

ISLAMISM AND NATIONALISM IN TURKEY

*An Uneasy Relationship*¹

Halil Ibrahim Yenigun
Graduate Student
University of Virginia
Department of Politics
halil@yenigun.net

Amidst the continued dominance of neo-Orientalist structural-functional analyses of Islamism, there has been growing intensity of contending voices that favor agentic approaches and/or prefer ideational variables over materialistic ones over the last decade. Increased efforts to integrate Islamism with the Western-based social movement theory complement this quest for a more post-orientalist, inter-subjective understanding of Islamism. In this article, building on this recent theoretization I suggest an alternative framework to explain the emergence and the rise of Islamism in Turkey as a discourse through its uneasy relationship with nationalism. In my attempt to unearth the genealogy of Turkish Islamism, I argue that although Islamism was eliminated from the ideological landscape during the one-party period, its potential peripheral constituency persisted in the form of discontented conservative masses in the rural areas or educated religious nationalists in the urban centers. Defensive use of nationalism to couch Islamic ideas by Islamists during the one-party Turkey resulted in its eventual domestication and internalization by the following generations. Islamism, as a derived ideology, was transformed from this religious-cum-nationalist tradition into Islamic universalism by the newly educated peripheral youth, who came together in the formal organized networks of student associations, and who were inspired by the Islamist ideologues of the Muslim world. The socio-economic/psychological approaches can complement this analysis by providing catalyzing variables for the subsequent attraction of alienated conservative masses of the shantytowns, while social movement theory can explain the framing processes as well as the effective use of mobilizing structures and resources in display of “Islam is the solution.”

The nationalist student leader was outraged during the board elections of a student organization at Boğaziçi University in 1998: “Day by day, at each and every university, Islamists are forging alliances with communists against us.” An event like this could easily be explained away as an *ad hoc* alliance against a common enemy. However, the recent contentious politics in Turkey has become scene of similar coalitions of Islamists and socialists on a wide range of occasions from pro-Palestine demonstrations and anti-war rallies to protests of the ban on headscarf,² an inconceivable event for the proto-Islamists of 1960s.

¹ The bulk of the research and interviews were made in March 2003 and an earlier version was presented at the Annual Conference of Association of Studies of Nationalities during April 2-5 2003. The current version is an extensive update of the earlier one to reflect the most recent works in the literature as well as a thorough elaboration of the theoretical framework of the paper.

² For an alliance for anti-war protest, see “Özgür-Der ve İHD’den müşterek protesto! "Hürriyet Gazetesi Pentagon Bülteni" ["United Protest by Özgür-Der and İHD! Daily Hürriyet is the Bulletin of Pentagon!"] March, 13, 2003. <http://www.haksoz.net/cgi-bin/news/bizden/L337News.cgi?action=comment&subaction=view&ID=163> (Access year: 2003; available now at www.musliman.o-f.com/diger/platform.htm). Also, for a common stand against the ban on headscarf, see

When the ultra-nationalists and Islamists clashed at the board elections of a nationwide student organization, MTTB, in 1969, elders of the movement were appalled: “When we are encircled by the rising communist threat, it is only distressing to see like-minded people fighting against each other instead of sticking together against communists.”³

Coupled with attitude shifts on other issues, these separate observations might point to a deep-rooted transformation in the nature of the ideological landscape of Turkey over the last few decades. For instance, it is hard to miss the support for Kurdish civil rights among many Islamic-minded people today while the majority shared the regime’s anathema of multiculturalism in the past. Similarly, amidst disparagement of some so-called “Islamist” newspapers, a few years ago women in *hijab* made the news by joining the socialists who had been on hunger strike in protest of the inhumane conditions in the F-type prisons.

Corresponding to these snapshots from contentious political activism and ideological alignments in Turkey, during the last few decades, ideological landscape of Turkey has been transformed by the emergence of an autonomous discourse rooted in Islam as its foundational source in informing not just ethical, but also economic, social and political realms. In simple terms, it was not possible to identify an Islamist discourse clearly distinguishable from nationalism fifty years ago while certain cluster of ideas is readily associable with Islamism today. It is my contention in this paper that tracing Islamism’s relationship with nationalism throughout the twentieth century offers the key to understand the emergence and dissemination of Islamism as an ideology. The same time line that signified the rise of the public visibility of Islam was also characterized by burgeoning of an Islamic political

“Devrimci-Demokrat ve İslamcı Öğrencilerden Ortak Tavır” [Revolutionary-democratic and Islamist students stand together!] *Kurtulus*, no.71, March, 7, 1998. Available at <http://www.kurtulus-online.com/eskisayilar/hicin71/devrimci.htm> . (Access date: 05.14.2005).

³ A columnist from a conservative magazine of the 1960s. At the time I wrote this paper, my personal archive in Turkey was inaccessible to me.

discourse that has detached itself from the nationalist ideology and its socio-political principles.

A possible objection might be raised to the limited influence and thus triviality of the subject given that such an anti-nationalist transformation still does not characterize the majority of Islamic movement. Specifically, the Islamic mobilization that has alarmed the military and the secularists does not much include the relatively marginal influence of the “Islamist” groups with anti-systemic views and a radical political agenda compared to the society-based apolitical communities or intra-system Islamic political parties. However, the discursive transformation I will analyze here has enjoyed a much wider influence by defining the parameters of “Islamic” politics and opening up a discursive space among Islamically oriented groups on Islamic socio-political action. In effect, no attempt for Islamically motivated socio-political action could remain totally indifferent to the boundaries set by this discourse.

As a cautionary remark, my nuanced use of the term Islamism should not escape attention. Despite the indiscriminate use of Islamism, Islamic movement, and Islamic fundamentalism in the literature, which itself obfuscates our understanding of them, I will treat these phenomena as analytically distinct categories. My aim in this paper is not to account for the rise of Islamic movement or the increasing visibility of Islam in the public sphere as its indicator, but the emergence and dissemination of a political discourse that is clearly divergent from the others in currency. Thus, in my own account of Islamism, I will grant the term Islamism only to the ideology and discourse of groups with a specific political agenda based on Islam as the foundational source of the socio-political principles and with a conception of Islam that is a whole way of life where politics is deemed an inseparable aspect of religion. This is close to Sayyid’s definition, according to which Islamism refers to “a

discourse that attempts to centre Islam within the political order.”⁴ Islamist movement thus becomes manifestation of this ideology in the form of a social movement. Islamic movement, on the other hand, just like other religious movements, refers to the movements organized around the goal to propagate Islam, regardless of whether it is accompanied by a political agenda or not. Just like in any other religious movements, this propagation will potentially have political implications but it only does not render a movement political. Fundamentalism, finally, suggests a certain approach to one’s own worldview, characterized by a strict and blind adherence to the philosophical fundamentals and intolerance to contestability of these beliefs. Hence, not just religion, but any worldview can be interpreted in a fundamentalist manner.

Along these lines of analysis, I will embark on my account of Islamism in Turkey by suggesting my reading of the current state of the literature that has developed under the auspices of the post-orientalist and New Social Movement waves. After situating the Turkish Islamism literature within the wider literature on Islamism or fundamentalism, I will move on to offer my methodological suggestions for a more adequate analysis. Next, drawing on my interviews with the leading figures of the critical transformation from nationalism into Islamism, I will offer an alternative narrative that will seek to present the emergence of Islamist discourse based on the self-understanding of Islamist actors. Thus, the self-narrative of Islamist discourse as well as its major ideas will be unearthed in interaction with my own analysis of the literature so that a “fusion of horizons” could come about. I will then undertake an effort to relate the dynamics of the Islamist ideology with the wider Islamic movement in Turkey. That is to say, how Islamist ideology has been disseminated to the larger public, for which social movement literature can be most helpful, and to what extent it was able to

⁴ Sayyid, B. S. (1997). A fundamental fear : eurocentrism and the emergence of Islamism. London ; New York, Zed Books., 17.

transform Islamic political discourse will come under consideration. I will conclude my paper by pointing to the direction this research might take in the future.

I. THE LITERATURE ON ISLAMIC RESURGENCE: TOWARDS POST-ORIENTALISM?

In parallel with the surfacing of Islamic fundamentalism as a foreign policy problem of the Western countries, especially of the U.S., there has been an unprecedented proliferation of scholarly works on the subject. The fact that since 1980 an estimated two hundred books has been published each year in English on Islamic resurgence⁵ is momentous. Haddad *et. al.*'s analysis dates this scholarly interest back to when the U.S. came about as the world leader after World War II to show how it is linked to the American interests in the Muslim world,⁶ especially in its utilization to further the secularist cause.⁷

The common trends in the literature on Islamic fundamentalism can be divided into three phases. During the high times of modernization theory, Lerner would deem the early fundamentalist reactions as a reaction of overeducated and underemployed classes against the process of modernization and as an obstacle to it.⁸ Fundamentalism appears during this modernization theory phase as an artifact of pre-modernity that is bound to die away when the country gets more modernized.⁹ This theory rests on a generic secularization argument that religion in the modern world appeals to the unsuccessful and vulnerable; hence is a reactionary, short-term consequence of the modern progress.¹⁰ Islamism thus becomes a micro-level reaction to macro-sociological processes. Apart from its structural-functionalist

⁵ Ibid 28.

⁶ Haddad, Y. Y., J. O. Voll, et al. (1991). The contemporary Islamic revival : a critical survey and bibliography. New York, Greenwood Press.: 13.

⁷ Ibid., 14.

⁸ Euben, R. L. (1999). Enemy in the mirror : Islamic fundamentalism and the limits of modern rationalism. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press.: 26.

⁹ Güllalp, H. "Modernization Policies And Islamist Politics in Turkey" in Bozdoğan, S. and Kasaba R., eds. (1997). Rethinking Modernity and National Identity In Turkey. London 52.

¹⁰ Sutton P. and Vertigans S. (2002). "The Established and Challenging Outsiders: Resurgent Islam in Secular Turkey" Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions, 3(1): 58-9.

commitments and economic bias, this trend also takes Islamist actors as irrational dysfunctional reactionaries.

The later phase emerged out of the need to explain the persistence and indeed the growth of Islamic fundamentalism despite the further modernization of the Muslim countries. In their continued commitment to the structural-functionalist framework, the scholars of this second phase attributed the phenomenon to the structural crises produced by the failure of secular modernization projects.¹¹ In this narrative, exogenous structural strains, such as the global crises of capitalism after the 1973 Oil Crisis paved the way for the bankruptcy of the developmentalist third world states, which had maintained secular nationalism as their legitimizing framework. The psychological discomfort and alienation of the newly urbanized shantytown dwellers resulting from their economic grievances predisposed them to seek refuge in a politicized form of religion. Thus, collective action in the form of Islamic fundamentalism appeared as an escapist coping mechanism through which individuals regained a sense of belonging and empowerment, and alleviated their psychological discomfort deriving from the structural strains.¹² The major difference of this second phase from the first one apart from its analytical sophistication is its reticence to make any prediction on the future evaporation of fundamentalism. Moreover, it also contains some tendencies to leave room for culture, though it is still superstructural at the end of the day. With its slightly modified forms, this theory still entertains the dominance in the literature amidst the surmounting criticisms.

Finally, during the last decade or so, especially in an aura of postmodern, post-structural and anti-Orientalist critique against the presumptions of Western social theory, the aforementioned dominant framework came under fire on a number of fronts. First of all, the

¹¹ Wiktorowicz, Quintan. (2003). "Islamic Activism and Social Movement Theory: A New Direction for Research" in Roberson, B. A. (2003). Shaping the current Islamic reformation. London ;; Portland, OR, Frank Cass.: 192.

¹² Ibid., 192.

reluctance of Western academia to integrate Islamic movements into “social movement theory” was criticized as an implication of the well-worn Orientalist presumption of Islamic exceptionalism in the form of essentialization of Islamic activism as unintelligible in comparative terms.¹³ This was accompanied by a criticism of the Orientalist denial of authenticity and rationality to Islamist actors.¹⁴ Euben goes even further to rebut the epiphenomenal constructions of Islamic fundamentalism as rooted in the rationality view that was developed in the West.¹⁵ Hence, to her, such constructions ultimately express the Western conceptions of truth, political fears, and cultural unease,¹⁶ and they function as a survival strategy for the rationalist discourse of the West in that “Islamic fundamentalism serves as the irrational Other to our intelligible Self.”¹⁷

These anti-orientalist criticisms in effect have led to a quest for inclusion of the Muslim voices, as in Wiktorowicz’s volume, and attentiveness towards inter-subjectivity, as exemplified by Euben’s analysis. In a deeper sense, especially through Wiktorowicz’s volume on *Islamic Activism*, Islamic movements were incorporated into the main body of social movement theory as novel cases, but by taking enough care not to impose the Western categories to study the non-Western realities, while seeking to de-essentialize Islamism.¹⁸ This work was in a sense culmination of an emerging trend of treating Islamic movements as social movements, initiated by earlier works such as Wickham (2002),¹⁹ which studied Islamic activism in Egypt utilizing the analytical tools of social movement theory; or Yavuz

¹³ Ibid., 189. Also, Sayyid, 1997, 8-14, rigorously shows how Western critique of Islamism rests on assumptions of Islamic exceptionalism by limiting fundamentalism to religious phenomena, by ascribing “control over bodies” only to fundamentalism, and not to governmentality, and by attributing conflation of religion and politics to the essence of Islam.

