

The London School of Economics and Political Science

**Rethinking religio-politics in Turkey through the
prism of religious majoritarianism**

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Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

A revised version of Chapter 4, entitled ‘Structuring politics: Turkey’s majoritarian political system’, was published in 2011 by the *Government and Opposition* journal under the title, ‘The Persistence of Turkey’s Majoritarian System of Government’. Some of the ideas in this thesis were developed during my previous study towards an MSt degree in Modern Middle Eastern Studies at St Antony’s College, University of Oxford, where I wrote a masters thesis entitled ‘The Directorate of Religious Affairs: State, Nation and Religion in Turkey in the 1990s’.

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to establish a framework for examining why certain contexts have proven conducive to the politicisation of religious identities. Prevalent scholarly approaches have treated politicised religious (or religio-political) movements chiefly as a ‘bottom-up’ reaction to the effects of modernisation, including secularism and capitalist development. In the Turkish case, the dominant narratives have placed religio-politics within the context of an ‘authoritarian’ or ‘assertive’ state secularism and have explained the rise of Islamism as a reaction or/and a product of democratisation. These approaches take for granted the notion of a ‘secular state’ versus a ‘religious society’. In contrast, ‘religious majoritarianism’ implies a more complex and intertwined relationship between state, religion and society. It refers to a political structure according to which a religiously demarcated group’s dominance and monopoly over political and economic resources is legitimated on the basis of its numeric majority within the nation. This thesis suggests that the degree to which the Turkish nation-state became religious majoritarian was determined by the extent to which (i) majority–minority boundaries were defined along religious lines during the late Ottoman period and (ii) the way these became reflected in state institutions subsequently. This institutionalisation then triggered long-lasting path-dependent effects leading to the persistence of religious delineations within the community and influencing the nature of political and economic competition. In sum, the resurgence of religio-politics under the AKP party should be understood not as a break with a secular pattern of state-building but as a path-dependent process occurring within the longer-term dynamics of nation-state building.

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Abbreviations

AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
ANAP	Anavatan Partisi (Motherland Party)
AO	Aydınlar Ocağı (Hearth of Enlightened)
AP	Adalet Partisi (Justice Party)
ASKON	Anadolu Aslanları İşadamları Derneği (Association of Anatolian Businessmen)
BDP	Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi (Peace and Democracy Party)
CGP	Cumhuriyetçi Güven Partisi (Republican Reliance Party)
CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party)

CKMP	Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi (Republican Villagers Nation Party)
CUP	İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti (Committee of Union and Progress)
DISK	Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions)
DoA	Dernekler Dairesi Başkanlığı (Department of Associations)
DoD	Mezhepler Müdürlüğü (Department of Denominations)
DoF	Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü (Directorate General of Foundations)
DP	Demokrat Partisi (Democrat Party)
DPT	Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı (State Planning Organisation)
DSP	Demokratik Sol Parti (Democratic Left Party)
DTP	Demokratik Toplum Partisi (Democratic Society Party)
DV	Diyanet Vakfı (Turkish Religious Foundation)
DYP	Doğru Yol Partisi (Right Path Party)
FP	Fazilet Partisi (Virtue Party)
HP	Halkçı Parti (Populist Party)
IHS	İmam Hatip Okulları (Imam and Preacher Schools)
İSO	İstanbul Sanayi Odası (Istanbul Chamber of Industry)
IYC	İlim Yayma Cemiyeti (Association for the Dissemination of Science)
KMD	Komünizmle Mücadele Dernekleri (Associations for Fighting Communism)
NUC	Milli Birlik Komitesi (National Unity Committee)
MHP	Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Movement Party)
MIT	Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı (National Intelligence Organisation)
MÜSİAD	Müstakil Sanayici ve İş Adamları Derneği (Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association)
MSP	Millî Selâmet Partisi (National Salvation Party)
NSC	Milli Güvenlik Kurulu (National Security Council)
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanî (Kurdistan Workers' Party)

PRA	Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı (Presidency of Religious Affairs)
RP	Refah Partisi (Welfare Party)
SP	Saadet Partisi (Felicity Party)
TGNA	Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (Turkish Grand National Assembly)
TIS	Türk-İslam Sentezi (Turkish-Islamic Synthesis)
TOBB	Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği (Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey)
TOKİ	Toplu Konut İdaresi (Mass Housing Association)
TUIK	Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu (Turkish Statistical Institute)
TÜSİAD	Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği (Turkish Industry and Business Association)
TUSKON	Türkiye İşadamları ve Sanayiciler Konfederasyonu (Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists)
YÖK	Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu (Council of Higher Education)

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Since the 1970s there has been increasing focus amongst scholars of different traditions on the global ‘religious resurgence’.¹ Studies have addressed two separate phenomena: rising religiosity and the emergence and spread of politicised religious movements, or what Keddie describes as religio-political movements.² Both of these phenomena in turn prompted a plethora of studies alongside a reassessment of modernisation theory.³ Indeed, the assumption that economic development and bourgeoisification would bring the long-run secularisation of society came to be dismissed as empirically problematic given the ‘religious resurgence’.⁴ On the other hand, for some scholars the fact that the ‘religious resurgence’ has been more prevalent in some regions than others was regarded not as a failure of secularisation per se but rather as the reflection of ‘Islamic exceptionalism’, or the inability of non-Western cultures to adjust to the secular

¹ Critics of secularisation theories have questioned the ‘myth of past piety’, arguing that there is nothing unique or exceptional about ‘religious resurgence’ (Stark 1999).

² Here, religio-political movements refer essentially to political ideologies or movements that legitimate and present themselves through reference to a particular religion and its symbolic universe. Keddie has argued that the term religio-politics offers a better alternative to terms such as fundamentalism and religious revival or resurgence, since these stress the religious at the expense of the political. Religio-political movements involve an appeal to a reinterpreted, homogenized religious tradition which is proposed as an alternative or a solution to ills blamed on secular ideologies or foreign powers. Importantly, what sets religio-political movements apart from a simple rise in religiosity or purely religious movements is the focus on gaining power to effect a transformation of government and society to reflect what are proclaimed to be the principles of that particular religious tradition. Religio-political movements therefore differ from conservative religiosity or piousness in being inherently political. In this vein, Islamists, for example, have typically expanded religious education and conservative social policies such as restrictions on alcohol and on women when in government, as well as working through civil society networks such as Islamic charities for the Islamisation of society. Similarly, the Hindutva movement in India have promoted policies such as Hindu prayers in schools and have attempted to enforce religious norms and morality codes. From this perspective, the term religio-politics is a useful alternative to commonly employed terminology such as fundamentalism and jihadism that stress the religious at the expense of the political. See Keddie 1998; Tuğal 2007; Hamid & Fauzi 2009: 17.

³ For an overview of the debate see; Stark 1999; Calhoun et al. 2011; Casanova 1994; Fox 2004; Martin 2007; Stark & Bainbridge 1980; Gorski & Altinordu 2008.

⁴ Secularisation, conceptualised in terms of a unilinear unravelling of history involving the decline and privatisation of religion with modernisation, has been widely criticised as being stuck in an ideological frame of reference and empirically problematic. However, some scholars have reformulated and distinguished certain aspects of the thesis as still relevant, including the dynamic of social differentiation involving a desacralisation of institutions. See, for debate, Fox 2004; Martin 2007; Stark & Bainbridge 1980; Gorski & Altinordu 2008; Casanova 1994; Casanova 1992; Martin 1969; Breen & Reynolds 2011: 195–212; Taylor 2007; Calhoun et al. 2011; Asad 2011; Warner et al. 2010.

nation-state and modernity. Such essentialist/culturalist arguments have been widely challenged both for presenting religions and cultures as highly segmented, discrete and closed systems⁵ and also because ‘religious resurgence’ is not confined to Muslim majority or non-Western contexts.

Instead, the most prevalent paradigm in explaining these phenomena has been the argument that the ‘religious resurgence’ reflects a reaction principally to modernisation and its political, social and economic effects, including secularism.⁶ Several versions of this theory have been proposed, with different combinations of factors emphasised, including the reaction to secularisation by the state, capitalism, globalisation, economic crisis, industrialisation, migration, urbanisation, the breakdown of traditional lifestyles, cultural homogenisation and defence against post-modernity.⁷ In general, therefore, the common approaches can be characterised as functionalist or ‘reaction’-focused, given the emphasis on ‘religious resurgence’ as a ‘bottom-up’ occurrence. Conversely, where attention has been given to state or ‘top-down’ factors, these have chiefly asserted that religion has been instrumentalised by the secular state or elites in a reaction to the emergence of religio-politics to buttress declining legitimacy.

These debates are also reflected in studies of religio-politics in the Turkish context. Studies explaining the rise of Islamism in Turkey, from the establishment of the first explicitly Islamist political party in 1970 to its electoral successes since the mid-1990s, commonly describe it as a reaction to modernisation/secularisation and (sometimes) capitalist development. In particular, studies have been underpinned by what Kandiyoti has described as the ‘master narrative’ of secularism, in which secularism or republican authoritarianism established during the one-party period is positioned against democracy, ‘where democratization is ... treated as coterminous with the ascent of previously marginalized Islamic actors to positions of cultural, economic and political prominence’.⁸ According to this narrative, secularisation reforms, particularly from 1924 (or the rule of the Young Turks from

⁵ Said 4 October 2001; Said 2003; Halliday 1995; Zubaida 2011.

⁶ Gill 2001.

⁷ Keddie 1998; Sahliyyeh 1990; Eickelman & Piscatori 1996; Haynes 1995.

⁸ Kandiyoti 2012: 515.

1908), constituted a break from the Islamic Ottoman past, with Islamism emerging as a ‘bottom-up’ reaction to the authoritarian secularism of the ‘Kemalist’⁹ regime. In this vein, the success in 2002 of Islamism or the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP), a political party with Islamist roots, has been depicted as a process of democratisation (at least until the 2013 Gezi Park mass protests). This is because, the argument goes, it involves the Muslim majority society, or ‘periphery’¹⁰ (re)gaining its rightful place in the state, or the ‘centre’, formerly inhabited by secular elites. In this vein, Hakan Yavuz has argued that ‘secularization imposed from above alienated Turkish society from the state. The history of Turkish politics, therefore, is the story of a complex tension between these two world-views and identities. Over time, the state-centric republican elite and its supporting groups have identified themselves as secularists, commonly known as laikler, and the large masses as “backward Muslims”.’¹¹ Similarly, Kuru has claimed that ‘in Turkey, there has been a tension between the ideological dominance of assertive secularism in state institutions and the highly religious

⁹ Kemalism is widely considered to be the constitutive or hegemonic (at least until the AKP period) ideology of the Turkish Republic that was officially defined and adopted as part of the CHP’s party programme during the period of one-party rule in 1935. It comprises the ‘six arrows’ (as depicted in the CHP party emblem) or principles, including republicanism, nationalism, statism (or etatism), populism, laicism and reformism/revolutionism. It has been argued by some scholars that Kemalism has been an elitist ideology or approach that underpinned ‘top-down’ modernisation, and as reflecting a ‘tutelary democratic’ view or an authoritarian/Jacobin fundamentalist project. As Parla and Davison have noted, various scholars have regarded Kemalism as ‘anti-religious’ because of its ostensible focus on secularism, while others argue that it marginalised and de-prioritised Islam within a synthesis of Westernism–Turkishness–Islam. Likewise, Köker has claimed that Kemalist laicism was conceived of as control of religion by the state. Other approaches to the concept of Kemalism have emphasised it, or a perseverance of ‘Kemalist mentality’ (as exemplified by the depiction of the AKP as ‘Islamist Kemalists’), as the essence of a state ideology that tends towards essentialism. At the same time, it has been noted that Kemalism has been interpreted and reinterpreted at different times by different actors, including the military (as Atatürkism, following the 1980 coup) and political movements across the political spectrum (leftist or rightist Kemalism). In this sense, it has been described as having ‘big tent’ elements, comprising an umbrella term with content that can be flexibly interpreted. As Zürcher has argued, Kemalism ‘lacks coherence’ and is ‘best seen as a set of attitudes and opinions which were never rooted in any detail’. Given these paradoxical approaches, it can be argued that the concept of Kemalism has little analytical power. As Kandiyoti argues, designations such as Kemalism and Islamism in the Turkish context have become ‘empty signifiers and tropes mobilized by contending political actors in their search for hegemony and the consolidation of their power’. Consequently, rather than focusing on how to define the ideological content of Kemalism, this thesis focuses on historically grounded analysis of such constitutional principles by examining the broader constitutional order, the historical contexts and legacies, constitutional debates and institutional structures and the evolution of these over time. For a debate on Kemalism, see Tunçay 2005; Köker 2007; Oran 1999; Parla & Davison 2004; Zürcher 2002; Bora & Gültekinil 2002; Can & Bora 2004; Taşkın 2002; Copeaux 2000: 306–7; Kandiyoti 2012.

¹⁰ Mardin 1973.

¹¹ Yavuz 1997.

nature of society' and that 'democratisation has also caused relative moderation of assertive secularist policies in Turkey'.¹² An alternative narrative of Islamist politics and secularism in Turkey points to elements of continuity with the Ottoman state and the instrumentalisation of religion by a 'laic' 'Kemalist' state through institutions such as the official religious authority, the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, PRA). Regardless of the different readings of history underpinning these narratives, however, both accounts essentially rely on a dichotomisation of state and society and consequently narrate Turkish history as a 'struggle between the values of a secular Kemalist state elite and a traditional Muslim society'.¹³

This thesis raises some key problems with approaches that present religio-politics chiefly as reactions driven from the bottom up. Firstly, the depiction of the 'secular state' is itself problematic since, in many cases, states are significantly involved in religion or incorporate religious authority within their domain. This is evidenced in the Turkish case by the role of the PRA within the state.¹⁴ Indeed, there has been increasing acknowledgment of the problems with the common assumptions of a secular/religious dichotomy within studies of 'religious resurgence'.¹⁵ Secondly, the counter-argument that 'secular states' were simply instrumentalising religion in response to bottom-up pressures also tells a partial story. For instance, within Turkish studies, the view that the adoption of Islamisation policies (such as the expansion of compulsory religious education) by the military following the 1980 coup or the AKP period marked a break from secularism neglects the fact that state policies to expand religious infrastructure (e.g. religious education, PRA etc.) preceded the ascent of religio-politics as a force enjoying widespread appeal and

¹² Kuru 2009: 2000; Kuru & Stepan 2012: 104.

¹³ Kandiyoti 2012: 515.

¹⁴ There is a plethora of studies on whether Turkey can be described as secular. Various scholars differentiate between laicism and secularism and point out that they have differing political implications. For instance, it is argued that, rather than there being a 'wall of separation' between religion and state, the Turkish case exemplifies state control of religion. However, this thesis suggests that, by continuing to use the typology of secularism and focusing on the question of the extent to which Turkey is secular or laic, such approaches lead to the neglect of a more complex relationship between religion and state. It is suggested here that a better means to understand the state involves a focus on analysing its practices, rather than analysing the state through its own terms and definitions. See Davison 2003 for discussion of the classification of the Turkish case as laicism or secularism.

