Beyond Post-Islamism: Transformation of Turkish Islamism Toward 'Civil Islam' and Its Potential Influence in the Muslim World

Ihsan Yilmaz[1]

Abstract:

Turkey have been seen as an almost unique case as far Islam-state-secularism-democracy relations were concerned but the recent transformation of Turkish Islamism coupled with the global turmoil in the post-9/11 world has made the Turkish case much more important. Dynamics that affected the change in the Turkish Islamists' Islamic normative framework have not been analyzed in detail. This paper endeavors the answer the question what kind of factors causes a change in political Islam in Turkey. Thus, this study endeavors to analyze the main factors behind the newly emerged tolerant normative framework of the JDP leaders who were formerly Islamists. After showing that there are historical reasons arising from the Ottoman experience of secularism and democracy and arguing based on a brief theoretical discussion of the plurality of Islamisms, this paper argues that the Turkish Islamism has always differed from the other Islamist experiences. Therefore, in this study, a detailed evaluation of the Turkish Islamist experience starting from the Young Ottomans is undertaken. Then, this paper attempts to show that Islamic groups' physical and discursive interaction has been a crucial factor in the Turkish Islamism's transformation. Main premise of this paper is that the Gülen movement's 'Civil Islam' has been an influential factor that has helped the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party, hereinafter referred as JDP) leaders to develop a more tolerant normative framework and to eventually jettison their

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[1] Fatih University, iyilmaz@fatih.edu.tr

Islamism. It is of course difficult to establish casual relationship between two social phenomena but one can underscore correlations. As the main hypothesis is that the Gülen movement has been an influential factor in the normative transformation of the former Islamists' mental frameworks and their religio-political worldviews, this paper provides a comparative discourse analysis between Fethullah Gülen's and Islamists' ideas on several issues that have been relevant for both Islamism and newly-emerged post-Islamism. In addition to having been influential in Turkey, Gülen's understanding of Islam, one can expect, will also be influential in the wider Muslim world in parallel to the increasing influence of both Turkey and the movement on a global scale.

Keywords: *Islamism, Post-Islamism, Non-Islamism, Turkey, JDP, Gulen Movement*

Introduction

Structural materialist analyses of Islamism and post-Islamism take globalization and Westernization as independent variables and try to analyze how they have influenced Islamists' behavior. Although academics have drawn our attention to the globalization, international opportunity structures and failure of Islamist government experiences both in Turkey and abroad as the factors that have influenced the Islamists' transformation, the socio-cultural variable needs to be taken into account as well.[2] Dynamics that affected the change in the Turkish Islamists' Islamic normative framework have not been analyzed in detail. The research question of this paper is what kind of factors causes a change in political Islam in Turkey. Thus, this study endeavors to analyze the main factors behind the newly emerged tolerant normative framework of the JDP leaders who were formerly Islamist. After showing that there are good historical reasons arising from the Ottoman experience of secularism and democracy and arguing based on a brief theoretical discussion of the plurality of Islamisms, I will discuss that the Turkish Islamism has always differed from the other Islamist experiences. Then, I will move on to the contemporary times and will attempt to show that Islamic groups' physical and discursive interaction has been a crucial factor in the Turkish Islamism's transformation. I argue that the Gülen movement has been an influential factor that has helped the JDP leaders to develop a more tolerant normative framework and to eventually jettison their Islamism. It is of course difficult to establish casual relationship

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[2] See for a recent exception, Rabasa and Larrabee 2008.

between two social phenomena but we can underscore correlations. By focusing on the Gülen movement, I in no way disregard the other domestic influences such as the transformation of the formerly Islamist scholars and the newly emerged nascent Anatolian bourgeoisie. The Gülen movement has been a dominant factor, because, compared to the other factors, it is the most influential and widespread one with its schools, dormitories, businessmen associations, charities and the media organizations. Secondly, when we look at the discourses of the all main Islamic actors mentioned in this study from an historical perspective, we find that while Gülen has been advocating almost the same views for the last four decades, the other actors have had to adapt their views during the course of the same time span and what is more, their views converged to Gülen's views. Needless to say, as I mainly focus on the socio-cultural factors that have influenced the transformation of the JDP leaders' normative frameworks, I will not be looking at the external factors such as global opportunity structures and domestic institutional constraints imposed by the aggressively laicist establishment that have already been discussed elsewhere.

As my main hypothesis is that the Gülen movement has been the most influential factor in the normative transformation of the former Islamists' mental frameworks and their religio-political worldviews, I will try to provide a comparative discourse analysis between Fethullah Gülen's and Islamists' ideas on several issues that have been relevant for both Islamism and newly-emerged post-Islamism. Our brief theoretical discussion of Islamism and post-Islamism will thus help us to identify these relevant issues (secularism, pluralism, democracy, rule of law, nationalism, state, Islamism, religiosity, the other, borders and dialogue). This theoretical discussion is also an essential prerequisite to understand the fundamental differences between Islamism and the Gülen's thought.

From Islamism to Post-Islamism

Islamism is a controversial term and its definitions vary. Even though the term has been used widely for at least the last two decades, unfortunately, the distinction between *Islam, Islamic* and *Islamism* is sometimes blurred and difficult to discern as some writers use them interchangeably. The term generally refers to political Islam, ideologisation of religion and instrumental use of Islam in politics. Islamism is a set of ideologies enunciating the view that Islam is not only a religion but also a political system. Depending on the one's definition of politics, one could even call an apolitical individual Islamist. Thus, it is sometimes employed to make reference to observant and

socially active Muslims as well regardless of whether these people see Islam as an ideology; a political project to be implemented and see Islam just like any other religion's followers see their religion. Thus, some scholars label socially active observant Muslims as Islamists but such a definition considers almost all observant Muslims as Islamists. Calling any socially active religious Muslim Islamist is thus simplistic as the main tenets of Islam –and indeed any other major religion- require the faithful to be active participants in the public sphere with an aim of reaching a more ethical and just society. Such usage of the term blurs the differences between individuals who take Islam as an ideology and condones its instrumentalist use politics and individuals who simply sees life as a divine test and try to follow religion's basic tenets such as giving alms, helping the needy, trying to tackle socio-economic inequalities and so on. The term is also used to define fundamentalist version of religion but still not all fundamentalists have politics or political projects in mind. If the term Islamist is continued to be used to cover observant Muslims as well, then we need to coin a specific term that would only denote Muslims who ideologise Islam and see it as a political project. At the moment, the term is ''too nebulous a formulation to act as an analytical guide capable of explaining either the nature of the Islamist ideology or the scope of political activities undertaken in the name of Islam'' (Ayoob 2005: 952). Even limiting the term's meaning to political Islam, to instrumentalist use of Islam in politics and to seeing it an ideology –as we will do in this study- is far from satisfactory because it will still not give us an idea if it means democratically participating at elections with a faith-based ideological mindset or if it also means ideology of Islamizing the society with a top down systematic social engineering effort after winning the elections. Furthermore, we also do not have a clue when the term is used if it refers to a revolutionary ideology, for which there is not a distinctive term. Unfortunately, although the term is widely used, it seems to be a blanket or umbrella term without an agreed and precise meaning. This is not just an Orientalist –with a capital ''O'' in Edward Saidian terms- manipulation of the term in employing knowledge in hegemonic power games but Muslims who call themselves Islamist use it very loosely as well and claim the particularism/peculiarity/essentialism of Islam. This understanding of imagined immutable particularism/peculiarity/essentialism of Islam shows how Islamists agree with the Eurocentric claim of an essential difference between Western and non-Western cultures.

In this study we use the term to mean ''a form of instrumentalization of Islam by individuals, groups and organizations that pursue political objectives. It provides political responses to today's societal challenges by imagining a future, the foundations

for which rest on reappropriated, reinvented concepts borrowed from the Islamic tradition '' (Denoeux 2002: 61). It should be underlined that these political objectives and political responses are openly voiced by actors who are involved in daily politics in the name of Islam. Claims of universalism and monopoly of religious truth, exclusivism, obligation and responsibility are the main tenets of Islamism. Generally speaking, inclusion, compromise and tolerance are anathema to Islamism. This study uses Islamism and political Islam interchangeably.

The Islamists endeavor to articulate an Islamic ideology that could respond to their societies' current political, economic and cultural deficits. They imagine Islam as a complete and ready-to-use, ''divine system, with its superior political model, cultural codes, legal structure and economic arrangement – a system that responds to all human problems. More importantly, this Islam was to offer Muslims a sense of selfrespect, self-confidence, and a discursive autonomy'' (Bayat 2007a: 14). Islamists argue that contemporary Muslims must return to the roots of their religion and be united politically. Islamism ''entails a political ideology articulating the idea of the necessity of establishing an Islamic government, understood as government which implements the shari'a'' (Ismail 2004: 616). Islamists aim to apply shari'a in full and to eliminate western influences in the ''Muslim World'' especially in the areas of politics, economy, society and culture, which they consider to be incompatible with the ''true & authentic'' Islam.

