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THE SECULARIZATION AND DESECULARIZATION NEXUS IN THE TURKISH CONTEXT: WHAT IS BEHIND?²

Abstract

The history of Turkey provides multiple examples of intricate combination of secularization (in the Turkish tradition – laicism) and desecularization (understood as a revival of Islam and its expansion into social life) while its contemporary dynamics provides a background for a non-conventional view on the correlation between the state and religion in the Muslim societies. The desecularization of Turkey has been a continuous process since the late 1940s, making it increasingly convenient for Islamists to become more visible in the political and the socioeconomic spheres. This paper analyzes the inclusion and accommodation of the “Turkish Islamism” into the sociopolitical life of Turkey focusing on such important phenomena as the constantly expanding religious sphere, the emergence of economic liberal conservatism, the rising resurgence of Islamism in education and media sphere together with the “jemaatization” of the Turkish society. The analysis of desecularization dynamics in Turkey let one reassess the way religion and politics interconnect in the Muslim societies. The manifold manifestations of desecularization in social, political and economic life, its profound impact on the Turkish party system, banking sector, education and mass media indicates the dialectic nature of secularization and desecularization nexus and reveals the flexibility of the border between religious and political spheres.

Keywords: Turkey, Secularization-Desecularization nexus, Turkish Islamism, Turkish Democracy, Jemaats, Civil Society

Introduction

In 1999, an Austrian sociologist Peter Berger coined the term “desecularization”. Introducing it, he wanted to explain the phenomena of religion’s immunity

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 - 2 The paper is prepared with the financial support of the Russian Foundation for Basic Research Project No. 17-01-00203.

in the secular societies and the diversity of the ways by which the religion was reviving itself in the contemporary world thus bringing forward the nexus between the secularization and desecularization as the key issue of the sociology of religion. Berger stated that the process of religious revival in various countries took place due to a contradiction between the secular views of political elites and the human nature, which remained essentially religious.³ Another theorist of desecularization, Vyacheslav Karpov, suggested a more nuanced definition of desecularization as a counter-secularization that he saw as a process during which religion was reestablishing its influence over the society reacting to the previously occurring or taking place simultaneously secularization.⁴

The fundamental studies of religious revival around the world done by Gilles Kepel,⁵ Robert Hefner,⁶ Andrew Greeley,⁷ Philip Sutton,⁸ Scott M. Thomas,⁹ Christopher Marsh¹⁰, Sadia Saeed¹¹ and others substantiated the concept of desecularization but did not introduce any new theoretical dimensions to it. Paradoxically with so many examples of desecularization worldwide (the rise of Islam, the upsurge of Christianity in the Global South, the revival of religion in Russia and China, etc.) its very definition is a rare find in the academic works. The deficit of theoretical research on desecularization that could have defined its patterns, driving forces, content and components contrasts sharply with a large number of publications on secularization – both focused on its theoretical explanations and country cases. In the theoretical domain Jose Casanova,¹² Grace Davie,¹³

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- 3 Peter L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview*, in: *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, Peter L. Berger (ed.), Ethics and Public Policy Center, Washington, pp. 1-18.
 - 4 Vyacheslav Karpov, *Desecularization: A Conceptual Framework*, *Journal of Church and State*. Vol. 52, No. 2, 2010, pp. 232-270; Vyacheslav Karpov, *Konceptual'nye Osnovy Teorii Desekuljarizacii (Conceptual Foundations of the Desecularization Theory)*, *State, Religion and Church in Russia and Worldwide*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2012, pp. 114-164, 136.
 - 5 Gilles Kepel, *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism in the Modern World*, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, 1994.
 - 6 Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2000.
 - 7 Andrew M. Greeley, *Religion in Europe at the End of the Second Millennium*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, 2003.
 - 8 Stephen Vertigans, *Islamic roots and resurgence in Turkey: understanding and explaining the Muslim resurgence*, Praeger, Westport, Conn., 2003; Philip Sutton, Stephen Vertigans, *Resurgent Islam: A Sociological Approach*, Polity, Malden, 2005.
 - 9 Thomas M. Scott, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005
 - 10 Christopher Marsh, *Religion and the State in Russia and China: Suppression, Survival, and Revival*, Continuum, New York, 2011.
 - 11 Sadia Saeed, *Politics of Desecularization: Law and the Minority Question in Pakistan*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017.
 - 12 José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1994.
 - 13 Grace Davie, *The Sociology of Religion*, Sage Publications, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, and Singapore, 2007.

Philipp Rieff,¹⁴ Christian Smith,¹⁵ Rodney Stark,¹⁶ Charles Taylor¹⁷ and others detected the existence of mutually intertwining processes of secularization and religious revivalism. Contemporary understanding of secularization as a complex, cyclical and multidirectional process required additional adjectives such as “societal”, “institutional”, “macro”, “micro”, etc. As Rodney Stark,¹⁸ Roger Finke,¹⁹ William Bainbridge,²⁰ and Michael Warner²¹ argued, macro-secularization, that is the division between the Church and the state, did not always lead to the secularization at the mezo- and micro-levels. On the contrary, it contributed to the religious revival, based on the shift from traditional (collective) to the individual (non-traditional) religiosity. “Societal secularization” led to the decline of the “tension” between the society and religion, interconnected with the individualization of religion, demise of traditional religious institutions’ authority and a growing understanding that religious symbols are essentially socially constructed.²² The recent studies on Islam in Turkey by Hakan Yavuz,²³ Ahmet Öztürk,²⁴ Martin van Bruinessen²⁵ and others²⁶ continue this trend to accentuate the secularization and its transformation amidst the rise of religiosity.²⁷

Speaking about the underdevelopment of desecularization theory Peter

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- 14 Philipp Rieff, *My Life among the Deathworks: Illustrations of the Aesthetics of Authority*, University of Virginia Press, London, Charlottesville, 2006.
 - 15 Christian Smith (ed.), *The Secular Revolution: Power, Interests, and Conflict in the Secularization of American Public Life*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2003.
 - 16 Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries*, Harper San Francisco, San Francisco, 1997; Rodney Stark, *For the Glory of God: How Monotheism Led to Reformations, Science, Witchhunts, and the End of Slavery*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2003; Rodney Stark, Bainbridge William, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985.
 - 17 Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge and London, 2007.
 - 18 Roger Finke, Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 2005.
 - 19 William Bainbridge, Stark Rodney, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985; Bainbridge W., Stark R., *A Theory of Religion*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996.
 - 20 William Sims Bainbridge, *Dynamic Secularization: Information Technology and the Tension Between Religion and Science*, Springer International Publishing, New York, 2017.
 - 21 Michael Warner, *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age*, Harvard University Press, Harvard, 2010.
 - 22 Brian Turner, *Religija v postsekularnom obshchestve (Religion in Post-Secular Society)*, *State, Religion and Church in Russia and Worldwide*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2012, pp. 21-51, 44.
 - 23 Hakan M. Yavuz, *Understanding Turkish Secularism in the 21st Century: a Contextual Roadmap*, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2019, pp. 55-78.
 - 24 Ahmet Erdi Öztürk, *An Alternative Reading of Religion and Authoritarianism: the New Logic Between Religion and State in the AKP's New Turkey*, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2019, pp. 79-98
 - 25 Martin van Bruinessen, *The Governance of Islam in Two Secular Polities: Turkey's Diyanet and Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs*, *European Journal of Turkish Studies [Online]*, No. 27, 2018, pp. 1-26
 - 26 Mehmet Arısan, *From 'Clients' to 'Magnates': The (not so) Curious Case of Islamic Authoritarianism in Turkey*, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2019, pp. 11-30; Ertug H. Tombus, *Aygenc Berfu, (Post-)Kemalist Secularism in Turkey*, *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2017, pp. 70-85.
 - 27 See, for example, the special Issue in the *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* journal, specifically the article of Hakan Yavuz, Ahmet Öztürk, *Turkish secularism and Islam under the reign of Erdoğan*, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2019, pp. 1-9.

Berger once lamented that the predominant secularism in the academic sphere led to a widely spread view of any persistent religiosity as fundamentalism thus hampering objective analysis of religious revival.²⁸ The critics of desecularization concept, on the contrary, claim it to be an ad hoc hypothesis, which explains the facts beyond the orthodox understanding of secularization as an inevitable decline of religion in the process of modernization.²⁹

Secularization and desecularization are interconnected dialectic processes. Desecularization does not presuppose a return to what existed before in the same forms. Moreover due to the impact of globalization it generates such combinations which were hardly imaginable before, for instance the European youth's interest in jihadism.³⁰ Desecularization implies not only a growing consolidation of the institutionalized religion and its broader sphere of influence but also the transformation of religious institutions and of the religiosity per se. It is a common view to regard the majority of these phenomena as a consequence of secularization thus explaining the tight dialectic interconnection between desecularization and secularization. The transformation of institutionalized religion into non-institutional and other non-traditional forms results from secularization but at the same time represents the ways religion is trying to survive. Desecularization not necessarily has a connection with the enhancing positions of the institutionalized religion and dissemination of religious forms in the social milieu. However, both these processes may take place simultaneously.

Turkey's history provides multiple examples of intricate combination of secularization (in the Turkish tradition – laicism) and desecularization (understood as a revival of Islam and its expansion into social life). In the political development of Turkey laicism and Islamism did not always oppose each other. From time to time they co-existed and even intertwined.

In the 1870s and 1880s, Sultan Abdulkhamid II aspired to subordinate Islam to the state interests and to use it to consolidate the disintegrating Ottoman state and society. In the 1910s, Young Turks also tried to control the religious sphere. In the early Republican period during the National Liberation war of 1919-1922 Kemalists utilized Islamic institutions and religious symbols as a means of effective social mobilization. Later on, in the 1920s and 1930s, the nationalization of Islam became a part of the so-called "New Turkey" construction. After 1945, when a multi-party system emerged in Turkey both members of the Kemalist Republican People's Party and their opponents from the Democratic Party and other political organizations began to use actively Islam and Islamic

28 Peter Berger, Grace Davie, Effie Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe? A Theme and Variations*, Ashgate, Burlington, 2008, p. 12.