¹⁵ Calhoun et al. 2011.

significant electoral success. Both of these dynamics cast doubt on the claim that the ‘accommodation’ of religio-political demands represented a break from the previous ‘secular’ orientation of the state or that it was a partial democratisation in response to powerful ‘bottom-up’ demands. Thirdly, the argument that religio-politics was a reaction to authoritarian secularism in countries such as Turkey are equally problematic. For example, India is a democratic state where secularism is typically conceived as comprising a ‘principled distance’¹⁶ of the state from religion, which has involved maintaining religious personal laws. Nevertheless, religio-political movements have arisen in India since the 1970s despite the less ‘assertive’ secularism of the Indian state. In addition, this thesis demonstrates through archival and historical evidence that, contrary to the narrative of ‘assertive’ state secularism, religious infrastructure was expanded in Turkey by different state actors, including the PRA and the military.

Conversely, while modernisation (including capitalist development) and democratisation may be key variables in explaining the rise and timing of religio-politics, they do not necessarily provide answers as to why some settings proved more conducive to the emergence of religio-political movements than did others. Indeed, often the very conditions – such as modernisation – that were argued to have given rise to religio-politics in some countries instead supported greater secularisation in others.¹⁷ With the end of the Cold War, the decline of ideological polarisation and the shift to a preoccupation with ‘identity politics’ and post-structuralist critiques there has been a turn towards more contextual approaches with greater attention given to the agents themselves – the religio-political movements – their strategies, ideologies and methods of mobilisation. However, it could be argued that some of these explanations conflate social categories (e.g. a Muslim majority in Turkey) with ‘groupness’, thereby reifying them as a homogenous, monolithic unit with common purposes.¹⁸ Consequently, they assume politicisation as natural (e.g. Muslims as Islamists) without deconstructing groupness as a contingent political project by questioning how and why certain group boundaries become politically significant and others do not. These analyses

¹⁶ Bhargava 2011.

¹⁷ Gill 2001.

¹⁸ Brubaker 2002: 164.

can therefore be implicitly essentialist in assuming religious primordial identities ready to be awakened.

1.2 Aim, research question and outline of argument

This thesis is concerned with the gap between theories of ‘religious resurgence’ and the historical evidence, which it explores through the case study of Turkey. Existing studies have generated important insights into the different political and socio-economic contexts in which religio-politics has thrived and the responses and strategies of actors within them. This thesis does not deny the importance of factors such as the instrumentalisation of religion by political actors, nor does it downplay the importance of ‘bottom-up’ grassroots mobilisation, the role of contingent events such as economic crises, the ideological or emotional commitment of actors or actors’ resistance to phenomena such as modernity. However, my contention is that these approaches have told a partial story chiefly as a result of the false binary analytical conceptualisations of ‘religious society’ and ‘secular state’. In this sense, this thesis involves a shift in focus from the prevalent approaches on the basis of the historical and archival material presented in this study. To clarify, however, this thesis is not a study of Islamist movements or religio-political movements per se, nor of the dynamics of rising/falling piety or trends in secularisation. Neither am I concerned with defining the nature, type or evolution of laicism or secularism in Turkey; there are already numerous studies in these areas.

The purpose of this study is to examine and establish a framework to conceptualise why certain contexts prove more conducive to the politicisation of religion through a reconsideration of the state–religion relationship. The dependent variable is therefore the persistence of politically salient religious delineations insofar as they influence the nature of political and economic competition, raising the possibility of their politicisation. In the Turkish case, this has meant the persistence since the late Ottoman period of the articulation of the ‘majority’ or society as (Sunni) Muslim, and typically as ‘religious’ and ‘conservative’. For instance, a popular mantra of political life is that Turkey is ‘99%’ or ‘majority’ Muslim. At the same time, a distinction is made, especially by Islamist or conservative actors, of a ‘minority’ Kemalist/‘laic’ elite or ‘centre’. In particular, ‘Islamic’ business

organisations which emerged in the 1990s emphasise their identity as ‘Muslim’, in contrast to what they allege are the ‘minority’, ‘comprador-masonic’ Istanbul-based business elites.¹⁹

Hypothesis

Based on its findings, this thesis proposes the concept of ‘religious majoritarianism’ to describe what is a more complex and intertwined relationship between state, religion and society, instead of the typical and static ‘secular state’ versus ‘religious society’ categorisation. Religious majoritarianism refers to a political structure in which a religiously demarcated group’s dominance and monopoly over political and economic resources and power is legitimated on the basis of its numeric majority within the nation. The degree to which a nation-state establishes a religious majoritarian structure is determined by the extent to which i) majority–minority boundaries are defined along religious lines (understood through Weber’s concept of social closure) and ii) these become reflected in state institutions during the foundational period of the nation-state. This institutionalisation can trigger long-lasting, path-dependent and self-reinforcing effects leading to the persistence of religious delineations and thereby affect the possibility of their politicisation. In sum, this thesis proposes that the possibility of religio-politics should also be understood and situated within the longer-term

¹⁹ How Islamists articulate and differentiate themselves on religious lines is evident from, for example, an influential article by Yahya Kemal, a leading poet, politician and diplomat of the early Republican period, which remains a reference point for Islamists/conservatives. The article, written in 1922 and titled ‘Neighbourhoods without the ezan [call to prayer]’, has been reprinted in various formats since and, in 2013, the Ministry of National Education under the AKP government took the decision to include the article as part of its approved reading material for use within primary schools. The article distinguishes between ‘Muslim’ neighbourhoods and ones that are regarded as being insufficiently ‘Muslim’ or too ‘westernised’: ‘I say to myself, do the Turkish children that are born, grow and play in neighbourhoods such as Şişli, Kadıköy, Moda share in nationhood to the full extent? In those neighbourhoods minarets cannot be seen, the ezan cannot be heard, the Ramadan and Kandil days are not felt. How do the children see the children’s dream of being a Muslim? ... Today the majority of children are again born and grow in Muslim neighbourhoods ... But the children of the top stratum that have civilised too much, are raised in the new neighbourhoods without the ezan and according to alafranga [European style] education and do not see the most beautiful dream of Turkish children We grew up by hearing the sound of ezan amongst the trees and minarets However, Turkish children raised in neighbourhoods without the minarets, ezan, and according to frenk [European] education will not remember where to return!’ Kemal 1963; *Zaman* 4 January 2013; *Vagus TV* 14 December 2013; *Haber 7* 7 November 2013; *Radikal* 16 December 2013.

dynamics of nation-state building and the level of religious majoritarianism it incorporates.

As Calhoun et al. have pointed out, ‘many of us are unconsciously affected ... [by] a grand narrative involving secularism in the spread of modernization’.²⁰ The concept of religious majoritarianism provides an alternative analytical prism through which to analyse the state–religion relationship over time and a means to categorise the organisation of a state. The prism challenges false dichotomies in two ways. Firstly, the processes by which the religious boundaries of groups are shaped, reproduced and persist in politically salient ways (with state influence) are traced. In contrast to studies of religio-politics that conflate social categories and politicised group identity, this approach serves the purposes of avoiding the assumption of ‘groupness’ in the sense that ‘groups’ are treated as timeless, homogeneous and with common purpose. Max Weber’s concept of social closure is useful for understanding the processes by which group boundaries are constructed as actors mobilise to ensure the monopolisation of resources.²¹ The degree and form of social closure within the nation-state is indicated by the configurations of institutions, including the particular definition of the nation and its approach towards majority and minority communities, the legal framework and the distribution of resources. Social closure is embedded within the very project of the nation-state itself and defines the identity of the legitimate rulers or owners of the new state at the foundational stage. The ways in which social closure is reflected in state institutions subsequently result in differential outcomes in terms of which forms of boundaries become developed and persist, and how strong those boundaries are.²² In other words, higher levels of social closure on the basis of religious identity indicate sharper group boundaries based on religious delineations and competition, thereby increasing the boundaries’ political salience.

Secondly, the role of state institutions matter for the politicisation of religious identities in two key ways: i) in shaping and constraining political actors and strategies and articulating and reproducing religious group boundaries; ii) and in

²⁰ Calhoun et al. 2011: 16.

²¹ Weber 1978; Wimmer 2008.

²² Wimmer 2008; Wimmer 2002; Brubaker 1992.

generating path-dependence which underpins the persistence of group boundary delineations shaped by social closure. Regarding the first role, institutions as defined by North are the ‘rules of the game in a society or, more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction In consequence they structure incentives in human exchange, whether political, social, or economic.’²³ Yet, the impact of institutions or state structures has rarely been acknowledged or considered in analyses of religio-politics, with the exception of studies that consider top-down instrumentalisation by secular states. Instead, I draw on the insights generated by historical institutionalism in examining the role that institutions – considered as endogenous and, as such, as arenas of struggle – play in affecting the political salience of religious identities. The intention here is not to promote a purely instrumentalist view of the politicisation of religion by presenting religio-political movements as being a product of state manipulation; rather more simply, it is to suggest, as does Zubaida, that political processes, forces, actions and solidarities are determined not just by class or community but by political institutions and processes in interaction with various social groupings.²⁴ States, in particular, have ‘a special influence, for ... [they are] the agent of separation and the defender ... of the social map’²⁵ and play a key role in shaping and constraining political strategies and competition through the distribution of political and economic resources. In terms of their second role, institutions are by their nature characterised by persistence, given ‘the self-reinforcing processes in institutions that make institutional configurations, and hence their policies, difficult to change once a pattern has been established’.²⁶ Consequently, institutions not only structure actors’ behaviour and choices but generate the path-dependent effects of social closure by enabling the persistence of boundary delineations, stabilising them and ensuring their reproduction.²⁷

To summarise, I propose firstly that the ‘religious resurgence’ in Turkey should be understood within the context of path-dependent processes of nation-state building which contrasts with mainstream theories and Turkish studies. Secondly, I argue

²³ Acemoglu et al. 2005; North 1990.

²⁴ Zubaida 1993.

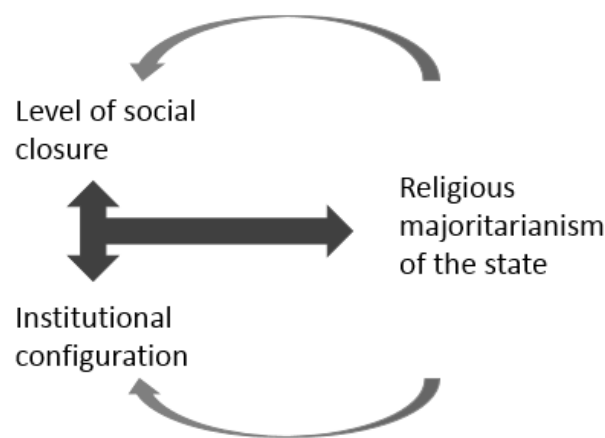
²⁵ Walzer 1984: 327.

²⁶ Peters et al. 2005; Acemoglu et al. 2005.

²⁷ Wimmer 2008.

that these dynamics cannot be explained through the ‘secular state’–‘religious society’ dichotomy, and thereby propose the prism of ‘religious majoritarianism’ as a conceptual redescription of the state–religion relationship. The religious majoritarianism of the state has depended on both the extent of social closure and the degree to which this becomes institutionalised during the founding years of the nation-state (a ‘critical juncture’). The reinforcing ways in which this relationship can work are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Religious majoritarianism diagram



Nation-state building, by its nature, involves majoritisation²⁸ and homogenisation. At the same time, as Kandiyoti argues, ‘genealogies of national belonging are, most of the time, heavily imbued with the language of religion’.²⁹ What transforms these processes and dynamics into religious majoritarianism in some cases and not others is the degree to which they result in particular institutional configurations. In the Turkish case the establishment of the PRA elevated Sunni Muslim Turkish identity and bestowed it with political and economic resources. These processes raise the political significance of religious delineations by encouraging the identification of common interests and the formation and sharpening of group boundaries through the (unequal) distribution of state political and economic resources, thereby, possibly, facilitating the rise of religio-politics. Consequently, I do not argue that the contextual arguments of the prevalent functionalist/reaction-based approaches are necessarily wrong, but that the combined analysis of the shaping of group

²⁸ Kaufmann and Haklai 2008.

²⁹ Kandiyoti 2009.

boundaries along religious lines and the way state institutions play a role in their reproduction leads to a more complete understanding of the contexts that make the rise of religio-politics more likely.

Specifically, this is not a ‘linear’³⁰ deterministic argument in which a variable has only one causal outcome regardless of the specific contexts and sequencing. I am not arguing that politicisation is necessarily and deterministically caused by the dynamics of majority–minority relations at the formative period of the nation-state. Instead, the argument is rather a ‘probabilistic’ one, in that it claims ‘a cause increases the likelihood of an outcome and/or the magnitude of a (scalar) outcome’.³¹ Accordingly, it is argued that i) variance in variable A (majority–minority relations) can lead to certain processes (institutionalisation) that generate path-dependent effects which limit the range of future paths or constrain/shape the boundaries or actions that particular agents can take, which in turn ii) can influence the possibility of the development of religio-politics. In this sense, the argument can be categorised as a ‘generative explanation’, given the focus on describing ‘processes that generate the form’.³²

This approach, I argue, i) addresses the gap outlined above between theory and the historical record of the existing literature; ii) provides a framework to trace continuity and change in religion–state relations; iii) situates religio-politics as part of longer-term path-dependent processes associated with nation-state building; and iv) can be used to situate the Turkish case in a comparative context.

1.3 The Turkish case: antecedent conditions, the critical juncture and path-dependence

This section outlines the Turkish case and places its main findings within the framework outlined above. I argue that the Ottoman legacy and the level of social closure at the end of empire constituted antecedent conditions that shaped the

³⁰ Abbot 1988.

³¹ Gerring 2004.

³² Fredrik Barth quoted in Cederman 2005: 869.

strategies and choices of nation-state builders during the foundational stages of the Republic.

i. Antecedent conditions: the Ottoman legacy

The high levels of social closure at the time of the establishment of the Republic in 1923 can be traced to the Ottoman Empire's political and social structure and its transformation and disintegration from the nineteenth century. Religion played an important role in Ottoman society. The empire was a multi-ethnic and multi-religious polity in which Islam was a crucial reference point. In theory, the Ottoman state was theocratic: laws had to be in compliance with Islamic law. In practice, however, despite the concept of *din u devlet* (unity of religion and state),³³ Ottoman rulers could circumvent religious law, whilst the religious establishment enjoyed degrees of autonomy. In addition, the Ottoman social structure was highly stratified and within it religion was a communal marker that 'demarcated ethnic groups and defined these as religious communities'.³⁴ As Göçek has discussed, this 'ethnic segmentation' was operationalised in what was called the *millet* system. This system, based on Islamic principles, had emerged as a practical arrangement of rule over diverse populations as the empire expanded.³⁵ Thus, within a hierarchical social structure in which Muslims were positioned at the top and ruled the lands, the *millets* comprised religiously defined (only non-Muslims that were recognised by Islam as 'people of the book') communities in which each enjoyed a degree of administrative autonomy over areas pertaining to personal law, religion, education and judicial matters.³⁶ The segmentation and stratification on the basis of religion was reinforced by various legal and social codes and restrictions, including different dress, different taxation and a system of privileges and exemptions that not only enforced 'a cognitive sense of their difference in relation to other communities' but also restricted interaction between communities.³⁷

³³ Toprak 1981: 1–2.

³⁴ Göçek 1993: 513.

³⁵ Barkey 2005; Karpat 1982; Kucukcan 2003.