Islamists' discourse is based on the rejection of the West but it is not crystal clear if they also completely oppose modernity project. Islamists –based on ontological and epistemological incompatibilities- do not accept the rationalist and positivist thought derived from the enlightenment. ''It is certainly easy to see how... Islamism explicitly renounces some of the core tenets of that inheritance - secularism, individualism, tolerance, democracy, gender equality, among them'' (Halliday 1995: 416). Yet, in practice, Islamists accept, if de facto, the other derivative of modernity, a system of social organization produced by the industrial revolution. They use many modern socio-political instruments and do not have any feasible alternative to many of modern phenomena such as capitalism and consumerism. Islamists have not also developed any alternative to modern state system, political economy and technology; they have also accepted to work within the boundaries of the nation-state despite their rhetoric of cross-national/transnational claims. Islamists are not Luddites and happily make use of western technological products. Even more, many of them prefer a western dress code. The current leader of Turkish Islamism, former Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan always wears Versace ties. It is said that he prefers them because their patterns

are oriental in style. He has always sported them without problematizing if it was all right to buy western products without any compelling reason, let alone pondering on if there was a concept of wearing tie in the ''true & authentic'' Islam. Almost all Islamists implicitly accepted western institutions.

As an essentially modern movement Islamism developed very much in reaction to Western hegemony. Young Ottomans were the first to respond to the western hegemony, superiority and institutions by trying to formulate Islamic answers from the original Islamic sources. Young Ottomans blamed their rulers for their corruption and for not returning to authentic Islam. They argued that many western institutions such as constitutionalism are already authentic Islamic institutions (Turkone 1994a, see also Mardin 1962). Young Ottomans could be seen as predecessors of Jamaladdin Afghani and Muhammed Abduh who are widely known as first Islamists. Islamism as movement emerged as a reaction to the Western colonialism in the middle of the 20th century. Islamism's seminal thinkers and activists established their organizations mainly in Egypt and Pakistan, while secularized Republican Turkey was under authoritarian one-party regime and did not allow room for public, let alone political, manifestations of Islam. Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and Pakistan's Jamaat-i-Islami's foundations were laid by the Hasan al-Banna who established the Brotherhood in 1928, and Sayyid Abu l'Ala Maududi (1903-79) who founded Jamaat-i-Islami in 1941. Even though Hasan al-Banna is known to be sensitive about Islam's spiritual and ethical dimensions, most prominent Sunni Islamists have been strict advocates of the Salafi epistemology, a broad scripturalist epistemology whose proponents—regardless of their political attitudes—disregard Sufism and theosophical ideas, focus on scriptural positivism, and usually give lesser importance to the inner dimension of religious life.

Islamists' reinvention of religion as a political ideology and not a theological or socio-cultural construct provides the tools for dehistoricizing Islam and to separate it from the various tempo-spatial contexts in which Islam has been practiced over the fourteen hundred years. By this decontextualization of Islam, Islamists conveniently ignore, if only in theory, the social, economic and political milieux within which Muslim societies operate (Ayoob 2005: 952). In practice, nevertheless, political manifestations of Islam are dependent on local cultures and contexts. For instance, in contrast to the Middle Eastern experiences, many Turkish Islamists are either close to or informal members of officially outlawed Sufi orders. Despite the Islamists' attempts to decontextualise Islam, there are as many different versions of political Islams as there are different socio-political contexts (Ayoob 2005: 953). As a matter of fact, non-

essentialist scholars who focus on culture, such as towering Clifford Geertz (1968), argue that underneath the similarities of Islam there were such profound socio-cultural in different contexts as to make one ask the question whether this is one religion with different aspects or different religions sharing some common features.

The term ''post-Islamism'' was first used by Asef Bayat (1996) referring to the Iranian context. He stated that ''(b)y "post-Islamism" I mean a condition where, following a phase of experimentation, the appeal, energy, symbols and sources of legitimacy of Islamism get exhausted, even among its once-ardent supporters. As such, post-Islamism is not anti-Islamic, but rather reflects a tendency to resecularize religion. Predominantly, it is marked by a call to limit the political role of religion'' (Bayat 1996: 45). In Iran, ''post-Islamism is expressed in the idea of fusion between Islam (as a personalized faith) and individual freedom and choice; and post-Islamism is associated with the values of democracy and aspects of modernity'' (Bayat 1996: 45).

Since then, a number of European, mainly French, writers have employed the term, if often descriptively, to refer to what they consider a shift in attitudes and strategies of Islamists after the so-called failure of Islamism (Schulze 1998, Roy 1995, 1998, 2004, Kepel 2002, 2004). In Bayat's (2007) formulation, post-Islamism refers to both a *condition* and a *project*, which may be embodied in a master (or multi-dimensional) movement. In the first instance, post-Islamism refers to a political and social condition, in which after a phase of experimentation, the appeal, energy, and sources of legitimacy of Islamism get exhausted even among its once ardent supporters. Islamists become aware of their paradigm's anomalies and inadequacies as they try to rule. The continuous trial and error make the system susceptible to questions and criticisms. Eventually, pragmatic attempts to maintain the system reinforce abandoning certain of its underlying principles. Islamism becomes compelled, both by its own internal contradictions and by societal pressure, to reinvent itself, but does so at the cost of a qualitative shift (Bayat 2007a: 18). It is obvious that post-Islamist condition can only be relevant in the contexts where Islamists could come into power.

Bayat (2007a: 18) further puts that ''Not only a condition, post-Islamism is also a project, a conscious attempt to conceptualize and strategize the rationale and modalities of transcending Islamism in social, political, and intellectual domains. Yet, post-Islamism is neither anti-Islamic nor un-Islamic or secular. Post-Islamism represents an endeavour to fuse religiosity with rights, faith and freedoms, Islam and civil liberties and focuses on rights instead of duties, plurality instead of singular authority, historicity rather than fixed and rigid interpretation of scriptures, and the future rather than the past''.

Let us now elaborate on in detail the evolution of Turkish Islamism from Ottoman times up to the present post-Islamist times.

Evolution of Turkish Islamism

Ever since its inception at the end of the thirteenth century, the Ottoman State had been in constant contact with Europe. When its superiority began fading away in the seventeenth century, its rulers became acutely aware that reform was vitally needed. Initially, they searched for indigenous solutions but then decided to emulate the West. After establishing permanent diplomatic posts in major European capitals, Ottomans also start sending students to these cities. Young Ottomans are among these first generation students that were sent to study in Europe with a hope that upon their return they would help reforming the State. They were trained in modern secular Ottoman bureaucratic schools, knew one or more European languages, and had lived for years in major European capitals. Reading European political writings and associating with the westerners made them a *sui generis* Ottoman elite class. Thus, they developed a respect for western political institutions and affirmed that the state would never be modernized unless adopting a democratic government and a constitution (McCarthy 1997: 302). They envisaged synthesizing modern values with the traditional local values. They demanded a constitutional government, a parliamentarian regime and a political system based on human rights. They made reference to the Anglo-Saxon system and tried to adapt it to the Ottoman state. They offered a constitutional project with an Islamic foundation (Mardin 2005: 150).

The changes they were asking for were not so easy to implement for the Ottoman rulers for various reasons, thus, the Young Ottomans quickly found themselves in opposition position. One important difference between the first generation Islamists and contemporary Islamists is that the earlier generation is ''an intellectual elite operating as part of the establishment whereas the contemporary group is one of persons of modest origins whose position in society is less assured'' (Mardin 2005: 160). Young Ottomans were not coming from the periphery; they were also part of the centre but made a conscious choice to oppose the establishment. As they were also part of the Ottoman elite, ''they were democrats in theory, but not necessarily men who understood the people for whom they avowedly spoke'' (McCarthy 1997: 303). Another unique feature of these first generation Islamists is that in their private lives they were not observant Muslims even though they were proud of their Islamic culture. In that they differ from the later generation Islamists. Moreover, Ottoman rulers tolerated them to a great extent

and punishments they were meted out were either light or they were pardoned afterwards. These peculiarities of the first generation Islamists are important for Turkish Islamism has never had radical overtures. Young Ottomans' writings appealed to two groups: those who wanted faster liberalist reforms and those who wanted a renewed Islam to take part in the system denied by *Tanzimat* ruling elite (McCarthy 1997: 302).