¹⁴ Wiktorowicz, Q. (2004). Islamic activism : a social movement theory approach. Bloomington, Ind., Indiana University Press. :26-7.

¹⁵ Euben, 21.

¹⁶ Ibid., 22.

¹⁷ Ibid, 43.

¹⁸ Wiktorowicz, 2003, 207.

¹⁹ Wickham, C. R. (2002). Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt. New York, Columbia University Press.

(2003),²⁰ which provided an extensive survey of Islamic movements in Turkey with its examination of Islamic movement as a New Social Movement (NSM). Earlier, Göle had already incorporated Islamism into NSMs drawing on Touraine's studies.²¹

In this emerging trend, there are several attempts to ameliorate the deficiencies and biases of the earlier structuralist-cum-psychological theory. While under the influence of Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT), irrationality assumption of "dysfunctional" Islamist actors are supplanted by rational actor models,²² structure still finds its place in the form of "opportunity structures."²³ In addition, it is suggested that, just like Olson showed,²⁴ grievances do not automatically generate collective action.²⁵ Thus, mobilizing structures and resources, organizational resources, informal institutions and social networks gained importance in Islamic social movement studies.²⁶

Even the rational actor assumption could not escape scrutiny. Wickham, for instance, challenged the rational-actor models of collective action by pointing to their failure to explain "what motivates citizens to participate in opposition politics when self-interest should propel them toward political abstention."²⁷ Hence, ideational factors came to the forefront in understanding Islamic activism. This interest manifested itself through the study of "framing."²⁸ Especially Wickham utilized this concept to explain how Islamist leaders were

²⁰ Yavuz, M. H. (2003). Islamic political identity in Turkey. Oxford, New York.

²¹ Göle Nilüfer. "The Quest of Islamic Self within the Context of Modernity" in Bozdoğan, S. and Kasaba R., eds. (1997). Rethinking Modernity and National Identity In Turkey. London

²² Wiktorowicz, 2003: 195.

²³ Ibid, 200. Political opportunity structures can be understood simply as "changes in the institutional structure and/or informal relations of a political system" Benford, R. D. and D. A. Snow (2000). Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment. Annual Review of Sociology. **26**: 611-39.

²⁴ Klandermans, B., H. Kriesi, et al. (1988). From structure to action : comparing social movement research across cultures. Greenwich, Conn., JAI Press.; 4.

²⁵ Wiktorowicz, 2003: 195.

²⁶ Ibid., 197-199.

²⁷ Wickham, 5.

²⁸ Wiktorowicz, 2003, 202. Collective action frames are defined in the SM literature as "action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization (SMO)." (Benford and Snow, 2000: 614); while framing refers to "conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective

able to disseminate “a particular ‘frame’ of Islam emphasizing the obligation of all Muslims to participate in reforming society at large.”²⁹ Still, the concept of framing in itself does not fully acknowledge the “moral power” of ideas because of its emphasis on the instrumentalization of ideas by rational actors. Wickham does not fully address where ideas come from except for suggesting her “belief” that maybe they come from the opposition movements themselves.³⁰

Under this framework of Islamic social movement theory where resource availability, mobilizing structures, opportunity structures, and framing constitute the key elements, and social-psychological variables play a catalyzing role,³¹ there have still been attempts to incorporate the issues of identity, emotions, and the impact of globalization.³² Altogether, this body of literature promises to show the future direction of Islamic movement analyses. Therefore, the current trend in the literature can be regarded as a move away from the macro-level structural-functional approaches along with their essentialism, economism, conception of dysfunctional-irrational individuals and little or no room for culture, towards a social movement approach with its agency-orientation, rational conception of individuals, strong emphasis on meso-level mobilizing structures and a belief in the independent power of ideas.

Roxanna Euben and Bobby Sayyid contributed to the post-orientalist Islamism analysis by their political theory oriented works. Euben, in defiance of theories that take Islamism as epiphenomenal³³ and against the rationalist epistemological bias of the rational-actor model due to its disciplinary effect on the study of fundamentalism,³⁴ proposed the moral power of

action" Giugni, M. G. (1998). "Structure and Culture in Social Movement Theory." Sociological Forum 13(2): 365-375.

²⁹ Wickham, 147.

³⁰ Ibid., 120.

³¹ Wiktorowicz, 206.

³² Ibid, 209-10.

³³ Euben, 20.

³⁴ Ibid., 23.

ideas in the fundamentalist thought as an independent variable for Islamism's appeal.³⁵ Bobby Sayyid, on the other hand, in his strongly ideational theory, wants to explain how Islamism has been such a powerful force in the last thirty years.³⁶ Yet, he first discusses how the presumptions of the "Western" minds³⁷ distort our understanding of it. He extends the scope of Kemalism by taking it as the prevalent ideology in the Muslim societies prior to the resurgence of Islamism.³⁸ Even though he finds several bits of truth in the five dominant frameworks³⁹ as they explain the causal processes that led to an ideological vacuum, he is still dissatisfied for they never answer why Islamism, rather than liberalism filled the vacuum.⁴⁰ His alternative rests on the argument that the rise of Islamism was only possible when the availability of Islam could be articulated into a counter-hegemonic discourse.⁴¹ The modernist discourse that the Kemalists borrowed and imposed underwent a crisis along with postmodernism, and when Islamists articulated Islam as the master signifier of their political discourse, Islam became the unifying point of the discursive production of Islamists.⁴² Consequently, in his vision, it is more helpful to consider Islamism as (the opening of) a new terrain of ethical, cultural, political and social action, rather than as a name for a group of radical political movements.⁴³

In conclusion to this section, there is a fledgling post-orientalist academic discourse on Islamism with an emphasis on subject voices, agentic explanations and ideational variables, amidst the continued dominance of the orientalist analyses in counter-framing Islamism.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁶ Sayyid, 18.

³⁷ Many Western writers think of Islamism as an ideology that tries to establish control over the women body, that rejects pluralism, and that purposefully conflates religion and politics as a means of furthering its aims (*ibid*: 8).

³⁸ *Ibid*, 70.

³⁹ These five reasons are 1) the failure of nationalist secular elites 2) the lack of political participation 3) the crisis of petty bourgeoisie 4) the petrodollars and uneven economic development 5) the effects of cultural erosion (*ibid*:19-22).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 158.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 157.

Discourse on Islamism thus appears as a contested terrain between interpretations that seek to represent Islamic fundamentalism as the evil Other in order to affirm the “Western” self as civilized and moral, and those that seek to counter this representation by giving Islamist subjects their voice and subjectivity. It is interesting to note that the “Muslim” Other of the past, throughout the last decade has split into radical/fundamentalist “other” *versus* moderate Muslim, where the latter is a more acceptable category to the West. It has yet to be seen how the literature on Turkish Islamism studies this phenomenon.

II. ISLAMISM AS THE INTERNAL “OTHER”

If 9 / 11 sparked an explosion of the literature on Islamic fundamentalism in the English speaking world, the Welfare Party’s rise to power in 1996 made the same effect in Turkey.⁴⁴ This interest poses a contrast to the general indifference to the influence of religion on politics that had characterized the Turkish academia for a long time. Indeed, as Şerif Mardin relates, when he sought to write an academic account for Islam’s role in politics, his colleagues reacted strongly that he was wasting his time with antiquarian concerns.⁴⁵ This was chiefly

⁴⁴ Although it is difficult to grasp the whole literature, for some representative studies, see, David Shankland. (1999). Islam And Society in Turkey. Eothen Press ; Ahmet Çiğdem. (2001). Taşra Epiği. Birikim Yayınları; Nilüfer Göle. “The Quest of Islamic Self within the Context of Modernity” in Bozdoğan, Sibel and Kasaba Reşat, Eds. (1997). Rethinking Modernity and National Identity In Turkey. London (This author is maybe the most productive scholar on this subject with several other works); Nilüfer Narlı (1999) “Rise of Islamic Movement in Turkey.” MERIA. 3(3) <http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/meria/journal/1999/issue3/jv3n3a4.html#author> ; Fred Halliday (2000) “Turkey 1998: Secularism in Question” in Nation and Religion in the Middle East, Rienner: 177-188; Alan Taylor. (1988). “The Secular Nationalist Response” in The Islamic Question in Middle East Politics. Westview:29-45. Mortimer, Edward. (1982). “Turkey-Muslim Nation, ‘Secular State’ in Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam Random House: 126-158; Ronnie Margulies and Ergin Yıldızoğlu. “The Resurgence of Islam and the Welfare Party in Turkey” in Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report ed. Joel Beinin and Joe Stork. University of California Press:144-153; Anat Lapidot (1997) “Islamic Activism in Turkey since the Military Takeover.” in Maddy-Weitzman, Bruce and Inbar Efraim (eds) Religious Radicalism in the Greater Middle East Besa Studies in International Security:62-74; Haldun Güllalp (2002) “Using Islam as a Political Ideology: Turkey in Historical Perspective” Cultural Dynamics 14(1):21-39. Birol Akgün (2002) “Twins Or Enemies: Comparing Nationalist And Islamist Traditions in Turkish Politics” Meria 6(1) <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2002/issue1/jv6n1a2.html> ; Karmon Ely (1997) “Radical Islamic Political Groups in Turkey” Meria 1(4) <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/1997/issue4/jv1n4a2.html> ; Ziya Öniş (2001) “Political Islam at the crossroads: from hegemony to co-existence”. Contemporary Politics 7(4):281-298; Aslı Aydıntaşbaş (2000) “Murder on the Bosphorus” Middle East Quarterly:15-22; Jenny White (2001) “The Islamist Movement in Turkey and Human Rights” Human Rights Review October December:17-26; Hakan Yavuz (2000) “Cleansing Islam From the Public Sphere” Journal of International Affairs. 54(1):21-42..

⁴⁵ Mardin, Şerif. (1997) in Bozdoğan, S. and R. Kasaba (1997). Rethinking modernity and national identity in Turkey. Seattle, University of Washington Press.: 71.

because Kemalist ideology was a modernization theory in action with its unilinear conception of modernization that was equated with Westernization. Then, there seemed little reason to study an artifact of pre-modernity that was bound to die away as the country got more modernized.

Turkish academic discourse had its share of the general trends in the Islamic fundamentalism literature with the prevalence of structural-cum-psychological approaches; yet, it had its unique characteristics as well. In fact, the bulk of literature has been dominated for a long time by descriptive works⁴⁶ that rarely inquired causal mechanisms but mainly described the increased public visibility of Islam primarily through the course of the National Outlook Movement (political party tradition of NOP; NSP; WP; VP; and most recently FP).⁴⁷ Still, most of the arguments of the structural-functionalist approach with its economic commitments run through these works in an unacknowledged manner.

While the structural-cum-psychological approach has enjoyed wide appeal among the scholars, it has never been without contenders. In a similar manner to the changing trends in the broader literature, the scholarship on Islamic fundamentalism has gone through several stages with dominance of certain ones during certain periods. At the cost of oversimplification to a certain degree, following is an account of the general strands in this literature:

⁴⁶ See, for example, Nilüfer Narlı (1999) "Rise of Islamic Movement in Turkey." *MERIA*, 3(3) <http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/meria/journal/1999/issue3/jv3n3a4.html#author> ; Birol Akgün (2002) "Twins Or Enemies: Comparing Nationalist And Islamist Traditions in Turkish Politics" *Meria* 6(1) <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2002/issue1/jv6n1a2.html> ; Ronnie Margulies and Ergin Yıldızoğlu. "The Resurgence of Islam and the Welfare Party in Turkey" in *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report* ed. Joel Beinin and Joe Stork. University of California Press. pp.144-153 ;

⁴⁷ Although the current party in power, Justice and Development Party, was founded by the ex-members of Virtue Party after it was banned, it has detached its ideological affiliation with National Outlook Movement by dropping Islamism and embracing conservatism. Its leader, PM Tayyip Erdoğan, once an fervent Islamist, openly disowned Islamism. His stance represents a new current among ex-Islamists who renounced their Islamism and shifted back to conservatism. For a reasonable analysis of this new movement it has yet to be seen whether this is a long term shift or they just find this strategy more instrumental in order to broaden the opportunity spaces within the public sphere for Islamization from below. For this reason, my paper will not attempt to analyze this new party. Yet, the conservatism of the party does not necessarily have to reflect conversion of all Islamists to conservatism.

