmination by the establishment of the New Order Army (*Nizam-i Cedid*) in the period of Selim III (1789-1807). In 1807 the New Order Army was dissolved by a coup led by the Janissaries and with their allies opposing the centralization reforms of the *sultan*.¹⁶⁰ Mahmut II who destroyed the Janissaries took the last step in this direction and paved the way to the military modernization in the Ottoman Empire.

The establishment of modern schools for military purposes was a decisive step both in the establishment of a modern military organization and in the intellectual history of Ottoman-Turkish modernization. Humbaraci Ahmet Paşa (1675-1744) (a Frenchman converted to Islam) helped to establish a modern School of Mathematics (*Hendesehane*), and was an important actor in modernization of the cannon foundry (*tophane*), the powdermill (*baruthane*), and arsenal (*cebhane*).¹⁶¹ The most significant step was the establishment of the School of Medicine and the Military Academy, which became the hotbeds of secular intellectuals¹⁶² who later became the

¹⁵⁸ Avigdor Levy, "Military Reform and the Problem of Centralization in the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century," *Middle Eastern Studies* 18 (1982): 233.

¹⁵⁹ Kemal H. Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-Party System* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1959), 6-7.

¹⁶⁰ Levy, "Military Reform and the Problem of Centralization in the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century," 239-240.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 232.

¹⁶² Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964), 111-112.

faithful supporters of secular ideas and the reform movements in the Constitutionalist and Republican periods.

It was in these schools that first nationalist movements accompanied by a Western inspired positivism developed among the students, and began to take the place of Islam as the new foundational ethics for the state, society and the individual. It was offered by the state elites as the principal solution to Turkish quest for modernity and, early in game, a reverse relationship was established between Islam and modernity. The party of Union and Progress was organized by the men coming from the ranks of the military educated in these schools who later took power and proclaimed the Constitution of 1908. Not surprisingly, the same leaders organized the Republican movement after the defeat of the Ottoman state in the World War I.

The Ottoman reforms in military and society will be discussed in detail in the following chapter in relation to secularization and modernization of the Ottoman state and society. It is necessary here to note some of their general characteristics to understand the ultimate consequences of the reforms in terms of the changes in the relationship within the groups of central power block and between the center and periphery. The general characteristics of the Reform period can be summarized as following: First, the modernization aimed at the restoration of central power by promoting military modernization through introducing western technical and administrative models. Second, the reformers mainly were the men educated in the military schools that were established as part of the modernization efforts. They gradually consolidated power and took the control over the government in the period of the Union and Progress. Third, the reforms largely worked against a particular institution and a section of the bureaucracy: Islam and the *Ulema*. All reforms more or less weakened the institutional hold of Islam and the position of the *Ulema*. Finally, the central-local cleavage was intensified by the reforms since the centralization reforms resulted in further penetration of the periphery. By abolishing the social hold of Islam, which was the binding instrument of the periphery to the

center,¹⁶³ and systematically extending the state machinery to society without an affinity to local representatives, the center-periphery cleavage was even further radicalized. Moreover, the military modernization in the Ottoman Empire took place in the same way that as it produced autocracies in Europe. In other words, two critical developments, which were important according to Downing,¹⁶⁴ for the emergence of autocracies in Western Europe, were at work in the Ottoman Empire. First, the military modernization destroyed the nascent peripheral forces, which were weak in comparison to their Western counterparts. Second, the wars in the second half of the eighteenth century, which were operated especially against Russia, necessitated extra revenues which were supplied by the internal resources by means of instituting extra taxes.¹⁶⁵ These developments put the state elites not only in a sole position to shape the direction of the modernization reforms, but also strengthened the position of the military vis-a-vis the other sections of the state—the bureaucracy and the sultan. The military opted a kind of strong state which accentuated the general interest without an affinity to the private or the particular interest. The expression of any particularity was denied on behalf of the high interests of the state, an understanding which also constituted the rationale for the republican reformism.

The elitist character of the Ottoman-Turkish polity also colored the picture of the secularism in Turkey. In other words, the one-sided position of the state elites marked the secularization reforms and state-Islam relationship throughout the Ottoman-Turkish modernization period and after. Since the primary motive behind the modernization project was to overcome the Ottoman decline, which was

¹⁶³ Şerif Mardin, "Ideology and Religion in the Turkish Revolution," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 2 (1971): 204; Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 2.

¹⁶⁴ Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change*, 3-17.

¹⁶⁵ Levy, "Military Reform and the Problem of Centralization in the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century," 238-239.

perceived by the state elites as the widening of the gap between the West and the Empire in the military power, and to recapture the power that once possessed by the Empire, religion was considered as the main cause for the backwardness, an idea borrowed from the thinkers of the French Enlightenment. Relying on the Enlightenment's critic of religion, the modernizing state elites formulated a reverse relationship between Islam and modernity; thus, secularism seemed to them as the principal solution both for saving the state and attaining modernity. It was for this reason that from its very beginning all modernization reforms were carried out with a strict secularist outlook.

Thus, not surprisingly, the Turkish secularism resembled the French secularity tradition, i.e. "maximal secularity," because of the similar state traditions. Especially in terms of objective secularization, i.e., the secularization at the institutional level, the Turkish case is closely similar to the French case, yet differs from one important respect. The church in France maintained itself as being an institution, autonomous and belonging to civil society, but in Turkey, the state maintained its control over religion by incorporating it into the state apparatus. In France, the Revolution was first of all against the monarchy to displace the nobility, but not directly against religion. However, in Turkey, all reforms, which were carried out during the modernization period, aimed directly or indirectly at breaking the hold of religion on society, which was considered responsible for the backwardness of the Ottoman-Turkish society. Thus, once established, secularism took an extreme form in the hands of the state elites, including the suppression of all religious collectivities along with the state's reserved right of interference into religious affairs.

Unlike the Western Europe where multiple confrontations between state and religion took place which included various compromises, in Turkey "the state elite has been in a singular position to influence and structure the political course and

discourse of Islam.”¹⁶⁶ The establishment of the republic, which was proclaimed on the total rejection of the Ottoman past did not change the intrinsic nature of the polity- elitism. Although it brought a radical break in the value system with a new social philosophy on which the new society was supposed to be constructed, it maintained the basic pattern in center-periphery relations with an explicit elitist outlook.

The Republican period represents the radicalization of the reforms started in the eighteenth century, and as has already been noted in that sense, it was a continuum rather than a substantive break from the past. The elitist nature of the Ottoman reform movement also tinted the character of the republican reformism. As argued by Frederick W. Frey; “The Kemalist revolution was both continuation and culmination of Turkey’s historic struggle over elite modernization. It resulted in the victory of the modernizers and effective general modernization of the national elite.”¹⁶⁷ In regards to the center-periphery cleavage the republican reforms did not bring radical changes. Despite the fact that structural changes have taken place both in the Ottoman and Republican periods, which contained radical alterations especially in the Republican period,¹⁶⁸ “one of the basic and most enduring patterns is a strong tendency toward elitism.”¹⁶⁹ Even it can be said that the republican reforms represent further intensification of the centralization and center-periphery

¹⁶⁶ Ümit Cizre Sakallioğlu, “Parameters and Strategies of Islam-State Interaction in Republican Turkey,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28 (1996): 231.

¹⁶⁷ Frederick W. Frey, “Patterns of Elite Politics in Turkey,” in *Political Elites in the Middle East*, ed. George Lenczowski (Washington. D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Policy Research, 1975), 59.

¹⁶⁸ Ergun Özbudun, “Türk Siyasal Sisteminde Değişim ve Süreklilik Unsurları” [The Elements of Change and Continuity in Turkish Political System], *Türkiye Günü* [Turkey’s Agenda] 25 (1993), 13-15.

¹⁶⁹ Frey, “Patterns of Elite Politics in Turkey,” 43.

cleavage since the new state was based on a new value system different from the value universe of the periphery.¹⁷⁰ The new state was established after a long period of wars which destroyed a great empire resident in a large territory and after a deadly war of Independence for which the last resources of the country were mobilized. The loss of the Empire in a short span of time increased the fears and prejudices of the architects of the Republic for the remnant territory, and intensified the elitist attitudes of the civil and military bureaucracy. As Mardin points out, “between 1920 and 1923, the fear that Anatolia would be split on primordial group lines ran as a strong undercurrent among the architects of Kemalism trying to establish their own center, and it remained as a fundamental-although often latent- issue of Kemalist policy to the end of one party rule in 1950.”¹⁷¹ Thus, the expression of any particularity was considered as harmful to the harmonious fabric of society. Therefore, Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic, opted to institutionalize a strong state capable to direct the modernization reforms already started. His primary aim was to create a well-integrated society around a nationalist ideology and bring the whole nation to the level of contemporary civilization. The core of the changes was carried out in the value system of society. Science as a sole means of foundation of state and society was substituted for religion. For him science, not religion, was the true instrument of attaining the goal of contemporary civilization; hence, he tried to disestablish Islam in social and political life, and substituted it with science.

The central agents of the new project of modernization in Atatürk’s view were the military-bureaucratic elites which were also in a position to show the true direction to the people until they would gain an adequate rationality through the

¹⁷⁰ For the changes in the value system of the center by the establishment of republic and its impact on the peripheral conception of the state, see, Şerif Mardin, “The Just and the Unjust,” *Daedalus* 120 (1991):113-129.

¹⁷¹ Mardin, “Center-Periphery Relations,” 177.

education.¹⁷² Heper¹⁷³ argues that unlike the post-Atatürkian state elites, Atatürk believed in the capacity of the people to reach contemporary civilization but they should be helped by the educated elite. In a sense, the educated elite, or intelligentsia was given a temporal task or duty, i.e., the education of the people until they would gain an adequate rationality. Therefore, he believed that reforms had to be imposed “from above.”¹⁷⁴ For that purpose he introduced various reforms to break the ties with the past, which he considered to be the barriers to the actualization of the potential of the people. Although he based his power on his charisma and the military, he did not see the military as the best instrument of legitimacy. The elitist tradition of the Ottoman-Turkish politics constituted a center of gravity; thus, soon after the death of Atatürk, the military-bureaucratic elites appeared as the guardians of the state, and they transformed the legacy of Atatürk into an ideology, a closed system of ideas filled with extreme prescriptive tenets.¹⁷⁵ The latent cleavages became manifest after the transition to democracy, which brought peripheral forces to the center as the representative of particular interests and local values. Having depended upon an extremely autonomous concept of “public interest,” the military and the bureaucratic elites have always adopted suspicious attitude towards any expression of private interest and social differentiation which both were the direct outcomes of modernization. As a result, their understanding of democracy has

¹⁷² Metin Heper, “A Weltanschauung-turned-Partial Ideology and Normative Ethics: “Atatürkism” in Turkey,” *Orient* 25 (1984): 86.

¹⁷³ Heper, “The State, Democracy and Bureaucracy in Turkey,” in *The State and Public Bureaucracies: A Comparative Perspective*, ed. Metin Heper (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 132-133.

¹⁷⁴ Heper, *The State Tradition*, 50.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 71. Preston Hughes provides a comprehensive account for the development of Atatürkism and its transformation after Atatürk. See, Preston Hughes, *Atatürkçülük ve Türkiye'nin Demokratikleşme Süreci* [Atatürkism and Democratization in Turkey], trans. Rabia Süer (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1993).

radically been different from that of the civilians. This understanding of democracy places sole emphasis upon the concepts such as the unity and integrity of the nation and society, classlessness, and coherence that were derived from populism, one of the principles of Atatürkism, which in fact, has a long history in Turkey.¹⁷⁶ They understood democracy as an end in itself which meant “promoting the general interest through debate on reason and not as a means to promote as well as reconcile “interests” *vis-a-vis* the problems of liberal democracy in Turkey.”¹⁷⁷ Consequently, they have always seen the political parties to be involved in harmful activities, and when they thought that the civilians had deviated from Atatürkism, they intervened into politics on behalf of it.¹⁷⁸

Secularism and religion lie at the center of the contention between political and military elites. As it will be elaborated in detail in the following chapter, it can be said that secularism and the interpretation of the role of religion in society have been two critical subjects on which the views of the military and civilians diverge mostly. In all military interventions one of the prominent claims of the military was the civilians deviation from the principle of secularism. Even, as noted by Binnaz Toprak, the state elites have seen “the expression of religious interests through the

¹⁷⁶ Sakallıoğlu, *AP-Ordu İlişkileri* [The Justice Party-Military Relations], 53.

¹⁷⁷ Metin Heper, “Introduction,” in *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey*, ed. Metin Heper and Jacob Landau (London: I.B. Tauris, 1991), 2.

¹⁷⁸ For instance, Mehmet Ali Birand noted how the military leaders saw the political parties and the politicians in Turkey as follows: “The promise of the political parties to the people that they could satisfy all their needs is harmful to democracy as much as it is unconvincing. It is natural that people want a care for all their needs, but they have no idea to what extent the conditions permit to do that. Therefore, political parties have to consider those needs of the people on the bases of the existing possibilities, and the general interest and future concerns of the country as well.” Mehmet Ali Birand, *Emret Komutanım* [Yes Commander] (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1986), 118.

interest groups or political parties... as alarming, rather than as a natural outcome of electoral politics.”¹⁷⁹

The following part traces the historical stages and conditions under which the state elites moved to the center and the “maximal secularity,” which was direct outcome of the enduring elitism, was established in the process of the formation of modernity and within the framework developed in this chapter.

¹⁷⁹ Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 3.

CHAPTER III

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF TURKISH SECULARISM: THE STATE ELITES AND SECULARISM IN TURKEY

3.1 The Ottoman Secularization as the Instrument of Modernization

The Ottoman-Turkish secularization and its close relevance to the state elites have important historical determinants, and an understanding of them necessitates a careful look at the place of religion and the relationship between religion and the state in the Ottoman society. In addition, the modernization reforms and the rationale that guided these reforms are also crucial to understand the development of secularism in Turkey. In general terms, secularization in Turkey was neither an administrative device designed to put an end to schisms, as developed in Western Europe, dividing society into different conflicting fronts,¹ nor was it an initiative of the state to get rid of the Church which possessed strong independent institutional network, a phenomenon totally absent in the Ottoman-Turkish tradition. To be sure,

it was initiated by the state, but only as an instrument of modernization project imposed upon society from above, by an elite group already present in the Ottoman state machinery. Thus, the shift of power from traditional religious group to secular reformist forces as well as the basic elitist composition of the Ottoman state, seems vital to understand the nature and the Ottoman-Turkish secularization policies and the established secularity tradition.

The primordial elements of the Turkish secularism were already present in the traditional configuration of the Ottoman state. In the previous chapter it has already been pointed out that despite the theory that religion was the ultimate end in the Ottoman state philosophy, due to the military and bureaucratic character of the polity, the state had always priority over religion in the Ottoman polity. In other words, the state had a dual character, the religious and the bureaucratic. As Mardin observed:

It [the state] was Islamic in the sense that Islam was the religion of the state and that the Sultan's primordial role was that of the leader of the Islamic community; it was "bureaucratic" in the sense that working for the preservation of the state colored the practice of Ottoman officials. Endangering the state was what -by definition- made a movement heretical. At times, such as the seventeenth century, the style of government was more "Islamic," but by the middle of the eighteenth century, the pendulum had swung to a more bureaucratic style.²

The move of the bureaucratic elites to power center of the state was a result of a process in which the survival of the state became the main issue of debate among top ranking Ottoman statesmen. At the end of this process, the Ottoman

¹ Martin E. Marty, *The Modern Schism: Three Paths to the Secular* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1969), 9-17.

bureaucratic strata took upon itself the responsibility of saving the state from decline, and Westernization was offered as the only solution by the state elites. This opened a new chapter in the Ottoman-Turkish history with a new agenda that marked the political discourse in the following centuries: modernization as “Westernization.” The rationale of the bureaucratic elites was different from that of the *Ulema*, and as aptly noted by Metin Heper,³ they adopted *adab* tradition that accentuated necessity and reason in policy formation rather than religious sources, which had strong secular connotations. Since the increase of the power of the bureaucracy brought the *adab* tradition, or secular outlook, to the center of the Ottoman state, the rise of the elites to the top of the power hierarchy and of secularization developed as simultaneous processes in the Ottoman context, a natural outcome of the Ottomans’ search to regain the strength previously possessed by the Ottoman state. When the Ottoman statesmen recognized that the Western states had become stronger than themselves, it became apparent with the Ottoman defeats resulting in loss of territory in the Western frontiers, particularly after the Treaty of Passarowitz (1718), their initial response was to adopt the new Western military and administrative techniques to catch up with the Western nations.⁴ Along with the recognized weakness against the West, there was another motivating factor which led the Ottoman statesmen to reform the state machinery. As Kemal Karpat observed, the internal factor created by

² Şerif Mardin, “Religion and Secularism in Turkey,” in *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State*, ed. Ergun Özbudun and Ali Kazancigil (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1981), 194

³ Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Walkington, England: The Eothen Press, 1985), 45.

⁴ Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964), 30.

the peripheral forces, which demanded autonomy and raised their voices to share the central power, was important to the same extent as the external factor.⁵ In the same vein, Avigdor Levy noted that “the impulse for military reform stemmed from two sources: the need of the central government to maintain, or restore, its control over the bureaucracy and the military and suppress the centrifugal forces threatening to break up the state from within, and second, the necessity to defend the state against external enemies.”⁶ In order to break the power of the local elements, centralization policies became the principal motto and solution of the Ottoman state elites.

The first attempts at modernization included the introducing of the press in 1727 by Ibrahim Muteferika, a converted Hungarian, and the establishment of a military school in 1734 called “*Hendese*” to train the military engineers in Üsküdar by Humbaracı Ahmet Paşa (1675-1747), another European convert whose real name was Comte de Bonneval. Through these schools, modern sciences began to enter into the Ottoman schools and the public.⁷ Various books on military, geography and medicine were published, which were high in number. After the war with Russia in 1787, the Ottoman statesmen recognized that the reforms could not be successful, unless the traditional structures in the society and the state changed. In order to closely observe the Western governments and the militaries, permanent embassies

⁵ Kemal H. Karpat, “The Transformation of the Ottoman State: 1789-1908.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (1972), 245-246; Also see, Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 71.

⁶ Avigdor Levy, Military Reform and the Problem of Centralization in the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 18 (1982), 241.

⁷ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 36-50.

were established in the prominent European capitals.⁸ One of the tasks of these embassies was to prepare the reform proposals based on their observations. Other important steps were taken by the establishment of a new army by Selim III, independent of the Janissaries, called the “New Order” (*Nizam-i Cedid*), and the establishment of the School of Engineering.⁹

The reforms gained new impetus in the period of Mahmut II who occupied the throne between 1808-1839. The scope of reforms was then extended and the rationale behind these reforms changed substantively. During the reign of Mahmut II, one may see that the reforms, which had already been initiated a few decades ago, turned into intensive policy programs comprising large areas of state and society. Mahmut II knew that the creation of a modern state was only possible through some social and administrative reforms, and he was also aware of the difficulties that he could face. Bernard Lewis wrote on that dilemma, “no real progress towards reform would be possible until all power other than that emanating from him had been eliminated, and the Sultan’s will made the sole source of authority in the provinces as well as in the capital.”¹⁰ Therefore, he decided to eliminate all intermediary social forces.¹¹ He succeeded in destroying the Janissary who was an opposing institution against the new innovations and a powerful enemy of the newly established armies.

⁸ These capitals were London, Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and Madrid. See, Berkes, *The Development of Secularism*, 77.

⁹ Eric J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997), 26-27.

¹⁰ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 78.

¹¹ Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 43.

He set up a new army called *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye* in place of the Janissaries. He continued his campaign of centralization by abolishing *the timars*,¹² increasing supervision on *vakfs* (religious endowments) and local agencies of the state, establishing new communication networks including newspapers, post services and new roads, and promoting civil officials both in proficiency and honesty.¹³ Moreover, he established new military schools staffed by foreign specialists and new schools called *Mekteb-i Maarif* (School for Secular Learning) for future recruitment as government officers.¹⁴

Administration and the cultural arena went also under reforms. Mahmut II abolished some old governmental positions. For example, he created *Porte* which became the center of the Ottoman government, and abolished *Sadrizam* whose place was filled by a new man called *başvekil* (the prime minister) with new departments. He also tried to give a new context to the state by propagating the principle of equality before the law which was an important step toward the consolidation of the modern state.¹⁵ The cultural realm also underwent similar reforms. The Western manner of life, for instance, was promoted by the state. The most important reform in that respect was the change of the dress of the military and later of the civilians, especially the dress of the state servants. *Fez* became a compulsory headgear.¹⁶ The

¹² *Timar* was a military fief given by the state to some people in return for the military services.

¹³ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 74-102.

¹⁴ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 106.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 97-98.

reforms that were carried out in the reign of Mahmut II (1808-1839) were extremely important in terms of centralization and modernization within the context of whole Ottoman reform period. As summarized by Eric J. Zürcher,

Like the policies of Slim III and all those of his great rival and inspiration, Mehmet Ali Pasha, they were ultimately aimed at the strengthening of the central state through the building a modern army. All his reforms can be understood as means to that end: building a new army cost money, money had to be generated by more efficient taxation, which in turn could only be achieved through a modern and efficient central and provincial bureaucracy. Better communications were needed to extend government control and new types of education to produce the new-style military and civil servants the sultan needed.¹⁷

The modernization of the Ottoman army, or the military modernization, had far reaching consequences for the subsequent reforms because the military became the main agent to carry out the following reforms. The process of formation of the modern state in the Ottoman-Turkish context was not different from Europe. As has already been argued in the Second Chapter, the establishment of the modern armies was central to the state-building process, particularly to centralization, modernization and secularization. The main attributes of modernization such as centralization, secularization, and extension of the state towards the periphery were preceded by the military modernization, and were achieved by means of modern armies.

¹⁶ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 102; Berkes summarizes the reforms undertaken by Mahmut II with regard to the manner as follows: “He became an enemy of long beards; he declared war against the traditional Turkish saddles and style of riding; he appeared before the people and became a public orator and ribbon cutter; he caused his ministers to sit his presence; he went on steamer trips; he began to learn French; he imported European musicians and concert masters; he is reported to have ordered samples of European headgear with a view toward recapping his troops or, perhaps even popularizing these among his people”. Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 122.

¹⁷ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 41.

A radical move towards further secularization and modernization in the Ottoman Empire was the proclamation of the *Tanzimat Fermani* [The Imperial Edict of Tanzimat] in 1839. This era, which is known as the Tanzimat Period (1839-1876), was marked by further reforms aiming at the reorganization of the state and the redefinition of the status of the people *vis-a-vis* the state. *Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu* which was proclaimed by Mustafa Reşid Paşa in 1839 could be considered as a continuation of the reforms of Mahmut II directed to create a new conception of an impersonal state and a new conception of the equality of the subjects formulated around the concepts of law and justice regardless of their religious and ethnic origins. The radical aspect of the *Hatt-ı Hümayunu* was related to religious minorities, which were subjected to different treatments in the Empire. It proclaimed that all the people belonging to the Ottoman state were equal before the law and had equal status *vis-a-vis* the state. It also included the safeguards of life and property, the reorganization of the financial structure, a just taxation system and reforms in the administration.¹⁸ The judicial system was subjected to various reforms, which included the translation and promulgation of the French Penal Code into the Turkish which was followed by the establishment of the mixed courts in 1847, and the adoption of the Commerce Code and Maritime Code, respectively in 1861 and 1863.¹⁹

¹⁸ İlber Ortaylı, “Tanzimat,” in *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Turkey from Tanzimat to the Republic], vol. 6 (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), 1545; For the Tanzimat policies and the social reactions against them see, Halil İnalçık, “Tanzimat’ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkiler” [The Adoption of Tanzimat and Social Reactions], in *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Turkey from Tanzimat to the Republic], vol. 6 (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), 1536-1544.

Along with the successes, the Tanzimat period was also marked by various failures and frustrations. For instance, although the Tanzimat reformers had great aims to modernize society and create a modern state based on the European model, they were far from accomplishing them completely. Moreover, it generated new tensions within the state machinery. The Tanzimat reforms created a central bureaucracy, which also granted new rights to the bureaucrats. With these new legal rights, they became an influential group holding power vis-a-vis the sultan and the other branches of the government.²⁰ After 1870, they began to use arbitrary methods in governmental affairs, which contradicted the fundamental philosophy of the Tanzimat.²¹ Fueled by the failures in economic and social life, the Tanzimat created serious frustrations among the Ottoman intellectuals, which paved the way for a new search on the part of the Tanzimat intellectuals. Among them, a new group of opposition called the Young Ottomans who were also the members of the ruling elite with few exceptions.²²

The Young Ottomans who instituted the First Constitution in the Ottoman Empire in 1876 took a critical posture against the imitative reforms of the Tanzimat.

¹⁹ Ahmed Selim, *Din-Medeniyet ve Laiklik* [Religion, Civilization and Laicism] (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 1991), 286.

²⁰ Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 44.

²¹ Bülent Tanör, “Anayasal Gelişmelere Toplu bir Bakış” [An Overview of the Constitutionalist Developments], in *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Turkey from Tanzimat to the Republic], vol. 1. (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), 16-17.

²² The prominent figure of the Young Ottomans were Namık Kemal, Ziya Paşa, Mustafa Fazıl Paşa, Hayrettin Paşa and Ali Suavi. For a well-documented and detailed work on the origins and the ideas of the main Young Ottoman leaders see, Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1962).

However, what they demanded was not different from that of the advocates of the Tanzimat. They, too, demanded constitutional reforms, freedom, equality before the law and the adoption of the “good” aspects of the Western world which included more than the technical innovations. In this respect, they were in the same line with the reformers of the Tanzimat. On the basis of the Constitution of 1876, one may come across the first Ottoman Parliament opened in 1877 in the Ottoman-Turkish history.²³ The Parliament was made up of members from different ethnic and religious communities of the Empire. Although the Parliament was dissolved in 1878 by Abdülhamid II, in historical terms, it was a significant experience in the Empire since this was the first constitutional experience in the Ottoman-Turkish political history.

The first Ottoman Parliament was dissolved by Abdülhamid II (1876-1908) in 1878 who put an end to the reform process in the constitutional arena. Accordingly, the influential figures of the period, such as Namık Kemal and Mithat Pasha, were sent to exile. Abdülhamid II adopted a different outlook towards the state-religion relationship. If all policies of Abdülhamid II are taken into consideration, a paradoxical outlook can be discerned regarding state-Islam relationship and modernization in general. Although Abdülhamid gave priority to religion, he intensively maintained the modernization reforms in other domains of the state and society such as education, railways and communications throughout his reign. In this period, most of the Muslim geography was colonized by the Western powers, especially England and France. Abdülhamid II thought that if he propagated the political role and importance of the *hilafet*, he could mobilize the Muslim world

against these colonial powers. To achieve this purpose, he followed pan-Islamist policies which were accompanied by a viable revival of religious movement inside of the Empire.²⁴ Abdülhamid II's style of rule was based on the suppression of all opposition movements through authoritarian measures, including extensive use of secret intelligence and police force. The authoritarian measures inevitably paved the way for the formation of secret organizations, aiming to overthrow the ruler and to reinstall a constitutional government. As will be elaborated below, it was in this period that an organization, whose ambitions determined the fate of the country in the following decades, came into existence. Thus, in that respect, this period has special significance in the Ottoman-Turkish modernization and secularization history.

As has already been noted, despite the fact that Abdülhamid II preferred a religious oriented outlook to the internal and external policy issues, his period was marked by extensive reforms which meant the continuation of the secularizing and modernizing reforms of the *Tanzimat*. In the legal arena, a set of laws to regulate the organization of justice and the operation of the courts was promulgated in 1879 which was followed by the establishment of the Ministry of Justice. Some new laws were also proclaimed about the *nizamiye* (mixed) courts, previously established to regulate the affairs between Muslims and non-Muslims. In regard to communication, the efforts included the construction of railways which linked different centers of the Empire to the important centers, such as Damascus and Medina, Hayadarpaşa and Izmit, Istanbul and Edirne. The expansion of railways was also in accordance with

²³ Zürcher, *Turkey*, 69-78.

²⁴ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 253-261.

the pan-Islamist policies of Abdülhamid II. In this respect, one of the most important improvements was done in the telegraph service which was spread throughout the Empire. The telegraph was the most valued means of communication because it enabled the center to supervise the whole periphery.²⁵

The legal and judicial reforms and the improvements in communications played a crucial role in solution of the daily problems faced by the state. Yet, the classical question of the Ottoman tradition, i.e. how to save the state from decline, found its actual answer in educational reforms in this era. In fact, Abdülhamid II spent his most intimate efforts on educational reforms, particularly in educating the Muslim subjects. In order to spread the primary and secondary education, he opened new schools in Anatolia, Arab provinces, and the Balkan provinces where Muslims were majority. He opened some higher learning schools in Istanbul and some other great cities of the Empire.²⁶

The educational reforms of Abdülhamid II were also supported by his close associates. Lewis observes that the Grand Vizier of Abdülhamid, Mehmet Said Paşa (1838-1914), saw educational reforms as “the first prerequisite to any further improvement”²⁷ and prepared a report explaining the significance of education. The school of *Mülkiye* was reorganized in 1877 to educate the bureaucrats. He also made important improvements in War School (*Harbiye*) and added new schools of naval, medical, and artillery. The reforms were extended to the establishment of “the

²⁵ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 183-187.

²⁶ Engin Akarlı, “II. Abdülhamid (1786-1909),” in *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Turkey from Tanzimat to the Republic], vol. 5. (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), 1293.

schools of finance (1878), law (1878), fine arts (1879), commerce (1882), civil engineering (1884), veterinary science (1889), police (1891), customs (1892) and an improved new medical school 1898).”²⁸ The school of Galatasaray which became the favorite school of the sons of the ruling class was reformed and the number of the Turkish students was increased. Moreover, the first Turkish university was opened in 1900 which was named as *Darülfünun* and later became the University of Istanbul.²⁹ On the differences between the military schools and the civil schools established during the Abdülhamid and Young Turks’ periods, Heper³⁰ observes that the military schools were more important than civil schools both in number and in quality. For the civil bureaucrats there was only Mülkiye as high school, but for the military, one may see War School, Naval, the Artillery, and School of Engineering. These military schools were the place where lots of students from various regions of the country and from different sections of society were socialized according to the Western norms.

The rule of Abdülhamid postponed the development of opposition but never prevented its emergence. In fact, as Berkes pointed out “the Hamidian regime did not foresee that a policy of political suppression would breed a generation manifesting intellectual characteristics antithetical to the dominant features of the regime’s

²⁷ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 179.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 181.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 182.

³⁰ Metin Heper, “19. yy’da Osmanlı Bürokrasisi” [The Ottoman Bureaucracy in the Nineteenth Century], in *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Turkey from Tanzimat to the Republic], vol. 1. (Istanbul: İletişimYayınları, 1985), 245.

ideology.”³¹ The principal outcome of the Hamidian regime was a group of intellectuals full with the materialist outlook who aimed, first of all, to force Abdülhamid to put the Constitution at work, and then to initiate necessary reforms in order to save the country from decline. The succeeding Second Young Turk period was marked by intensive political movements first developed in the form of secret organizations, and in due course became open, which compelled Abdülhamid to proclaim the Constitution.

The schools established before Abdülhamid and by Abdülhamid himself were the places where new western norms were internalized by the students. Extensively filled with secular tenets, a new secular ideology began to take place among students in these schools, which later turned into a political program of saving the state. Especially, the new military schools were the fertile soil for the diffusion of the new ideology. It was in the Military Medical School that the first secret organization, *İttihad-i Osmani* (The Ottoman Union) founded by İbrahim Temo, Abdullah Cevdet, Mehmet Reşad and İbrahim Sukuti in 1889 emerged. In the same year, this organization joined *İttihat ve Terakk-i Cemiyeti* (The Union and Progress Association) which was founded in Paris by a group of the Young Turks led by Ahmet Rıza, one of the prominent figures of the Young Turks who published a newspaper *Meşveret*.³² The new organization grew rapidly and found supporters from different sections of society, especially from the military and the bureaucracy.

³¹ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism*, 290.

³² Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasi Partiler: İttihat ve Terakki, Bir Çağın, Bir Kuşağın, Bir Partinin Tarihi* [Political Parties in Turkey: A History of an Age, a Generation, and a Political Party] (Istanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1989), 7. The perfect name in the Turkish is *Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*.

In the same period, in Egypt, Murad Bey (Mizancı Murad) began to publish a newspaper, *Mizan*, which was criticizing the policies of the Sultan. He was also aware of the developments in Paris. Instead of Paris, he went to Geneva and established a Young Turk association and continued to publish *Mizan* there. He returned to Istanbul after the invitation of the Sultan who promised the Young Turks leaders some official posts if they had returned to Turkey. One important development in this period related to the Young Turks was the arrival of Prince Sabahattin at Paris. The Young Turk leaders decided to hold a conference in Paris in order to centralize the movement and arrive at some principles for action in 1902.³³ In this Conference, two main fronts emerged within the Union and Progress. The first group led by Prince Sabahattin was supporting the reform aiming at decentralization, and was evaluating foreign intervention into the internal affairs justifiable if promoted their aim. The second group led by Ahmet Rıza opposed any external interventions. Their strategy was based on a strong centralized state and on preserving the already existing Sultanate. At the end of this process, the Young Turks were split, and Prince Sabahattin formed a new organization under the name of *Teşebbüs-ü Şahsi ve Adem-i Merkeziyet Cemiyeti* (The Society of Private Initiative and Decentralization).³⁴

The division was partly due to the differences of the sources of the ideas. Ahmet Rıza was a disciple of August Comte, thus, his reform proposals were laden by extreme positivist tenets. The positivist slogan “union and progress” was chosen

³³ Kemal Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi- Party System* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1959), 14.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 13-19.

as the official name of his organization, but Prince Sabahattin adopted the ideas of Le Play and his disciple Edmond Demolish (1852-1907) who analyzed the strength of the Anglo-Saxons under the ideas of Le Play, and concluded that their power had originated from the decentralized administrative system.³⁵ However, because of the Unionists desire to strengthen the state coupled with the traditional conception of the sovereign state, the official ideology throughout the Union and Progress period remained positivism, and the ideas of Prince Sabahattin found no supporters.³⁶

The Young Turk associations were founded in different parts of the Empire and under different names. In Damascus, *Vatan ve Hürriyet Cemiyeti* (Fatherland and Freedom Society) was formed by some officers including Atatürk.³⁷ The most important one was founded in Salonica by the officers of the Third Army under the name *Osmanlı Hürriyet Cemiyeti* (The Ottoman Freedom Society) which became the most dominant group among others and took the whole initiative when it merged with the Union and Progress. Discontent was high in society, but particularly in the Balkan provinces where the foreign influence and intervention had been extensive, it was openly expressed. The possibility that Macedonia could be split from the Empire due to a conspiracy of certain foreign powers caused alarms among the officers of the Third Army. Enver Bey, the most influential Unionist figure, initiated a resistance movement against the Sultan in the mountains of Resne in 1908, and he was followed by Niyazi Bey who brought a few hundred men with him. The men of

³⁵ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism*, 310.

³⁶ Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). Especially Chapter Two and Chapter Nine.

³⁷ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 205.

the Sultan who were sent to deal with this problem were killed by these resisting revolutionaries. The outbreaks were spread in the whole Balkan provinces and reached to the Second Army resident in Edirne. People joined the movement and raised their revolt against the Sultan especially in Salonika, Monastir and Kosova,. Now, the Union and Progress sent more concrete political demands to the Sultan. At the end, the revolt resulted in the proclamation of the Constitution of 1876 in the Balkan provinces and in sending an ultimatum to the Sultan demanding the proclamation of the constitution. Abdülhamid conceived the seriousness of the events and reinstated the Constitution of 1876, and opened the Parliament. This event also marked the beginning of the Second Constitutionalist period.³⁸

The Second Constitutionalist period developed under direct or indirect influences of the Union and Progress. Although it did not take over the control of the government directly at the beginning, all developments took place under the control of the Union. One year after the revolution of 1908, a religious oriented revolt supported by the opposition took place in Istanbul demanding the return to *Sharia*, an event which is known in the Turkish history as the “31 March Event.” The bloody nature of the movement alarmed the Unionists and encouraged them to use hard measures against the revolt. They sent *Hareket Ordusu* [Mobile Army], which was established by the Unionists in Salonika, to Istanbul in order to suppress the movement.³⁹ One of the officers of the army was Atatürk who later became the

³⁸ Ibid., 207-209.

³⁹ On this famous 31 March Event Sina Akşin, a prominent student of the Turkish history, notes that to say that the event was merely a religious one does not give us the true picture of it. Although the motto of the revolt was “we want the Sharia,” the true reason behind the revolt was opposition developed against the

fouder of the Republic. The army suppressed the movement and dethroned Abdülhamid in 1909. The movement was important in the history of the Union because after that event the gap between the Union and the government narrowed. Mahmut Şevket Paşa, the Chief of the General Staff, became the leader of the Union, and began to impose his ideas upon the Organization.⁴⁰ After this event, the Union took authoritarian measures against the opposition as Abdülhamid II did. The period between 1908 and 1913 was marked by the forming and dissolution of various governments which ended with famous “*Bab-ı Ali Baskını*” (The Sublime Porte Raid) on January 23, 1913 after the loss of the Balkan territories. A group of the Unionist officers, led by Enver Paşa, made a raid on the Sublime Porte during a cabinet meeting and killed Nazım Paşa, the Minister of War. The Union forced the Kamil Paşa government to resign, and took direct control of the state. It was after the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa that the Union suppressed all the opposition groups and became the only political force until 1918 in the Empire. The last remnants of democracy were henceforward repealed by the Unionist government.⁴¹

Although the Unionists returned to authoritarian measures in conducting the governmental affairs, they maintained the modernization reforms as their predecessors. They created a new provincial system of government, and developed the first municipal organizations in the Empire which later became the basis of the

Union. The aim of the opposition was to drive away the Union from Istanbul, but they failed. See, Sina Akşin, “İttihat ve Terakki” [The Union and Progress], in *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Turkey from Tanzimat to the Republic], vol. 5. (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), 1424.

⁴⁰ Akşin, “İttihat ve Terakki” [The Union and Progress], 1426.

municipal government system of the Republic. As to the secularization, the Union and Progress period witnessed various reforms parallel to the intensification of the Westernization reforms in all aspects of life. The European twenty-four hour system was taken as the new time measure and the costume and manners were westernized. Especially the dress of women became European in style. The most important reforms were implemented in the field of education. The Unionists were successful in establishing a primary and secondary educational system totally along a secular line. They opened new colleges to educate teachers and some specialized institutions, along with the reorganization of Istanbul University. A further development in this respect was the extending of the scope of education to the female students that was a novel phenomenon in the social life of the Empire, which increased the appearance of women in public life.⁴²

The institutional reforms of modernization or secularization denoted a gradual process through which the traditional relationship between the state and religion was dissolved, and religion was pushed away from the center of the state. Yet the ground on which reforms were realized was not a vacuum. It generated far-reaching consequences for the subsequent fate of the reforms. There was a gradual alteration in the inherited composition of the power block, which sometimes took place after bitter confrontations. The balance between the civil bureaucracy, military, *sultan* and *Ulema* changed in favor the military, and the *Ulema* was discarded from the block. Moreover, there was a radical shift in the mentality of the secularizing or

⁴¹ It must be remarked that the political instruments of the Union were not always “legal.” In fact, they extensively used para-political instruments including conspiracies, public assassinations, threat and the like.

⁴² Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 228-229.

modernizing elites, which is crucially important to understand the subsequent political developments both in the Ottoman and the republican periods, since it was the final move of the military to the center of power with a new *weltanschauung* that set the basic parameters of secularization and modernization which remained at work until recently, albeit with some notable changes. The following part analysis this process with its theoretical implications around the questions such as how was the relationship between Islam and modernity articulated in this new *weltanschauung*? What kind of patterns was produced by this conceptualization between the state (read the state elites) and religion? In other words, to what kind of tradition did the above developments lead in Turkey?

3.2 The Rise of the Military to Power and the Emergence of a Secular *Weltanschauung*

The initial rationale of the Ottoman institutional reforms gives us only the primary concern of the Ottoman statesmen, i.e. saving the state from decline, but as already been noted, it says little about the principal results of these reforms and of their theoretical implications for the state-Islam relationship and for the general relationship between Islam and the modernity as it was conceived by the state elites. It is evident that at the beginning, the reforms were not conducted through a conscious effort to secularize the state and society, but they were conscious efforts to regain the military power possessed earlier by the Ottoman state. Secularization was a natural outcome of the chosen strategy on the part of the military-bureaucratic elites to attain this goal, i.e. modernization through Westernization. Yet, whatever the initial concerns of the military-bureaucratic elites were, it inevitably paved the

way to new understandings and the proposals with novel rationale which were beyond the horizons of the early reformists.