Young Ottomans were also social engineers like the *Tanzimat* elite and the twentieth century Islamists: They advocated imposing the reform from the top. Young Ottomans are also the first Islamists who despite being lay challenged the traditional authority of *ulama* in religious matters. To their date, discussion of religious matters was only a legitimate field for the *ulama* (Mardin 2005: 151). This ''new ''private'' voice of Islam, sometimes loud and sometimes more measured, was from now on a theme equally shared by secular and religious intellectuals. Members of a new intelligentsia— most of whom were no longer educated in religious seminars (*medrese*), but in the schools established as part of the reforms of the *Tanzimat*—began to discuss Islam as a fundamental social issue'' (Mardin 2005: 151). This new utilitarian use of Islam first appeared in the 1870s, with an aim to mobilize Muslims in order to construct a new Islamic unity and solidarity to be used against imperialism (Mardin 2005: 151). ''Later, in the 1890s, part of the intelligentsia promoted arguments that would allow Islam to be seen as the locus of progress and civilization'' (Mardin 2005: 151). It must be noted that the rise of Islamic consciousness in the form of Islamism in the late nineteenth century and the emergence of Turkish nationalist consciousness were not entirely separate processes and they were ''manifestations of a reaction to Ottoman disempowerment in the face of rising European imperialism'' (Gulalp 1995: 178). Republican period's Islamists would always keep this nationalist consciousness part of their Islamist discourse.

Young Ottomans had a chance to put their ideas into practice in 1876 when a junta composed of reformist statesmen, military officers and *ulama* took advantage of the chaos in the country and pressed for a constitutional government. The first Ottoman constitution (*Kanun-i Esasi*) was promulgated on 23 December 1876, which also started the period known as the First *Meshrutiyet*, or First Constitutional Period, a period of a liberal constitutional monarchy. The 1876 Constitution was a document that resembled written western constitutions. It was modelled on the Belgian Constitution of 1831 and the Prussian Constitution of 1851 (Bozkurt 1998: 285). It is the first constitution of an Islamic state in history. For the first time in Islamic history, all subjects were declared to be Ottomans regardless of their religion. All subjects were equal and all were to enjoy

liberty. The basic concept in the 1876 constitution is that, although somewhat restrictive in the exercise of powers, it recognized a legislative assembly partially elected by the people. However, Sultan Abdulhamid II. dissolved the parliament in 1878 and ended this period. The Young Ottomans did not challenge the Sultan and eventually their group was dispersed but the influence of their proto-liberalism and constitutionalism continued and eventually the Sultan was forced to restore the Constitution in 1908 and the Second *Meshrutiyet* period started (Ozbudun 1978: 24). In 1909, the 1876 Constitution was substantially amended to the effect of increasing the power of the legislature and restricting those of the Sultan. Secularist and more nationalist successors of Young Ottomans, Young Turks' party *Ittihat ve Terakki* (Union and Progress) *Party*, came into power. As a result, a truly constitutional system was established. But this system did not last long as the authoritarian positivist Young Turks transformed the system into a dictatorship of the dominant party in a few years' time. Young Turks' republican successors, Kemalists, did not also allow pluralism and democracy to operate until 1950. During these four decades a positivist and staunchly secularist elite ruled the country. Ottoman Islamists' identity and discourse were to a great extent de-legitimized and marginalized by the Republican Kemalist elite. The role of Islam in the public sphere has been radically marginalized and the state attempted to confiscate and monopolize even this marginal role, leaving no official room for private interpretations of Islam.[3] Thus, the Islamists had to keep a very low profile.

Karpat (2001) argues that there is a ''structural cultural and social continuity'' based on the goal of modernization in the Hamidian, Young Turk, and Republican eras. Looking at the policies of the Young Turks, he documents the specific language employed in debates about the concepts and boundaries of nation, race, ethnicity, and religion. The emergence of the Turkish nation-state was a ''complex process of acculturation to modern nationhood, both through and despite Islam'' (Karpat 2001: 329). He concludes that, despite staunch anti-Ottomanist and anti-Islamic rhetoric, ultimately, the state of modern Turkey emerged by ''relying upon the solidarity and common identity engendered by Ottomanism and Islamism'' (Karpat 2001: 406). Serif Mardin draws our attention to this Turkish exceptionalism and puts that ''Mehmet Akif (1873–1936) is the archetypal agent of the stage Turkish ''exceptionalism'' had reached

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[3] Following their Young Turk predecessors, the Kemalists, with a Durkheimian mentality, thought of religion as a helping hand and thus did not aim to terminate it altogether but endeavored to monopolize its interpretation and use, see in detail Yilmaz 2005a. Despite their staunchly laicist rhetoric, Kemalists' understanding of nationalism is also an imagination of a coherent society, members of which are --- preferably non-practising and non-observant--- Muslims. Not officially but in practice, non-Muslim Turkish citizens are not considered as real Turks by the Kemalist state, despite for instance some of them can only speak Turkish. Unfortunately, similar practices are also common in Western European countries.

at that time: he projected the voice of an Islamic reformer, he was an Ottoman patriot, he sat as a representative in the Republic's Grand National Assembly, and he was the author of the Republic's anthem'' (Mardin 2005: 152). It is this hybrid unofficial Turkish-Ottomanist-Islamist identity of the Turkish nation-state that prevented Turkish Islamism's radicalization.

After all Sufi brotherhoods and lodges were closed down by the Turkish Republic, they did not challenge the state, as a result of the Sunni understanding of preferring a bad state to anarchy, chaos and revolution. Nevertheless, they did not sheepishly obey the state's unjust law either. They continued their existence unofficially without making much noise and without claiming any public or official role. In return, the officials turned a blind eye to their existence. Among them, Nakhsbandi Order is very prominent as all of the successful elements of modern Turkish Islamic politics have originated in later branchings of the extraordinarily resilient Nakhsbandi brotherhood that was also the closest brotherhood to the Ottoman establishment compared to the others (Mardin 2005: 152).

The Khalidi branch of the Nakhsbandi has been the most politically engaged of the brotherhoods, whose debut in national politics was led by Sheikh Mehmed Zahid Kotku (1897–1980) who preached that it was the duty of observant Muslims to take an active interest in national affairs (Smith 2005: 316). He did not perceive the secular state as an absolute enemy and, in that sense, did not hold much esteem for radical Islamists in the Muslim world (Mardin 2005: 158). He created a new version of the ''operational code'' of the brotherhood, synchronized with the political code promoted by the secular state, that of constitutional legitimacy (Mardin 2005: 158). By the 1970s, Kotku started promoting a second layer of legitimacy, working in tandem with Islamic legitimacy, was that of political institution building (Mardin 2005: 158). It was an aspect of a positive view of the state as an institution, also part of the Nakhsbandi tradition from Mevlanâ Halid to Bediüzzaman Said Nursi (Mardin 2005: 158).

Kotku's circle would include many prominent right-wing politicians. The first prominent Islamist party in Republican Turkey, the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*, MNP) (1970–71), and the National Salvation Party (*Millî Selamet Partisi*, MSP) (1972–81) were established through his promotion and support and he had supervised their activities (Cakir 1994: 22 cited in Mardin 2005: 157). The leader of these parties, Prof. Necmettin Erbakan, was a disciple of Kotku. Most of the leaders of Erbakan's the National Order Party, were also disciples of Kotku and political parties founded by the leadership of Erbakan always carried a deep communitarian identity (Yildirim et al 2007: 6). His parties were composed of strong grassroots organizations reflecting

communitarian, family, and religious order mentality and ''communitarian imaginations and aspirations dominated his parties'' (Yildirim et al 2007: 6).

Erbakan's Islamist movement is known as *Milli Görüş* (National View or Outlook) that embraced a set of aspiring yet ambiguous references to the Ottoman past, and directed criticism against ''cosmopolitanism'' as opposed to the ''national'' (Dagi 2005: 24). Here, nationalism, a primary motto of the secular Turkish Republic, promoted as religio-nationalism by Erbakan's parties, was not an obstacle but a shared feeling of pride—first ''Ottoman'' then ''Turkish''—that had been building since Abdülhamid II (Mardin 2005: 157-158). Erbakan's intellectual sources and industrial connections to the Anatolian middle-sized conservative capitalists brought about ''an interesting amalgam of traditional Sunni-based Islamic culture and Sufi worldview embedded within a developmentalist discourse'' (Yildiz 2003: 189).

The first of several Islamic parties led by Necmettin Erbakan, National Order Party (MNP), was established in January 1970. It espoused a discourse of new economic and social order based on ''national'' as opposed to Western principles. In MNP's view, Turkey's identity and future was with the Muslim world, rather than with the West. The party was shut down after a military intervention in 1971 on the ground that it was against the secularism.

The National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi* (MSP)) was founded in October 1972. MSP's ideology was almost the same as the closed MNP. The MNP argued that the Westernization had fragmented Turkish society. Erbakan envisaged that based on Anatolian heavy industry, a stronger Turkey would loosen the ties with the West and would become the leader of the Muslim world under the umbrella of a Muslim Common Market, with the Islamic *dinar* as its common currency. Also, a Muslim Defense Alliance would be developed.