2.1. Center versus periphery Approach: From the time on when Şerif Mardin's seminal article "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?"⁴⁸ appeared, this cleavage has been taken to be the key to understand the dynamics of Turkish politics. The periphery here represents the center of a counter-official culture,⁴⁹ where religion has a significant place. More recent pieces like Şerif Mardin's own later work,⁵⁰ studies by Ümit Cizre- Sakallıoğlu,⁵¹ Philip Sutton and Stephen Vertigans (2002) and most recently Taşpınar's⁵² chapters on Islamism represent different instances of this approach. These studies look at Islamic revival as "part of a sociological process whereby the traditional culture of the Anatolian periphery is carried to the political center."⁵³

Hence, the recent visibility of Islam is mainly due to the expansion of, in SM terms, opportunity structures for the religious expression as a result of transition to democracy and hence increased responsiveness of the political system to the populace. Sutton and Vertigans express this dichotomy through the "established-outsiders thesis" of Norbert Elias and John Scotson, originally used to analyze wider group conflicts and interstate differences.⁵⁴ Albeit a useful tool to analyze a persistent cleavage in the Turkish socio-political structure, this approach fails to account for the inner dynamics of periphery, especially the fragmentation of the peripheral political discourse into nationalist and Islamist ones, let alone the tensions between Turkish and Kurdish elements of the periphery. Mardin concedes to the heterogeneity of the periphery;⁵⁵ yet when proto-Islamists' detachment from nationalism and

⁴⁸ It first appeared on Daedalus, Winter 1973, "Post Traditional Societies":169-90. The version I used is reprinted with additions from that version in Engin Akarlı with Gabriel Ben-Dor (1975) Political Participation in Turkey: Historical Background and Present Problems. Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Publications:7-32.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 31.

⁵⁰ Mardin, Ş. (1983). "Religion and Politics in Modern Turkey." in James Piscatori (ed), Islam in the Political Process. Cambridge University Press: 138-159.

⁵¹ Sakallıoğlu, Ü. C. (1996) "Parameters and Strategies of Islam-state interaction in Republican Turkey." International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies. 18 pp.231-251.

⁵² Taşpınar, O. (2005). Kurdish nationalism and political Islam in Turkey : Kemalist identity in transition. New York, Routledge.

⁵³ Ibid., 115.

⁵⁴ Sutton and Vertigans, 2002, 59.

⁵⁵ Mardin, 1975, 12.

the emergence of Islamism is at issue this “key” cannot provide adequate help. Moreover, in negligence of the utilization of mobilization networks by conscious activists, it seems to rest upon the assumption that once opportunity structures become available, movements will automatically arise. In this shape, unaccounted culturalism and undertheorized collective action seem a major deficiency of this approach.

2.2. Kemalist Approaches: Throughout the history of Republican Turkey, the Kemalist academic class has continuously represented the religiously motivated opposition to forced secularization policies as a stubborn reactionary plot against modernization. Thus, they saw little new in essence in the recent growth of Islamism. Arguably the first comprehensive account on Islamism was written as early as 1962 by Tarık Zafer Tunaya. He based his account on the dichotomy between revolutionaries/progressives and traditionalists/reactionaries throughout the history of modernization in Turkey. Islamism here appears as little more than the residue of an antiquarian phenomenon in the modern age. Although Niyazi Berkes dealt with the same issues from a similar perspective in his history of Turkish modernization starting from 18th century,⁵⁶ Tunaya’s book was the most specific account of the Islamic movement for its time.

Needless to say, their predictions did not come true, and to the surprise of Kemalists, although the country got more modernized, the Islamic movement flourished even more rather than vanishing. This initial predictive failure led to a reformulation of the secularist thesis. The new thesis holds primarily the right wing governments responsible for the rise of the movement by giving concessions to the “reactionaries” in order to buy their votes. Given these concessions and external funding by Iran and Saudi Arabia,⁵⁷ Islamists appealed to the alienated, disadvantaged suburbanized segment of the society. Attracted by scholarship,

⁵⁶ Berkes, N. (1964). *The development of secularism in Turkey*. Montreal,, McGill University Press.

⁵⁷ Oran, Baskın. (2001) “Kemalism, Islamism, and Globalization: A Study on the Focus of Supreme Loyalty in Globalizing Turkey” *Northeastern and Black Sea Studies* 1(3): 36.

accommodation, or other forms of rewards,⁵⁸ the alienated youth fell prey to Islamists. There are also references to⁵⁹ the “Green Belt” strategy of the U.S. to counter the spread of socialism.⁶⁰ The media portrayal of Islamism for the most part exemplifies this approach that expresses the fears of the ruling class and relies on paternalistic commitments and increasing utilization of materialist presumptions.

2.3. Structural-cum-Psychological Approach: More analytical works for the most part apply the structural-cum-psychological model to the Turkish context. The narrative flows as follows: the rural exodus due to economic stagnation in itself resulted in unfulfilled aspirations of shanty-town dweller urban youth, as a result of which they were either bribed by Islamists who tried to exploit their disadvantaged position, or they expressed their grievances with the uneven economic development by turning Islam into an ideology promising a just order. Hence, ideology becomes a function of the material discontents. The implication is denial to Islam any authentic moral power to influence the youth or denial of any authenticity in general to cultural grievances in a country where the most significant struggle of the modernizing elites was waged in the realm of cultural modernization. This defiance of Islam playing any causal role also suffers from an inability to answer “why Islamism, and not another ideology” question of the post-orientalist literature. As Öniş suggests,⁶¹ Islamic bourgeoisie (“pious middle class” of the broader literature) is also a manifest face of Islamic activism in Turkey, especially embodied by MÜSİAD (Association for Independent Businessmen). Yet, when Islamism is theorized as an escapist coping mechanism of the poor, such examples and also numerous conversions of the youth from well-to-do families to Islamism remain undertheorized.

⁵⁸ Howe, M. (2000). *Turkey Today: A Nation Divided Over Islam’s Revival*. Westview Press; 10.

⁵⁹ Oran B. (2001). purveys a Marxist account of this Kemalist approach. Kemalist groups affiliated with IP (Workers’ Party) usually gives this kind of explanation.

⁶⁰ Oran, 27 ; Howe, 9.

⁶¹ Öniş, Z. (1997). “The Political Economy of Islamic resurgence in Turkey:the rise of the Welfare Party in Perspective”. *Third World Quarterly*. (18)4: 748 and 757.

Still, the advocates of this approach differ from Kemalists because they are relatively neutral in the reactionary-progressive dichotomy, and they mostly do not refer to the Saudi-Iran (an unlikely alliance) support as a critical variable. Yet, the military's shift of strategy geared towards "more Islam" in the form of Turkish-Islam synthesis is sometimes deployed for this line of analysis.⁶² Nilüfer Narlı points to the political socialization of the conservative youth at universities along Islamic lines as well and gives an explanatory value to this experience.⁶³ By and large, the most explicit instance of economism is this approach.

2.4. Economism-cum-Culturalism: Though largely an extension of the previous approach, this analysis has incorporated ideational variables with their independent explanatory power. Haldun Gülalp, with his numerous articles⁶⁴ and Ziya Öniş⁶⁵ are exemplar figures of this approach. Here the central emphasis is on nationalism accompanied by developmentalism as its corollary, which gave the state the primary role to achieve economic modernization throughout the Republican history. Since this developmentalist state failed to fulfill its promises, it ultimately collapsed by 1980.⁶⁶ Islam has emerged in this context of the global crisis of modernism and secular nationalism.⁶⁷

For the alienated masses, socialism could not be an alternative since it shared the same Eurocentrism of modernist nationalism; hence, Islamism appeared as the most viable alternative to capture these alienated and dispossessed masses. At this stage, "why Islamism, and why not another ideology" question of Sayyid is answered through incorporation of the independent power of ideas. While Öniş focuses more on the economic component, Gülalp is

⁶² Howe, 15, citing Feride Acar.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 226.

⁶⁴ Gülalp, 1997, Gülalp, H. (2002). "Using Islam as a Political Ideology: Turkey in Historical Perspective" *Cultural Dynamics* 14(1):21-39; Gülalp, H. (1995). "The Crisis of Westernization in Turkey: Islamism versus Nationalism" *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(2): 175-182; Gülalp, H. (1999). "Political Islam in Turkey: the rise and fall of the Refah Party" *Muslim World*, 89(1):22-41.

⁶⁵ Öniş, Z. (1997). "The Political Economy of Islamic resurgence in Turkey: the rise of the Welfare Party in Perspective". *Third World Quarterly*, (18)4. 743-766

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 745; Gülalp, 1995, 175.

⁶⁷ Gülalp, 2002, 23.

more prone to emphasize the “identity processes.” Likewise, even though Öniş also talks about the globalization and the rise of cultural relativism,⁶⁸ he expends more time talking about the anti-poverty projects and moral arguments of Islamism than the postmodernist opportunities for Islamism.⁶⁹

Despite his attempt to explain the rise of Islamism with multiple variables, Gülalp subscribes to a unitary conception of nationalism. Another form of nationalism, the one blended with religion and not fraught with Eurocentrism, had already co-opted the peripheral masses. Under these circumstances, it becomes difficult to account for conversion of the religious nationalists from the safe waters of this ideology to Islamism, which would involve more risky situations. Likewise, the increase of cultural relativism can only explain opening up more room for Islam, but that room was opened for many other ideologies as well. It remains unclear then, why Islamism benefited from this aura more than any other ideology.

2.5. Islamism as a (New) Social Movement: As mentioned above, the latest trend in Islamism literature has found its representatives in Turkey as well. Nilüfer Göle, for quite a while, and lately Hakan Yavuz (2003) have looked at Islamism/Islamic movement as an instance of NSMs. Göle borrows heavily from Alain Touraine, who sees the social movements as struggles for control over cultural models. Accordingly, Islamic movements do not articulate solely a politico-religious opposition, but also present a countercultural model of modernization.⁷⁰ Islamism is an expression of the intensifying voice of Muslim identity as that identity, in its search for legitimacy, is radicalized and politicized in the modern world.⁷¹ Yet, in answering “why now” question, Göle does not seem to attend much to the processes of initial cultivation of this Muslim identity.

⁶⁸ Öniş, 1997, 747.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 748.

⁷⁰ Göle, N.. (1997). in Bozdoğan, S. and R. Kasaba (1997). Rethinking modernity and national identity in Turkey. Seattle, University of Washington Press.: 82-3.

⁷¹ Ibid., 88.

It would not be wrong to see Göle, along with the representatives of the previous approach as making a corrective to the authoritarian and state-sponsored project of Kemalism in the form of a society-based project of modernization that focuses on the micro-processes of lifestyles, gender identity, and self-definition of identity.⁷² Nevertheless, with their commitment to the Enlightenment ideals, they still largely differ from the Islamist critics of Kemalist modernization project.

Yavuz, in his by far the most detailed survey of Islamic movements in Turkey, develops a NSM approach to Islamism sharing many concerns of the post-orientalist perspective and seeking “a new framework which incorporates ideas and traditions within social and political contexts to understand the rise of a new political consciousness.”⁷³ Towards this end, he differentiates between several strands within the larger Islamic movement through a clear sympathy towards the horizontal Islamic identity movements, which he sees as flexible and pragmatic, as opposed to the vertical ones that are dogmatic.⁷⁴ He argues that, “by embracing certain opportunity spaces within the public sphere, Islamic movements could become a motivating force for economic expansion, democratization, and the popular acceptance of many aspects of modernity.”⁷⁵ He attributes the rise of Islamic movement to democratization and liberalization, which have brought Islam closer to the center of politics, and opened up public spaces for Muslim voices in politics.⁷⁶ In a later work, his account of Islamic movement favors a combination of factors like political economy, political opportunity structure and cultural contention.⁷⁷ Here, he links economic liberalization with expanded

⁷² Bozdoğan and Kasaba (eds) is almost like a manifesto of this current.

⁷³ Yavuz, M. H. (1998). *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey: Movements, Agents, and Processes*. Department of Political Science. Madison, University of Wisconsin-Madison: 572.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* ; 44.

⁷⁵ Yavuz, 2003, 15.

⁷⁶ Yavuz, 1998, 551.

⁷⁷ Yavuz (2004) “Opportunity Spaces, Identity, and Islamic Meaning in Turkey” in Wiktorowicz. ed.

“opportunity spaces” and argues that these spaces favored the society-based (horizontal) movements rather than the state-based ones.⁷⁸

Yavuz, who was joined later by Taşpınar (2005), can be said to have countered the dominant discourse by pointing to the democratizing and pluralizing potential of Islamic movements. Yet, Yavuz’s equation of society-based movements with more pluralistic projects in juxtaposition to his treatment of state-based movements as harboring authoritarian or even fascist views⁷⁹ requires more elaboration, given that radical Islamist movements often times criticize those society-based movements for being too authoritarian and hierarchical in their internal structure. Indeed, taking an apolitical stance towards the political system does not automatically render these movements immune from in-group authoritarianism, while being radical and anti-systemic does not automatically render one authoritarian or intolerant.