29 Andrey Titsian, *Koncepcija desekuljarizacii v sociologii religii* (The Concept of Desecularization in the Sociology of Religion), *Moscow State University Bulletin*, Ser. 7. Philosophy, No. 4, 2016, pp. 105-118, 116

30 Vyacheslav Karpov, *Desecularization: A Conceptual Framework*, *Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 52, No. 2, 2010, pp. 232-270; Vyacheslav Karpov, *Konceptual'nye Osnovy Teorii Desekuljarizacii* (Conceptual Foundations of the Desecularization Theory), *State, Religion and Church in Russia and Worldwide*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2012, pp. 114-164, 160.

values to mobilize electorate thus correlating modernization with desecularization. At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, the then Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal utilized religion to consolidate the Turkish society's support for his painful economic liberalization reform. The birth of Turkish-Islamic synthesis ideology became a side effect of his actions.

In the first quarter of this century, the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP, 2002 - nowadays) provided a clear example of secularization-desecularization nexus. On the one hand, the AKP was trying to bring Turkey to the European level of development through the economic, administrative and political reforms under the process of the EU's accession. On the other hand, it actively introduced Islamic political discourse into Turkish society removing a ban on wearing religious headscarf (*başörtüsü yasağı*), introducing social benefits for the graduates of religious schools of imam-hatibs and practicing favoritism vis-à-vis the members of tariqats (Sufi "orders") and jemaats (Islamic communities and associations). The AKP also resorted to Islam as a means for structuring the national identity. As a result, the 2000s and 2010s became the decades of Turkish nationalism and Islamism diffusion. In the public consciousness both processes strengthened the formula "I am Muslim because I am Turkish"³¹ thus emphasizing the key role of religion in the definition of the national identity borders.

Sociological research indicates that in the 2000s the Turkish society became more conservative in terms of its values, more religious in its moral orientations and more right-wing in its political leanings.³² Given these new social features the transformations of Turkey's domestic and foreign policy in 2000s does not seem unexpected or artificial. However these assessments lead us to a number of important questions, which do not find a direct answer in the statistics.

Why alongside with the rise of the welfare and income per capita, one of the main achievements of the socio-economic development since 1980s, the Turkish society is becoming more conservative? What can explain the expansion of Islamic movements and institutions into social life? Is it just the AKP policy, which spurred this process or is it a result of a long-standing opposition of and inter-connection between secularization and desecularization, laicism and Islamism, which had such unexpected results?

Trying to answer these questions the proposed paper argues that the recent Turkish history provides a background for a non-conventional view on the correlation between the state and religion in the Muslim societies. On the one hand, it demonstrates the dialectic nature of secularization and desecularization processes. On the other hand, it shows the flexibility of the border between the

31 Hakan Yavuz M., Ahmet Erdi Öztürk, Turkish secularism and Islam under the reign of Erdoğan, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2019, p. 2.

32 See: Ali Çarkoğlu, Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *The rising tide of conservatism in Turkey*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2009; Binnaz Toprak, *Türkiye'de Farklı Olmak: Din ve Muhafazakârlık Ekseninde Ötekileştirilenler*, Open Society Institute, İstanbul, 2008; Binnaz Toprak, Ali Çarkoğlu, *Değişen Türkiye'de Din, Toplum ve Siyaset*, TESEV, İstanbul, 2006.

religious and political spheres. The limited effect of the Kemalist Westernization defined by the very nature of this “revolution from above” and implemented without necessary socio-cultural conditions draw this border very superficially. In reality it created serious cleavages in the Turkish society between the Europeanized population of the big cities and conservative population of the remote areas and villages while the latter retained deep connection with the Islamic tradition. For this reason the recent rise of the tariqats, jemaats and other religious public organizations which have been changing the modern face of the Turkish society originates not only from the AKP policy alone but also from the Turkish model of religious identity with the strong dominance of the so-called “popular Islam”.

Unraveling its core argument the paper first briefly explores the social changes which one can consider the main drivers of desecularization: the expansion of the religious sphere, the dynamics of Islam-state relations, the “nationalization” and “politicization” of Islam and the institutional dimensions of the religious sphere. Second, it dwells upon the economic dimensions of the desecularization process and analyzes the determinants and characteristics of the economic liberal conservatism, which provided the infrastructure for the expansion of the socio-cultural conservatism. The paper then speaks about such important phenomenon as the “jemaatization” of the Turkish society. Afterwards it underlines the distinguishing features of the desecularization process in the sphere of education, especially focusing on the project of the “pious generation” (*dindar nesil*). Finally, it surveys the alterations in the Turkish media where the dialectic nature of desecularization clearly manifests itself and contextualizes the transformation of Islamic media within the changing domestic political landscape with the new forms of power relations introduced by the ruling AKP party.

Analyzing desecularization in the different spheres of the Turkish society the paper highlights the dialectic nature of this process, its multidirectional and non-linear nature in contemporary Turkey.

The Politics of Desecularization: its components and derivatives

The expansion of the religious sphere is one of the key factors in the transformation of the contemporary Turkish society. The process, which had started in the late 1940s and gained new impetus in the 1980s, resulted in the ongoing rise of the influence of Islam in both the socio-political discourse and cultural life of the country.

Although reconstructing the national legal and education systems, social and political institutions in the 1920s and 1930s Kemalists were successful in creating formal secular institutions, the task of removing Islam from the public life was difficult. In the process of the nation-state building, Kemalists could not disregard the fact that throughout the centuries-old history of the Ottoman Em-

pire, Islam was the basis of social and cultural identity. In the early Republican years Kemalists had to retain the loyalty of the religious and conservative circles because this part of the Turkish society actively supported the War of Independence (1919-22). Kemalists needed mass loyalty towards the imposed from above new republican and secular values. These goals envisaged the dissemination of the “progressive” state and secularized Islam against the “regressive” popular Islam of the Sufi tariqats and sheikhs. Seeking tools for the realization of these goals, Kemalists began to monopolize the religious sphere. The state assumed the exclusive right to interpret the “right” Sunni Islam and to maintain control over the spread of it.

Following the establishment of the Republic (1923) Kemalists founded a special state agency – the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Reisliği, Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı – Diyanet*), whose tasks were to de-politicize and integrate Islam into the Kemalist project of the “New Turkey”. In 1928, another state agency appeared, that is the special Committee for Religious Affairs headed by the Dean of the School of Theology Mehmet Fuat Köprülü and the Rector of Ankara University İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, with the same goal of both Westernization and adaptation of Islam for the Kemalist modernization.³³ Kemalists portrayed this “Modern Islam” (*Çağdaş İslam*) as the reformed Islam rather than as a retreat from the traditional Islam. In this line, for example, state authorities made an analogue between the translation of the Koran into Turkish and the famous translation of the Holy Bible into German by Martin Luther in the 16th century.

Among different projects offered by Köprülü’s Committee were the implementation of a new progressive schedule for the daily prayers. The prayer times no longer depended on the path of the Sun but instead on the rhythm of the working day. The Committee introduced the Turkification and optimization of the Islamic rituals. The calls to prayer – *ezan* – and sermons were no longer in Arabic but in Turkish, prayers at mosques were no longer to be performed while kneeling but while sitting in pews like in the Christian churches. Most of the Turkish people perceived this “Kemalist Islam” as a mockery of Islam and organized mass protests. Consequently, only one proposal of the Committee – to recite *ezan* in Turkish – became a normative rule and was implemented from 1928 to 1950.³⁴

Meanwhile, in subsequent decades the *Diyanet* became the main bastion of the state Islam, putting obstacles in the way of all alternative, non-Sunni religious streams, and registering any abuse of Islam in the anti-state activities. Since then the *Diyanet* has been enjoying extremely broad rights in the religious sphere. It became responsible for all the matters of religion belief and rituals. It started to

33 İlahiyat Fakültesinde Hazırlanan Laiha Etrafında, *Vakit*, 20 June, 1928; Osman Ergin, *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi. 5. Cilt*, Osmanbey Matbaası, İstanbul, 1943, pp. 1639-1641; Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Tek-Parti Yönetimi’nin Kurulması (1923-1931)*, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul, 1999, p. 223.

34 Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, Oxford University Press, London, 2003, pp. 46-50.

issue Islamic legal reports and opinions (*fatwas*), to oversee all the state mosques and state Koran schools, to design the content of broadcasts about Islam and of Koran recitations in the state media and to organize and regulate pilgrimages to Mecca and all other religious public events. Its responsibility included to manage special organizations responsible for the religious care for Turkish Muslims abroad (e.g., the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs established in 1984 in Germany was a branch of the *Diyanet*).

With so much power concentrated in the *Diyanet*, *fakihs* and *alims*, *mudarrises* and imams, together with all other people affiliated with Islamic cult and rituals, ceased enjoying their autonomous status outside any formal hierarchy and became subordinate to the *Diyanet*. Now the *Diyanet* is one of the largest state institutions in Turkey, currently employing more than 120,000 people. These include imams, preachers, and legal scholars in 88,681 mosques and 18,675 Koran schools; its joint year budget exceeds 1.96 billion US dollars.³⁵

The Kemalist model of laicism turned out to be very discriminative. Although the *Diyanet* has been getting financial support from all the taxpayers, 15-20% of which represent ethnic and religious minorities – Christians,³⁶ Alevis, Kurds, etc., the agency has been dealing only with the problems of the Sunni Islam. Thus, Kemalists set the practice of violating the principle of the separation of religion and state and almost converted the Sunni Islam into the state religion.

The transition to the multiparty system in 1946 intensified the struggle for votes, which went hand-in-hand with the exploitation and politicization of religion from below. Religion became instrumental both to conquest and to retain power. All center-right parties aspiring for financial and electoral support from religious and conservative circles integrated references to Islam into its political programs. The desecularization and politicization of Islam from above was partly a backlash against state laicism. The main intention of this multidimensional process was not a conversion of Turkey into an Islamic state. Instead, its aims were to weaken the state monopoly over the religious sphere and to broaden religious freedoms, thus abolishing the unification of Islam in Turkey, and to use religious and anti-Western rhetoric to win the sympathy of the electorate including the Kurdish electorate marginalized by the Kemalist regime.

A new wave of politicization of Islam and desecularization of society started in the early 1980s. This time the desecularization wave again came from above, and the state – as it was during the Kemalist reforms – played the role of its main driver. By the late 1970s the radical movements, especially from the left part of political spectrum got wide support and became extremely popular among the youth. This challenge of political and social disintegration of the Turkish society made the state to seek for the ideological and political matrix that could have

35 Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı. Strateji Geliştirme Başkanlığı. İstatistikler, <http://stratejigelistirme.diyamet.gov.tr/sayfa/57/istatistikler> (accessed 31.08.2019)

36 According to the different data calculations, from 100,000 to 150,000 Christians (Greek Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox) live in Turkey.

helped to curb the rising tide of radicalism. A managed Islamization based on a deeper synthesis of Turkish and Islamic identities, like the new constitutional system of managed democracy which Turkey had since the 1982 Constitution seemed to be a good idea.