³⁶ Karpat 1982; Kucukcan 2003; Göçek 1993: 513; Ortaylı 2001.

³⁷ Göçek 1993: 513; Göçek 1996.

As detailed by various historical studies, the eventual breakdown of this system rested on a set of inter-related factors including war, (usually forced) migration, Westernisation/modernisation, imperialist penetration, class bifurcation and the spread of European ideas of self-rule and nationalism.³⁸ Despite the importance of Islam, identity and doctrine were fluid in the empire's more than 600 years of existence across different territories.³⁹ Beginning with a majority Christian population at the end of the fifteenth century, the conquest of Arab lands during the reign of Selim I (1516–18), the seizure/transfer of the caliphate to the Ottoman dynasty with the conquest of Egypt and the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514 against the Shi'a-dominated Safavid Empire were important turning points in terms of the greater Muslimisation of the population and emphasis on the Sunni doctrine. Pronounced demographic changes took place from the late eighteenth century (with Russian expansion into the Crimea) following territorial loss and migration. For instance, the Muslim population had risen from 59.6% in the 1820s to 76.2% by the 1890s.⁴⁰ Demographic changes were also driven by population exchanges and ethnic cleansing. The most tragic instance of this was the Armenian genocide in 1915, involving the massacre of an estimated million people⁴¹ and their elimination in Ottoman lands. Around a million orthodox Christians had migrated to Greece by 1922, while the population exchange agreed at the Lausanne Convention in 1923 led to the transfer of a further 1.5 million Orthodox Christians to Greece in exchange for around 0.5 million Muslims sent to Turkey.⁴²

In parallel and related to these developments was what Göçek has described as the polarisation of ethnic segmentation owing to the institutional changes introduced by modernisation/Westernisation reforms and European imperial penetration. The loss of territories following the Battle of Vienna (1683) and the economic and military decline of the Ottoman state relative to the emerging superiority of European powers had triggered a period of reforms starting with the New Order (*Nizam-I Cedit*) reform programme of Sultan Selim III (1789–1807) that culminated in the Tanzimat reforms (1839–76). The introduction of Western

³⁸ For example; Deringil 1991; Göçek 1993; Göçek 1996; Karpas 2001; Dündar 2011; Zürcher 2004.

³⁹ Ergul 2012.

⁴⁰ Karpas 1985; Dündar 2011: 56.

⁴¹ Brubaker 1995b: 93.

⁴² Kolluoğlu 2013.

education and exposure to Enlightenment ideas, coupled with the economic ascendancy of non-Muslims from the nineteenth century (related to imperial penetration and the system of privileges under the capitulations regime), resulted in the bifurcation of the bourgeoisie,⁴³ also heightening processes of social closure.

These developments were impacted by and led to the transformation of the underpinning principles of organisation of the Ottoman state. State politics shifted (different elements being stressed at different times) between three currents of thought: Ottomanism (aimed at uniting Muslim and non-Muslims under a territorially based identity), pan-Islamism and Turkish nationalism, which were articulated to address the legitimacy crisis of the state.⁴⁴ Ottomanism and the drive to ease the capitulations regime (alongside European imperialist pressures) had influenced the introduction of equality for non-Muslims during the Tanzimat era, which, however, had angered Muslims and was a catalysing factor for the emergence of Islamism.⁴⁵ The subsequent policy of pan-Islamism under Abdulhamid II (1876–1908) marked the first self-conscious drive to establish a homogenous (Hanefi⁴⁶) Sunni Muslim social base,⁴⁷ coinciding with and probably accelerating the Muslimisation of the land. The augmentation of majority–minority boundaries occurred at a time when the granting of equality to non-Muslims and the spread of nationalism meant that there was an increased focus on the numerical size of the different communities, which became important for claims of national interest and territorial rights.⁴⁸ Indeed, it was only in the last decades of the empire that the term ‘minority’ (*ekalliyet*) was introduced.⁴⁹ The 1912–13 Balkan wars and loss of Christian lands largely spelled the end of Ottomanism, whilst subsequent revolts and loss of (Muslim majority) Arab lands played a role in undermining pan-Islamism. Turkish nationalism⁵⁰ had begun to assert a greater force with the ascent of the Young Turk movement, as the Committee of Union and Progress⁵¹ (*İttihat*

⁴³ Göçek 1996.

⁴⁴ Akçura 1976; Deringil 1991.

⁴⁵ Göçek 1996; Kara 2013.

⁴⁶ The Hanefi school comprises one of the four schools of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence alongside Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali.

⁴⁷ Deringil 1991.

⁴⁸ Kale 2014; Karpas 1985.

⁴⁹ Ortaylı 2012: 16.

⁵⁰ Kushner 1977.

⁵¹ Hanioğlu 1995.

ve Terakki Cemiyeti, CUP) took power in 1908. Pan-Islamism as a political project may have appeared less achievable, but Islam remained a constitutive element of identity for Turkish nationalist ideologues such as Ziya Gökalp, as demonstrated by his statement: ‘I belong to the Turkish nation, Islamic ummah, Western civilisation.’⁵² The CUP continued not only, with greater determination, modernisation reforms, but also Turkification, which largely involved Muslimisation policies aimed at creating a Muslim bourgeoisie and giving greater advantages to it over the non-Muslims. Equally, it was to Muslim unity that the nationalist movement had appealed during the independence war.

In sum, there were three legacy antecedent conditions that impacted the decisions made at the critical juncture with regards to religion and state. First was the increasingly politically salient and sharpened religious delineation of majority and minority boundaries in the late empire, which meant that the nascent national community came to be imagined as majority Muslim, whilst non-Muslims, previously inferior to Muslims under the *millet* system, came to be regarded as foreign/enemy elements. The second condition was the demographic reality, by the establishment of the Republic, of the devastation of the non-Muslim population and the Muslimisation of the territory. The third condition was the intertwined relationship between religion and state which involved the situation of the religious authority, the ulema, within the Ottoman state. The confluence of developments outlined above were consequential in terms of the levels of social closure and in facilitating the transformation of religious categories into ethnic group identity⁵³ in the lead-up to the declaration of the Republic in 1923.

ii. The establishment of the Republic as a ‘critical juncture’

The extent to which the establishment of the Republic constituted a break or continuity with the Ottoman past remains a matter of ongoing debate within Turkish studies.⁵⁴ Its foundational years can be regarded as a ‘critical juncture’ in which decisions were taken in a moment of heightened contingency that raised the

⁵² Keskin 1994.

⁵³ Karpas 2001.

⁵⁴ See Chapter 3.

possibility of both significant change or preservation/reconfiguration of previous forms.⁵⁵ The adoption of the principle of popular sovereignty in 1921, the abolition of the sultanate in 1922 and ‘secularisation’ reforms, including the abolition of the caliphate in 1924, the adoption of a Swiss civil code in 1926, the removal of Islam as state religion in 1928 and the adoption of laicism as a constitutional principle in 1937, were important examples pointing to high levels of institutional fluidity. It is these changes, and particularly the secularisation reforms, that have been the chief focus of Turkish studies and underpinned narratives of the unfolding of a top-down secularisation and modernisation project.

Conversely, this thesis argues that the available paths for state-builders were constrained and shaped by the outlined antecedent conditions, including the high level of social closure, which was heightened by international pressures (the Treaty of Lausanne on the treatment of minorities) and historical memory (minority nationalism and the ‘Sevres syndrome’; fear of the designs of Western powers to divide the country). In this vein, this thesis makes two claims vis-à-vis aspects of continuity. Firstly, there was continuity in terms of the Hamidian drive to construct a dominant (Sunni) Muslim majority, which remained a persistent feature during the Republic. This reflected the high degrees of social closure at the end of empire, which became institutionalised in the nation-state framework. This claim is made on the basis of archival research into the debates of constitutional framers during the Republic and the establishment and role of the PRA. Secondly, the establishment of the PRA in 1924 represented the entrenchment of the ulema within the state, similarly reflecting continuity. Both of these dynamics together have meant that religious majoritarianism has been a persistent feature.

iii. Institutions and path-dependency effects

Religious delineations persisted following the transition to multipartism from 1946. From the 1950s, Turkey experienced urbanisation, migration, industrialisation, economic development, key Europeanisation reforms from the 1990s and a number of military interventions (involving the establishment of a tutelary regime) in 1961,

⁵⁵ Lerner 2014. This differs from Kuru’s thesis: see Chapter 3.

1971, 1980 and in 1997. Significantly, the 1980 coup was followed by an explicit programme of Islamisation adopted by the junta leaders, which has been called the Turkish–Islamic Synthesis (Türk–İslam Sentezi, TIS)⁵⁶, while in 1997 the military intervened by forcing the resignation of a Islamist-led coalition government. Over this period, the PRA played a vital role in embedding religious majoritarianism, leading to the reproduction and persistence of the religious delineation of community boundaries as Sunni Muslim Turkish as well as shaping a more accommodating environment for Islamists, including the expansion of religious education from the late 1940s. Significantly, religious majoritarianism has become more explicit over time, alongside the elimination of the remaining non-Muslim ‘minorities’ and the oft and widely repeated assertion by various actors that Turkey is ‘99%’ Muslim. For example, while around 20% of the population of what is today Turkey were non-Muslims in 1906, this proportion fell to 2.6% in 1927, 1.6% in 1935, 1.3% in 1945 and less than 0.2% in the 1990s⁵⁷. In addition, the non-recognised Alevi ‘minority’, comprising between 15 and 20% of the population, have been the target of state-led ethnic-cleansing (e.g. Dersim 1937–38) and Islamisation efforts.

Equally, contingent events including external factors or shifting geopolitical dynamics were also significant in effecting institutional shifts whether through pressure on state actors to undertake certain measures or creating opportunities for agents to shift balances of power between different sets of actors to achieve change. One key development, in the aftermath of World War II and the emergence of the Cold War, was Turkey’s alliance with Western powers, marked by its inclusion into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952, driven by concerns of a growing threat of Soviet expansion and communism. The subsequent transition to multipartism in 1946 and political opening had partly been regarded by the Turkish authorities as a means to extract both political and economic support from its new allies, while, at the same time, the country became a key element of attempts by Western powers to ‘encircle’ the Soviet Bloc and anti-communism

⁵⁶ For elaboration of the TIS programme see Can & Bora 2004: 150–89; Kafesoğlu 1999; Güvenç & Turan 1994; Gültekin 1995; Sakallıoğlu 1996; Dursun 2003.

⁵⁷ The inclusion of Alevis as Muslim in these figures is highly contested. See Chapter 6.

strategies.⁵⁸ The Cold War-related anti-communism drive from the late 1940s was important for the expansion of religious infrastructure, including religious education, the role of the PRA and creation of anti-communist associations by state actors in cooperation with Islamist and rightist actors, such as the Associations for Fighting Communism (*Komünizmle Mücadele Dernekleri*, KMD⁵⁹). In the 1970s, the rise in prominence and influence of the oil exporting conservative Arab monarchies following the 1973-74 oil embargo augmented these dynamics. As Ahmad notes, since the 1960s, Saudi Arabia, supported by the USA, had been using Islam as a means to counter Nasserite Arab nationalism and leftists⁶⁰. Turkey in particular had emerged as a critical country within this context since it was ‘considered to be at the heart of a [Islamic] ‘green belt’ fighting against the ‘red belt’ of communism’.⁶¹ The growing wealth of the monarchies in the 1970s enabled increased funding for religious and Islamist actors and organisations in Turkey, through bodies such as the Saudi based *Rabita al-Alam al-Islami* (The Muslim World League).⁶² Such geopolitical developments, together with domestic dynamics, played a role in creating new opportunity structures for conservative or Islamist actors. These included the conservative policies enacted by the rightist-Islamist National Front coalition governments in the 1970s and the adoption of the TIS in the 1980s. For instance, following the 1980 coup, the Saudi *Rabita* was involved in funding the salaries of the PRA’s religious functionaries to ensure that they would not be tainted by “foreign ideologies”⁶³. Equally, the neoliberal turn in the global capitalist economy from the 1980s, shaped the economic restructuring programme of the 1980 junta leaders, while also facilitating (together with ‘petrodollars’ from the Persian Gulf monarchies) the expansion of Islamic charities. In the post-Cold War period, the ‘ideological hegemony of democracy’⁶⁴ was a factor in catalysing Turkey’s Europeanisation process, reminiscent of the earlier political opening in the late 1940s. This was marked by Turkey’s application for membership of the European Community in 1987, signing of the Customs Union with the European Union (EU) in 1995, the granting of Turkish candidacy

⁵⁸ Angrist 2004; Zürcher 2004.

⁵⁹ See pages 264, 275.

⁶⁰ Ahmad 1988.

⁶¹ Ergil 2000.

⁶² Ahmad 1988.

⁶³ Ahmad 1988.

⁶⁴ Diamond 1996.

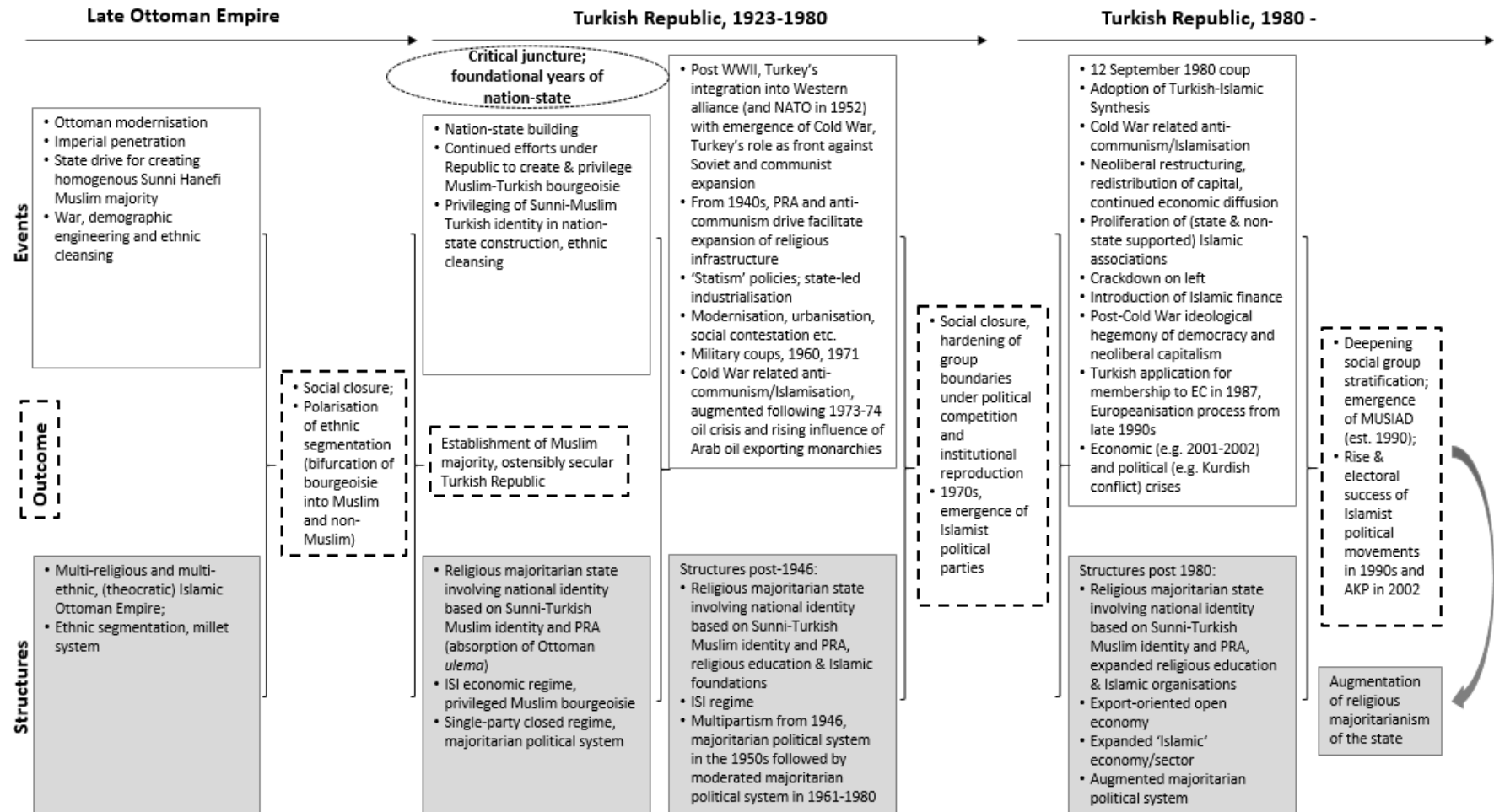
by the European Council in 1999 and the agreement by the EU to start negotiations with Turkey for membership in 2004. Major reforms simulated by the Europeanisation process during this period most notably included the role of the military in politics, the Turkish Penal Code and its articles on freedom of expression and association, the death penalty, the transparency of the public sector and human rights legislation⁶⁵. The waning of the Europeanisation process from 2007, was followed by the domestic (by the AKP government) and external promotion of Turkey's role in the Middle East and North Africa region as a 'Muslim democracy', which has been re-shaping and exacerbating sectarian and ethnic fault-lines as well as augmenting religious majoritarianism domestically.