It was in the following decades, i.e. by the end of the nineteenth century, that the total displacement of Islam became the primary issue of the proposals and debates among the state elites who were also the products of the same reforms. This means that a radical shift in the *weltanschauung* of the state elites took place throughout the reform periods.⁴³ This was especially the case in the Young Turks era in which several rival ideologies emerged from different political groups concerning the problem “on which proposal the state would be restructured.” Therefore, as has already been noted, the shift in the *weltanschauung* of the state elites, which brought new secular concepts, is crucial to understand the whole adventure of the Ottoman-Turkish secularization process and the role of the military in shaping this process.

The most important development with respect to the secularization of the *weltanschauung* was related to the changes in the vocabulary of new ideas. Even in the period of the Young Ottomans which was relatively an early date, one can see that new ideas were articulated via secular concepts. For instance, Heper observes that Namık Kemal and Ziya Paşa “posed the concepts of fatherland and patriotism against the concept of *umma*, of religious community”⁴⁴ and placed sole emphasis on the state and nationality. Even this conceptual departure in itself denotes that the rising intellectuals and the military-bureaucratic elites were already at a search for a

⁴³ For the ideological origins and the emergence of the new materialist and positivist *weltanschauung* within the Ottoman military-bureaucratic elites see, Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, Especially Chapter Two and Chapter Nine.

new secular *weltanschauung* to make it as the new foundation stone of the state. In the Young Turk period, a total divorce between the state elites (the military and the bureaucratic elites) along with the intellectuals and Islam took place. There was a new cultural background that deserved special attentions, which made the development of such secular ideologies possible.

Concerning the nineteenth century, Heper points out the Ottoman state elites had a basic assumption: “In order to save the state the space of the value system based on the superstition should be narrowed, and a new secular educational system should be established. In a social condition lacking entrepreneurial Muslim middle classes and maintaining a strong state tradition the true saver of the state were the ruling elites educated in the secular schools.”⁴⁵ Thus, the newly established secular schools were placed at the center in shaping this new *weltanschauung*. Again Heper⁴⁶ remarks that cleavages in the Ottoman society developed along the cultural lines due to the fact that social forces based on economic differentiation were absent. In this particular social setting, knowledge and the type of education were more important in shaping the cultural cleavages than socio-economic background. The new schools offered secular education, which also meant that the world view of the new powerful social forces were shaped by secular ideas. In fact, the new secular schools became the hot bed of secular ideas, and secular ideologies found their most fertile soil in these schools among which the military schools played the most

⁴⁴ Metin Heper, “Islam, Polity and Society in Turkey: A Middle Eastern Perspective,” *Middle East Journal* 35 (1981), 349.

⁴⁵ Heper, “19. yy’da Osmanlı Bürokrasisi” [The Ottoman Bureaucracy in the Nineteenth Century], 246.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 248.

significant role. The new ideology emerged in the Ottoman Empire was radically different from its counterparts in Europe which dominated the agenda of the masses in the course of the formation of modernity. Unlike the utopias and great philosophical traditions such as humanism, individualism, liberalism, and later Marxism, conservatism and nationalism which dominated the Renaissance and the post-Renaissance centuries in Europe,⁴⁷ in the Ottoman Empire, only science with its strict positivistic and materialistic content was adopted as the fundamental world view and an ideology by the state elites for the new foundation of the state and the society.⁴⁸ Şükrü Hanioğlu, in his seminal work, mentions how science gained substantive and prescriptive meanings in the conception of the Ottoman intellectuals. In his words; “for Ottoman intellectuals science attained the status of religion, and faith in science usurped the position of religious belief; thus “science” became endowed with a transcendent meaning.”⁴⁹ In other words, religion was replaced by science. “The impact of contemporary science on Ottoman intellectuals was so profound that many became convinced that in such a “century of progress” every aspect of life would be regulated according to science.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ For a short but incorporating account of the Western thought see, J. Bronowski and Bruce Mazlish, *The Western Intellectual Tradition: From Leonardo to Hegel* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1975).

⁴⁸ It is clear that the Young Turks took nationalism as a substitute for Islam especially in the last years of their rule, but, as will be pointed out below, the nationalism formulated by the Young Turk intellectuals were injected by positivist and scientific tenets. According to the Young Turks, the genuine norm creating agent was science.

⁴⁹ Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 11.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

The impact of science on the Ottoman intellectual fabric was so profound that it gained a hegemonic status in a sense; thus, none of the ideological groups was in a position to take a critical position towards it. For all branches of politically active thought in the Young Turk period, the privileged theme in the Ottoman society was progress (*terakki*). Although there were several currents of thought during the Young Turk period, two general trends can be discerned: the Islamists and the Westernists.⁵¹ Yet, they shared the basic problematics of the time, i.e. saving the state and progress. The accent on science and progress in their ideas also shows how modern science had a deep effect on the minds during the period in question. As has already been pointed out, a common point shared by the Islamists and the Westernists was “progress,” the process which had been achieved by the “civilized” Western nations. The search for a powerful state and the goal of attaining the progress were inevitably transformed into a search of new civilization, for which the Western civilization was offered by the Westernists. According to the Westernists in order to achieve the progress and save the state, the Western civilization had to be adopted in all fields of life and with all of its aspects.⁵² The traditional structures of the Empire, the most

⁵¹ In the literature one may face with different divisions of the schools of thought during the Young Turk period. This is partly a result of the fact that it is difficult to identify clear boundaries between them. For instance, in Westernists we may see an extreme Westernist figures. For example, Abdullah Cevdet wanted total adoption of the elements of Western civilization, and was an anti-religious person. A moderate figure like Celal Nuri Ileri, meanwhile, suggested partial adoption of the Western civilization. The same is true for other schools. In general, four schools such as Westernists, Islamists, Ottomanists and the Turkists can be identified for this period. Berkes and Karpat divide them into three such as Westernists, Islamists and the Turkists. Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 337-346; Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, 20-31. Since the Turkists were also modernist and aimed at Westernization, they can be considered together with the Westernists. The above distinction was borrowed from Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 234.

dominant of them being Islam, were obstacles to progress and ought to be replaced by those imported from the West. The agenda of the Islamists was dominated by a reverse rationale. For them, Islam was not an obstacle to progress, but was a true instrument of becoming strong. Another recurrent theme in the writings of the Islamists was that “true” civilization was only possible with Islam, and the Western civilization has its origins in the old Islamic civilization.⁵³ Thus, science and technique could be borrowed, but nothing was needed in morality and manner. Only material aspect of Western civilization was legitimate for the Islamists.

The final victory was won by the Westernists since they allied themselves with the leading group of society: the military. Among the intellectual, bureaucratic and military elites, the military was more prone to welcome the positivist and materialist ideas.⁵⁴ It is commonly believed among the students of the Turkish politics that the military was in a leading position in the reform period, i.e. Young Turk period, which witnessed various secularization reforms.⁵⁵ The role of the military in making a revolution was emphasized in the initial stage of the Young Turk movement. In the First Young Turk Congress which was held in 1902, the members discussed the ways by which Abdülhamid could be overthrown, and the

⁵² Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, 21-22.

⁵³ İsmail Kara, *İslamcıların Siyasi Görüşleri* [The Political Views of Islamists] (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 1994), 24-25. Kara's book is a comprehensive research on the ideas of the Islamists based on first hand original texts. See also, Tarık Z. Tunaya, *İslamcılık Akımı* [The Current of Islamism] (Istanbul: Simavi Yayınları, 1991). For a first hand material of the Islamists see, Sait Halim Paşa, *Buhranlarımızve Son Eserleri* [Our Crisis and his Last Works] (Istanbul: İzYayıncılık, 1993). He was a leading figure among the Islamists.

⁵⁴ Şerif Mardin, “The Just and the Unjust,” *Daedalus* (Summer, 1991), 123.

use of the military was offered to dethrone him, which was also repeated in the Second Congress of the Young Turks in 1907.⁵⁶ The developments within the Empire did not deceive them, and the military ended the rule of Abdülhamid paving way to the rule of the Union and Progress.

The rationale of the military which was a product of its positivistic outlook determined the direction of subsequent reforms. Hanioglu points out how one of the newly established military schools became suffused with positivism and materialism as follows:

The role of the Royal Medical Academy played through the socialization of its students is noteworthy. This institution had been a spawning ground for materialist and anti-religious ideas for decades when the Young Turk movement emerged there. Senior fellows required pious students to read chapters from Darwin's works in order to unseat their convictions. Most of these students were astonished... and soon after they usually converted to "scientific" materialism.⁵⁷

That is why the Turkish nationalism, from its very beginning, developed on scientific and rationalistic bases and was injected into the *weltanschauung* of the Union and Progress. The rise of nationalism as dominant ideology was a result of the final move of the military to the leadership position. The wider acceptance of

⁵⁵ Heper, "19. yy'da Osmanlı Bürokrasisi," 254; Karpaz, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State," 277-279; Mardin, "The Just and the Unjust," 124.

⁵⁶ Kurtuluş Kayalı, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Yenileşme Hareketleri ve Ordu" . ." [The Reform Movements and the Military in the Ottoman State] in *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Turkey from Tanzimat to the Republic], vol. 5 (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), 1256.

⁵⁷ Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 20; On the leadership position of the military and their world view which they intended to impose upon society, Mardin writes: "As representatives of the military professions, officers nevertheless retained their prestige as leaders of Ottoman society among all Ottomans. In the 1890s the view of the world that the military had introduced seemed increasingly

nationalism among the military, bureaucracy and the intellectual circles was the most important step in the Ottoman secularization process because from the beginning the Turkish nationalism evolved at the expense of religion, with its scientific and positivistic content. As it was pointed out by Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, in Turkey, nationalism was conceived “as a specifically “modern” phenomenon, which was best represented by European rationalism.”⁵⁸ The positivist-rationalist nationalism then was offered as an alternative to Islam. It was not only an ideology which defined a particular group of people in a certain way, but also a new kind of political unit,⁵⁹ i.e. the nation vis-a-vis *ummet* (the religious community) whose definition was based on a secular conceptual matrix. In the Turkish case, the adoption of nationalism represents both a radical break from the so-called *ancien régime* and a new definition of the basis of legitimization, i.e. the nation. In order to understand the way in which nationalism and Islam were articulated (or disarticulated), an elaboration of the ideas of the theoretical fathers of Turkish nationalism is needed.

The most prominent figure of the Turkish nationalism was Ziya Gökalp who also became the ideologue of the Young Turks and the theoretical father of the Republican reforms. In Gökalp’s view, the nation “could not be founded only on race, geography, political affinity or mere will power, but must chiefly be based on culture”⁶⁰ which was intensely defined on the basis of language. In accordance with

alien and godless, but their prowess was still cause for celebration, as was seen in the short Greek-Ottoman conflict in 1897.” Mardin, “The Just and the Unjust,” 124.

⁵⁸ Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, “Parameters and Strategies of Islam-State Interaction in Republican Turkey,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28 (1996): 234.

⁵⁹ Karpal, “The Transformation of the Ottoman State,” 280.

the Gökalian understanding of nationalism, secularism plays significant role since he thought, “the Turkish nation would come into existence as a result of the breakdown of Islamic *ümme*t under the impact of the modern technology of Western civilization, whose constituent elements were democratic, secular nationalities.”⁶¹ Thus, a total separation of the state and Islam was considered as indispensable prerequisites to built the Turkish nation and create a nationalist ideology.

Gökalp was not in a position to deny the role of Islam in society. In a sense, he tried to reconcile three different views which were dominant in his time, namely Westernism, Islamism, and Nationalism, in such a way that they were not obstacles for each other. Since the domains of them were different, it was possible to belong to Western civilization, Islamic religious community, and the Turkish nation at the same time. Yet, the synthesis that Gökalp tried to achieve did not give equal weight to each of them in his general system. By a careful observation, one can notice that Gökalp was not successful in this synthesis. Andrew Davison points out that, to most of the Gökalp’s interpretators, nationalism and modernity were more important than Islam in Gökalp’s writings.⁶² The place of religion was in the conscience of the people. Instead of religion, society became the supreme authority of ideas and morality. He was strongly influenced by the social philosophy of Durkheim who put

⁶⁰ Karpat, *Turkey’s Politics*, 25.

⁶¹ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 345.

⁶² Andrew Davison, “Secularization and Modernization in Turkey: The Ideas of Ziya Gökalp,” *Economy and Society* 24 (1995), 197; Ergun Özbudun also notes that Ziya Gökalp was not clear on the religious aspect of Turkish national identity, and, in his view, language, culture and ideals were more important than religion in defining the nation. See, Ergun Özbudun, “Antecedents of Kemalist Secularism: Some Thoughts on the Young Turk Period,” in *Modern Turkey: Continuity and Change*, ed. Ahmet Evin (Opladen: Leske, 1984), 37.

greater emphasis on society than the individual. Durkheim's society became "nation" in Gökalp's theory of nationalism. Uriel Heyd aptly noted how this modification produced radical implications:

For Durkheim's *society* he substitutes *nation*, which for French sociologist is only one of the various social groups to which modern man belongs. Consequently, he transfers to the nation all the divine qualities he had found in society, replacing the belief in God by the belief in the nation; nationalism had become a religion.⁶³

The place of religion in the new set up of society and the state also aroused the intellectual interest of the other intellectuals in the same period. One of the most influential intellectuals was Yusuf Akçura whose view of the secular nationalism was more influential than the views of Gökalp in the official formulation of Turkish nationalism in the newly established republican state. In comparison to the view of Gökalp, Akçura's conception of secularism was more radical, hence secular, because he did not include religion as an ingredient of the nation. Akçura developed his view in his essay entitled *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset*⁶⁴ [Three Styles of Politics] in which he discussed three different views intellectually active in the Young Turk period. These views were Pan-Ottomanism claiming to create an Ottoman nation from the existing Ottoman population with different ethnic and religious origins, Pan-Islamism whose ideas focused on the unification of the Muslim people, and Pan-Turkism aiming at doing the same thing for the Turkish-speaking people in the world. One of his most important differences from Gökalp as regards nationalism was his conception of

⁶³ Uriel Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism: The Life and Teachings of Ziya Gökalp* (London: Luzac-Harvill, 1950), 57.

⁶⁴ Yusuf Akçura, "Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset" [Three Political Views], *Türkiye Günlüğü* [Turkey's Agenda] 31(1994), 9-18.

nation which was based on race rather than culture. For Akçura, it was impossible to realize former two projects because:

In the present history, existing currents are race-based. Religions, because of their very nature, are losing their power and political significance. They are becoming more private rather than social. Freedom of conscience has replaced religious unions. Religions have ceased to be a matter of society and become guides for the hearts of the people. They are only the ties of the conscience between man and God. Therefore, they only maintain their social and political significance to the extent that they serve, help, and are integrated to the races.⁶⁵

The Republican nationalism was a synthesis of Gökalp and Akçura in such a way that it took linguistic-centered cultural conceptualization of Gökalp as the basis of nation, and like the view of Akçura, omitted religion as a constituent component of nation.

The importance of the development of Turkish nationalism in the development of Turkish secularism was not limited only to its emergence as an alternative source of norms and as an instrument of the legitimization of power. Moreover, its positivistic implications played significant role in the development of Turkish secularism because it put great emphasis on the formative role of modern science in creating the Turkish nation. Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire, says Karpat, “appeared not only as a political solution to the survival of the state, but also a means or channel for the introduction of science and progress for the new political unit: the nation.”⁶⁶ On the proximity of the nationalism and positivism in the Turkish history Mardin observed that “the emerging Turkish positivist generation of the

⁶⁵ Ibid., 17.

⁶⁶ Karpat, “The Transformation of the Ottoman State,” 280

1890s was also a nationalist generation.”⁶⁷ The most brilliant explanation of the relationship between modern science and nationalism, which also shows the frame of mind of the period in question, can be found in Gökalp’s view. As quoted by Özbudun, Gökalp thought “in order to join the ranks of contemporary nations, certain conditions should absolutely be fulfilled. At the top of these comes the drive towards science... A modern nation is a creature which thinks in terms of the positive science.”⁶⁸

All of the above steps toward secularization had far-reaching effects on the subsequent developments, particularly on the developments in the Republican period in terms of secularism and on the role of the military in the process of secularization. These developments meant that at the end of the Ottoman Empire, there had already occurred at the substance level the “objective secularization” or what Heper called “institutional secularization as disengagement”⁶⁹ and the “subjective secularization” or secularization at the consciousness level, or, “normative secularization as desacralization, i.e. the concept that life can be lived in accordance with human rationality.”⁷⁰ Although the extent of secularization was limited to the educated public, it was also an effective public, which, in the succeeding decades, imposed secularization upon whole society from above. Özbudun properly summarizes overall contributions of the Young Turk period to the development of Turkish secularism in Turkey as:

⁶⁷ Mardin, “The Just and the Unjust,” 125.

⁶⁸ Özbudun, “Antecedents of Kemalist Secularism,” 32.

⁶⁹ Heper, “Islam, Polity and Society in Turkey,” 350.

By emphasizing the superiority of rational and scientific thought, by enlarging considerably the domain of secular political authority and, above all, by making Turkishness the predominant component of the corporate identity, the Young Turks provided an essential link between the Ottoman reforms and the Turkish revolution.⁷¹

The injection of the secular and positivist nationalism into *weltanschauung* of state elites radically changed the attitude of the military-bureaucratic elites toward Islam. It seems that the military-bureaucratic elites relied on the assumptions of the “secularization thesis,” even on its extreme conception, which claims that “modernization (itself no simple concept) brings in its wake (and may itself be accelerated by) the diminution of the social significance of religion,”⁷² as extreme interpretations add, in due time it disappears.⁷³ Thus the relationship between religion and state turned out to be problematical. The initiative came from the military which dominated power towards the end of the Young Turk period and structured the State-Islam relationship. Their attitude can be described as the “cast-iron theory of Islam,” which runs, according to Nur Yalman, as following:

The Quran is the Word of God. The word of God is unchangeable. New societies and political conditions are very different from eighth and ninth century Caliphates. Therefore, Islam, which has fallen out phase with life, can not be adapted to modern circumstances today. Consequently, modern life can not be organized around Islamic principles.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Ibid., 349.

⁷¹ Özbudun, “Antecedents of Kemalist Secularism,” 43.

⁷² Roy Wallis and Steve Bruce, “Secularization: The Orthodox Model,” in *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis*, ed. Steve Bruce (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 11.

⁷³ José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 20.

⁷⁴ Nur Yalman, “Islamic Reform and the Mystic Tradition in Eastern Turkey,” *Archiv. Europ. Sociol.* 10 (1969), 41.

The cost-iron theory of Islam shows the mentality by which succeeding reforms were carried out. In the last period of the Ottoman Empire, the military remained as the only organized group capable of bringing this rationality to its logical conclusion, i.e. to completely disestablish Islam in society, and was ready to do this. The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War gave the opportunity to the military not only to secularize the country, but also to change the rules of the game of politics in a fundamental way. By the end of the War, only nationalism, in the form that explained above, albeit cleaned of its Turanic tenets, remained a powerful ideology.⁷⁵

3.3 Secularism and the Military in the Early Republican Period

The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the War resulted in a nationalist struggle in the Anatolian land of the Empire against Greece under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, which culminated in the establishment of the Republic in 1923. What remained as a major actor from the Ottoman state was the military which was also the only agent able to use the initiative to tackle the problems faced by the nation. Under the leadership of Atatürk, the military fought against Greece and saved the Anatolian land. Guided by him, the military was ready to bring the reforms that had been initiated long before to its logical conclusion, i.e. completely secularizing the state. In a sense, the Republic was a radical response to the old master problem: “How to save the state?” The republican answer was a total displacement of religion through deliberate secular reforms. The difference between the nineteenth and early

⁷⁵ Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, 28.

twentieth century modernizing elites and Atatürk lies in the fact that Atatürk, although acted along the same Westernizing line, brought the scope of reforms far beyond the horizons of the former reformers. This was the radical side of the reforms of Atatürk.

When the secularization reforms of the Republican period are concerned, the mainstream orthodoxy of political writings is prone to pose the issue as a series of legal and institutional arrangements introduced by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic, with a secular spirit directed to the superstructural level of society, and little attention has been paid to their implications in terms of culture and individual identity. However, an exact understanding of the Republican reformism and secularism, and their far-reaching consequences in terms of secularism and secularization of the Turkish state and society necessitate a careful look at not only the superstructural arrangements, but also their relations to the whole modernization project of Atatürk and his followers. It is true that almost all of the reforms of Atatürk were concerned with the legal-institutional level of society, and all aimed, either directly or indirectly, at disestablishing institutional Islam from the state machinery and society. Yet, without relating these reforms to the primordial goal of Atatürk, we can not grasp the full picture. The secularization reforms should be evaluated according to their relations to the fundamental goal of Atatürk and his future expectations. What was the fundamental goal of Atatürk? In what way did Atatürk define the new individual? What kind of identity was offered to the new individual? On what grounds was the new state to be based? In what way was the new political collectivity conceptualized? These interrelated questions are crucial to understand the secularizing reforms of Atatürk.

The ultimate Atatürk goal that Atatürk had formulated for the nation was to reach to the level of contemporary civilization. It was the main rationale behind the reforms and all actions were justified on the basis of the “requirements of contemporary civilization.”⁷⁶ In order to reach the level of contemporary civilization, it was necessary to create a modern national state based on a national sovereignty. Contemporary civilization, national state, nation, nationalism, modern science and technology, progress and national unity were the keywords which constituted the conceptual matrix of Atatürk’s thought. In Atatürk’s view contemporary civilization had a clear address, i.e. Western civilization, which was, for him, a product of modern science. What was considered an obstacle to this goal had to be eliminated. The institutional part of the reforms were instituted both to get rid of the outmoded parts of the state preventing its development in a secular fashion, and to create new institutions required for a modern state. The cultural side of the reforms were concerned with creating the socio-cultural ground for a modern national state, namely creating a nation as a new political collectivity.

Atatürk’s conception of the modern state was both an inspiration of the western nation state model and a critique of the Ottoman state. As pointed out by Heper,⁷⁷ Atatürk’s criticism of the Ottoman state is important in understanding his conception of the modern state. According to Atatürk, if the conquest policy of the Ottoman sultans is examined, it can be seen that “all these attitudes and actions of the mighty sultans were based on their personal passions that they had for the foreign

⁷⁶ Mardin, “Religion and Secularism in Turkey,” 210.

⁷⁷ Metin Heper, “A Weltanschauung-turned-Partial Ideology and Normative Ethics: “Atatürkism” in Turkey,” *Orient* 25 (1984): 85-86.

policy.”⁷⁸ To the extent that the state was expanded on the basis of the personal passions the Ottomans were forced to give concessions to different ethnic and religious groups that brought the state to disaster. Instead of the selfish wishes of the sultan, the state had to be based on the sovereignty of the people.⁷⁹ It must be organized on the principles of modern science; thus, a full separation of the state and religion was an essential requirement. It was for this reason that the opening of the National Assembly in Ankara in 1920 and the proclamation of the Republic were followed by a series of reforms. In 1922, before the proclamation of the Republic, the sultanate was abolished. The abolishment of the Sultanate was, as also claimed by Atatürk himself, a logical end of a process started in the early period of the Independence War which gradually introduced the sovereignty of the nation. For example, after the opening of the National Assembly, a new constitution was accepted in 1921 to provide a legal base for the daily working of the government and to sustain the Independent War against Greece. The Constitution stipulated that sovereignty belonged to the nation without any reservation, and the Assembly called itself the true representative of the nation.⁸⁰ It also collected in itself the legislative and executive powers, and gradually discarded the Istanbul government. Under these conditions the abolishment of the Sultanate was only the official declaration of a de-facto situation. Although the Constitution put the nation in a position of the sole

⁷⁸ Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, I-III* [Speeches and Statements of Atatürk, I-III] (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 1989), 105.

⁷⁹ Heper, *The State Tradition*, 51.

holder of the right of sovereignty, the members of the Assembly were not clear on the ultimate implications of the existing situation. This became clear when the abolishment of the sultanate was discussed in the Assembly. A committee was formed to elaborate the issue and prepare a bill. In the mixed committee of the Assembly, where the religious groups raised their opposition to the bill, it became apparent that the committee could not reach a decision. Atatürk intervened into affairs and made the following explanation in a harsh tone of voice:

Three commissions met under the chairmanship of the Hoca Müftü Efendi. They discussed the issue. The jurists and theologians claimed by their specious reasoning that the sultanate and Caliphate could not be separated.... We were also listening to their discussions from a corner of the room. Under such conditions it seemed impossible to solve the problem. We understood this... Then I climbed on a table and made the following statement: Gentlemen, I said, the sovereignty and sultanate can not be given to anyone by scientific discussion and debate. Sovereignty and sultanate can only be taken by use of force and coercion. The Ottomans also took them from the Turkish nation by force, and they maintained this for six hundred years... Now the Turkish nation took back its usurped sovereignty by rebellion. This is a fact. It is not a matter whether we leave the sovereignty to the nation or not. The matter is to express the already existing fact by law. This will certainly happen. If those who are here, the Assembly and everyone recognize this as natural, all will be good. If not, the fact will happen by its appropriate way, but perhaps some heads will be cut off.⁸¹

The members were left no alternative, and on the same day the sultanate was abolished by a law passed in the Assembly on November 1, 1922. The gradual strategy of Atatürk included the separation of the sultanate and Caliphate, and after the abolishment of the sultanate, the Caliphate was maintained until 1924. In 1923 the Republic was declared in the Assembly. A preamble was accepted stating that

⁸⁰ A. Şeref Gözübüyük and Suna Kili, *Türk Anayasa Metinleri: 1939-1980* [The Turkish Constitutional Texts: 1939-1980] (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, 1982), 93.

the form of government in Turkey was a Republic. The above reforms were followed by new ones.⁸² Education was put under the monopoly of the state with a law entitled “The Law of the Unification of Education” which was promulgated in 1924. By his Law the schools whose owners were religious establishments, especially pious foundations, were given to the state. In 1925 hat wearing became compulsory for public officials and it was accepted as a new head cover for the Turks. The dress was changed, and wearing some uniforms was forbidden in the public sphere. The dervish lodges were banned in 1925, which was followed by the adoption of the Swiss Civil Code in 1926. The Gregorian calendar was given up in 1925. The call to prayer was also translated into Turkish and it became obligatory that it be said in Turkish in 1932. The statement in the Constitution declaring that “the religion of the Turkish state is Islam” was erased in 1928. Last but not least, the script was changed from the Arabic to the Latin in 1928. By the end of the 1920s one could face a completely secular state in Turkey.

The ultimate address of the reforms in the social and cultural spheres was the creation of a new individual compatible with the modern national state and society. The public representation of the republican citizen was imagined centrally, whose main formal attributes had to resemble those of their western counterparts. In this sense, the problem of Westernization was not only contemplated as a simple search for modernization, but as a search for a totally new civilization. Therefore, the republican reforms took as its targets what were deeply rooted components in society

⁸¹ Kemal Atatürk, *Nutuk* [Speech], ed. Zeynep Korkmaz (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 1994), 468.

such as the traditions, manners, style, values, and the like. This was the unique characteristics of the republican reformism. As Mardin aptly noted:

The Turkish Revolution was not the instrument of a discontented *bourgeoisie*, it did not ride on a wave of peasant dissatisfaction with the social order, and it did not have as target the sweeping away of feudal privileges, but it did take as a target the values of the Ottoman *ancien régime*. In this sense it was a revolutionary movement.⁸³

In the same vein, S. N. Eisenstadt observed that the unique characteristics of the Kemalist Revolution:

[W]as a shift in the bases of political legitimization and the symbols of the political community, together with a redefinition of the boundaries of collectivity. The redefinition of the political community took place in a unique way: the society withdrew from the Islamic framework into that of the newly defined Turkish nation. While this process appears similar to the path followed by the European nation states, it in fact involved the negation of universal framework: Islam. This was not the case in Europe.⁸⁴

The negation of Islam and its symbolic universe as a legitimizing formula for the state was the most important aspect of the secularism of Atatürk since in doing so the scope of secularism was extended beyond the simple separation of the state and religion, and as a logical conclusion of such understanding, alternative sources for the formation of a new identity and a new ethic were needed. What was substituted for Islam was Turkish nationalism made up of the positivistic and solidaristic

⁸² For a full documentation of the reforms in question, see, D. Mehmet Doğan, *Bir Savaş Sonrası İdeolojisi: Kemalizm* [Kemalism as a post-War Ideology] (Konya: Esra Yayınları, 1993), 92-93.

⁸³ Şerif Mardin, "Ideology and Religion in the Turkish Revolution," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2 (1971): 202.

⁸⁴ S. N. Eisenstadt, "The Kemalist Regime in Comparative Perspective: Some Cooperative and Analytical Remarks," in *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey*, ed. Jacob M. Landau (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1984), 9.

tenets.⁸⁵ The above move in itself was a radical one because it redefined the basic references by which the society and the individual could define themselves. Needless to say, this new conceptual matrix was expressed in a completely secular vocabulary.

As has already been noted, the latent and often manifest aim of the institutional and cultural reforms was to create a new individual suitable for a modern national state. Atatürk thought that creating a nation was only possible if a new Turk and a new national identity were created; this new citizen would be armed with a mind completely different from the old. It was expected that the socio-cultural and institutional reforms would create a fertile ground on which modern minded, enlightened and civilized Turks would be flourished. So, what would the place of religion be in the life of the new state, society and individual? This question is closely related to the way that Atatürk theorized on secularism and religion.

3.4 Religion and Secularism in Atatürk's Thought

It has already been pointed out that Atatürk aimed at creating a new symbolic system of society different from that of the *ancien regime*, the Ottoman, whose fabric was colored by traditional tints. Although he attacked the existing institutional Islam, he did not claim that religion as whole had no place in men's lives and consciousness. In other words, he did not adopt an irreligious outlook, but narrowed the space of religion in men's lives. Religion was a private matter confined only to men's conscience as Atatürk said,

In the Turkish Republic, anyone can worship God in any ways he/she wishes. No one can be mistreated because of his religious beliefs. The Turkish

⁸⁵ Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, 254; Andrew Mango, *Turkey* (New York: Walker and Company, 1968), 54.

Republic has no official religion. In Turkey it is not possible to find a person who wants to impose his ideas upon others by means of force. No permission is possible for that action too.⁸⁶

Although Atatürk tried to disestablish the institutional religion in a way which sometimes included hard measures, he did not try to impose a new creed upon society.⁸⁷ In some occasions, especially when the reactionary revolts were broken out in different parts of the country, he delivered statements hard in tone, which was showing his opposition against the institutional Islam. The following sayings were such ones: “Turkey can never be a society of *sheiks*, *mürids*, *dervishes* and their followers,” and “the truest and most genuine *tariqat* is the *tariqat* of civilization.”⁸⁸ For him, after the establishment of the sultanate tradition in Islam, a tradition in which religion was exploited for political purposes.⁸⁹ Islam was transformed into an obscurantist and superstitious belief system which was responsible for backwardness and ignorance. In approaching Islam as a rational and modern religion, he was showing his affinity to Islam, which was confined to the private sphere of life and conscience of individuals.

For Atatürk, Islam was a rational, modern and civilized religion. Nothing is found in Islam contrary to contemporary civilization. But in history Islam was

⁸⁶ A. Afetinan, *M Kemal Atatürk'ten Yazdıklarım* [What I Wrote from M. Kemal Atatürk] (Ankara: Altınok Matbaası, 1969), 41.

⁸⁷ Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, 271.

⁸⁸ Atatürk, *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, I-III*, vol. II, 225.

⁸⁹ Sadi Bolak, ed., *Atatürk ve Din* [Atatürk and Religion] (Anıl Yayınevi, 1997), 43. The Book is a collection of Atatürk's speeches and statements on religion, includes some anecdotes.

transformed into an obscurantist and superstitious belief by ignorant religious men to promote their petty interests. It was used for political purposes, and today what was needed was to put Islam in its true place. He said to a French journalist in an interview that there could be nothing in their policy contrary to Islam. He went on: “The Turkish nation must be more pious... I believe this as far as I believe my religion and the truth. My religion does not contain anything contrary to reason and progress.”⁹⁰

Yet, the place of religion in Atatürk’s conception was the conscience of man. In fact, it can be said that Atatürk’s understanding of religion was “to resemble the Protestant tradition that placed emphasis on the absolute privacy of individual conscience,”⁹¹ an understanding that excluded any public appearance of religion by its very definition. Atatürk said:

Religions is a matter of conscience. Everybody is free to follow the orders of his conscience. We respect religion. We are not against the thought and contemplation. What we are doing is to separate the affairs of religion and the those of the state and nation. We are just keeping away from the deliberate actions of the reactionaries.⁹²

The profound accent on the private nature of religion in Atatürk’s conception was closely related to his project of new individual; thus, the secularizing reforms confined to the cultural sphere need to be considered together with the individual

⁹⁰ Quoted in Baskın Oran, *Atatürk Milliyetçiliği: Resmi İdeoloji Dışı Bir İnceleme* [Atatürk Nationalism: An Inquiry Independent of Official Ideology] (Istanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1990), 182.

⁹¹ Heper, “Islam, Polity and Society in Turkey,” 351.

⁹² Bolak, ed., *Atatürk ve Din* [Atatürk and Religion], 87.

project in question and his expectation to create a new cultural identity. Mardin⁹³ notes that one of the most important ideological aims of Atatürk was individual autonomy, which he saw as an indispensable part of creativity. The traditional communal life of *mahalle*, whose legitimacy was derived from religion, not from science, was a limiting force for individual autonomy. He considered that without divorcing people from this traditional collective control mechanism, individual autonomy was not possible. The reforms related to dress, mystical orders, women's rights, and central control of education were aimed at encouraging this autonomy.

What was expected as the outcome was a new individual having little or no affinity to religion. The ethical void that was created by displacement of religion in individual life was expected to be filled with the modern science and technology. It seems that the attitudes of Atatürk and early republicans towards this problem resembles the attempts of the Third French Republican elites to find out a viable instrument in coping with social disorder. As Jack E. S. Hayward noted, "the nineteenth century French philosophers sought to base the principles of social reorganization upon a conciliation of "social moralism" and "social scientism"... as the only both acceptable and viable foundation for social life."⁹⁴ Like the French elites, Atatürk together with the secular military-bureaucratic intelligentsia relied on science as the true foundation of the new society and the individual. In Karpat's words, "the new individual whom the Republican regime wanted to bring out was a rationalist, anti-traditionalist, anti-clerical person, approaching all matters

⁹³ Mardin, "Religion and Secularism in Turkey," 212-216.

⁹⁴ Jack E. S. Hayward, "Solidarism: The Social History of an Idea in Nineteenth Century France," *International Review of Social History* 4 (1959), 266.

intellectually and objectively.”⁹⁵ Consequently, religion, as the foundation of old society was excluded from the ingredients constituting the nation, society, individual and cultural identity.

Yet, the republican conception of the individual autonomy had its limitations. It was bounded by the requirements of society. The conciliation of social moralism and social scientism influenced the early republican view of society and the individual. Drawing from Durkheimian sociology, not unlike the elites of the Third French Republic, society was conceptualized as an entity more than the sum total of individuals, hence, the individual was subordinated to it. The fragmented nature of society, i.e. the concept of society made up of classes and different ethnic groups was denied giving way to an understanding of society based on the harmonious interdependence of occupational groups.⁹⁶ In the same vein, in defining citizenship, not surprisingly, duties rather than rights were given primary emphasis. For instance, Füsün Üstel, on the books on citizenship written and circulated during the 1920’s, observed that the concept of citizenship in this period was defined on the bases of “being civilized” (*medenilik*) and patriotism (*yurtseverlik*).⁹⁷ The expression of particular interests was denied on behalf of presupposed common interests shared by the members of the whole community, a belief which found its expression in the

⁹⁵ Karpat, *Turkey’s Politics*, 53-54.

⁹⁶ For instance in his Balıkesir Speech Atatürk said; “Since the members of various occupational groups are dependent upon each other, it is impossible to see them as classes. All of them constitute nation [*halk*].” Atatürk, *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, I-III*, vol. II, 102.

⁹⁷ Füsün Üstel, “Cumhuriyet’ten Bu Yana Yurttaşlık Profili” [The Profile of Citizenship from the Republic to the Present], *Yeni Yüzyıl* (Istanbul Daily), 24 April 1995.

principles of Atatürkism as populism. Needless to say, this definition of individual was an apolitical, since the role of the individual in defining the rules of the game and politics was either narrowly defined or denied.⁹⁸

Apart from the reforms and Atatürk's view of individual and new cultural identity, it is also important to complement Atatürk's view of religion with his future considerations because it enables us to put all his views and reforms under a wholistic perspective. This is particularly important to understand the laicist policies of the government after the death of Atatürk because as will be explained below, although they were implemented on behalf of Atatürkism, in reality they were just freezing of the experimental applications of Atatürk. Although Atatürk had a clear idea on religion and its role in the life of individual and society, his heritage borne some ambiguities stemming from his gradual methodology and the some temporary and experimental exercises. It has already been pointed out that Atatürk believed in a rational and modern Islam which was also, for him, the genuine Islam, but in the course of history some foreign elements infiltrated it. For this purpose he intended to initiate some reforms in Islam to purify it. One of his sayings gives important insight in this regard. He said, "We have a religion whose base is firm. Its material is good; but the building has been neglected for centuries... Lots of foreign elements,

⁹⁸ Üstel remarks that the notion of a permanent enemy and threat were other references by which the citizenship was defined. The threat, until the end of the 1920's, was the possibility to return to the *ancien régime*, and the scope of the enemy was limited to the Greeks. But the most important characteristic of citizenship was related to the separation of the public and private spheres. A lot of behavioral codes, which were defined according to a widened public sphere, were proposed to the citizens; hence, by this conception these codes exceeded the public sphere and penetrated into the private. For instance, protection of health was considered as a national duty. See, Üstel, *ibid*.

interpretations and superfluous beliefs ill-treated the building.”⁹⁹ Early in game, in 1925, a commission was formed under the leadership of M. Fuad Köprülü to discuss religious reform and prepare a report about what kind of reform would be possible in Islam. The report stated that:

Religion is a social institution. Like other social institutions, it has to follow both the requirements of life and the trajectory of evolution... [Thus] The religious life, not unlike the economic and social life, should be reformed according to scientific thought and method. It can only under these conditions make its proper contribution to other institutions in society.¹⁰⁰

The reform proposal contained recommendations to change the style, language and places of worship, which were extremely contrary to its orthodox forms. The reforms were not implemented because of their extreme character. Only the call to prayer was translated from Arabic into Turkish which was done only for experimental purposes according to Celal Bayar, a close friend of Atatürk and his last prime minister.¹⁰¹ Later again Atatürk began to be interested in religious reforms. For this purpose he started to work with Afet Inan on Islamic history and theology. His aim was to reform religion in order to make it compatible with modern science and the requirements of modern life. After a long period of investigations,

⁹⁹ *Atatürkçülük: Birinci Kitap* [Atatürkism: Book One] (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1988), 459.

¹⁰⁰ Gotthard Jaschke, *Yeni Türkiye’de İslamlık* [Islam in New Turkey], trans. H. Örs (Ankara: Bilgi Basımevi, 1972), 40.

¹⁰¹ Celal Bayar’s explanations on “call to pray” quoted in Nazlı Ilıcak, *15 Yıl Sonra 27 Mayıs Yargılanıyor* [27 May on Trial after Fifteen Years Later] (Istanbul: Kervan Yayınları, 1975), 201-202.

discussions and disputes, he abandoned his project of religious reform by declaring, “I will not be a Luther.”¹⁰²

If one of the reasons behind the termination of these reform efforts was their extreme nature; the other reason was Atatürk’s belief in the evolutionary character of modernity. Since the republic conceptualized a new individual armed with a scientific mentality, modern education was supposed to be the basic instrument to bring out such individual and the civilized nation into existence.¹⁰³ Through education, it was expected that people would attain “a higher level of rationality.”¹⁰⁴ It can be argued that Atatürk left this issue to the coming educated generations. Thus, it can be said that he left no static or frozen model of secularism and a view on the role of religion in society. There was a certain kind of uncertainty, which Atatürk expected, would be filled after the effects of reforms became widespread in society. Atatürk expected that a tension would be developed between the modernized and traditional parts of society, which would work in favor of modernity. Mardin’s observation on Atatürk’s attitude towards religion seems valid. After the reforms, Mardin noted, “The little man’s religion was thus placed in an ambiguous situation: tolerated but not secure. It was this tension which Atatürk hoped would work in favor of secularization in the long run.”¹⁰⁵ In other words, a kind of interaction

¹⁰² Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Tek Adam: Mustafa Kemal* [Unique Man: Mustafa Kemal], vol.3. (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1985), 496.