The ideology of Turkish-Islamic synthesis was designed to reverse the mentioned above negative trends through state religious and educational institutions. The official propaganda replaced the trinity of family-mosque-barrack with another set of values including fear of Allah and obedience to the state power. At that time the Kemalists regarded Islam as the only tool capable of both restraining atomization and political radicalization and consolidating the society. For these reasons, in the 1980s the government introduced compulsory religious courses (from 1948 to 1982 they were not obligatory) and the courses on state "nationalized" Islam in order to Turkify children from Kurdish and Alevi families. The nationalization of Islam within the framework of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis was equally crucial to restrain the diffusion of the Islamist ideas and movements of non-Turkic origin, which had gained strength in Turkey since the late 1960s and were originating from the Arab states of the Middle East and Pakistan. The military elite also wanted to curb the effect of the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran.

The liberalization of the Turkish economy and the socio-economic reforms of the 1980s opened the Turkish market and considerably reduced the states' social welfare function. Ideological rethinking of the religion's role in society, and the expansion of the state religious institutions acted as a sort of moral compensation for the inevitable material loss. The number of mosques rose from 57,000 in 1983 to 72,000 in 1987, state Koran schools from 2,200 in 1983 to 4,900 in 1990, and theological faculties from eight in 1983 to 22 in 1990³⁷. The expansion of the state religious services and institutions, compulsory religious education, "the maintenance of national solidarity and unity" (Article 136 of the 1982 Turkish Constitution) with the help of the Diyanet deepened the nationalization of Islam and led to a new wave of desecularization. By instituting nationalized Islam, the Turkish government acted within the framework of the old Kemalist paradigm, which considered fragmentation along the ideological (Islamism-laicism), religious (Sunni-Shiah) and ethnic (Turks-Kurds) lines to be the greatest threat to the Turkish society. Sociopolitical processes of the 1980s and 1990s led to the ongoing expansion of the state in the religious sphere in contrast to the classic laicism and to the enforcement of Islam as one of the most important factors in the sociopolitical life.

The AKP's advent to power in the beginning of this century became a result of the dialectic interconnection between secularization and desecularization. The social basis of the AKP included not only conservative segments of the

37 Elisabeth Özdalga, Education in the Name of Order and Progress, *The Muslim World*, Vol. 89, No. 34, 1999, pp. 414-438, 430.

population but also those who were marginalized by the Kemalist policy. At the early stages of its activities the AKP was an example of magnificent consensus among liberal and conservative parts of the Turkish society, right-wing parties' electorate and even part of the political establishment.

The success of the AKP in 2002 general elections – highly unexpected by a large number of both politicians and political analysts – sparked a lively discussion on the future of Turkish democracy and probable shifts in the foreign policy orientation of this “New Turkey”. Some liberal-oriented experts and journalists welcomed the abrupt victory of this “young party” as the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Turkey. They expected the AKP to launch sociopolitical reforms by the model of the Christian Democrats in Germany and thus end the long lasting conflict between Islamists and laicists. Others seriously hoped that the AKP under the guidance of charismatic politicians Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül both of whom had broken off ties with the old Islamists parties of Necmettin Erbakan and the Milli Görüş movement, would lead Turkey in the direction of further modernization. The hope was also that the AKP's advent to power will put an end to the military elite's backstage “deep state” (*derin devlet*) and would encourage progressive economic and sociopolitical development.

In the first decade of this century many Islamist groups, first and foremost Gülen's jemaat joined the AKP's supporters while the majority of the population and Western countries welcomed the AKP's program of democratization and its intent to enhance civil liberties, support political pluralism and struggle against military elite's paternalism institutionalized by the Kemalists. Only a small part of the Kemalist elite voiced concerns about the AKP's hidden agenda of Turkey's Islamization.

In the 2010s, however, Turkey's political landscape has changed dramatically. The 2010 constitutional referendum which limited the influence of the military elite and gave a start for discussion on the change of Turkey's political system from the parliamentarian to the presidential one has indicated the general trend towards consolidation of power in the hands of Erdogan. The other side of Erdogan's “New Turkey” implied the demolition of the previously existed checks and balances and further instrumentalization of Islam as a means of politics through the transformation of the education system and stronger role of the Diyanet. Unsatisfied with the end of democratic reforms Turkish liberals turned away from the AKP and started to fiercely criticize the authoritarian ways of the “new Sultan” Erdogan.³⁸ The Arab Spring, which engulfed the Middle East and North Africa in the early 2010s and the burst of the anti-governmental activism in Turkey itself in 2013 (protests in the Gezi park, corruption scandals, etc.) led to a break between the ex-allies – the Gülen's jemaat and the AKP leader Erdogan.³⁹

38 Söner Çagaptay, *The New Sultan: Erdoğan and the Crisis of Modern Turkey*, I.B. Tauris, London, 2017.

39 Ahmet Erdi Öztürk, The Presidential elections in Turkey: History and Future Expectations, *Contemporary Southeastern Europe*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 110-118.

It also indicated a trend towards stronger “conservative pragmatism” which defined the main features of the next decade of desecularization in Turkey.

Unsuccessful military coup of 2016 and following dramatic mass purges highlighted an important feature of the AKP’s desecularization politics. It implied the use of secular social and state institutions inherited from the Kemalists and the liberal rhetoric of democracy and human rights as a means to reframe the Turkish society proceeding from the AKP’s view of ideal social order determined by the Islamist populism. This approach manifested itself not only in the promotion of the Islamist cadres to the administrative positions of all levels but also in the desecularization of the whole state system, including education, administrative and legal system, army and police.

Thus, the government of the Turkish Republic whose stated ideology proclaims laicism as one of its main pillars paradoxically seized more power over religious affairs than Sultan-Caliphs of the Ottoman Empire had ever had.

Political Economy of Desecularization

Sociopolitical processes in Turkey since 1980 led to the mutual intersection of the Turkish Islamism and neo-liberalism. For a variety of reasons, in the 1980s Turkey witnessed the formation and swift strengthening of a new class of provincial businessmen who were more committed to the social projects supported by the Turkish Islamists. Most of these small entrepreneurs quickly became owners of medium-sized and big enterprises.⁴⁰ Some of them subsequently occupied leading positions in different Islamic movements and Islamist parties. Tariqats and Islamic movements, on their turn, have always had a close connection with the owners of the small and medium-sized businesses, expecting to enlarge their social basis and to receive financial support.

In 1990 conservative Islamic businessmen created their own association – *MÜSİAD* (*Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği*, Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association) to counter the *TÜSİAD* (*Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği*, Turkish Industry and Business Association), established in 1971. Within 10 years *MÜSİAD* became the largest business organization in Turkey. Unlike *TÜSİAD*, whose target was the EU market, *MÜSİAD* developed economic ties with the Islamic countries and created a broad network of local branches and agencies in Central and Eastern Anatolia,⁴¹ one of the most dynamic economic region of modern Turkey. *MÜSİAD* has traditionally had a close association with the Islamic and conservative parties including the Welfare Party and Virtue Par-

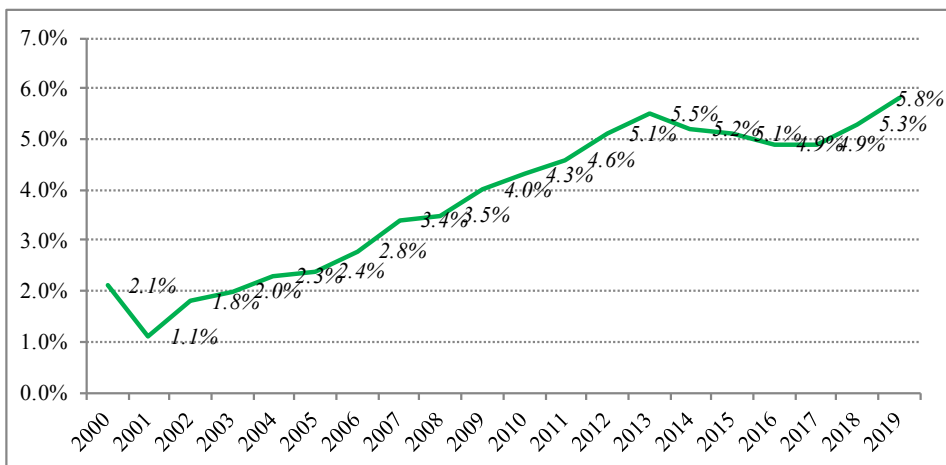
40 Ayşe Ayata, *The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism and Its Institutional Framework*, in: *The Political and Socioeconomic Transformation of Turkey*, Eralp Atila, Tünay Muharrem & Yeşilada Birol (eds.), Praeger, Westport, 1993, p. 58; Emin Baki Adas, *The Making of Entrepreneurial Islam and the Islamic Spirit of Capitalism*, *Journal for Cultural Research*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2006, pp. 113-137; Ayşe Buğra, *Labour, Capital, and Religion: Harmony and Conflict Among the Constituency of Political Islam in Turkey*, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2, 2002, pp. 187-204.

41 *Müstakil Sanayici ve İş Adamları Derneği*, <http://www.musiad.org.tr/tr-tr/subeler> (accessed, 31.08.2019)

ty (nowadays closed) and the acting Felicity Party and the AKP and supported them financially.