In short, the interplay of both domestic and external factors were crucial in opening 'windows of opportunity' for a range of actors (including state officials, Islamists), shaping policy options and the balance of power, and augmenting religious majoritarianism over time. In addition, since these contingent events either occurred in other country contexts without religio-political movements, or equally, they did not occur in other contexts (such as India) where religio-political movements did arise, it is argued that they should be considered in conjunction with path-dependent effects generated by institutional structures. Once established, institutional structures such as the PRA and religious education became self-reinforcing, generating a differentiated 'habitus' and social groups with a vested interest in the continued reproduction of these boundaries. The majoritarian political system further reinforced this process by imparting a majoritarian logic to political party competition. Consequently, the rise of Islamism and the AKP in 2002 is situated against this background, which, in conjunction with contingent events, is argued to have facilitated and made more likely the AKP's rise and domination. In contrast to the prevalent scholarship, which portrays the AKP era as a break from secularism or a turning point for the 'secular' state, therefore, this thesis argues that it marks continuity and an augmentation of religious majoritarianism, and in this sense relates it to the historical processes of nation-state building.

⁶⁵ Müftüler Baç 2005.

In sum, decisions made during the foundational years of the Turkish state, shaped by antecedent conditions, resulted in significant continuity, firstly in the conceptualisation of the national community as Sunni Muslim Turkish, and, secondly, in terms of the institutionalisation of religious authority. This evolution of the Turkish case is illustrated in Figure 2. State structures are distinguished from events such as war, coups, neoliberal restructuring and the Cold War anti-communism drive. The particular outcomes that are generated, such as the establishment of a Muslim majority Turkish Republic or the emergence of 'religious resurgence' in the 1970s, are facilitated by the combination and interaction of the structures and the contingent events. At the same time, it is suggested in Figure 2 that these outcomes have also facilitated the augmentation of the religious majoritarianism of the state.

Figure 2: The Turkish case



1.4 Methodology, sources and data collection

This thesis adopts a case-study approach involving the ‘intensive study of a single unit with an aim to generalize across a larger set of units’.⁶⁶ The Turkish experience is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, Turkey has long been hailed as a paradigmatic case for modernisation theory and, related to this, is typically treated as the archetypal example of separatist or ‘assertive’ secularism.⁶⁷ This makes it a good case study to test the prevalent reaction-based approaches. Thirdly, Turkey represents one of the rare cases of a relatively open political system and ostensibly secular state in a Muslim majority context. This has driven some to treat Turkey as *sui generis* or as a test case of the broader compatibility of Islam and democracy.⁶⁸ In addition, Turkey’s relatively open system means the dynamics of religio-politics can be examined more clearly than in an authoritarian, closed and theocratic state such as Saudi Arabia, for example, where other political avenues or identity claims are restricted.

Small-n case studies, however, have various recognised drawbacks, including limitations on any claims of generalisability, causality, representativeness or usefulness as a confirmatory research strategy.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, it has also been acknowledged that small-n case studies play an important role by contributing to theory building by providing important insights into ‘details on the ground’ and complex causal processes overlooked by general large-n studies.⁷⁰ As Gerring has argued, case-study approaches are better suited to ‘exploratory’ research, which involves a quest for new theories, elucidating new relationships and mechanisms, rather than ‘confirmatory’ research design, which involves theory testing. This thesis starts with the observation that there is a gap within the existing literature on religio-politics, and, following in-depth historical–archival research, suggests alternative variables and causal relationships to address the disjuncture. In this vein, Charles Tilly has argued that there is a need for ‘historically grounded

⁶⁶ Gerring 2004.

⁶⁷ Stepan 2011; Kuru 2007.

⁶⁸ Huntington 1993; Lewis 1952; Lewis March 1994.

⁶⁹ Gerring 2004.

⁷⁰ George & Bennett 2005; Almond & Genco 1977; APSA–CP 2006; Ziblatt 2006; Mesquita 2006; Bunce 2006.

analyses of big structures and large processes as alternatives to timeless ones of social change coming from our nineteenth century heritage'. According to Tilly, this means 'discover[ing] appropriate historical cases and ... devise[ing] alternative explanations ... I do not mean universal statements confirmed by a wide variety of instances in different eras and parts of the world; at that level of generality, we have so far framed no statements that are at once convincing, rich, and important.'⁷¹

Reflecting the historical institutionalist approach underpinning this thesis, institutional persistence and change over time is understood in path-dependent terms. Path-dependency can be described in the most general terms as 'history matters', and, more narrowly, as a deterministic idea that emphasises the causal importance of initial conditions.⁷² This thesis adopts a middle way, which conceives of initial conditions as being only indirectly causal in limiting the range of alternatives in path-dependent sequences as opposed to constituting a causal condition. Therefore, this thesis rejects a deterministic definition of path-dependency, where the past determines the future, rather arguing that "[c]hoice is real but it is also constrained." Choices are strategic and the constraints are path dependent.⁷³ Mahoney and Schensul's formulation summarises this approach: 'path dependence is a property of a system such that the outcome over a period of time is *not determined* by any particular set of initial conditions. Rather, a system that exhibits path dependency is one in which outcomes are related stochastically to initial conditions, and the particular outcome that obtains in any given "run" of the system depends on the choices or outcomes of *intermediate events* between the initial conditions and the outcome.'⁷⁴

Such a conceptualisation is important in terms of how this thesis deals with a key challenge of path-dependency analysis: how to incorporate and explain change. Approaches to path-dependency that are more deeply structuralist have tended to envisage institutional change in terms of punctuated equilibria or exogenous shocks

⁷¹ Tilly 1984.

⁷² Mahoney & Schensul 2006.

⁷³ Hausner et al. 1995.

⁷⁴ Mahoney & Schensul 2006.

following long periods of stability characterised as ‘lock-in’ or institutional inertia.⁷⁵ During periods of change, which are defined as ‘critical junctures’ marked by contingency, a new set of arrangements is adopted from a constrained range of alternatives.⁷⁶ The ‘punctuated equilibria’ arguments of change are problematic in that they sometimes comprise an idea of the state/institutions that is overly monolithic and autonomous and that is also deterministic, in that it does not consider agency. In contrast to these ‘discontinuous’ models of change, in which history is punctuated by agency and choice, others have emphasised the importance of gradual change.⁷⁷ Moving beyond these, other approaches both take contingency seriously and acknowledge strategic action by agents, which helps avoid the trap of teleological reasoning that presents the final outcome as the inevitable result of initial conditions. In this vein, Cortell and Peterson incorporate both gradual and sudden shifts whereby change can occur as external and internal events opening windows of opportunity for actors to transform institutions.⁷⁸ However, whether and what type of change occurs depends on the actors, their institutional capacity and position, and the extent to which existing institutions constrain or not their ability to utilise the window of opportunity.⁷⁹ In sum, contrary to overly structuralist/deterministic approaches to change, this thesis incorporates agency, contingency and the assumption of institutions as an arena of struggle and competition, so that ‘a dynamic of potential change is built into institutions’.⁸⁰ Shifts in the balance of power (owing to both endogenous – in terms of actors’ intended or unintended strategies – and/or exogenous factors⁸¹) enable actors (albeit constrained and shaped by path-dependent structures) to reshape the institutional milieu, which can in turn establish new paths.⁸²

A further challenge of employing a path-dependent approach is how path-dependency can be demonstrated over a long period of time, with the dependent variable emerging later. While case-study approaches are restricted from making

⁷⁵ Peters et al. 2005; Thelen 2009.

⁷⁶ Thelen 1999.

⁷⁷ Mahoney & Thelen 2009.

⁷⁸ Cortell & Peterson 1999.

⁷⁹ Cortell & Peterson 1999.

⁸⁰ Mahoney 2000.

⁸¹ Wimmer 2008; Acemoglu et al. 2005.

⁸² Hausner et al. 1995.

deterministic and generalisable causal arguments, Cappoccia and Kelemen have suggested that ‘well-crafted cross-sectional and longitudinal comparisons can substantially increase confidence in the findings of historical institutionalist analyses’.⁸³ In particular, I employ process tracing which involves the attempt to ‘identify the intervening causal process – the causal chain and causal mechanism – between an explanatory variable (or variables) and the outcome variable’.⁸⁴ This involves taking ‘snapshots’ ‘to characterize key steps in the process, which in turn permits good analysis of change and sequence’⁸⁵ with a ‘moving pictures’⁸⁶ approach in which attention is paid to timing and sequencing.⁸⁷ For example, in examining the evolution of the political system and principles, I not only identify the antecedent conditions and the critical juncture but systematically examine each constitutional framing period in Republican history and decisions made by the constitutional framers. This facilitates tracing of not only continuity (in terms of recurring empirical regularities or patterns⁸⁸) and change but also the extent to which the paths available were constrained and shaped by pre-existing ones.

To examine the Turkish case I have utilised a variety of primary and secondary sources and data. Aside from constitutional and legal documents, a key source of primary data was the Grand National Assembly of Turkey Library and Archives (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Başkanlığı Kütüphane ve Arşiv Başkanlığı*, TBMMKA). The TBMMKA comprises extensive digitised records, including the minutes of parliamentary debates and committee reports, party and government programmes and draft constitutional proposals from different actors. This material helped me to identify actors’ (i.e. lawmakers’, bureaucrats’) concerns and the constraints they faced while tracing the evolution of the interpretation of key principles over time in ways that are not reflected by analysis of codified documents alone. A further primary source was the Prime Minister’s State Archives Directorate (*T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü*, PMAD), where I accessed the archives of the PRA and the Republican People’s

⁸³ Capoccia & Kelemen 2007: 369.

⁸⁴ Koinova 2013: 10; George & Bennett 2005; Bennett & Elman 2006.

⁸⁵ Collier 2011.

⁸⁶ Koinova 2013: 6.

⁸⁷ Koinova 2013.

⁸⁸ Collier 2011.

Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) government records of the one-party period. Through these sources, which included inspectorate reports, correspondence between different institutions of the state and memorandums, I was able to trace the evolution of the PRA's institutional identity, agency and role. It was also this 'deep dive' (going through the entire digital archive) into the PRA archives that led me to identify Alevism as the primary concern of the PRA compared with other 'minority' groups. The key limitation of these archives was that the PRA documents were not available from the 1970s onwards, partly reflecting a 30-year rule that restricts access to state documents. A further constraint on historical research on Turkey is the lack of transparency and consistency in enforcing procedures. Despite my request, I was unable to gain access to the PRA's in-house archives containing documents not transferred to the PMAD. To my knowledge, these archives are not systematised and entrance is highly restricted, but this is nonetheless an important limitation which I have tried to address through multiple sourcing. In addition, the Ministry of Interior refused (following an official request under transparency laws) to provide historical statistical information on the number of associations and foundations. Although the work was highly time-consuming, I compiled the information myself through the online Official Gazette (*Resmi Gazete*) archives.

One means of continually testing the reliability of data and being open to contrary evidence was the consultation of multiple sources. I investigated and located important official documents (such as departmental regulations and official publications of the PRA) in various major libraries, including the National Library, TBMMKA and the Centre for Islamic Studies (ISAM). I also consulted memoirs and biographies, journals and newspapers and published archival documents such as the minutes of the 1960 military cabinet meetings, one-party period regional inspectorate reports, military reports on Dersim and archives of one-party period (Dersim/Tunceli) lawmaker Necmettin Sahir Silan. I have looked at the writings of various historians, ideologues, lawmakers and bureaucrats of the late Ottoman Empire and Republic, such as Ziya Gökalp and Hasan Reşit Tankut. A further helpful source was the group of documents unearthed by the parliamentary committee for investigating military coups.

This process of collecting data from multiple sources helped me test the reliability as well as the plausibility of my interpretations and build a more reliable historical description. For example, until I discovered the 1960–61 military cabinet meetings on the issue of Alevi representation within the PRA, the discussion of this topic during the 1961 constitutional debates had appeared to be an unprecedented example of a pluralistic approach to ‘minority’ communities. An examination of multiple sources therefore helped to demonstrate that this was not the case. Aside from consulting these sources, I also conducted a number of exploratory interviews with a range of actors, including members of the PRA, journalists, business representatives and academics. The interviews were helpful in terms of gaining access to information (such as PRA documents), alerting me to different sources and helping to test my data. Given the politicised environment and fears related to speaking openly, particularly following the December 2013 corruption allegations, the interviews were not particularly reliable or useful as data inputs per se.

1.5 Chapter structure

The chapter structure reflects the concern of the thesis not with the political salience of religious delineations as a primordial reality or as a reaction to secularisation/modernity, but rather the identification of the processes and structural contexts that facilitated their emergence and persistence. Given this focus, the thesis is organised not chronologically, but in six empirical chapters that identify and describe different aspects of macro and micro political structures that shape and constrain political action. In terms of identifying relevant structural aspects, Fox argues in his world survey of religion and state relations that, alongside the official role of religion vis-à-vis the state, the relationship of the state to the majority religion is as important as the relationship with the minority religions.⁸⁹ This is because, even if two countries have an official religion, this can mean different things in different settings; it does not necessarily indicate complete partiality to the particular majority faith group. Fox raises the examples of the UK, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Greece, all of which demonstrate entanglement of religion and state to different degrees while approach minorities in different ways. While,

⁸⁹ Fox 2008.

at one end of the spectrum, UK law provides full religious freedoms, at the other minority religious practice is illegal in Saudi Arabia. Accordingly, understanding how the state draws and articulates boundaries between majority and minority is more illuminating of the state–religion relationship than is simply focusing on the specifics of a particular majority religion or religious identity. With this in mind, I examine both the political and economic dimensions of the relationship between state, religion and religious identity with respect to majority and minority religions. I begin with the macro structures of political life, including the constitution and political system, and examine how they evolved. Secondly, I concentrate on a case study of one institution, the PRA. Finally, I consider actors such as ‘Islamic’ business organisations and the AKP in terms of their identity claims and political discourse, and situate them within the structural context outlined.