All things considered, where does the literature on Turkish Islamism stand vis-à-vis the broader literature? We have seen how modernization theory, structural-cum-psychological, and lastly new social movement approaches found their counterparts in Turkish case in the form of Kemalist approaches, Güllalp and Öniş’s slightly modified structural-cum psychology theories, and Göle and Yavuz’s new social movement approaches, respectively. However, despite the contending voices, especially those of Yavuz and Taşpınar, the discourse is still too much dominated by the orientalist paradigm. Nonetheless, we can talk about the existence of a fledgling post-orientalist academic discourse on Islamism in Turkey. In the following section I will elaborate on this to search for an alternative of inter-subjective understanding of Turkish Islamism.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 270.

⁷⁹ Yavuz, 2003, 110.

III. “UNDERSTANDING” TURKISH ISLAMISM: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Notwithstanding the title, my initial preoccupation shall be how the literature on Islamism obstructs “understanding” Islamism. Euben’s effort to understand “Islamic fundamentalism” against a backdrop of a discourse that is more an expression of “Western conceptions of truth, political fears, and cultural unease”⁸⁰ will guide me in my quest for describing the power relations that mediate the discursive practices on Islamism and later to propose an alternative.

Euben takes Gadamer’s idea that understanding is a dialogue between two horizons of meaning, to result in fusion of horizons, where “prejudices” are part of constitutive claims.⁸¹ In the development of inter-subjective meaning and mutual understanding, there is no notion of final valid interpretation and no transcendental position, although this position does not amount to affirmation of subjectivity and relativity. What Gadamer misses here is, as Habermas pointed out, the processes such as labor and power that are not exhausted by language. Language, then, being also constituted by material conditions, is a medium of domination and power as well.

The question remains as to who is there to tell the distortion in meaning? If our inquiry is to explicate the meaning of a non-Western phenomenon, how can we get around the distortion of meaning given that the West has spread its political culture all around the world? Thus, it is important to see the power effects that mediate the dialogue. As Said and later postcolonial theorists have adroitly elaborated, Orientalism is “more revealing of the formation and presence of European-Atlantic power than as a valuable or truthful discourse

⁸⁰ Euben, 22.

⁸¹ Euben, 36. Note that this rather neutral use of prejudice does not necessarily carry the evaluative meaning of everyday use of the term.

about the Orient itself.”⁸² On this ground, she declares the current scholarship on Islamic fundamentalism as an “exercise in power, a power to construct and control a subject that has little opportunity to contest either the interpretation or the terms of the discourse....without reference to the adherents’ own understanding of the connection between action and meaning”.⁸³

Speaking of Orientalism in the context of discourse on Turkish Islamism, which is largely produced by “non-Western” Turkish scholars, might seem too far-fetched. Yet, on many grounds, it is my contention that the discourse on Islamism in Turkey, which is largely produced along secularist lines, is an exercise in power. Religious discontents have always seemed as an anathema to the Kemalist modernization project, which can rightly be called an “internal colonization project”⁸⁴ in the language of postcolonial theory. Thus, religious periphery, along with Kurdish minority, appeared as the internal Other of the modernizing elites. Indeed, a quick glimpse on the nationalist literature written during the heyday of the Kemalist reforms will reveal the deployment of most of the rhetorical strategies of the colonial discourse.⁸⁵ One-party period novelist and politician Yakup Kadri’s portrayal of “reactionaries” in *Ankara* is quite telling: “Black Terror, black terror! Our enemy is not only Europe, but also these, as well. The day will come when it will be necessary to fight against them.”⁸⁶

⁸² Ibid., 22.

⁸³ Ibid., 41-43.

⁸⁴ I borrowed the term from Moore-Gilbert, B. J. (1997). Postcolonial theory : contexts, practices, politics. London ; New York, Verso. Yordan, borrowing from Ed Ayres and Habermas defines the term as “the imposition of new definitions of Modernity to areas that have already experienced the project in Modernity. The idea is not to simply control the activities of social groupings, but to achieve social stability to implement projects that will move these groups and their country closer to the physical and metaphysical spaces of the Western type of Modernity.” Yordan, C. (2000). Internal Colonization, Ethno-Nationalism & Negative Emancipation: A Critique of Mainstream Social Integration Projects. International Studies Association. Retrieved on May 17, 2005 from Columbia International Affairs Online <<http://www.ciaonet.org/isa/yoc01/index.html>>

⁸⁵ I myself undertook such a project to identify the tropes in representing the internal Other in the nationalist literature. Yakup Kadri’s *Yaban* (1932) and *Ankara*, Halide Edip’s *Zeyno’nun Oğlu* (1928) that also involved the Kurdish Other all proved an extensive use of the colonial tropes.

⁸⁶ Karaosmanoğlu, Y. K. (1999). Ankara. Istanbul, İletişim Yayınları.: 51. This book was first published in 1934

Islamism's portrayal as an internal Other by the *hegemonic* secularist discourse manifests itself at many different levels. First, indefinite and indiscriminate use of terminology, that characterizes both the Turkish secularist discourse and Western Orientalist discourse, appears as part of "exercise in power" through essentialization of complex phenomena. This more or less dominates the discourse, notwithstanding the admission that "Turkey's Islamic society is hardly monolithic, ranging from mystics who oppose involvement in politics to politicians determined to restore *Sharia*, by violence if necessary."⁸⁷

Hence, I regard the terminological indiscriminateness for the most part more than carelessness, but as a rhetorical strategy in both discourses. This strategy, as a power effect, creates the impression that in their wide variety, all sorts of socio-political actions with an "Islamic" adjective share a certain essence no matter how they differ from each other. Hence, it makes no difference if they oppose the use of violence, or whether they have a fundamentalist or a dynamic view of shariah; as they ultimately belong to the same essential worldview and they are associated with each other. For instance, although most studies confirm that Islamists of Turkey are in general peaceful,⁸⁸ violence of a few groups is represented as the essential characteristics of Islamism.⁸⁹ It is correct that moderate vs. fundamentalist distinction has become a dominant representation strategy. However, nobody can really identify where one ends and the other one starts. The latent message thus becomes, certain attributes associated with Islamic fundamentalism as the essential features of it binds all of the Islamic movements which act on the socio-political sphere with Islamic motivations.

⁸⁷ Howe, 2000, 5.

⁸⁸ Akgün; Heper, cited by Howe, p.50; Halliday, p.185.

⁸⁹ Ely; his evidence for these claims are mainly hard-core Kemalist newspapers. Howe also argues that Islamists plotted some violent actions in corroboration with the police (p.48), although mostly ultranationalists were convicted for those crimes, or those crimes have not been solved by the legal officials yet.

There is in fact an intense diversity of Islamic groups in Turkey with parallel organizations of the same sort that cannot be encapsulated into a bifurcated structure, and they are almost never able to work out a collective action against any of the challenges by the political system.⁹⁰ Some of them seek refuge in Allah from politics in their daily prayers while others are highly politicized. Despite this diversity, “Islamism” functions as a catchword that seem to lump together at some point all the differences and cleavages of these groups.

This is not to say that secularist *hegemonic* discourse remained unchallenged. Indeed, as I will elaborate later, Islamist discourse emerged also not only as a contender to the self-definition of Turkish people, but also as a resistance strategy to the Kemalist discourse in a way to empower the “religious” subject. On top of all other cleavages in Turkey, definition of Turkish citizenry thus remains as a contested space between secularists and Islamist, with other discourses in between tilted to either side.

Given this contested nature of the discourse on Islamism in Turkey, empiricist-rationalist social science epistemologies that aim for “objectivity” by means of subject’s isolating herself from the objectified phenomenon are bound to be an exercise in power. We are talking about secularist subjects analyzing their internal Other, Islamists, as their object while two sides are situated in an uneven power relationship. Under these circumstances, there seems little chance that the produced “knowledge” will escape being a power effect. On the other side of the coin, Islamist representation of Kemalists, because of the identity construction processes that incite the temptation to turn difference into Otherness,⁹¹ will also be an effect of Islamists’ attempts of empowering themselves through discourse. It is quite

⁹⁰ The best example is the lack of collective action on the resistance against headscarf ban at the universities.

⁹¹ Connolly, W. E. (2002). *Identity, difference : democratic negotiations of political paradox*. Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press.: 65.

telling that, as a foreign observer also recorded, secularists and Islamists in Turkey generally lead an isolated way of life in their respective parallel societies.⁹²

Does this discursive entanglement leave any space for interpretation? Gadamer's method for inter-subjective understanding comes into view as a step away from the attempting to "explain" the phenomenon at hand by objectifying it from a transcendental subject position, towards the end of "fusion of horizons" by means of an inter-subjective dialogue. In order to retain the achievement of supplanting objectivity by intersubjectivity, one also needs to be aware of his prejudices as well as his situatedness in a power relationship, since this activity is still fraught with distortion. As Euben suggests, indeed valid for many interpretivist scholars, Gadamer's almost exclusive emphasis on social inquiry as explication of meaning turns out to be a weak form of relativism for not leaving enough space for critique. In a dialogue, participants might misunderstand or misrepresent their own experience. Hence, it is incumbent on the analyst not to take human beings as objects in nature, but also not to take their word as it is.⁹³

Along these lines, despite her evident indebtedness to Foucault, and in turn, Said for their exposition of the power distortion in meaning, Euben also takes issue with Said for he fails to question if there is an Orient out there independent of the discourse. Following Halliday's⁹⁴ footsteps in this criticism, she says, "the fact that Orientalist analyses are implicated in imperialist power is not a sufficient reason to disqualify or negate the knowledge they produce."⁹⁵ Therefore, in this inquiry, while on the one hand Orientalist analysis are suspect for their implication in imperialist power, the empowered subaltern

⁹² Howe, 2000, 4.

⁹³ Euben, 36-40.

⁹⁴ For both Orientalists and its critics, he says, "For neither of them does the analysis of what actually happens in these societies, as distinct from what people say and write about them, ... come first." Halliday, F. (2003). Islam and the myth of confrontation : religion and politics in the Middle East. London ; New York New York, I.B. Tauris ;

In U.S. and Canada distributed by Palgrave Macmillan.

⁹⁵ Euben., 46.

voices who can now speak for themselves do not necessarily give the true meaning of their situation. The methodological leverage gained by turning the monologue into a dialogue does not transfer the possession of truth claims from the interpreting subject to the subaltern object. It is rather an increased attentiveness to all of the mentioned factors without making strong truth claims. Therefore, in my methodological commitments in order to understand Islamism, I will join with Euben to target only a “better interpretation,” which is,

simultaneously attentive to participants’ self-understandings and to the way power functions in language, that is, interpretation that make central the explication of the subjects’ meanings without concluding that there is no perspective adequately distant from them from which to criticize the actors’ account of their own experience.⁹⁶

My goal for a better interpretation imposes certain commitments upon me. In my analysis, I will aim for terminological clarification, attentiveness to the diversity of Islamic groups, in such a way not to essentialize any of the attributes of particular groups as defining characteristics of the Islamic movement, and realization of the methodological view I laid out above. This will require me to be considerate of the value and potential validity of the knowledge produced within the secularist discourse while giving voice to the Islamist perspective. In that, I will utilize the historical narratives regarding the Republican era in relation with the Islamist actors’ self-narratives. While this will provide the historical context, I will analyze the formative period of Islamism by looking at both ideational and sociological processes. To that end, I will maintain clear lines between the processes involved in the emergence of Islamist discourse and dissemination of this discourse both through discursive practices and concrete socio-political actions. For this latter part, I will utilize the social movement literature. Among my philosophical commitments, ideas matter. They matter not only as part of a means-ends or value-rationality, but for their own power. Apart from that, with an emphasis on framing, I will attend to the process of dissemination of Islamist ideas

⁹⁶ Ibid., 45.

where value-rationality played an important role. Thus, my analysis will give tribute to the international and historical context as well as ideational variables, but also other structural circumstances such as socio-economic conditions and resource mobilization processes will also have their share.

Terminological clarification will precede any further inquiry. Islamic fundamentalism generally connotes the fundamentalist movements worldwide. It is desirable to theorize at a general level when religious groups with calls for “return to the fundamentals” and “conflation of religion and state” flourish in almost all religions. But then we should be careful not to label apolitical religious groups or religio-political groups with non-puritanical agendas as fundamentalist. On the other hand, if with our conceptualization we want to capture the variety of religious groups, which in fact are more responsible for the increased public visibility of Islam than the strictly political groups, then we should simply focus on the increased religiosity and its effects on public policy as a transnational phenomenon. In that case, we should not, for instance, take increased distribution of the copies of the Qur’an as an indicator of the rise of fundamentalism.⁹⁷

In my quest for a better interpretation of Turkish Islamism along these lines, I made the Islamists speak for themselves. I conducted interviews with four leading Islamist intellectual-activists who have had formative influence in the emergence of Islamism as a discourse in Turkey and who have been identifying themselves, though reluctantly,⁹⁸ as Islamists since the late 1960s, when there was hardly any talk about Islamism in the literature.