In parallel to the liberalization of the economy and the ongoing increase in the Turkish exports, the need for another organization capable of supporting group solidarity and lobbying group interests became apparent. The second large-scale organization of conservative business in Turkey became *TUSKON* (*Türkiye İşadamları ve Sanayiciler Konfederasyonu*, Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists). In 2005 *TUSKON* consolidated 150 business-associations representing more than 14,000 entrepreneurs from different regions of Turkey. Along with these associations, Islamic banks (*katılım bankaları*, participation banks) has been constantly expanding their influence since the 1980s. One of them, *İhlas Finans*, was closed in 2001, the other, *Asya Katılım Bankası A.Ş.* was shut down in July 2016 as part of the purges after the failed coup, but the acting ones include *Albaraka Türk Katılım Bankası A.Ş.*, *Türkiye Emlak Katılım Bankası A.Ş.*, *Kuveyt Türk Katılım Bankası A.Ş.*, *Türkiye Finans Katılım Bankası A.Ş.*, *Vakıf Katılım Bankası A.Ş.*, *Ziraat Katılım Bankası A.Ş.* Within two decades of this century the share of the Islamic financial institutions in the Turkish banking sector has risen approximately by 6% and continued to rise (see Figures 1 and 2). Moreover, the Turkish government declared plans to expand the share of the Islamic financial institutions in the Turkish banking sector up to 15% by 2023 (that means the five-fold rise of their total assets up to 200 billion US dollars).⁴²

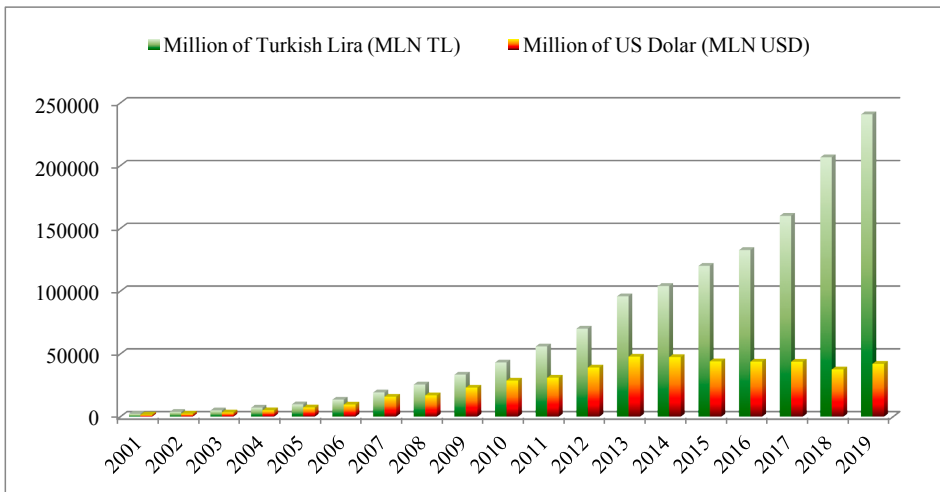
Figure 1. The growth of Islamic banking in the Turkish banking sector in the 2000s and 2010s



Source: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Merkez Bankası – <http://www.tcmb.gov.tr/>, Türkiye Katılım Bankaları Birliği – <http://www.tkbb.org.tr/>

42 Turkey has 'long way' to go for Islamic finance system, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 25 November, 2013, Istanbul, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-has-long-way-to-go-for-islamic-finance-system-58463> (accessed, 31.08.2019)

**Figure 2. The growth of assets of the Turkish Islamic financial institutions in the 2000s
(in Turkish Lira and US Dollars)**



Source: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Merkez Bankası – <http://www.tcmb.gov.tr/>, Türkiye Katılım Bankaları Birliği – <http://www.tkbb.org.tr/>

In the psychological domain for the entrepreneurs of Anatolia Islamic values became an important tool for fence-mending, fine-tuning interpersonal relations, and for creating an atmosphere of mutual trust. However they never disregarded personal economic interests and profit-maximizing conditions like their secular counteragents. Members of *MÜSİAD*, like most neo-liberals, ardently support the privatization and marketization of the social sphere and politics. They regard privatization of the state corporations as a perfect tool for the destruction of the Kemalist elite's domination in the economic sphere. From the beginning of its political activity, the AKP has also enthusiastically supported the privatization of the strategic state corporations,⁴³ regarding privatization as an imperative of economic development similar to the rhetoric of the previous coalition governments. Most of these corporations started privatization procedures in the first decade of the 2000s. According to official statistics, in 1986-2002 the total number of privatization deals equaled 8 billion US dollars, and within five years of the AKP's rule this index exceeded 28 billion.⁴⁴

Parallel to the dissemination of neo-liberal and conservative ideas, Turkey witnessed a rise in the number of different religious communities, groups, and

43 *Ülkemi adeta pazarlamakla mükellefim*, *Sabah*, 16 October, 2005, <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2005/10/16/eko107.html>, (accessed, 31.08.2019)

44 Duru Bülent, Üzgel İlhan (eds.), *AKP Kitabı: Bir Dönüşümün Bilançosu*, Phoenix Yayınevi, Ankara, 2010, p. 526.

movements. The most noticeable manifestations of this process were a virtual legitimizing and partial sublimation of the different religious communities, which had been discredited in the first years of the Republic, into civil society organizations⁴⁵. The retreat of the state from economic and some social spheres, i.e., the demolition of the “left hand of the state” using Pierre Bourdieu’s language, created favorable conditions for the sociopolitical activity of different tariqats, jemaats, and religious groups. For the past two decades religious communities, along with private companies, have enthusiastically filled the emerging vacuum, especially in the education and healthcare spheres. Thus, religious movements and structures became the main tool for the desecularization of the social sphere.

The Jemaatization of Turkey

The social projects and large-scale activities of such Islamic associations as Gülen jemaat, Menzil, İsmailağa and Erenköy jemaats became the most vivid social factor of Turkey’s desecularization and growing conservative trends in the Turkish society.

The term jemaat (Arabic *djamā’a*) is usually translated as ‘community’, ‘society’ or ‘association’. Historically this term identified a group of Muslims united for joint studying of Islam, performing of religious rituals, cooperation and mutual assistance, and regular intercommunication. Jemaats associated Muslims attending the same mosque or like-minded people adhere to the same religious tradition, school of Islamic thought etc.

In the modern history of Turkey jemaats became a specific Turkish form of Islamic self-organization that evolved after the formation of the secular Turkish Republic in 1923 and the outlawing of the Sufi orders in 1925 followed by the abolishment of the madrasas, classical Islamic educational institutions. The jemaat phenomenon emerged from the motivational reading circles of faithful citizens in the context of the pressure from the state on any organization that could have potentially challenged the new Kemalist regime. Usually a jemaat had no formal membership requirements, no initiation rites and required no specific building or room in order to convene. Thus, jemaats initially substantially differed from classical Sufi tariqats.

The wide spread of jemaats and their influence on the socio-political life of Turkey, i.e. “jemaatization” of the contemporary Turkey, originates from the rapid urbanization which has taken place since the mid-1960s and became a serious trauma for the Turkish society. The mass migration from the villages to the cities

45 See: Faruk Birtek, Binnaz Toprak, The Conflictual Agendas of Neo-Liberal Reconstruction and the Rise of Islamic Politics in Turkey: the Hazards of Rewriting Modernity, in: *The Post-Modern Abyss and the New Politics of Islam: Assabiyah Revisited. Essays in honor of Şerif Mardin*, Binnaz Toprak, Faruk Birtek (eds.), İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2011, pp. 192-212; Ayşe Ayata, The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism and Its Institutional Framework, in: *The Political and Socioeconomic Transformation of Turkey*, Eralp Atilla, Muharrem Tünay, Birol Yeşilada (eds.), Praeger, Westport, 1993, pp. 51-68.

had dramatically changed the face of the country because of the emergence of the satellite slums cities (*gecekondu*). It also provoked socio-economic and cultural shocks resulting in the emergence of new social identities. The traditional principles of good neighborhood and mutual assistance became irrelevant in the new social milieu of big cities. Jemaats not only started to fill in this moral vacuum overcoming the mutual alienation of the peasant migrants and the city milieu but also contributed to the formation of new models of group solidarity and mutual assistance thus helping to overcome the traumas of rapid urbanization. The group solidarity started to function within a certain jemaat, which acted as an instrument of both moral and social support for the internal migrants. Due to their activism jemaats managed to create their own social milieu free of the paternalistic expectations and the Kemalist model of the “proper” society imposed from above since the 1920s.

The rapid urbanization had several important implications for Turkey. The demographic map of the country had changed dramatically. The state had lost the means to influence effectively the religious sphere and to use Islam in its political interests in the form it did since the 1920s. While traditional mechanisms of communitarian mutual assistance became less functional, the Turkish society turned more to Islam as its sociocultural framework. Moreover, socialization in the urban milieu required the new models of spiritual education and Islamic ritual practices.

The Turkish jemaats have never had a definite legal status in the Republican Turkey. However, despite this undefined status jemaats managed to fill the moral and spiritual vacuum among the new city-dwellers and residents of *gecekondu*. They also became an important means of social security and were able to adapt in the organizational sense to the requirements of society in any political situation. Thanks to jemaats internal migrants became sure of their abilities to solve their problems and to overcome the psychological challenges of big cities with their norms of capitalist economy and the primacy of individualism.

The year 1970 became crucial for jemaats’ development. In that year the first in the series of Necmettin Erbakan’s Islamic parties – the National Order Party – came to power. Before the 1970s, the Islamic movements mostly stayed underground. In order to participate in the political process they had to create conservative factions within the right-wing parties. After 1970, Islamic movements got their independent party and could participate in the political life openly pushing forward their political views and interests.

Unlike in the 1960s the 1980 military coup did not entail repressions against Islamic movements and jemaats. Moreover President Turgut Özal’s politics contributed to their consolidation. His liberal economic course and export-oriented economy made possible the rise of new business elite from the periphery of central and eastern Anatolia – so-called Anatolian tigers, the main social and financial basis of Turkish Islamic movements. Amendments to the Penal Code abolished a number of articles, which previously limited or prohibited social activities con-

nected with Islam. As a result Islamic movements started to enhance their activities in the social, political and economic spheres. Despite of their unidentified legal status their very existence at the turn of 1980s and the 1990s was no longer under the direct threat.

The Islamic resurgence of 1980-1990s in Turkey had three important consequences. First, the rise of scientific and popular literature on Islam created a strong public discourse on the religious topics. Second, the religious public organizations evolved into a network tightly interconnected with the local centers of political and economic influence. Third, jemaats became the main actors of Islamic development in the modern Turkey as Sufi tariqats historically were in the Ottoman Empire. As a result of the socio-political transformations in the 1980s the leaders of Islamic movements ceased to reject the Kemalist Republic in the existential sense and changed its tactics to the multifaceted political struggle. They thought that their support of the conservative parties at the elections could mitigate the authoritarian regime. Some of them hoped for the establishment of the Islamic rule through the elections, others just hoped that a demand for democracy will help to enhance religious rights and will guarantee their observation.