Accordingly, in **Chapter 2** I discuss the existing literature on religio-politics and its limitations, and outline my theoretical framework. Given my focus on the structural conditions that made politicisation more likely, in **Chapter 3** I examine Turkey’s constitutional framework and history in the light of their role as key documents that structure political life. I trace the ways in which the prevalent forms of social closure and the Ottoman legacy influenced constitution-making, embedding high levels of religious majoritarianism in ways that generated path-dependent effects. Through thematic analysis of constitutional debates and proposals I look at how the constitutive vision of nation-state builders was codified in constitutional texts and, crucially, how these evolved and were reinterpreted over time by actors. I thereby show the persistence of constitutional framers’ focus on the construction of the nation as a (Sunni) Muslim–Turkish majority while highlighting the problems with the prevalent narratives of secularism. **Chapter 4** looks at how this constitutive vision shaped the institutional design. The subsequent evolution of the political system in the multi-party era (1950–2014) is traced through Lijphart’s typology of majoritarian and consensus government. This involves the analysis of variables such as judicial politics, electoral systems and cabinet dominance. I demonstrate that majoritarianism has been a persistent feature of the Turkish political system owing to its unitary and centralised character, its weak separation of powers and the disproportionate effect of an electoral system that favours large parties, which has facilitated the concentration of power in the

executive branch. The key impact of this majoritarian ‘spine’ of the system has been to impart a zero-sum logic to political competition that has been an important factor in augmenting the religious majoritarianism of the state over time. **Chapter 5** examines more closely a key institution of the Republic, the PRA, and thereby the relationship between the state and the majority religion. I trace dimensions of continuity between the Ottoman ulema and the role and evolution of the PRA. The focus on the PRA rather than other bodies of the state, such as the military or judiciary, reflects the fact that this is the primary institution through which policies related to religion are formulated and channelled. The PRA has been largely neglected owing to the prevalence of the secularism narrative. However, on the basis of the archival material presented, I argue that, contrary to its common depiction as a tool of the ‘Kemalist’ state, the PRA has had an agency of its own, engaging in a dynamic struggle within the state and pursuing the expansion of Islamisation and the reproduction of Islamic delineations of the community. **Chapter 6** looks at the relationship of the state to a ‘minority’ faith group through the PRA’s approach to Alevism. The focus on the Alevis, who comprise the second largest faith group in Turkey after Sunni Muslims, reflects the results of my archival research and the fact that they are a primary focus of concern for the PRA compared with other minority groups. This chapter demonstrates the ways in which the PRA plays a role in embedding religious majoritarianism through (re)articulating and reproducing Turkish nationalism and group boundaries. I argue firstly that the PRA has acted as a carrier and preserver of Sunni (Hanefi) Muslim Turkish identity through the generations in a manner which has strong lines of continuity with the late Ottoman period. Secondly, I suggest that this, together with the partial distribution of political and economic resources of the state, has reinforced processes of social closure, sharpening group boundaries. **Chapter 7** presents the case study of an ‘Islamic’ business association, MÜSİAD, and deconstructs the identity claims by tracing the ways in which the political salience of religious delineations has been bound up with distributional conflicts over state resources and how the persistence of the delineations has been facilitated by the structural framework. In this vein, this chapter examines further the dynamics of social closure in the late Ottoman Empire and the ways in which class formation became religiously coded. I argue that the salience of these boundaries persisted despite the exclusion of many non-Muslims from economic life as a result of two

structural factors. The first of these was nationalist economic planning that sought to establish and give advantages to a Muslim bourgeoisie that continued in the Republic and reinforced the notion of a rightful Muslim hegemony over state resources. The second was the fact that, within the Republic, the reproduction of these boundaries was facilitated through institutions such as the PRA and, subsequently, the expansion of religious education, Islamic charities and finance, which has, over time, imparted a distinct 'habitus'. Against these chapters on how specific institutional structures have influenced the possibility of religio-politics, **Chapter 8** situates the AKP period and the evolution of the Islamist movement more broadly within these longer processes of nation-state building, emphasising patterns of continuity and change. I suggest that the AKP has been engaging in strategic action to effect change. Accordingly, I firstly highlight the manner in which the AKP is able to occupy the political centre owing to the embedding of religious majoritarianism in the nation-state project and review the utilisation of the 'national will' discourse. Secondly, I demonstrate how this discourse and the majoritarian political system has enabled the AKP to concentrate power in the executive through greater control over formal (e.g. the judiciary) and informal (involving clientalism and rent-distribution) institutions. In conclusion, **Chapter 9** discusses the lessons from the Turkish case and outlines the ways in which the framework proposed in this thesis can be used for comparative analysis by looking at contexts such as India, Malaysia and Ireland. Here I show the ways in which the prism of religious majoritarianism offers a useful means to trace continuity with the earlier stages of nation-state building and structural contexts that facilitate religio-politics. In addition, the comparative analysis helps to situate the Turkish case more widely and also helps to identify areas for further research, also outlined in the final section.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework and concepts that underpin this thesis. The first section examines existing approaches to understanding religio-politics. The second outlines the overarching theoretical framework of this study. Accordingly, I firstly draw on the insights of historical institutionalism in outlining the constitutive role of the institutional structures. In the exploration of political outcomes institutions are taken not as dependent variables but as independent variables. Based on these theoretical approaches, the state is identified not as a unitary monolithic and autonomous actor but as an arena of struggle which has a differential impact on political actors' strategies through the partial allocation of resources. Secondly, I consider and outline the approach to nationalism and ethnic identity, which has a bearing on whether identities are considered as primordial or as constructed. I adopt a modernist approach in emphasising 'constructedness' and focusing on group-making and boundary-building through the concept of social closure, which is important in examining why certain boundaries become prevalent and are reproduced. The final section of the chapter moves on to the discussion of the concept of religious majoritarianism.

2.2 Existing explanations of religio-politics and their limits

This section examines and assesses the limitations of scholarly works on religio-politics broadly categorised as i) essentialist/culturalist; ii) functionalist/reaction-based; iii) critical theory/constructivist.

i. Essentialist/culturalist arguments and 'multiple modernities'

The essentialist/culturalist approaches that emphasise, for instance, the 'clash of civilisations' depict civilisations, demarcated by the major world religions, as fundamentally distinct. Scholars that belong to this tradition place emphasis on the

incompatibility of Islam with secularism⁹⁰ and tend to blame 'Islamic culture' for the rise of 'fundamentalist' political movements. Bruce argues that religions act as an autonomous force on political life in distinct ways. On this basis Bruce claims that, in contrast to Christianity's approach, Muslims always want to take over the state and impose sharia (Islamic) law.⁹¹ According to such perspectives, therefore, where religions do 'persist' or 'revive', it is related to either the civilisational character of that particular religion or whether the religion has become a means of 'cultural defence or integration',⁹² enabling it to evade modernisation/secularisation.

Essentialist/culturalist accounts also pervade analyses of religio-politics in Turkey, which is often treated as a unique case in that it is a country with a Muslim majority that is nevertheless both secular and democratic. For example, Huntington has classified Turkey as a 'torn country' following Bernard Lewis' assertion that Islamic tradition and Westernisation represent two separate civilisational patterns and systems that cannot easily be reconciled, and that secularism belongs to Christian tradition.⁹³ Similarly, it has been argued that the specific nature of Turkish secularism reflects the fact that Islam does not accept the separation of state and religion.⁹⁴

Essentialist/culturalist explanations have been widely criticised as 'orientalism', in that they present identities and civilisations as 'shut-down, sealed-off entities that have been purged of the myriad currents and counter currents that animate human history, and that over centuries have made it possible for that history not only to contain wars of religion and imperial conquest but also to be one of exchange, cross-fertilization and sharing'.⁹⁵ It has been also been argued that religions cannot be taken as unique, monolithic and discrete civilisations given both the sheer variety of interpretations within different religious traditions and the similarities amongst them. The emphasis of essentialist/culturalist approaches on the

⁹⁰ Philpott 2002; Huntington 1993; Lewis 1952; Stark 1999

⁹¹ Bruce 2003.

⁹² Bruce 2003; Casanova 1992.

⁹³ Huntington 1993; Lewis 1952.

⁹⁴ Berkes 1964.

⁹⁵ Said 4 October 2001; Said 2003; Halliday 1995; Zubaida 2011.

autonomous influence of religious traditions on political action is also problematic. Doctrine may be important, but how individuals subjectively interpret and act upon it will be influenced by existing political–economic power structures.⁹⁶ In addition, the proposition that Islam is essentially not reconcilable with secular government or inherently political does not stand up to historical scrutiny. Zubaida has argued that, while the notion of the unity of state and religion is an element of Islamic jurisprudence, historically Islamic empires have maintained a *de facto* separation between state and society, with religion entering both in different ways.⁹⁷ Even under the theoretically Islamic Ottoman state, ‘religion occupied [a] distinct but limited and subordinate position within [the] sphere of [the] state’.⁹⁸

Another version of an essentialist/culturalist approach is arguably the ‘multiple modernities’ school, which maintains that despite cultural distinctions there is no inherent incompatibility between non-Christian traditions and modernity. An example is Göle, who claims that conflict between secular and Islamist elites in Turkey is fuelled by different worldviews and lifestyles and that ‘Islamic movements are not solely a reaction to a given situation of class and cultural domination, but also present a counter-cultural model of modernity, and a new paradigm for self-definition that has led to the formation of Islamist counter-elites.’⁹⁹ However, the ‘multiple modernities’ school is open to the same critiques as the ‘civilisational clash’ theses in that they distinguish between cultural patterns defined in an (implicitly) essentialist manner. In this sense, as Zubaida has argued, it can be regarded as another type of essentialism; ‘it describes and implicitly justifies the ideological projects of identity politics – defined as “alternative”, presumably, to Western modernity, which is assumed to have some uniformity deriving from a Western essence’.¹⁰⁰ In short, these approaches can reduce complex socio-political and economic struggles to ‘culture’ and ideology alone.

⁹⁶ Halliday 2000: 134.

⁹⁷ Zubaida 1993.

⁹⁸ Zubaida 1993; See also Eickelman & Piscatori 1996 for similar arguments.

⁹⁹ Göle 1997. See also Çınar 2005 for similar arguments.

¹⁰⁰ Zubaida 2011.

ii. Functionalist/reaction-based theories

A prevalent approach adopted by different scholarly traditions is the treatment of religio-politics as a type of reaction by society, constituting either a contingent event by agents or, in functionalist terms, an epiphenomenal development. Often these analyses formulate religio-politics as a response to actual or perceived crises, whether social, economic, political or identity-related,¹⁰¹ and as a side effect of alienation caused by modernisation¹⁰² or ‘postmodernity’.¹⁰³ In this vein scholars list a host of variables, such as migration, capitalism, economic slowdown/liberalisation, neoliberalism, increasing rights of women, growth in secular power, education, urbanisation, cultural homogenisation, population growth, improvements in health, corruption and disaffection with established institutionalised religious bodies, as contributing to the rise of religio-politics.¹⁰⁴ Haynes states in this vein that ‘that the effects associated with modernization ... are crucial to an understanding of the political role of religion in the current era’.¹⁰⁵ For Sahliyah, religious resurgence is a direct product or by-product of modernisation whereby ‘in some cases, religious resurgence came as an expression of cultural authenticity, while in others it helped in coping with the unsettling emotional, intellectual, economic, and social consequences of modernisation’.¹⁰⁶ In addition, there has been an emphasis on religious resurgence as a reaction to secularism and the ‘secular’ state. For Juergensmeyer, amongst others, religious ‘resurgence’ is an ideology of protest against the secular states of ‘religious societies’ that is driven by the failure of secular nationalism and ideologies in the face of multi-faceted crises of modernity¹⁰⁷ or the failure of the West.¹⁰⁸ Göle considers Islamism as a reaction to the ‘subjugation of Muslim identity and monocivilisational impositions of Western modernity’.¹⁰⁹ A more recent permutation of these theories is Kuru’s comparative work on varieties of

¹⁰¹ Gill 2001.

¹⁰² Haynes 1995.

¹⁰³ Haynes 1995; Antoun & Hegland 1987; Tehranian 2007.

¹⁰⁴ Keddie 1998; Haynes 1995; Ehteshami 2004; Kepel 1994.

¹⁰⁵ Haynes 1995.

¹⁰⁶ Sahliyah 1990: vii.

¹⁰⁷ Nandy 1988; Bruce 2003; Madan 1987; Sahliyah 1990; Juergensmeyer 1993; Juergensmeyer 2011; Kepel 1994.

¹⁰⁸ Voll 1987.

¹⁰⁹ Göle 2000.

secularism, in which it is proposed that the politicisation of religion is a reaction to the ‘assertive secularism’ of the state.¹¹⁰ Conversely, others contend that it is the very processes of modernisation and democratisation that have been enabling of religion and its involvement in politics, particularly in countries with previously closed regimes that restricted religion.¹¹¹ Alongside the bottom-up reaction approaches, some studies have focused on top-down or state elite instrumentalisation of religion in reaction to religio-politics. One example is Hibbard, who analyses religio-politics in terms of changing (secular) state elite strategies towards ‘illiberal religion’.¹¹²

In the Turkish case, the depiction of religio-politics as a form of reaction to the project of secularism remains the most prevalent interpretation and a key premise of the ‘master narratives’ of Turkish secularism in Turkey described by Kandiyoti (and summarised in Chapter 1). The classical modernisation approach is seen in the works of Berkes, who, writing in 1964, described Turkish secularism as reflecting the end result of a unidirectional progress of secularisation/modernisation since the Ottoman Empire with the salience of religion regarded as a traditionalist reaction.¹¹³ While the overt modernisation theory approaches have been generally disregarded, many analyses adopt its epistemological assumptions. An example is Şerif Mardin’s centre–periphery thesis, a prevalent paradigm which has shaped understandings of religion, state and religio-politics in Turkey. Rather than positing a unilinear development, centre–periphery approaches are premised on the assumption of a secularist/Kemalist state/elite conflict with the Muslim/traditional society that has persisted since the Ottoman Empire.¹¹⁴ For Mardin, religion increasingly became identified with the periphery following the creation of the ‘secular’ Republic, having been placed on

¹¹⁰ Kuru 2009; Kuru 2007.

¹¹¹ See (Fox 2004) for an overview. Also; Toft et al. 2011. Some focus on elements of modernisation, such as the impact of globalisation and developments in communications technology in precipitating the formation of national and transnational communities or the transmission of ideas; see Rudolph & Piscatori 1997; Haynes 1999; Shupe 1990: 22.

¹¹² Hibbard 2010.

¹¹³ Berkes 1964.