After the military coup in 1980, the MSP was also closed down together with all other political parties. When the army returned back to its barracks in 1983, Erbakan founded a new party under a new name— the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi* (RP). The Welfare's ideology was not different from that of the MSP. Welfare had steadily increased its share of the votes and after the 1994 general local elections; mayors of several major cities such as Ankara and Istanbul (current Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan became the mayor of Istanbul at that date) were Welfare members. The trends in the political and economic aspects of the Turkish society from the 1980 military intervention through the 1990s were advantageous for the Islamists and ''(b)oth the military and the government were supportive of a nationalist view of Islam. Islam

gradually became politicized. For the new middle and bourgeoisie classes, Islamic movements and networks provided social capital with which to establish business links and NGOs'' (Yildirim et al 2007: 7).

In 1996, as the bigger partner of a coalition government with the True Path Party (*Dogru Yol Partisi* (DYP), Necmettin Erbakan became Turkey's first Islamist prime minister. One of his first acts was to invite --officially non-existent-- Islamic brotherhoods' leaders to an *iftar* dinner to the Prime Ministry. Not surprisingly, secularists were all up in arms. He then went on to establish an economic cooperation pact with 8 biggest Muslim nations under the name D-8. He had not had any friends in the West and this attempt increased the number of his foes both at home and abroad. A psychological warfare accompanied by a media campaign was launched trying to prove that the country was under the occupation of radical and strange-looking Islamists. On February 28, 1997, the military dominated National Security Council presented Erbakan with a list of ''recommendations'' (read orders) to curb the alleged anti-secular activities. Meanwhile, the generals invited the top echelons of bureaucracy (governors, judges and all others) to a series of secularism-in-danger briefings and mobilized the establishment against the Welfare Party, eventually forcing Erbakan to resign in June 1997 in what has been called a ''post-modern'' coup. In January 1998, the Constitutional Court closed down Welfare Party and banned Erbakan from politics for five years. Acutely being aware of history's repetition, this time Erbakan's new party was already ready before the closure decision. The Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi* (FP)) continued operating under Erbakan's close friend Recai Kutan's leadership until it was also shut down by the Constitutional Court in June 2001.

The Virtue Party was a post-Islamist party and thus we will analyze it in a separate section. For all the other parties Erbakan formed and led, serving the religion was a crucial factor. These parties heavily used religion as the dominating parameter of their ''political discourse, among the characteristics of which were: confining religious concepts and values to a certain group, nationalizing, modernizing, secularizing and politicizing them, making use of political opinions held by Muslims in the generic sense as the criterion for the religious brotherhood, the sectarian possession of its contributions to religious life and hence causing people of different political convictions and preferences to feel cold against the religion and making them hold anti-religion attitudes, functioning as a non-systemic party while operating within systemic boundaries, if necessary, by instrumentalizing the religion'' (Yildiz 2003: 200). Erbakan had intolerant and exclusivist rhetoric. His discourse justified itself by the alleged

existence of a monolithic ''other''. He constantly blamed all others as blind imitators of the West. He was upset with many religious brotherhoods and communities that never voted for his parties and he did not think they were good Muslims as he believed politics was based on ''the truth versus wrong'', him representing the truth. His followers were quick to label people as the voice of America or even worse as CIA agents. Erbakan himself ''was accusing those who did not vote for RP as belonging to ''religion of potato,'' instead of Islam'' (Kuru 2007: 145). He was of the opinion that '''"the political party means the religion" and, accordingly, those Muslims who have not belonged to the party or lent support to it have been warned that they may be subject to spiritual sanctions/hazards'' (Yildiz 2003: 193). In Erbakan's view ''elections are the counting of Muslims in Turkey'' (Yildiz 2003: 193). Yildiz (2003: f. n. 19) notes that the "Muslim census" argument was publicly voiced by Erbakan for the first time in his "Great Turkey Once Again" public meeting in Konya held in October 7, 1973. The meeting was presented as ''the greatest meeting of human history,'' gave birth to the conception of ''the Muslim census'' by the party's semi-official daily *Milli Gazete*. In October 4, 1973, *Milli Gazete*'s headline was ''Not Parties but Beliefs are in Collision in the Election" (Yildiz 2003: f. n. 19). Erbakan was not always exclusivist: ''The Prophet Adam was Welfarist. Likewise, all the past prophets were partisans of WP, so was the Sultan Mehmet II (The Conqueror)'' (Quoted in Yildiz 2003: 193).

In the beginning of the multiparty politics in 1950s, both nationalism and Islamism were represented in the center-right parties. The coexistence of nationalism and Islamism is one of the reasons ''why Islamism emerged in the form of Islamic nationalism even when it gained an independent existence. Thus, the conception of an anti-Western Islamism structured by a national Islamism/Islamic nationalism, with a heavy emphasis both in NSP and WP, became one of the main leitmotifs characterizing their politico-religious discourse'' (Yildiz 2003: 197). Similar to the world wide Islamist discourse, the Turkish Islamists have also envisaged capturing the state and using it to socially engineer top down Islamist transformation in society by adopting the centralism of the state.

Civil Islam: Gülen's Discourse and His Movement

Now, we turn our attention to the most resonant voice of non-Islamist (apolitical) tradition in Turkey roots of which are older than the Islamist tradition. Fethullah Gülen's apolitical Islamic understanding is not of course unique neither in Turkey nor in the Muslim World but his both intellectual power & *alim* credentials and wide influence over the Turkish society as a whole makes him and his influential movement relevant for our

discussion. To see if and to what extent, Gülen and his movement have influenced the transformation of Turkish Islamism to non-Islamism, from Milli Görüş to JDP, we will now analyze the discourse of Gülen on secularism, pluralism, democracy, rule of law, nationalism, state, Islamism, religiosity, the other, borders and dialogue.

Gülen on Secularism, Democracy and the Rule of Law

In Gülen's view, the faithful can comfortably live in secular environments ''(i)f secularity is understood as the state not being founded on religion, hence it does not interfere with religion or religious life; and as the faithful living his religion does not disturb others; and furthermore if the state will accomplish this task in a serious neutrality, then there is no problem'' (Armagan & Unal: 108, quoted in Altunoglu 1999: 103). He makes a reference to an Anglo-Saxon understanding of passive secularism and argues that within the boundaries of this type of secularism, Islam and secularity of the state could be compatible (Yilmaz 2000: 5). As for secular law-making, in his view, Islam does not have a problem with it:

> In Islam, the legislative and executive institutions have always been allowed to make laws. These are based on the needs and betterment of society and within the frame of general norms of law. On domestic issues in the Islamic community and its relationship with other nations, including economic, political and cultural relations, Muslims have always developed laws. The community members are required to obey the laws that one can identify as ''higher principles'' as well as laws made by humans. Islam has no objection to undertaking *ijtihad* (independent reasoning), *istinbat* (deductive reasoning), and *istikhraj* (derivation) in the interpretation of *Shari'ah* principles (Gülen 2005: 450).

Gülen's views on democracy are well-known. He has been underlining for a long time that ''Islam does not propose a certain unchangeable form of government or attempt to shape it. Instead, Islam establishes fundamental principles that orient a government's general character, leaving it to the people to choose the type and form of government according to time and circumstances'' (Gülen 2006: 14). Fundamental principles Islam prescribes, accruing to Gülen, are social contact and election of a group of people to debate common issues (Gülen 2006: 17). Gülen summarizes the theological reasons why Islam considers that people are responsible for their own fate and thus governance:

> Islam considers a society to be composed of conscious individuals equipped with free will and having responsibility toward both themselves and others. Islam goes a step further by adding a cosmic dimension. It sees humanity as the ''motor'' of history,

contrary to fatalistic approaches of some of the nineteenth century Western philosophies of history such as dialectical materialism and historicism. Just as every individual's will and behavior determine the outcome of his or her life in this world and in the hereafter, a society's progress or decline is determined by the will, worldview, and lifestyle of its inhabitants. The Koran (13:11) says: ''God will not change the state of a people unless they change themselves [with respect to their beliefs, worldview, and lifestyle].'' In other words, each society holds the reins of its fate in its own hands. The prophetic tradition emphasizes this idea: ''You will be ruled according to how you are.'' This is the basic character and spirit of democracy, which does not conflict with any Islamic principle. As Islam holds individuals and societies responsible for their own fate, people must be responsible for governing themselves (Gülen 2006: 16).

Gülen's understanding of majority rule does not permit a tyranny of majority: ''members of minority communities should be allowed to live according to their beliefs. If these sorts of legislations are made within the norms of international law and international agreements, Islam will have no objection to any of these. No one can ignore the universal values that the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* have presented with regard to the rights mentioned above'' (Gülen 2005: 451).

Whenever speaking on the issue of democracy, Gülen constantly reminds us that Islam is a religion and thus is more than a political method, system or ideology:

> On the issue of Islam and democracy, one should remember that the former is a divine and heavenly religion, while the latter is a form of government developed by humans. The main purposes of religion are faith (*iman*), servanthood to God (''*ubudiyyah*), knowledge of God (*ma'rifah*), and beautiful actions (*ihsan*). The Qur'an, in its hundreds of verses, invites people to the faith and worship of the True (*al-Haqq*). It also asks people to deepen their servanthood to God in a way that they may gain the consciousness of *ihsan*. ''To believe and do good deeds,'' is among the subjects that Qur'an emphatically stresses. It also frequently reminds people that they must develop a conscious relationship with God and act as if they see God, or as if they are seen by God (Gülen 2005: 451-452).