Throughout the 1990s and during the first decade of this century jemaats managed to strengthen their positions in the Turkish society. In the early 2010s, i.e. before the open conflict between the leader of the biggest Turkish jemaat Gülen and the leader of the AKP Erdogan according to the surveys the overall number of jemaat followers reached 5-6 million people. 62% of them were supporters of Gülen jemaat (Hizmet movements), 16.3% – of Süleymancılar jemaat, 15.2% – of Menzil jemaat and 7.3% of İsmailağa jemaat⁴⁶.

The Turkish jemaats vary in terms of their socio-political, economic and cultural activities. Among them Gülen jemaat is the most progressive and adapted to the modern economic activities. Süleymancılar jemaat, the second most widely supported, has a broad network of affiliated organizations both in Turkey and abroad. For example, in Germany it owns several hundreds of mosques and Koran schools. This is a politically active jemaat whose members since the 1980s have been actively participated in the Turkish political life. In doing so, they cooperated with the right-wing parties and nationalists and even became members of the parliament. However this jemaat never supported the AKP.

Menzil jemaat is one of the most dynamic and politically active of the Turkish jemaats. It used to cooperate with the right-wing parties and later on, when the AKP was established, became its consistent supporter. In the 2000s-2010s, a number of Menzil jemaat's members became ministers. Its followers include many wealthy executives and founders of *TÜMSİAD* business association, an instrument of jemaat's economic influence. One more Turkish jemaat, Erenköy, is also politically active and since the 1970s has been supporting only Islamic par-

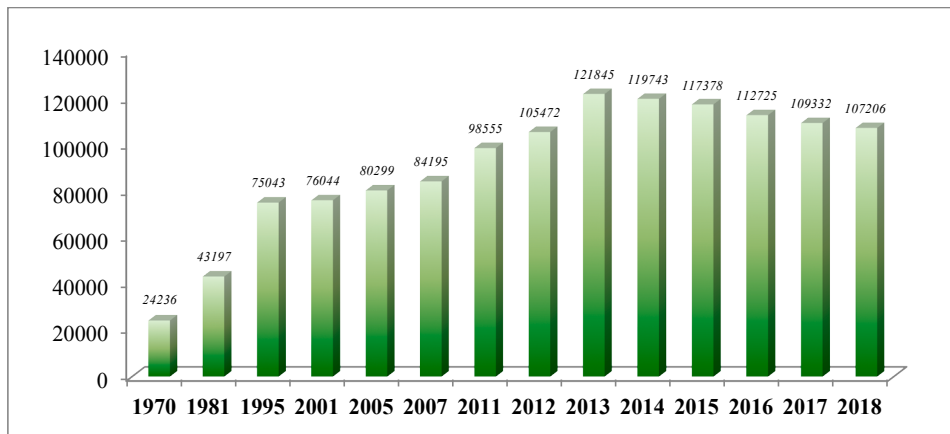
46 Türkiye'nin Cemaat Tablosu, *Milliyet*, 22 June 2011, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/turkiye-nin-cemaat-tablosu/gundem/gundemde-tay/22.06.2011/1405297/default.htm> (accessed 31.08.2019)

ties, including the ruling AKP. In this line of jemaats İsmailağa represents the most conservative and closed one. The assessments of its membership varies from 100 thousands up to several millions. Similar to Gülen jemaat with which İsmailağa jemaat shares the same Sufi tradition it mainly focuses its activities on education.

Desecularization of education

The state religious apparatus increased by 70% within 10 years (from 50,000 in 1979 to 85,000 in 1989)⁴⁷ was second to none in contributing to the enlargement of the social base of the Islamists and different Islamic movements. Imam-hatip schools, originally designed for the loyal religious functionaries along with other similar educational structures (theological faculties, Koran schools, etc), became the most effective channels for the recruitment of the new members for their organizations and a “cradle for a new Islamic ulema”.⁴⁸ Indeed, most functionaries of Necmettin Erbakan’s parties and the ruling AKP attended imam-hatip schools.⁴⁹ These schools played the decisive role in the dissemination and strengthening of the Turkish Islamism. The growing number of the functionaries of the *Diyanet* and students of imam-hatip schools reflected the dynamics of the enlargement of the religious sphere in Turkey (Figures 3-5).

Figure 3. The number of the *Diyanet* personel (1970-2018)



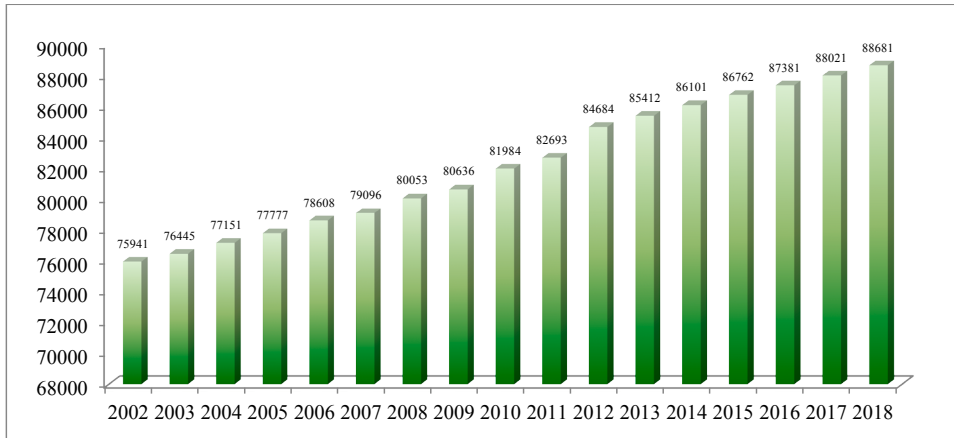
Source: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, <http://stratejigelistirme.diyaret.gov.tr/sayfa/57/istatistikler>

47 Jan Erik Zürcher, Heleen van der Linden, Searching for the Fault Line. A Survey of the Role of Turkish Islam in the Accession of Turkey to the European Union in the Light of the Clash of the Civilisations, in: *The European Union, Turkey and Islam*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2004, pp. 81-174 (110).

48 Bahattin Akşit, Islamic Education in Turkey: Medrese Reform in Late Ottoman Times and Imam-Hatip Schools in The Republic, in: *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics and Literature in a Secular State*, Richard Tapper (ed.), I.B. Tauris, London, 1991, p. 145.

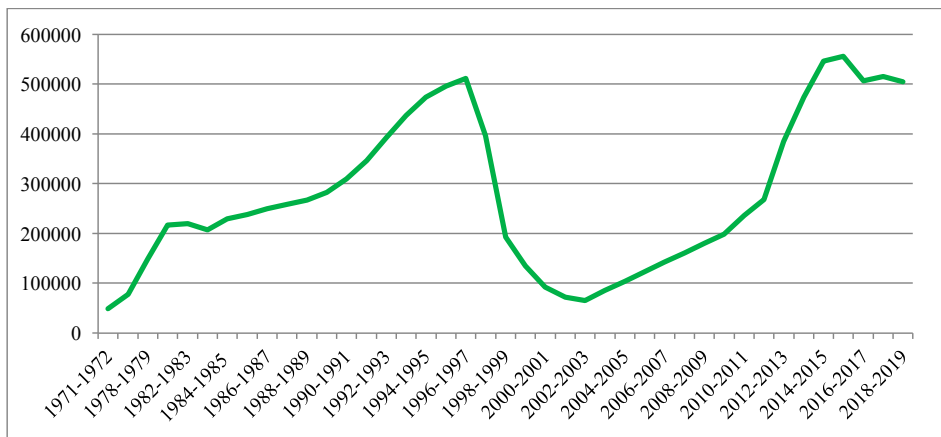
49 Ibidem, p. 47.

Figure 4. The growth in the number of mosques in Turkey in the 2000s



Source: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, <http://www.diyamet.gov.tr/>, <http://stratejigelistirme.diyamet.gov.tr/sayfa/57/istatistikler>

Figure 5. The number of students attending imam-hatip schools (1971-2019)



Source: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, <http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/www/resmi-istatistikler/kategori/23>

The number of students attending religious schools stopped growing in 1997 when the National Security Council issued a special memorandum on February 28 (the event known in the Turkish historiography as “the process of February 28” (28 Şubat Süreci) or “post-modern coup”), that precipitated the resignation of the Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan and further dissolution of his Welfare Party. After this intervention the military elite introduced compulsory continu-

ous eight-year education and thus closed imam-hatip secondary schools.⁵⁰ However, the AKP's rise to power in 2002 reversed the decline of the religious schools and the number of imam-hatip students started to rise again.

In 2012 the AKP started to reform the national education system. It resulted in the implementation of the 12-year compulsory education system, which included three cycles usually termed as "4+4+4" (4 years of primary education at the first level, then 4 years of primary education at the second level and, at last, 4 years of secondary education). This reform virtually abolished the restrictions on the network of religious schools, which the National Security Council initiated in the late 1990s, and re-established the imam-hatip middle schools (*İmam Hatip Ortaokulu*). Amendments to the Law of National Education were passed through the Turkish Parliament (Turkish Grand National Assembly) in March 2012⁵¹ without wide public discussion and expertise of the Supreme Council of National Education, an advisory body of the Ministry of National Education. Moreover, the plans for the national education system reform were not in the AKP's electoral manifesto of 2011. All this generated suspicions and discontent of many people who considered the whole situation as the new manifestations of Erdogan's rising authoritarianism.

Addressing the youth in the early 2012 Erdogan for the first time mentioned the "right" models of education.⁵² It was a response to Gülen's project of the "golden generation" aimed at upbringing highly educated Muslims which could have been competitive at the global labor market.⁵³ Since that time the thesis about a "pious generation (*dindar nesil*)" became part and parcel of the AKP's rhetoric.⁵⁴ The AKP's educational reform expanded the rights of the imam-hatip' religious schools while the programs of secular educational institutions had to include the lessons of Arabic, courses on Koran and Sunna (biographical records of the prophet Muhammed).⁵⁵

The opposition, scholars and civil society representatives assessed this reform as an attempt to create a "parallel educational system" which would be nurturing the mentioned above "pious generation" set as one of the AKP's political aims. Thus, for example, the number of religious schools of imam-hatip doubled during the initial years of reforms from one thousand in 2012 to two thousands

50 Rüşen Çakır, İrfan Bozan, Balkan Talu, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Efsaneler ve Gerçekler*, TESEV Yayınları, İstanbul, 2004, p. 68.