In social scientific terms, there is an issue of external validity in my inquiry. My respondents were fervent opponents of the regime, by even refusing to vote in order not to legitimize it. In this sense, they are marginal in their view among the Islamic-minded people

⁹⁷ This is in fact my first-hand observation at an academic conference where a political science professor employed increased distribution of copies of the Qur’an as an indicator of escalating fundamentalism.

⁹⁸ This reluctance is only terminological, as they consider being Islamist only a necessary corollary to being a Muslim.

in Turkey. So, it might be argued that I cannot arrive at any valid conclusions about structural features of Turkish Islamism based on this unrepresentative sample. Yet, my interpretation does not aim at providing a map of Turkish Islamists, which has been adeptly done by Yavuz's (2003) detailed survey of Islamic movement in Turkey. Mine is rather an attempt to trace the processes by which Islamism, in my very specific definition, emerged as a discourse and how it transformed the ideological landscape of Turkey by its dissemination.

In fact, my focus on the margins of Islamic movement in Turkey has its own value. Given the fact that, whether through constitutional means or by revolution, any intention to abolish the Kemalist principles in the constitution in favor of a political system that is more accommodative towards religion is subject to legal prosecution in Turkey, it is quite hard to get reliable information about what percentage of the population wants such a change and how they justify it. My respondents thus become more important for their outspoken behavior in demanding this regime change. Though they did not want me to conceal their names, I had to opt for anonymity in order to take utmost care not to get them involved in legal persecution because of their statements. In that, I followed Jenny White, who changed the names of her interviewees because of the "the increasingly hostile political climate toward anyone suspected of being active in the Islamist movement" and who even took care "not to link [known Islamist politicians] directly to statements that might be used against them."⁹⁹

In another sense, these respondents posed hard cases for my hypothesis that nationalism might be a key to the dynamics of Islamist discourse. As being among the most active people in disseminating their ideas through journals or newspapers that were highly influential especially between the late 1970s through the 80s, ideological transformation of these highly influential individuals may lead us to the discursive processes themselves.

⁹⁹ White, Jenny. Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics University of Washington Press: Seattle and London, 2002: xi.

While my analysis acknowledges its own boundaries by not targeting any empirical generalization, this does not imply any subscription to the idiosyncrasy of Turkey or Turkish Islamism within the Muslim world. My particularism in this work is methodological rather than substantive. At this stage, I am just seeking to make sense of Islamism, as it emerged in Turkey, while I am aware that as many structural-cum-psychological studies demonstrated, there are stark regularities across the cases in the Muslim world in terms of social bases of Islamists as well as the conditions of the emergence of Islamist movements. It is yet interesting to note that under the conditions where there is little accommodation of religious freedom by the political system, the term Islamist gained a much wider meaning in Turkey. By expanding the sphere of system against the life-world, the Kemalist system politicized any expression of religion. So, any desire to practice religion more freely in personal or social life by even the most apolitical individuals carried a political meaning for the regime. That is why, to the dismay of the mostly apolitical *hijabi* women themselves, any attempt to don headscarf is regarded by Kemalists as attempts to “damage the basic principles of the Republic, ... to destroy the Republic completely.”¹⁰⁰ Under these circumstances, the common use of the term Islamist apply to a much wider range of individuals than maybe any other Muslim country where Islamist denotes a clear demand for *shariah* and a much more politically conscious group of people. In my research I am employing this more specific but global sense of the term.¹⁰¹ Despite the particularity of Turkey, my inquiry lends itself to a study of comparative Islamisms and even comparative fundamentalism, rightly referring to only some Islamists.

¹⁰⁰ “Rectors' Committee: 'Wearing a headscarf in the university is a crime'”03.14.1998. *Turkish Daily News*. (Accessed on 05.05.2005) Available at :

http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/oldeditions.php?dir=03_14_98&fn=DOM.HTM

¹⁰¹ It is interesting to note that in the face of this indeterminacy of the meaning, Hakan Yavuz changed the term Islamist in many contexts in his dissertation later on to “Islamic” when he published it as a book (see, p. 112 in the book and p. 266 in the dissertation). In the personal correspondence I made to inquire about this terminological change, he justified it by mentioning the counter-revolutionary connotations of Islamist, which he did not want to use for the broader movement. Yavuz, Hakan. E-mail, May 13, 2005.

With that in mind, in order to make my interviewees speak for themselves, I posed open-ended questions to get their narratives of the rise of Islamism in Turkey, as well as where how this process was related with nationalism. My first question was about the Islamist pioneers of the Second Constitutional Period (between 1908 and the Republican period), and I asked how they saw themselves vis-à-vis these pioneers and how they evaluated their relationship with nationalism. Following that, I asked about the shape that the relationship between Islamism and nationalism took during the One-Party period through 1950s. Following that, I requested them to relate their personal stories about their Islamist past with specific reference to the contrast between the nationalist mood of the 1960s and their fervent anti-nationalism today. The interviews were concluded by their evaluations about my observation on the oscillation of Islamic groups between nationalism and Islamism as well as their changing relations with socialists and their attitude on ethnic issues.

At the beginning of this search for inter-subjective meaning of Islamism, my “prejudice” was that the trajectory of emergence of Islamism as a discourse was in most part conditioned by the relations between Islam and the state crystallized during the early Republican period, as largely embodied by the center-periphery relations. The re-emergence of Islamism in the late 1960s and throughout 1970s has carried with it the complex amalgamation of relations with conservatism, communism, Kemalist system, and most importantly, nationalism. By the late 1970s, especially through their acquaintance with a framed Islam as an ideology in the translated works of Islamist theorists of the Muslim world, these conservative outsiders detached themselves from nationalism and gradually became Islamic Universalists, hence Islamists. Islamism, by virtue of its unique historical trajectory in Turkey, could sustain itself as an autonomous ideology and discourse as it could disengage itself from nationalism.

The next section will be structured as a historical narrative to meet these commitments. I will embark on the narrative by giving an account of Islamist pioneers of the early 20th century. Foundation of the Turkish Republic constitutes a break point for the following subsection, where domestication of nationalism as a coping mechanism will be elaborated. My focus then will be on the precipitating factors leading to proto-Islamists and their transformation into truly Islamists along with the emergence of an Islamist discourse through the specific external and internal circumstances of 1960s and 1970s. Then I will look at the dissemination of this ideology by synthesizing the catalyzing socio-economic circumstances, Islamists' re-framing Islamism in the Turkish context and their active resource mobilization strategies, and beyond all, the moral power of Islamist worldview itself in its resonance with the alienated masses.

IV. INTERSUBJECTIVE UNDERSTANDING OF TURKISH ISLAMISM

4.1. Islamist Pioneers

The bulk of the literature assumes Islamism as a nascent ideology of the 1970s. While more mainstream secularist scholarship, more informed by the worldwide trends of emergence of Islamism, tends to see the conservative resentment with Kemalist state a distinct category from Islamist opposition, hard-core Kemalists, perceive it as an ebb and tide process. In this sense they do not admit any intermission even during one party period. As Tunaya suggests, "this group can survive in secret when it is silent or it is silenced, it can find an appeal among the mass to believe in it."¹⁰² Interestingly enough, the same view is maintained by Türkan Saylan, a hard-core Kemalist three decades later: "Islamists went underground and formed a counterrevolutionary movement."¹⁰³

¹⁰² Tunaya, T. Z. (1962). İslâmcılık Cereyanı: İkinci Meşrutîyetin Siyasi hayatı Boyunca Gelişmesi ve Bugüne Bıraktığı Meseleler [The Current of Islamism: Its Development During the Political Life of the Constitutional Period and Its Legacy for Today]. Istanbul, Baha Matbaası.:viii.

¹⁰³ Howe, 2000, 9.

In fact, what Tunaya has in mind is more than the conservative peripheral resentment with Kemalist reforms. He refers rather to the early Islamism, which he sees as the strongest ideology of the Second Constitutional Period (1908-1918).¹⁰⁴ Joining with Tunaya, Kara, who is an anti-secularist but also an anti-Islamist, argues that “while Islamism, in the form pan-Islamism, had been the dominant political ideology of the Ottoman Empire since 1870, its emergence as an *intellectual movement* is traced back to forty years later, along with the publication of the first issue of *Sırat-ı Mustakim* [The True Path] on August 14, 1908.”¹⁰⁵ Notwithstanding its immensely diverse characteristics, this intellectual movement was in no good terms with the nationalist ideology of the time. They considered nationalism as against *Sharia*.¹⁰⁶ One of the most important works of the time was “The Nationality Cause in Islam”¹⁰⁷ by Babanzade Ahmed Naim,¹⁰⁸ where he, using textual evidence of the Qur’anic verses and sayings of the Prophet, argued that nationalism was in no way compatible with Islam. In the same piece, he uses the term *İslâmcı* (Turkish for Islamist), which explicitly shows that the thinkers of the time were using this term to name themselves, despite their misgivings.¹⁰⁹ Kara’s quotations from the leading figures such as Akif, Nursi, and Musa Kazım¹¹⁰ prove that beyond any doubt the early Islamism was characterized by anti-nationalism. However, Kara, relating a story from Naim, argues that when the World War I ended in 1918, whatever was left out of Islamism was nationalism blended with Islamism.¹¹¹ To support his argument, he relates a story from Naim during the Republican period, and

¹⁰⁴ Tunaya, 1962, 1.

¹⁰⁵ Kara, İ. (1986). *Türkiye’de İslâmcılık Düşüncesi: Metinler, kişiler* [the Islamist Thought in Turkey: Texts and Figures]. Çağaloğlu, İstanbul, Risale. : xxix. (Emphasis added).

¹⁰⁶ Tunaya, 1962: 276.

¹⁰⁷ The original term is *kavmiyet*. Among the three terms, *ırk* basically means race, *kavim* means ethnicity, and *millet* means nation in today’s Turkish. As a matter of fact, the original meaning of *millet*, as drawn from the Qur’an, was religion, and was later extended to mean *umma*, religious community. It was a strategy for Turkish modernists of the time to use Islamic terms in new meanings, and Islamists of today usually accuse them for exploiting legitimizing power of Islam to import foreign ideas to the intellectual landscape of Turkey. Here, Babanzade’s use of *kavmiyet* instead of *millet* might have stemmed from a similar concern.

¹⁰⁸ *İslâmda Davayı Kavmiyet*. 1332 [Rumî calendar]. Darulhilafé, for another piece by him, see “Milliyetçilik ve Türkçülük Üzerine” [On Nationalism and Turkism] in Ismail Kara. 1986..

¹⁰⁹ Kara, 1986, xxxv.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, xlv-liv.

¹¹¹ Kara, 1986, xxxi.

quotes the national anthem of Turkey, which was written by Akif in 1921, for its deployment of the terms like *ırk* (race), *millet* (nation), *vatan* (fatherland), *bayrak* (flag), and *ata* (ancestor).¹¹² Kara's argument does not seem persuasive given that in that story Naim's attitude can rather be characterized as adopting a milder tone towards folk Islam than endorsing nationalism. Conceptual analysis of Akif's vocabulary, on the other hand would reveal his use of those terms not in a nationalist, but an Islamist sense.¹¹³

Therefore, much to the neglect of the literature, there was an anti-nationalist Islamist discourse centered on the idea of *ummah* or Islamic universalism. In a very short reference in the dissertation that was taken out in the book,¹¹⁴ Yavuz calls this age "Liberal Age," apparently inspired by the use of this term for the Arab world by Hourani.¹¹⁵ This is mainly because of the more conciliatory attitude of these Islamist pioneers towards some Western political ideas, especially through seeking to show their compatibility and even resemblance with Islamic notions, as illustrated by their opposition to the absolutist rule of Abdulhamid II on the basis of *shura* (consultation) principle.

In response to my questions about this earlier period of Islamism, it is worth noting that my Islamist interviewees embraced the Islamists of this period as their antecedents. So, despite Yavuz's implication of a contrast between the two trends, they tended more to embrace the Islamist pioneers. Secondly, contrary to Kara, Islamists rejected any association between Islamist pioneers and nationalism. Therefore, in their self-understanding, these Islamists trace their history as an intellectual discourse back to early 20th century without any clear contrast in that period to their own vision.

¹¹² Ibid., liv.

¹¹³ Like "Hani milliyetin İslâm idi..." [Wasn't Islam your nationality?] (Kara, 1986:L).