¹⁰³ Atatürk, *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, I-III*, vol. II, 206.

¹⁰⁴ Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 64.

¹⁰⁵ Mardin, “Ideology and Religion in the Turkish Revolution,” 209.

between modernity and Islam was proposed by Atatürk which could take place after the secularization reforms had reached a certain level.

The easy shift to extreme and a solid conception of secularism in the succeeding decades was closely related to this ambiguity because the successor state elites froze Atatürk's experimental trial-error method and ascribed a prescriptive content to his reforms, from which Atatürkism as an ideology was born. The differences in perspectives between Atatürk and his near circle were evident even before the death of Atatürk. Ahmet Hamdi Başar noted that within the near circle of Atatürk there were people who had the potential to completely misunderstand the secularizing reforms of Atatürk, especially in an irreligious fashion.¹⁰⁶ In fact, it was in the following decades after Atatürk that secularism, along with Atatürkism, was transformed into a laicist ideology by the state elites. Thus, the question whether Atatürk followed a predetermined and prescriptive program, or whether he had some solid guiding principles, becomes crucial to understand the differences in policies regarding religion and secularism in Atatürkian and post-Atatürkian periods. It is argued here that Atatürk did not have a definite set of ideas which resembled an ideology, rather he had a very practical orientation. To be sure, he had a definite aim, i.e. to modernize the country through Westernization, but his methodology did not contain frozen rules, and even sometimes we face reverse moves in reforms. Thus, Heper's¹⁰⁷ argument that in its original form Atatürkism or Kemalism (they can be

¹⁰⁶ Ahmet Hamdi Başar, *Atatürk'le Üç Ay ve 1930'dan Sonra Türkiye* [Three Months with Atatürk and Turkey after 1930] (Istanbul: Tan Matbaası, 1945), 45-53. The point will further be clarified in the Fourth Chapter.

¹⁰⁷ See, Heper, "A Weltanschauung-turned-Partial Ideology and Normative Ethics: "Atatürkism" in Turkey."

used interchangeably) was a *Weltanschauung*, but not an ideology seems valid. Unlike *Weltanschauung* which means a soft world view that shows general directions to society, ideology offers a closed system of ideas according to which all human *praxis* are regulated.¹⁰⁸ In the following parts, both of these conceptions will be elaborated along with the transformation from *Weltanschauung* to ideology, and their implication for secularism in Turkey.

3.5 Atatürkism as a *Weltanschauung*

The overall project of Atatürk became clearer when he formed a political party to use as an apparatus for the adoption further reforms. The establishment of the Republican People's Party was one of the most important steps in the development of the Kemalist *weltanschauung*, since the program of the party became both the best expression of the real intentions of Atatürk and the basic text on which new state was structured in the following decades.¹⁰⁹ It is true that at the beginning, the party program did not have a well-defined political philosophy except for a few general statements.¹¹⁰ It was in the Third Congress of the Party which was held in 1931 that certain principles were laid down in the Program, and became unremovable stones of

¹⁰⁸ For this conception of ideology see, Edward Shils, "The Concept and Function of Ideology," *International Encyclopedia of Social Science*, vols. 7-8 (London, New York: Macmillan and the Free Press, 1968), 66-76; For the differentiation of Atatürkism as *weltanschauung* and Atatürkism as Ideology, see, Heper, "A *Weltanschauung*-turned-Partial Ideology and Normative Ethics: "Atatürkism" in Turkey," 83-94.

¹⁰⁹ Suna Kili, *Kemalism* (Istanbul: School of Business Administration and Economics, Robert College, 1969), 60-138.

the state. These will be elaborated below; here, it can be illuminating to point out the conditions under which the Party emerged.

Although Atatürk intended to establish a political party soon after the defeat of the Greeks, the project was realized only after a gradual process. In the end, the party emerged as a response to opposition carried out against him in the Assembly. While Atatürk gradually began to undertake his intended reforms, he aroused opposition in the Assembly. This opposition led him to form a group made up of the representatives supporting his ideas and proposals. The group which was called the “First Group” was pro-republican, reform oriented and secular in their outlook. The conservatives, alternatively, formed another group called the “Second Group,” whose members were more traditional and pro-religious. Although these groups did not resemble well-structured organizations, and the boundaries between them were not clearly delineated, they acted as if they were two different political parties in the National Assembly.¹¹¹

The First Group was later transformed by Atatürk into a political party, called People’s Party which came out in September, 1923. In the same year new elections were held and the members of the Second Group were not elected. This was followed by a new opposition originating from some generals who were close friends of Atatürk in the War of Independence. They formed another opposition party called the Progressive Republican Party in November, 1924. However, the Sheikh Said revolt which took place in the Eastern provinces of the country aiming

¹¹⁰ Ergun Özbudun, “The Nature of the Kemalist Political Regime,” in *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State*, ed. Ergun Özbudun and Ali Kazancigil (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1981), 89.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 81.

at the establishment of an independent and religious Kurdistan in 1925 put an end to this party because the party was accused of being involved in the revolt. Although no connection was found between the revolt and the Progressive Republican Party, the party was closed, and a new law called the “Law for the Maintenance of Order” was passed in the Assembly, which gave extraordinary powers to the government. The Independence Tribunals, which were revolutionary courts established in 1920 to tackle treasonable activities, were reactivated again. This development started a new process in the political life of Turkey in which no opposition was allowed.¹¹² The Republican People’s Party remained in power in Turkey from 1925 to 1945 without a genuine opposition except for a short lived Free Party experiment in 1930 which was established by the encouragement of Atatürk as being a loyal opposition, and as

¹¹² Ibid., 81. The Independence Tribunals and the “Law of the Maintenance of Order” are two critical phenomena on which different views exist. Although they were activated after a revolt which developed against the state, later, they were used by the hard-liners of the government as instruments to suppress all opposition movements, including not only the popular expression of dissent against the policies of the government, but, also, the press. The working style of the Independence Tribunals is also questionable, since they usually deviated from the common procedures of judgment. One of the well-known events is the hanging of Iskilipli Atif Efendi, a religious scholar who wrote a book on hat wearing. He was accused of being involved in treasonable activities against the reforms, and was sentenced to death, but the book which was shown as evidence of his conspiracy activities had been written before the establishment of the Republic. Another well known event is the “Izmir Assassination Trial” which was a trial of those who attempted to kill Mustafa Kemal on his visit to Izmir. The trial exceeded the normal scope and resulted in the elimination of old Unionist members. For such activities of the “Independence Tribunals,” see Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyet’inde Tek Party Yönetimi’nin Kurulması* [The Establishment of One-Party Rule in Turkey: 1923-1931] (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1981), 149-171; Ahmet Kabaklı, *Temellerin Duruşması* [The Trial of Origins] (Istanbul: Türk Edebiyatı Vakfı Yayınları, 1993), 273-288.

to supervise the policies of the ruling Republican Party, and to erase the dictatorial image of Turkey.¹¹³

As has already been noted above, if the genealogy of Atatürkist ideology is to be analyzed it must, first of all, begin with the program of the Republican People's Party because the program was the main text in which Atatürk firstly formulated his intentions systematically, and also Atatürk was both the founder and permanent leader of the Party until his death in 1938.

Along with the establishment of the Party, two important developments in terms of the emergence of Atatürkism as a *weltanschauung* took place. First, in the Second Congress of the Republican People's Party in 1927 Atatürk delivered an important speech (*Nutuk*)¹¹⁴ which has been one of the most important texts of Atatürkism. Second, some basic principles around which the Republican Party defined itself were formulated. Together with some new principles added in the 1931 Congress, these principles began to be known as the principles of Atatürkism. These were republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism, laicism and reformism. Statism and reformism were added as new principles in the 1933 Congress.

¹¹³ Before the establishment of the Free Party Mustafa Kemal said to Fethi [Okyar], the founder of the Free Party, the following; "Today our image is a *dictaturé*. But, I did not establish the Republic for my personal interests. We all are mortal. What will be left after me will be an institution of dictatorship. I do not want to leave such a kind of institution as a legacy to the nation, and to be recorded such a man in history." Quoted in Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyet'inde Tek Parti Yönetim'nin Kurulması: 1923-1931* [The Establishment of One-Party Rule in Turkey: 1923-1931], 252; For a detailed account on Free Party, see Walter F. Weiker, *Political Tutelage and Democracy in Turkey: The Free Party and its Aftermath* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973).

These principles were defined in the party program as following: Republicanism meant the form of government in which national sovereignty could best be guaranteed. Nationalism took the nation as a basic unit of political community and placed emphasis on developing the peculiar characteristics of the Turkish nation. Populism dwelt upon the assumption that people were the ultimate source of sovereignty, but the sociological implications of the Turkish populism was more important than its political ones because on the basis of populism society was conceptualized as a classless entity based on the interdependence of occupational groups. No privileges were accepted. Statism was an economic principle giving the state the primary role in the economic life of the nation.¹¹⁵ Reformism or revolutionsim (*Inkılâpçılık*) referred to the commitment to the principles which emerged from the Republican reforms.¹¹⁶

Secularism is defined in the program as follows:

The Party accepts as a principle that all laws, orders and procedures in governing the state must be formulated and applied according to the principles and forms (*esas ve şekillere*) which were provided by science and technology for contemporary civilization, and according to the actual needs of the world.

Religious thought (*telakki*) is a matter of conscience, and the party sees the separation of religious ideas from the affairs of the state and the world and from politics as a necessary requirement of successful progress in line with contemporary civilization.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ There are different editions of *Nutuk*. Here Zeynep Korkmaz's *Nutuk* is used. Kemal Atatürk, *Nutuk* [Speech], ed. Zeynep Korkmaz (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 1994)

¹¹⁵ Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyet'inde Tek Parti Yönetim'nin Kurulması: 1923-1931* [The Establishment of One-Party Rule in Turkey: 1923-1931]448-449. The original party program is given in Tunçay's book.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 448-449.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 448.

The above six principles were symbolized by six arrows and were accepted as the party emblem in the 1931 Congress. These principles were introduced in the Constitution in 1937, and later became the indisputable principles defining the ideological boundaries of the state.¹¹⁸ These principles, according to those who took Atatürkism as a closed system of ideas, constitute the main framework on which all other writings and statements of Atatürk could be systematized.

Yet, the formulation of these principles did not denote that a prescriptive and systematic framework of ideas was put at work by Atatürk. It is evident that the overall emphasis of Atatürk on science and technology, and contemporary civilization prevented him from transforming his ideas into a hard ideology. Here ideology is taken as a comprehensive philosophy with an explicit methodology that enables to predetermine all policy issues on indisputable presumptions.¹¹⁹ Özbudun points out that the Republican People's Party lacked any mobilizational ideology, which was a characteristic of mobilizational totalitarian party structures. What characterized the Party, which also explains the nature of the Kemalist regime, was a new mentality based on positive science, but not an ideology.¹²⁰ Ismet Giritli, one of the prominent students of the Kemalist Revolution, makes similar arguments. According to Giritli, although Atatürkism is an ideology, it is an pragmatic one since

¹¹⁸ For a comprehensive analysis and the relationship of these six principles to the Kemalist ideology, see Paul Dumont, "The Origins of Kemalist Ideology," in *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey*, ed. Jacob M. Landau (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1984), 25-44.

¹¹⁹ Shils, "The Concept and Function of Ideology," 66-76

¹²⁰ Özbudun, "The Nature of the Kemalist Political Regime," 89-90.

it is based on reason and science.¹²¹ In that sense Atatürkist thought did not include substantive norms, but scientific mentality. Heper's conceptualization of Atatürkism is illuminating in this regard. Heper says on Atatürkism:

It may be surmised that if Atatürkist thought was an ideology at all it was a soft ideology at best-an antidote to the hold of religion on society. If it was an ideology, it was so only in the sense the *idéologues* took the ideology- not a quality of thought, but a technique for discovering truth and dissolving illusions... It did not in the long run intend to fasten on society a closed system of thought- certain fundamentals to which everybody needed to conform.¹²²

Atatürk always remarked that his actions were directed from the practical conditions not by ideological prerequisites. He never gave the opportunity to those who wanted to develop an ideology for the revolution. For instance, when Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, one of the intellectuals of the time close to Atatürk, asked Atatürk why the party had no ideology, Atatürk responded to him without giving an implication that ideology was necessary for either the party or the state. A conversation between Yakup Kadri and Atatürk took place as follows: "My general, this party has no doctrine.... Of course it doesn't, my child; if we had a doctrine, we would freeze the movement."¹²³ Another evidence denoting the absence of the intention to develop a closed system of thought during the lifetime of Atatürk is that, although the six arrows were incorporated in the program of RPP in the Congress of 1931, it is interesting that in the opening speech of the Congress Atatürk did not mention them. Instead of the six arrows, Atatürk advised the Party to work hard in

¹²¹ İsmet Giritli, "The Ideology of Kemalism," in *Atatürk's Way*, ed. Turhan Feyzioğlu, tras. C. Olson Eraslan, Joshua Bear and Harun Rızatepe (Istanbul: Gün Matbaası, 1982), 310.

¹²² Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 64-65.

order to gain the trust and love of the people. Preston Hughes sees all of the above affairs as an evidence of the reluctance of Atatürk to develop Kemalist ideology.¹²⁴ The same was also true for the Party Congresses of 1935 and 1936. Despite the fact that he had the opportunity to develop Kemalism as an ideology based on the party principles, in these congresses Atatürk did not mention these principles.¹²⁵ All of this shows that Atatürk never intended to develop a closed system of ideas to direct and predetermine all activities of both the state elites and the people.¹²⁶ Instead, the legitimate source for the practices of the state elites and the nation was science and practical necessities.¹²⁷ It was in the following decades that by attributing some

¹²³ Quoted in Özbudun, “The Nature of the Kemalist Political Regime,” 88.

¹²⁴ Preston Hughes, *Atatürkçülük ve Türkiye'nin Demokratikleşme Süreci* [Atatürkism and Democratization in Turkey] (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1993), 72.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹²⁶ For an understanding of the six principles in their original form, Udo Steinbach notes the following: “The six principle of Kemalism, formulated in response to the emerging needs of the modernization process, should be regarded not as the articles of a political manifesto but rather as a rationalization of this determination to modernize. Kemalism was indeed one of the first modernization ideologies of the Third World; however, unlike the modernization ideologies of Europe (e.g. Marxism) or the ideological endeavors of Atatürk’s successors in various parts of the Third World (e.g. Latin America), Kemalism did not start from an analysis of the structure of Turkish society. Modernization in Turkey was imposed by order; *the principles of Kemalism arose largely from the practical requirements of this process.*” Udo Steinbach, “The Impact of Atatürk on Turkey’s Political Culture since World War II,” in *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey*, ed. Jacob M. Landau (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1984), 78. Italics are added.

¹²⁷ Even Recep Peker, the then Secretary-General of the RPP, who was one of the hard-liners of the party, and was always prone to develop prescriptive guiding principles for the party, said the following to the journalists who came to Ankara to follow the Fourth Congress of the RPP held in 1935: “We do not behave with some formulas and proposals. We follow the requirements of our emotions. Neither the party is an order open only to its members, nor our program is a verse. In terms of our actions we are conditioned by the requirements of the time. We don’t know what

substantive meanings to Atatürkism, the state elites transformed *weltanschauung* into an official ideology, and they became by themselves the true guardians of it, which is the subject matter of the following part.

3.6 From *Weltanschauung* to Ideology: Atatürkism After Atatürk

The transformation of Atatürkism or Kemalism from a *weltanschauung* into a political manifesto or an official ideology after Atatürk has produced important consequences for subsequent political developments. The most important impact has been on the state-religion relationship, because secularism in its maximal form became the main definitive component of the novel ideology. The definition and application of secularism experienced substantive changes which in turn, resulted in some anti-religious features. Within the framework of the previous differentiation of secularization, it can be said that Turkish secularization took the form of “maximal secularization,” which was the case in France. Even in Turkey it went beyond boundaries of this model because the extreme conception of secularization thesis, namely, the cost-iron theory of Islam, was put at work by the state elites. Islam was considered as an obstacle to the societal development, and the elimination of religiosity became the preferred policy choice of the state elites. It may rightly be claimed that after Atatürk “maximal secularization” became the founding stone of the Kemalist ideology. It also became the central issue of the tug of war between intellectual, military-bureaucratic elites and political elites after the transition to

will be tomorrow’s requirements” Quoted in Tekinalp, *Kemalizm* [Kemalism], trans. Çetin Yetkin (Istanbul: Toplumsal Dönüşüm Yayınları, 1998), 104. These words also belong to Peker: “The party took the principles and ideas and the road which had been followed since its establishment not from a theory, but from the life itself

multi-party politics. Not surprisingly, the military interventions were justified on the basis of the claim that the politicians deviated from the basic principles of Atatürkism, especially from the principle of secularism. Under what conditions Atatürkism was transformed into a political ideology, and how the new understanding formulated the state-religion relationship will be the subject matter of the following part.

The Early attempts to systematize Atatürk's views and the efforts to develop a new ideology for the revolution were already present in Atatürk's time. The most important attempt came from a group of intellectuals that organized around a journal called *Kadro*. The events that developed between Atatürk and the members of *Kadro* movement show not only the existence of a deep drive to transform the ideas of Atatürk into an ideology, but also Atatürk's decisive stand vis-a-vis ideologies. The prominent representatives were Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, İsmail Hüsrev Tökin, and Şevket Süreyya Aydemir. Their philosophy and aim were best summarized by Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, the most prominent adherent of *Kadro*'s philosophy, in his well known book, *Tek Adam* [Unique Man] as follows:

As it is known, Atatürk's attitude towards the doctrines was different from the behaviors of the founders and leaders of contemporary regimes. In his time, the attempts at doctrine and doctrination were dominant almost everywhere in Europe: Revolutionary Socialism in Russia, Fascism in Italy, Nazism in Germany, and finally Reformist Socialism in Democratic European countries were dominant currents. The patterns of doctrination lie at the very basis of these developments. But similar attempts in the Turkish Revolution did not become influential values, despite the fact that there was a great demand. In summary, it seems that we face a reality of revolution, but not a theory and philosophy of revolution.¹²⁸

and from the sum of the particular and general conditions surrounding us." Ibid., 103-104.

¹²⁸ Aydemir, *Tek Adam: Mustafa Kemal* [Unique Man: Mustafa Kemal], vol.3, 456.

The editors of *Kadro* said that their mission was to develop a systematic explanation of the Turkish Revolution. Aydemir noted, “if there is a revolution, there must be an explanation of it with regards to its characteristics and its place in history.”¹²⁹ In another well known book, *Inkılâp ve Kadro* [Revolution and Cadre] he clearly stated that their aim was “to develop the ideas which represent Revolution as an ideology, and to make it the foundation of the Revolution.”¹³⁰ All in all, what they offered was a state centered societal development program in which an elite group would play the leading role. Their thesis was statist and centralist with important tints of Marxism. Heper conceptualizes them as radical Kemalists trying to develop a prescriptive system of thought based on the bureaucratic centered economic nationalism.¹³¹ Although Atatürk supported their movement in financial terms, and the staff of *Kadro* interpreted this support as Atatürk’s willingness to develop an ideology for the revolution, as Hughes aptly noted, there is no evidence that Atatürk shared their idea of inventing a Kemalist ideology.¹³² The way *Kadro* was terminated is important in this regard, because it was done by the personal

¹²⁹ Ibid., 457.

¹³⁰ Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Inkılâp ve Kadro* [Revolution and Cadre] (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1990), 84.

¹³¹ Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 73.

¹³² Mustafa Kemal ordered ten *Kadro* for every issue on behalf of the Presidency. In addition to economic aid, Mustafa Kemal sent a message to *Kadro* in the tenth anniversary of the Republic stating his good will for the success of the journal. The *Kadro* writers interpreted this as Mustafa Kemal’s willingness to develop a Kemalist ideology, but according to Hughes it is hard to make such a conclusion. See, Hughes, *Atatürkçülük ve Türkiye’nin Demokratikleşme Süreci* [Ataturkism and Democratization in Turkey], 70-71; Heper, too, shares the view that

intervention of Atatürk. He suddenly appointed Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, one of the prominent members of the group, as ambassador to Albania, which was Atatürk's way of closing the journal.¹³³

Along with the attempts to develop a systematic explanation of Atatürkism, namely, to invent a prescriptive system of thought on behalf of Atatürk, some developments after the RPP's Congress of 1931 took place which encouraged the bureaucratization of the state and deepened the reforms in society. The most important development was the election of Recep Peker as the secretary-general of the party; he was a representative of the so-called Jacobin front of the party. The liberal members were replaced by the Jacobins, who preferred to deepen reforms in society by means of state power and coercion. Peker's orientation was on revolution rather than reform. He defined revolution as "cutting away from a social structure what is bad, harmful, backward and unjust, and to replace all of them with the progressive, the right, the new, and the useful things."¹³⁴ He declared that "making a revolution generally necessitates coercion"¹³⁵ which in fact, became the preferred strategy of the government after 1931. As observed by Karpas, after 1931 "Mustafa Kemal's own initial method of gradual change, preparing national opinion, as he described it, step by step towards the desired goal, had given way to Recep Peker's

the *Kadro* movement was stopped by Mustafa Kemal himself. See, Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 73.

¹³³ Hughes points out that Y. K. Karaosmanoğlu was aware of the fact that it was Mustafa Kemal's method of terminating *Kadro*'s publication. See, *ibid.*, 71.

¹³⁴ Recep Peker, *İnkılab Dersleri Notları* [Lecture Notes of Revolution] (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1936), 7. The text consists of the lecture notes given to university students as a first course in the Turkish Revolution. The text is one of the most important sources of the official ideology in Turkey.

philosophy of forceful change.”¹³⁶ Peker emphasized the unity of the party, the state and the nation which resembled the state and party organizations of fascist countries. The local representatives of the party became the governors of the provinces. Feroz Ahmad points out that Peker’s strategy within the party totally alienated the liberals, and paved the way for the radicals, who interpreted the principle of reformism as revolutionism.¹³⁷ Suppressing became a daily phenomenon¹³⁸ which deepened the gap between the state and the people.

How Peker succeeded in concentrating power in his hands, despite the fact that Atatürk was alive, is an important point because it seems to contradict the claim that Peker’s methods were alien to Atatürk’s. A probable answer for this is that Atatürk left the daily governmental issues to the government, and began to interest himself in general reform issues, especially in language and history after 1930. To what extent Atatürk approved of the practices of Peker can be understood by looking at Peker’s resignation as Secretary-General of the party. In 1936 Atatürk personally intervened in party affairs, and forced Peker to resign. Peker’s resignation reinforces the view that Atatürk did not approve of the policies of the government. Walter F.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 8.

¹³⁶ Karpas, *Turkey’s Politics*, 72. Karpas observed that *Kadro*’s philosophy of forceful change was accepted by the government after 1931, but he did not claim that there was direct connection between the *Kadro* movement and the government.

¹³⁷ Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993), 64.

¹³⁸ C. H. Dodd, *The Crisis of Turkish Democracy* (Wilmington, England: The Eothen Press, 1983), 8.

Weiker interprets this move as Atatürk's response to Peker's attempts to build "the party into a personal organization."¹³⁹

Although Peker resigned from the party, the process in itself was a further step in the development of Atatürkism as an ideology. There was a wider indoctrination of the revolution through the People's Houses (*Halkevleri*), which were created to socialize and mobilize people according to the party principles. As observed by Walter F. Weiker, "it is likely that many of the political education and indoctrination measures were originated by Peker."¹⁴⁰ Heper sees the developments which took place in the İnönü period as important in the development of a prescriptive system of thought around Atatürk's views, because as showed by the *Kadro* movement, there had always been some deliberate efforts of the bureaucratic intelligentsia in this direction, despite the fact that due to Atatürk's restrictions on those efforts, they did not go beyond a certain point.¹⁴¹ The last move which showed Atatürk's dissatisfaction with government policies was the forced resignation of İnönü as the prime minister, and the appointment of Celal Bayar, who was more liberal in outlook.¹⁴²

As far as the military and bureaucratic elites are concerned, it can be said that Atatürk was careful in keeping the military out of politics, since he observed the drawbacks of the military's involvement in politics in the Unionist period. After the

¹³⁹ Weiker, *Political Tutelage and Democracy in Turkey*, 212.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 212.

¹⁴¹ Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 73-74.

¹⁴² For the details of this, see Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Çankaya* [Çankaya] (Istanbul: Bateş, 1984), 492-500.

consolidation of power, Atatürk isolated the army from politics, and promulgated a law stating that those who chose politics had to be retired from the military.¹⁴³ The RPP's Program of 1931 stated that "the Turkish military was above any political influence and consideration."¹⁴⁴ In regards to the civil bureaucracy, Atatürk had a great distrust of them, because he believed that they were looking for the promotion of private interests; thus, they could not be the locus of the new state.¹⁴⁵

Yet, Heper points out that in Atatürk's view some roles were given to the educated leadership group in helping people to accelerate their progress towards a more civilized style of life.¹⁴⁶ Heper says "according to Atatürk, the people were passing through the necessary stages of progress towards a more civilized pattern of life. So the leader, or the leadership group, was obliged to detect the nature of this progress, and accelerate it."¹⁴⁷ The role which was given to the educated elite was transient because through education people would acquire a higher level of rationality and become real owners of sovereignty. Science was the true and sole means of acquiring a higher level of rationality and discovering the true direction along which the collective conscience of the people was evolving.¹⁴⁸ This transient nature of the role of the elites in helping people is the crux in understanding the

¹⁴³ Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 9.

¹⁴⁴ Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyet'inde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması* [The Establishment of One-Party Rule in Turkey], 454.

¹⁴⁵ Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 54.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, , 62.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, , 62.

place of the subsequent actions of the military-bureaucratic elites within the whole heritage of Atatürk. Unlike Atatürk, the state elites did not believe in the capacity of the people to develop their potential, and in the absence of the charisma possessed by Atatürk, they distorted some basic principles of Atatürkism, and transformed it into a political manifesto, denying any plural implications and dynamic approach to policy issues. In other words, they generalized their transient role. Heper explains this process as follows:

The only alternative for the bureaucratic intelligentsia, if they were to legitimate the influential role they wanted to play in what was *formally* a Rousseauist parliamentary democracy, was to transform the Atatürkist *Weltanschauung* into a political *manifesto*, and take upon themselves the responsibility for carrying it out.¹⁴⁹

After the death of Atatürk in 1938, İnönü was elected to the President of the Turkish Republic. İnönü opted to work with Peker, which denoted that the government would be in the hands of the hard-liners of the RPP. In fact, the liberals were totally alienated from the party, and in the hands of the radicals the state was transformed into a machine of oppression. İnönü became the “National Chief,” an idea which originated from Recep Peker. Recep Peker had a great sympathy with the fascist party organizations of Europe. Peker explains his views on the Chief as follows: “In the life of a political party the most important element is the chief. The chief of a party represents the main ideas, the will and the force of the party. The chief also enlightens his party and environment by his enthusiasm.”¹⁵⁰ In the hands

¹⁴⁸ Metin Heper, “A Weltanschauung-turned-Partial Ideology and Normative Ethics: “Atatürkism” in Turkey,” 86-87.

¹⁴⁹ Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 71.

¹⁵⁰ Peker, *İnkılap Dersleri* [Lecture Notes], 63.

of the radicals, authoritarian measures were taken, especially against religion. Unlike the time of Atatürk, in this period the state extended into authority to the level of the village. Since there was no official religious instruction even at the elementary level people were trying to solve this problem by their personal endeavors at the local levels.¹⁵¹ These actions were considered deviation from the principle of secularism, and the gendarmarie was extensively used to suppress all of these activities. As aptly noted by Karpaz, during this period secularism acquired “excessive anti-clerical positivistic characteristics which were labeled later as an official dogma of irreligion.”¹⁵² For instance, in 1939, İnönü, in a speech delivered to teachers, said that “the education which you give is not religious, but, national. We want national education.”¹⁵³ The interpretation of nationalism also underwent substantive changes moving towards a more racist understanding. For instance, the then prime minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu stated that “we are Turkist, and we always will remain Turkist. For us, Turkism is a matter of conscience and culture as much as it is a matter of blood.”¹⁵⁴ All of these efforts towards the transformation of Atatürkism into an ideology were reinforced by the bureaucratization of the state, which was a result of

¹⁵¹ When the authoritarian measures of İnönü period are concerned, it must be remembered that there was World War II, and Turkey was trying to stay out of the War through a difficult diplomatic process. But this only partially explains the RPP’s authoritarianism.

¹⁵² Karpaz, *Turkey’s Politics*, 271; Ali Fuat Başgil, *27 Mayıs İhtilali ve Sepepleri* [The May 27 Coup and its Causes], trans. M. A. Sebük and I. H. Akın (Istanbul: Çeltüt Matbaacılık, 1966), 36.

¹⁵³ Quoted in Şükrü Karatepe, *Tek Parti Dönemi* [One-Party Period] (Istanbul: İzYayıncılık, 1997), 95.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 95.

İnönü's desire to have a strong state. As Heper¹⁵⁵ observed, İnönü always underlined the necessity of a strong state which exercises power whenever required. The bureaucratization of the state was also accompanied by the improvement of the life conditions of the bureaucrats, which led them to identify themselves with Atatürkism to which they ascribed some substantive meanings.¹⁵⁶ Consequently, a substantive differentiation occurred in the interpretation of Atatürkism in the post-Atatürkian period on the part of the state elite.

As to the military, it can be said that the military was loyal to İsmet İnönü, since he was a close friend of Atatürk, and one of the heroes of the Independence War. However, a suspicious attitude emerged among the military when İnönü decided to open the political system to competitive politics, because İnönü began to liberalize previous strict secularist policies, and took some steps in this direction. It was after this move that in the military a suspicious attitude towards the RPP developed, and some secret organizations around the idea of protecting the principles of Atatürk began to emerge.¹⁵⁷ After the transition to multi-party politics, they widened their organizational networks. In the face of the concession from the secularism given by the RPP and later DP governments, they began to see themselves as the true guardians of the national interest which was also an

¹⁵⁵ Metin Heper, *İsmet İnönü: The Making of a Turkish Statesman* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 1998), 111-112.

¹⁵⁶ Heper, *The Strong State Tradition in Turkey*, 70-71.

¹⁵⁷ Ümit Özdağ, *Ordu Siyaset İlişkisi: Atatürk ve İnönü Dönemleri* [The Military-Politics Relations: The Periods of Atatürk and İnönü] (Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları, 1991), 164-165. Özdağ says that the date of the first secret organizations in the military goes back to 1941-1944 period. He also adds that after 1945 there was

expression of the legacy of Atatürk.¹⁵⁸ Although the military maintained limited loyalty to the RPP, a gap was created between the military and politics after the transition to competitive politics, which was the result of the legacy of the elitist tradition of Turkish polity. The transition to competitive politics opened a new chapter not only in the political history of Turkey, but also in the state-Islam relationship, and in the relationship between the state elites and newly emerging political elites.

3.7 Transition to Multi-Party Politics and Limited Liberalization of Secularism

Liberalization of the maximal secularism started by the end of the one-party era. As has already been pointed out, when İnönü decided to open the political system competitive politics in 1945, he developed a more liberal outlook toward Islam in comparison to the previous anti-religious policies of the RPP. In 1946 a new party was formed by members who were former deputies of the RPP, due to the controversy among the members of the RPP. The controversy that resulted in the resignation of these members from the governing party developed as a reaction to the RPP's projects on land reform and authoritarian policies. The members who gave a proposal to the RPP explaining their political demands in 1945 were Celal Bayar, the last prime minister of Atatürk, Adnan Menderes, Fuad Köprülü, and Refik Koraltan.¹⁵⁹ On the rejection of their proposal by the RPP, they resigned from the

a wider belief in the military that the RPP had deviated from the principles of Atatürk.

¹⁵⁸ Özbudun, "Development of Democratic Government in Turkey.", 40.

¹⁵⁹ Cem Eroğlu, *Demokrat Parti* [The Democrat Party] (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1990), 29-31; Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, 145.

party and became independent deputies in the parliament. After the transition to multi-party politics, they formed the Democrat Party under the leadership of Celal Bayar in 1946. The response of the ruling party to these developments was a sudden decision to hold elections which were held on spurious grounds.¹⁶⁰

In this questionable election, the Democrat Party won only 63 seats out of 500 in the Parliament.¹⁶¹ After the election, the Democrats widened their propaganda and opposition against the Republicans; in particular they criticized the RPP's strict secularist policies. But the Democrat Party's opposition on secularist policies activated a new debate within the RPP itself. The debate developed around religious education, an idea originating from some members of the RPP demanding the state's active involvement in religious education partly because of the ethical erosion of the youth which intensified the threat of communism, and partly as a response to the propaganda of the Democrat Party. A proposal demanding religious education was rejected by the government led by Recep Peker.¹⁶² İnönü was decisive in softening those strict policies. He overthrew Peker by means of his influence within the RPP in 1947. Ali Gevgilili interprets the fall of Peker as the fall of official ideology since he was a symbol of it.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1950-1975* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1977), 30.

¹⁶¹ Dankwart A. Rustow, "Türkiye'de İslam ve Politika: 1920-1955" [Islam and Politics in Turkey: 1920-1955], in *Türkiye'de İslam ve Laiklik* [Islam and Laicism in Turkey], ed. and trans. Davut Dursun (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1995), 77.

¹⁶² Rustow, "Türkiye'de İslam ve Politika: 1920-1955" [Islam and Politics in Turkey], 78. The supporters of religious education in the RPP were Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver and Muhittin Baha Pars.

In the following two years, the government took some new measures aiming at promoting religious activities. The government provided the exchange for the pilgrims to Mecca. In May 1948, elective religious courses were initiated in the schools. The government opened new schools to educate the *imams*. A faculty of theology was opened at Ankara University. The RPP decided to enter into elections in 1950 under the leadership of Şemsettin Günaltay, who was a religious scholar.¹⁶⁴

The elections of 1950 resulted in the victory of the Democrat Party and produced far-reaching consequences. The government changed for the first time in republican history as a result of free competitive elections. The new government was formed under the leadership of Menderes, and Celal Bayar became the President of the Republic. The victory of the Democrat Party was both an expression of the dissent of the people to the RPP's secularist policies, and the periphery's challenge to the center which had been the most enduring cleavage of the Ottoman-Turkish polity.

Unsurprisingly, the Democrats initial movements were related to the liberalization of secularism. Their first action was to change the "call to prayer" from Turkish into Arabic. As has already been noted, it was changed in Atatürk's time from Arabic into Turkish as part of the secularization program of the Republic. It produced great unrest among the common people. The law that passed this change did not deny performing the Turkish version of the "call to pray;" however, it

¹⁶³ Ali Gevgilili, *Yükseliş ve Düşüş* [The Rise and Fall] (Istanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 1987), 61-66.

¹⁶⁴ Rustow, "Türkiye'de İslam ve Politika" [Islam and Politics in Turkey], 79; Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment*, 28.

allowed its Arabic form along with the Turkish one.¹⁶⁵ In addition to the change of the “call to prayer” from Turkish into Arabic, the Democrat Party changed the religious education in the schools. The religious education became permanent in primary schools unless the parents expressed the opposite.¹⁶⁶ They also supported religious publications through providing some economic incentives. A notable policy of the Democrat Party government was about the language of the Constitution. In the period of İnönü, the language of the Constitution was Turkified excluding old Arabic and Persian words as a part of the pure Turkification program of the language. The Democrats returned to the old text of the Constitution written in 1924.¹⁶⁷

The relative liberalization of secularization was accompanied by an increase in the activities of the old *tarikats* and various religious groups. The DP was careful in not deviating from secularism, and they were careful not to encourage the obscurantist policies.¹⁶⁸ When some members of an order called *Ticanis* destroyed Atatürk’s statue, the government quickly arrested them. Moreover, the DP government passed a law to punish any action against Atatürk.¹⁶⁹ The government also closed the National Party (*Millet Partisi*), which was a religious-oriented political party. The party was accused of being involved in activities against the principle of secularism.

¹⁶⁵ Gevgilili, *Yükseliş ve Düşüş* [The Rise and Fall], 78.

¹⁶⁶ Jaschke, *Yeni Türkiye’de İslamlık* [Islam in Modern Turkey], 81-82.

¹⁶⁷ Eroğlu, *Demokrat Parti* [The Democrat Party], 129-130.

¹⁶⁸ Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 88.

¹⁶⁹ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 244-245.

Along with the activities of the religious groups, considerable development was related to the religious press. During the period in question, different journals with religious content were published. Some were clerical, like *Büyük Doğu*, under the leadership of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, a well-known religious poet, and some journals included issues related to simple piety.¹⁷⁰

Although the DP government seemed more willing to liberalize the previous strict secularist policies than the RP, generally speaking, there were no great ideological differences between the DP and the RPP. The RPP was more statist and centralist, and had an elitist tutelary conception of participation, but the DP emphasized local initiative.¹⁷¹ Over time there developed a tension between the RPP and the DP, which in turn, led to deterioration in the relationship between the two parties. Especially after the 1957 elections, the RPP increased its opposition claiming that the DP had weakened the basic principles of the state, namely, secularism. The RPP found great support from the bureaucracy and the press. The DP's response to the RPP and the press was adoption of authoritarian methods.¹⁷² A commission of investigation was formed in the parliament "to look into the subversive activities of the opposition parties"¹⁷³ along with some other measures taken to combat the

¹⁷⁰ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 420.

¹⁷¹ Ergun Özbudun, "Development of Democratic Government in Turkey: Crises, Interruptions, and Reequilibrations," in *Perspectives on Democracy in Turkey*, ed. Ergun Özbudun (Ankara: Turkish Political Science Association, 1988), 17.

¹⁷² A comprehensive documentation of the authoritarianism of the DP can be found in Eroğlu, *Demokrat Parti* [The Democrat Party], Section III.

activities of the press. As has been noted, the members of the DP came from the old RPP. Thus, to a certain extent the growing authoritarianism of the DP was a legacy of the one party period. As noted by Ilter Turan:

In analyzing the actions of the DP which in the long run contributed much to the failure of the first Turkish experiment with democracy, it has to be recognized that both the leaders and the members of the DP had developed their familiarity with politics during the single party period. Expressed differently, they had been socialized into politics under the RPP rule; and held attitudes, beliefs, norms, and orientations which were in harmony with a single party than with a competitive party system.¹⁷⁴

Fueled by an increase in inflation, the policies of the DP produced a great unrest especially within the state machinery, namely, within the state elites, the press, and among the population of the great city centers. As pointed out by Ahmad, “by the beginning of 1958 the government had become totally isolated from virtually all the institutions of the state. First, it had been the press and the judiciary, followed by civil bureaucracy in the 1957 elections, and finally the army and the universities.”¹⁷⁵ Some demonstrations were organized by the university students, which were followed by the declaration of martial law in some cities. This was followed by the march of the War College students in 1960. A coalition was at work by the end of the 1959 between the press, the University, the military and the RPP. The result was the military intervention on May 27, 1960 on behalf of the Atatürkism.

¹⁷³ Ilter Turan, “Stages of Political Development in the Turkish Republic,” in *Perspectives on Democracy in Turkey*, ed. Ergun Özbudun (Ankara: The Turkish Political Science Association, 1988), 79.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 73-74.

¹⁷⁵ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment*, 59.

It has already been pointed out above that secret organizations within the military had begun as early as the RPP period. But by the mid-1950's there developed new groups around the idea of protecting the principles of Atatürkism. For instance, in the Istanbul War Academy some officers formed a group which included Orhan Erkanlı, one of the influential figures of the military coup of 1960, and the group took "Atatürkist Society" as its name because of their opposition to the DP's anti-Atatürkist policies. In Ankara, Talat Aydemir formed another group whose mission was defined as guarding the principles of Atatürk, the Republic and democracy.¹⁷⁶ The military's dissent was especially on secularism, and the use of religion for political purposes.¹⁷⁷ Özbudun quotes some interviews with some of the military leaders of the Intervention of 1960:

General Gürsel: "I am convinced that the reforms retrogressed during the period now behind us. In fact, this was the greatest evil." Colonel Türkeş: "The Atatürk reforms did not mark the time, they retrogressed. They retrogressed in the field of religion, of dress and, most importantly, of mentality."¹⁷⁸

The leader of the coup formed a committee to take over the function of the government called the National Unity Committee, and appointed a commission made up of university professors to prepare a report on the situation. The report stated that the coup was legal since it was executed against a government which had fallen out of law. The report did not see the Grand National Assembly as a true legislative

¹⁷⁶ Hughes, *Atatürkçülük* [Atatürkism], 91.