Gülen has been defined as nationalist but when analyzed in detail it will be seen that he cannot be a nationalist for various reasons. First of all, as an observant Muslim, he can only be a patriot and love his people but this cannot be to the exclusion of others. Secondly, he has followers and sympathizers all over the world, including many Kurds in Turkey. A nationalist stance would deter all these people. Third, one of his intellectual predecessors, Said Nursi, was a Kurd and Gülen has Kurdish friends in his close circle. Overwhelming majority of Gülen's close friends is from Western Anatolia, a region that is not known for its strong nationalist sentiments unlike several inner Anatolian cities. Last but not the least, whenever Gülen talks positively about Turks, he makes clear that the

main reason of his respect is Turks' heroic service to the cause of Islam. Any nation that fares better will be appreciated by Gülen as he appreciates and admires past successful eras of several non-Turkish Muslim individuals and nations such as Abbasids and so on.

Politics & Islamic State versus Religiosity & Piety & Spirituality in the Gülenian Discourse

Fethullah Gülen has stayed away from ideologisation and instrumentalisation of religion in politics. While Islamists had conceived Islam as identity, ideology and politics and focused on religion instead of religiosity, Gülen had been harshly critical of Islamists. ''The distinction between political ambition and religious activism is crucial for a correct understanding of Gülen's mission'' (Ozdalga 2000).

The phrase, ''Sovereignty belongs to the nation unconditionally,'' does not mean that sovereignty has been taken from God and given to humans. On the contrary, it means that sovereignty is entrusted to humans by God, that is to say it has been taken from individual oppressors and dictators and given to the community members. To a certain extent, the era of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs of Islam illustrates the application of this norm of democracy. Cosmologically speaking, there is no doubt that God is the sovereign of everything in the universe. Our thoughts and plans are always under the control of the power of such an Omnipotent. However, this does not mean that we have no will, inclination or choice. Humans are free to make choices in their personal lives. They are also free to make choices with regard to their social and political actions (Gülen 2005: 453).

Gülen also flatly rejects the totalizing ideology of Islamism:

> This vision of Islam as a totalising ideology is totally against the spirit of Islam, which promotes the rule of law and openly rejects oppression against any segment of society. This spirit also promotes actions for the betterment of society in accordance with the view of the majority. Those who follow a more moderate pattern also believe that it would be much better to introduce Islam as a complement to democracy instead of presenting it as an ideology. Such an introduction of Islam may play an important role in the Muslim world through enriching local forms of democracy and extending it in such a way that helps humans develop and understanding of the relationship between the spiritual and material worlds. I believe that Islam also would enrich democracy in answering the deep needs of humans, such as spiritual satisfaction, which cannot be fulfilled except through the remembrance of the Eternal One (Gülen 2005: 452)

He is also well aware that generally speaking Islamism is a reactive and reactionary ideology that is formed by contemporary human and social needs rather than what actually religion dictates. Put differently, he strongly refutes the claim of the Islamists that what they advocate is indeed the true, authentic, original and pure Islam (Gülen 2005: 455).

He repeatedly declared that there is no particular model for either the method of election or the system of administration. He explains that:

> ... in Islam it is not possible to limit the concept of governance and politics into a single paradigm, unlike the principles of faith and the pillars of Islam. History shows us that in the Islamic world, since the time of the Prophet, there have been many types of states. This is so even if we exclude the elections in the early period of Islam and the qualities that were exhibited in those elections. Even if one cannot see some major methodological differences among these types of governance, there are many differences in the details. Those who are not aware of the principles of these different methods of governing have understood each of them as a separate system. I have to note that these differences were the result of the aspects of religion that are open to interpretation and related to the field of independent reasoning (*Ijtihad*) (Gülen 2005: 454).

Recently, Gülen has been arguing that in this age Islam does not need a state support, which is a new ijtihad. He does not oppose to the idea of mutual autonomy of state and Islam. He puts that ''(i)f a state... gives the opportunity to its citizens to practice their religion and supports them in their thinking, learning, and practice, this system is not considered to be against the teaching of the Qur'an. In the presence of such a state there is no need to seek an alternative state'' (Gülen 2005: 451). He also told Ali Bulac that establishing an Islamic state is not a religious duty for Muslim individuals and that in this age civil society can independently maintain Islam even where Muslims are not in majority.

Gülen is a modern version of *alim* (singular of *ulama*) and *ulama* never engage in a selective reading of the sources as Islamists do. While Islamists did not respect the authority of the *ulama*, Gülen, backed up by his intellectual power too, helped *ulama* profile regain its prestige back among cosmopolitan urban middle class white collars, a base Islamists were trying to address.[4] Gellner argues that development and education have been conducive, rather than detrimental, to teaching the orthodox practices of Islam because, in the past, the knowledge-based orthodox (*ulama*-formulated) observance was

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[4] *Ulama* were not always conservative in Islamic tradition and history. For instance, unlike the image portrayed by several modern scholars on Turkey, the bureaucratic ulama were progressive and were not staunchly opposing the Ottomans modernization project. Their class struggle with the other sections of the state are mistakenly interpreted as their opposition to modernization. The only opposed the change in the sense that they did not want to see their power diminishing in the state structure.

generally limited to more educated and urbanite Muslims; while the practices of the rural periphery were intermingled with superstition and, in some cases, remnants of pre-Islamic practices (Gellner 1992: 2-22). Today it is possible for many more Muslims to adhere to the orthodox practices. This observance is not seen as a sign of backwardness (Gellner 1992: 2-22). This is definitely the case with white-collars and cosmopolitan middle classes that compose majority of Gülen's followers and sympathizers.

Ulama, unlike the Islamists, look at the issues from a holistic point of view. For instance that is why Gülen could see many verses in Qur'an that strongly encourage dialogue while many Islamists were busy portraying all non-Muslims in the same manner. While Islamists focused on political acts, Gülen keeps reiterating that hereafter is much more important and his life in the 5th floor revolves around worship. Gülen transcends the strictly scripturalist and literalist Salafi epistemology by attempting to rehabilitate Sufi concepts and by focusing on the renewal of inner faith. This is reminiscent of the approach adopted by previous Islamic activists and intellectuals who, like al-Banna (d. 1949) in Egypt, Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938) in colonial India, and Said Nursi (d. 1960) in Turkey who were conscious of the spiritual dimension of Islam.

Paul Tillich coined the term ''the *ultimate concern*'' that is, what a community or individual considers to be of most importance: ''Whatever concerns a man ultimately becomes god for him... and conversely, it means that a man can be concerned ultimately only about that which is good for him'' (Tillich 1951: 211). Gülen's ultimate concern in this life differs from many Islamists at least in the sense that what they do in practice. While Islamists focus on political acts, a socially active Gülen reiterates that hereafter is much more important and worship is vitally important. He does not see the Qur'an as a political book or project:

> The Qur'an is a translation of the book of the universe, which comes from the divine commands of creation, an interpretation of the world of the unseen, of the visible and invisible. It is an explanation of the reflections of the divine names on earth and in the heavens. It is a prescription for the various problems of the Islamic world. It is a guide for bliss in this life and in the life to come. It is a great guide for the travellers in this world moving towards the hereafter. It is an inexhaustible source of wisdom. Such a book should not be reduced to the level of political discourse, nor should it be considered a book about political theories or forms of state. To consider the Qur'an as an instrument of political discourse is a great disrespect for the Holy Book and is an obstacle that prevents people from benefiting from this deep source of divine grace (Gülen 2005: 456).

Gülen's discourse has been influential primarily in the movement named after him. Atay (2007: 459, 467) gives details about how his discourse and praxis in relation to piety, spirituality and worship influence also his movement.

It is obvious that Gülen is not a socially inactive thinker and practitioner who formulates a discourse and practices it and then only passively observes if people discover and emulate them. Gülen seeks to actively engage with this world by teaching and presenting his weltanschauung and its praxis. Atay's observations are also confirmed by Vicini (2007: 439) who did a field research among the movement's adherents and sympathizers: ''I am not arguing disciplinary aspects disappear from Gülen's view on Islam. Firstly, because Gülen is a strenuous defender of Islamic pillars and the need to accomplish them. Adherents to the movement – overall people who aim at becoming educators – perform *namaz* five times per day and often even perform the meritorious one during the night. Secondly, ... volunteers of the movement, by endlessly engaging in activism, really follow a very disciplined life''.