51 İlköğretim ve Eğitim Kanunu ile Bazı Kanunlarda Değişiklik Yapılmasına Dair Kanun (6287 Sayılı ve 30/3/2012 Tarihli), *Resmî Gazete*, 11 April, 2012 (sayı 28261).

52 Altan Öymen, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek ve Tayyip Erdoğan, *Radikal*, 22 February 2012, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/yazarlar/altan-oymen/necip-fazil-kisakurek-ve-tayyip-erdogan-1079526/> (accessed 31.08.2019); Dindar gençlik yetiştireceğiz, *Hürriyet*, 2 February, 2012, İstanbul, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dindar-genclik-yetistirecegiz-19825231> (accessed 31.08.2019)

53 Yavuz Çobanoğlu, *Altın Nesil'in Peşinde. Fethullah Gülen'de Toplum, Devlet, Ahlak, Otorite*, İletişim Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2012.

54 Kadri Gürsel, Erdogan Islamizes education system to raise 'devout youth', *Al-Monitor*, 9 December, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/turkey-islamize-education-religion.html> (accessed 31.08.2019)

55 Alexander Christie-Miller, Erdogan Launches Sunni Islamist Revival in Turkish Schools, *Newsweek*, 16 December, 2014, <http://europe.newsweek.com/erdogan-launches-sunni-islamist-revival-turkish-schools-292237?rm=eu> (accessed 31.08.2019)

in 2016.⁵⁶

In 2016, the AKP made one more important step to reframe the national education system through the creation of a parallel educational milieu taken out of the direct institutional subordination to the Ministry of education. On June 17, 2016 despite of the public protests and heated debates among the Members of Parliament, the AKP managed to approve in the Parliament the Law on the creation of the State Wakf of education (*Maarif Vakfi – MAVAK*).⁵⁷ The very name of this new structure was conservatively symbolic. Instead of the contemporary term “education” (*eğitim*) it used the Ottoman world “enlightenment” (*maarif*). The state allocated huge funds for MAVAK, though it had no connection with the Ministry of Education. The critics of MAVAK regarded it as the AKP’s instrument to construct the educational infrastructure to indoctrinate the youth with the conservative ideals based on the Islam and the Ottoman heritage. On the eve of the parliamentary debates on the law of MAVAK the students from all parts of the country organized protests against the Islamization of education⁵⁸ and appointments of Islamists on the positions of the heads of the educational institutions. The overall request towards the government was to ensure the modern secular education for all.

Meanwhile MAVAK, whose headquarters is based not in Ankara where the Ministry of Education seats but in Istanbul, got the right to establish educational institutions of any level – from the kindergartens to the universities. According to the law, initially MAVAK received 1 million Turkish Liras (approximately 350,000 USD) from the budget of the Ministry of National Education. However more important is that the Ministry of National Education passed gratis its oversees property (land, real estate, etc.) to MAVAK while the Ministry of Finance had to allocate to it its buildings and premises from the state funds on the territory of Turkey (also gratis).⁵⁹ Being a wakf MAVAK can receive both financial and non-financial donations including land, buildings, any real estate automatically exempted from taxes from private individuals. At the same time it has the right to establish commercial enterprises exempted from taxes. Endorsed by the law these broad credentials of MAVAK in the sphere of education de facto turns it into the second Ministry of Education⁶⁰ since MAVAK has also the authority to train and select the

56 *Millî Eğitim İstatistikleri, Örgün Eğitim 2015-2016*, T.C. Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı Strateji Geliştirme Başkanlığı, Ankara, 2016, http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_ajs_dosyalar/2016_03/18024009_meb_istatistikleri_organ_egitim_2015_2016.pdf; *Millî Eğitim İstatistikleri, Örgün Eğitim 2018-2019*, T.C. Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı Strateji Geliştirme Başkanlığı, Ankara, 2016, http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_ajs_dosyalar/2019_09/06141052_meb_istatistikleri_organ_egitim_2018_2019.pdf

57 Yurdagül Uygun, *Maarif Vakfı kuruluyor*, *Sözcü*, 15 June, 2016, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2016/egitim/maarif-vakfi-kuruluyor-1275103/> (accessed 31.08.2019)

58 Bir isyan da Galatasaray Lisesi’nde: Padişaha kölelik yapmamış müdür araniyor, *Cumhuriyet*, 5 June, 2016, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/546020/Bir_isyan_da_Galatasaray_Lisesi_nde_Padisaha_kolelik_yapmamis_mudur_araniyor.html (accessed 31.08.2019)

59 O kanun yasalaştı, *Yeni Akit*, 17 June, 2016, <http://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/o-kanun-yasalasti-185485.html> (accessed 31.08.2019)

60 İkinci Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı kuruluyor, *Cumhuriyet*, 16 June, 2016, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/552132/ikinci_Milli_Egitim_Bakanligi_kuruluyor.html (accessed 31.08.2019)

“right” teachers and lecturers loyal to the government.

The law created a special mechanism of MAVAK’s governance that is the supervising council, which includes seven permanent members appointed almost for their lifetime, four members elected by the President himself and three members appointed by the government.⁶¹ Thus, the AKP can retain the full control over MAVAK even in case of the reshuffles in the Cabinet of Ministers.

One of the main initial tasks of MAVAK was to close or nationalize Turkish education institutions abroad, that is schools and universities launched by the Turkish citizens overseas mainly with the support of Gülen. It is hard to define the exact number of the institutions affiliated with Gülen since they do not have any clear system of interaction and subordination. However using the indirect indicators – mainly the large-scale events like the international contests of the Turkish language, one can count more than two thousand education institutions in 160 countries.⁶² According to the new law neither private individuals nor wakfs or associations with the Turkish jurisdiction have the right to establish educational institutions that is schools, lyceums, universities and even dormitories abroad. Such actions become the MAVAK’s prerogative only.

The latest reports of the left-wing Trade union of workers in the sphere of science and education (*Eğitim Sen*) indicated two main trends in the development of the Turkish education system that is Islamization and commercialization of education.⁶³ Throughout the initial years of reforms (2012-2018) and development of the three-level compulsory education the number of the secondary schools of imam-hatip raised by 78% and the number of their students increased by 4.5 times. The overall number of imam-hatip lyceums raised by 3.6 time (from 450 to 1607), the number of their students increased by 7.8 times (from 71 thousand to 556 thousands). The number of private schools of all three levels raised in average by 60% and the number of their students increased almost twofold (from 600 thousands to 1.2 millions).

The state schools statistics indicates the directly reverse trend that is the twofold decrease of the state institutions and students. Meanwhile the Diyanet and Islamist wakfs actively penetrate the state schools. Under the pretext of re-

61 TBMM’de yasalaştı! Maarif Vakfı kuruluyor, Milliyet, 17 June, 2016, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/tbmm-de-yasalasti-maarif-vakfi-siyaset-2263926/> (accessed 31.08.2019)

62 Joe Parkinson, Ayla Albayrak, From His Refuge in the Poconos, Reclusive Imam Fethullah Gulen Roids Turkey, *The Wall Street Journal*, 20 January, 2014, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304027204579332670740491570> (accessed 31.08.2019); 10 maps that explain the global war between Erdoğan and Gülen, *Hürriyet Daily News*, Istanbul, 8 March, 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/10-maps-that-explain-the-global-war-between-erdogan-and-gulen.aspx?pageID=238&nID=63342&NewsCatID=338> (accessed 31.08.2019)

63 2019-2020 Eğitim Öğretim Yılı Başında Eğitim Durumu, Eğitim ve Bilim Emekçileri Sendikası, 7 September, 2019, Ankara, <http://egitimsen.org.tr/2019-2020-egitim-ogretim-yili-basinda-egitimin-durumu/> (accessed 07.09.2019); 2018-2019 Eğitim-Öğretim Yılında Eğitimin Durumu, Eğitim ve Bilim Emekçileri Sendikası, 13 June 2019, Ankara, <http://egitimsen.org.tr/2018-2019-egitim-ogretim-yilinda-egitimin-durumu-raporu/> (accessed 31.08.2019); 2017-2018 Eğitim Öğretim Yılı Sonunda Eğitimin Durumu Raporu, Eğitim ve Bilim Emekçileri Sendikası, 7 June 2018, Ankara, <http://egitimsen.org.tr/2017-2018-egitim-ogretim-yili-sonunda-egitimin-durumu-raporunu-acikladik/> (accessed 31.08.2019).

ducing the working load of students the number of humanitarian and natural science classes has been decreasing while the religious classes (formally optional but de facto mandatory) have been substituting them. Against this background during the recent years the preschool religious training of Islam for four- and five-years old children in the mosques has been actively developing throughout the whole country.

Mass media in the secularization-desecularization nexus

The multidimensional character of desecularization manifested itself very clearly in the sphere of mass media and its transformation since the mid of the 20th century. For different Islamic and Islamist movements and groups⁶⁴ the transition to the multiparty system in 1946 created the opportunity to establish new social communication channels to recruit new followers. Much more tolerant attitudes of Turkish authorities towards religious activists and a weaker state control over the media in the 1940s paved the way for the development of Islamic mass-media both newly created and the ones originated from the Islamic newspapers and magazines once published in the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁵

A number of prominent conservative thinkers managed to launch their own media projects. Islamist intellectuals closely connected with the tariqat of Nakshibendi Nurettin Topçu (1909-1975) and Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1904-1983) started to publish their magazines namely “*Hareket*” (The Movement, 1939-1975)⁶⁶ and “*Büyük Doğu*” (The Great East, 1943-1978). By the late 1940s the number of Islamic newspapers and magazines was considerable. More than a dozen of conservative magazines, like “*Ehli Sünnet*” (The Followers of Sunnah, 1947-1953), “*Hakikat Yolu*” (The Way of Truth, 1947-1949), “*Hakka Doğru*” (Towards the God, 1947-1960), “*İslâmiyet*” (Islamism, 1948-1960); *Müslüman Sesi* (The Voice of Muslims, 1948-1985) and others,⁶⁷ severely criticized the Kemalist reforms, advanced anti-Western rhetoric, Islamism and Turkism. However, in the mid-1950s the expansion of the Islamist media and press came to a halt. Amidst increasing economic crisis in Turkey and providing the declining popularity of the ruling Democratic Party the government decided to curtail the civic liberties and toughen the state control over the press. The latter became a very inconvenient critic of the central authorities given the deteriorating living standards of the majority of population. Besides, the government took steps against the rising influence of

64 Until the 1980s prominent Turkish Islamist intellectuals did not define themselves as Islamists and tried to avoid this term. They preferred to use the adjective “Islamic” that implied the immanent political dimensions of Islam, which is traditionally called Islamism.