¹⁷⁷ Muhsin Batur, *Anılar ve Görüşler: Üç Dönemin Perde Arkası* [Memoirs and Views: The Hiddenground of Three Periods] (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1985), 72.

¹⁷⁸ Ergun Özbudun, *The Role of the Military in Recent Turkish Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Center for International Affairs, 1966), 13.

organ.¹⁷⁹ In general, after the coup the military bureaucratic elites aimed at creating some mechanisms to institutionalize their influential position in the political system. For that purpose, they narrowed the space of the political elites in the new set up of the state. The new Constitution put some checks on the will of the Parliament. As observed by Heper:

[T]he 1961 Constitution did not allow sole emphasis to be placed on ‘national will.’ Not unlike the ‘republican synthesis’ of the French Third Republic, of the “constitutional dualism” of the Bismarckian Reich, this Montesquieuist “mixed constitution” legitimized the *de facto* political influence of the bureaucratic intelligentsia. Article 4 stipulated that ‘the nation shall exercise its sovereignty through the authorized agencies as prescribed by the principles laid down in the Constitution.’¹⁸⁰

Consequently, a council called the National Security Council made up of the military and civilians was created whose mission was defined as informing government in security issues, but in practice, it became a mechanism of imposing the policy preferences of the military upon the civilians. Another institution limiting the power of the parliament was the creation of the Constitutional Court. The Constitution also defined the nature of the state. The state was not only republican, but was also “national, democratic, secular, and social state”¹⁸¹ and the Atatürkist principles were accentuated as the fundamental principles.

The Constitution explained the freedom of religion and conscience in the Article 19. It stated that the worship and religious rituals were free, unless they were contrary to public order and common moral values. The article prohibited to exploit

¹⁷⁹ Gevgilili, *Yükseliş ve Düşüş* [The Rise and Decline], 158.

¹⁸⁰ Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 88.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 89.

and misuse religion, religious sentiments and the religiously sacred things for the political and private purposes and for the purpose to change the social, economic, political and legal structure of society according to religious rules. It was also mentioned that the parties that broke the law would be closed by the Constitutional Court.¹⁸²

After the 1960 military coup, the state elites strengthened their position within the state through some legal arrangements. Atatürkism became the untouchable prescriptions in the hands of the state elites, and the military took upon itself the responsibility of guarding them. Secularism in its maximal understanding occupied the top position within the official ideology of Atatürkism. Even the Coup of 1960 further accentuated Atatürkism not only in legal-constitutional terms but also in the formulation of policies regarding the socio-economic development of the country. As pointed out by Suna Kili:

The 1961 Constitution, by encompassing the basic principles and by embracing the Reform Law, has retained the silent features of Kemalist ideology. But it has done more. It has helped to develop the ideology by placing it within the context of a very progressive and comprehensive philosophy of state as established by the 1961 Constitution, while at the same time showing the compatibility of Kemalist principles with the new Turkish political, constitutional, and socio-economic developments.¹⁸³

Muhsin Batur, a general from the group that gave the 1971 Memorandum to the government, properly described the role that the military began to play and the position they sought to legalize within the state machinery after the 1960 Coup, and

¹⁸² Şeref Gözübük and Suna Kili, *Türk Anayasa Metinleri: 1839-1980* [The Turkish Constitutional Texts: 1839-1980] (Ankara: AUSBF Yayınları, 1982), 150-151.

¹⁸³ Kili, *Kemalism*, 7.

pointed out how the issue of secularism occupied central position in military's outlook was as following:

In Turkey there are some issues on which the armed forces are sensitive. We can order the most important of them as safeguarding the principles of Atatürk- especially secularism should not be degenerated and reaction should not be awakened- separatism and communism. If the above threats begin to appear and the politicians do not take measures to cope with them, the armed forces take the task upon itself.¹⁸⁴

The period between 1960 and 1965, which was characterized by various coalition governments, was relatively silent regarding the issue of secularism due to the military's strict control over politics and its strong commitment to "a strict version of Kemalist secularism."¹⁸⁵ Soon after the transition to competitive politics by the mid-1960s the Justice Party, which was the successor of the DP, gained majority and began to adopt similar attitudes like the DP towards religion, but they were seriously criticized by Cemal Gürsel, the then president and the head of the junta.¹⁸⁶ Yet, in this period Demirel maintained its the connections with *Nurcus*, who were religious groups following the ideas of a religious leader, Said Nursi.¹⁸⁷

Yet, the notable developments in this period took place within the political arena, which brought new polarization and new groups including the religious ones to the scene. Various leftist groups emerged among the university students and some

¹⁸⁴ Batur, *Anılar ve Görüşler* [Memoirs and Views], 187.

¹⁸⁵ Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey*, 91-92.

¹⁸⁶ Sakallıoğlu, *AP-Ordu İlişkileri: Bir İkilemin Anatomisi* [The JP-Military Relations: The Anatomy of a Dilemma] (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları 1993) , 52.

¹⁸⁷ Toprak, *Islam and Political Development*, 94. For an authoritative study of the life and ideas of Saidi Nursi see, Şerif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change: The*

parts of the laborers, which was followed by the rightists and religious groups. Apart from different organizational networks, these groups had political parties. The leftists were represented by the Turkish Labor Party (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*) under the leadership of Mehmet Ali Aybar. The nationalist right organized under the Republican Peasants National Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi*), later the Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*) led by colonel Alparslan Türkeş, an influential figure of the 1960 Coup. Finally the religious conservative groups formed the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*) under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan.¹⁸⁸ When the polarization took the form terror and the street violence became widespread among the extreme leftist and the rightist groups the military intervened in 1971.

The rationale behind the Memorandum of 1971 was not different from that of the 1960 Coup. The text which was sent to the National Assembly claimed that the parliament and the government put the country into chaos, and did not realize the reforms proposed by the Constitution. The military saw the formation of a government as urgent to stop anarchy, and to enact the reforms proposed by the Constitution with an Atatürkian outlook. The government had also to apply the Laws of Revolution. Unless these were done, the military would take power directly.¹⁸⁹ After the Memorandum the political role of the military within the system was extended. The status of the National Security Council had changed in such a way that “the language of the paragraph concerning the council’s powers was

Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989).

¹⁸⁸ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 266-270.

strengthened by substituting *recommends* for *submits* and dropping the words to *assist*.”¹⁹⁰ The National Order Party of Necmettin Erbakan was closed by the Constitutional Court in 1972 under the conditions created by the military Memorandum.¹⁹¹

All in all, the post-1970 presents us a different picture from previous decades, because along with the RPP and the Justice Party, which was formed by the old Democrats, new parties emerged from the extreme left and extreme right, including a religious-oriented one, the National Salvation Party established by Erbakan after the National Order Party had been closed down. Moreover, there were different outlawed organizations from the extreme right and the extreme left which were involved in terrorist activities. The situation in Turkey resembled civil-war leading to five thousand murders by the end of 1980. The coalition governments formed after the election of 1973 did not manage to solve the crises intensified by economic shortcomings.¹⁹² Parties were polarized along ideological lines although there was no evidence that the electorate was so.¹⁹³ In a sense, Turkey faced what Frederick W. Frey described as the exhaustion of Atatürkism: “One might argue that part of the

¹⁸⁹ Batur, *Anılar ve Görüşler* [Memoirs and Views], 300-301.

¹⁹⁰ Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation* (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 108. Italics are original.

¹⁹¹ İlkay Sunar and Binnaz Toprak, “Islam in Politics: The Case of Turkey,” *Government and Opposition* 18 (1983), 432.

¹⁹² Özbudun, “Development of Democratic Government in Turkey: Crises, Interruptions, and Reequilibrations,” 23-25.

¹⁹³ Üstün Ergüder notes that when the regime issues are concerned, the Turkish voters are conservative. Üstün Ergüder, “Post-1980 Parties and Politics in Turkey,” in *Perspectives on Democracy in Turkey*, ed. Ergun Özbudun (Ankara: Turkish Political Science Association, 1988), 125.

current malaise in Turkish political culture is due to the fact that the Kemalist paradigm is exhausted, that this is obscurely recognized, and that no successor has been accepted.”¹⁹⁴ It was under these conditions that the military intervened again in the Turkish politics asserting to restore public order and state power, and to revitalize Atatürkism. Yet, this time the attitude of the military leaders towards religion and Atatürkism underwent significant changes, because the military elites were pursuing a new social morality that would function as an antidote for the extreme ideologies, which were considered as the outcomes of the erosion of the indigenous social and historical values. By incorporating the indigenous social and historical values including Islam in the new set up of the social order, the military leaders redefined the fundamental concepts which shaped the foundational philosophy of the state up to 1980. Unlike the previous elites who conceived of modernity as a totality in itself and equated it with Westernization, the military leaders of the 1980 Military Intervention tried to reach a new synthesis between the local and cosmopolitan values, and emphasized that the indigenous social and historical values were indispensable component in attaining modernity. By approving the social significance of religion, they gave up the cost-iron theory of Islam, or the “secularization thesis,” which conceptualized a reverse relationship between modernity and religion. In doing so, they took an important step from “maximal secularity” to “mere secularity.” The following chapter analyses the ways in which that the military leaders of the 1980 Intervention re-articulated modernity and Turkish cultural and historical values including religion.

¹⁹⁴ Frederick W. Frey, “Patterns of Elite Politics in Turkey,” in *Political Elites in the Middle East*, ed. George Lenczowski (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975), 70.

CHAPTER IV

THE MILITARY AND ISLAM AFTER THE 1980 MILITARY INTERVENTION

4.1 The Road to the 1980 Military Intervention and Restructuring the State Around Atatürkism

The principal aim of this chapter is to analyze the way the leaders of the 1980 Intervention formulated the state-Islam relationship. To put it differently, this chapter will focus on the question of what was different in their understanding of the role of religion in society from that of the previous military-bureaucratic elites. Related to the above question, the chapter also seeks to answer the question why the leaders of the 1980 military coup, while placing exceptional emphasis on Atatürkism, reformulated the state-Islam relationship granting a greater role to Islam in society. In the previous chapter, it was stated that under the chaotic conditions of the 1970s, the military leaders reached a conclusion that the Atatürkist ideology, which was abstracted from the local and indigenous values, did not perform well both in holding society together and in providing the nation with appropriate goals. Therefore, while strengthening the legacy of Atatürkism as the best ideology for

Turkish society, they tried to enrich its cultural basis by injecting a new morality in which the indigenous values and Islamic tenets were validated. Yet this does not mean that the state's dealing with the political side of Islam was softened. Contrary to the military leaders' approach to the social and cultural side of Islam, the state's hold on its political side remained intact; even strengthened. The military's action in this direction was, to a large extent, conditioned by the developments in the 1970s; thus, in order to understand the practices of the military leaders at that time, one needs to look at the period in question more carefully and at the background of the intervention.

The developments during the 1970s, as conceived by the military leaders, were employed not only as a justification ground for the intervention, but it was also these developments that extensively determined the philosophy of intervention, the policy formation and application of policy and the whole ground on which the new structure of the state was based. Therefore, attention should be paid to the period in question in order to understand the post-1980 developments.

The most prominent development in the 1970's was the emergence of rival political forces fighting with each other by using para-political means, i.e., terror and violence due to the fragmentation of the political system which resulted in the erosion of state authority. The roots of these incidents can be traced back to the political developments which took place after the mid-1960s. Therefore, the main hallmarks of the period in which genuine political differentiation in the Turkish political system emerged should be elaborated in detail.

After the transition to multi-party politics, new parties were established which originated chiefly because of the intra-elite conflicts. For this reason, as far as

the basic philosophy of the state was concerned there were no great ideological differences. This is especially true when the RPP and the DP are taken into account. The differences between these two parties were mainly on non-ideological matters, particularly matters related to the role of the state in society, and the place of the local forces in the body politic. Generally, the RPP was more centralist in its orientation while the DP stressed local initiatives.¹ Meanwhile, there was a notable difference between the two parties on the interpretation of secularism despite the fact that they both shared its main tenets. Since the power of the DP relied heavily on the periphery, their understanding of secularism differed from the centralist RPP in such a way that the DP adopted a somewhat more liberal outlook, but never aimed at the eradication of its basic tenets.² In short, both parties were nationalist, republican and secular.³

¹ For an evaluation of the ideological differences and the deterioration of the relationships between the RPP and DP, see Ergun Özbudun, “Development of Democratic Government in Turkey: Crises, Interruptions, and Reequilibrations,” in *Perspectives on Democracy in Turkey*, ed. Ergun Özbudun (Ankara: Turkish Political Science Association, 1998), 16-18.

² Gencay Şaylan, *Türkiye’de İslamcı Siyaset* [Islamist Politics in Turkey] (Ankara: Verso Yayınları, 1992), 89; C. H. Dodd, *The Crisis of Turkish Democracy* (Walkington, England: The Eothen Press, 1983), 8; Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1977), 13.

³ As pointed out in the previous chapter, the prominent criticism of the RPP against the DP was centered on the claim of the DP’s deviation from Atatürkism, especially from the principle of secularism. Ahmad explains the RPP’s accusing the DP of being anti-Kemalist with the DP’s counter attacks and the position of the Democrats *vis-a-vis* Atatürkism as follows: “The DP leadership was embarrassed by the accusation of anti-Kemalism which was leveled against the party, but knew of no way to deal with it adequately since the accusation could never be satisfactorily defined. Many Democrats, especially men like Bayar, were able to make as good a claim to Kemalism as any Republican. In fact, they claimed that their aim was to make Kemalism a living ideology, as it had been before Atatürk died in 1938.” Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment*, 42; Şaylan, also, makes similar points. For him, the difference between the DP and the RPP centered not on their understanding of

Like the RPP, the founders of the DP were also close associates of Atatürk, including his last prime minister, Celal Bayar. Due to the specific nature of the Turkish political culture as explained in previous chapters, in particular, the exclusion of the periphery from the central power block, these little differences had been capable of creating deep polarization within society. The RPP generally found its supporters among the central bureaucracy, local notables, and the intelligentsia, while the social sections which were out of power for decades gave their support to the DP. But in general, the genuine ideological differences did not emerge till Bülent Ecevit redefined the place of the RPP within the spectrum of Turkish politics as left of center by the mid-1960s. By the mid-1960's Ecevit as the secretary-general of the party adopted a left of center position with İnönü, and after the election of Ecevit as the leader of the party in the beginning of the 1970s, the RPP became more left oriented. Their slogan was "land to tiller and water to the user."⁴ By accepting a new place for the RPP, the center left and center right of Turkish politics were differentiated, and correspondingly, the society was divided along the same lines. Another notable development was the emergence of the radical groups from both sides of the political spectrum by the end of 1960s. Early in game, namely, at the beginning of the 1970s, the relationships between these groups gave dangerous signals which also anticipated subsequent developments. One of the claims of the

secularism, but on the basis of electorate. The RPP was a party of the central state elites while the DP's social base was made up of the local elements which were conservative in their political outlook which was also one of the basic reasons of the DP's liberal attitude toward secularism. Şaylan, *Türkiye'de İslamcı Siyaset* [Islamist Politics in Turkey], 94.

⁴ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment*, 255.

military leaders of the 1971 Interregnum was to prevent the spilling of the blood of brothers.⁵

The socialist leftist movements began by the early 1960s, and with the establishment of the Worker's Party of Turkey on 13 February 1961 by Mehmet Ali Aybar; they acquired an official organization. In the same year a new journal called *Yön*, with a philosophy resembling that of the *Kadro* mentioned in the Third Chapter of the present work was begun by some of socialist intellectuals whose prominent figure was Doğan Avcıoğlu. Like *Kadro*, a state-centered developmental program aiming at radical reforms in society under the leadership of the leading intelligentsia composed of the military, the bureaucracy and free intellectuals marked their basic philosophy. These organizations initiated and accelerated the leftist movements in Turkey. Correspondingly, similar developments took place in the rightist front. In 1963, they formed some associations to combat communism under the name of Association to Combat Communism (*Kömunizimle Mücadele Derneği*).⁶

At the beginning, these organizations were legal; they never aimed to impose their ideas upon society through the use of violence. However, some new leftist organizations with more radical outlooks emerged especially among the university students, and gradually the relationships between these two fronts became

⁵ The first article of the letter which was sent to the President of the Republic and the Parliament stated that “the Parliament and the government with their views, attitudes and policies brought our country into anarchy and war of brothers, and into social and economic problems. The prospect to reach the target stated by Atatürk as reaching the contemporary civilization was lost in the public, and the reforms proposed by the Constitution were not realized. All these developments led the future of the Republic of Turkey to face the serious dangers.” Muhsin Batur, *Anılar ve Görüşler: Üç Dönemin Perde Arkası* [Memoirs and Views: The Hiddenground of Three Periods] (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1985), 300.

antagonized, and took the form of a physical struggle. The rightist groups were organized around the Idealist Houses (*Ülkü Ocakları*) which had unofficial contacts with the National Action Party, a party which was founded by Alparslan Türkeş, one of the influential figures of the 1960 military intervention and the leader of the nationalist groups in Turkey. The polarization of society was accompanied by the polarization of the state, namely, the bureaucracy including such strategic institutions as the police and the educational institutions. The coalition governments which were established after the elections of 1973 were not able to prevent these chaotic developments because the relationship between the major parties, i.e., the Justice Party of Süleyman Demirel and Bülent Ecevit's Republican People's Party, had deteriorated due to the pressure of this extremist members as well as the personal rivalry between Demirel and Ecevit. Not unlike society, Parliament was also polarized, and it lost its ability to cope with developments, despite its potential to resolve the conflicts. No consensus was possible even on the most fundamental issues concerning the vital interests of the country. Each party accused the others of being involved in outlawed activities and of supporting extremist groups. These accusations may have been partially true, for it was possible that some local units of political parties could have been involved in such activities.⁷ The situation by the end of the 1970's reached very closely the point that Huntington described as a praetorian society. For Huntington these societies are characterized by the following traits:

⁶ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment*, 218-219.

⁷ For details of the polarization of the Turkish political system and its principal consequences, see Özbudun, "Development of Democratic Government in Turkey," 20-25; Dodd, *The Crisis of Turkish Democracy*. Especially Chapter II.

All sorts of social forces and groups become directly engaged in general politics. Countries which have political armies also have political clergies, political universities, political bureaucracies, political labor unions, and political corporations. Society as a whole is out-of-joint, not just the military. All these specialized groups tend to become involved in politics dealing with general political issues: not just issues which affect their own particular interest of groups, but issues which affect society as a whole.⁸

Political assassinations became a daily routine phenomenon reaching approximately 15 people a day by the end of 1980 including well known journalists, university professors, and one of the former prime ministers, Nihat Erim. As noted by Feroz Ahmad “by 1980, the political climate in Turkey had deteriorated to such a point that people were actually grateful to the generals when they took over.”⁹

It has already been pointed out that the most prominent result of these developments was the erosion of state authority, which was also conceived by the generals of the military coup as the most dangerous development. This point was stated not only in the first statement of the Intervention but also in the Warning Letter of the Turkish Armed Forces which was given to the President in December 1979.¹⁰ The second paragraph of the First Statement of Kenan Evren made on September 12, 1980 as a declaration of the Intervention announced:

The state with its prominent organs was put in a position that was unable to function. The Constitutional institutions were either in inconsistent position or silent. The political parties neither provided the unity and cooperation nor took necessary measures to save the state from existing situation due to their petty

⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1968), 194.

⁹ Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993), 13.

¹⁰ For the Warning Letter of the Turkish Armed Forces see, Kenan Evren, *Kenan Evren'in Anıları* [Memoirs of Kenan Evren], vol. I (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1990), 331-332.

struggles and uncompromising attitudes. So, the separatist and violent groups intensified their activities as much as they could, and the life of citizens fell into danger.¹¹

Another notable consequence of the period in question was the intensification of the fears of the military elites that the unity and integrity of the nation had fallen in danger. As has been elaborated in the previous chapter, the unity and integrity of the nation was the most significant notions rooted in the deep subconscious of the Turkish state elites. It is well known that the Republic was established after a great war which resulted in losing a great empire. It seems that this experience shaped, to a great extent, the mentality of the state elites. As noted by Şerif Mardin:

Between 1920 and 1923, the fear that Anatolia would be split on primordial group lines ran as a strong undercurrent among the architects of Kemalism trying to establish their own center, and it remained as a fundamental-although often latent-issue of Kemalist Policy to the end of one party rule in 1950.¹²

The fear did not cease by the transition to multi-party politics, at least at level of the state elites, and remained a sensitive issue directing the military's concern with politics. As pointed out in the preceding chapter, the Republican elites, relying on the solidarist notion of the populist principle, conceptualized society as a classless entity based on interdependence of the occupational groups, and this understanding of society became one of the principles of Atatürk-*halkçılık*.¹³ The conceptualization

¹¹ Kenan Evren, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devlet Başkanı Orgeneral Kenan Evren'in Söylev ve Demeçleri: 12 Eylül 1980-12 Eylül 1981* [The Speeches and Statements of the President of the Turkish Republic Kenan Evren: 12 September 1980-12 September 1981] (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1981), 17.

¹² Şerif Mardin, "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?" *Daedalus* 102 (1973): 177

of society as an harmonious entity was regarded by the military as the ideal form, and they have has always been suspicious of any kind of division of this social fabric.¹⁴ But, what was happening in the 1970s was contrary to the ideals of the military, because the divisions within society went beyond the tolerable point that the military conceived, i.e., beyond the functional cleavage based on the clashing interests of different social sections. During the 1980s sectarian, ethnic and separatist movements were dominating the agenda of Turkey. The sectarian conflicts turned into bloody fights in the provinces of Maraş, Çorum and Sivas, which were sensitive provinces in terms of sectarian differences, through the agitation of distinct sects by the leftist and the rightist groups by the second half of the 1970s.

All of these developments largely influenced, or in more assertive terms determined, the philosophy and the policies of the Intervention. The military elites placed the whole responsibility upon the relatively liberal constitution of 1961 which according to the generals of the coup, defined the rights of individuals but not those of the state.

Consequently, the military leaders took as their primary target to reinstall the authority of the state, and a new ethics by which the Turkish youth would be provided with new norms and values preventing them from the traps of the so-called deviant ideologies. A new cultural policy was adopted by the military elites after the intervention which aimed at the fulfillment of the above ends. In this new approach,

¹³ For a detailed elaboration of populism (*halkçılık*) in Kemalist *weltanschauung* and its critics see, Levent Köker, *Modernleşme, Kemalizm ve Demokrasi* [Modernization, Kemalism and Democracy] (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1993), 136-177.

¹⁴ Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Walkington, England: The Eothen Press, 1985), 149.

the understanding of some fundamental concepts and issues defining the parameters of the state and the whole policy orientation of the nation, such as modernity, Westernization, statism, and secularism underwent significant changes, and the role of religion in society was redefined in a way which started a new chapter in the state-religion relationship in Turkish history. If all the policies of the generals are taken into consideration, it becomes clear that the military elites recognized the weakness of the ethical bases of Atatürkism as it was operating after the death of Atatürk, and they tried to inject a new morality based on the attempt of the mutual legitimation of both the societal role of religion and the secular state. On the one hand, religion was given a notable role in defining the new values of the nation and was taken as one of the components of national identity; on the other, the belief in the old understanding of the secular state was maintained. The secular state was regarded as the best and most appropriate solution. It must be noted that such an understanding of religion can not be explained by relying on the claim of some secular leftist intellectuals that the military leaders of the 1980 intervention were enemies of secularism, and are responsible for the revival of Islamic movements in Turkey.¹⁵ Nor can their attitude towards religion totally be explained by their pragmatism and instrumentalism, namely, by the claim that the adopted policies originated from the practical considerations of the generals to find a viable source of values for the problem of national unity and integration. Undoubtedly, this was one of the principal considerations of the military elites, but it can not be taken as simple pragmatism and instrumentalism. The whole picture can be seen when the military's move in this

¹⁵ See, for instance, Çetin Yetkin, *12 Eylül'de İrtica Niçin ve Nasıl Gelişti* [How and Why did Reaction Develop After 12 September] (Ankara: Ümit Yayıncılık, 1994)

direction is considered as an endeavor of not only taking worthy aspects of religion, but also finding out a durable source of a social morality which in turn resulted in official recognition of religious values. In other words, whatever drives were behind the adopted policy, their consequences turned out to be important regarding state-Islam relationship in Turkey. The old theory, namely, the cast-iron theory of Islam was partially abandoned, and the role of religion in the life of society and the individual was accepted. The old understanding of religion which was conceptualized as an extremely private matter paved the way to a new one accepting the public role and function of religion.

The legitimization of religion at the state level was done through various means. Firstly, it was done at the discursive level of the statesman. A new rhetoric was adopted by the leaders of the Intervention articulating religious notions to the public in political language and discussing issues through the discourse of “our religion.” As noted by İlter Turan, the statesmen’s talk about “our religion” is a tacit way of identifying the Islamic dimension of political community,¹⁶ and it has been one of the indicators of the decrease in the gap between the state and Islam in Turkey. Besides, the official ideology was legitimized through religious means. This included the strategies of the military leaders which were designed to decrease the gap between Islam and Atatürkism, the official ideology, and Atatürk himself as well by means of religious arguments. Sometimes it took the form of showing how Mustafa Kemal was a religiously devoted man, and sometimes religion was used to justify secularism by giving examples from the verses of the Quran and events from

history demonstrating that Islam and secularism did not necessarily contradict each other.

Secondly, at the cultural policy level religion was given some cultural functions. The public policy preferences of the military leaders in education included introducing compulsory religious courses in primary and secondary schools. Moreover, the accentuation of the religious aspects of the republican leaders was also a way of the legitimation of the official ideology through the religious means.

Thirdly, the official ideology was further legitimized by emphasizing the religious aspects of the republican leaders.

4.2 The Articulation of Religious Rhetoric to the Official Political Discourse

As has already been pointed out, one of the most important compromises between Islam and the state was the incorporation of religious discourse into the official language. Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu observed that in a political environment in which the state-Islam relationship underwent radical changes, “official discourse articulated and tolerated Islamic elements in the public-political realm that had, until that point, been under the monopoly of secular standards and criteria.”¹⁷ At the discursive level, this articulation appeared in the speeches given by the leader of the National Security Council established after the intervention. The Council whose members included the Chief of the General Staff, the head of Land, Air, and Navy forces and the

¹⁶ İlder Turan, “Religion and Political Culture in Turkey,” in *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics, and Literature in a Secular State*, ed. Richard Tapper (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 1991), 39.

¹⁷ Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, “Parameters and Strategies of Islam-State Interaction in Republican Turkey,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28 (1996): 244.

Gendarmerie enjoyed strong executive powers. In general, the head of the Council, Kenan Evren, who was also the Chief of the General Staff, acted as a spokesman of the intervention and the military, and delivered many speeches to inform the people about the reasons and philosophy of the intervention. Early in the game, on September 30, 1980 Evren delivered a speech in Van which was also his first speech given directly to a live audience. In this speech, he explained the reasons for the Intervention in which some clarifications on secularism were included. A long passage taken below gives us an insightful picture of the views of the military leaders on politics and secularism in Turkey. For Evren, the military intervened because:

We [the Turkish nation] misunderstood democracy and the political parties which are the indispensable establishments according to our Constitution. As being member of a certain party, we began to see the members of other parties as enemies. The sons of this country were divided into different numbers of existing parties. No group was sharing the places (*kahve*) of others. Marriage between them was ceased. Even the fathers and sons of the same family began to see themselves as enemies, and became offended.

Democracy is not this. Naturally, the external forces found the opportunity, and washed the brains of our sons, and gave guns to them. They began to kill each other. In every day twenty or thirty men were losing their lives in vain....

After this, they [the politicians] began to exploit religion. They began to misrepresent secularism. They announced that secularism was irreligion. They indoctrinated this idea into the citizens. My dear citizens, secularism is not irreligion. Up to now, who intervened into the beliefs of a citizen? Whose worship was interrupted? Which mosque's building was prohibited? But, they exploited all of these issues in order to get just a few more votes. They said that religion was lost [*din elden gidiyor*]. No one can be a genuine Muslim only by praying, fasting and going on a pilgrimage to Mecca in a deceptive manner. Let your heart be pure. What the essential is is the purity of heart.

I am a son of a hodja. I know well what religion is all about. Look, my dear citizens. They were those, on the one side, who put the people into tug-of-war between each other, and on the other side, who exploited religion for the political purposes, that brought the country into this situation.¹⁸

¹⁸ Kenan Evren, *Kenan Evren'in Anıları* [Memoirs of Kenan Evren], vol. II (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1991), 84-85.

On the same day, Evren went to Kars and made a similar speech. He added that the military were not against religion, but they were against its political use and obscurantism. In the military any kind of worship was free, and suitable conditions were provided for those who wanted to worship.¹⁹

Evren's religious rhetoric does not seem to be an arbitrary tactic, rather it was a carefully chosen strategy to incorporate religion into the new design of the state and politics. It was this rhetoric which anticipated the military's subsequent attitudes towards religion. Therefore, Evren did not restrict his resort to religious discourse to just one subject, i.e. to show that secularism was not irreligion. He used religious arguments extensively on different issues ranging from dress and birth control to the emergence of the religious sects in Islamic history. Some arguments were used to justify the ongoing policies of the state. For instance, on the veiling issue, which is still a hot issue in Turkish society, Evren quoted some verses from the Quran, and interpreted them in such a way that the veil is not an order of God, but just an advice for women.²⁰

Since Evren was the spokesman of both the military and the military government, his understanding of religion and his interpretation of Atatürkism should be considered within the general framework of the military rule. It has

¹⁹Ibid., 89.

²⁰ Evren quoted the Quranic verses mostly in his speeches given in different cities. For instance, for the Latin Script and the Turkish translation of the Holy Quran see, Kenan Evren, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devlet Başkanı Orgeneral Kenan Evren'in Söylev ve Demeçleri: 9 Kasım 198 -9 Kasım 1985* [The Speeches and Statements of the President of the Turkish Republic Kenan Evren: 9 November 198-9 November 1981] (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1981), 201. The speech was

already been pointed out that due to the developments prior to September 12, 1980, the military government had decided to develop a new social ethics, and impose it upon society. As will be elaborated below in detail, in this project, two critical components of Turkish society, namely Atatürkism and Islam, were redefined, and to a certain extent, they were conglomerated. The content of Atatürkism, the official ideology, was filled with a new meaning whose basic premises were derived from modern science and technology. In other words, as in its original form, which was a positivistic outlook, or *weltanschauung* based on reason and modern science, Atatürkism was redefined on the basis of modern science and technology. These two concepts became the central references of new ideology; in other words, the foundation stones of the new *weltanschauung*. Accordingly, the post-Atatürkian conception of Atatürkism as “western orientation of everything” was turned into a new conception as “the rational and scientific orientation of everything.” This new conception paved the way to a new understanding of morality which infiltrated native social and historical values. Thus, as a spokesman of the military and military government, the way Evren viewed Islam and secularism could be better understood if it is considered together with the general project of the military government.

If the whole of Evren’s opinions are taken into account, it becomes clear that in political terms Evren maintained the classical view of secularism which had also been adopted by the state elites in the republican era; Furthermore, he regarded Islam as a necessary and useful component in regulating the moral sphere of the individual and society, a view which was radically different from that of the previous state elites. This is the most important point to understand both the policies of the military

given in Kastamonu on October 18, 1985. For the cultural, but, not religious origin

government established after the Intervention of 1980 and the changes in the state-Islam relationship. As has already been noted, there was a marked shift in the state's approach to Islam. In the classical view, secularism meant the separation of religion from state affairs, and the state's involvement in regulating religion. As has already been explained in the Third Chapter, this view of secularism treats religion as an extremely personal phenomenon, and denies any of its public expression and political connotation. By sharing the view of strict separation of religion and the state, Evren saw in this view nothing contradicting true Islam because for him, Islam does not deny adapting to the conditions in which man lives and assimilating novelty. In other words, what he was against was not the cultural proliferation of Islam, but the politicization of Islam, or the so-called "political Islam". Thus, many times, he criticized different religious communities for being involved in harmful activities to the harmonious unity of the Turkish nation and for the political use of religion, for it was not only against the Constitution, but also aroused the passions of the repressed reactionary groups looking for an opportunity to come to the surface. In the past, this kind of political use of religion had gained some concessions from the legacy of Atatürk which had proved dangerous for Turkey.²¹

Evren's view on religion can fully be grasped if his answer to the classical problem that the state elites had faced since the establishment of republic is carefully elaborated. In simple terms, the problem can be stated as follows. The primary task of the state is to keep Islam out of politics. How can this task be accomplished in such a way that religion is partially recognized? If there is a need for partial

of the women's veil see, Evren, *Anılar* [Memoirs], vol. II, 483-484.

recognition of Islam, either cultural or social, how could its political effects be avoided? A large part of Evren's understanding of Islam and secularism consists of his endeavor to overcome the above problems. In fact, on the surface, it may seem that Evren's approach to Islam is contradictory. On the one hand, he was alarming people about the perils of politically activated Islam, while he was also emphasizing its ethical importance. The center of this problem was that no appropriate answer had been given to the question of "to what extent ethics and politics are independent from each other." The same contradictions can also be seen into the attitudes of the military rule, in general, established after the intervention. But a careful elaboration of the matter reveals that these contradictions are neither divergent nor independent from those of the early republican elites.

It can be argued that the origins of this problem could be found in one of the fundamental assumptions of the republican philosophy. According to this assumption, politics and religion constitute two different domains, and have no relations with each other. The Western model of state-church separation was generalized to religion-politics separation in Turkey which in turn produced some unresolved tensions between politics and Islam. Implicitly, this assumption also presupposes the separation of politics and ethics in their philosophical senses. On the basis of the above assumption, no direct political expression of religion was permitted even at the interest level. As a result, the early republican synthesis of the state and Islam, or politics and Islam in general, was marked by the state's policies of narrowing the domain occupied by Islam both in society and in the consciousness of men in order to open a space for modernizing reforms. As explained in the Third

²¹ Kenan Evren, *Kenan Evren'in Anıları* [Memoirs of Kenan Evren], vol. I

Chapter, this was the prominent reason behind the fact that the establishment of the republic was followed by a series of reforms which resulted in the complete disestablishment of Islam from the institutional and political domains. To the extent that the legitimacy of the public representation of Islam was recognized, it could be subjected to reform according to Atatürk's conceptualization of Islam whose characteristics involve both being "rational" and "modern". Yet, the initiated reforms were not terminated, for Atatürk noticed the potential implications of reform in religion, and it would have produced undesired consequences.²² He said that he did not want to be a Luther. Consequently, the issue in a certain way remained ambiguous.²³

(Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1990), 89.

²² Celal Bayar, who one of the founders of the Democrat Party and who was also a close friend of Atatürk and his last prime minister, explained the reasons of their permission for the Turkish call to prayer by relating it to Atatürk's aim. His explanation also gives us important clues to understand Atatürk's way of tackling the issues. He said, "Atatürk was a careful man and a man of principles. He was a man who would pass into law at the expense of any costs those issues on which he had reached certain conclusions, and never gave up pursuing them until they were succeeded. On the other hand, he sometimes used to make some experiments for his uncertain ideas. His works on history and language and the change of the call to prayer to Turkish were made for experimental purposes... The change of the call to prayer was a part of Atatürk's general project of religious reform... But, Atatürk abandoned to realize his intention, because he did not reconcile his view of the secular state and his intention to reform Islam. The inclusion of the Arabic call to prayer to the Penal Code was an action of government, not the action of Atatürk." Quoted in Nazlı Ilıcak, *Onbeş Yıl Sonra 27 Mayıs Yargılanıyor* [27 May on Trial after Fifteen Years Later], vol. I (Istanbul: Kervan Yayınları, 1975), 201-202.

²³ Ahmet Hamdi Başar narrated an anecdote about Atatürk's visits to various provinces of Turkey which took place in 1930 after the closing of the Free Party. The aim of these visits was to detect the reasons of discontent against the RPP. During these visits, Atatürk mentioned the necessity to develop some principles as the basis of the RPP program. As a result, the famous six principles were developed. But Başar had some doubts whether the top leaders of the RPP understood these principles as they were understood by Atatürk. The first principle was republicanism,

By taking only the reformist aspect of Atatürk as their guide in policy formation and implementation, the radical secularist post-Atatürkian state elites expected to solve the contradictions by resorting to suppression policies against Islam on both sides. The multi-party period witnessed a tug of war between political elites who tried partially to incorporate religious tenets into the polity, on the one hand, and the state elites, on the other, who were proponents of the ongoing situation and in a position to impose their preferences upon the Turkish polity. In all cases the problem remained unresolved because it was considered that any recognition of Islam, whether it be cultural, public or political, meant a qualified concession from the legacy of Atatürk, and the principles of Atatürkism. Briefly, no satisfactory answer was given at the state level to the question of what kind of political costs or risks were involved in cultural recognition of Islam with regards to the official ideology and the state.

and it was clear enough since the sovereignty was taken from the hands of the sultan and it was delegated to the nation. Populism was democracy and needed no explanation. The principle of nationalism was also clear because the nation was considered as the sole constitutive element of political community. Başar notes that two principles were hotly debated. These were statism and laicism or secularism. On the principle of secularism, the most emphasized view was that secularism could not be interpreted as irreligiosity. But Başar says that he made a speech which had made a distinction between Christianity and Islam in regards to secularism, and stated that in Islam it was not possible to separate the world and religion, since it would cause irreligiosity. What had to be done was to liberate worldly affairs from the hold the religious clergy which had been developed due to deterioration of true Islam. Some members raised strong criticism against Başar. When the discussion shifted to the problem whether it was possible to separate religion and the state in Islam since they were closely interrelated, Başar said that, Atatürk intervened at the crux and cut the discussion saying that, “the issue was clarified enough. Let’s discuss another subject.” He also points out how the issue was put into an ambiguous situation, and bore with it a potential to be developed into irreligiosity. Ahmet Hamdi Başar, *Atatürk’le Üç Ay ve 1930’dan Sonra Türkiye* [Three Months with Atatürk and Turkey after 1930] (Istanbul: Tan Matbaası, 1945), 45-53.

The most prominent result of the above formulation in terms of the state-Islam relationship has been that recognition of Islam, with any of its aspects, might produce high political costs regarding the secular nature of the state. If the decisive attitude of Evren and the military leaders towards Islam is taken into account, it becomes meaningful here to ask, against this background, how Evren and his collaborators tried to overcome the above problem. It seems that Evren's positive attitude towards Islam in cultural terms stemmed from two important factors. The first one was his strong belief in that, after a long period, Atatürk's reforms were so deeply rooted in society that no group would be successful in removing them from the life of the nation. The people would not permit the removal of the established order and the setting up of a new one. His strong belief in the firmly established character of Atatürkism in particular and the existing order in general caused Evren not only to adopt an affirmative attitude towards religion, but also to evaluate the religious revival in Turkey differently. Unlike the advocates of extreme secularism who are prone to see the legacy of Atatürkism as involved in a continuous challenge stemming from various religious groups, Evren perceives the religious revival in Turkey as having no serious threat to either the secular nature of the state or Atatürkism. According to Evren, since the period of Atatürk, although there had always been a religiously oriented group who could not internalize secularism, they were just a minority, and the evolution of Turkish political life had reached the point that people would permit no compromise on any of the principles of Atatürk. A firm evidence of this fact is that the political parties previously established on a religious basis in Turkey faced little approval by the people, rather various frustrations.²⁴

The second factor in adopting a more positive approach to Islam was the way that Evren had conceptualized it. Following Atatürk's understanding, Evren emphasized the "rational" and "modern" features of Islam, and in these features he saw the potential to adapt to modern conditions. Evren's insistence on the priority of human practice over religious prescriptions led him to develop what could be called a "historicist approach" towards religion. As a religious intellectual trend in contemporary Islam, the historicist view was grounded on the assumption that the rules of the religious jurisdiction are contingent, namely, the product of some specific socio-historical conditions, and needed to be revised on the basis of new conditions. In other words, a change in any of these conditions necessitates new interpretation of the sources of the jurisdiction. In this understanding, the methodology of the interpretation of religious laws undergoes a substantial change on the basis of the actual conditions of human experience. The old religious judgments are subject to amelioration according to the actual conditions of life. Although this view has not been alien to the orthodox view of religious jurisdiction, it is radical in its treatment of tradition. The tradition is subjected to an intensive

²⁴ Evren made these points in an answer given for an Indian journal. Evren said the following; "first of all it must be said that one of the principles which guide Turkey is secularism. As a principle set by Atatürk, secularism was accepted by the Turkish nation, and it is an indispensable foundation of Turkish law and social system... But, in Turkey there has always been a minor group since the period of Atatürk who could not internalize secularism.... The acts against the state system defined in the constitution and secularism are forbidden. But the essential obstacle to such religious fundamentalist currents is the commitment of Turkish people to Atatürk's main philosophy and secularism. These "uncontemporary" (*çağdışı*) currents are being defeated by various means. The frustration of the religiously oriented parties in previously held elections is the best indicator of the above fact." Kenan Evren, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devlet Başkanı Orgeneral Kenan Evren'in Söylev ve Demeçleri: 1988-1989* [The Speeches and Statements of the President of the Turkish Republic Kenan Evren: 1988-1989] (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1989), 38.

criticism which leads to a total denial of the validity of the accumulated historical precepts. This is a novel element. In this approach a substantial autonomy is given to reason in interpreting the religious precepts and directing worldly affairs. The existing orthodoxy does not represent the true Islam, and the historical knowledge feeding this orthodoxy is temporal. There is only one *ahistorical* source of valid knowledge and it is the Holy Quran. The rational individual has the capacity to interpret the Holy Book.²⁵

Conceptualizing Evren's religious view as historicist is not to say that Evren had a definite philosophical ground to base his understanding of religion. Nor, does it mean that he had an intention to find an ultimate solution to the problem of the state-Islam relationship in Turkey. What should be understood from the above explanations is that Evren shared some important tenets with regards to religion which could be conceptualized as historicist, and gave us important clues to understand changing policies of the state towards religion.