The Other, East & West and Gülen as Border Transgressor

Unlike Islamists, Gülen does not pursue an identity politics and does not define himself by the Other. In other words, he does not have a constitutive other. In his discourse, ''(o)therization and adversary component is weak'' (Komecoglu 1997: 86), which is not reactive but proactive, not having ''us'' versus ''them'' coarse schism. To put it differently, ''unlike the confrontational New Social Movements, the Gülen movement has engaged in 'moral opposition', in which the movement's actors seek to empathize with the adversary by creating (what Bakhtin calls) 'dialogic' relationships'' (Gurbuz 2007: 104).

Gülen does not see the world in political terms and does not draw imaginary boundaries. As skilfully expressed by Klas Grinell (2010), Gülen is a ''border transgressor''. Gülen's frequently used term *dar al-hizmet* (country of service) reflects his border transgressing vision (Yilmaz 2003: 234). By employing *ijtihad*, he bases this border transgressing understanding on – and also extends to- the Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). He does not divide the world by employing mutually exclusive concepts of *dar al-harb* (abode of war) and *dar-al Islam* (abode of Islam, peace) but sees it as an almost coherent place, as it were, that needs to be served continually by utilizing the concept *dar al-hizmet* (abode of service to humans, thereby God) (Yilmaz 2007: 35). Gülen stresses that wherever a Muslim is, even outside a Muslim polity; he or she has to obey the law of the land, to respect others' rights and to be just, and has to disregard discus-

sions of *dar al-harb* and *dar al-Islam*. In Gülen's understanding, *umma* is a transnational socio-cultural entity, not a utopian politico-legal one (Yilmaz 2003: 235).

He does not see the world not in terms of Muslims versus others. He also does not think that trying to revive the Caliphate is feasible: ''I would say that the revival of the Caliphate would be very difficult and making Muslims accept such a revived *Khilafah* would be impossible. The perception of the modern world regarding the revival of *Khilafah* must be considered'' (Gülen 2005: 457). Gülen ''subscribes to a remarkably different interpretation of the Muslim world and realistically draws the boundaries where Turkey can play a leadership role. He did not regard D-8 optimistically and considered it Erbakan's cheap message to his constituency. Such initiatives are, for Gülen, quite adventurous and risky, and therefore a waste of time'' (Kosebalaban 1999: 175).

He rejects that a clash between the "East" and "West" is necessary, desirable or unavoidable. In Gülen's worldview an abstract West is not the enemy of Muslims but ignorance, poverty and disunity are: ''unlike many Islamic revivalist movements, the Gülen movement shaped its identity against the perceived threat of a trio of enemies, as Nursi named them a century ago – ignorance, disunity, and poverty. This perception of the opposition is crucial to understanding the apolitical mind-set of the Gülen movement's followers'' (Gurbuz 2007: 104).

He has been supportive of Turkey's accession to the European Union (Ünal and Williams 2000, 189). ''Gülen's pro-Western attitude has played a key role in the domestication and softening of other Islamist groups' anti-Europe and anti-U. S. positions. Although many Islamists eventually came closer to embracing this idea, a majority of them initially criticized Gülen for his pro-Europe views. He was one of the first Islamic leaders to embrace the idea of EU membership and at a time when Islamists in general regarded it as a threat to Turkish security and Islamic culture'' (Kosebalaban 1999: 176).

Gülen's self-confidence and positive view of the world are ''in contrast to Wahhabism, Tablighism, and Jihadism, Sufism as advanced by the Gülen movement has a positive view of the world entire. The internal workings of the universe—science, history, politics, art and culture, philosophy—are not something Muslims should fear or stuff into an Islamized box but rather engage positively in view of the spiritual insight of Islam'' (Heck 2007: 645).

Gülen's ''acceptance of the two Turkish identities—European and Islamic—as complementary rather than contradictory was innovative at a time when both secular and Islamist identities totally rejected this duality. Gülen's national-security identity encourages Turkish foreign-policy decision makers to remain fully on track with EU

membership. As a leader of a significant Islamic movement, he gave his approval to this policy goal. Many Turkish Islamists joined him later, unloading the Islamic element in the anti-EU camp. Yet Gülen also defends the argument that the success of Turkish diplomacy in the West lies with its success in the East'' (Kosebalaban 1999: 182).

In comparison to Islamism's simple but abstract assertion to surrendering to the ancestors, i. e. returning to the golden age of pristine Islam will solve all problems of Muslims; Gülen endeavors a concrete socio-economic and cultural analysis of the current spatio-temporal context and based on this analysis offers concrete solutions to tackle Muslims' enemies rather than insisting on abstract rhetoric. If ignorance is one of three major enemies, then the Gülen project's offer would be education at different levels, not only at schools or not only religious education. Gülen's educational project covers life. It is not only confined to mosque nor is it only confined to secular schools. It also includes family education, child upbringing (see his book *Cekirdekten Cinara*), educating religious scholars (Atay 2007), educating by example (*tamsil*) not only in classrooms etc. If poverty is Muslims' second enemy, then Gülen's offer would be establishing charity organizations (Kimse Yok Mu?) in addition to education's indirect help to lift people's socio-economic status. If dissention or internal conflict is the third major enemy, then, dialogue, tolerance and mutual understanding are the remedies to tackle this conflict. As can be seen, Gülen movement's major projects all focus on either of these three areas and the movement's media organizations play also supporting roles in this global civil activism.

Turkish Post-Islamist Party: Virtue Party

After the Welfare Party was ousted from power, many younger members of the Islamists began thinking that the only way they could succeed was to avoid confrontation with the Kemalist establishment and to stay away from the instrumentalist use of religious rhetoric in politics. This started an internal debate among the Islamists. Thus, a cleavage emerged within the movement between two different groups. The ''traditionalists'' (*Gelenekçiler*), centered on Erbakan and the party leader Recai Kutan, opposed any serious change in approach or policy, while the younger group of ''renewalists'' (*Yenilikçiler*), led by Tayyip Erdoğan, the mayor of Istanbul, Abdullah Gul and Bulent Arinc argued that the party needed to revise and renew its approach to a number of fundamental issues, especially democracy, human rights, and relations with the West.

The influence of this internal debate was reflected in the platform of the Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi* (FP). The Virtue represented a rupture from the *Milli Görüş*'s Islamism. The Virtue's discourse fundamentally differed from Islamism. It embraced Western political values and anti-Westernism was not on the agenda of the Virtue. The Virtue Party ''was essentially not a party of political Islam but a liberal-conservative party with a powerful "social state" inclination and a strong interest in nationalism'' (Yildiz 2003: 199). According to the Virtue Party, ''the raison d'être of a state that was based on human rights was to protect liberties. Therefore, the misuse of the state as an instrument for discriminating against a certain religion, sect, ideology or belief could not be justified on any grounds. Rejecting the use of both religion and laicism as instrumental in politics, VP disapproved of political understandings based on the exploitation of religion or religious symbols'' (Yildiz 2003: 199).

Yenilikciler (renewers) began constantly airing their renewed views on several fundamental issues and also declared the failure of Islamism. They confessed that they were under the influence of the Middle Eastern Islamists and they confused the conditions of Turkey with the Middles Eastern experiences. In spite of the movement's tradition, they openly criticized the Welfare Party on the ground that it made a mistake by using religion. Tayyip Erdogan underlined that state could not and should not have a religion; it is individuals that have religious affiliation. He also emphasized the importance of democracy, free market economy and human rights. Another *yenilikci* Bulent Arinc stated that respect for other people's views and beliefs is at the core of democracy. Abdullah Gül, who contested against –first ever in the history of the movement- Erbakan-supported Recai Kutan for the Virtue Party chairmanship, concurred with these new ideas and underscored that their demand was religious freedom not an Islamic state and declared that the best way of government is democracy as it is a system that does not stop its search for good. The discourse of the young generation showed all signs of a more sophisticated approach and they have learned to avoid the confrontational rhetoric, opting instead for a message of democracy and human rights (Yilmaz 2000: 12). They have also developed a new and ''tolerant normative framework'' (Kuru 2005: 273). [5]

Independence war victory also gave Turks a sense of pride and as the country was not colonized it has prevented Turkish Islamists being radicalized. Even their anti-western rhetoric towards the west was superficial to a great extent and they easily gave it up. Their lifestyles, dress codes and so on had always been in tune with the western

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[5] See for an overview and how institutional constraints and democratic rewards helped the transformation, Mecham 2004

ones anyway. Furthermore, unlike the Islamist in many other countries, the movement never severed its ties with the tradition and did not succumb to the literalist rhetoric of the Salafis. On the contrary, as we discussed above, Republican era's Islamist parties originated from a Sufi brotherhood. Democratic experience in Turkey dating back to 1876 and the Turkish state's hybrid identity have also helped Turkish Islamists to stay away from radicalization of religion.