¹¹⁴ Mardin borrows Edward Shils’ theoretical framework. See Mardin 1971; Mardin 1973; Mardin 1991; Mango 1977; Toprak 1981; Lewis 1952; İnsel 2003; Sakallıoğlu 1996; Ahmad 1991; Jenkins 2008: 125; Taşpınar 2004; Rustow 1991; Ozbudun 1966; Rabasa & Larrabee 2008.

the border of both sides during the Ottoman Empire.¹¹⁵ The analytical approaches which take a centre–periphery dichotomisation/confrontation as a fundamental dynamic of the Turkish and Ottoman politics take various forms. Nonetheless, in general they explain religio-politics as reflecting a reaction against what is narrated as a top-down, authoritarian secularisation/modernisation/Westernisation project of (secular) state elites in an essentially Muslim and religious society. Accordingly, various scholars argue that ‘religious resurgence’ reflects democratisation and the easing of authoritarian secularism since the move to multipartism in 1950 by giving a voice to the ‘periphery’ and allowing its integration into the ‘centre’.¹¹⁶ In addition, various studies underline the specific nature of Turkish secularism. Like Kuru, Yavuz argues that by not separating religion and state (in contrast to other ‘secular’ states), but subordinating religion, Turkish secularism resulted in the politicisation of Islam and a struggle between Muslims and secularists for control of the state.¹¹⁷ Consequently, these types of analyses typically claim that Kemalist elites adopted an instrumentalist approach to religion firstly for nation-building purposes and then as an anti-communist bulwark, which was abandoned following the rise of Islamists as a major political force in the 1990s.¹¹⁸ Following similar reasoning, some have implicated the top-down manipulation of religion by the state in the rise of Islamist movements.¹¹⁹ A recent example is Eligür, who argues that Islamists were able to mobilise effectively only after the 1980 coup, when they gained elite allies within the state.¹²⁰

Alongside analyses that focus on ‘assertive secularism’, other approaches point to further side effects of modernisation, economic development and industrialisation.¹²¹ For Tuğal, who employs a Gramscian framework, Islamists in the 1970s represented mainly small provincial entrepreneurs reacting to rapid westernisation, labour militancy and state industrial policies, and the 1980 coup

¹¹⁵ Mardin 1971; Mardin 1973.

¹¹⁶ See, for example, Toprak 1981; Heper & Evin 1988. The same conclusion can be seen in Ahmad 1991; Özdalga 1998; Yavuz 1997; Tank 2005; İnel 2003; Dağı 2008; Lewis 1952; Esposito & Yavuz 2003; Yavuz 2003; Voll 1997.

¹¹⁷ Yavuz 1997. See also Taşpınar 2004.

¹¹⁸ Sakallıoğlu 1996; Yavuz 1997; Taşpınar 2004.

¹¹⁹ See, for example, Sakallıoğlu 1996.

¹²⁰ Eligür 2010: 20.

¹²¹ For instance, Mehmet (1990) argues that the roots of ‘religious resurgence’ in Turkey are due to the failure of the nationalist development strategy to deliver social justice.

marked a turning point in the state's relationship to Islam.¹²² The subsequent rise of the AKP is described as a transformation of the Islamist movement resulting from a process of hegemonic absorption by, again, the 'secular' state. The incorporation of Islamist demands by the state, it is argued, while trying to consolidate secularism consequently led to greater conflict in a state that defined itself as secular.¹²³

Functionalist or bottom-up 'reaction' approaches have been important in terms of generating insights into the different socio-historical contexts in which religio-politics has thrived and the particular responses and strategies of actors within these contexts. However, these approaches face three key problems. Firstly, in part a reflection of the dominance of identity politics, there has been a neglect of the constitutive role of institutions and how they shape and constrain the behaviour, choices and strategies of actors. Many take for granted the 'groupness' and existence of a monolithic and homogenous 'religious society' or Muslim majority. Yet, various theoretical approaches, including rational choice and social movement/collective action theories, have highlighted the importance of institutional or political structures in shaping and precipitating political mobilisation.¹²⁴ Part of the problem with existing literature, therefore, as Stathis Kalyvas notes, is the 'assumption away of the problem of collective action through the positing of a direct and automatic leap from common interests to organisation and action'.¹²⁵ In this sense, there is an implicit primordialism/essentialism in some of these accounts that conflate social categories and political identity. In other words, the mere existence of a Muslim or Hindu population does not imply an automatic and natural emergence of a common religious identity and, subsequent to that, a political movement necessarily based on Islam or Hinduism.

Secondly, studies on religio-politics have relied too much on the explanation of a reaction to modernisation and its effects. The importance of structural factors such as modernisation and economic developments is suggested by the fact that

¹²² Tuğal 2007: 11–12.

¹²³ Tuğal 2009.

¹²⁴ Gill 2001; Tarrow & Tollefson 1994; Kalyvas 1996; Przeworski & Sprague 1986.

¹²⁵ Kalyvas 1996: 11.

‘religious resurgence’ was a widespread global phenomenon in the 1970s. However, as Gill has observed, modernisation has been utilised as the explanatory variable for the dynamics of secularisation in some parts of the world, such as western Europe, while also being used to explain the rise of religio-politics and religiosity in other parts. In addition, alienation or economic deprivation are widespread phenomena and yet they do not always trigger religio-political movements. As a result, ‘whether a cultural community reacts to modernization by secularizing or adopting religious fundamentalism can only be inferred by the presence of secularization or a fundamentalist revival. Theoretically, the dependent variable is linked to the definition of the independent variable and the argument becomes tautological. Moreover, there is a problem with the unit of analysis. Modernization supposedly affects entire cultures, or at least certain subcultures (e.g. urban migrants). Yet, there is scant evidence that entire cultures convert to new religio-political movements.’¹²⁶ In this sense, explanations that focus on the impact of modernisation or economic developments leave unanswered the question of why some contexts were more amenable to the rise of religio-politics than were others.

Thirdly, a key problem with scholarship on religio-politics as a reaction to secularism or the secular state (or top-down manipulation) is that it generally remains epistemologically rooted in the secularisation/modernisation paradigm¹²⁷ even if it does not necessarily draw the same conclusions. This is because many explanations continue to take for granted a central premise of the paradigm in terms of the ‘bifurcated spatialised picture of religion/secular landscape’.¹²⁸ As Hurd argues, ‘failing to account for the power and limitations of the category of the secular and its shifting and contested relation not only to religion but to other political phenomena cast in opposition to it risks imposing a simplistic and distorted template on world politics. A rigid secular/religious divide stabilizes particular, historically contingent, and often hegemonic definitions of both politics and religion’.¹²⁹ Indeed, Talal Asad has suggested that the secular and religious are

¹²⁶ Gill 2001.

¹²⁷ Vertigans 2003.

¹²⁸ Linell E. Cady in Hurd 2011.

¹²⁹ Hurd 2011.

mutually constituted through socio-political struggles and as such are reflective of power and power relations.¹³⁰ The separation of religion from power and its construction as an independent (and *sui generis*), transhistorical and uniform religious domain¹³¹ is considered ‘an integral part of the modern practice of politics in the post-Enlightenment state’.¹³² Accordingly, it can be argued that the very notion of the ‘secular’ state and ‘religious’ society is highly problematic and consequential for the study of religio-politics.¹³³ In this vein, this study suggests a need to reconsider the existing conceptualisation of the state–religion relationship by i) deconstructing the concept of the ‘secular’ state and ‘religious society’; and ii) adopting a concept of religion that focuses not on belief systems¹³⁴ or ‘cultural systems’¹³⁵ but on relationships of power and authority.¹³⁶

Fourthly, these binary understandings of the ‘secular’ state and ‘religious’ society have resulted in a gap between theory and historical evidence. As will be demonstrated in this study, reaction-based approaches are empirically problematic in their analyses of state secularism as fundamentally anti-religious or as instrumentally deploying religious policies. For instance, a closer look at different cases suggests that ‘accommodative’ policies of states regarding the demands of religio-politics often preceded these movements becoming significant political actors or electorally successful. The argument that the ‘secular’ Turkish state absorbed an Islamist challenge in 1980 through adopting an Islamisation programme is problematic. While there were indications of greater salience of religion and religiosity in Turkey following the move to multipartism in 1950, this did not translate into a popular mass Islamist movement or electoral success, with the Islamist National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*, MSP) votes peaking at 11.8% in 1973. Similarly, in the Indian case, the ‘secular’ Congress party’s Hindu majoritarian turn predated the rise and significant electoral success of the Hindutva

¹³⁰ Calhoun et al. 2011; Hurd 2011; Van der Veer 2011; Asad 1999.

¹³¹ Asad 2009.

¹³² Asad 1992.

¹³³ Calhoun et al. 2011.

¹³⁴ Smith 1996.

¹³⁵ Geertz 1966: 90.

¹³⁶ Sidel 2007; Asad 1992; Asad 2009; Asad 2003; Mitchell 2000: xix.

movement.¹³⁷ These dominant approaches, therefore, can misconstrue historical developments, neglecting more complex patterns of interaction.

In part reflecting efforts to take into account different patterns of religion–state relations by historically contextualising secularism as a specific political project,¹³⁸ various authors have emphasised ‘multiple competing secularisms’.¹³⁹ In this they point to differences between western Europe, where established churches are common, French laicism, US secularism as a ‘wall of separation’ and Turkish laicism, incorporating religious authority within the state.¹⁴⁰ Likewise, Kuru distinguishes between passive (inclusive) and assertive (exclusionary) secularism, in which states are friendly or hostile, respectively, towards religion depending on the particular configuration of relations and the perceptions of political elites towards religion during the process of nation-state formation.¹⁴¹ However, cases such as Malaysia and India suggest that religio-politics could flourish in less restrictive environments, implying that there may be more to its causes than simply a reaction to authoritarian secularism.

iii. Critical theory, discourse analysis and deconstruction

A departure from essentialist/culturalist and functionalist/reaction-based theories of religio-politics can be found in constructivist or critical theory approaches that emphasise deconstruction and discourse analysis.¹⁴² Sociological/anthropological studies that seek to decipher and deconstruct everyday experience and secular/religious concepts have provided important insights, challenging the binary assumptions prevalent in the other approaches. For instance, in her study of Turkey, Navaro-Yashin has problematised secularism without taking a ‘schism’ between secularists and Islamist for granted, but, rather, argues that they are in a dialectical relationship. According to Navaro-Yashin, secularism is not a neutral paradigm but a hegemonic public discourse and the Turkish state’s preferred self-

¹³⁷ Gupta 1991.

¹³⁸ In terms of demarcating the relationship of states to religion conceived under the modern nation-state as an autonomous sphere governed by its own internal laws: Casanova 1992.

¹³⁹ Casanova 2011; Stepan 2011; Martin 2007; Van der Veer 2011.

¹⁴⁰ Stepan 2011; Fox 2008.

¹⁴¹ Kuru 2009: 22–23; Kuru & Stepan 2012: 5.

¹⁴² Kuru & Stepan 2012: 5.

representation.¹⁴³ While illuminating in terms of understanding everyday reproduction of power relations, these approaches are less concerned with identifying how and why these patterns emerge and why these particular patterns have arisen over others.

2.3 Theoretical framework

2.3.1 Historical institutionalism, institutions and religio-politics

This thesis employs the theoretical framework of historical institutionalism to examine the persistence of religious delineations in shaping political and economic competition and the state–religion relationship through a focus on the role of state institutions. Studies of religion, state and religio-politics often neglect the role of state institutions in structuring politics, regarding them essentially as dependent variables and as autonomous discrete units (i.e. church and state) that are transformed by actors. Where attention is paid to the role of institutions, it is chiefly within studies of religio-politics that adopt rational choice or supply-side perspectives. A criticism of these approaches is that they tend to be western (particularly US) centric and to assume a high degree of flexibility in the adoption of religion, neglecting the ways it can act as an ethnic marker. Neither can pure instrumentalism account for why religiosity or religious identities may persist despite adversity, for the intensity of emotions or for the reasons that they have become prevalent in the first place. Nevertheless, such theories have made important contributions in highlighting the ways in which institutions impose constraints on actors and how the process of reproduction may work.¹⁴⁴ More broadly within the social sciences, the plethora of ‘institutionalist’ approaches have demonstrated the ways in which institutions play a fundamental role in shaping political life, contestation and conflict, the organisational capacity and strategies of actors. In this vein, Kitschelt et al. have argued that institutions are ‘a critical component of the environment in which actors shape their strategies of adaptation’, rather than a dependent variable.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Navaro-Yashin 2002.

¹⁴⁴ Gill 2001.

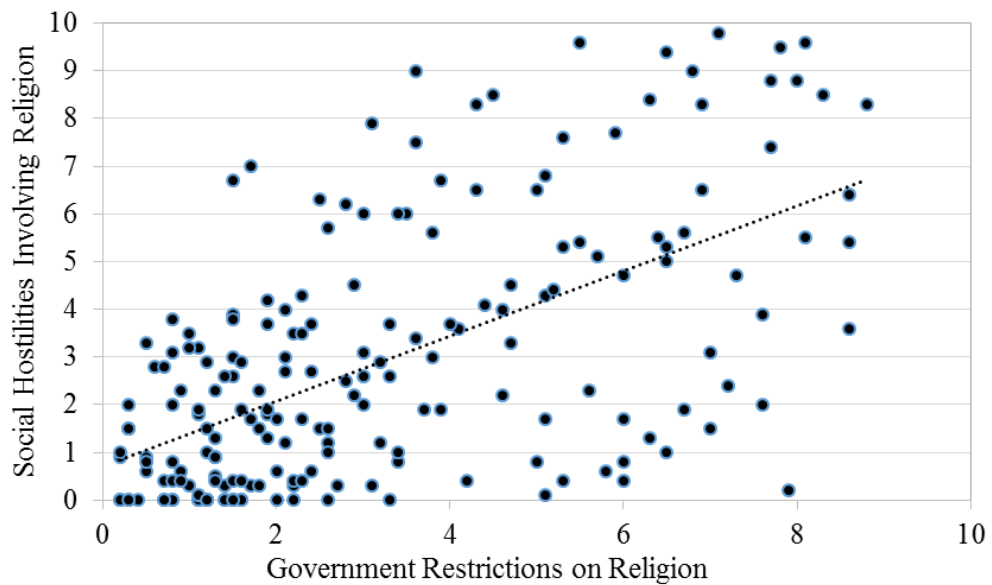
¹⁴⁵ Kitschelt et al. 1999.

The importance of institutions for the political saliency of religion or religio-politics is highlighted by two global surveys of religion and state relations. Compiled and published from 2009, the Pew Research Centre's Global Restrictions on Religion and Social Hostilities Involving Religion indices¹⁴⁶ (see Chart 1) suggests a correlation between the extent of 'government restrictions on religion' and 'conflict involving religion' little correlation between closed political systems and hostilities involving religion (see Chart 2).¹⁴⁷ It is important to note that what is suggested here is not causation, as it is not possible to extract from this data whether social hostility involving religion is a product of government restrictions on religion or whether the government is involved in religion owing to pre-existing social hostility. In addition, the data is clouded by regimes which are highly authoritarian and have high levels of government restrictions on religion but no social hostility involving religion, such as China, Cuba, the Arab Persian Gulf states (e.g. Qatar, Oman, UAE) and former Soviet Union Muslim majority central Asian states (e.g. Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan). Accordingly, this may be more a reflection of the oppressive nature of these regimes, which severely curtail the growth of social movements. Excluding these highly authoritarian regimes, the correlation between government restrictions on religion and social hostility involving religion appears greater.