Evren's historicist approach appears most openly in his evaluation of the veil in Islam. He was against the veil in state institutions. When Hasan Sağlam, the then Minister of Education, asked Evren what he should do for the head cover in *Imam-hatip* schools, Evren replied that nothing could be said in the Quran lessons, but, in other lessons and in the schools no permission for head cover was possible.²⁶

²⁵ The most prominent figure of the historicist approach in Islam is Fazlur Rahman (1919-1988) who is popular among the Faculty of Divinity of Ankara University circles. The historicist approach which includes important modernist themes, finds its clearest expression in Rahman's writings. For the historicist approach and Fazlur Rahman see, *İslami Araştırmalar Fazlur Rahman Özel Sayısı* [Journal of Islamic Research: Special Issue on Fazlur Rahman], 4 (1990):

²⁶ Evren, *Anılar* [Memoirs], vol. II, 479.

Although in various occasions Evren remarked that the head cover was banned because there was a law prohibiting it together with some other dress like short skirts, his endeavor to present the issue as a matter originating not from the true Islamic creed, but from the wrong interpretation of verses shows that he had a special interest in it. In the clarification of the matter, Evren pointed out that there was no clear order in the Holy Book to cover the head, but only some recommendations of God. He added that the origins of the veil went back to the early period of Islam. In the early years of Islam, unbelievers were disturbing Muslim women, and wearing the veil was begun as an instrument to prevent them from the undesired harassment of the unbelievers. Today, in a civilized world, it was unnecessary since there was not such a need. The transformation of this recommendation into God's orders took place after the Prophet in the hands of the different religious sects who misinterpreted the verses. If the time dimension was not taken into account, it was possible that we would deduce some wrong conclusions from the verses. For example, in various verses, we find some encouragement to emancipate slaves. If these verses were taken as God's orders, everybody needed to have slaves. Today this was not possible because the conditions were different.²⁷

The accent on the "rational" nature of Islam is the complementary part of Evren's general view of religion. Evren claims;

Our religion is the last religion. Since it is the last religion, it is the most rational religion. It is a religion that esteems knowledge and science. But, we see that in the past some religious groups squeezed us into solid rules of religion, and taught us nothing. That's why we remained backward in some areas. Our religion never restricts reading and writing. On the contrary, it asks that how can a learned and an ignorant be equal?²⁸

²⁷ Evren, *Anılar* [Memoirs], vol. V, 482-485.

The emphasis on the rational character of Islam is also an appropriate tool for the purpose of employing Islam in regulating the socio-cultural realm. Relying on this assumption, Evren, in particular, and the military rule, in general, hoped that the unacceptable religious views and visibility of Islam posed by different religious communities, such as the head cover, the role of women in society and the demands for the institutionalization of religious laws, could be rejected as the leftovers of a “corrupt tradition.” Since modernity was redefined on the basis of modern science and technology, no opposition would appear between Islam and modernity, which will be further clarified below..

If Evren’s actions are taken into account as a whole, it becomes clear that Evren was acting in a radically different way from that of the previous state elites in regards to secularism and Islam. The state elites of the post-Atatürkian period, as was stated before, adopted the cast iron theory of Islam which was based on the assumption that there was a built in contradiction between Islam and modernity. Consequently, they imagined a political community whose symbolic universe was made up of secular elements, and none of the religiously-inspired component was accepted as a legitimate ingredient for this community. The reforms of Atatürk were radicalized to an extent that even an “enlightened religion”, which seemed to be an ideal of Atatürk, would have not been accepted as a constituent element of the nation. However, by the military intervention of 1980, Islam was begun to be taken as a legitimate source of Turkish historical and cultural values, and an indispensable

²⁸ Evren, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devlet Başkanı Orgeneral Kenan Evren’in Söylev ve Demeçleri: 1985-1986* [The Speeches and Statements of the President of the Turkish Republic Kenan Evren: 1985-1986] (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1986), 221.

part of the national identity. It was the departure of the military rule from the previous tradition that caused extensive criticism originating from circles of the radical Atatürkists. Considerable criticism was directed to Evren and the military rule accusing them of departing from Atatürkism. The intensity of the criticism also demonstrated that under the military rule the interpretation of Atatürkism underwent significant changes in comparison to the pre-1980 official and secularists' understandings. In fact, no move could be possible without reinterpretation of Atatürkism in a different vein because in the established tradition, Islam and Atatürkism were mutually exclusive. The military posed a new Atatürkism by resorting to its primordial understanding, i.e., Atatürkism which was at work in the time of Atatürk was a modernizing framework based on reason and modern science and a unifying cement and an antidote to other hard ideologies from right and the left. The radical westernizing content of Atatürkism, namely, Atatürkism which takes what is Western as ideal was modified, and technological and scientific aspects of Westernization became definite references of the new project of modernity divorcing the concept from its earlier normative aspects.²⁹ In this re-elaboration the relationship between Atatürkism and Islam were reinstalled, and to a certain extent they were conglomerated.³⁰ Therefore, it is very important for this study to analyze

²⁹ Kemal Karpat, "Military Interventions: Army-Civilian Relations in Turkey Before and After 1980," in *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, ed. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 156.

³⁰ Although it will further be clarified below, here it is necessary to mention the attempts of the military leaders of the 1980 Intervention at clarifying what was meant by Atatürkism. Among other endeavors in this regard, the most important one was publishing three books on Atatürkism under the same name, *Atatürkçülük*. These are the first hand sources on the official understanding of Atatürkism.

how the military leaders defined Atatürkism and what place was given to Islam in this new definition.

4.3 Atatürkism and Islam: Toward a Conglomeration

In the preceding chapter the evolution of Atatürkism was analyzed in detail with the changes in its meaning at different periods. It was pointed out that after Atatürk, Atatürkism was filled with some prescriptive meanings and was transformed into an official ideology closely setting the parameters of all policy issues. By the multi-party period the military bureaucratic elites moved to a position of defending this ideology vis-a-vis the political elites, and the subsequent military interventions aimed at reinstalling Atatürkism in the way that they defined it. By radicalizing the reformist legacy of Atatürk, the post-Atatürkian state elites attributed to Atatürkism a radical secularizing and westernizing mission which in turn, resulted in a kind of radical modernization project, whose conception of modernity necessitated a total divorce from what was “old” and indigenous for “the contemporary civilization.” Instead of science and reason, which were Atatürk’s ideals to be used in the life of the nation, the bureaucratized version of Atatürkism became the self-referential normative doctrine and the sole legitimate ground of policy formation and implementation. Unlike the scientific methodology based on “trial and error” approach in problem solving, which also sometimes includes backward moves from an action, they turned official interpretation of Atatürkism into an end-in-itself. A solid and extremely occidentally inspired framework of the “requirements of the contemporary civilization” was substituted for a pragmatic and rationalistic conception of Atatürkism. The principle of reformism, which meant further

improving the republican reforms along the line of science and technology, was transformed into revolutionism whose main tenet was to destroy more what was traditional and religious on behalf of Westernization. It became the only normative framework from which any legitimate action had to be derived. Furthermore, the military and bureaucratic elites justified their actions on behalf of Atatürkism, and no policy inspired from a different source was accepted as legitimate. When the concept of religion was concerned, their motto was that “science was the true guide in life” and there remained no room for religion in society. For instance, the belief that “becoming the true and the sole guide in life for science is only possible in a secular condition”³¹ reflects this understanding. Religion was specifically a “non-modern” phenomenon best to be excluded from society. The only acceptable point for religion on the part of the post-Atatürkian state elites was at the private level. It was accepted as private devotion. But, by the 12 September, one came across a substantive change in the state’s approach to Atatürkism and religion. The most radical change was the social acceptance of religion. The military leaders perceived the significance of religion in society, and changed the old maxim of the previous elites stating that “religion was specifically a non-modern phenomenon” into a new one announcing that “religion was a necessary institution.”³² The military leaders of 12 September

³¹ Özer Özankaya, *Toplumbilimine Giriş* [Introduction to Sociology] (Ankara: S Basımevi, 1984), 428. Özer Özankaya presents Atatürkism as a systematic ideology, and understands religion through an evolutionary perspective. For him, science and religion are exclusive phenomena and an increase in one necessarily results in decrease in the other. See, *idem.*, 359-369.

³² It has been pointed out that like the previous military interventions, one of the chief aims of the military intervention of 1980 was to reinstall the state on the principles of Atatürkism. In fact, the accent on Atatürkism was greater than the previous interventions. It was also intensified by activities held for the centennial of

declared that religion was a social reality and a necessary institution. This is the demarcation line of the conception of religion of the 12th of September's military leaders and that of their previous counterparts. The leaders of the military intervention of 1980 realized that neither science nor an abstract concept of "Westernization" could become a good substitute for Islam in terms of social ethics. So far, for the military leaders, what was produced by the adopted policies had not been a set of norms and values suitable for the institutionalization of social solidarity, but a social condition in which no appropriate ideals were provided for the Turkish youth. As a result the youth were inclined towards hard ideologies, and began to see such ideologies as the true way to salvation.

the birth of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1981. But, the existence of significant differences between the military leaders of 1980 and their previous counterparts led the military leaders of the 1980 Intervention to explain what they understood by Atatürkism. For this purpose, the military leaders published three books entitled *Atatürkism*. These books are crucial in understanding the military's approach to Atatürkism. They are first hand official sources on the subject. The first book, *Atatürkçülük: Birinci Kitap, Atatürk'ün Görüş ve Direktifleri* [Atatürkism: Book One, Atatürk's Views and Orders], includes Atatürk's statements on various issues, like the state, intellectual life, economic life, and religion. All statements are taken from Mustafa Kemal given both in old Turkish and in today's Turkish. The second book, *Atatürkçülük: İkinci Kitap, Atatürk ve Atatürkçülüğe İlişkin Makaleler* [Atatürkism: Book Two, Articles on Atatürk and Atatürkism], contains articles written by some academicians and militarymen on State and Thought, Economy and Religion in Atatürkism. The third book, *Atatürkçülük: Üçüncü Kitap, Atatürkçü Düşünce Sistemi* [Atatürkism: Book Three, Atatürkist System of Thought], is the most important one because this book is a direct interpretation of Atatürkism by the military. This book reflects the military's understanding of the Atatürkist view of the state, intellectual life, economy and religion. Unlike *Birinci Kitap* [Book One] which is made up of only Atatürk's statements, *Üçüncü Kitap* [Book Three] includes the explanations of the writer(s) with extensive quotations from Atatürk. These books were first published by the Chief of the General Staff and circulated within the military, but later the military advised the Ministry of Education to publish these books to be used as the supplementary books for the lessons of "The History of Turkish Revolution." In the present study, the books which were published by the Ministry of Education are used.

The problem that instead of commitment to Atatürkism, the youth in Turkey showed a tendency towards hard ideologies led the military to search for its principal causes. It seems that although they thought that this problem stemmed from the lack of Atatürkist education in the schools, they also accepted that Atatürkism which was at work before was not able to fulfill the desired aim, because it lacked specific targets and a suitable morality. Thus, the military leaders tried to enrich Atatürkism by injecting new tenets into it. Additionally, they narrowed the existing gap between Atatürkism and the traditional elements, which had been the phenomena that ought to have been transcended on behalf of Westernization, like the historical and national moral values and religion. In the new interpretation of Atatürkism, the historical-national moral values and religion were emphasized as the indispensable components of society. Thus, needless to say, a compromise was reached between Atatürkism and Islam.

4.4 Atatürkism as an Ideology Based on Science and Technology

The incorporation of the above elements into Atatürkism necessitated a new articulation of the main ideas of Atatürk since the existing interpretation had closed, prescriptive elements making unable any compromise in the relationship between Islam and Atatürkism to cope with the existing identity problems. In this respect, the military took important steps. One of the most important steps was to turn back to the primordial Atatürkism which was a *weltanschauung* based on the ultimate guidance of science and technology in life. Despite the fact that the military authorities of 12 September placed exceptional emphasis on injecting Atatürkist ideology into society, their zeal to reformulate Atatürkism on the basis of reason and

science shows that the military had recognized the autonomy of “social praxis” in such a way that it was not possible to overcome the problems by some prescriptive, solid formulas. Thus, while extending the scope of influence of Atatürkism in society as an antidote for other ideologies, the military rule narrowed its prescriptive ideological domain. A pragmatic standpoint was developed.

The military authorities of the 1980’s declared:

The most important feature of Atatürkism is that it reflects a rationalist and scientific mentality and behavior. What is meant by this is that all problems have to be elaborated not with a dogmatic and emotional perspective, and by presumed and solid judgments, but with a rationalist, scientific and pragmatic approach. Generally speaking, in this approach, all problems faced by the humankind are evaluated by looking at the situations and conditions through any means. After debates and discussions originating from genuine needs and realities, a conclusion is reached, and at the end, it is implemented. The guiding components here are reason and science.³³

The chief characteristic of the post-1980 Atatürkism is an accent on its pragmatic and empirical foundations. In other words, in the new interpretation, Atatürkism was taken as a pragmatic ideology emphasizing the use of science and technology in order to attain the conditions of contemporary civilization. As indicated in the above passage, the situations and conditions, genuine needs, realities of human life, rationalist scientific debates, science and reason, pragmatism and the rejection of dogmatism are all not only the parameters denoting that the post-1980 Atatürkism is a soft ideology based on a scientific mentality, but also constitutes a matrix on which the post-1980 Atatürkism dwells. The radical prescriptive components of previous interpretations were given up. In *Atatürkçülük: Üçüncü Kitap* [Atatürkism: Book Three] a definition of Atatürkism was given in which we

see two important concepts which are the constitutive ones of post-1980 Atatürkism: the guidance of modern science and reason. For the military Atatürkism is,

The realist ideas and principles whose basic tenets were set by Atatürk for the state, the intellectual life, the economic life, and for the fundamental institutions of society, all aiming at maintaining the national independence for now and forever, providing prosperity and welfare for the people, advancing the Turkish culture to the level of contemporary civilization and even surpassing it under the guide of reason and modern science, and basing the state on the national sovereignty.³⁴

The realist outlook, and the stress on science and reason in the new program of Atatürkism necessitates well-specified and realizable formulations. An essay written by General Necdet Öztörün in *Atatürkçülük: İkinci Kitap* [Atatürkism: Book Two] gives us important insights to understand the realism and also the military's approach to Atatürkism in the 1980s. The phrase "the dynamic ideal of the state," which is also included in the title of the essay "The Dynamic Ideal of the State in Atatürkism,"³⁵ is the dominant theme of Atatürkism posed by the military in the 1980s. It specifies both the place of Atatürkism in the new set up of the state, and the role of the state in the formation of general national targets and specific policies. The dynamic ideal of the state was taken from a statement of Atatürk. Atatürk stated that "Our great target is to progress in the world as the most civilized and most prosperous nation. This is the "dynamic ideal" of the great Turkish nation which

³³ *Atatürkçülük: Book Three, Atatürk'çü Düşünce Sistemi* [Atatürkism: Book Three, Atatürkist System of Thought] (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1984), 107.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁵ Necdet Öztörün, "Atatürkçülük'te Devletin Dinamik İdeali" [The Ideal Dynamic of the State in Atatürkism], in *Atatürkçülük: İkinci Kitap, Atatürk ve Atatürkçülüğe İlişkin Makaleler* [Atatürkism: Book Two, Articles on Atatürk and Atatürkism] (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1988), 347-368.

accomplished a deep revolution not only in institutions, but also in their way of thinking.”³⁶

Material aspects of the progress are given more emphasis in defining the “dynamic ideal” without complete rejection of morality. The realization of this ideal requires specific policies which should have the following features: a national orientation of issues, realism which means that the targets should be attainable, the use of modern science and technology in realizing the ideals, and educating the youth according to this ideal. These ideals are realizable only with a strong state.³⁷

The dynamic ideal in Atatürkism gives tools to regulate three important domains of society. These domains are the state, the intellectual life (*fikir hayatı*), and the economic life.³⁸ In *Book Three*, religion was added as a new component, albeit it was evaluated separately from the other subjects. The significance of these domains in understanding the post-1980 Atatürkism stems from the fact that they constitute the bases on which Atatürkism was systematized. According to the military leaders, these domains are “the basic institutions that after the death of Atatürk, we have faced as the sources of the external and internal problems, and,

³⁶ Ibid., 348.

³⁷ Ibid., 348-352.

³⁸ It seems that these three domains are very functional in the military’s conceptualization of society. In Öztörün’s division religion is absent, but the other two books are divided into four chapters which includes religion along with the above three domains. Thus, when society and Atatürkism are concerned these four levels are the operational components on which the Atatürkist program was specified.

also, the main subjects through which we can attain national power which is necessary to bring the state to the dynamic ideal.”³⁹

Since these three domains also corresponded to a particular kind of conceptualization of society, they were also taken as the basis on which specific operationalization of Atatürkism could be made. Thus, in a sense, the way that these concepts were examined corresponds both to the concrete meaning of Atatürkism and a tangible Atatürkist program. Its concrete content prevents Atatürkism from developing into a closed and totalistic ideology whose presumptions constitute ultimate norms and the structural boundaries for all human actions.

The underlying guides in the actualization of the “dynamic ideal” which has been the ultimate aim of the post-1980 Atatürkism are “reason” and “modern science.” The emphasis on the use of reason and science in realizing the social “dynamic ideal” is the differentiating mark of Atatürkism of the 1980’s. The central position of pragmatism founded upon practical and scientific bases was explained in *Book Two*. In *Book Two* İsmet Giritli mentions the prominent features of Atatürkian ideology as “national sovereignty, nationalism, secularism, and *pragmatic rationalism*.”⁴⁰ According to Giritli, the pragmatic outlook in tackling problems was not only apparent in Atatürk’s life, but also in various occasions he said that his guide in life was science. He also took inspirations not from abstract dogmas, but from the practical needs and realities of life, and science. For Giritli, the invitation of

³⁹ *Atatürkçülük: Üçüncü Kitap, Atatürkçü Düşünce Sistemi* [Atatürkism: Book Three, Atatürkist System of Thought] (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1984), 2.

⁴⁰ İsmet Giritli, “Kemalizm İdeolojisi,” [Kemalist Ideology] in *Atatürkçülük: İkinci Kitap, Atatürk ve Atatürkçülüğe İlişkin Makaleler* [Atatürkism: Book Two,

John Dewey, one of the philosophers systematizing the pragmatic philosophy, to Turkey in order to prepare some proposals for educational reforms was not an arbitrary choice, but a conscious enterprise which exhibited Atatürk's genuine interest in pragmatism.⁴¹

The scope of rationalism and science in the post-Atatürkism occupies all domains of society. For instance, the chapter on the "Intellectual Life" whose first subheading is "Rationalism" begins with a statement of Atatürk saying that "there is no problem in the world which could not be solved by reason and logic."⁴² The intellectual life is no exception. In fact, for the military leaders, "the aim of Atatürkism is to base the people's way of thinking on modern science and technology."⁴³ The genuine ideas are those which derived from science and reason. The ideological ideas which contradict science are superstitious and harmful to society. The following passages indicate how science was given the central role in the social life and in the interpretation of Atatürkism. The military leaders said:

Atatürkism presupposes that social life could be governed by science. By regarding meaningless, illogical and superstitious ideas as the symptoms of illnesses, Atatürk says that the societies having harmful and non-sense beliefs and traditions incompatible with science and logic could not overcome their essential social problems...

In order to prevent the ideas from being filled with non-sense and useless statements, and the social life from irrational, and illogical beliefs and traditions, it is necessary to multiply the sources of social powers which are matters that promote, advance, and make the nation a nation. To do this, we

Articles on Atatürk and Atatürkism] (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1988), 59. Accent is added

⁴¹ Ibid., 68-72.

⁴² *Atatürkçülük: Birinci Kitap* [Atatürkism: Book One], 259.

⁴³ *Atatürkçülük: Üçüncü Kitap*, 109.

need science and technology together with patriotism, devotion, and goodwill.⁴⁴

Although the concept of rationalism implies a kind of doctrine founded upon some definite, abstract, and rationalist speculations, in the military's understanding it has a very empirical base because its content is tinted with modern science and technology. Thus, it is not just a kind of rationalism which operates against empiricism. It was clearly stated that "the essence of rationalism in Atatürkism is science and technology."⁴⁵

The interpreters who claim that Atatürkism is a systematic ideology developed by Atatürk himself are usually reluctant to quote and interpret the crucial statement of Atatürk in which he said that what he left as his spiritual heritage to the Turkish nation was only science. In explaining the importance of science and technology in the intellectual life of nation, a crucial statement of Atatürk further illuminates the military's endeavor to base Atatürkism on science and reason. In this passage Atatürk said:

I don't leave any verse, any dogma, any frozen and fixed rule as my spiritual (*manevi*) heritage. My spiritual heritages are reason and science. It is evident what I am trying to do and to achieve for the Turkish nation. After me, those who want to adopt me can become my spiritual heirs if they accept science and reason as their guide in the above manner.⁴⁶

The resort of the military to the original Atatürkism, namely the Atatürkism as a soft ideology, a *weltanschauung* emphasizing the use of science and reason in

⁴⁴ Ibid., 112.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 111

⁴⁶ Ibid., 110.

reaching the ideas of “contemporary civilization”, gave the military rule an opportunity to change some fundamental policies implemented up to the 1980’s on behalf of Atatürk and Atatürkism. The most visible changes took place in the economy, religion and in the conceptualization of cultural modernity. In the economy solid interpretation of the principle of statism was replaced with a new moderate understanding (*mutedil devletçilik*) which approved of liberal and free market economic policies.⁴⁷ To show how radical this change was, it is enough to remark that the precepts of the Constitution of 1961 prepared by the military rules gave important obligations to the state in providing social justice and welfare for the people.⁴⁸ According to the military leaders of the time, this was an imperative of Atatürkism. Not surprisingly, one of the reasons for the 1971 Memorandum was that the reforms proposed by the Constitution of 1961 had not been done.⁴⁹ In terms of secularism, a more moderate approach was developed without transgressing Atatürkism. On the basis of the “actual needs of society,” as they were perceived by

⁴⁷ In the opening speech of “The Second Economic Congress of Turkey” held in 1981, President Kenan Evren said that “the ideas that we develop for the state and private sector to be benefited from the opportunities provided by the free market economy will have great contributions to the economy of Turkey.” Kenan Evren, “Devlet Başkanı Orgeneral Kenan Evren’in İkinci Türkiye İktisat Kongresini Açış Konuşması,” [The Opening Speech of General Kenan Evren, the President of Turkey, Given in the Second Economic Congress of Turkey], in *Atatürkçülük: İkinci Kitap, Atatürk ve Atatürkçülüğe İlişkin Makaleler* [Atatürkism: Book Two, Articles on Atatürk and Atatürkism] (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1988), 250. For the concept of moderate statism [*mutedil devletçilik*], see, *Atatürkçülük: Birinci Kitap* [Atatürkism: Book One], 109.

⁴⁸ Suna Kili, *Kemalism* (Istanbul: School of Business Administration and Economics, Robert College, 1969), 184.

⁴⁹ Cüneyt Arcayürek, *Demirel Dönemi, 12 Mart Darbesi: 1965-1971* [The Demirel Period and 12 March Intervention: 1965-1971] (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1992), 25; Batur, *Anılar* [Memoirs], 300-301.

the military leaders, secularism was softened, which increased the legitimacy of religiosity. In a similar vein, the radical understanding of modernity was softened, and native historical and cultural moral values were more emphasized. Since modern science was made the ultimate guide in life and an indispensable component of Atatürkism, a more manipulative attitude towards social problems was developed which in turn, infiltrated novel ideas and policies contrary to the previous official interpretation of Atatürkism and its prescriptive principles.⁵⁰

4.5 Islam and Secularism in Post-1980 Atatürkism

One of the most important changes accompanying with the changes in understanding of Atatürkism took place in the state-Islam relationship, hence in the military's view of secularism. The origins of the maximal secularism and its official institutionalization in Turkey have already been discussed in the Third Chapter. The maximal secularism and anti-clerical and anti-religious policies were justified on the bases of Atatürkism. In the hard ideological interpretations of Atatürkism, the reforms of Atatürk were defined as a revolutionary movement saving society from the obscurantism of the Middle Ages,⁵¹ and a movement launching a fatal attack on Islam, and any compromise (read liberalization) on secularism meant a return to this backward position. Due to the reasons explained before, in the post-1980

⁵⁰ There are lots of works criticizing the military rule of 12 September, and accusing the military leaders of deviating from Atatürkism. For instance, see, Emre Kongar, *12 Eylül Kültürü* [The Culture of 12 September, 2nd ed. (Istanbul: Remiss Kitabevi, 1993); Bozkurt Güvenç, Gencay Şaylan, İlhan Tekeli, and Şerafettin Turan, *Türk-İslam Sentezi* [Turkish-Islamic Synthesis] (Istanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi, 1994).

Atatürkism, religion was incorporated into the state, and was given an important role in society as an indispensable and necessary component of culture, and one of the moral sources of the Turkish nation.

One chapter in *Atatürkism: Book Three* examines the Atatürkist view of religion, and the place of religion in society from the perspective of the military. There are two fundamental changes regarding both religion and secularism in the official interpretation of post-1980 Atatürkism. On religion the key sentence is that “religion is a reality and a necessary institution.”⁵² In terms of secularism the change was about the content of secularism. Although the separation of the state and religion, or religion and politics, was maintained and no change was offered, a pragmatic definition of secularism was proposed as follows:

In the Turkish Republic the aim of the principle of secularism is to guarantee freedom of conscience and worship, confine religious activities to creed and worship, and base worldly affairs and worldly institutions on the principles of modern science and advanced technology. The principle also gives the rights of the state to the state, and that of religion to religion, and separates state and religion.⁵³

The “necessity of religion” for society in the post-1980 Atatürkism has an ontological justification delineating the limits of reason and science in the philosophical quest of man, and in its ultimate applicability to the design of the state and society. In other words, although science and reason would be taken as mere

⁵¹ Güvenç, Şaylan, Tekeli and Turan, *Türk-İslam Sentezi* [Turkish Islamic Synthesis], 170.

⁵² *Atatürkçülük: Üçüncü Kitap* [Atatürkism: Book Three], 225. The “necessity of religion” was taken from a statement of Atatürk. The statement is as such: “Religion is a necessary institution. It is not possible for nations to survive without religion. But, the point is that, it is an attachment between man and God.” *Idem*, 225.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 48.

guides in life, it was also accepted that they could not be enough to satisfy all needs of man, since there is a distinct realm in which reason and science have nothing to say. One of the indicators of the change in the military's interpretation of Atatürkism in the 1980's is that the military elites discerned one important point which was absent in the previous interpretation; Atatürkism as an ideology could not be a suitable substitute for Islam. Hence, they took religion as an autonomous component. This fact has vital importance to understand the whole efforts of the military rule in finding appropriate instruments in order to set up the state and design society after the 1980 Intervention. The relationship between science and religion was posed by the military elites as follows: "An essential point should be indicated that although great improvements are taking place in science and technology today, the need that religion fulfills does not disappear. This is a reality too."⁵⁴

The demarcation line between science and religion was drawn from a statement of Atatürk in which he tried to explain the relationship between reason and God. Atatürk said, "the concept of God is a metaphysical issue which is difficult to be comprehended by human mind."⁵⁵ The military's interpretation of this statement justified the existence of an independent sphere peculiar to religion, and its necessity for society. It also questions the universality of reason and science, and limits their claims to worldly affairs. The military's interpretation of the above statement is as follows:

Atatürk's attempt to present the concept of God as a metaphysical issue beyond the comprehension of human mind explains that man's rational reasoning has some limits. The reason of man is unable to answer all questions

⁵⁴ Ibid., 49.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 225.

which are and have to be asked by man. The answers of some questions exceed the boundaries of reason. They are transrational.

In this respect, the rationalists' denial of and criticism against the religious answers explaining the ties between man and God produce harmful results for society. Indeed, this is not possible. Neither belief and negation can go together, nor it has, up to now, been possible for negation to dissolve the belief. As it was explained by Atatürk, religion is a necessary institution, and it is not possible for a nation to survive without religion.⁵⁶

It was expected that religion should accept the scientific and rational ordering of worldly affairs, namely, the economic, juridical, and historical matters. For the military, this view is not contrary to Islam, because after the Prophet the Islamic scholars accepted to solve the problems whose solutions had not been found in the Holy Quran by means of reason. "Atatürkism understands and implements the essential elements of religion in accordance with the spirit of the way defined by the Quran and followed by the Prophet."⁵⁷ One of the important results of the defining the domains of religion and reason in the above manner is that the military elites maintained the sharp separation of the state and religion and avoided any political implications. In other words, the military's view on the political expression of Islam was maintained in its old fashion. The state was given the responsibility to prevent religion from political exploitation which was considered against Atatürkism.

A further notable change in terms of the military elites' approach to religion and secularism in Atatürkism was related to the rhetoric and style by which Atatürkism and Islam were rearticulated. The changes comprised, first of all, the personality of Atatürk who was presented as a person having respect for religion. In 1981, Evren said to the students of Theology Faculty in Konya:

⁵⁶Ibid., 226.

There may be some people with an intention to introduce Atatürk to you in a wrong way. Investigate him well. Atatürk was not an enemy of religion. He had great respect for religion. But some people presented him as if he was an enemy of religion. Our nation suffered from schisms in history. Atatürk made reforms to save religion from the hands of ignorants and fanatics. Otherwise, he was very close to the enlightened men of religion, and he always supported them.⁵⁸

It is a well known fact that in the radical secularist circles Atatürk has been presented as a person whose main mission was secularizing the Turkish society in a radical way which was considered as an indispensable requirement for modernization.⁵⁹ The mild point made on the relationship between Atatürk and Islam was just to point out that Atatürk was not an enemy of Islam. He was respectful of the “true” Islam. Within the same circles, the statements of Atatürk tackling Islam in an affirmative manner which were stated especially in the years between 1920-1924 have been considered as tactics to manipulate the Muslim public for the political purposes, particularly to defeat the Greeks, and to prepare a secure ground for the

⁵⁷Ibid., 234.

⁵⁸ Evren, *Söylev ve Demeçler: 1980-1981* [Speech and Statements], 146. It is interesting, for instance, to compare Evren’s perception of Atatürk with that of Özer Özankaya who claims that Atatürk believed in a cosmic natural religion which sees nature as the only source of all powers and happenings, and adopts an evolutionary perspective towards religion. Özer Özankaya, *Atatürk ve Laiklik: Türk Demokrasi Devriminin Temeli* [Atatürk and Secularism: The Basis of the Turkish Democratic Revolution] (Istanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1983), 172-189.

⁵⁹ For instance, on the relationship between the reforms of Atatürk and “reaction,” and how they marked the Republican history, Cahit Tanyol writes: “The struggle between revolution and “reaction” has become coat of arms of Atatürk’s revolutions and the Turkish Republic. The revolution was put under the command of political authorities. When the state was strong enough, the institutions, the organizations, and ideas which were previously eliminated by the revolution disappeared from the scene. The state attacked all religious institutions... Atatürk intimidated the exploiters of religion, and aimed at leaving the religion as a pure belief in the conscience of the people and as a private tie between God and man.”

future secularizing reforms. Later, when Atatürk consolidated his power, his real attitude towards religion became manifest which was revolutionary aiming at eliminating religious phenomenon from society. Indeed, it is true that during the period of the War of Independence, Atatürk used religion as a social force to mobilize the masses against the Greeks,⁶⁰ and after the victory, his attitude towards religion changed, and it was followed by his well-known secularizing reforms. Another true point in this regard is that most of the affirmative statements given by Atatürk were pronounced in this early period of republic. But what is important for our perspective is not whether Atatürk was acting in a manipulative manner or not. Nor it is that all affirmative statements of Atatürk given in the early years were pronounced tactically. The important point, here, is that the military elites extensively used and accepted Atatürk's early statements in the rearticulation of Islam and Atatürk and Atatürkism in the 1980's. The most notable text is Atatürk's khutbah⁶¹ (*hutbe*) delivered at Paşa Mosque in Balıkesir in which he pointed out that Islam was a rational and logical religion, and in which he explained the significance of mosques in the daily life of the people. He also emphasized in the same khutbah that the subjects of khutbahs should be taken from the actual life and problems of the

Cahit Tanyol, *Laiklik ve İrtica* [Secularism and Reaction], 2nd ed. (Istanbul: Altın Kitaplar, 1994), 160.

⁶⁰ On Mustafa Kemal's use of religion in the War of Independence, see, for instance, Paul Dumont, "Hojas for the Revolution: The Religious Strategy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk," *Journal of the American Institute for the Study of Middle Eastern Civilization* 1 (Autumn-Winter, 1980-81): 17-32, and Dankwart A. Rustow, "Mehmed Akif's "Independence March": Religion and Nationalism in Atatürk's Movement of Liberation," *Journal of the American Institute for the Study of Middle Eastern Civilization* 1 (Autumn-Winter, 1980-81): 112-117.

⁶¹ The speech delivered at Friday moon prayer.

people.⁶² The text of this khutbah was completely reproduced in *Atatürkçülük: Birinci Kitap* [Atatürkism: Book One]. Most of the other passages found in the military's books of Atatürkism were chosen again from the affirmative statements of Atatürk.⁶³ The contrary views of Atatürk were limited only to the reaction. A careful look at the elaboration of the views of Atatürk in the book reveals that Atatürk was presented a person who was primarily interested in explaining the true Islam, not in fighting against the reactionary. Thus, positive elements of Atatürk's statements on religion were given a constituting role in the formulation of the place of religion in Atatürkism, and anti-reactionism was considered as a supplementary to it.⁶⁴

The approval of religion as one of the basic institutions of society, and accepting a distinct ontological sphere confined to religion were radical shifts in this new articulation of Atatürkism because in its extremist interpretations neither religion had been recognized as a social institution, nor religion and science had been considered as two independent phenomenon concerning different spheres. On the contrary, they were considered as rival entities claiming monopoly on the problem of "truth." Not surprisingly, the extreme positivist outlook adopted by the pre-1980 state elites prevented them from recognizing the role played by religion in society as an "independent" phenomenon. Thus, on the part of the state elites it was

⁶² *Atatürkçülük: Birinci Kitap* [Atatürkism: Book One], 465-467.

⁶³ Şaylan mentions the tactics of the authorities in extracting the statements of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. For instance, from a passage which included both positive and negative statements of Atatürk on religion, the authorities had chosen the positive statements neglecting the negative ones. See, Şaylan, *Türkiye'de İslamcı Siyaset* [Islamist Politics in Turkey], 107-108.

⁶⁴ This observation is true for the chapters of "Religion" of *Atatürkçülük: Birinci Kitap* [Book One] and *Üçüncü Kitap* [Book Three].

expected that as modernity develops, religion is doomed to disappear.⁶⁵ The religious policies implemented in the one-party period were formulated on the basis of this presumption, which resulted in a maximal secularizing program containing strong atheist tenets.⁶⁶ The principal result was “the impoverishment of Turkish culture,” as pointed out by Mardin,⁶⁷ which undermined the sources of cultural identity. It seems that the changes in official interpretation of Atatürkism in the post-1980 period were closely associated with the military’s recognition of the fact that the ongoing model of secularism had important drawbacks in terms of social morality and cultural identity. Thus, the changes in the theoretical formulation of Atatürkism were followed by changes in the cultural policies of the state. In the new formulation of the national culture, Islam was not only identified as an important cultural source, but also the new cultural policy of the military rule took important measures in order to encourage religion as the legitimate source of the national culture of Turkish society. At the educational level, religious courses were made compulsory, and in the

⁶⁵ For instance, Cahit Tanyol asks; “why is religion still so influential in our social and political life despite the fact that it has lost its popularity in civilized societies?” This question reflects the implicit, sometimes explicit, assumption of the radical secularists’ belief that the development of science and modernity operates contrary to religion. Tanyol, *Laiklik ve İrtica* [Laicism and Reaction], 13. For a qualified elaboration of the above problem and its place in the development of Republican secularism see, Nur Yalman, “Islamic Reform and the Mystic Tradition in Eastern Turkey,” *Archiv. Europ. Sociol.* 10 (1969): 41-60.

⁶⁶ Kemal H. Karpat observed that in one party period, “the policy followed by the government in implementing a secularist policy although never impairing the freedom of worship nor imposing a new creed upon the society, acquired in time excessive anti-clerical positivistic characteristics which were labeled later as an official dogma of irreligion.” Kemal H. Karpat, *Turkey’s Politics: The Transition to a Multi-Party System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 271.

⁶⁷ Şerif Mardin, “Religion in Modern Turkey,” *International Social Science Journal* 29 (1977): 279.

planning of the national cultural policy the potential contributions of religion were elaborated in detail.

4.6 Religion and the National Culture: Toward a Rearticulation of Modernity

The principal consequences of the radical secularizing policies of the republican elites were elaborated in the Third Chapter. If we summarize the problem here, it can be said that the replacement of religion with science did not operate well in the domain of morality, and in solving the problem of cultural identity. The problem of secular morality was universal unleashed by modernity which dominated to a certain extent the social thought of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Max Weber was aware of the same problem when he claimed that “at the public level, secularization leaves a moral vacuum which can not be filled by scientific advance.”⁶⁸ In Europe, it was not science that totally dominated the spectrum of individual choice, but various philosophical doctrines have developed with alternative frameworks of morality. Moreover, as argued by Mohammed Arkoun, unlike the Turkish case where the positivistic postulates became dogmas themselves, “the Western societies had an advantage of maintaining a tradition of free, strong, and continuous criticism of science.”⁶⁹ In Turkey, where radical positivistic outlook marked the Ottoman and the republican reforms; however, “scientific moralism” was

⁶⁸ Bryan S. Turner, *Weber and Islam: A Critical Study* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 153-154.

⁶⁹ Mohammed Arkoun, “İslami Bir Bakış Açısı İçinde Positivizm ve Gelenek: Kemalizm Olayı,” [Positivism and Tradition through an Islamic Perspective: The Case of Kemalism], *Cogito* 1 (1994): 61.

considered sufficient to solve the social, political, cultural, and moral problems. The problem faced by the republican Jacobean was posed by Mardin as follows:

The greatest problem of the republic was not the sovereignty of the people, it was easily captured. The fundamental problem was at the deep level of society and in its ethical foundation. In other words, it was a problem of the “leading principle” which defines what were the ethical principles that citizens would follow, and on what bases the familial and daily relations would be re-constructed. What would be the required transcendental principle from which legitimacy could be derived?... Republican jacobeanism addressed only the citizens, but its principles pertaining to the constitution of society and the daily life of individuals were rather weak. The Turkish jacobean who were positivist and republican had to remember the following sentence of Auguste Comte: “The religion of humanity replaces God, but, it never forgets the functions previously fulfilled by God.” This means that there is a great void in the republican ideology, and it is the void of ethical principles which are becoming more important in the modern world.⁷⁰

The total rejection of the past had not been succeeded by a new ethical underpinning. The past was not only rejected as the political, cultural, ideological and societal model, but a complete divorce from the old cultural identity was supposed as a requirement for the republican citizens to become “civilized” and “modern.” The articulation of the local and universal values, namely, the conglomeration of the indigenous values and the “universal” values of the Enlightenment, were rejected due to the belief in a maxim that “there was only one civilization and it was the Western civilization.” The situation was aptly described by Kevin Robins. He argued:

For the Kemalist elite, it seemed as if the principles of modernity could be accommodated only on the basis of the massive prohibition and interdiction of the historical and traditional culture. To make way for the new, rational

⁷⁰ Şerif Mardin, “Kollektif Bellek ve Meşruyetlerin Çatışması,” [The Collective Memory and the Conflict of Legitimacies] in *Avrupa’da Etik Din ve Laiklik* [Ethics, Religion, and Secularism in Europe], ed. Oliver Abel, Mohammed Arkoun, and Şerif Mardin, trans. Sosi Dolanoğlu and Serra Yılmaz (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1995), 10-11.

world view the culture had to be purged of its theocratic, mystified and superstitious ways of life. To become “civilized” it must purify itself of all that was particular, and by that token pre-modern, in the local culture. What this resulted in was not only disavowal and suppression of historical memory in the collectivity, but also, and even more problematically, denial and repression of actuality of Turkish culture and society. As much as it has been shaped by the assimilation of western culture, modern Turkish identity is also a product of various negations: Turkish society became practiced in the art of repression.⁷¹

For the first time in the republican history the state elites, particularly the military elites, nullified these negations, and recognized the shortcomings of the above cultural outlook which had been at work for decades. They also took important decisive steps to remove the cultural impoverishment by injecting into the national culture what was historically negated; “the historical” and “cultural moral values” which included both Turkish and Islamic components. Filled with these concepts, the “national culture” became the defining concept of the cultural policy of the military rule in the 1980’s. Needless to say, it was developed along a conservative line.