Non-Islamism: JDP

The renewalists of the Virtue party continued to adhere to their renewalist discourse and as JDP leaders have frequently asserted universal values and value-based discourses such as human rights, democracy, and free market principles (Yildirim et al 2007: 17). As they departed their ways with the Islamist wing of the Virtue Party, their new discourse is no longer a hybrid (post-Islamism of the Virtue Party) form of Islamism and universal liberal democratic conservative values. While acknowledging the importance of religion as personal belief, they accommodated themselves within the secular constitutional framework (Mecham 2004: 350). They completely jettisoned the Islamist elements in their previous post-Islamist rhetoric and underscored a non-Islamist, as it were, universal liberal democratic conservative discourse. Yet, they are in no way non-Muslims despite Erbakan's implications even though, ironically, from an Islamist point of view, there is no difference between non-Islamist and non-Muslim. As a matter of fact, ''the most radical and harsh criticisms of the AKP came from the Happiness Party, which is now the single representative of the National Outlook Movement'' (Yildirim et al 2007: 17).

Erdoğan frequently states that his party is a conservative democrat party, implying a Muslim democrat party similar to Christian Democrats in Western Europe in which an Anglo-Saxon type passive secularism is espoused where public visibility of religion is tolerated but religion is only a cultural backdrop rather than an active part of the Islamist discourse. In direct contrast to Islamists' formulation of political identity based on opposition to the West, the JDP has steadily emphasized Western political values. At the same time, the party has viewed the West, especially the EU, as an important ally in democratization of Turkey. The party ''successfully linked traditional identity and issues of social and distributive justice to a global 'Third Way' between a statist economy and unfettered capitalism'' (Smith 2005: 322).

The JDP has attracted the votes of a broad constituency, cutting across class, gender, and ethnic (and religious) lines, and who previously had voted for mainstream right and

Islamist parties. In the 3 November 2002 election, it won 34 per cent of the votes and increased its share of the votes to 47 per cent in 22 July 2007 elections, the main opposition party receiving only 21 per cent. In the 2007 elections, many Turkish-Armenians reportedly voted for the JDP as well. Several polls suggest that the JDP may win 12 June 2011 for a third consecutive term by getting about 44-48 per cent of the votes.

Factors that Influenced the Transformation from Milli Görüş to JDP

Globalization, international opportunity structures[6] and failure of Islamist government experiences in countries such as Sudan, Pakistan and Iran coupled with the awareness of the fact that some Islamists who severed their ties with the tradition and bypassed several centuries' experiences have gone out of their way and become extremely radicalized are some of the external or non-domestic factors that influenced Turkish Islamists to change their discourse. In the domestic context, there are two major factors that contributed to the change. First is the desire to avoid from confrontation with the aggressively laicist establishment as this would prevent Islamists to stay in power even if they rise to it as the Welfare Government experience showed. Constraints imposed by the laicist establishment and state ''structure have limited Islamist actions and provided distinct opportunities for the emergence of a brand of reformist new thinking'' (Cavdar 2006: 480). Second major factor is a tolerant normative framework that has brought about Turkish Islamists' transformation. As I have tried to analyze in the preceding sections, there are several factors that influenced the emergence of this tolerant framework. Turkish exceptionalism, to use Serif Mardin's terminology, has always been a factor in the Turkish Islamism's moderation. For instance, its close ties with the Nakhsbandi tradition differentiate Turkish Islamism from the majority of Islamist ideologies and movements worldwide. Turkish constitutional and democratic history starting from the Ottoman times and the fact that the country has never been colonized by the European imperialist powers have also contributed to the moderate and less than reactionary nature of the Turkish Islamism. Moreover, ''(t)he state policies of creating the parameters for Islamist parties further moderated the already mild nature of political Islam in Turkey'' (Cavdar 2006: 486).

Export-oriented and liberalizing reforms of Turgut Ozal that integrated the country to the global structures and trends also made it possible for Anatolia's culturally conservative, religiously observant but economically liberal bourgeoning bourgeoisie

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[6] For a useful analysis on how global opportunity structures influenced AK Party leaders' transformation, see Kuru 2005.

to be major players in the Turkish domestic scene. These new classes are more liberal than the Istanbul bourgeoisie as they were export-oriented unlike Istanbul businesses. As observed by Barkey and Congar (2008: 66) ''Following Ozal's reforms in the 1980s, this new business elite took advantage of the economic liberalization to internationalize itself. In the process, Anatolian-based businesses gained self-confidence, lessening fear of the outside world. As more flexible and adaptive newcomers, this new class tacitly endorsed the EU process and demonstrated very little, if any, opposition to privatization efforts. It is this socially conservative but economically liberal business elite that forms the backbone of the AKP's support''.

Islamic and Islamist intellectuals' transformation is another important factor that influenced the paradigmatic shift in the minds of Turkish Islamists. After the 28 February 1997 post-modern coup that directly aimed at terminating all Islamic activities, groups, social projects and bourgeoisie, these intellectuals also have come to the views of Gülen that he has been advocating since 1960s. They stated that under the new post-28 February domestic and post-9/11 global ''conditions, the old discourse and actions of the previous parties had become "useless," and they called for an accommodationist rather than a confrontational approach'' (Cavdar 2006: 482). In fact, these Muslim intellectuals were never ''unwilling urban residents yearning to return to the security of the rural town or village where there was no need to think through who one was and what one was to do. They are very much creatures of the contemporary Turkish city, like their secular counterparts'' (Meeker 1991: 217). Dagi (2004: 135-136) observes that these Muslim intellectuals ''appear to have abandoned their ideas for the construction of an alternative social and political order that in effect enabled them to seek a rapprochement with the West, Western ideas and institutions. The alternative to the established political regime is no longer searched for in Islam but rather in modernity and its political architecture''. As the most prominent of these Muslim intellectuals, Ali Bulac, affirmed long ago, these intellectuals now accept that ''if the meaning of political Islam is to establish a theocratic state, it is finished'', pointing out that being, once, a cause for conflict and polarization, Islam is now a base for conciliation (Bulac 2000).

These ''intellectual leaders of post-Islamism have been searching for a rapprochement with the West, but not out of necessity to form a temporary alliance to confront the Kemalist state apparatus. Rather, this rapprochement is part of an effort to rethink modern political notions like democracy, human rights, and integration into the globalization process, including Turkey's membership in the European Union'' (Dagi 2004: 136). Other than being directly and normatively influenced by the new Anatolian

elite, the Gülen movement, its schools and media, and the post-Islamist intellectuals, the younger generation Islamists were also aware of the fact that the new middle classes would no longer vote for an Islamist party after the failure of the Welfare in power. As Ihsan Dagi (2004: 140) observes ''Because the visibility and power of Islam in the political realm justified only the counter-attack of the Kemalists, the threatened Islamists have become more interested in keeping Islam's social and economic structures intact as the bases for social 'conservatism. ' Therefore, ideas for a 'social' rather than a 'political' Islam have gained ground.''

Younger generation Islamists politicians have always been in contact with the man in the street, grassroots and periphery. Moreover, the current Interior Minister professor Besir Atalay, who is known to be close to the current president Abdullah Gul, established and directed a social research institution, ANAR, several years before the establishment of the JDP and this research institution regularly surveyed socio-political trends in society. Abdullah Gul is also known to be frequenting the offices of this institution before establishing the JDP. They must have been well aware of the fact that the society would never vote an Islamist party to the power.

Islamic groups' both physical and discursive interaction is also a major factor in the Turkish Islamism's transformation. Whilst it is difficult to establish casual relationship between different social phenomena, it is still possible to underscore correlations. A number of academics including myself (Yilmaz 2000, 2003, 2005; Kuru 2007; Maigre 2007) have argued that the Islamists' ''transformation was not an isolated event, but part of a larger experience that several other Islamic groups took part in'' (Kuru 2007: 141). In the words of Elisabeth Maigre (2007: 42) ''(w)hile it is quite difficult to tell which group has had the foremost influence, researchers and academics have outlined the inter-connexion between the Islamic bourgeoisie, the moderate Islamists, and the Gülen movement. It is noteworthy that many of these business people as well as some Virtue and later JDP politicians sent their children to Gülen's schools. Furthermore, Zaman is the second largest daily newspaper, the largest in Anatolian towns, and the majority of Virtue & JDP's supporters, including the businessmen, are regular readers'' (Maigre 2007: 42). Kuru (2007: 141) also argues ''that the AKP leaders' interaction with the Gülen movement, in this regard, played an important role in the formation of the party's new perspective toward secularism''. With regards to politicization of Islam, it is –at least- fair to suggest that ''(t)he emergence of the Justice and Development Party has shown that Muslim politics in Turkey is evolving from an instrumentalist usage of Islam to a new understanding of practicing Muslims who have to deal with daily politics. This evolution

is obviously what Gülen has been advocating over the past three decades'' (Yilmaz 2003: 227). Maigre (2007: 45) concurs: ''By anticipating the need to adapt Islam to the present times, confident that the Turkish republic would have to adapt too and open itself to more diversity, Gülen has been a visionary. He has unlocked the way to a new global culture that places Muslim Democrats ahead of any radical thinking and he has sent a strong message to the Muslim world showing a successful way towards democratic transition and gradual adaptation to Globalization without losing landmarks and religious background'' (Maigre 2007: 45). Maigre (2007: 34) further argues ''that Gülen's cultural and religious influence on both the business and political classes within the Islamic movement has driven the moderation of political Islam and open the way toward the integration into the new reality of globalization where the frontier between religion and business are blurred and those notions are brought together within a new conception of Culture'' (Maigre 2007:34). Gülen's competitive Islamic discourse which is not anti-western, tolerant, pluralistic, politically and economically more liberal etc. has weakened the influence of Erbakan's Islamism on the wider socially conservative masses of Anatolia including the nascent Anatolian elite. This social base was much larger than the base of Milli Görüş and has become more open to Gülen's discourse.