65 They were such magazines like *Volkan* which published in 1908-1909, *İslam Mecmuası* (1914-1918), *Beyânülhak* (1908-1912), *İslâm ve Ulûm* (1908-1909), *İttihâd-ı İslâm* (1908-1909), *Sırât-ı Müstakîm* (1908-1912), *Ceride-i Süfîyye* (1909-1919) and others.

66 In 1966 the publisher of “*Hareket*” changed its name to “*Fikir ve Sanatta Hareket*”.

67 See: Vahdettin Işık, Ahmet Köroğlu, Yusuf Enes Sezgin (eds.), *1960-1980 Arası İslamcı Dergiler Toparlanma ve Çeşitlenme*, Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2016.

different Islamic and conservative groups especially after the much-publicized assassination of “*Vatan*” (the Home) newspaper’s editor-in-chief Ahmet Emin Yalman in November 1952 (known as the “incident in Malatya”, *Malatya Hadisesi*).

A new wave of desecularization in the media sphere started in the 1960s. The liberal constitution of 1961 substantially enlarged the scope of civil liberties, especially the freedom of speech and assembly. It gave unprecedented opportunities for public and political activities of both leftist and conservative Islamist groups. The distinguishing feature of this new period of desecularization was its increased institutionalization. The emergence of the first legal Islamist religious-political movement – *Milli Görüş Hareketi* (The National View Movement) of Necmettin Erbakan in 1967 and then the first Islamist political party in 1970 (the National Order Party) had two important consequences. First, it consolidated conservative circles in the Turkish society. Second, it framed the Islamist discourse more clearly in terms of its attitudes towards the key questions of national culture, education, social order and development in accordance with the norms and principles of Islam.⁶⁸ However the format of existing religious and conservative magazines was not suitable for a sound public discussion on these questions. The leading newspapers with large circulation did not provide the *Milli Görüş* movement with such opportunity as well. For this reason, Erbakan initiated the establishment of his own nation-wide newspaper – *Milli Gazete* (The National Newspaper, 1973) as a tool for indoctrination of new followers and dissemination of his ideas.

The majority of publications done by different Islamist newspapers and magazines focused on the utopian idea of establishing a strong state relying on Islam and Turkish nationalism, on the one hand, and technological achievements of the West, on the other.⁶⁹ At the same time these publications crystallized the main aims which the Islamist press should achieve. First, it was to increase the social and political influence of the Turkish Islamism, which should facilitate the infiltration of conservative people in the power institutions and state bureaucracy. Second, it had to expand the circle of Islamist and Islamic movements’ adherents among the educated people and the reading public, especially the youth.

Among the Islamic movements the jemaat of Nurcular, which experienced difficulties in distributing the cult texts of Said Nursi (*Risale-i Nur*) in the 1940s and 1950s, became a pioneer in extensive use of mass media. In the 1960s the followers of Said Nursi launched more than a dozen of weekly magazines all-around Turkey – the *Nur Mecmuası* (1961-1967) and *Bediülbeyan* (1963) in Konya, the *İrşat* (1963) in Ankara, the *Zülfikar* (1964) in Izmir, the *Vahdet* (1964) in Trab-

68 Banu Eligür, *The mobilization of political Islam in Turkey*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2010, p. 66.

69 This idea was even encompassed in the name of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek’s “The Great East” magazine [Findley Carter Vaughn, *Turkey, Islam, nationalism, and modernity: A history, 1789-2007*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2010, pp. 340-341]; Menderes Çınar, Burhanettin Duran, *The Specific Evolution of Contemporary Political Islam in Turkey and Its ‘Difference’*, in: *Secular and Islamic politics in Turkey: The making of the Justice and Development Party*, Cizre Ümit (ed.), Routledge, New York, 2008, pp. 17-40.

zon. However the life span of these periodicals was not long.⁷⁰ The publication of the first weeklies including *İhlas*, *Zülfikar*, *Uhuvvet* lasted for one year only (1963-1964), the *İttihad* newspaper was published for five years (1967-1971) until the military coup of 1971. Proceeding from this negative experience, the jemaat changed its mass media tactics in the 1970s. The jemaat's new daily *Yeni Asya* (the New Asia) which first issue came out in February 1970, tried to be more loyal towards the government in order not to provoke petulance of the authorities. The *Yeni Asya* newspaper even supported the military memorandum of 1971.⁷¹ An important element of this new survival strategy implied close relations with the leading political parties including the center-right Justice Party of Suleyman Demirel together with the rising National Salvation Party of Necmettin Erbakan.

In the late 1970s Turkey witnessed the rise of radical Islamist press – *Şura* (1978), *Tevhid* (1979) and *Hicret* (1979), which provided a platform for a new wave of discussion on the necessity to reconcile the social, economic and political order with the Islamic principles and norms.⁷² However, against the raging political violence and the approaching military coup of 1980 the publication of these newspapers did not last for more than a year.

The military coup of 1980 and the new Constitution of 1982, which created a system of managed democracy including the institutionalization of the military's political influence, the extension of the executive power at the expense of civil rights and freedoms changed the situation in the sphere of media. The economic liberalization of the 1980s created new rules of the game for the mass media. Lower state subsidies made the running of a newspaper much more costly and forced the publishers to search for new investors. The conservative entrepreneurs of Anatolia, the so-called Anatolia Tigers, who had grown rich under the new liberal economic order and became a social bastion for both the Homeland Party of Turgut Özal and Islamic movements, agreed to sponsor the publishing and enlightening activities of different jemaats. The jemaat of İskanderpaşa (one of the most influential jemaats in the 1980s due to its close relations with Turgut Özal) launched its own educating magazines *Kadın ve Aile* (The Woman and family, 1985-1996), *Gül Çocuk* (The Rose Child, 1987-1990) and *İlim ve Sanat* (The Science and Art, 1985-1998). The jemaat of Erenköy started to publish its monthly journal *Altınoluk* (1986-2016) with strong depoliticized contents and focus on culture and moral issues.

The jemaat of İcmalci known for its contemporary leader Haydar Baş promoted the ideas of Turkish-Islamic synthesis on the pages of its magazines *İcmal* (since 1983) and *Öğüt* (1987-2016). In the 1990s, Haydar Baş owned a media empire called *Mesaj Yayın Grubu*, which included the publishing house *İcmal*

70 Vahdettin Işık, Ahmet Köroğlu, Yusuf Enes Sezgin (eds.), *1960-1980 Arası İslamcı Dergiler Toparlanma ve Çeşitlenme*, Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2016, pp. 24-25.

71 Ibidem, p. 322.

72 Ibidem, pp. 35-36.

Yayınları, the newspaper *Yeni Mesaj* and a dozen of TV-channels broadcasting both in Turkey and abroad. The latter included *Mesaj TV*, *Meltem TV*, *Kadırga TV*, *Köy TV*, *Sıhhat TV*, *Av TV*, *Özlem TV*, *Marmara TV*, *Sağlık TV*.

The jemaat of Fethullah Gülen managed to set up the most widespread and high-profile media network. The first periodical of the jemaat was the *Sızıntı* magazine (The Fountain, 1979-2016) published under the aegis of the Waqf for Turkish Teachers (*Türkiye Öğretmenler Vakfı*). Its core publications contemplated how to overcome the contradictions between the modern science and Islam.⁷³ For the foreign audience the jemaat established an English-language version of the *Sızıntı* magazine with the same name *The Fountain* (since 1993). At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s the jemaat with the support of its influential adherents launched a number of media-projects, including the daily newspaper *Zaman* (The Time, 1986-2016) which in the following decades became one of the highest circulated newspaper in the country, the theological journal *Yeni Ümit* (lit. The New Hope, 1988-2016), the political weekly *Aksiyon* (The Action, 1994-2016) and the scientific international journal *Ekoloji Dergisi* (The Ecology Journal, 1991-2019).

Since the late 1980s and up to the first decade of this century the Gülen jemaat controlled a real media empire, which spread its network all-around the world. Its numerous newspapers, magazines and journals, TV channels and radio stations broadcasted in a number of languages and on different continents. It also virtually possessed the second largest news agency in Turkey *Cihan* (lit. The World, since 1994) and the Waqf of journalists and writers (*Gazeteciler ve Yazarlar Vakfı*). The jemaat demonstrated loyalty towards the authorities. Gülen did not condemn the military coup, refrained from criticizing the new Constitution of 1982 and joined the company for promoting Turkey's interests in the Balkans and in the post-Soviet republics. This loyalty provided the jemaat with some safety for its media projects and resources for future development and expansion⁷⁴. In the 1990s the *Zaman* newspaper started its circulation in Europe, the United States, republics of Central Asia, and in the Balkans. The number of TV channels affiliated with the jemaat was constantly rising (*Samanyolu Haber*, *Yumurcak TV*, *Mehtap TV*) and the geography of their circulation was continually expanding (*Ebru TV* and *Mehtap TV* were represented in Germany and the United States, *Samanyolu TV* in Africa, *Hazar TV* in Azerbaijan etc.).

The emergence and tremendous rise of Islamic television characterized the desecularization of the media sphere in Turkey in the 1990s. By that time the graduates from different universities formed a wide circle of active public intellectuals and media figures with conservative worldview. On the one hand, they were capable of making high quality media content. On the other hand, they strived for creating a positive image of the pro-Islamic part of Turkish society

73 Salih Cingilhoğlu, *The Gülen Movement: Transformative Social Change*, Springer International Publishing, Cham, 2017, pp. 58-59.

74 *The Gülen Media Empire. The Monographs of Arab Media Report*, Nocera Lea (ed.), Reset S.r.l., Rome, 2015, pp. 23-42.

demonized by the mainstream media as the enemies of the secular Kemalist Republic⁷⁵.