The encouragement of the national cultural values necessitated the determination of components of national culture. For this purpose two important attempts of the military rule are worth noting. First, the State Planning Organization (SPO) prepared a report for the Fifth Development Plan under the title of “*Milli Kültür: Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu*” [The Specialists Committee’s Special

⁷¹ Kevin Robins, “Interrupting Identities: Turkey/Europe,” in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage Publications, 1996), 68.

Report on the National Culture]⁷² in which the sources and components of the national culture were elaborated in detail, and the required policies for flourishing the national culture were planned. Second, the Turkish History Society [*Türk Tarih Kurumu*], which was established by Atatürk to make research on Turkish history, was reorganized under the name of Atatürk Higher Institution for Culture, Language, and History [*Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu*]; it was given the responsibility to determine the components of the national culture. In the Law numbered 2876, one of the tasks of the Institution was defined as “to determine the components of national culture as the guiding cores in determination, formation, and implementation of the national culture, and in the election of national targets, according to the aims and principles stated in this law.”⁷³ Like the SPO, the Higher Institution also prepared a similar report on the components of national culture which will be examined below. In these reports one can see a different understanding of modernity and interpretation of Atatürkism.

It has been pointed out several times in this study that the Turkish state elite’s conception of modernity was extensively “Western” comprising only weak local tenets since they were firm believers in the universality of the Enlightenment. For instance, if we look at the understanding of the Kemalist nationalism among the radical Atatürkist circles we see that the indigenous elements play either marginal or

⁷² Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı [State Planning Organization], *Milli Kültür: Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu* [The Specialists Committee’s Special Report on the National Culture] (Ankara: DPT, 1983).

⁷³ Aydın Sayılı, “Önsöz,” [Preface], in *Milli Kültür Unsurlarımız Üzerinde Genel Görüşler* [General Views on the Components of Our National Culture] (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayını, 1990), vii.

no role at all. The central notion in defining the Kemalist nationalism is “independence” in political, economic, and in all other fields. For example, Doğan Avcıoğlu, who was one of the leading figures of the Kemalist leftist journal, *Yön*, and a member of both the Constitutive Assembly established after the Coup of 1960 and the Commission of Constitution which drafted the Constitution of 1961, sees the Atatürkist movement as follows: “In Atatürk’s movement there were two main ideas: nationalism and contemporary civilization. Nationalism meant independence in political, economical, and all other fields. The Contemporary civilization would be reached through the independence.”⁷⁴ Hikmet Özdemir argues that this kind of understanding of the Kemalist nationalism was common within the *Yön* circle. Özdemir says that “according to *Yön* writers the first and indispensable condition of nationalism is total independence.”⁷⁵ A similar argument is made by Ahmet Taner Kışlalı who sees independence and modernization as the defining concepts of the Kemalist nationalism.⁷⁶ For him, “nationalism is an ideology which fulfills the needs of protection from the external forces, and solidarity of those people who share the same territory and conditions.”⁷⁷ As can be seen local and indigenous attributes and values were not included in these interpretations of the Kemalist nationalism. It will

⁷⁴ Doğan Avcıoğlu, *Türkiye’nin Düzeni: Dün, Bugün, Yarın* [Turkey’s Order: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow], vol. I. (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1971), 225.

⁷⁵ Hikmet Özdemir, *1960’lar Türkiyesinde Sol Kemalizm: Yön Hareketi* [The Left Kemalism in Turkey in the 1960’s: The *Yön* Movement] (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 1993), 141.

⁷⁶ Ahmet Taner Kışlalı asks that; “What kind of need or needs did the Kemalist nationalism fulfill? Independence and modernization.” *Kemalizm, Laiklik ve Demokrası* [Kemalism, Laicism, and Democracy] (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1994), 36.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

be meaningful if we compare the above interpretation of Turkish nationalism with that of Atatürk. Atatürk says:

Turkish nationalism is to march in the track of progress and development, and in the arena of international relations as equal and harmonious partner of the civilized nations. Yet, at the same time it is to preserve the particular characteristics (*hususî seciyelerini*) of Turkish society and its distinct identity.⁷⁸

The conception of the national culture of the military elites in the 1980's represents a substantive departure from this old tradition, and places special emphasis upon the second part of Atatürk's above definition of Turkish nationalism. The national and local elements were rejected by the radical secularists because they were considered as opposite qualities to the cosmopolitan values of modernity, and they implied the ideology of conservatives and ultra-nationalists.⁷⁹ It was claimed that there was nothing which could be supposed as an unchanged essence defining the peculiarity of the Turks, but only some metaphysical presumptions. Thus, the preservation of the "national culture" was a wrong target choice of the post-1980 governments.⁸⁰ However, the military elites were decisive in resorting to indigenous culture and national history in installing the new national and cultural identity. Therefore, in the period of the military government the cultural policy formation and

⁷⁸ A. Afetinan, *M. Kemal Atatürk'ten Yazdıklarım* [What I Wrote from M. Kemal Atatürk] (Ankara: Altınok Matbaası: 1969), 13.

⁷⁹ Kongar, *12 Eylül Kültürü* [The Culture of 12 September], 211.

⁸⁰ İlhan Tekeli, "Türk-İslam Sentezi Üzerine," [On the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis], *Bilim ve Sanat* [Science and Art], 77 (1987), 5-8. Tekeli's article is a good representative of the criticisms coming from the radical Kemalists front directed to cultural visions and policies of the military and succeeding civilian governments.

implementation completely differed from the previous periods. The national character of the Turkish culture was strongly emphasized. Evren's recommendations to the students of the War College in 1985 portray the military's outlook of modernity and Westernization in the 1980's. Evren said:

Do not be imitators. Atatürk said that "the nations could not progress by imitating each other." Imitation leads to slackness and eradicates the ability. The greatest danger is that it erases the culture and tradition. You will profit from the science and experiences of the West, but without taking them totally. You will do what the traditions and the character of our nation oblige.⁸¹

The fact that the new set up of state and society has dwelled upon the national culture has important implications in terms of secularism and the state-Islam relationship in Turkey. In the new formulation of cultural policy religion was incorporated as one of the important sources of the national culture. As a result of this policy, the old conception of maximal secularism was relatively softened, since the new policy included not only the recognition of religion as a social matter, but also, the encouragement of religiosity in society through family, school and mass media. The following section analysis the conception of religion in the report. It can also be meaningful to mention here the way in which the national culture was elaborated, and how Islam and national culture were articulated.

The program of national culture, like other policies, found its justification by addressing Atatürk's cultural aims. The report of *National Culture* conceives the main characteristics of Atatürk's cultural policy as "national" [*milli*] one. The report says:

The essence of this policy is to preserve our self-identity without denying the fact that in the process of improving its own essence, the culture is open to the

⁸¹ Evren, *Söylev Ve Demeçler: (1984-1985)* [Speeches and Statements: (1984-1985), 50.

elements of foreign cultures if they are appropriate to our social body. Yet, it is far from imitation. Atatürk aimed at a culture which was appropriate to our history and our national character. The basis of culture is the character of the nation.⁸²

The state was given the dominant role in the cultural domain as an agent defending a particular national culture. A pure liberal and democratic outlook in the cultural domain was not supposed as an ideal goal because it was assumed that in societies where the state is not given the role of guide in cultural planning, it is likely that the culture is exposed to invasion of foreign influences. The role of the state is to provide a kind of development which seeks the balance between the material welfare and moral heritage. It also aims at transforming the developments in science and progress into the inner wealth and ensuring the continuity between the past and the present.⁸³

The Commission discussed principal cultural items such as language, literature, music, architecture, fine arts, history and religion, and prepared detailed proposals to inject a nationalist tone into them. The underlying concepts throughout the report are the historical, cultural, moral and national values. Western and secular concepts are either absent or less emphasized.

Religion is one of the most important components of the national culture discussed in the Report. Religion was defined within the context of theology. It was defined as “a divine origin institution delineating the relationship among people and

⁸² *Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı* [State Planning Organization], *Milli Kültür: Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu* [The Specialists Committee’s Special Report on the National Culture], 21.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

between men and God.”⁸⁴ The sociological justification of religion in the Report is a radical break from the previous conception since like the views of the military on religion developed in the three books of *Atatürkçülük*, the conception of religion has changed from being a “private” matter to a “social” one. The following passages do not only represent how the state described the place of religion in society but also show how a radical change took place in the state’s approach to religion. In the Report, the old conception of religion as an extremely private phenomenon was abandoned, and a “social” conception has been accepted. It is argued:

First of all, it is not a proper idea to say that religion is only a matter of conscience, and since its scope is limited to the conscience it has no influences upon the individual behavior and social life. On the contrary, religion guides the life of individuals and regulates the social life of societies ranging from the most primitive to the most developed ones. The fact that the religious rules and orders have vivid life in society shows that religion could not be separated from society.⁸⁵

The importance of religion in “nationality” stems from the history of the Turks in such a way that the Turks accepted Islam as their religion because there were great similarities between pre-Islamic beliefs of the Turks and Islam. Islam played a vital role for the Turks in maintaining their nationality and unity. It is not possible to think of the Turkish architecture, literature, music, social rules and norms, and manners without Islam. The Turks who accepted Christianity as their religion lost their nationality. This shows how Islam is vital for the maintenance of the national unity and integrity.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Ibid., 511.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 543.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 141.

In the Report, religion as a policy issue was studied in relation to the following headings: social integration and development, the role of religion in family and child development, religious education in schools and through the means of the mass media, and the education of religion and ethics in the educational institutions. It was planned that religion would be encouraged in these areas. The developments in the 1970's were considered as a product of alienation stemming from the rapid social change, and the encouragement of religion was offered as an antidote for these problems. It was declared:

The unifying and integrating features of Islam, which is the most appropriate religion to the Turkish character, has deeply penetrated into our people with its power of strengthening the ties between the individual and society. Religion had shown its power in the history of the Turks in hard times when there appeared the possibility of dissolution, and saved the Turkish nation from such an undesirable end.⁸⁷

The suggestions on the religious education in family life and schools include radical criticism of the republican educational policies. The report blames the republican educational system for being materialistic, and sees the chaotic developments in the 1970s as a direct product of this educational philosophy. Therefore, according to the report, the education of the republican period was unsuccessful. A new alternative educational program had to be formulated on the basis of a spiritualist philosophy. Thus, the definition of secularism had to be changed in such a way that it would not pave the way to an irreligious interpretation of secularism and the belief that religion could be ignored in social life. For this

⁸⁷ Ibid., 145-146.

purpose, among other policies, religious courses would be introduced in the schools.⁸⁸

Another issue which was elaborated in relation to religion was the problem of development. It has been previously pointed out that the radical Westernists understood development heavily within the context of a normative frame. The central concept to which all other ideas were addressed was modernization (*çağdaşlaşma*) which included cognitive changes. Subjective secularization, i.e. the secularization at the level of consciousness, was more emphasized in the conceptualization of modernity rather than in material development. The traditional Islam was seen as an obstacle to this purpose; hence, the elimination of traditional Islam was conceived as a requirement for modernity.⁸⁹ However, as it was argued by Arkoun, neither was modernity developed independent of a specific historical and cultural tradition, nor was it possible that without substantial interaction with the tradition modernity would be reached.⁹⁰ An interaction is needed between the dynamics of tradition and modernity. The Report recognizes such a need in a radical way. For the Committee “the development should be spiritual and ethical.”⁹¹ This does not mean that the material side of development could be ignored. The relationship between spiritual and material development was established as outlined below:

⁸⁸ Ibid., 534-545.

⁸⁹ Gürbüz D. Tüfekçi, *Atatürk'ün Düşünce Yapısı* [Atatürk's Way of Thought] (Ankara: Turhan Kitapevi, 1986), 156; Kili, *Kemalism*, 179.

⁹⁰ Arkoun, “İslami Bir Bakış Açısı İçinde Positivizm ve Gelenek,” [Positivism and Tradition through an Islamic Perspective], 61

The essential and rooted development is one which takes place on the spiritual base and under the guidance of the spiritual development. None of them are ignorable. A fair and harmonious balance must be established between spirit and matter, religion and science, and moral and material development. Posing the problem as such, the answer to the question of what kind of development is required can be given as following: The socio-cultural prerequisites of development are education based on healthy principles, strong ethics and religion, and national and religious consciousness.⁹²

The emphasis on the Turkish and Islamic notions in drawing the sources of national culture and in formulating a new social ethics implies parallelism with the ideas developed by a conservative circle, *Aydınlar Ocağı* (the Hearth of Intellectuals) which has been one of the influential conservative organizations whose ideas were partly shared by the ultranationalists (e.g. The Nationalist Action Party). In fact, as will be further elaborated in the following chapter, there was a close relationship between the rule of 12 September and the Hearth, which led some left-oriented Atatürkist intellectuals to the claim that the ideology of the military government was the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, and the military authorities were the collaborators of the Turkish-Islamic synthesizers who were best represented by *Aydınlar Ocağı* and the Nationalist Action Party. For instance, Emre Kongar claims that “the military government was not only a continuation of the *idealists*⁹³ [*ülküçüler*] because it was totalitarian, but also because the government implemented the principles of Turkish-Islamic synthesis.”⁹⁴ Similar arguments were raised by

⁹¹ *Milli Kültür* [National Culture], 527.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 527.

⁹³ An ultra-nationalist group organized in the 1970s around the Idealist Hearts [*Ülkü Ocakları*] having informal contacts with the Nationalist Action Party who defended Turkish-Islamic Synthesis.

⁹⁴ Kongar, *12 Eylül Kültürü* [The Culture of 12 September], 211.

Şaylan who claimed that the Turkish-Islamic synthesis became the official ideology of the state in the hands of the military leaders in the 1980s.⁹⁵ Yet, it is hard to claim that there was a total fit between the ideas of the Hearth and the military leaders. For instance, unlike the preferences of the Hearth, the use of head scarf in schools was banned by the military leaders.⁹⁶ Moreover, what is important here is not the sources from which the military leaders were inspired in formulation and implementation of policies, but the nature of the policies concerning secularism and Islam which has important implications in terms of moderating the maximal secularism in Turkey. As it was pointed out before, their understanding of secularism referred to Islam in an affirmative way, which decreased the gap between two polar opposite forces of the Turkish polity, i.e. Islam and the state. Although the military never saw the politicization of Islam as legitimate, at least they recognized that modernity did not necessarily mean the eradication of the religious phenomenon from social life.

To see how close were the views of the Committee to those of the military government, it is enough to look at the practices of the military government. The military introduced religious courses in primary and secondary schools and created the Atatürk Higher Institution for Culture, Language, and History [*Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu*], which was given the responsibility of research to determine the constitutive elements of national culture. The religious education will

⁹⁵ Şaylan, *Türkiye’de İslamcı Siyaset* [Islamic Politics in Turkey], 216; For a detail elaboration of the military rule and Turkish-Islamic synthesis also see, Tekeli, “Türk-İslam Sentezi Üzerine” [On the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis]; Güvenç, Şaylan, Tekeli and Turan, *Türk-İslam Sentezi* [Turkish-Islamic Synthesis]; Hasan Cemal, “Türk-İslam Sentezi I” [Turkish-Islamic Synthesis I], *Cumhuriyet* (Turkish Daily), 19, April, 1987; Mümtaz Soysal, “Atatürk Perdesi” [Atatürk’s Curtain], *Milliyet* (Turkish Daily), 6, May, 1987.

be discussed below, but it would be meaningful first to look at the endeavors of the Atatürk Higher Institution.

It has been previously pointed out that the most important task of the Higher Institution was to find out the sources and elements of national culture in order to formulate cultural policies. For this purpose, the Institution prepared and accepted a report⁹⁷ whose content was very similar to that of the SPO's *Milli Kültür* [National Culture]. The Report of the Institution determined the cultural sources of the Turks and the character of the national culture by resorting to Turkish and Islamic origins. In the report it was claimed that:

The Turkish and Islamic cultures which are the sources of our national culture had reached a perfect synthesis in the period of Seljukids and especially in the Ottoman period; however, none of these two cultures was dissolved into the other. By taking the complementary features one from the other, a fair synthesis was realized. It was this synthesis that gave shape, spirit and power to the Ottoman Empire which was one of the largest and most enduring Empires of the world.⁹⁸

After the reforms of Atatürk, the Turkish nation faced a new cultural heritage, i.e. the West, which was a preferred strategy of the republican elites to

⁹⁶ Evren, *Anılar* [Memoirs], vol. II, 479.

⁹⁷ The Report was titled as “Kültür Unsurlarının ve Kültür Politikalarının Tespitinde Uygulanacak Yöntem ve Sorumluluklar Hakkında İnceleme,” [An Inquiry into the Method and Responsibilities in Determination and Application of the Cultural Elements and Cultural Policies]. It was discussed and accepted on June 20, 1986, under the leadership of the President Kenan Evren including Prime Minister Turgut Özal, Necdet Ürüg, the Chief of the General Staff, other related ministers and top bureaucrats. The Report was included in *Türk-İslam Sentezi* [The Turkish-Islamic Synthesis], ed. Bozkurt Güvenç, Gencay Saylan, İlhan Tekeli and Şerafettin Turan (Istanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi, 1994), 60-94. In this thesis, the Report which was reproduced in this book has been used.

⁹⁸ “Kültür Unsurlarının ve Kültür Politikalarının Tespitinde Uygulanacak Yöntem ve Sorumluluklar Hakkında İnceleme,” [An Inquiry into the Method and

bring the Turkish culture to the level of contemporary civilization. Today, the cultural problem that Turkey faces is the problem of the harmonization of these three cultural traditions in a fair way. Useful and acceptable parts of each culture needed to be taken and integrated into the unity of the Turkish culture. This task requires an investigation of the cultural sources of our nation.⁹⁹

The items which were proposed as the sources of the Turkish culture were similar to those of the SPO's report.¹⁰⁰ Religion, as one of the sources of the national culture, was elaborated in relation to its historical importance for the Turks and to its possible contributions to the national culture. Although the language employed in articulating religion and national culture was not as radical as that in the SPO's Report, it was chosen carefully, and the ultimate implications were the same: religion is an indispensable part of the Turkish national culture, and we should benefit from it. Unlike the radical secularist's understanding, the report regards

Responsibilities in Determination and Application of the Cultural Elements and Cultural Policies], 63.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 64.

¹⁰⁰ The prominent items proposed in the report as the sources of the national culture are customs, manners, language, history, science, technology, literature, fine arts, religion, ethics, law, economy, politics, mass media, books and publications. Another important source published by the same Institution on the elements of national culture gives us better insights about what has been understood by the "sources" of national culture. *Milli Kültür Unsurlarımız Üzerinde Genel Görüşler* [General Views on the Components of Our National Culture] (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayını, 1990). In this book the following elements were discussed as the components of national culture: Atatürkism, Atatürkist thought, language, history, religion, science, intellectual culture and technology, book arts in national culture, classical Turkish music, modern music, folk music, architecture, literature, theater, customs, traditions and manners, ethics, law, state philosophy and state structure, agriculture, military, sports, publications, mass media and books.

religion as one of the defining components of the Turkish nationalism. The report stipulates:

Without being removed from social life, religion should maintain its feature of being a source of the national culture feeding the ethical, moral, and cultural norms and values of Turkish society. No one can deny the role of religion in formation of nations. If the demarcation line between *ümme*t (the religious community) and the nation is clearly drawn, it becomes clear that religion supports the national culture. It is possible to add religion, as a cultural element to the moral side of the Turkish nationalism within legitimate boundaries.

Religion, as one of the unifying and integrating components of the nation, has shaped the world view of our nation throughout the centuries. Since culture is also a way of life, we shall incorporate religion into this cultural system without breaking the main tenets of secularism.¹⁰¹

The aim of a cultural policy is to preserve the basic proponents of a cultural identity and the substance of the national culture. In the report the development of culture involved taking elements from foreign cultures which were suitable for the national culture. It is in this sense that the report is far from imitation.¹⁰²

All of these endeavors clearly indicate that the military leaders' understanding of religion, modernity and Atatürkism was radically different in comparison to the previous periods. The state elites began to approach religion in a more affirmative manner, which partly legitimized the societal role of religion. The specific and most concrete result of these changes in the state's approach to Islam emerged in the field of the religious education. The new educational policy introduced compulsory religious courses at the secondary school level, which is still a hotly debated issue with some important implications for secularism. The religious

¹⁰¹ “*Kültür Unsurlarının ve Kültür Politikalarının Tespitinde Uygulanacak Yöntem ve Sorumluluklar Hakkında İnceleme*,” [An Inquiry into the Method and Responsibilities in Determination and Application of the Cultural Elements and Cultural Policies], 73.

education has also been the most important and concrete move taken by the military throughout the republican history in the understanding of secularism.

4.7 Religious Educational Policies under the Military Rule

Religious education in the Republican period has been a crucial area upon which the secularists and Islamists have fought with each other to impose their preferences. The strategic position of the educational institution within the state-society framework put further impetus on the intensity of this combat. The extreme secularists' view of the religious education can be summarized in such a way that no religious education is compatible with the spirit of a secular state.¹⁰³ On the other hand, both the religious and conservative right groups in Turkey have supported religious education by means of the state's hand, and they have seen no opposition between religious education and secularism, hence Atatürkism.¹⁰⁴ To what extent the compulsory religious education is compatible with the secular state is open to debate, all the more so if no private religious education is allowed by any means. The state's intention to hold Islam under the state's control throughout the republican history led the state elites to put the religious education under the strict control of the state. In

¹⁰² Ibid., 87.

¹⁰³ Yetkin, *12 Eylül'de İrtica Niçin ve Nasıl Gelişti* [How and Why Did Reaction Develop After 12 September], 12-13.

¹⁰⁴ Ahmet Gürtaş, *Atatürk ve Din Eğitimi* [Atatürk and Religious Education] (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1982); Ömer Çam, "Atatürk ve Din Eğitimi," [Atatürk and Religious Education] in *Atatürk'ün 100. Doğum Yılında Türkiye Birinci Din Eğitimi Semineri: 23-25 Nisan 1981* [Proceedings of Seminar on Religious Education in Turkey in the Centennial of the Birth of Atatürk: 23-25 April 1981] (Ankara: İlahiyat Vakfı Yayınları, 1981), 25-31; Ersoy Taşdemirci, "Türkiye Cumhuriyetinde Laiklik ve Din Eğitimi," [Secularism and Religious Education in

some periods, especially from the mid-1930s to the end of the 1940s, no religious education was offered by the state educational institutions; it totally disappeared.

The most important step in this direction was taken by the educational reforms of the republic, particularly by the promulgation of *Tevhidi Tedrisat Kanunu* [The Law of the Unification of Education] which aimed at transferring all educational institutions to the Ministry of Education on March 3, 1924 together with the abolishment of the Caliphate. Atatürk's aim at subjective secularization by means of the state apparatus gave rise to secularizing the institution of education. Also his intention to spread an "enlightened religion" and enlightened men of religion presupposed the establishment of modern religious institutions. For this purpose, the Theology Faculty within the *Darülfünûn* (Istanbul University) and some new schools of *imam-hatip* to educate religious personnel were established. But by 1933 all of these institutions had disappeared due to the lack of the students, which was also a result of the existing social and political environment. Between 1935-1948 no religious course was offered in the public schools.¹⁰⁵ The government during the period in question had been in the hands of the extremists of the RPP led by Recep Peker; therefore, the policies reflected a radical character. The moderate group within the party always kept an intention to institute religious education in the schools, however, they could not realize their intention until the end of the 1940s.¹⁰⁶

Turkey], in *idem*, 164-174; İnal Cem Aşkun, "Laiklik ve Din Eğitimi," [Secularism and Religious Education], in *idem*, 387-393.

¹⁰⁵ Gotthard Jaschke, *Yeni Türkiye'de İslamlik* [Islam in New Turkey], trans. Hayrullah Örs (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1972), 74-83.

¹⁰⁶ The most prominent figure supporting the religious education by the state was Hamdullah S. Tanrıöver. For a detailed discussions on this issue within the RPP

The liberalization of extremely radical secularism and initiating religious courses in the public schools began after the World War II when İsmet İnönü, the President of the Republic, decided to open politics to competitive elections. The softening of the state's attitude towards religion was partly due to the competition between the Democrat Party and the RPP. The Democrat Party had a strong appeal among the masses, not the least for their support of religious education. The RPP felt the need to have educated personnel to regulate religious affairs. The new policies of the RPP included initiating elective religious courses in the schools based on the parents' will, and opening of some new *imam-hatip* schools to educate religious personnel and the establishment of the Theology Faculty at Ankara University.¹⁰⁷

After the transition to democracy, the DP government opened a new chapter in the field of the religious education. Religious courses became regular in the schools unless the parents declared otherwise. The government opened new religious schools. In due course, the number of religious schools increased, and in the 1970s *the imam-hatip* schools were transformed into *lise* by the right wing governments, but no change was done related to the status of the religious courses in the schools.

The military government planned to revise the ongoing policy of religious education in Turkey. The changes in the state-Islam relationship in the same period were previously explained with their principal reasons. In a similar vein, through religious education, the military had expected to realize what were proposed by the changes, i. e. to solve the moral, ethical, and identity crisis of the Turkish youth

see, Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, 277-281; Jaschke, *Yeni Türkiye'de İslamlık*, [Islam in New Turkey], 83-89.

especially to prevent them from inclining to extreme left and right ideologies. Another notable reason was to put an end to the private, sometimes illegal, religious courses given by different religious groups, a strategy which also reflects the intention of the state to maintain its control over religion. Evren criticized the old policies of religious education in Turkey because these policies failed to teach the youth the religion of their parents:

So far, it has not been possible for the Turkish children to learn the religion of the Turkish nation which is also the religion of their parents. It is impossible for every family to teach religion at home. It is also risky because they may instruct wrong things... For this reason, we put compulsory religious courses into the Constitution. By this way, our children will learn their religion, as proposed by Atatürk, in schools of the state and by the hand of the state.¹⁰⁸

In the early days of the Intervention a commission made up of some ministers and the head of the Directorate of Religious Affairs prepared a report entitled “*Türkiye’de Din Eğitimi-Din İstismarı*” [Religious Education and Religious Abuse in Turkey] and sent it to the related people and institutions as a secret document. Describing the existing state of affairs, the document made it clear that after the republic the attempts at keeping religion out of politics had reached an important stage, which was then followed by reverse movements resulting in the exploitation of religion by some politicians. The document proposed the following: “The termination of these negative developments is only possible if the state recognizes

¹⁰⁷ Dankwart A. Rustow, “Türkiye’de İslam ve Politika: 1920-1955,” [Islam and Politics in Turkey] in *Türkiye’de İslam ve Laiklik* [Islam and Laicism in Turkey], ed. Davut Dursun (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1995), 79.

¹⁰⁸ Evren, *Anılar* [Memoirs], vol. III, 309.

religion as a social reality, provides religious services and perfect religious education by its hands, and leaves no space for the exploitation of religion.”¹⁰⁹

The report mentioned about the significance of the *imam-hatip* schools, and offered to introduce compulsory religious courses in all the primary and secondary schools.¹¹⁰ Further important attempts in this regard were the organization of a seminar by the Ankara Theology Faculty in which religious education was discussed in detail, and a minor but notable event the publication of a book by the Directorate of the Religious Affairs entitled *Atatürk ve Din Eğitimi* [Atatürk and the Religious Education].¹¹¹ Hüseyin Atay, the then dean of the Theology Faculty and the head of the Organization Committee, argued that “the Law of the Unification of Education was instituted not to eradicate religious education, but to integrate religious education into the broad educational system and to evaluate it within this broad frame.”¹¹² A speech delivered on behalf of the Minister of National Education shows that the seminar was planned together with the Ministry.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ *Nokta* [Turkish Weekly], 26 March 1989. The report was introduced by *Nokta* with large quotations from the original report. The members of the commission who prepared the report were, according to *Nokta*, Mehmet Özgüneş (Minister of the State), Cevdet Mentеш (Minister of the Justice), Selahattin Çeliker (Minister of the Interior), İlder Türkmen (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Hasan Sağlam (Minister of the Education), Münir Güney (Minister of the Village and Cooperative Organizations, Vecdi Özgöl (Minister of the Youth and Sports) and Tayyar Altıkulaç (Head of the Directorate of the Religious Affairs).

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹¹¹ *Atatürk'ün 100. Doğum Yılında Türkiye Birinci Din Eğitimi Semineri: 23-25 Nisan 1981* [Proceedings of Seminar on Religious Education in Turkey in the Centennial of the Birth of Atatürk: 23-25 April 1981]; Gürtaş, *Atatürk ve Din Eğitimi* [Atatürk and Religious Education].

The underlying point in these endeavors was one and the same: since religion is a social phenomenon and an indispensable part of the Turkish national culture, the religious education should be given by the state itself, and it should be compulsory. It is not contrary to secularism and Atatürkism.¹¹⁴ This was also stressed by Evren personally as follows:

By doing this [initiating religious courses in schools] are we acting against secularism, as sometimes said by the opponents of religion, or do we serve secularism? Of course, we serve secularism, because secularism is not to leave the Turkish youth and citizens in the hands of exploiters of religion by depriving them of religious knowledge...

The religious education in the schools is not against the principles of Atatürk. Look what Atatürk said on this issue: Friends. Religion is an essential institution. It is not possible for a nation to survive without religion. But the point is that religion is a relationship between man and God... There is no clergy in our religion. We all are equal, and have to learn the religious rules at equal levels. Every individual needs a place to learn the religious rules, religious sentiments and creeds. This place is the school. Look, this is what Atatürk said to us.¹¹⁵

As has already been shown in this chapter, the approach of the military leaders to religion was radically different from the preceding era. The old conception of religion which was based on the “secularization thesis” assuming that with the

¹¹² Hüseyin Atay, “Türkiye Din Eğitimi Semineri’ni Açış Konuşması” [Opening Speech of the Seminar on Religious Education in Turkey], in *Türkiye Birinci Din Eğitimi Semineri* [Proceedings], 2.

¹¹³ The Seminar was opened on 23 April, 1981, which is a national celebration day in Turkey. Necati Öztürk, a member from the Ministry, made a speech on behalf of Hasan Sağlam, the then Minister of National Education, stating that the Minister could not join the seminar, although he wished to, because of the celebration protocols. Öztürk made similar points to those of Atay saying that the problem of the religious education had be solved according to the principles of Aatürk. *Ibid.*, 11.

¹¹⁴ For a further elaboration of this matter, see, Gürtaş, *Atatürk ve Din Eğitimi* [Atatürk and Religious Education]. The book was revised and published by the Directorate of Religious Affairs in 1982.

¹¹⁵ Evren, *Anılar* [Memoirs], vol. III, 309-310.

development of modernity religion becomes a matter of private due to the process of privatization and its social significance decreases, or even disappears, was replaced with a new understanding which emphasized its social significance. A new cultural philosophy was formulated which incorporated the indigenous cultural and historical and moral values. In accordance with this new approach, Atatürkism was reinterpreted, which enable to give up its strict statist and secularist stand, and to adopt a critical standpoint in evaluating modernity. Furthermore, the softening of the maximal secularism by the military government created a basis on which the succeeding Motherland Party governments under the leadership of Turgut Özal further liberalized existing secularism, which has been vital in transferring of the Islamist to the public sphere, hence, in their integration to the system. Yet, the contention between Özal and the military leaders on secularism and the role of religion in society reveals the limits of this new move, which will be examined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

THE MILITARY AND RELIGION AFTER THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

This chapter aims at analyzing the developments in state-religion relationship after the transition to democracy with a particular focus questioning whether any change took place in the attitude of the military leadership of the 1980 Intervention towards religion. In other words, to what extent the military leaders of the Intervention maintained their previous affirmative standpoint towards religion after the transition to democracy is the main question that the present chapter seeks to answer. In this chapter, the above problem will be examined in relation to the attitudes of the military leaders towards two main developments after the transition to democracy in Turkey. The first important development was the coming to power of the Motherland Party (MP) whose policies were different from, and to a certain extent, opposing those of the military government. What was the attitude of the military leadership towards “the pro-religious” policies of the MP? This chapter also includes the elaboration of the thesis of Turkish-Islamic synthesis which underpinned the conservatism of both the military government and the MP. The second important development was the rise of the “religious revival” or the public visibility of Islam along with the rise of civil society which gained wider autonomy in comparison to the pre-1983 period and to a great extent provided a suitable ground for the religious movements to be flourished in the public sphere. In fact, the post-1983 period

brought about new concepts and styles of conducting politics at the level of civil society, if not at the level of party politics, which generated far-reaching consequences for the relationship between the state and society or politics and society. For the first time in the Ottoman-Turkish political history, civil society began to take shape and gained notable autonomy. This chapter also seeks to delineate whether the military leaders changed their affirmative attitude towards religion in the face of the “religious revival” which dominated the scene in the 1980s. Because of the subject matter of this study, this chapter only covers the period of Evren’s presidency.

5.1 The Legal-Institutional Setup of the System and the Coming of the MP to Power

Although the legal framework in the new set up of the state, namely in the 1982 Constitution, was designed by the military leaders in such a way that it set some limits to the freedoms provided by the legal-constitutional framework of the Constitution of 1961¹ and gave priority to the “highest interests of the state,”² the

¹ Ergun Özbudun, *Türk Anayasa Hukuku* [The Turkish Constitutional Law] (Ankara: Yetkin Yayınları, 1986), 48-49.

² Bülent Tanör, “Siyasal Tarih: 1980-1995” [Political History: 1980-1995], in *Türkiye Tarihi V: Bugünkü Türkiye (1980-1995)* [Turkish History V: Turkey Today (1980-1995)], ed. Sina Akşin (Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1997), 46-47. The new constitutional framework also vested in the president considerable power vis-à-vis other parts of the executive, i.e. the prime minister and cabinet, and the legislature, which also means that it strengthened the state vis-à-vis the civilians in comparison to the 1961 Constitution. See, for instance, Ergun Özbudun, “The Status of the President of the Republic Under the Turkish Constitution of 1982: Presidentialism or Parliamentarism?” in *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, ed. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989), 37-45; Özbudun, *Türk Anayasa Hukuku* [The Turkish Constitutional Law], 49; For an evaluation of the executive in Turkey after 1982 see, Metin Heper, “The Executive in the Third Turkish Republic: 1982-1989,” *Governance* 3 (1990): 229-319; See also, Ömer

impacts of the changes unleashed by the economic liberalization policies, coupled with the liberalization discourse of the MP under the leadership of Turgut Özal, on political liberalization, were in sharp contrast to the intentions and expectations of the military leaders. “Institutional monism,”³ i.e. the monist structuration of the state by a coherent elite group around an official ideology, marked the character of the post-1983 Turkish polity, however, some radical changes took place at civil societal level strongly influencing the subsequent course of politics in Turkey. The concept of “change” and further democratization of the political system shaped the new content of social and political discourses. The concept of democracy became a shared concept of different political groups. Accordingly, the new political discourse was marked by liberal and compromising tenets.

Within the political domain, the notable change was the coming of the Motherland Party to power, which was not the preferred eventuality of the military, thus the situation in which the MP had come to power in particular, and the general conditions under which a new game of politics was allowed are important to understand the compromises and conflicts between the military and civilians. As has already been pointed out, the military leaders of 12 September intended to introduce democracy within narrow limits. They identified the party leaders and the political parties as the main responsible agents behind the erosion of public authority, prevalent terror and chaos, thus, in the new set up of the political system the military

Faruk Gençkaya, “Democratization and Legislative Development in the Middle East,” in *Democratization in the Middle East*, ed., A. A. Razzaq Shikara and Ö. Faruk Gençkaya (Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies, 1994), 99-103

³ Metin Heper, “Trials and Tribulations of Democracy in the Third Turkish Republic,” in *Politics in the Third Turkish Republic*, ed. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994): 231.

leadership paid special attention to the party system.⁴ The first attempt of the military leaders in this regard was the closing down of all political parties that were active in political arena prior to 1980. The leaders and the upper level administrators of former parties, which included deputy leaders, secretaries general and the central executive members, were banned from forming a political party and from becoming members of any of the political party for a period of ten years. Moreover, the new constitution extensively restricted the political activities of the trade unions and associations, and no political links were allowed between such organizations and the political parties. The political parties were also banned from establishing branches of youth and women.⁵ The new constitution not only prohibited the political activities of the trade unions, but also it excluded students and civil servants from party membership.⁶ By prohibition of the political parties and the active political participation of different organizations to politics, the military aimed to prevent the fragmentation and polarization of the political system that were considered to be the main causes of the chaotic developments in the 1970s which led the country to the crises.⁷

⁴ İltter Turan, "Political Parties and the Party System in Post-1983 Turkey," in *State Democracy and the Military: Turkey in 1980s*, ed. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 68.

⁵ Ergun Özbudun, "Development of Democratic Government in Turkey: Crises, Interruptions, and Reequilibrations," in *Perspectives on Democracy in Turkey*, ed. Ergun Özbudun (Ankara: Turkish Political Science Association, 1988), 26-27.

⁶ Eric J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 1997), 296.

⁷ For the tendencies of the Turkish politics towards polarization and fragmentation see, Üstün Ergüder, "Post-1980 Parties and Politics in Turkey," in

As İlder Turan notes, the aim of the new legal framework was to achieve three goals: “preventing excessive politicization of citizens and groups, keeping political parties internally more democratic, and rendering both political parties and the party system more stable.”⁸ Thus, although fifteen parties were established before the elections of November 6, 1993, the National Security Council allowed only three parties to join the elections. They vetoed other parties and some candidates of the approved parties, whom were found undesirable by the military in the new design of the political system. The approved parties were *Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi* [the Nationalist Democratic Party], *Anavatan Partisi* [the Motherland Party] and *Halkçı Parti* [the People’s Party]. The Nationalist Democratic Party was established by Turgut Sunalp, a retired general, and the party had the military’s support. The People’s Party was led by Necdet Calp who was a former bureaucrat in the military government. The position of the PP was at the left of the political spectrum, and hoped to get the votes of the electorates of the former RPP. The Motherland Party was established by Turgut Özal, the deputy prime minister in the military government and the architect of the 24 January 1980 economic decisions which was a radical economic program aiming at transformation of Turkish economy from the imports substitution industrialization to the export-led one.

As has already been noted, the military leaders supported the Nationalist Democracy Party of Sunalp since they considered that the NDP, led by a former general, would maintain the reforms and the main policies of the military. Thus, on the eve of the elections, held on the November 6, 1983, Evren made a speech on

Perspectives on Democracy in Turkey, ed. Ergun Özbudun (Ankara: Turkish Political Science Association, 1988), 115-145.

television in which he declared an overt support for Sunalp. He said to people that, “I hope that you will choose the party which will maintain the policies of the National Security Council, and will not bring the country to terror and chaotic situation.”⁹ But, the striking point in this speech was his criticism directed to Özal. Although he directly indicated no name, his implications openly addressed Özal. Evren stated that he wished to realize the promises of those who announced that they had the key to everything. He went on to say that it was unpleasant to take possession of all the good things accomplished by the military government by those who held the post in that government. It seemed to Evren that they [Özal] disregarded the efforts of the National Security Council, the Economic Council and the Council of the Ministries who were the true agents behind the economic success.¹⁰ To be sure, the intention was not to criticize Özal, but to influence the electorate in favor of Sunalp. But the election results surprised the military because, unlike their expectation that the electorate would choose the NDP, the winner of the elections was the MP whose political program had little affinity with the military’s political concerns.¹¹ Generally speaking, the results of the elections had two significant implications: although the people gave the support to the military in installing the regime, they did not want to go on with the military after a successful set up of the regime, and two relatively

⁸ Turan, “Political Parties and the Party System in Post-1983 Turkey,” 69.