These people have sent their children to secular educational establishments where they could learn a European language, instead of sending them to *madrassah* or state's Imam Hatip Schools. In most cases, as there were only Gülen movement's schools that could provide this opportunity, most of the new elite's children and thus indirectly themselves have become acquainted with the movement and its worldview. As a matter of fact, in most cases the boundaries between these new elites and the Gülen movement supporters are blurred and it is the members of this Anatolian bourgeoisie who actually fund and establish the Gülen schools, after seeing their success in other Anatolian towns and cities. These new middle classes have always been in close contact with both center-right and Islamist parties, influencing center rights parties to be more Islamic and Islamist parties to be more center-right. Many provincial Islamist politicians have also sent their own children to Gülen schools. We must also note that the Gülen media is the largest in almost all Anatolian cities. The Zaman daily is currently the country's most circulated newspaper with an oscillating circulation between 800.000 and 1.000.000. Samanyolu TV is one of the major TV channels in the country and it is widely watched in Anatolia especially by right-wing and conservative & religious people.

Abant Platform and the Gülen Media are the two major public mediums that the younger generation Milli Görüş politicians and the Gülen movement were able to

discursively interact (Kuru 2007: 145). Among the attendants of the Abant platform meetings were several leaders, founding members and ministers of the JDP such as Abdullah Gül, Bulent Arınç, Cemil Çiçek, Ali Coşkun, and Nevzat Yalçıntaş. Moreover the chairperson of the meetings, theology professor Mehmet Aydın, and some frequent participants, such as associate professor of political science Hüseyin Çelik and constitutional law professor Burhan Kuzu, joined them the new generation former – Islamists when they founded the JDP (Kuru 2007: 145-146).

Lastly, Aktay (2003: 139) looks at the transformation of Turkish Islamists from another angle:

> Governmental experience brought about a decrease in the diasporic discourse. They saw that the existing system—that is, the current tacit or implicit social contract—indeed did include sufficient possibilities for others than the political elite to represent the national body politic of Turkey. From the Islamists' point of view, this realization presented some peace with the existing political apparatus that had been injurious to them since the 1920s.

The acknowledgment that the current democratic system could indeed be sufficient for Muslim individuals to live and observe their religion reminds us the views of Gülen on Islam, state and politics. We must note that the Turkish Islamists came to this understanding after their experience and failure in power.

Conclusion

Similar to multiple modernities, we can also talk of multiple Islamisms for several reasons. Firstly, in practice Islamists confine themselves to their nation-state boundaries. Although the Islamists all over the world use same vocabulary –as the original sources are the same- when we begin ''to scrutinize the political objectives and actions of the various Islamist formations it becomes clear that they are engaged primarily in promoting multiple national agendas and not a single universal project. Even the shared preoccupation of various Islamist groups with creating the 'Islamic state' is very clearly envisaged within the territorial confines of existing states: their objective is to Islamize existing states, not to join them in a single political entity'' (Ayoob 2005: 954). Secondly, as we have seen above, there is no clash between Sufism and Turkish Islamism unlike the overwhelming majority of the other Islamist experiences. Thirdly, majority of Turkish Islamists have never been influenced by the Salafi scriptualism and literalism. Erbakan himself was disciple of a respected Sufi sheikh who encouraged him to establish a party. Fourth, even though the literature on

Islamism and post-Islamism has argued that the focus on religiosity has been notably weak among Islamists, the Turkish case is also different. Fifth, anti-westernism has always been weak in Turkish Islamism and it was always in rhetoric. Last but not the least, Turkish Islamists focused on bottom-up transformation of society. They were never revolutionary, domination-oriented and supremacist. They have always been content with democratic methods –maybe just because they were available- despite their parties were shut down by the Kemalist establishment several times. Democracy, loyalty to the state and the nationalism are not anathema to the Turkish Islamists similar to the first Islamists in history, the Young Ottomans. These reasons have also facilitated the Turkish Islamists' evolution towards post-Islamism and also non-Islamism as advocated by the Gülen movement.

Similar to multiple-Islamisms, we can also talk of multiple post-Islamisms. Moreover, as this paper has shown, a group of people who are post-Islamist may reverse back to Islamism again. As we have seen above, the Turkish Islamists under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan, established a new party after their party –Welfare Party- was shut down by the Constitutional Court. This new party –Virtue Party- had a post-Islamist discourse. But that did not stop the Constitutional Court to close this party down as well. After this closure, the group split into two, young generations under the leadership of Tayyip Erdogan formed ''non-Islamist'' JDP whilst elders leaded by Necmettin Erbakan established the Felicity Party and returned back to the Welfare Party's Islamist rhetoric.

Islamic groups' both physical and discursive interaction is a major factor in the Turkish Islamism's normative transformation. The former Islamists have directly and normatively been influenced by the new Anatolian elite, the Gülen movement, its schools and media, and the post-Islamist intellectuals. As we noted above, the Islamic and Islamist intellectuals' transformation is an influential factor in the paradigmatic shift in the normative frameworks of the Turkish Islamists. After the 28 February 1997 post-modern coup that directly aimed at terminating all Islamic activities, groups, social projects and bourgeoisie, these intellectuals also have come to the views of Gülen that he has been advocating since 1960s.[7] We should note that Gülen's stateless cosmopolitan Islam is still different than post-Islamism --- as he puts that Islam does not need a state to survive; in this age civil society can independently maintain Islam even where Muslims are not majority. As far as the Anatolian elite's influence is concerned, it

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[7] It must be underlined that whilst these Muslim intellectuals still base their arguments on Islamic sources and make frequent references to Islam, AK Party leaders severed their discursive ties with these sources as far as politics is concerned. That is why we can call these Muslim intellectuals post-Islamist but not the AK Party leaders.

should be underlined that the Gülen movement has been an influential factor in shaping the normative frameworks of this new class as well as Ozal's reforms, export-oriented economy and global opportunities.

In addition to having been influential in Turkey, Gülen's understanding of Islam, one can expect, will also be influential in the wider Muslim world in parallel to the increasing influence of both Turkey and the movement on a global scale. As Voll (2003: 247) noted a while ago, ''(i)n the clashing visions of globalizations, Fethullah Gülen is a force in the development of the Islamic discourse of globalized multicultural pluralism. As the impact of the educational activities of those influenced by him attests, his vision bridges modern and postmodern, global and local, and has a significant influence in the contemporary debates that shape the visions of the future of Muslims and non-Muslims alike'' (Voll 1999: 247). Major developments in Turkey have already been followed with considerable interest by the Muslim media, thinkers and activists. The movement also increased its activities in the non-Turkish Muslim world. In addition to operating several schools in major Muslims countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Indonesia, it has recently been opening schools, hospitals and also universities in Africa and wherever permitted in the Middle East.

Moreover, the movement, being aware of the need to situate itself and publish its ideas within the wider *ummah*, has started publishing the *Hira* magazine in 2005 (Heck 2007: 643). The magazine ''is chiefly intra-Muslim in its aims and aspirations. The magazine is published in Arabic and features articles written by both Turkish and Arabic writers; a lead article by Fethullah Gülen opens and sets the tone of each issue. The magazine acts to bring the intellectual outlook of the Gülen movement to the Arab world, serving as a cultural bridge between Turks and Arabs, as a forum in which pressing issues in contemporary Islam can be aired and treated by leading Muslim thinkers, and as a tool for the global Muslim community to consolidate a renewed vision of its relation to the intellectual and socio-political realities of the modern world'' (Heck 2007: 643). Furthermore, in 2006, the ''movement, which has been criticized not paying enough attention to the Muslim World as much as they emphasize dialogue with non-Muslims, invited intellectuals from the Middle East including Arab, Jewish and Turkish to discuss the future of the Middle East…. in February 2007, the [Abant] platform co-organized a meeting in Egypt with the prominent Al-Ahram Institute to discuss Turkish and Egyptian experience with democracy, modernization and secularism'' (Ugur 2007: 158).

In concluding, I do not claim that the Turkish experience is totally unique; neither do I suggest that this experience could be directly copied and pasted to the other

contexts. Moreover, Islamisms in other countries are also in transition. Yet, what I do envisage is that the Turkish experience and the Gülen movement's influence will interact with these experiences, paving the way for new hybrid Islamisms, post-Islamisms and even non-Islamisms.

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