¹¹⁴ Yavuz, 1998, 268-9.

¹¹⁵ Hourani, A. H. (1962). Arabic thought in the liberal age, 1798-1939. London, New York,, Oxford University Press.

4.2. One-Party Period and Domestication of Nationalism

While Islam was instrumentalized to enlist popular support for the nationalist cause of Kemal during the Independence War, as the goal was constantly declared to be “saving the Caliph,” the ensuing foundation of Republic was the start of an unrelenting secularization of Turkey through delegitimation of Islam in the public discourse as a source of socio-political principles. Islamist pioneers showed mixed reactions to the new secularist regime. While Akif, the poet of the national anthem, chose *hijra* (emigration) to Egypt, Nursi dropped any distinctly political action in favor of going grassroots to revive the essentials of Islamic credo among the populace without any reference to politics. Another scholar who started an apolitical grassroots movement in order to preserve the popular knowledge about the rituals of Islam was Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan. Some were co-opted by the regime, such as Seyyid Bey, who justified the abolition of the Caliphate by utilizing his command on Islamic corpus, and Günaltay, who later served as prime minister, right before the electoral victory of DP. All in all, Islamism as a political discourse was delegitimized and eliminated from the public discourse in any form or capacity.

At the grassroots level, Ankara was engaged in a major kulturkampf against Islam and its political legitimacy.¹¹⁶ This authoritarian model of ‘modernization from above’ aimed at forcefully imposing secularism and Westernization on reluctant masses.¹¹⁷ Kemalism manifested itself as an internal colonialism where a nationalist elite holding universalist conception of Western civilization tried to redesign the society along Western lines. Still, except erratic armed rebellions that erupted a few times,¹¹⁸ most of the periphery chose passive opposition. The periphery, who did not identify itself as Turk,¹¹⁹ did not also

¹¹⁶ Taşpınar, 2005, 119.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 116.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 118.

¹¹⁹ This point is illustrated by Yakup Kadri, in his well-known nationalist novel *Yaban*. When Ahmet Celâl, the nationalist officer gets angry with the “ignorant” peasants who praised Greek army’s occupation of their village,

internalize anti-religious Republican reforms and “the process of establishment was only ever partially achieved.”¹²⁰ To illustrate this point, Özdalga relates Kemalist novelist Mahmut Makal’s memoirs when he served as an elementary school teacher in a remote village around the 1940s.¹²¹ The book documents the hostile attitudes of the villagers against him. He hardly gets a place to live. More interestingly when he criticizes the villagers for their improper ablution for prayer, he is labeled as a “regular infidel.”¹²² Özdalga also quotes Makal telling the reluctance of the villagers to send their kids to school.¹²³ Although scholars tend to associate this reluctance with either ignorance or their desire to employ their kids’ labor in the farm, this anecdote refers to the possibility of non-cooperation. It is hard to know the overall attitude of the rural population of that time against the reforms of the Republic, especially in the religious realm; yet this does not seem to be an exceptional case. I remember an old-age supporter of Erbakan, the leader of the National Outlook Movement, explaining his illiteracy as, “we are not educated, because our parents did not send us to the school fearing that we would be anti-religious.”¹²⁴ One of my interviewees confirmed this explanation by relating his family history: “My grandfather learned one day that the gendarme¹²⁵ would raid the village to forcefully enroll the kids in the village to school. I had my aunt at the school age. At that same night, my father tells, my grandfather took whatever he can with him, and fled the

he yells at them “Aren’t you Turkish?” They reply “No sir, we are Muslims, alhamdulillah; those you named live in Haymana.” (Karaosmanoğlu, Yakup Kadri, (1998) *Yaban*, ed. Atilla Özkırımlı, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul: 173.)

¹²⁰ Sutton and Vertigans, 2002, 65

¹²¹ Özdalga Özdalga, E. (1998). *The Veiling Issue : Official Secularism, and Popular Islam in Modern Turkey*. Richmond, Surrey, Curzon.: 28.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 29.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹²⁴ For a diatribe by a famous religious nationalist activist on the anti-Islamic socialization of the educational system of that period, see Serdengeçti, O. Y. (2000). *Bir Nesli Nasıl Mahvettiler [How They Ruined a Generation]*. İstanbul, Türk Edebiyatı Vakfı. It is interesting to note that this outspoken opponent of the regime (b. 1917) was the nephew of a famous Islamist of the earlier period, Ahmed Hamdi Akseki (whose article against nationalism can be found in the second volume of Kara’s anthology (1987) and his father was a *mufti* (local religious official) of his hometown, while Süleyman Arif Emre, who would be one of the most intimate friends of Erbakan in the National Outlook Movement, was his lawyer. This clearly shows the connections involved in the lineage of Islamist opposition.

¹²⁵ Gendarmas left a lively impression in the collective memory of “outsiders” since they were usually used by the state to recruit kids to the school, or to ensure the compliance of the people with Kemalist reforms.

village for the mountains.” Education was the primary means of upward social mobility to join the ranks of Kemalist modernizing elites then. The Republican regime, which was not founded upon any stratification system of ascribed status, had instead created such a distance between the educated and uneducated.¹²⁶ This distinction coincided with the dichotomy between center and periphery, or established and outsiders. Indeed the Republican regime was quite affective in educating the children as secularist elites.

This resentment against secularization in the periphery resulted from the other reforms as well. The same interviewee relates, “my father used to wear the hat by force of the law; since he could not openly oppose it under the fear of persecution. But, each and every evening, whenever he came home the very first thing he would do was to throw the hat to the floor in curses. I wondered then, why he would do the very same thing each and every day. Now I realize that he never wanted us to think that he really embraced wearing the hat of his own free will.”

During this period, Kemalist hegemony in the intellectual landscape was not without any challenges. Although Islamism had been eliminated from the public discourse, especially after the 1940s contending voices against the political system began to rise. Apart from some writers of the old generation, the most outspoken voices against the anti-Islamic policies were Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1904-1983) and Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti (1917-1983), with their *Büyükdoğu* (the Great Orient) and *Serdengeçti* magazines, respectively. The most striking aspect of this religious opposition was its embrace of nationalist discourse. Hence, when Islamist self-identification of the old era was *Türkiye Müslümanları* (Muslims of Turkey), Serdengeçti, anti-nationalist Islamist Akseki’s nephew, adopted the term *Müslüman Türk* (Muslim Turk) of the nationalist ideologue Gökalp.¹²⁷ Among other magazines with some

¹²⁶ Mardin, 1997: 71.

¹²⁷ *Türkiye Müslümanları* is Akif’s term (Kara, 1986, 505). Serdengeçti, for instance, uses Muslim Turk in *Serdengeçti*, 09.11.1949. Available on the web at: <http://www.otuken.org/arsiv/gazetelerimiz.html>

religious content, *Sebilürreşad*, as *the* magazine of Islamist pioneers that was closed by the one-party regime but started its publication towards the end of it, *Büyük Cihat* (Greater Jihad), *Hür Adam* (Free Man),¹²⁸ and *Selamet* (Salvation) stood out.

This is the period when Tunaya talks about a form of Islamism identifying itself as nationalism and couching Islamic ideas in nationalist terms. In the journals he quotes the nationalist discourse is quite evident: “For Turks, love for religion and love for nation are intermingled, even unified. Love for religion incites other loves of Turks, it is a source of them.”¹²⁹ It requires a discourse analysis of these journals¹³⁰ to be sure, yet this quick snapshot seems to confirm Tunaya’s conclusion.

Yavuz takes these journals as part of the “Civilizational Movement in the Literature” that runs through 1950 and 1970. I am more inclined to assign them to the domestication period of nationalism during one party period. In fact Yavuz’s analysis also supports my observation that the Islamic discourse of this period incorporated and domesticated the Turkish nationalism of the Republican intelligentsia.¹³¹ Thus, nationalist discourse became the only means to express Islamic ideas. It is hard to identify the influence of this religio-nationalist media on the society where the urbanized-educated generations were largely Westernized along secularist lines, but the fact they were at least able to survive indicates the existence of a literate urban class with religious leanings. Even Tunaya, labels this new class of writers as “Republican Traditionalists,” rather than Islamists and explains the lack of a

¹²⁸ Albayrak, S. "CHP'nin Din Atağı" *Demokrasi Yolunda Siyasi Kavgalar* [Religious Move of RPP, *Political Clashes in the path of Democracy*]. *Yeni Şafak*. Istanbul. Access Date: 05.17.2005 Available at: <http://www.yenisafak.com/diziler/siyasi/siyasi15.html>

¹²⁹ Tunaya, 202.

¹³⁰ It would be especially helpful to analyze *Sebilürreşad*, which was printed between 1908 and 1966 with an interruption during most of the one-party regime. Yavuz relates that it became very popular during the 1950s and he takes it as a propogator of religio-nationalist views. (Yavuz, 1998, 272fn)

¹³¹ Yavuz, 2003, 115.

visible Islamist current by the deficiency of those traditionalists, and argues that they could not go beyond repeating their antecedents' arguments.¹³²

While my interviewees were not able to give me a clear answer regarding whether any or some of the Islamist pioneers resorted to nationalist discourse, except for denying Akif and Naim this claim, in a rather loose sense they pointed to the possibility of tactical use of nationalism by some leading to further domestication later on. One of them said, it was nationalism that couched itself in Islamic language in order to gain legitimacy with the masses. While there is no question about this tendency of all ideologies in Turkey, it remains unclear how and why the following generation of conservative intelligentsia adopted the nationalist discourse. While I leave this point to further research, my inclination is to view their position as a sincere embrace a form of religious nationalism in an aura where at least some Islamist pioneers gave expression to a domesticated nationalism and the ideological landscape was monopolized by nationalism. Another interviewee imputed this to general ignorance about Islam due to the adverse circumstances where they were not given a chance to study Islam. They were calling themselves *mukaddesatçı* (sacredist) which made them different from the official ideology only in that sense. Hence, I conclude by making the argument that, deprived of its Islamist discourse, Islamic views sought refuge in the nationalist discourse during the One party era in effect to domesticate nationalism, which would never cease to be an ideological part of the broader Islamic movement during the subsequent periods.

4.3. Imam Hatip (Prayer Leader and Preacher) Schools and the Formation of a New Counter-Elite

When İnönü decided for transition to a multi-party regime, efforts at relaxing the suppression of religion and giving certain concessions to the religious demands of the

¹³² Tunaya, 1962, 271.

periphery appeared as an effective strategy to incorporate the rural masses and stay in power. Either as part of this strategy, or in order to respond to a real demand by the populace who were unable to offer their funeral service because of the lack of *imams*,¹³³ imam-hatip schools that were closed down in 1933 were re-opened in 1949¹³⁴ and in a very short time skyrocketed.¹³⁵

People of the outsider/periphery, who were boycotting the school system at worst, or reluctantly sending their kids at best rushed to these schools as a safe harbor from secularizing influence of the regular schools. Now the religious periphery, which used to lack an institutional basis to carry its worldview into the intellectual landscape, gained this opportunity thanks to these schools. Baskın Oran, a leftist Kemalist, rightfully gives a key role to these schools on the ground that “it was beginning of the recreation of the religious ‘counter-elite.’”¹³⁶ The view on the other side is not so different, as Beşir Ayvazoğlu, a conservative writer argues that in the formation of the new class of Islamic intellectuals “the first and the only source was the *Imam-Hatip* schools.”¹³⁷ In a sense, these schools were the “opportunity structure” in mobilization of an Islamic movement. At that stage, the formation of a potential basis for Islamist counter-elite was an unintended consequence of a concessive action by the regime.

Belonging to the first generation of the graduates of these schools, two of my interviewees stated that being educated religious youngsters, they were really hungry for Islamic publications at that time but there were very few to read. As a new mass of religious high school students who developed a more intellectual relationship with Islam formed, a substantial need to find religious works beyond the instruction books for religious rituals

¹³³ Yavuz, 1998, 249.

¹³⁴ Taşpınar, 2005, 122. Tunaya admits that this was a new tactic by the regime in the face of the conservative pressure (1962, 219).

¹³⁵ Yavuz, 1998, 250. As the author records, in 1962 there were 19 schools and 3374 students.

¹³⁶ Oran, 2001, 26.

¹³⁷ Yavuz, 1998, 254-255.

emerged. The writers they mentioned were the ones who advocated religion blended nationalism: Necip Fazıl, Cevat Rifat Atilhan, Hüseyin Hilmi Işık. Following them, all but one of my interviewees said that during those years, they also had embraced religious ideas blended with nationalism as they never thought of the two as incompatible.¹³⁸ One interviewee said about his nationalist commitment that he even tried to contact the ultranationalist party founded around that time (Nationalist Action Party), in order to open a local office in his hometown. Moreover, he related, when NAP started its nationalist “boot camps” to fight against nascent communists, he looked for a way to join them. It is noteworthy that this person is ethnically an Arab.