⁹ Kenan Evren, “*Kenan Evren’in Anıları* [Memoirs of Kenan Evren], vol. IV (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1991), 339.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 396.

¹¹ In his evaluation of elections results, Evren compares the failure of the NDP which also meant the failure of the military with the fall of Churchill after the Second World War. For Evren, despite the fact that Churchill worked hard after the

uncompromising groups were brought to the top of the state, i.e. the presidential council made up of the former coup leaders and the government which claimed that they reconciled four main trends of the political spectrum under the banner of the MP-nationalist, conservative, liberal and social democrat. Indeed, relatively weak, yet tolerable, conflicts between Kenan Evren, the president, and Turgut Özal occupying the post of the prime minister characterized the post-1983 period. Needless to say, the prominent issues of conflict between them were religion and secularism.

In fact, Özal's claim that the MP was representing four main political fronts of Turkish politics was true at least when the MP's conservatism, nationalism and liberalism were concerned. The MP was liberal in its economic program, conservative in cultural outlook, along with a strong emphasis on basic individual rights of man which also implies liberalism. In its political program, the MP emphasized the basic rights and freedoms of man, and the minimal state both in economy and politics. Thus, the space occupied by the state in society needed to be redefined. The conservatism of the MP bore the basic tenets of the currents of the conservative right in Turkey such as the preservation of national, religious and historical values with a strong emphasis on a mighty Turkey. But, Evren warned Özal not to accept the candidates of the former Nationalist Action Party, an ultra-nationalist party involved in outlawed activities in the 1970s, and the religious National Salvation Party. When Özal visited Evren to inform about his intention to establish a political party, Evren told Özal:

War to restore the country, people did not vote for him. The same case was now in Turkey. Ibid., 413.

I see no objection in your intention to form a political party. In fact, you served in the Uluşu government. If we found an objection, we would not give you the seat of state minister and deputy prime minister. But in the past you had some relations with the National Salvation Party. You were a candidate of the NSP from İzmir. You have affinity with the members of the NSP and the National Action Party. If you accept their adherents to your party, we do not permit you. When we asked him to promise this point, he replied that, “be pleased, I never permit.” On this agreement we approved him to establish the party.¹²

Yet, despite the early reservations about the extreme representatives of the conservative right, there were significant similarities between the views of Evren and Özal stemming from the fact that, as far as culture and the cultural role of religion were concerned, they both had a conservative outlook which made compromise between them possible, and kept the conflicts within the sustainable boundaries. In order to understand this affinity and the ideological origins of the cultural policies of the military government, it is necessary to portray the conservative current of thought from which the military government was inspired. As will be elaborated below, the main common point between Özal and Evren, or the military leadership of the 1980 Intervention and the MP governments in general, was their affinity to the Turkish-Islamic synthesis which was one of the prevalent currents of the conservative right in Turkey.

5.2 The Turkish-Islamic Synthesis

In order to capture a more definite picture of the relationship between Evren and Özal in terms of religion and secularism, particularly how they tolerated each other despite the fact that they had different views on these matters, it is necessary to elaborate the similarities of their views as much as the differences are needed to

understand the contention persisted between them during the period of Evren's presidency. Although there were significant differences between Özal and Evren in terms of religion and secularism, they shared one fundamental point which was also the guiding principle of the cultural policies of the military government in relation to religion in the 1980s: "religion is the cement of Turkish society." The conception of religion as a social "cement," or a binding instrument of social life, has been the prominent idea of the Turkish nationalist-conservative right; thus, it also reveals the intellectual tradition from which the military leadership was inspired in the formulation and implementation of cultural policies. In fact, there were notable similarities between the approach of the military leadership of the 1980 Intervention to religion and that of some rightist groups, particularly those of the advocates of the Turkish-Islamist synthesis.¹³ The role of religion in the development of the nationalist ideology in general and the articulation of these concepts in Turkey in particular is beyond the scope of this study, but a particular approach will be discussed below, which sees a historical synthesis between the Turkish culture and Islam, and offers a nationalist ideology for society, i.e. the nationalist right that has been represented by the Nationalist Action Party [*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*]. The NAP made its appearance in political arena by the mid-1960s under the leadership of Alparslan Türkeş, a retired colonel and an influential figure of the 1960 coup, and enlarged its organizational networks to combat particularly with communism in

¹² Evren, *Anılar* [Memoirs], vol. IV, 151.

¹³ Nationalism, conservatism and Islamism are three substances of the Turkish right which are articulated in different ways in the rightist literature. Tanıl Bora analysis how these themes appear and are interwoven in the rightist thought. See, Tanıl Bora, *Türk Sağının Üç Hali: Milliyetçilik, Muhafazakarlık, İslamcılık* [The

Turkey.¹⁴ They were involved in armed struggle with the leftist groups in the 1970s and, after the coup of 1980, the military government arrested their activists and closed down their organizations.

The underlying idea in the nationalist-conservative thought is the unity of the 2500 year old Turkish tradition and Islam, which was seen as the most appropriate religion for the Turks in terms of beliefs, manners and way of life. İbrahim Kafesoğlu, one of the leading ideologues of this circle, argues that throughout history the Turks have accepted different religions, but they have only been content with Islam. When they accepted religions other than Islam, they either lost their nationality or felt the need to change religion again.¹⁵ “Why has the religious history of the Turks taken place in this way?” he asks:

Three Cases of the Turkish Right: Nationalism, Conservatism, Islamism] (Istanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 1998).

¹⁴ Alparslan Türkeş was an influential member of the radical front of the junta of the 1960 Coup, which claimed the military would remain in power to realize social and political reforms. But the radicals were purged by the moderates, an event that was known as the event of the “Fourteen,” and Türkeş was sent to India as an ambassador. He was an ardent advocate of the Turkish nationalism tinted with extreme ethnicist tenets. He began his political movement by the mid-1960s by capturing the leadership of the Republican Peasant’s Nation Party [*Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi*] which changed its name into Nationalist Action Party [*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*] in 1969. In the 1970s the party enlarged its organizational network under the banner of *Ülkücü Hareket* [The Idealist Action] and fought against the extreme left. The military rule of the 1980 Intervention accused their followers of involving in outlawed activities and arrested them. For the event of the “Fourteen” see, Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1950-1975* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1977), 165-172. The book of Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can is a good account on the history of the Nationalist Action in Turkey. See, Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet, Ocak, Dergah: 12 Eylül’den 1990’lara Ülkücü Hareket* [The State, The Hearth and the Dervish Lodge: The Idealist Action from 12 September to the 1990s] (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000).

¹⁵ İbrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türk-İslam Sentezi* [The Turkish-Islamic Synthesis] (Istanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 1999),143-144.

It has a simple answer: There are astonishing similarities between the Islamic beliefs and those of the ancient Turks. It seems that other religions were unable to satisfy the Turks because Judaism was only for the Jews; Christianity was based on Trinity; and Buddhism lacked the belief in God. On the contrary, the Islamic conception of unique God comprised the beliefs system of ancient Turks. In a sense, by accepting Islam the Turks thought that they did not embrace a new religion, but the one which was stronger and convincing, and had a book.¹⁶

According to the advocates of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, the similarities between Islam and the beliefs of the ancient Turks, such as belief in a unique and heavenly God, and the immortality of souls, were so close that the Turks, in a sense, were ready to accept Islam. It was, as Süleyman Yalçın argues, a dress as if it was sewn for the Turks, thus, the Turks accepted Islam easily by their free wills and neither psychological nor socio-cultural incompatibility took place between Islam and the Turks.¹⁷ It was this harmony which mutually fostered both Islam and the Turks in history. Neither the historical and traditional ingredients nor Islam can be separated from the national culture and daily life of the people.

The Turkish-Islamic synthesis turns into a radical conservative cultural program when western culture is concerned. Since the Turkish-Islamic synthesis is the final cultural state, nothing can be taken from the west except for the technological and scientific products. Moreover, they argue that Turkish culture has been under the attack of the West since the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, and except for the period of Atatürk, the Turkish state has followed a “wrong” westernization program which destroyed the “essence” of national culture. This was

¹⁶ Ibid., 144.

¹⁷ Süleyman Yalçın, one of the leaders of the Hearth, expressed this view in “Introduction” written for the book of Kafesoğlu. See, Süleyman Yalçın, “Takdim,” [Foreword] in Kafesoğlu, Ibid., 8-9.

the main reason behind the erosion of social norms and values, and social crises that Turkey experienced before 1980. In order to overcome these crises, the state should formulate and implement a program of “national culture” which is an indispensable task for our national state and well-being of Turkish society.¹⁸

A well-elaborated program based on the Turkish-Islamic synthesis was offered by the Hearth of the Intellectuals [*Aydınlar Ocağı*], an organization formed by a group of rightist intellectuals in 1970. The initial aim of the Hearth was to unite the divided nationalist-conservative right to use it as a defensive block against communism. In due course they widened their networks especially among the educated strata, and thus, became influential in state bureaucracy and universities which enabled them to influence the government policies during the periods of the right wing Nationalist Front governments in the 1970s. Although they had no direct connections to the Nationalist Action Party, or the *Ülkücü* Movement in general, because of the nationalist-Turkist tenets contained in the ideology of these both groups, the Hearth was closer to the NAP than any other right wing parties. Moreover, there were close relations between the Hearth and the leadership of the NAP especially in the 1970s.¹⁹

¹⁸ İlhan Tekeli, “Türk-İslam Sentezi Üzerine” [On the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis] *Bilim ve Sanat* [Science and Art] 77 (1987): 5-8.

¹⁹ Bora and Can, *Devlet, Ocak, Dergah* [The State, The Hearth and the Dervish Lodge], 152-154. Although the Hearth and the NAP were close associates and had similar views, it is hard to say that the Hearth was a sub-division of the NAP. As Bora and Can note, if the relationship between the Hearth and NAP in comparison to other right wing conservative parties is concerned, it can be said that it was a *primus inter pares* kind of relationship. *Ibid.*, 150. In the 1980s the contention between the Hearth and NAP became more visible, partly due to the Hearth’s support of the 12 September, and the proponents of the NAP began openly to criticize the Hearth. See,

The chief target in the philosophy and political program of the Hearth appears to be the preservation and improvement of the “national culture” which was articulated through the precepts of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, thus, not surprisingly, peculiar characteristics are accentuated in the definition of culture. For instance, Muharrem Ergin, the leading ideologue of the Hearth, defines culture as “the totality of all aspects of life which makes a group and people a nation, and gives a peculiar character to it.”²⁰ These aspects of life constitute the essence or the unique values of a nation, and the “essence” of a culture can not be transformed into other cultures.²¹ In their understanding, a change in a culture ineluctably leads to the loss of nationality, thus, the issue of preservation of the national culture becomes the survival problem of Turkey and the Turks. As he says, “culture is, before anything else, a problem of national security.”²² Since the survival of Turkey is closely related to the preservation of national culture, the state is obliged to adopt a policy of national culture.²³ Like other adherents of the circle, he also criticizes the cultural

for instance, Mustafa Güngör, “Türk-İslam Sentezi Mümkün Mü?” [Is the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis Possible], *Yeni Düşünce* [New Thought], 1 May 1987.

²⁰ Muharrem Ergin, *Türkiye'nin Bugünkü Meseleleri: İlaveli Dördüncü Baskı* [Turkey's Problems: 4th enlarged ed.] (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1998), 6. The first edition of Ergin's book was published by the Hearth of Intellectuals in 1973 with no name and it was presented as the official view of the Hearth. The subsequent editions appeared under the name of Ergin. The last edition (1998) includes an appraisal on the 1980 Military Intervention.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

²² *Ibid.*, 33.

²³ The following passage demonstrates how vital is the problem of national culture for the survival of Turkey in the conception of the Hearth. “Today Turkey has to decide, first of all, whether she will live in these lands as a national society or as a cosmopolitan international mass made up of the world citizens. In fact, no new decision is needed for this matter, because long before Atatürk decided that Turkey

policies that were put at work after the death of Atatürk as being humanistic, which idealized western values instead of the Turkish national ones, and hence, undermined the essence of the national culture. Ergin says:

Humanism means the rejection of national culture and substituting it with the cultural values of the West. So, it transforms a national society into a cosmopolitan mass. This is exactly what happened in Turkey. The national culture of Atatürk's period was rejected and the non-national values were propagated.²⁴

Orhan Türkdoğan visualizes the attempt of the idealization of the Greco-Latin culture between 1940-1950 as a backward move from the spirit of the National Forces of the Independence War and departing from the way of Atatürk, and claims that it was a mortal blow on the process of the nation-building in Turkey.²⁵ It created generations who were filled with international cosmopolitan values, which made them admirers of Greco-Latin culture rather than the native Turkish one. As a consequence of such understanding, a program of a national policy comes out as the chief target of the state which is vital for the survival of Turkey.²⁶

The hallmarks of their outlook were declared under the title of “*Milli Mutabakatlar*” [the National Consensus] in a seminar organized by the Hearth in September 1984- “The Reasons which Brought our Country to the 12 September and the Conspiracies on Turkey” [*Ülkemizi 12 Eylül'e Getiren Sebepler ve Türkiye*

would live as a national society forever. It is impossible for other kind of society to survive in these lands. If it were possible, the Ottoman society would endure.” Ibid., 180.

²⁴ Ibid.,

²⁵ Orhan Türkdoğan, *Değişme, Kültür ve Sosyal Çözülme* [Change, Culture and Social Disintegration] (Istanbul: Birleşik Yayıncılık, 1996), 178.

²⁶ Ergin, *Türkiye'nin Bugünkü Meseleleri* [Turkey's Problems], 381.

Üzerindeki Oyunlar].²⁷ The proposal, which summarizes the fundamental tenets of the views of the Hearth in forty points, proposes various policies grounded on national culture with a perspective presented above.²⁸ The novel element in *Milli Mutabakatlar* in comparison to their previous standpoint and to other rightist circles was the western dimension which was highly instrumental, as will be elaborated below, in the articulation of this view to the philosophy of the 1980 Intervention.

According to the proposal:

The Turkish culture is a triple synthesis based on Turkish, Islamic and Western combination. The first pillar of this trivet is Turkishness, the second pillar is Islam and the third one is the West.... The Turkish-Islamic synthesis is the invariable essence of this culture, whereas, the West is the changing and developing component.”²⁹

The Hearth and their views became significant for Turkish political life because the military leadership, in search of a new source of social “cement,” resorted to the Hearth and their views for the formation and implementation of cultural policies. In a sense, there was a mutual recognition between the military leadership of 12 September and the Hearth, albeit unofficial. The military leadership benefited from the views and the cadres of the Hearth during their rule, and, in return for this, the Hearth gave a sincere support to the Intervention. For instance, Ergin sees the Intervention as “a blessed and comprehensive movement for the fate of

²⁷ Bora and Can, *Devlet, Ocak, Dergah* [The State, The Hearth and the Dervish Lodge], 162.

²⁸ This text was published in *Türk Kültürü* [The Turkish Culture] 279 (1986) with the signs of Muharrem Ergin, A. Aydın Bolak and Süleyman Yalçın, and was reprinted in Ergin’s book. See, *Türkiye’nin Bugünkü Meseleleri* [Turkey’s Problems], 380-399.

²⁹ Ergin, *Türkiye’nin Bugünkü Meseleleri* [Turkey’s Problems], 385.

Turkey.....” and says that, “the first great event of the last 60 years of the Turkish history was the movement of Atatürk and the second one was the 12 September Military Intervention.”³⁰

There were some fundamental concerns shared both by the military and the Hearth which made this tacit alliance or coalition possible. First of all, a strong anti-communist rhetoric was a common point in the approaches of both the military and the Hearth. The Hearth’s conception of the strong state, which would be capable of restoring law and order in Turkey, was another merging point.³¹ Moreover, the Hearth had an affirmative approach to Atatürk and Atatürkism which made it easy to articulate their views to the *weltanschauung* of the 12 September Intervention. As Bora and Can note; “This positive attitude towards Atatürkism can not simply be explained, as the left-Kemalist circles usually do, by the Hearth’s worry to use Atatürkism as a folding screen.”³² Their Atatürkism stems from their ascertainment that in the period of Atatürk, who was the greatest Turkish nationalist, the “national culture” colored the essence of the state.³³ In accordance with the Westernization aims of Atatürkism, which were indispensable elements of Turkey’s quest of modernity, the Hearth modified the synthesis by adding the western dimension. As has already been noted, Turkish culture was illustrated as a synthesis made up of the Turkish, Islamic and western elements, though the last ingredient was a changing

³⁰ Ibid., 237-239.

³¹ Bora and Can, *Devlet, Ocak, Dergah* [The State, The Hearth and the Dervish Lodge], 149-151.

³² Ibid., 155.

³³ Ibid., 155-256.

and developing one. The accentuation on Atatürkism and their approval of the West also differentiate the Hearth from other rightist-conservative and religious circles in Turkey.³⁴ Furthermore, as far as the relationship between the state and religion was concerned, they had a secular outlook in such a way that the withdrawal of religion from its traditional position due to the formation of the national state or the rise of modernity, was taken as a natural and necessary development. Religion in the modern world, which was seen only as a component of culture, could not dominate all realms of culture, but only its own sphere. The affairs of the state and religion should be separated. Ergin says that, “Turkey will never be religious but will always remain pious.”³⁵ Yet, they conclude that religion is an important and necessary cultural component which sustains society.³⁶

Not surprisingly, the most important state agencies which were influential in the ideological and cultural spheres, such as the universities, the Atatürk Higher Institution for Culture, Language and History [*Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu*] and *TRT* [the Turkish Radio Television], were filled with either the

³⁴ For instance, Ergin says: “We should never forget that Atatürk will always be influential in the fate of Turkey. Atatürk is the founder of this state, and no state can be far from embracing its founder and pursuing his road. Therefore, Turkey will never be without Atatürk.” Ergin, *Türkiye’nin Bugünkü Meseleleri* [Turkey’s Problems], 293. But, their conception of Atatürkism is highly nationalistic. Among the principles of Atatürk, they give priority to nationalism, and other principles are seen as complementary. See, *Ibid.*, 303.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 203.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 306. Türkdoğan’s definition of the policy of national culture has significant implications for their understanding of secularism and religion. The policy of national culture means “all efforts to realize the requirements which are necessary to be transformed from *ümmet* [the religious community] to nation with an historical outlook.” Türkdoğan, *Değişme, Kültür ve Sosyal Çözülme* [Change, Culture and Social Disintegration], 39.

members or the sympathizers of the Hearth. The military government enacted a decree on July 20, 1982 which proposed to establish an institution in order to investigate the principles and the reforms of Atatürk, and to educate the staff which was required to teach these subjects in the universities. The Institute of the Turkish Revolution [*Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü*], which was already an academic unit under the Faculty of Language, History and Geography of Ankara University [*Dil Tarih ve Coğrafya Fakültesi*], was reorganized in accordance with this decree. The Institution was staffed with the members of the Hearth.³⁷ Another notable attempt of the military government in this regard was related to the status of the Turkish History Society [*Türk Tarih Kurumu*]. As has been noted in the previous chapter, the Turkish History Society was reorganized under the name of Atatürk Higher Institute for Culture, Language and History, and was given responsibility to determine the components of national culture by law. As it was stated, these components would be the guiding cores in formation and implementation of the national culture and in determination of national targets.³⁸

If the relationship between the Hearth and the attempts at reorganization of these institutions along with the efforts of the newly installed institutions are examined, it can be seen that the Hearth gained extensive influence and succeeded to articulate its views to the ideology of the 1980 Intervention. Consequently, the

³⁷ Bora and Can give a detailed documentation of the places occupied by the adherents of the Hearth. See, Bora and Can, *Devlet, Ocak, Dergah* [The State, The Hearth and the Dervish Lodge], 185-189.

³⁸ Aydın Sayılı, "Önsöz," [Preface], in *Milli Kültür Unsurlarımız Üzerinde Genel Görüşler* [General Views on the Components of Our National Culture] (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayını, 1990), vii.

Hearth's views from *Türkiye'nin Bugünkü Meseleleri* [Turkey's Problems], firstly published in 1973, to *Milli Mutabakatlar* [the National Consensus] colored the content of the main state documents which were used to formulate and implement the cultural policies in Turkey. Indeed, the report of the SPO (State Planning Organization),³⁹ and the other report which was accepted by the Atatürk Higher Institution for Culture, Language and History on June 20, 1986⁴⁰ repeated the above sources of the Hearth.⁴¹

The fact that the military leadership of the 12 September Intervention were inspired from the views of the Hearth of the Intellectuals in formation and, to a certain level, in the implementation of cultural policies gives us the principal reason behind the compromise between the Motherland Party government, or Özal, and the military leadership, now represented by President Evren and the Presidential Council made up of the former commanders of the Land, the Naval and the Air forces and the government. In a sense, the Hearth was a common ground of the two sides. Although the liberal rhetoric of Özal and the MP government had little or nothing in common with the military's desire to have a strong state, in cultural terms there were striking affinities between the preferences of the military and Özal which stemmed

³⁹ Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı [The State Planning Organization], *Milli Kültür: Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu* [The Specialists Committee's Special Report on the National Culture] (Ankara: DPT, 1983).

⁴⁰ "Kültür Unsurlarının ve Kültür Politikalarının Tespitinde Uygulanacak Yöntem ve Sorumluluklar Hakkında İnceleme," [An Inquiry into the Method and Responsibilities in Determination and Application of the Cultural Elements and Cultural Policies]. The report, which was also used in this thesis, was republished in *Türk-İslam Sentezi* [The Turkish-Islamic Synthesis], ed. Bozkurt Güvenç, Gencay Saylan, İlhan Tekeli and Şerafettin Turan (Istanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi, 1994), 60-94.

particularly from the conservatism of Özal and the MP. As is well-known, Özal always claimed that he combined the four trends of the Turkish politics in the philosophy of the Motherland Party. In his words; “Our government is nationalist, conservative and takes the principles of social justice and competitive free market economy as its essence.”⁴² His liberalism was especially related to his economic policy and the fundamental rights of man, whereas, his conservatism was more visible in his understanding of culture. In fact, Özal was a firm believer in conservative values, thus, like the military leadership, he put considerable emphasis on the preservation of traditional norms, values and manners in the cultural realm. Needless to say, religion has been the most important ingredient of the conceptual universe of Turkish conservative thought and political currents,⁴³ which was also true for Özal. Therefore, despite the fact that there were differences, even dissention, between the views of Özal and Evren, as much as the similarities that will be elaborated below, Özal welcomed the cultural policies of the military government, in which religion played a considerable role. Moreover, Özal had close connections with the Hearth since the 1970s.⁴⁴ For instance, Süleyman Yalçın, the then head of the Hearth, said that Özal developed the main frame of the 24 January Economic Decisions as part of the activities of the Hearth, and announced in an conference held

⁴¹ The content of these documents has been examined in the previous chapter. See Chapter IV of the present study.

⁴² Turgut Özal, *Başbakan Turgut Özal'ın Konuşma, Mesaj, Beyanat ve Mülakatları: 13.12.1983-12.12.1984* [The Speeches, Messages, Statements and Interviews of Prime Minister Turgut Özal: 13.12.1983-12.12.1984] (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1984), 24.

⁴³ Bora, *Türk Sağının Üç Hali: Milliyetçilik* [The Three Cases of the Turkish Right], 77-78.

in Ankara in April 1979.⁴⁵ Not surprisingly, there were significant number of deputies in the MP who were either direct members or the adherents of the Hearth.⁴⁶ Therefore, as far as the cultural dimension of religion was concerned, no serious conflict took place between the military leadership and the Motherland Party governments under Özal's premiership. Yet their compromise on the cultural role of religion comprised no concessions on its political appearances on the part of the military, and conflicts arose between the parts in question which manifested themselves in various disputes between Özal and Evren. They stemmed especially from the fact that, unlike Evren who only approved the cultural aspect of religion, Özal was willing to further enlarge the space in social and political spheres occupied by religion. Thus, in order to comprehend the course of the state-religion relationship after the transition to democracy, the contentious side of the relationship between the civil and the military leadership concerning religion also needs to be elaborated.

5.3 The State Conservatism versus Civil Conservatism: Evren and the Policies of the Motherland Party Governments led by Özal

As has already been noted, the period of Evren's presidency and Özal's premiership was characterized by tolerable conflicts on secularism and the role of religion in

⁴⁴ Güvenç, et al., *Türk İslam Sentezi* [The Turkish-Islamic Synthesis], 157.

⁴⁵ Süleyman Yalçın, "Aydınlar Ocağı ve Türk-İslam Sentezi" [The Hearth of the Intellectuals and the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis], *Tercüman* [The Interpreter], (Turkish Daily), 1-6 February 1988.

⁴⁶ It is enough here to note just the charter members of the MP belonging to the Hearth. For instance, Veysel Atasoy, Kazım Oksay, Mustafa Taşar, Vehbi Dinçerler and Ercüment Konukman were the members of the Hearth. The number of the deputies with the origin of the Hearth and other nationalist circles was also high.

society, and it was stated that although they shared the view that religion was an important cultural component holding society in harmony, this did not lead them to reach an agreement on a political expression of religiosity. Therefore, after the transition to democracy, Turkey witnessed different confrontations between Özal and Evren arising from what Evren had been most afraid of, i.e. religion. This was due to the fact that what Özal understood about secularism and religion was quite different from Evren's understanding. Evren's views of religion and secularism were elaborated in detail in the previous chapter along with the policies of the military governments, hence, it would be a repetition here to give a comprehensive account of Evren's conception of secularism and the role of religion. Briefly, Evren took religion as a component of national culture and as a source of social morality, which, he hoped, would be instrumental in promoting national harmony and moderating extreme political "ideologies." Yet he was against the politicization of religion and its use by the politicians for the political purposes. As a natural consequence of such a view, Evren regarded neither religious communities nor political expressions of religiosity as legitimate, because they implied particularism that would be harmful to the unity of the nation. Thus, where the politicization of religion was concerned, his view of secularism did not differ substantially from the previous military-bureaucratic elites. He saw secularism as a guarantee for Turkish cultural modernization and for the national unity and democracy. As such, his move from the mainstream understanding of secularism was only limited to cultural and moral aspects of religion in society, which was, to be sure, a radical break in itself. In short, without lifting their reserves on the politicization of religion, Evren and the military

See, Bora and Can, *Devlet, Ocak, Dergah* [The State, The Hearth and the Dervish

elites of the 1980 Intervention treated Islam in a more positive manner in such a way that Islam was accepted and promoted as a marker of national cultural and social morality, an understanding which led to the incorporation of religion into the new set up of the state.

Özal's view of religion, however, was shaped by his conservatism and liberalism.⁴⁷ In a sense, the differences between the attitudes of Evren and Özal towards religion and secularism represent also two different brands of conservatism represented by the state elites and the political elites. Since Evren was a member of the bureaucratic strata, the priority in his conservative policies was given to the general interests of the state, i.e., its unity and integrity, whereas, Özal, as a representative of the people, pursued ways to enlarge the public domain in favor of particular values. As noted above, Özal's political program included political and economic liberalism, and cultural conservatism. As an advocate of liberalism, especially of its Anglo-American version, he was a firm believer in the fundamental rights and freedoms of man. For instance, in a speech delivered to the İzmir Economic Congress held on 4 June 1992, in which he gave the signs of what was later labeled as the "Second Change Program" aiming at transforming of the structure of the state on the basis of democratic principles, he said that the primary target was "to realize the freedoms of thought, religion, conscience and free-enterprise in a perfect way."⁴⁸ Therefore, the Motherland Party governments led by

Lodge], 202-210.

⁴⁷ For further elaboration of the differences between Evren's and Özal's understandings of secularism see, Burhanettin Duran, "Kenan Evren's and Turgut Özal's Conceptualizations of Secularism: A Comparative Perspective," Unpublished Master Thesis (Ankara: Bilkent University, 1994).

him removed the articles of 141, 142 and 163 from the Criminal Code of the Turkish Constitution, prohibiting the communist and religious activities and propaganda, and as such were impediments to the freedom of thought. As a conservative politician and a believer, he pointed out that religion was the cement of society, an indispensable part of social morality and the most important component of cultural identity.⁴⁹ Like other right wing governments formed hitherto, the MP governments under the leadership of Özal proposed that the “development” would be on the basis of national, moral and historical values of the Turks.⁵⁰ In various occasions Özal pointed out the necessity of maintenance of historical values. The following passage portrays what Özal understood from conservatism and indigenous values:

The reason behind our efforts to strengthen youth, sports, family, the middle class and the like is our desire to preserve the most valuable items of our customs and tradition. We are a conservative party in the Western sense of the word. It does not mean reaction.... For instance, there is a principle in our religion which was expressed in a hadith saying that “the man who sleeps full in his bed while his neighbor is hungry is not from us.” This is the most striking sign for the necessity of social assistance... I mean we should keep these values. I do not see the preservation of such good things that we have inherited from the past as reaction. On the contrary, it is an endeavor to keep what is good and worthy... This is what we understand from conservatism.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Yavuz Gökmen, *Özal Yaşasaydı* [If Özal Were Alive] (Ankara: Verso Yayınları, 1994), 51.

⁴⁹ “Turgut Özal’la Mülakat” [An Interview with Turgut Özal], *Türkiye Günü* [Turkey’s Agenda] 19 (1992): 17.

⁵⁰ Nuran Dağlı and Belma Aktürk, *Hükümetler ve Programları: 1980-1987* [Governments and Their Programs: 1980-1987] (Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1988), 78.

⁵¹ Turgut Özal, *Başbakan Turgut Özal’ın Resmi Geziler, Tesis Açılışları ve Toplantılarda Yaptığı konuşmalar: 13.12.1988-31.10.1989* [The Speeches of the Prime Minister Turgut Özal Delivered at Official Visits, Opening of Establishments and Meetings: 13.12.1988-31.10.1989] (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1989), 220-223.

Therefore, Özal found nothing wrong in the conservative cultural policies of the military government; hence, he did not hesitate to maintain them after he came to power. For instance, despite the fact that he pursued a minimal state in all areas of life and made an enormous effort to propagate it, he upheld the compulsory religious courses in primary and secondary schools, which were introduced by the military government. He said, “we see it as an obligation of the state to take necessary measures to provide religious courses in primary and secondary schools. This is necessary to create moderate and highly decent generations.”⁵² This was due to the fact that, in Özal’s view, religion was an important component in the life of individuals and society because, for him, it educated people and kept society in unity and harmony.⁵³ Yet, he also remarked that their conservatism did not hesitate to take from the West what was good and beneficial. According to Özal, today the crucial area of change was technology rather than ideology, thus technological innovations had to be taken from the West.⁵⁴ In a sense, as far as his conservatism was concerned, Özal followed the path of mainstream Turkish conservative thought in relation to tradition and modernization, which argued that modernity could be attained by adopting the Western technology, so nothing was needed in the way of

⁵² Özal, *Başbakan Turgut Özal’ın Konuşma, Mesaj, Beyanat ve Mülakatları* [The Speeches, Messages, Statements and Interviews of Prime Minister Turgut Özal], 29.

⁵³ Turgut Özal, *Başbakan Turgut Özal’ın TBMM Grup, MKYK ve Siyasi Konuşmaları: 13.12.1988-31.10.1989* [The TGNA, the Group, the Central Decision and Executive Committee-CDEC and Political Speeches of the Prime Minister Turgut Özal: 13.12.1988-31.10.1989] (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1989), 173.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 202.

culture and morality.⁵⁵ Traditions, customs and manners were the cultural components which differentiated us from other nations, shaped our distinct character and kept us in unity.⁵⁶ As Osman Ulagay, in a somewhat exaggerated fashion, observed, “in Özal’s agenda only one thing had a place as a collective ideology-i.e., the religion. Özal did not hesitate to say that it was the religious ties which held society together.”⁵⁷

Yet in Özal’s view the role of religion in the life of individuals and society went beyond the mere considerations of national unity and social harmony, probably due to his religious-conservative background and his belief in the fundamental premises of liberalism. As has already been noted, Özal considered that there were three fundamental freedoms which were indispensable for Turkey to become a great nation, and he made them the fundamental tenets of his political mission. These were freedom of thought and speech, freedom of religion and freedom of free enterprise.⁵⁸ If these freedoms, which were given by God, were put under pressure, it would be impossible for man to develop its potential, thus no societal development could occur.⁵⁹ For Özal, development was only possible in our society if these conditions

⁵⁵ Bora, *Türk Sağının Üç Hali* [The Three Cases of the Turkish Right], 80.

⁵⁶ Özal, *Başbakan Turgut Özal’ın TBMM Grup, MKYK ve Siyasi Konuşmaları*: [The TGNA, the Group, the Central Decision and Executive Committee-CDEC and Political Speeches of the Prime Minister Turgut Özal], 375.

⁵⁷ Osman Ulagay, *Özal’ı Aşmak İçin* [Transcending Özal] (Istanbul: Afa Yayınları, 1989), 125. For similar observations see, Yavuz Gökmen, *Özal Sendromu* [The Özal Syndrome] (Ankara: Verso Yayınları, 1992), 120.

⁵⁸ Turgut Özal, *Cumhurbaşkanı Turgut Özal’ın Bazı Konuşmaları* [Some Speeches of the President Turgut Özal] (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1991), 13.

were provided for the people in a perfect way.⁶⁰ Therefore, he related the activities and existence of religious communities to the fundamental rights of man and saw them as a natural consequence of democracy and an outcome of the piety of Turkish people. As will be discussed below, the positive attitude of Özal toward religious communities was the main controversial subject between Özal and Evren.⁶¹

Unsurprisingly, Özal's interpretation of secularism also differed from that of Evren and the state elites. At the general level he repeated the classical maxim; "Secularism has a basic reason. This is the freedom of religion and conscience. The freedom of religion and conscience has a unique guarantee, it is secularism."⁶² Yet he emphasized the unrestrictive rather than restrictive features of secularism. Özal said;

Under the guarantee of the Constitution, everybody has the freedom of conscience, religious belief and worship. We believe that we have to realize the material and moral development together... We do not see secularism as a restrictive instrument in the preservation of moral values, in practicing the freedom of religious worship and belief, and in the development of religious culture.⁶³

⁵⁹ Turgut Özal, *Cumhurbaşkanı Turgut Özal'ın 29 Ekim Cumhuriyet Bayramı Konuşmaları* [The President Turgut Özal' Speeches of the 29 October Celebration Day of the Republic] (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1991), 12.

⁶⁰ Özal, *Başbakan Turgut Özal'ın TBMM Grup, MKYK ve Siyasi Konuşmaları: [The TGNA, the Group, the Central Decision and Executive Committee-CDEC and Political Speeches of the Prime Minister Turgut Özal]*, 386-387.

⁶¹ Kenan Evren, *Kenan Evren'in Anıları* [Memoirs of Kenan Evren], vol. V (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1992), 295.

⁶² Özal, *Cumhurbaşkanı Turgut Özal'ın 29 Ekim Cumhuriyet Bayramı Konuşmaları* [The President Turgut Özal' Speeches of the 29 October Celebration Day of the Republic], 13.

⁶³ Özal, *Başbakan Turgut Özal'ın Konuşma, Mesaj, Beyanat ve Mülakatları* [The Speeches, Messages, Statements and Interviews of the Prime Minister Turgut Özal], 29.

His ideal model of secularism was the one which was found in the developed Western countries and the United States, where both the religion and the state were independent from each other. Thus, Özal was questioning whether the existence of the Directorate of Religious Affairs [*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*]⁶⁴ within the state machinery was compatible with state's secular nature. Should it be left to the religious communities? How could this purpose be realized?⁶⁵ He desired all these issues to be discussed in public. One may say that, as it was pointed out, Özal "aimed to make some changes in the existing status of secularism in accordance with the requirements of our age."⁶⁶ Similarly, Özal's approach to Atatürkism and Atatürk was different from that of the state elites. For Özal, the rightist governments have always faced with an ardent opposition originating from the leftist intelligentsia with a claim of defending the principles of Atatürk and the republican reforms. The intelligentsia gained considerable success in this effort.⁶⁷ According to Özal, republican secularism was a revolutionary secularism and, naturally, included some hard measures. Thus, the traces of operation of Atatürk reforms, which were instituted from top to down, were deep.⁶⁸ In due course, this sort of secularism produced a situation in which the state gained some divine features, and secularism

⁶⁴ Directorate of the Religious Affairs is an official body established after the Republic which provides religious services.

⁶⁵ *Zaman* [Time] (Turkish Daily), 20 January 1992.

⁶⁶ Hikmet Özdemir, "Değişimin Kıyısında" [At the Corner of Change], *Nokta* [The Point] (Turkish Weekly), 17 April 1993, 20.

⁶⁷ "Turgut Özal'la Mülakat" [An Interview with Turgut Özal], 22.

was equated with atheism.⁶⁹ But after a long period through which secularism was successfully consolidated, some corrections were needed to erase the traces of this operation. Without denying the role of Atatürk in the Turkish history and the republican reforms for Turkey, Özal criticized the attempts which presented Atatürk as a *taboo*, and as an infallible and indisputable person. He said:

It is not possible for the Turkish nation to forget Atatürk. But what is important is how to remember him. On the basis of the present stage occupied by the Turkish nation which was taken with the help and inspirations of Atatürk's, it is worth if Turkish nation remember him as a man purged from taboos. This did not decrease the greatness of Atatürk.⁷⁰

All of these differences between Evren and Özal became manifest when the Motherland Party governments began to implement pro-religious and conservative policies. In terms of the economic policies there were no great differences between the military and Özal. The military and their spokesman Evren did not intend to intervene into the economic policies because they considered economy as a governmental and technical realm. However, in terms of the cultural, political, and ideological issues Evren kept its hold on government, and when he felt that the

⁶⁸ Turgut Özal, *Başbakan Turgut Özal'ın Tesis Açılışları, Çeşitli Toplantılarda Yaptığı Konuşmaları* [The Speeches of the Prime Minister Turgut Özal Delivered in Different Occasions] (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1988), 212-213.

⁶⁹ Turgut Özal, *Cumhurbaşkanı Turgut Özal'ın Bazı Konuşmaları* [Some Speeches of President Turgut Özal] (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1991), 293; Although Özal criticized Turkish secularism which was at work in his time, he did not deny its historical role which came out as a reinforcing effect on the Muslim belief. Due to the impact of secularism, Muslims have internalized the belief in God. They became pious in their private life and secular in their public affairs. Turgut Özal, *Turkey in Europe and Europe in Turkey* (Nicosia: K. Rustem and Brother, 1991), 293.

⁷⁰ Özal, *Başbakan Turgut Özal'ın Tesis Açılışları, Çeşitli Toplantılarda Yaptığı Konuşmaları* [The Speeches of Prime Minister Turgut Özal Delivered in Different Occasions], 211.

government took unacceptable measures, he intervened. He led the first meeting of the cabinet to counsel the members on some sensitive issues. He remarked that reactionary activities were as dangerous as communism and it was Atatürkism which could unite the people; thus, he desired that concessions would not be given to the reactionary groups.⁷¹ Yet, this did not prevent the problems to emerge and in due course the contentions arose between the government and Evren. The most controversial issues between Özal and Evren during the term of Evren's presidency were religious developments, which manifested itself as Evren's criticism directed both towards the activities of the ministers with conservative backgrounds and towards Özal's reluctance to take measures against the activities of religious groups.

Interestingly enough, the first two demands of Özal were related to such sensitive issues. Özal requested from Evren to lift the ban on a leader of *Nakşibendi*⁷² order, Raşit Erol, who was sentenced to compulsory residence in Çanakkale and proposed to promote the position of the President of the Religious Affairs within the hierarchy of the state protocol. They were firmly rejected by Evren. This incident aroused in Evren's mind some questions about Özal whether he ever understood secularism in a correct way.⁷³ In this regard, the most controversial issue between Özal and Evren was the policies of Vehbi Dinçerler, the Minister of Education. Dinçerler, who was said to be having relations with some religious groups, attempted to change some ongoing educational policies according to his

⁷¹ Evren, *Anılar* [Memoirs], vol. V, 22.

⁷² A branch of sufi orders which has been influential in the Ottoman and Turkish social and political life since the nineteenth century.