The rise of private satellite TV channels broadcasting to Turkey from abroad interrupted the long-lasting state monopoly on the television and made possible the extensive use of the television.⁷⁶ The de-facto liberalization of the mass media sphere was crucially important. When in 1994 the doyen of the Turkish Islamism Necmettin Erbakan made a speech on the opening ceremony of the TV channel Kanal 7 he compared the modern television with the “artillery and air forces...”.⁷⁷ He claimed “the absence of them makes impossible any jihad, as a struggle on the way of Allah, and formation of an Islamic Ummah in the modern world”.⁷⁸ The paradigmatic example of an Islamic TV channel was the TGRT – *Türkiye Gazetesi Radyo Televizyonu* (Turkish Newspaper Radio Television) established in 1993 in the UK with the financial support of the İhlas Holding headed by Enver Ören known as a leader of the jemaat of Işıkçılar. One of the TGRT’s broadcasting hallmarks was the recitation of Quranic verses at the end of the main TV programs.⁷⁹ In total by the late 1990s the Islamic and Islamist movements in Turkey controlled 19 TV channels and 45 radio stations with a huge broadcasting network which included 525 retransmission station.⁸⁰

The rapid desecularization of the media sphere in the 1990s was important not only for the quantitative and qualitative development of the Islamist media, but more importantly for their institutional transformation. The activities of Islamist media in the 1990s influenced the Turkish society on the three levels. First, they served as a source of information and a platform for discussion. Second, they functioned as the schools of civic engagement for the followers of numerous Turkish jemaats. Third, they acted as a powerful instrument for both expanding the influence of the Islamist movements and increasing the number of their followers.⁸¹ Therewith the diversity of both the Islamist media and the contents of their publications reflected the pluralistic character of the desecularization in Turkey and the absence of consensus between different Turkish Islamist move-

75 Yavuz M. Hakan, *Islamic political identity in Turkey*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, p. 131.

76 Esral Elmas, Dilek Kurban, *Communicating Democracy – Democratizing Communication. Media in Turkey: Legislation, Policies, Actors*, TESEV Publications, Istanbul, 2011, pp. 20-22.

77 Ceren Sözeri, The Transformation of Turkey’s Islamic Media and Its Marriage with Neo-Liberalism, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2019, pp. 164, 155-174.

78 Ibidem.

79 However, in the mid-1990s the TGRT faced financial difficulties which forced the management of the TV channel to diversify the broadcasting program by including popular TV shows and attracting advertisers. For several times the management of the TGRT was transferred to the the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (*Tasarruf Mevduatı Sigorta Fonu*), and finally in 2007 the TGRT was sold to the *American News Corporation* media holding. As a result, the TGRT became the *Fox TV*. The jemaat of Işıkçılar in 2004 establish its own new TV channel – the *TGRT Haber*.

80 Hakan Yavuz M., *Islamic political identity in Turkey*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, p. 104.

81 *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce. Cilt 6 / İslamcılık*, Gültekinil Murat, Bora Tanıl (eds.), İletişim Yayınları, Istanbul, 2005, pp. 721-723.

ments in both political and humanitarian issues.⁸²

The military memorandum of February 28, 1997 followed by the resignation of Necmettin Erbakan's government and the closure of his Welfare party in 1998, the emigration of Fethullah Gülen to the US in 1999 and the large-scale campaign against reactionaries in the mass media⁸³ did not reverse the trend towards Islamist mass media expansion. Early this century they received new impetus due to the AKP's accession to power and thanks to the harmonization of Turkey's legislative with the EU norms.

However the desecularization of the media sphere in the 2000s was increasingly framed and managed by the government. First, the state-supported Islamist media started to sideline the old mainstream media such as the *Doğan* media holding which unexpectedly faced the charges for the large-scale tax abuses. Second, a change in the management of many influential mass media converted them from the devotees of the Kemalist ideals to the partisans of the ruling AKP and advocates of the conservative pro-Islamic discourse.⁸⁴ One telling example of this process was the appointment of Zahit Akman, who served for many years as the top-manager of the pro-Islamist Kanal 7, to the position of the chairman at the Radio and Television Supreme Council (*Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu*) (2005-2009). The Journalists working for the state media were forced to leave the "Kemalist" Turkish Journalists' Union (*Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası*) and become members of more conservative HAK-İŞ Trade Union Confederation (*HAK-İŞ Konfederasyonu*)⁸⁵.

Demonstrating their loyal attitude towards the government and the ruling party the numerous mass media, which were under control of Gülen's adherents, played a crucial role in covering and legitimizing the repressions against the military and Kemalist elite within the framework of the high-profile trials in the late 2000s (the Ergenekon and the Sledgehammer).⁸⁶ However in 2013 the situation has changed dramatically. The 2013 Gezi protests split the Islamist mass media in two camps. The majority of the media outlets like *Akşam*, *Takvim*, *Türkiye* and others preserved their loyal attitude towards Erdoğan and his party and expressed solidarity with the government's interpretation of the 2013 events as "a conspiracy against Erdoğan". On the other pole were the newspapers, radio and TV channels close to Gülen which overnight became opposition mass media. In

82 Hakan Yavuz M., *Islamic political identity in Turkey*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, pp. 109-110; Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan – Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar*, Metis Yayınları, İstanbul, 1990 pp. 150-155.

83 Dilek Kurban, Ceren Sözeri, *Caught in the wheels of power: The political, legal and economic constraints on independent media and freedom of the press in Turkey*, TESEV Publications, İstanbul, 2012, pp. 15-21.

84 Bora Erdem, *Türkiye'de Yeni Medya Düzeninin Oluşumunda. Tasarruf Mevduatı Sigorta Fonu'nun Rolü*, *İnsan&İnsan*, Sayı/Issue 6, Güz/Fall 2015, pp. 37-54.

85 Aziz Çelik, *Trade Unions and Deunionization During Ten Years of AKP Rule, Perspectives* (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Turkey), No. 1, 2013, pp. 44-48, http://akademikpersonel.kocaeli.edu.tr/aziz.celik/diger/aziz.celik12.07.2013_10.43.18diger.pdf (accessed 31.08.2019)

86 Bilge Yesil, *Media in New Turkey: The Origins of an Authoritarian Neoliberal State*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 2016, pp. 96-98.

the following years most of them ceased to exist (*Zaman*, *Today's Zaman*, *Saman-yolu*, *Kanaltürk*, *Bugün* and others).

After the coup attempt of July 2016 the media empire of Gülen was totally ruined. The state of emergency declared in reaction to the failed military coup enabled to launch large scale purges against the mass media accused of close relations with the jemaat of Gülen which the authorities called the main enemy of the state. In the late July 2016 the government shut down 16 TV channels, 23 radio stations, three news agencies, 45 daily newspapers and 29 publishing houses,⁸⁷ the total number of the purged and detained journalists exceeded 300 persons,⁸⁸ more than 130 of which were still in jail in spring 2019.⁸⁹

The crackdown on the media empire affiliated with the Gülen jemaat reflected two important tendencies. By the mid of 2010s, the government has consolidated the media sphere in its hands and acquired total control over more than 90% of the mass media. More importantly, however, is that the state had monopolized the right to formulate Islamic and Islamist discourse.

Conclusions

The analysis of the desecularization dynamics in Turkey let one reassess the way religion and politics interconnect in the Muslim societies. The manifold manifestations of desecularization in social, political and economic life, its profound impact on the Turkish party system, banking sector, education and mass media indicates the dialectic nature of secularization and desecularization nexus and reveals the flexibility of the border between religious and political spheres.

The recent rise of tariqats, jemaats and other public organizations with a religious profile has been changing the familiar face of the Turkish society. The reasons of these changes are twofold. On the one hand, the historically established Turkish model of religiosity implied a strong dominance of the “people’s Islam” despite the Kemalist efforts to oppress it. The waves of Islam politization from below and from above have reinforced non-secular elements in the Turkish society even further. On the other hand, the international trends of religious revival and its growing influence on the individual and public consciousness resonated well in Turkey seriously marginalizing secular orientations. As a result, at the beginning of this century the AKP did not even need any special program to desecularize the society and to reinforce Islamic institutions. In the late 1990s, the administrative and legal system created in Turkey in order to comply with

87 Yasemin Inceoglu, Ceren Sozeri, Erbasal Filibeli Tirse, *Monitoring Media Pluralism in Europe: Application of the Media Pluralism Monitor 2017 in the European Union, FYROM, Serbia & Turkey. Country Report: Turkey*, https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/61159/2018_Turkey_EN.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (accessed 31.08.2019)

88 Turkey locks up 228 journalists, a new world record, *Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF)*, 1 April, 2017, <https://stockholmcf.org/turkey-locks-up-228-journalists-a-new-world-record/> (accessed 31.08.2019)

89 Gazeteciler Cezaevindeki, *Çağdaş Gazeteciler Derneği*, 12 July 2019, <http://cgd.org.tr/index.php?Did=222> (accessed 31.08.2019)

the Copenhagen criteria for the EU accession enabled the rise of the civic activities. A largescale work of multiple tariqats and jemaats to implant the Islamic way of life in the Turkish society was just part of it.

These processes have not only transformed the previously existing social relations but also initiated the reframing of the conceptual basis of the state system and foreign policy discourse. The “New Turkey” of Erdogan as the “New Turkey” of Ataturk is a revisionist project, which however has different foundations. While the letter emphasized the individual identity based on the secular orientations, the former reinforces the interconnection between the Turkish nationalism and Islamism. Moreover, utilizing secular state institutions inherited from the Kemalists Erdogan has been trying to implement his vision of the ideal state order determined by the Islamic populism thus complicating the secularization-desecularization nexus even further.

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СЕКУЛАРИЗАЦИЈА И ДЕСЕКУЛАРИЗАЦИЈА У ТУРСКОМ КОНТЕКСТУ: ШТА ЈЕ ПОЗАДИНА?

Сажетак

Историја Турске нуди много примера комбинације секуларизације (у турском случају – лаицизма) и десекуларизације (која се разуме као препород ислама и његово ширење у друштву), док савремени пример нуди динамичну слику за не конвенционалне погледе на односе између државе и религије у муслиманским друштвима. Десекуларизација Турске је континуиран процес који траје од касних 1940 тих година, и који је погодан за исламисте да постају видљиви у политичкој и друштвено-економској сфери. Овај чланак анализира инклузију "турског исламизма" у овој земљи са фокусом на ширење верске сфере, раст економског либералног конзервативизма, раст утицаја ислама у образовној сфери и сфери медија, заједно са џематизацијом друштва. Случај Турске нам нуди могућност за нову интерпретацију односа религије и политике у муслиманским друштвима. Она открива дијалектичку природу нексуса секуларизације и десекуларизације и открива флексибилност границе између верске и политичке сфере.

Кључне речи: Турска, секуларизација-десекуларизација, турски исламизам, турска демократија, џемати, цивилно друштво

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