Apart from the conservative/nationalist/sacredist magazines, this new youth got together in the national student organizations that were controlled by conservatives. They told that *Millî Mücadele Birliği* (National Struggle Union), *Komünizmle Mücadele Derneği* (Association for Struggle against Communism-KMD), and most importantly, *Millî Türk Talebe Birliği* (National Union of Turkish Students-MTTB) were the most prominent organizations that attracted them. One of the interviewees related that he had saved money just to travel to Diyarbakır in order to join an anticommunist rally of KMD. They were quite anti-communist at that time, and this was sometimes forcing them to take side with the state, such as when they clashed with the socialist students who were protesting the advent of 6th fleet of the U.S. navy in Istanbul. But one interviewee said that he was so regretful for committing such an ignorant action. There is indeed, no doubt that one of the main tenets of their ideology was anti-communism. A booklet that was distributed for free at that time by MTTB was named *Right and Left according to Islam*. Primary goal of this book was to prove with reference to textual evidence why Muslims should be rightist and should struggle against

¹³⁸ Only one of them said he was claimed himself as Arab nationalist for only two months when his Turkish religious friends pursued Turkish nationalism. But then he adds that he repented, asked for forgiveness from Allah for this sin, and never pursued nationalism again.

leftists. When asked about this booklet, an interviewee said it was the perfect example of the deficiency of knowledge of Muslims at that time about Islam. By getting a somewhat religious education compared to the earlier generations of the conservative families who could hardly preserved their religiosity, this new generation developed dissatisfaction with the available works and a desire to find pieces that would provide them with an intellectual view of religion and also that would make sense with their life experience. At a time when the Republican reforms cut off their relationship with the earlier Islamism through the script reform and given their modest backgrounds, they had a little chance to revive the upper class Islamist tradition. Hence until the academic Islamism of the 1980s the views of the Islamist pioneers would go unnoticed.

Therefore, as my Islamist interviewees related, those years for them were characterized by an immense yearn for Islamic publications, conservative journals that shaped their minds along nationalism, and finally student organizations where conservative students from different schools and universities were able to get together and mobilized. These conditions rendered a mass of youth ready for new ideas, which would come soon from the outside.

4.4. Islamism as “Framed” Islam: The Translation Wave

The religious publishers did not fail to see the demand for Islamic books. A wave of translations into Turkish from the Islamist thinkers of the Muslim world, most prominently the books of Muhammad and Sayyid Qutb as well as Mawdudi, ensued and was greeted with great excitement. An interviewee also noted that the renowned writer Sezai Karakoç with his (*Diriliş*) *Revival*, where he published translations of the pieces by e.g. Qutb, was among the pioneers of this trend. But he said Karakoç himself was transformed through these translations towards a more Islamist direction. While gaining currency simply to meet a public demand, these works with their anti-nationalist, Islamic Universalist, and revolutionary content nevertheless led the proto-Islamist youth to question and rethink about the ideas that

they had been holding. Most of the interviewees attributed a pivotal role to these translations in their adoption of a holistic interpretation of Islam that encompassed all aspects of life, not just spiritual or personal life. That is to say, the conservative, nationalist, and religious youngsters who were opposed to the Kemalist reforms, yet were neither anti-statist nor revolutionary until then, turned into revolutionary Islamists when the framing of the Islamist theorists resonated with their perceptions of the world.

To repeat, the mass under consideration shared a number of attributes: most of them were of rural backgrounds, they were the first educated generation of their families; they were mainly, but not always imam-hatip school graduates; they came together in student organizations, especially in MTTB; and finally they began to read translations of Islamist thinkers together in book circles.

Although the background of these youth was mainly lower-middle class peripheral families, they did not fit into the alienated youth description of the structuralist-cum-psychological approaches. They were rather, as Yavuz suggests the most upwardly mobile segments of the society.¹³⁹ They also did not seem to be frustrated highly educated youth, in their blocked social mobility became vulnerable to the Islamist message.¹⁴⁰ But what predisposed them to the call of Islamism was their need for a vocabulary in their “inherent ideology,”¹⁴¹ Islam, to express their value-based discontent with the political regime. Nationalism could not serve as a “master frame”¹⁴² for this youth, because it lacked both the “empirical credibility” compared to Islamism when it advised to embrace the regime despite its apparent anti-Islamic character, and “credibility of the framers,” when the framers turned out to be less knowledgeable in Islam than themselves. For the power of

¹³⁹ Yavuz, 1998, 547.

¹⁴⁰ Wiktorowicz, 2003, 193.

¹⁴¹ This inherent vs. Derived ideology comes from Rude (1980), as cited by Benford and Snow, 2000, 622

¹⁴² Ibid. 619. “collective action frames [that] have been identified as being sufficiently broad in interpretive scope, inclusivity, flexibility, and cultural resonance.”

Islam as an inherent ideology, or culture, I embrace Emirbayer and Goodwin's value-oriented definition of culture, which sees it as a macro-sociological reality and which refers to "symbolic configurations or formations that constrain and enable action by structuring actors' normative commitments and their understandings of the world and of their own possibilities within it."¹⁴³ That is to say, Islam as a macro-level value system was already part of their imagination with a moral power awaiting its framing into a derived ideology. I cannot discuss where this moral power came from, except for saying that from itself, which makes my point no more or no less valid than the materialist analyses that insist on the need to provide its source in the concrete world, or dismiss it in favor of materialist explanations for lacking such a basis. This is ultimately a philosophical difference which might not be solved through scientific method.

Then, why did Islam's framing as Islamism by the Islamist thinkers resonate with the conservative-nationalist youth of Turkey? Once an Islamist follower of Erbakan put his experience with *Milestones* of Sayyid Qutb and *Four Basic Qur'anic Terms* of Mawdudi it this way: "Those books came like a shock to us. They were talking about some terms that we heard, but we had never heard those terms taking such meanings. We never thought of the political implications of *tawhid* (the principle of God's unity) up to that time." Apparently the framing by Islamist thinkers resonated with the youth because it carried the weight of a "master frame." It was inclusive (unlike Turkish nationalism, Turks, Arabs and Kurds were included in the project), flexible, had a wide interpretive scope and had a cultural resonance. The last one was assigned more importance by Benford and Snow (2000). Along those lines, first, the proffered frame had more resonance because it had more empirical credibility in that empirical referents seemed as "real" indicators of the diagnostic claims. For the proto-Islamist youth, Qutb's diagnosis of the current societies as *jahili* fitted more to Turkey than any other

¹⁴³ Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1996:365, cited by Giugni, M. G. (1998). "Structure and Culture in Social Movement Theory." Sociological Forum 13(2): 365-375.

Muslim country for its extreme secularization and clearer anti-Islamic stance of the political system. Besides, the credibility of the frame articulators was much higher than the – conservative-nationalist writers of their time, because Qutb evidently had an exegesis of the Quran, while Mawdudi was considered a scholar. Their theoretical strength expressed in a modern language had clear superiority to the folk Islamic books or instructive books on religious practices. These books re-enchanted the world for these educated youth through their religion.

Benford and Snow also point to “salience” as the other factor of resonance, with centrality, experiential commensurability, and narrative fidelity as its dimensions.¹⁴⁴ First of all, Islam was already a central value of the audience of these books. So, it was no wonder they would seem as salient. Secondly, experiential commensurability, that is, their resonance with everyday experience of the targets was also evident when they felt second class citizens every day for their religious freedom was not accommodated. Thirdly, narrative fidelity refers to the degree of congruence of the derived ideology, Islamism, with the inherent ideology, Islam. In that sense, by giving a full account of *tawhid*, for the person quoted above, Islamism seemed to be loyal to the shared narrative than anything else. It was calling people to develop a much more coherent understanding of Islam with its purity. It then becomes clear why this youth of late 1960s, early 1970s found in Islamist literature the attributes of a master frame, and it resonated with them.

Once those youth turned Islamists, they constituted the backbone of the subsequent dissemination of Islamism. They embarked on a massive frame contest with the statist, traditionalist, and nationalist religious circles, who counter-framed them from within the Islamic movement, in the words of one of my respondents, “first as Wahhabis, then after the Iranian Revolution as Khomeinists, and finally as radicals.” The Islamist thinkers like Qutb

¹⁴⁴ Benford and Snow, 2000, 621.

and Mawdudi also got their share from this counter-framing when they were stigmatized as the “enemies of the *Ahl’i Sunnah*.”

Ultrationalists of the NAP, on the other hand, counter-framed them as green communists, because of their affinity with socialism in anti-systemic and revolutionary attitudes, since their own brand of Islam was in support of the authoritarian interpretations. In their frame contests, this newly Islamist youth embarked on an unparalleled journalistic activity. Several radical magazines flourished in the latter half of the 1970s where each of the Islamists wrote in each other’s magazines as well. Just the titles of some magazines can give an idea about their tone: *Tevhid (Tawhid)*, *Hicret (Hijra)*, *Düşünce (Reflection)*, and *İslamî Hareket (Islamic Movement)*, though this list is in no way exhaustive. Thus, framed Islam in the form of Islamism was reframed again by this intelligentsia to be relevant to local circumstances. Among others, Ali Bulaç most successfully did this job, especially through his exemplary works titled *Çağdaş Kavramlar ve Düzenler (Modern Concepts and Regimes)* (1979) and *İslam’ın Anlaşılması Üzerine [On Understanding Islam]*. In these publications, the Kemalist establishment was diagnosed as a regime of *kufir* (disbelief), or *shirk* (idolatry). In the prognostic framing, its replacement with an Islamic state was proposed, and in the process of motivational framing, a call to *jihad* was issued. It should yet be noted that Qutb and others were for the most part read as a call to purify religion for Allah by eliminating the un-Islamic beliefs from one’s mind, not as a call to a violent struggle, as the peaceful record of this Islamist discourse revealed. Call to *jihad* as an offensive war in Qutb was subordinated to intellectual and political struggle with the regime. This reframed message had found a wide appeal in a highly politicized environment of the late 1970s among the *imam-hatip* educated students, whose political aspirations were hardly met by the traditionally apolitical or nationalist communities or *Sufi* orders.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Though some of the major sufi order was enormously involved in political Islam.

This Islamist re-framing resonated with the ever-increasing number of *imam-hatip* students and the conservative youth, living in the old conservative boroughs in an increasingly politicized environment amidst the street fights between ultranationalists and socialists. Before the 1980 coup, the mobilization among the shantytown dwellers was much limited. The other alternative for this youth was the ultranationalist organization, *the Hearths of Ideal*, but due to their religious education, and attracted to a holistic perspective that presented not the transient governments but the entire political regime as anti-Islamic, they were captured more by the Islamic universalist message. In short, Islamism emerged as the only available discourse to interpret Islam in a holistic perspective to include a political standpoint. This is why even their traditionalist opponents from time to time had to borrow their ideas to analyze politics in religious terms.

It should be noted that the movement framing literature has also attended to macro factors by investigating how political opportunity structures constrain and facilitate collective action frames.¹⁴⁶ As regards this factor, the constitution of 1961 with its much broader room for civil liberties, especially freedom of thought and religious freedom,¹⁴⁷ provided such an opportunity structure for this radicalized Islamists in disseminating their anti-systemic views. Thanks to the protected liberties, they were able to establish publishing houses, associations, and magazines where they could disseminate this holistic framing of politically attentive Islam. The other opportunity structure was the leeway to Erbakan's political party, which would serve as a significant mobilizing network especially when it was part of the coalitional governments in 1973 and in 1978, during which the imam-hatip schools skyrocketed¹⁴⁸ all over the country to mobilize a much wider conservative public maybe not specifically for Islamism, but for political Islam in a weaker sense.

¹⁴⁶ Benford, 628.

¹⁴⁷ Taşpınar, 2005, 121.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 201.

When the NSP of Erbakan was founded during the early 1970s, some of these youth were co-opted by Erbakan and they took on offices in the party, which was a regular strategy of Erbakan, as whenever he found some dynamism within the religious circles, he would try to co-opt them for his party's mobilization. Although there were some who stayed in the ranks of the party and were promoted during the later decades to much higher positions, some others left soon afterwards, such as one of my respondents, who did this because he did not find it sufficiently anti-regime. But soon afterwards, the youth of the party, who were rather under the influence of the Islamist trend than the conservative-nationalist elders of the party, led its ideology to Islamist direction. As one interviewee asserted, when in 1979, there was a severe conflict between the nationalists of NAP and the Islamists of NSP, namely, *Akıncılar [Raiders]*; this was not an inter-party clash. It was rather a clash between nationalism of the NAP youth, and Islamic universalism of the NSP youth. Yet, many other Islamists preferred to stay outside of the party to pursue an anti-systemic politics.