¹⁴⁶ For results and methodology see Pew Research Religion & Public Life Project; <www.pewforum.org>.

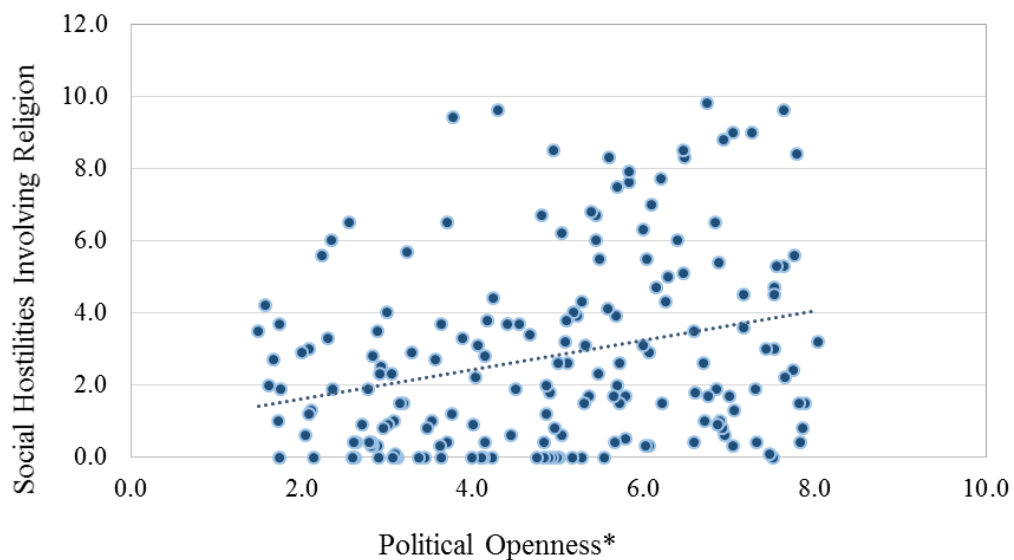
¹⁴⁷ It is not suggested here that conflicts are determined on the basis of religion alone. Religion may be utilised in order to legitimate resource-related conflicts. However, the point here is that these conflicts or political movements are legitimated through the use of religious symbolism in ways that cannot always be easily dismissed as epiphenomenal.

Chart 1: Institutions and hostilities involving religion



Sources: Pew Research Centre's Global Restrictions on Religion and Social Hostilities Involving Religion, <<http://www.pewforum.org/data/>>.

Chart 2: Political openness and hostilities involving religion



*Voice and Accountability Index, World Bank, Worldwide Governance Indicators

Sources: Pew Research Centre's Global Restrictions on Religion and Social Hostilities Involving Religion, <<http://www.pewforum.org/data/>>; World Bank, Worldwide Governance Indicators, <<http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home>>.

Another study – a world survey of religion and state compiled by Jonathan Fox – corroborates this relationship. For example, while most states display some

involvement in religion and restrictions on minority religions, government involvement in the majority religion (and support of established religions) is highest in the Muslim majority countries in the Middle East and north Africa, followed by the former Soviet Muslim majority Central Asian countries and Asian Muslim majority and Hindu countries, with the lowest involvement in the western, predominantly Christian countries, as well as Latin America.¹⁴⁸ Religio-political movements are far more limited in the regions where there is lower government involvement in the majority religion.

Against this context, the theoretical framework of historical institutionalism provides a useful means to examine the role of institutions with respect to religio-politics. What distinguishes historical institutionalism from other institutionalist approaches such as rational choice is not just its focus on how institutions can constrain the actions of actors and shape outcomes but also an emphasis on how they have a constitutive impact on actors and interests.¹⁴⁹ While historical institutionalism comprises a diversity of approaches, its two essential building blocks are, therefore, the claims that: i) policy outcomes are mediated by institutional structures which shape and contain the actions of actors; ii) historical processes, including timing, sequences, unintended consequences and policy feedback, matter.¹⁵⁰ In this sense, there is also an emphasis on the path-dependent nature of political outcomes, which has implications for continuity and change (see Chapter 1).

Historical institutionalists take as a given that competition for resources defines politics, within which institutions develop and operate in a manner which reflects and has a bearing on power relations, rather than acting as neutral arbiters or frameworks.¹⁵¹ Accordingly, unlike rational choice theorists, historical intuitionists, 'rather than posit[ing] scenarios of freely-contracting individuals, for instance, ... are more likely to assume a world in which institutions give some

¹⁴⁸ Fox 2008. Keddie argues that religio-politics differs in substance from Liberation Theology in Latin America, which does not seek to transform state and society on the basis of religious doctrine: Keddie 1998: 700–701.

¹⁴⁹ Brubaker 1994: 47–48.

¹⁵⁰ Ikenberry 1994: 2.

¹⁵¹ Hall & Taylor 1996.

groups or interests disproportionate access to the decision-making process; and, rather than emphasiz[ing] the degree to which an outcome makes everyone better off, they tend to stress how some groups lose while others win'.¹⁵² In this sense institutions are not regarded as the only causal force in politics¹⁵³ but instead are seen as being the outcome and structuring of political struggles defined by asymmetries of power. It can thus be argued that institutions, given their specific historical configuration and birth at different junctures, do not form a coherent or functional whole.¹⁵⁴ Instead, they 'are not neutral coordinating mechanisms but in fact reflect, and also reproduce and magnify, particular patterns of power distribution in politics'.¹⁵⁵ Hence, institutions have 'unequal implications for resource allocation',¹⁵⁶ with costs and benefits distributed unevenly, and as such certain actors can be empowered at the expense of others.¹⁵⁷ In other words, institutions are conceived as sites of contestation, whereby actors with different endowments of power have visions for different types of institutions. As a result, institutions that are created reflect the contestation and contributions of differently motivated actors.¹⁵⁸ For example, rather than considering the Turkish state as a monolithic and unitary Kemalist bloc, as has been typical, it is suggested that the state established in the 1920s comprised competing actors (such as the ulema) with different endowments of power which changed over time.

While historical institutionalism is inherently structuralist in its focus on the constitutive role of institutions, various works have sought to overcome dualistic approaches to structure and agency by emphasising the 'mutually constitutive character of structures and agents'.¹⁵⁹ In this way, we can 'examine the relationship between political actors as objects and as agents of history. The institutions that are at the centre of historical institutional analysis can shape and constrain political strategies in important ways, but they are themselves also the outcome (conscious or unintended) of deliberate political strategies of political conflict and

¹⁵² Hall & Taylor 1996: 9.

¹⁵³ Steinmo & Thelen 1992: 2–3; Hall & Taylor 1996.

¹⁵⁴ Thelen 1999.

¹⁵⁵ Thelen 1999; Riker 1980: 444–45.

¹⁵⁶ Mahoney & Thelen 2009.

¹⁵⁷ Mahoney 2000.

¹⁵⁸ Mahoney & Thelen 2009.

¹⁵⁹ See Hall & Taylor 1998 and Hay & Wincott 1998.

of choice.’¹⁶⁰ Consequently, it is possible to incorporate both the constraints imposed by structural factors and strategic action by agents through the notion of ‘path-dependent path-shaping’.¹⁶¹

2.3.2 Disaggregating the state

Related to the neglect of institutions, studies of religio-politics have in general tended not to problematise the state–religion dichotomy and have accepted as a given the idea of a monolithic, unified and autonomous secular state. This has also been the prevalent approach in Turkish studies, where the tendency is to take for granted the idea of the state as being monolithic and autonomous, while implicitly or explicitly suggesting that the state is coterminous with the civil–military bureaucratic elite. For instance, Heper sketches out the Turkish ‘state tradition’ along these lines, according the autonomous state its own intrinsic, separate nature, with the Republic presented as the continuation of a line of Turkish states throughout history.¹⁶² Thus Heper’s narrative internalises the idea of the state as a construct standing above society and acting in the national interest, which in turn serves to legitimise tutelage and existing relations of power. Similarly, Şerif Mardin’s centre–periphery theory postulates a sharp distinction between state and society.¹⁶³

Yet, one of the key insights of historical institutionalism (and neo-Marxist approaches), moving on from perspectives that perceive the state as a monolithic neutral broker, is the necessity of disaggregating the state form as a ‘complex of institutions capable of structuring the character and outcomes of group conflict’.¹⁶⁴ In this sense, states are considered to play a crucial role in the structuring of politics by having a ‘specific, differential impact on the ability of various political forces to pursue particular interests and strategies in specific spatio-temporal contexts through their access to and/or control over given state capacities’.¹⁶⁵ The classical

¹⁶⁰ Steinmo et al. 1992: 10.

¹⁶¹ Hausner et al. 1995.

¹⁶² Heper 1985.

¹⁶³ Mardin 1973; Kaliber 2009.

¹⁶⁴ Hall & Taylor 1996.

¹⁶⁵ Jessop 2004; Jessop 2007: 37.

Weberian conceptualisation of the state is of an organisation which claims a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory.¹⁶⁶ The state, therefore, is understood as a relation of domination of men over other men.¹⁶⁷ The different schools of debate on the nature of the state - society-centred or state-centred - can be distinguished firstly by *who* claims the monopoly and secondly how this 'legitimacy' is derived. Two strands of the society-centred approach are pluralism and classical Marxist theories. For the pluralists the state is a realm through which societal actors (political parties, interest groups etc.) pursue their interests and, as such, the state is non-autonomous and a function of society.¹⁶⁸ Classical Marxist theories are similarly society-centred, but perceive states as beholden to the interests of bourgeois society, serving as a 'machine for the oppression of one class by another'.¹⁶⁹ Statist approaches (including realist and elitist strands), in contrast, reject society-centred approaches as reductionist, emphasising instead the autonomy of the state, and arguing that states are unitary and homogenous actors acting in their own interests.¹⁷⁰

However, the assumptions of autonomy and the unitary, monolithic nature of the state, as well as the sharp demarcation between state and society, have been challenged by the institutionalist turn and neo-Marxist as well as critical theory approaches that deconstruct the notion of the state.¹⁷¹ Mann has attempted to address some of these issues by theorising the nature of the state through an 'institutional and part functional' approach, building on the Weberian definition and conceptualising the state as a differentiated set of institutions and actors embodying a centrality over a territorially demarcated area in which it exercises some authority backed by physical force.¹⁷² In addition, critical theory approaches¹⁷³ have contributed key insights by highlighting the ideological nature of the state, critiquing the state-society dichotomy and the assumption of an autonomous monolithic state. Based on these insights, it can be argued that

¹⁶⁶ Weber 1972.

¹⁶⁷ Weber 1972.

¹⁶⁸ Dahl 1958; Easton 1981; Mann 2003: 46–47.

¹⁶⁹ Lenin 1975: 11.

¹⁷⁰ Skocpol 1985; Krasner 1984; Poggi 1990.

¹⁷¹ Mitchell 1991; Mann 2003: 50; Jessop 1990.

¹⁷² Mann 2003: 55.

¹⁷³ Navaro-Yashin 2002; Gupta 1995; Mitchell 1991; Wells 1981.

conventional approaches are guilty of ‘methodological statism’. Like methodological nationalism and its naturalisation of the regime of nation-states,¹⁷⁴ methodological statism takes the state as a natural unit and seeks to understand its nature through the ideology and language of states and statesmen. As Bourdieu has observed, ‘to endeavour to think the state is to take the risk of taking over (or being taken over by) a thought of the state, i.e. of applying to the state categories of thought produced and guaranteed by the state and hence to misrecognise its most profound truth’.¹⁷⁵ In this vein, constructivist/post-structuralist studies have suggested that the seemingly unitary and autonomous nature of state in relation to society is itself a structural effect¹⁷⁶ and ‘a mechanism that generates resources of power’.¹⁷⁷ By extension, the state–society dichotomy is rejected and the focus placed instead on the study of the ‘complex relations of power in which the terms of “society” are implicated in discourses of “state”’.¹⁷⁸ Critical theory approaches, however, while insightful, are less concerned with matters of institutional persistence or their generation and can often appear to be describing ‘action without agents’.¹⁷⁹ Such Foucauldian approaches, therefore, are chiefly focused on specific questions about everyday techniques of power.¹⁸⁰

Consequently various approaches, such as Migdal’s state-in-society thesis and (neo)Marxist approaches, have distinguished between the ‘state idea’ and a state-system, positing a dual nature of the state construct. For Migdal, the state is a ‘field of power marked by the use and threat of violence and shaped by i) the image of a coherent, controlling organization in a territory, which is a representation of the people bounded by that territory; and ii) the actual practices of its multiple parts’.¹⁸¹ Migdal’s dualistic approach mirrors Philip Abrams’ description of the state as being ‘not the reality which stands behind the mask of political practice. It is itself which prevents our seeing political practice as it is. There is a state system: a palpable nexus of practice and institutional structure centred in government ...

¹⁷⁴ Wimmer & Glick 2002.

¹⁷⁵ Bourdieu 1994.

¹⁷⁶ Navaro-Yashin 2002; Mitchell 1991.

¹⁷⁷ Mitchell 1991: 90.

¹⁷⁸ Navaro-Yashin 2002: 153.

¹⁷⁹ Hall & Taylor 1996.

¹⁸⁰ Jessop 2010.

¹⁸¹ Migdal 2001: 15–16.

There is, too, a state-idea, projected, purveyed and variously believed in The state comes into being as a structuration within political practice: it starts its life as an implicit construct: it is then reified ... and acquires an overt symbolic identity progressively divorced from practice as an illusory account of practice.’¹⁸²

Two key contributions of these approaches go beyond the conceptualisation of the state by critical theory studies as a ‘structural effect’. Firstly, they recognise the separate ‘state system’ with its very real army, prisons and so on, while acknowledging the need to separate it from the ‘state idea’, propagated by institutions, which present the state as embodying the common interest. As pointed out by Abrams, it is the association with the ‘state idea’ that legitimates the ‘real power’ of coercive apparatuses, ensuring consent and acquiescence. Thus, the presentation of the state as an empirical entity, autonomous and possessing a separate identity, leads to a reification of the state by generating an ideological myth that legitimates subjection and distorts how we view relations of power.¹⁸³ The second contribution is the conceptualisation of the state system as an arena of struggle and as a ‘social relation’ rather than a unitary entity. To quote Jessop: ‘as an institutional ensemble, the state does not (and cannot) exercise power: it is not a real subject. Indeed, rather than speaking about *the* power of the state, one should speak about the various potential structural powers (or state capacities), in the plural, that are inscribed in the state as an institutional ensemble. The state is an ensemble of power centres that offer unequal chances to different forces within and outside the state to act for different political purposes. How far and in what ways their powers ... are actualized depends on the action, reaction, and interaction of specific social forces located both within and beyond this complex ensemble.’¹⁸⁴ Critically, therefore, states fundamentally affect political outcomes by privileging some actors, some identities, some strategies, some spatial and temporal horizons, some actions over others.¹⁸⁵ Given this special role of the state in affecting political outcomes and power dynamics, ‘the stateis not simply an arena or an

¹⁸² Abrams 1988: 58.

¹⁸³ Abrams 1988; Navaro-Yashin 2002; Gupta 1995; Nugent 1994.

¹⁸⁴ Jessop 1990; Jessop 1999.