⁷³ Evren, *Anılar* [Memoirs], vol. V, 25.

conservative outlook. The most contested event was Dinçerler's prohibition of the teaching of Darwin's theory of evolution in primary and secondary schools. He also ordered to wear "long shorts" in ceremonies held for the 19 May Youth and Sports Celebration Day. Moreover, a law was enacted to prohibit the opening of bars or shops selling alcohol within the 200 meters of the schools, dormitories and mosques. A further policy implemented by the encouragement of Dinçerler was the ban of beer advertisements on the television and the radio in April 1984.⁷⁴ Evren strongly criticized these policies and evaluated them as concessions to the reactionary groups.⁷⁵ In addition to these policies, he was bored by Dinçerler's decision to introduce Arabic as an elective course in the schools which aroused Evren's fear that the Arabic Alphabet would come back.⁷⁶ He took the attention of Özal to these developments, but Özal seemed to be unwilling to take into account of his warnings. As Evren noted, Özal always easily found some explanations to manage the situation.⁷⁷

Evren expressed his views on education in October 1984, in a speech by which he also implied that he was not satisfied with the policies of the Minister of

⁷⁴ Toprak, "The State, Politics and Religion in Turkey," in *Politics in The Third Turkish Republic*, ed. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 131-132.

⁷⁵ Evren did not say that it was a wrong policy, but he asked Özal that why Vehbi Dinçerler was interested in this matter. Evren was suspicious of the intention behind this policy because Vehbi Dinçerler was one of the most influential religious-conservative members of the MP and Evren thought that this could initiate a process of giving concessions to religious circles. Evren, *Anılar* [Memoirs], vol. V, 80.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 80-103.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 271-272.

Education. In his visit to *Yüzüncü Yıl* University in Van where Dinçerler was also present he said:

The new generation will be defender of the republic, democracy and the principles of Atatürk. They will be educated with your intimate and devoted efforts. Educate them as not chauvinist, but as patriots and Atatürkian nationalist; not as atheist and irreligious, but as secular minded.⁷⁸

Evren continued to warn Özal on the activities of Vehbi Dinçerler in different occasions, which culminated in the replacement of him by Metin Emiroğlu in September 1985, after an event that the Ministry of Education recommended a book on dining manners entitled “*Yemek Adabı*” written by a religious scholar and other books which were considered as religious by the press. After the change of the Ministry of Education, Evren wanted Emiroğlu, the new minister, to fix the number of *İmam Hatip* Schools, not to appoint the graduates of *İmam Hatip* Schools to the influential positions of the Ministry and to abandon Dinçerler’s project of offering Arabic as an elective course in the high schools.⁷⁹

Another important subject of controversy between Özal and Evren in relation to the religious movements was the head scarf (*türban*) in the universities. As will be further examined below, the head scarf was banned first in the primary and secondary schools and later the ban was widened to the universities, which initiated a process of long lasting disputes and confrontations between the opponents and proponents of the head scarf and the its ban. Özal and the MP, particularly its conservative members, were in favor of lifting the ban on the head scarf in the universities because Özal evaluated the head scarf within his general view of

⁷⁸ Ibid., 119.

fundamental freedoms comprising the freedom of conscience, belief, thought and free-enterprise.⁸⁰ Evren opposed to Özal because Evren saw the head scarf was not a religious matter, but a symbol of the desire of reactionary groups to revive the old regime and reaction.⁸¹ The problem of the head scarf needs to be evaluated with another issue of conflict between the parts, namely, the religious communities and the development of religious movements in Turkey which marked the second half of the 1980s, since they were closely related in such a way that the protest religious movements became apparent mostly in connection with the head scarf. Moreover, the rise of the public visibility of Islam also was closely connected with another process marking the post-1983 period, i.e. the gradual development of civil society, because it was not only a mere desire of Özal to be flourished in Turkey, but also it was firstly introduced by him as a concept after an event that a large amount of the military students, who were said to be having sectarian affiliations, were fired from the military school in 1987.⁸² The increase of public visibility of religious groups and their activities took the attention of the president and the military which forced the military to prepare a report in order to submit to the National Security Council. Although the government declared that they agreed with the National Security Council on a basic point that there was a potential danger of the fundamentalism, it

⁷⁹ Ibid., 275-287.

⁸⁰ Cemal, *Özal Hikayesi* [Özal's Story], 161.

⁸¹ Kenan Evren, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanı Kenan Evren'in Söylev ve Demeçleri: 9.11.1986-9.11.1987* [The Speeches and Statements of the President of the Turkish Republic Kenan Evren: 9.11.1986-9.11.1987] (Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1987), 161.

seemed that Özal did not share all views of the Council which claimed that there was an actual danger of fundamentalism. It was in this state of affairs that Özal introduced the concept of civil society in connection with “civilianization” and “civilization.” For him civilization and civilianization were close concepts in Western countries where the state was for the people. But in Turkey the situation was reverse, which had to be changed as the basis of civil society.⁸³

In order to widen the political sphere and promote the development of civil society the Motherland Party’s governments under the leadership of Özal pursued a liberal outlook in economy and politics which meant further legitimation of the plurality in the public and political spheres. In fact, as Ergun Özbudun observed, the liberal discourse in Turkish political life appeared for the first time under the leadership of Özal.⁸⁴ The orthodox liberal themes, such as the state was for the people but not reverse, and the freedom of belief, thought and free-enterprise are the indispensable perquisites of societal development, were strongly emphasized in this period under the leadership of Özal who was pursuing a kind of society in which the ideas were supplied, like goods, for the people in the free market. He said that:

Like goods and services, the ideas should also have a free market based on competition, in which they are supplied for the people and subjected to a civilized exchange. The value of an idea should be determined by free-market mechanisms without intervention. In fact, the freedom of thought and free-market mechanisms are closely related phenomena. It is not possible to

⁸² Ahmet Evin, “Demilitarization and Civilianization of the Regime,” in *Politics in the Third Turkish Republic*, ed. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 29.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁸⁴ Ergun Özbudun, “Türk Siyasal Sisteminde Değişim ve Süreklilik” [Continuity and Change in Turkish Political System], *Türkiye Günlüğü* [Turkey’s Agenda] 25 (Winter 1993): 14.

maintain, at the same time, a free-market and a closed social system which gives no freedom of thought and expression of ideas.⁸⁵

It was in this political climate that the religious groups raised their voice both to express their demands and also to find the ways to articulate these demands to the dominant public discourse.⁸⁶ The liberalization of the political atmosphere was one

⁸⁵ Özal, “Turgut Özal’la Mülakat” [An Interview with Turgut Özal], 11.

⁸⁶ The rise of Islamic sentiments or “political” Islam in Turkey and in other Muslim countries raised scholarly interests among the students of social sciences. In the Turkish case, a mainstream line of argumentation has been developed which springs from the assumption that the Islamic revival could be explained mainly by looking at the demographic variables, i.e. migration, and social and economic changes. The migration which was accelerated after the 1950s, and social and economic changes that destroy the traditional cosmology are the factors mostly referred to. In addition to the demographic factors, the problem of meaning, or the metaphysical function of religion which was intensified by the ethical void created by a process positivistic secularization, and the sense of belongingness have also been accentuated as significant reasons. Needless to say, these problems have been the derivatives of the main ones above. Accordingly, all of the above factors manifest itself as anomie and identity crisis which lead the people to resort to religion as a care in coping with these problems. See, Metin Heper, “Islam, Polity and Society in Turkey: A Middle Eastern Perspective,” *Middle East Journal* 35 (1981): 358-362; Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 117-118; Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, “Türkiye’de Siyasal Modernleşme ve İslam” [Political Modernization and Islam in Turkey], *Toplum ve Bilim* [Society and Science] 29-30 (1985): 45-64; Binnaz Toprak, “The Religious Right,” in *Turkey in Transition*, ed. Irvin C. Schick and R. Margulies (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 227; Feroz Ahmad, “Politics and Islam in Modern Turkey,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 27 (1991): 13; Jeremy Salt, “Nationalism and the Rise of Muslim Sentiment in Turkey,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 31 (1995): 23-24; Şerif Mardin, “Religion and Politics in Modern Turkey,” in *Islam in Political Process*, ed. James P. Piscatory (Cambridge, London: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 153-156; Nur Vergin, “Toplumsal Değişme ve Dinsellikte Artış” [Social Change and Increase in Religiosity], *Toplum ve Bilim* [Society and Science] 29-30 (1985): 9-28; İlkay Sunar and Binnaz Toprak, “Islam in Politics: The Case of Turkey,” *Government and Opposition* 18 (1983): 421-441; Sabri Sayarı, “Politicization of Islamic Re-Traditionalism: Some Preliminary Notes,” in *Islam and Politics in the Middle East*, ed. Metin Heper and Raphael Israeli (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 125; Haldun Günalp sees the Islamic revival as a response to the crisis of Westernization. See, Haldun Günalp, “The Crisis of Westernization in Turkey: Islamism versus Nationalism,” *Innovation* 8 (1995): 175-182; Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu sees the revival of Islam as a development under the initiative of the

of the encouraging reasons behind the rise of the public visibility of Islam because it provided a secure ground for the religious groups to widen their activities.

Although public expression of religiosity increased in the 1980s, the “Islamic revival” was not a new phenomenon. Rather it has been one of the permanent facts of Turkish social and political life. The long course of Turkish secularization process was analyzed in detail in the previous chapters. It was stated that, secularism in Turkey involved a sharp separation of the state and Islam, and Islam was pushed away from the public sphere. It was one of the ideological aims of the republic to design a sort of public sphere in which no religious representation was allowed. Consequently, the public visibility of Islam disappeared, but Islam remained as an important component of the culture, norms and identity among the masses. As it was pointed out by Binnaz Toprak, although the state was secularized and the subjective secularization turned out the primary objective of the state in Turkey, Islam has remained as an important force in the formation of group norms and in integration of the individual to the general social system.⁸⁷ “Religious enthusiasm disappeared on the surface but merely went underground. It was probably strengthened in some respects.”⁸⁸ After the political liberalization by the end of the 1940s, religious sentiments have become important factor influencing the preferences of the electorate. Needless to say, the strength of the Democrat Party was derived from its

state. For him, it has been the state that determined the political role of Islam throughout the republican history through the thin means of management. See, Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, “Parameters and Strategies of Islam-State Interaction in Republican Turkey,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28 (1996), 231-251

⁸⁷ Toprak, “The Religious Right,” 220.

more liberal approach to religion. The liberalization of the official attitude toward Islam led also to the reappearance of the religious orders at the surface,⁸⁹ which, since then, have become important agents in mobilizing the electorate. However, by the mid-1960, one can say that, religion lost its previous mobilizational capacity. For instance, the establishment of the National Order Party, and its successor the National Salvation Party, which had religious outlook, did not succeed grassroots mobilization. As noted by Toprak, “the results of the 1973 election⁹⁰ have shown that religion is indeed a significant factor in the political behavior of the Turkish electorate although it is not the most crucial factor for electoral success.”⁹¹ There was not a great shift in this trend until the 1990s. The development of different religious groups in the 1970s was a result of the increase of the plurality of social forces. In Toprak’s words, “Islamic revival “should be understood within the Turkish context as the outcome of an increasingly pluralist society during the 1970s... Islamic movements were only one, among several, such forces. And they were not the most militant in demanding regime change.”⁹² Again they were far from totally capturing the political power on religious basis. As Özbudun has shown, functional cleavages i.e. socio-economic rather than cultural ones denoting the center and periphery

⁸⁸ Nur Yalman, “Islamic Reform and the Mystic Tradition in Eastern Turkey,” *Archiv. Europ. Sociol.* 10 (1969): 47.

⁸⁹ Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey*, 82.

⁹⁰ The National Salvation Party won 11.8 of the votes.

⁹¹ Toprak, *Islam and Political Development*, 96.

⁹² Toprak, “The Religious Right,” 230-231.

cleavage increasingly became important in the behaviors of electorate.⁹³ In short, “in Turkey, politics has become a functional alternative to religion.”⁹⁴

In the 1980s there was a notable increase in the activities of the religious groups, such as the press, education, banking and different social welfare activities by means of various endowments.⁹⁵ Özal’s liberal approach to the religious groups encouraged their activities. Moreover, Turkey also witnesses the protest movements of the religious groups especially against the ban of the head scarf. These developments brought Evren and Özal to conflict, because, unlike Özal, Evren considered these developments as an expression of reaction.

⁹³ Ergun Özbudun, “Voting Behavior: Turkey,” in *Electorate Politics in the Middle East: Issues, Voters and Elites*, ed. Jacob Landau, Ergun Özbudun, and Frank Tachau (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 140.

⁹⁴ Metin Heper, “Islam and Democracy in Turkey: Toward a Reconciliation?,” *Middle East Journal* 51 (Winter 1997): 42.

⁹⁵ It should be noted that the religious revival in the 1980s was neither only in Turkey nor it was peculiar to Islam, rather it was a worldwide phenomenon. See, José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago, London: Chicago University Press, 1994); Gilles Kepel. *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World*, trans. Alan Braley (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994). Ronald Robertson, one of the leading theorist of globalization theory, accentuates globalism as an important factor in the politicization of religion throughout the world. According to Robertson, “[T]he globalization of the modern world constrains and encourages religious traditions and concrete religious movements to orient themselves to the fourfold contingency of the global human condition (consisting of societies, individuals, the system of societies, and mankind) and to attend to that condition as a whole (even if that means trying to deny its salience or regarding only one, two or three of these components as important). Ronald Robertson, “Globalization, Politics, and Religion,” in *The Changing Face of Religion*, ed. James A. Beckford and Thomas Luckman (London: Sage Publication, 1989), 20

5.4 Evren and Özal on Religious Developments

In the previous parts of this chapter the approaches of Evren and Özal to religion have been analyzed along with the criticism and actions of Evren against the conservative ministers of the MP governments and their policies. It has been noted that although both Evren and Özal shared the view that religion was an important component of national culture and social identity, they differed on the political and, to a certain extent, social dimensions of religion; thus, the religious developments in the 1980s remained as the most controversial issue between them. Evren saw the religious revival, which he called it as reactionism (*gericilik*) and fanaticism (*yobaz*), as a desire of the reactionary groups to bring the old backward *sharia* regime back to the country through the exploitation of religion⁹⁶ and as harmful activities to the national unity because, for him, it would provoke religious sectarianism in Turkey. Therefore, he did not tolerate the religious orders and communities, whereas Özal considered the religious revival as a natural appearance of the piety of Turkish people and a normal outcome of the democratic developments in Turkey. He saw the religious freedom, which also comprised the recognition of the existence of religious orders and communities, as one of the fundamental freedoms and a component of civil society. As noted by Yavuz Gökmen, Özal was trying to legalize the *sufi* lodges as civil societal elements and as the traditional educational centers in Turkey. For this purpose, he visited the dervish lodges (*tekkes*) when he went to the foreign countries, which was a way of legalizing the orders. His ultimate intention was to

⁹⁶ Evren, *Söylev ve Demeçler: 9.11.1986-9.11.1987* [The Speeches and Statements: 9.11.1986-9.11.1987], 53-54.

give them legal status within the constitutional framework.⁹⁷ Although Özal did not realize his intention in this regard, his advocacy to religion and the religious communities contributed to their legitimation in the face of the state.⁹⁸

His approval of religious orders and communities was also closely related to what he understood from secularism and civil society. As has previously been noted, Özal had in his mind an Anglo-American model of secularism in which the religious communities have legal status and religion is organized within the domain of civil society. For religion to be developed as an element of civil society, Özal thought that the state would be divorced from religion and religion would be transferred to society.⁹⁹ It was in this context that he said he was trying to find a new formula for the reorganization of the Directorate of the Religious Affairs, because, for him, it contradicted with the notion of a secular state. He said:

We say that we are secular, but we have a religious organization whose head is appointed by the state. Is this right? Should we leave it to the religious communities or not? How can we do this? These issues should be discussed publicly from now on.¹⁰⁰

Beside the liberalism and the advocacy of Özal in terms of religion, it seems that he was also aware of the imperatives of an autonomous public in the moderation of the extremities. It seems that Özal considered the integration of these religious groups to the system as the most effective way to moderate the extreme demands.

⁹⁷ Gökmen, *Özal Yaşasaydı* [If Özal Were Alive], 249.

⁹⁸ Özdemir, “Değişimin Kıyısında” [At the Corner of Change], 20.

⁹⁹ Hasan Cemal, *Özal Hikayesi* [Özal’s Story] (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1990), 160.

¹⁰⁰ *Zaman* [Time] (Turkish Daily), 20 January 1992.

For instance, in an interview, Özal said that, “in Turkey freed from prohibitions, the communists and the religious groups which desired to establish a totalitarian *mullah* autocracy under the guise of religion similar to the model of Iran lost their appeal and influence.”¹⁰¹ Similarly, in December 1986, when hot debates were taking place on religious movements in the press, Özal stated that reaction arose not from wide-range religious freedom, but the lack of it.¹⁰² He also said to Evren that by means of the religious policies of the MP governments they were fighting with the parties that were against the state such as the Welfare Party and the Nationalist Labor Party.¹⁰³

Due to the differences in their conceptions, confrontations between Özal and Evren became inescapable on reaction, (through not bitter). We learn from the *Memoirs* of Evren that in various occasion he continuously warned Özal to take some measures to deal with the reaction, but Özal seemed reluctant, or in Evren’s words, optimistic on the matter. Evren thought that Özal gave concessions to the religious groups and was unwilling to take the required measures. According to Evren, although the problem did not yet reach the critical point, the reactionary groups would become dangerous in the near future. On the other hand, Özal tried to convince Evren that these were transitional events and the people in Turkey were looking forward. They also belonged to the tradition. For him, what were generally shown by the press as the reactionary activities were intimate activities of the devoted people; thus, they should be careful on the matter because there was a

¹⁰¹ Özal, “Turgut Özal’la Mülakat” [An Interview with Turgut Özal], 12.

¹⁰² *Hürriyet* [Freedom] (Turkish Daily), 16 December 1986.

¹⁰³ Evren, *Anılar* [Memoirs], vol. V, 441.

problem of the identification of reaction and confusing of it with the normal religious practices of people.¹⁰⁴ He stated:

We are an open party. We are trying to establish relations with the West. We also belong to our tradition. Some circles misinterpret secularism. There are people who interpret laicism as irreligion (*dinsizlik*). Our view of secularism is that no body has the right to intervene into other. We don't allow anyone to interfere into the affairs of state.¹⁰⁵

The conflict became more apparent and intense in the last months of 1986 by the news of religious groups' infiltration of some military colleges and by one of the students in a Koran school in Denizli, controlled by an Islamic group called *Süleymancis*, committed suicide as a result of heavy punishment.¹⁰⁶ These events initiated a process of hot discussions in the press and public on whether there was the reaction in Turkey or not, which lasted at least four months. At the end, various measures were put at work including the ban of the head scarf in the universities. The issue of reaction was brought to the November meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) in 1986 in which Evren criticized the attitude of the government toward the reaction and demanded from the government to confiscate private dormitories controlled *Süleymanci* and *Fethullahci* groups, which were the places of the religious education in accordance with the understanding of these groups. Özal stated that it was not possible according to the Constitution and the law concerning the associations. When Evren suggested to change the Constitution, Özal remained silent.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 438-439.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 441.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 511.

Evren was decisive to pursue the matter, and he went to Denizli to investigate the incident of suicide in Koran school. In his Denizli speech he openly repeated his explanations which he had made in the meeting of the NSC that the dormitories built by the private foundations had to be turned to the Ministry of Education according to the Law of the Unification of Education. If a new law was required to transfer them, it should be enacted.¹⁰⁸ As an initial response to Evren's speech, Metin Emirođlu, the then Minister of Education, declared that they regarded the message of the president as an order and began to investigate the issue seriously.¹⁰⁹ However, Özal's interpretation of Evren's speech was quite different. He stated that Evren's message was only a suggestion and could be considered. He also emphasized that, contrary to the news, these dormitories were not independent, there was the control of the state over them.¹¹⁰ At the end, it seems that the government succeeded to convince Evren on the status of the private dormitories because neither the administration of these dormitories was given to the state nor the issue came on the scene again as a source of conflict between the president and the government.

The debate between the government and the president on whether there was any reaction or not in Turkey in the last months of 1986 and early months of 1987 also fueled another long lasting problem in Turkey, i.e. the problem of the head scarf in the universities. The first direct attempt to ban the head scarf in the universities was made in 1982 on the part of the Higher Education Council (*Yüksek Öğretim*

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 511.

¹⁰⁸ Evren, *Söylev ve Demeçler: 9.11.1986-9.11.1987* [The Speeches and Statements], 28.

¹⁰⁹ *Hürriyet* [Freedom], 3 December 1986.

Kurumu] (hereafter *YÖK*), to be sure, by the suggestions of the NSC, but it was softened in May 1984 probably due to the endeavors of the government.¹¹¹ Yet Evren was not contented with this move because, as he noted in December 1984, he did not welcome the veiled women who were becoming more widespread in the streets and universities.¹¹² Evren sent the court order of the Council of State (*Danıştay*) to *YÖK* in December 1986 in order to apply the ban on head the scarf in the universities strictly. The Council of the State banned the head scarf on the ground that it was a symbol of a world view which was contrary to the basic principles of the republic and the rights of women.¹¹³ He also said to İhsan Doğramacı, the then head of *YÖK*, that there would be some pressures from the government to put off the ban, but he would support him against these pressures.¹¹⁴

In order to bring the issue of the head scarf to a conclusion, the university rectors were invited for a meeting in Adana on January 1987. They met with the participation of Evren and came up with a conclusion that only modern dress could be worn in the universities and those who did not wear the modern dress were subjected to punishment.¹¹⁵ Soon after this meeting, the universities prohibited wearing the head scarf, which initiated protest movements in various cities. However,

¹¹⁰ *Milliyet*, [Nationality] (Turkish Daily), 4 December 1986.

¹¹¹ Elizabeth Özdalga, *Modern Türkiye’de Örtünme Sorunu, Resmi Laiklik ve Popüler İslam* [The Veiling Issue in Turkey], trans. Yavuz Alogan (Istanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi, 1998), 61-62.

¹¹² Evren, *Anılar* [Memoirs], vol. V, 154.

¹¹³ *Hürriyet* [Freedom], 26 December 1986.

¹¹⁴ Evren, *Anılar* [Memoirs], vol. V, 521.

¹¹⁵ *Milliyet* [Nationality], 9 January 1987.

Özal and the members of the MP did not appreciate the decisions because they were in favor of lifting the ban on the head scarf. For instance, upon the question of a journalist on the applications of the universities Özal said:

If it is a religious duty to cover the head, the universities accept it as a modern dress, as a result, there remains no problem. As far as I know entering classrooms with the head scarf is no prohibited by any rule. If I order you to cover your head, would this be right? If you do not like to cover your head, you argue against it. The opposite of this is also possible. I can not insist that you should uncover your heads.¹¹⁶

Despite the fact that Özal criticized the applications of the universities, he also added that the disposal belonged to *YÖK*, and he could not intervene in its affairs. However, the conservative members of the MP were more decisive to find a way for the students wearing the head scarf. For instance, when the veiled students visited Mehmet Keçeciler, he said that they would solve this problem sooner or later. He added:

We have to solve this problem. If we can not solve it through the decisions of *YÖK*, we have recourse to other means like law. Once we suffered from similar restrictions too.... You will struggle for your rights. May be after your struggle some solutions will be found.¹¹⁷

Keçeciler was supported by other conservative members such as Kazim Oksay and Şükrü Yörür but neither the government nor the Assembly made a move to cancel the ban on the head scarf probably due to the fact that the matter became highly politicized which increased tension in the public. It was almost two years later that a law was passed in the Assembly in November 1988, which stated that any kind of dress was free in the universities. Again Evren criticized Özal's way of

¹¹⁶ *Milliyet* [Nationality], 2 January 1987.

solution, because Evren preferred to solve it by regulation, not by law.¹¹⁸ Evren emphasized that his attitude towards the head scarf was not solid, but to arrange it by a law seemed in contradiction with the Constitution. Evren applied to the Constitutional Court, and it abolished the law in March 1989. At the same time, Evren preferred not to hinder the government to implement its policy; thus, he demanded from İhsan Doğramacı to change regulations in favor of the head scarf. Consequently, the change in regulation was carried out, and it was left to the discretion of the universities.¹¹⁹

Both Evren and Özal were careful not to rise the conflicts to a point of crisis. For instance, when the hot debates were taking place in the public, especially in the press, that whether there was reaction in Turkey or not, and the discussions were brought to the Assembly, Özal stated that he agreed with president Evren on the point that there was a potential danger of reaction in Turkey.¹²⁰ Similarly when the mayor of the metropolitan municipality of Konya, who was a member of the religious Welfare Party, allocated separate school buses to convey the female students to the university, Özal stated that the mayor could not separate the buses of the state for that purpose.¹²¹ On the other hand, Evren's attitude towards Özal and

¹¹⁷ *Milliyet*, [Nationality], 3 January 1987.

¹¹⁸ Kenan Evren, *Kenan Evren'in Anıları* [Memoirs of Kenan Evren], vol. VI (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1992), 355-356.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 388-392; See also, Özdalga, *Modern Türkiye'de Örtünme Sorunu* [The Veiling Issue], 65.

¹²⁰ *Milliyet* [Nationality], 9 January 1987.

¹²¹ Turgut Özal, *Başbakan Turgut Özal'ın Basın Mensuplarına Açıklama, Mülakat ve Konuşmaları: 13.12.1988-31.10.1989* [The Statements, Interviews and

the government remained moderate, despite the fact that he did not cease his criticism for the religious developments. For instance, as has already been pointed out, when the government desired to soften the ban on the head scarf in the universities, Evren said that he was not decisive on the matter, and it could be done by changing the regulations. Moreover, when the opposition parties demanded from the Assembly to investigate the reaction in Turkey, Evren told Erdal İnönü, the leader of the opposition Social Democrat People's Party, not to exaggerate the matter.¹²²

All in all, if the period of Evren's presidency and Özal's premiership are taken under consideration together with the compromises and contentions, it can be said that there were no differences in their approaches to moral and cultural significance of religion, however, conflicts usually arose when the political expression of religion was concerned. Yet, Evren's critical attitude towards the religious communities or the public appearances of Islam does not mean that there was a backward move in military's approach in comparison to the pre-1983 period because in no time the military leadership of the 1980 Intervention approved the politicization of religion which was seen as a threat to the national unity and social harmony. Evren continued to emphasize on the integrating and unifying aspects of religion as much as he made warnings about its politicization. For instance, in the last months of his presidency Evren advised Avni Akyol, the Minister of Education, to improve the curriculum of the religious courses in the primary and secondary schools so as to emphasize on the necessity and value of religion, and the superiority

Speeches of the Prime Minister Turgut Özal Given to the Press: 13.12.1988-31.10.1989] (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1989), 161.

of Islam.¹²³ In other words, the military leadership of the 1980 Intervention represented by the president and the presidential council maintained their previous standpoint towards religion in such a way that they regarded it as an indispensable part of the national culture and social identity, but always remained suspicious of its politicization.

¹²² *Milliyet* [Nationality], 15 January 1987.

¹²³ Evren, *Anılar* [Memoirs], vol. VI, 411.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The developments after the seventeenth century which led the West to modernity, namely the Enlightenment, produced far-reaching consequences beyond Europe. The expansion of modernity throughout the world, which went hand in hand with the colonization process, pushed the “others” out of history, a process that culminated in the transformation of the non-Western world into the mere subjects of “modern history.” Yet, the West’s formidable challenge to the East generated a strong stimulus within the non-Western world to come to terms with the West. The initial response in most cases was the activation of a program of modernization through Westernization based on the negation of native and particular cultures which were assumed as impediments to grasp the power and the “universality” of the West. There was little intellectual interests aroused in the said nations to find particular

paths to modernity equivalent to the German *Sonderweg*.¹ Rather, what characterized these societies was a weak historicism,² denoting that they did not generate modernity on the basis of their own internal dynamics, but experienced it as an external process by adapting Western technology, science, manners, institutions, and the like. Islam, as the prominent marker of the particular culture, was the first target of those who wanted to modernize their societies through Westernization. In cases in which the main actor of modernity, i.e. bourgeoisie, was lacking, this target was realized by the military-bureaucratic elites. This was especially true for the Ottoman-Turkish modernization process which has completely developed under the aegis of the military-bureaucratic elites. Indeed, what is called the “Turkish Modernization” was a response of these elites to the general process indicated above to come to terms with the “history.” Accordingly, the character of Turkish secularism was shaped by the elitist political tradition. Thus, there has been a close relationship between the military and secularism in Turkey. Neither the historical trajectory of the state-Islam relationship nor the present form of secularism is possible unless the role of the military in shaping the incidents is looked at.

As has already been noted, the formation of modernity in these societies was realized through a drastic process of secularization on the part of the state elites. As

¹ *Sonderweg*, a concept and a subject of German intellectual history, refers to the view that Germany should find a particular path to modernity different from the French and English ones. It should generate modernity on the basis of its local dynamics. See, David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth Century Germany* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

² Nilüfer Göle, *Modern Mahrem: Medeniyet ve Örtünme* [Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veil] (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1991), 13; For the lack of historicist thought in the Muslim world, particularly in the Arab world, see, Abdullah

it was shown, it was due to the particular historical-cultural tradition that the formation of modernity was realized by the state elites; thus, the modernizing-secularizing role of the military in the Ottoman-Turkish context can be explained by looking at this historical-cultural setting rather than addressing the existing literature on civil-military relations, which was mainly developed to explain the military interventions and the rise of authoritarianism in the so-called third world or developing countries. The existing orthodoxy on civil-military relations, in general, assumes that the political activism of the military in “developing” countries can be explained by looking at the following factors: the organizational peculiarities of the military, the class origins of the military staff, the crises generated by the import-substitution industrialization and the weak institutionalization patterns. Unlike the militaries which established enduring authoritarian regimes in most of the developing countries, the Turkish military has always been committed to a certain conception of democracy which places a sole emphasis on the “common interest” which prevented the military from establishing long lasting authoritarian regimes. Furthermore, the military’s political strength in Turkey springs from what the developing countries mainly lack: excessive institutionalization patterns,³ which also make the Turkish case exceptional.

The strong institutionalization patterns have come into existence through a long historical process which paved the way to a state tradition in which the military

Laroui, *Tarihselcilik ve Gelenek* [Historicism and Tradition], trans. Hasan Bacanlı (Ankara: Vadi Yayınları, 1993).

³ Metin Heper, “The Strong State as a Problem for the Consolidation of Democracy: Turkey and Germany Compared,” *Comparative Political Studies* 25 (1992): 169-193.

was a central institution. Two critical factors were emphasized in shaping the institutionalization patterns either in weak or strong direction: the antecedent polity tradition and the nature of the military modernization. In societies where the representative assemblies effectively functioned, particularly the societies with feudal past, and these assemblies were not destroyed by the military modernization, the formation of modernity (which was experienced as the formation of the center or the national states), did not generate strong and autonomous centers. But, the societies which either lacked these assemblies or were destroyed in the process of the military modernization have been characterized by the strong centers, i.e. states, political elitism and the long lasting tensions between the center and periphery. The center formation of these societies develops at the expense of the periphery, and the military and bureaucracy appear as the sole representatives of the will of the center vis-a-vis that of the periphery.

Then, it was argued that secularity traditions were closely related to the types of the political cultures, and the elitist political cultures tended to generate the “maximal secularity” tradition. Unlike the smooth reconciliation of the state and the church in stateless societies where “minimal secularity” was found, in state societies a sharp separation of the state and the church with bitter confrontations of “massive religion” and “massive secularism” took place, and secularism tended “to erode the institutional adherence and belief *together*.”⁴ Alternative secular ideologies with a new set of the symbols and vocabularies, and philosophical systems were substituted for religion.

⁴ David Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 6.

As to the Ottoman-Turkish tradition, it was shown that because of the lack of the feudal past, the representative assemblies remained alien to the Ottoman-Turkish polity tradition. In fact, the state was structured mainly by the military which shaped at the same time its political culture. The state concentrated the power at the center and had no affinity with the periphery. Therefore, neither a hereditary aristocracy nor a bourgeoisie developed which could challenge the power of the center. The dominant cleavage has been the center and periphery in the Ottoman-Turkish polity.⁵ Moreover, the modernization efforts, which firstly started by the modernization of the military, destroyed the nascent peripheral forces in the nineteenth century. Consequently, in the absence of the principal social forces which shaped the course of the political reforms in Western Europe, all reforms in the Ottoman-Turkish context aiming at modernization of society through Westernization were initiated from top down by the central elites, which resulted in further penetration of the periphery by the center. The state was structured around certain norms and by the military-bureaucratic elites which have filtrated the norms and demands of the periphery.

Like in Western Europe, the process of modernization and centralization was also the process of secularization. In the process of modernization whose origins go back to the nineteenth century, Islam, one of the central components of the Ottoman state, was gradually removed from the state structure, which culminated in a total divorce of the state and Islam with the establishment of the Republic in 1923. Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the republic, opted for a kind of religion which was

⁵ Şerif Mardin, "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?" *Daedalus* 102 (1973): 169-190.

extremely private and rational.⁶ Atatürk, as a firm believer in the ideas of the Enlightenment perceived on the basis of the French positivist-rationalist experience, imagined a collectivity which would be based on a secular-positivist nationalism; thus, he fought institutional Islam to free the individual from the hold of religion and to bring about the new collectivity, i.e. the nation. The desired individual for this new collectivity was “the rationalist, anti-traditionalist, anti-clerical person, approaching all matters intellectually and objectively.”⁷ Religion was not accepted as a component of the nation and as a source of social morality. As has already been noted, it was substituted by science and secular nationalism which contained strong imprints of positivism and rationalism. Another strategy concerning religion was to prevent its appearance in the public sphere.

The revolutionary legacy of Atatürk was generalized by the state elites after Atatürk, and his pragmatic outlook was replaced with a prescriptive interpretation which also paved the way for the maximal interpretation of the secularism in succeeding periods.⁸ It gained irreligious and anti-clerical characters in the hands of the state elites, which was reinforced by the ideas of the new intellectuals who were filled, as Kemal Karpat pointed out, with the idea that “every social evil came from Islam.”⁹ As a result, a reverse relationship was established between the declared aim of the Turkish modernization as Westernization and Islam, which was considered as

⁶ Metin Heper, “Islam, Polity and Society in Turkey: A Middle Eastern Perspective,” *Middle East Journal* 35 (1981): 351.

⁷ Kemal H. Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: Transition to a Multi-Party Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959), 53-54.

⁸ Metin Heper, “A Weltanschauung-turned-Partial Ideology and Normative Ethics: Atatürkism in Turkey,” *Orient* 25 (1984): 83-94.

an impediment in attaining this goal, a view whose origins go back to the nineteenth century.

Consequently, the republican synthesis excluded religion from the ingredients of the national culture and social morality. It was supposed that the new collectivity would be constructed on the total negation of historical memory,¹⁰ the view that led the state elites to search new sources of morality and the cultural identity other than Islam. Positivist science and secular nationalism were offered as new sources in this regard. It was the main historical weakness of the project of the Turkish secularism, on the one hand, that although it excluded religion from the definition of new collectivity and cultural identity, it failed to provide appropriate instruments for the moral sphere and even for attaining its fundamental goals- the national unity and social harmony because science as such had no relevance to them.¹¹ On the other hand, it had to cope with the main social component with which the Turkish people continued to identify themselves, i.e. Islam.¹² Thus, the rivalry colored the nature of the relationship between secularism and religion in Turkey, and exclusionary, rather than incorporating strategies, were preferred by the state elites.

⁹ Karpat., *Turkey's Politics*, 275.

¹⁰ Kevin Robins, "Interrupting Identities: Turkey/Europe," in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage Publications, 1996), 68

¹¹ Şerif Mardin, "Religion and Secularism in Turkey," in *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State*, ed. Ali Kazancigil and Ergun Özbudun (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1981), 211.

¹² Şerif Mardin, *Din ve İdeoloji* [Religion and Ideology] (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1995), 163-166. Mardin points out that "sometimes even the republic had to accept that the ümmet ideology was stronger than that of it among the masses." *Ibid.*, 148.

However, it was noted that the attitudes of the military leaders of the 1980 Intervention towards religion was a radical break from this tradition since their treatment of religion represents that the antagonistic and extremely private conception of religion was abandoned paving the way for the recognition of its social aspects and the approval of its positive role in attaining modernity. On the one hand, the attempt of the military leaders of the 1980 Intervention was another manifestation of the incessant endeavors of the state elites to find a satisfactory answer to the above problem, on the other, it brought about a new *modus vivendi* between the state and Islam. It seems that the military leaders in the 1980s discerned the most important weakness of the republican ideal: “the principles of modernity could be accommodated only on the basis of the massive prohibition and interdiction of the historical and traditional culture.”¹³ The military elites of the 1980s thought that the social and political upheavals that marked the 1970s stemmed from the lack of social morality which could be filled by religion. Therefore, they began to treat Islam in a more affirmative way. A new social ethics was offered which incorporated strong religious tenets. Religious courses were made compulsory at the primary and secondary school levels. The official recognition of Islam found its expression in daily political discourse which “articulated and tolerated Islamic elements in the political-public realm.”¹⁴ A new view of “national culture” was formulated by the military government in which religion was emphasized as an indispensable component of sources of this culture. Accordingly, the relationship between Islam

¹³ Robins, “Interrupting Identities,” 68.

¹⁴ Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, “Parameters and Strategies of Islam-State Interaction in Republican Turkey,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28 (1996): 244.

and Atatürkism was rearticulated which paved the way to the redefinition of the relationship between the modernization ideals of Atatürkism and Islam.¹⁵ With regards to the change in the ideological orientation of the military in the 1980s, Kemal Karpat aptly observed:

The key ideological change has occurred in the meaning attached to “modernism.” Today, the cultural and political emulation of the West is no longer the axis of the modernism. It is, rather, economic development, technological advancement, and material progress in all its forms. The reconciliation with the Ottoman past and the reshaping of the national identity in the light of the Turk’s own national cultural and religious ethos have broadened the scope of modernization in such a way as to relegate the West, without abandoning it, to a secondary position, while giving priority to a new historically rooted socio-cultural Turkish identity. In large measure this has been achieved by reinterpreting “secularism” in such a way as to permit the reconciliation between the past and present without damaging the foundation of the Republic.¹⁶

All in all, the incorporation of indigenous ingredients including Islam into the formulation of a social morality and the definition of cultural identity was an important move from “maximal secularity” to “mere secularity” because an affirmative relationship was reestablished between the state and Islam, and the modernization ideals of Atatürkism and Islam at least in cultural terms. The cast-iron theory of Islam, which bears strong imprints of the secularization thesis claiming that with the development of modernity the scope of religion declines, and

¹⁵ The military leaders of the 1980 Intervention resorted to the pragmatic interpretation of Atatürkism which enabled them to reinterpret it in accordance with requirements of the day as they were perceived by the military leaders. For instance, statism, which was one of the principles of Atatürkism, was totally abandoned and liberal policies were welcomed by the military government. See, Heper, “A Weltanschauung-turned-Partial Ideology and Normative Ethics,” 91-94.

¹⁶ Kemal Karpat, “Military Interventions: Army-Civilian Relations in Turkey Before and After 1980,” in *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, ed. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 156.

even disappears,¹⁷ was abandoned, and Islam began to be seen not as a rival, but as a cultural ally in attaining the modernity. The developments after the 1980s proved in a sense this view because after transferring of the religious groups to the public sphere, it became apparent that the “religious sphere” has not remained immune to the views, values, manners and representations of the “outside,” and new forms of Islam have emerged infused with the “cosmopolitanism” of modernity.¹⁸

Yet, the military’s move in this regard did not lift their reserve on the political expression of religiosity. They maintained the existing model of church-state separation based on the idea that politics should be totally immune to the influences of religion. Apart from the military’s prevailing commitment to secularism, seen as an indispensable instrument in attaining modernity, their suspicious attitude towards the political expression of religiosity was also shaped by the fear that it would awaken particularism and sectarianism in society which would damage the national unity and social harmony. Moreover, this new *modus vivendi* between the state and Islam did not change the one-sided position of the state vis-a-vis Islam, and the state maintained its “singular position to influence and structure the political course and discourse of Islam,”¹⁹ as it became more apparent after the meeting of the National Security Council on February 28, 1997, which resulted in the resignation of the coalition government formed by the religious Welfare Party and the True Path Party. It needs an independent study that whether or not 28 February represents a break from the legacy of 12 September.

¹⁷ Steve Bruce, ed., *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

¹⁸ Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, “Rethinking the Connections Between Turkey’s “Western” Identity versus Islam,” *Critique* (Spring, 1998).

¹⁹ Sakallıoğlu, “Parameters and Strategies of Islam-State Interaction in Republican Turkey,” 231.

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