4.4. Islamism as an Example of Worldly Success

When the villager of Makal tells the Kemalist teacher, "It is the other world we really need. You are concerned with this world, with its non-sense and its modern ideas. It's all humbug!"¹⁴⁹ he expressed his confidence in his religion and revealed his other-worldly orientation. In this sense, Islam can not be said to have lost its status as the path towards the eternal salvation among his periphery/outsider believers. Makal's villager only cared about the hereafter, but when the Iranian Revolution took place and Afghani jihad began in 1979 in a massive resistance to the Soviets, Islam also emerged as a source of the worldly-political success for Muslims. This factor goes largely unnoticed in the literature, while almost all of the Islamists mention this in explaining the rise of Islamism. Howe also relates it from Dilipak

¹⁴⁹ Özdalga, 1997: 22, 30.

as an important external factor,¹⁵⁰ and also Marguiles and Yıldızoğlu enumerate it among other factors.¹⁵¹ Apart from the translations, these two external events were among the most important factors mentioned by my interviewees. Maybe they did not affect the Islamist revival directly, but they created an atmosphere where Muslims ceased to console themselves only with a hope of otherworldly success. As Sayyid suggests, Khomeini took over the essentialism of Kemal, but turned it upside down. Thus, [re]emergence of Islamism marked the erosion of Eurocentrism.¹⁵² This was a victory of Islamists against the West, and also against the Western proxies in the Muslim world, who held the same Eurocentric ideas. An optimistic wave hoping Islamic revolution ensued in Turkey. Revolutionary Islamic movement gained leverage while counterframing strategies by the other Islamic groups relentlessly continued. Shiite identity of Khomeini was emphasized by these groups and in order to create a more effective negative image, and they likened him to the Alevis in to label Islamists as “followers of an Alevi”. Yet, the time had come for reaching out to the public.

4.5. Islamist Movement among Islamic Movements

The structural circumstances after the 1980 coup proved both negative and positive for Islamist groups. Continued influence of the Cold War to the domestic politics of Turkey and the right-wing leaning of the army against the purported communist threat led the government to co-opt the Islamic movements in order to counter communism by a de-politicized version of religion. The political formula of the military was to dilute Kemalist secularism to accommodate a certain form of "Turkish-Islamic" synthesis. In other words, by encouraging the fusion of Sunni Islam and national solidarity, the military government tried to de-politicize and homogenize Turkish society.¹⁵³ Carried over from the discourse of 1940s and 1950s, the popular idea of *Aydınlar Ocağı* (The Heart of the Enlightened), which suggested

¹⁵⁰ Howe, 2000, 148.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 149.

¹⁵² Sayyid, 1997, 150-1.

¹⁵³ Taşpınar, 2005, 205.

that "the best Turk is a Muslim Turk - the best Muslim is a Turkish Muslim," was turned into a state strategy to contain both communism and revolutionary universalist Islamism. In a striking similarity to my quotes above from the 1950s, Mustafa Erkal, the secretary of the organization, argued that "the love of the fatherland is the love of faith. Those who reject the idea of homeland and a national flag cannot grasp the meaning of Islam as well."¹⁵⁴

Fueled by this ideological leeway and coupled with the neo-liberal economic policies that favored religious economic entrepreneurs alongside the secularist big businesses who were the main beneficiaries of the developmentalist state of the earlier period, apolitical Islamic movements turned into self-contained religious communities with their own economic, institutional and intellectual basis. Islamist groups also benefited from the aura in other ways. Continued influences of the Iranian revolution as a model and the spirit of ongoing *jihad* in Afghanistan along with the ever-increasing rural exodus and burgeoning of the shantytowns in the metropolitan areas as a result of the neoliberal policies offered a strong potential for the Islamist framing of Islam with its emphasis on social justice.

On top of all these, when the military regime curtailed the civil liberties of the earlier period, radical journalism ceased to be a viable option for Islamist intelligentsia. Under these circumstances, an in-depth study of the intellectual currents and social theory of the West as well as engagement with the primary Islamic texts engendered intellectually sophisticated Islamist intelligentsia. This was the decade when a fully mature and intellectually sophisticated Islamist discourse took over the intellectual leadership of the periphery at the expense of the nationalist intelligentsia.

Seeing these structural opportunities, both Islamist groups including the youth organization of the Islamist party and apolitical/depoliticized Islamic groups, who were

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 205.

bought into the Turkish-Islamic synthesis,¹⁵⁵ engaged in outreach programmes through strategic “frame alignment processes”¹⁵⁶ as well as massive resource mobilization embodied by Islamic meso-level foundations and organizations where “transvaluation”¹⁵⁷ carried the primacy. While anti-systemic Islamist organizations mostly preferred informal networks such as study circles and Quranic study groups, in a striking similarity to the Jordanian counterparts,¹⁵⁸ Erbakan’s youth associations utilized the structural opportunity of the imam-hatip schools and appealed to the alienated conservative masses of the shantytowns through framing strategies that framed Islam either through a promise for social justice (“Just Order”) for simply conservative people, or a pledge for *shariah state* through electoral politics for more politicized religious masses. Just like its Islamist counterparts in the other Muslim countries, by providing social services to the disenfranchised urban poor through Islamist meso-level organizations, “Islam is the solution” was delivered to these segments as a concrete reality.¹⁵⁹

The growth of *Islamic* movements as self-contained entities drew them apart from each other. The competition between the communities to recruit more supporters forced the community leaders to develop too centralized and hierarchical structures, in a sense, *hegemonic* projects providing a life-world that is totally contained by the institutional structures and informal networks of the community. This organizational strategy molded these communities as “total institutions” in Goffman’s terms. In this regard, Gülen (1938-) aroused

¹⁵⁵ Yavuz, 2003, 55. Especially Gülen community gained the prominence to pursue this agenda (Taşpınar, 2005, 212). Gülen community is now estimated to be by far the biggest Islamic group in Turkey. For a recent analysis of the movement, see, Yavuz, M. H. and J. L. Esposito (2003). Turkish Islam and the secular state : the Gülen movement. Syracuse, N.Y., Syracuse University Press.

¹⁵⁶ Benford and Snow, 2000, 624 define it as “Strategic efforts by social movement organizations to link their interests and interpretive frames with those of prospective constituents and actual or prospective resource providers.”

¹⁵⁷ A reordering of priority that guided individual action.

¹⁵⁸ Wiktorowicz, 2003, 198.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 197.

the envy of the other communities for his success in structuring his highly hierarchical and centralized community as a quite effective total institution.

While the Islamist discourse constituted the most sophisticated element within the larger religious discourse in Turkey, it nevertheless could not penetrate the deeply entrenched structures of the Islamic communities. Thus, Islamism could not become *the* ideology of the Islamic movements, which remained in the safe waters of conservatism and nationalism. Still, since Islamism's emergence as an autonomous discourse in the 1970s as it detached itself from nationalism, Islamist intelligentsia had been able to transform itself into arguably the leading intelligentsia class of Turkey. This discursive transformation had a much wider influence defining the parameters of "Islamic" politics and opening up a discursive space among Islamically oriented groups on Islamic socio-political action. In effect, no attempt for Islamically motivated socio-political action could remain totally indifferent to the boundaries set by this discourse and for a long time the ideological flow ran from conservatism towards Islamism.

Up until very recent times, an ideological alternative to this strand of Islamism did not develop.¹⁶⁰ It is under these circumstances that for the first time Islamists in Turkey tried to develop an Islamic solution to Kurdish problem, changed their stance towards state violence against socialists, and contemplated on various issues of world and domestic politics to develop an Islamic attitude. In short what made this possible was the ideological detachment of "Muslim outsiders" from nationalism. It is quite striking that on ethnic issues the Islamists I interviewed maintained a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural view of society while the "society-based" movements, in Yavuz's terms, who are mostly nationalist, align themselves with Kemalism's assimilative definition of Turk.

¹⁶⁰ Some ex-radicals, joined by Kara, are proposing a "nativist" alternative to Islamism nowadays, but it is debatable whether it can be considered as a new ideological stance within Islamism, or a new depoliticizing current. Implications of Justice and Development Party, which emerged as a retreat to conservative phase, on the development of Islamism have yet to be seen.

CONCLUSION

In this article I have sought to understand what made possible the emergence of a distinct and autonomous Islamist discourse in Turkey which was not in existence for decades ago. While both in the general literature on Islamism and particular literature on Turkish Islamism there has been a dominance of Orientalist arguments, along with the incorporation of postcolonial, hermeneutical and social movement theories into the literature a new path seems to have emerged towards the post-orientalist direction. By my approach that gives primacy to the moral power of ideas, yet that is still attentive to structural circumstances in providing the context, agentic variables in framing and resource mobilization, finally opportunity structures in facilitating the active dissemination of the ideas by the actors, I pointed to the wide complexity of phenomenon at hand with an amalgamation of causal factors. My methodology has largely been in line with Euben's in that I embraced a modified version of hermeneutical method as the dialogue takes into account the distortion of meaning by the uneven power relations and subjectivity of the actors themselves.

The trajectory of Islamism as a discourse in Turkey since its inception has been told through its relationship with nationalism in this paper. It turned out that, when the anti-nationalist Islamist ideology of the Second Constitutional Period was crushed and delegitimized through the secularization reforms whereby the ideological landscape was monopolized by Kemalist secular nationalism, the conservative anti-reformist "outsiders" with prevailing religious concerns held their religiosity as a potential for Islamism.¹⁶¹ However this religiosity had domesticated nationalism as a source of political activism especially between the 1940s and the 1960s. The seeds of emergence of Islamism should be sought in the very particular conditions of the 1970s in Turkey. It is when the potential

¹⁶¹ "Because Kemalism did not exhaust all subject positions, and its ability to recuperate opposition was limited to the extent that it could recuperate only what it could see, the 'Islam of dreams' was not lost along with Kemalism. Instead, this utopian vision of Islam came to occupy an increasingly central place within Muslim communities" (Sayyid, 1997: 156).

counter-elites of the periphery were raised in the re-introduced imam-hatip schools, got together in student associations and got dissatisfied with the nationalist and statist but religiously less-informed discourse of the conservative intelligentsia, the demand for Islamic publications was met by the translations from the worldwide Islamist literature. The framing of Islam as Islamism in this literature resonated with this yearning youth mostly because of its own enchanting effect, salience and credibility. The emergence of a Turkish Islamist discourse is mostly a matter of the 1970s when, inspired by the worldwide Islamism, this new intelligentsia re-framed Islamism in Turkish context and disseminated their views through the media that were sustainable both because of the institutional structure and the potential audience in the skyrocketing imam-hatip schools. The next stage during the 1980s was characterized by the intellectual sophistication of this nascent discourse and its dissemination both through the resource mobilization of the National Outlook party organization and through informal networking by the anti-systemic Islamists targeting the alienated rural or shantytown dwellers under the conditions of pro-business neo-liberal policies, Afghani *jihad* and Iranian revolution, which rendered Islam as a key to worldly success, in the form of both an alternative to the existing ideologies and a direct deliverer of social justice. Nevertheless, amidst the co-optation by the regime of the highly centralized traditional communities through both political benefits under Turkish-Islamic synthesis and economic benefits for their supporter business class in a neo-liberal environment and maybe by the very political risks involved in their radicalism, Islamist groups could not flourish as much as the other Islamic groups except for their intellectual power.

What emerges from this account is the need for distinguishing between the conversions of proto-nationalists into Islamic universalists during the 1970s on the one hand and the subsequent dissemination of an Islamist discourse and mass Islamist recruitment among the largely shantytown dwellers in the aftermath of the 1980 coup. Not only the institutional

setting (developmentalist state coupled with more civil liberties versus neo-liberal state amidst less civil liberties) but the opportunity structures (resulting from liberal rights as opposed to the leeway for Turkish-Islamic synthesis) differ between these periods. Moreover, different exogenous influences such as the translation wave of the former period as opposed to Iranian revolution and Afghani *Jihad* of the latter should be pointed out. My focus in this paper has been on the former period as my chief concern has been to explain the discursive transformation that was sparked in this period and my interviewees were the proto-Islamists of that period that embraced Islamism for the first time, who later set out to re-frame it in the Turkish context. Accordingly, this renders the work less ambitious, as it only seeks to explain how the discursive transformation took place rather than a more ambitious project that aspires to a full fledged-explanation of the rise of Islamist or even Islamic movement within a comparative framework.

This particularistic approach that focused on Islamism in Turkey still lends itself to comparative studies between Islamisms in the Muslim world, or religio-political movements, or fundamentalisms across different religions. My aim was to develop a better interpretation of just one aspect of this complex reality through inter-subjective understanding. My conclusions are limited to explanatory power of just one case. For a more scientifically rigorous approach that sets out to explain the rise of Islamism in several countries, the factors I offered here could be brought together in better worked out causal variables linked with concrete causal mechanisms.

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