¹⁸⁵ Jessop 2004.

instrument of a particular class or ethnic groupthe state is itself the greatest prize and resource, over which groups engage in a continuing struggle'.¹⁸⁶

In sum, building on these approaches, the state is conceived in this thesis as i) a differentiated non-unitary institutional ensemble; ii) a site of political struggle; iii) a social relation, meaning an enmeshed relationship of state and society with no natural demarcated border, which is in itself reflects a mechanism and struggle of power. Given this conceptualisation of the state and the historical institutionalist theoretical framework, the assumptions of autonomous privatised or public 'religion' and 'secular' (monolithic) states are both conceptually problematic, as outlined above, and do not reflect what is a more complex empirical reality. First, as various studies have established, state and religion are deeply enmeshed even in the most 'secularised' polities of western Europe, as demonstrated by the existence of established churches.¹⁸⁷ Second, as a social relation and 'ensemble of power centres', states comprise differentially endowed actors with differing political visions (e.g. ulema, military etc.). By extension, just as the sharp demarcation of state and society is problematic, the secular state and religious society binarism which is typically superimposed upon this dichotomy is problematised.

2.3.3 Deconstructing identity boundaries

The above section sought to deconstruct the concept of the 'secular' state as a monolithic and autonomous unit separate from society. This section seeks to deconstruct the identity claim that is inherent to religio-politics and is reproduced within the binary approaches under the assumption of a 'religious society'. As outlined, the assumptions of 'religious society' often conflate a social ethnic category with a political group. There are two issues with this. First, this assumption of 'groupness' has a 'tendency to reify such groups ... as if they were internally homogenous, externally bounded groups, even unitary collective actors with common purposes'.¹⁸⁸ As Brubaker argues, groups should be considered not as substantial things but as 'practical categories, cultural idioms, cognitive

¹⁸⁶ Brass 1985.

¹⁸⁷ Fox 2008.

¹⁸⁸ Brubaker 2002: 164.

schemas, discursive frames, organizational routines, institutional forms, political projects, and contingent events'.¹⁸⁹ Second, the acceptance of categories or community delineations as natural can also reify them as a primordial reality.¹⁹⁰ In this sense, it is important to trace how certain boundaries or delineations were constructed and the ways in which they have been reproduced and later politicised. Consequently, in this section I outline the approach of this thesis in terms of theories of nationalism and ethnicity, which have a bearing on examining how religious delineations of the community become prevalent and politically significant.

i. Theories of nationalism

Nationalism incorporates heterogeneous and contested narratives. At the same time, national identity, nationalism and religion are deeply connected. Within this thesis, national identity is taken to refer to the 'maintenance and continuous reproduction of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths, and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations and the identification of individuals with that heritage and those values, symbols, memories, myths, and traditions'.¹⁹¹ In this vein, national identity is conceived as a process of construction of the nation, rather than a final fixed result.¹⁹² In turn, the concept of the 'nation' is defined as the territorially bound community with (imagined) common myths, memories, culture, economy and so on.¹⁹³ Nationalism, therefore, can be considered as an ideological movement where the nation is the primary focus of value and the attainment and maintenance of the political autonomy and self-determination of what is deemed to constitute a nation is the primary goal.¹⁹⁴

There are two main approaches in studies of nationalism and ethnicity. The modernist approach to nationalism posits nations as modern 'inventions', in contrast to primordialist/perennialist arguments that assert the antiquity of

¹⁸⁹ Brubaker 2002: 164.

¹⁹⁰ Brass 1985.

¹⁹¹ Smith 2000.

¹⁹² Zimmer 2003.

¹⁹³ Smith 2000.

¹⁹⁴ Smith 2000; Brubaker 2012; Calhoun 1993.

nations.¹⁹⁵ This thesis adopts a modernist perspective. In an example of the modernist approach, Benedict Anderson has famously asserted that ‘all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity-genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.’¹⁹⁶ In this vein, identities, be they national, ethnic or religious, are not fixed or primordial but are reimagined and reproduced as contexts evolve. This does not mean that all modernists argue that nothing preceded nations, but rather that ‘ethnic’ loyalties are also ‘socially constructed’;¹⁹⁷ with the emergence of nationalism populations are ‘ethnified’ to assert lines of natural continuity and common origins.¹⁹⁸ Elites play a key role in the process of reproduction and imagination as they ‘draw upon, distort, and sometimes fabricate materials from the cultures of the groups they wish to represent in order to protect their well-being or existence or to gain political and economic advantage for their groups as well as for themselves’.¹⁹⁹ In sum, as Calhoun has elaborated: ‘nationalism is not simply a claim of ethnic similarity, but a claim that certain similarities should count as *the* definition of political community. For this reason, nationalism needs boundaries in a way pre-modern ethnicity does not. Nationalism demands internal homogeneity throughout a putative nation, rather than gradual continua of cultural variation or pockets of subcultural distinction ... Nationalism, in short, involves a distinctive new form of group identity or membership.’²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁵ See Özkırımlı 2000; Calhoun 1993: 227. Smith proposes ethno-symbolism as a means to address this gap, arguing along with modernists that nations are modern and constructed, while maintaining that the nation is based on a pre-modern ethnicity or ‘ethnie’. Ethnicity is still regarded as socially constructed and not primordial, but it is argued that, once formed, it proves durable and slow to change, accounting for long-term continuity (Smith 1986). Modernist critics counter that, while pre-modern loyalties and sentiments may be used as bricks and mortar to forge cultural unity, this occurs in novel and particular ways which are transformative and selective, while some myths are simply invented (Özkırımlı 2000; Calhoun 1993). Arguably, the differences between the ethno-symbolists and modernists are over-stated and, ultimately, both consider nationalism as a novel form of group identity (Calhoun 1993: 229).

¹⁹⁶ Anderson 1991: 6.

¹⁹⁷ Sabaratnam 1997: 399.

¹⁹⁸ Balibar 1990: 140–41.

¹⁹⁹ See Brass 1991; Calhoun 1993: 229.

²⁰⁰ Calhoun 1993: 229.

ii. Ethnic boundaries and persistence

While taking on board modernist approaches to nationalism, this study adopts an analytical framework that focuses on processes of boundary construction and maintenance and applies this to analyse the persistence of religious articulations of groups in shaping political competition. Ethnicity, as described by Weber, refers to the subjective belief in common origins and shared culture, including such aspects as language, physical appearance and religion.²⁰¹ Weber envisages ethnic membership not as constituting a group in itself but as facilitating of group formation, particularly in the political field, essentially by the drawing of boundaries.²⁰² Likewise, Barth has argued that the locus of analysis should be based on the boundary rather than the ‘cultural stuff’, based on his observation that boundaries between ethnic groups persist despite change in membership, cultural features, assimilation and social interaction.²⁰³ The very focus on boundaries, therefore, is in one sense the study of persistence.²⁰⁴

The process of boundary creation and persistence can be understood through Weber’s concept of social closure. Social closure refers to a process in which social groups are constituted by the ‘construction of symbolic boundaries (categorization) by collectivities with varying degrees of prior “groupness”, and how such collectivities become groups with the potential to recognize and act upon collective interests to generate social change’.²⁰⁵ This involves an emphasis on any ‘group’ attribute, such as religion, language or race, and reflects a ‘process by which social collectivities seek to maximise rewards by restricting access to rewards and opportunities to a limited circle of eligibles’.²⁰⁶ Which attribute is chosen depends in turn on the hierarchies of power established by the institutional order.²⁰⁷ For instance, religious identity determined the place of subjects within the Ottoman power and social hierarchy and therefore social closure proceeded on the basis of

²⁰¹ Weber 1978: 385–93; Hale 2004; Wimmer 2008.

²⁰² Weber 1978: 389–90; Wimmer 2008.

²⁰³ Barth 1969. However, in later years Barth’s analysis has been modified to allow that ‘content’ can play a bigger role than acknowledged, emphasising historical processes and effects. See Jenkins 1994.

²⁰⁴ Conversi 1999.

²⁰⁵ Loveman 1999.

²⁰⁶ Parkin 2013: 3–4.

²⁰⁷ Wimmer 2008: 993.

these delineations. The aim is the monopolisation of (usually) economic resources; ‘this monopolisation is directed against competitors who share some positive or negative characteristics; its purpose is always the closure of social and economic opportunities to outsiders’.²⁰⁸ Consequently, it can be argued that social closure precipitates the institutionalisation of forms of inclusion and exclusion.²⁰⁹ As Wimmer has argued, under conditions of politically salient boundaries, high levels of social closure and cultural differentiation (precipitated and exacerbated by social closure) can generate path-dependent processes which underpin the persistence and stability of boundaries over time.²¹⁰

The institution of the nation-state and nationalism are key mechanisms of boundary creation through the politicisation of ethnicity and the elevation of ethnic unity. The question of how this unity or commonality is institutionalised and produced has led some scholars to distinguish between civic and ethnic nationalism, characterised as inclusive (often Western) and exclusive (often Eastern). As Brubaker has argued, this distinction is both analytically and normatively problematic since, essentially, all nationalisms are both exclusive²¹¹ and contain an ‘ethnic’ element. Instead, what ‘varies is not the degree of exclusiveness or inclusiveness but bases or criteria of inclusion and exclusion’.²¹² Indeed, as Wimmer states, ‘modern institutions of inclusion (citizenship, democracy, welfare) are systematically tied to ethnic and national forms of exclusion ... ethnic conflicts ... are integral parts of the modern order of nation-states’.²¹³ Unlike in pre-modern universalistic multi-ethnic empires based on dynastic rule where ethnic borders were permeable and blurred, the nation-state possesses an ‘ethnic logic’²¹⁴ that ‘like should rule over like’ or, rather, the ‘principle that any nation-as-people should have their nation as state’,²¹⁵ which is a by-product of nationalist thought and principles of popular sovereignty that arose with the French Revolution. The establishment of the nation-state therefore involves the creation and privileging of

²⁰⁸ Parkin 2013: 3–4; Weber 1978.

²⁰⁹ Wimmer 2004.

²¹⁰ Wimmer 2008.

²¹¹ Brubaker 1999.

²¹² Brubaker 1999: 64.

²¹³ Wimmer 2002: 4–5.

²¹⁴ Wimmer 2008.

²¹⁵ Billig 1995: 24; Hobsbawm 1990: 9; Gellner 2008; Wimmer 1997.

an ethnic majority, with minorities expelled, marginalised²¹⁶ or made invisible through a process of homogenisation.²¹⁷ In addition, democratisation can further enforce boundaries by encouraging competition over the resources of the nation-state and appeals to the ‘people’, often based on the ‘majority’ ethnic group.²¹⁸ The competition over state resources further supports processes of social closure, however, hardening boundaries and reducing multiple ethnic categories to a single ethnic dimension.²¹⁹ Social closure on the basis of ethnic boundaries can likewise correspond to class and intra-class divisions, resulting in an ethnic division of labour.²²⁰

This study draws from Wimmer’s outline of three structural constraints on the construction of boundaries by actors, including institutions, power endowments and political alliances, particularly during the stage of nation-building. Institutional frameworks structure the field in which the specific types of boundary construction occur and ‘provide incentives for actors to draw certain types of boundaries ... and to emphasize certain levels of ethnic differentiation rather than others’;²²¹ choice is, therefore, while free, constrained. In addition, institutions play a central role in embedding processes of social closure in a path-dependent manner while differentiated endowments of power affect which projects will be ultimately more successful. In this sense, the state has a privileged role given its power resources, which place it in a uniquely powerful position to enforce particular boundaries; ‘only those in control of the means of violence will be able to force their ethnic scheme of interpretation onto reality’.²²² For instance, the *millet* system in the Ottoman Empire was one structure (amongst others) that incentivised boundary-making on the basis of religion, which in turn influenced political alliances and projects of nation-state building. The absorption of the ulema within the state was a reflection of this and ensured the privileging of certain boundaries.

²¹⁶ Kaufmann & Haklai 2008; Wimmer 2002.

²¹⁷ Williams 1989.

²¹⁸ Kaufmann & Haklai 2008; Wimmer 2002.

²¹⁹ Wimmer 1997.

²²⁰ Parkin 1998: 119.

²²¹ Wimmer 2008.

²²² Wimmer 2008.

iii. Nationalism, ethnicity and religion

In terms of the relationship between religion and nationalism, Brubaker outlines four approaches, which include i) treating religion, nationalism, ethnicity and race as analogous phenomena; ii) using religion to explore facets of nationalism; iii) looking at ways in which nationalism and religion are intertwined; and iv) distinguishing a religious form of nationalism as distinct from secular nationalism.²²³ While the deeply intertwined nature of religion and nationalism has been acknowledged by a variety of scholars, there has been a tendency to regard nationalism as a modern and secular ideology which in the past has reflected the prevalence of the modernisation paradigm.²²⁴ The conception of nationalism as a replacement for religion in the modern world has been re-evaluated owing to the growing critique of the secularisation thesis and 'religious resurgence'.²²⁵ Approaches that delineate a specific type of religious nationalism in contrast to secular nationalism reproduce the problem of distinguishing between what is religion or secular while resulting in conceptual overstretching.²²⁶ Despite the centrality of religion for nationalism, it can be argued that they remain distinct in the sense that religion is universalistic and trans-ethnic, whereas nationalism remains fundamentally centred on the nation as the primary source of value.²²⁷ In addition, a secular versus religious distinction is problematic in the same way that an ethnic and civic delineation is.²²⁸

This thesis adopts the approach that religion and national identity and ethnicity are deeply intertwined in diverse ways and can be considered as analogous phenomena.²²⁹ Firstly, religion offers a rich symbolic repertoire of myths, metaphors and symbols used as building blocks in the process of national identity construction.²³⁰ Smith has argued that religion is a basis of ethnic formation owing to its role in providing a symbolic code of communication and focus for social

²²³ Brubaker 2012.

²²⁴ Mihelj 2007; Smith 2003; Kedourie 1993; Van der Veer 1994.

²²⁵ Mihelj 2007; Smith 2003; Smith 2000; Kedourie 1971.

²²⁶ Brubaker 2012.

²²⁷ Coakley 2002: 206; Asad 1999; Brubaker 2012.

²²⁸ Brubaker 1999.

²²⁹ Smith 2000; Friedland 2001; Brubaker 2012; Mihelj 2007.

²³⁰ Asad 1999; Brubaker 2012; Smith 2003: 254–55; Hutchison & Lehmann 1994.

organisation in pre-modern communities.²³¹ Religious discourse also enables the idealisation of nation and the sacralisation of state.²³² Accordingly, religion has played a central role in nation-building²³³ with ethnicity and religious cleavages often overlapping.²³⁴ This can be clearly observed in terms of the constitutive role of Islam in Turkish nation-building, which will be explored in later chapters. Equally religion can prove a resilient container for the cultural preservation of an ethnic group, since religious groups possess formal organisational bodies that contrast with loosely organised ethnic groups.²³⁵ Secondly, it is in this sense that religion can be regarded as analogous to nationalism and ethnicity, since religion can become an ‘ethnic marker’ delineating the boundaries of the ‘imagined’ community²³⁶ and involving a subjective belief in common descent. Religion, therefore, becomes a source of social and cultural identification, of construing sameness and difference, and a force of social segmentation much in the same way that nationalism and ethnicity does.²³⁷ This was the case in the Ottoman Empire, where religion was a communal marker and the basis of a system of ethnic segmentation. Consequently, politicised religion can be considered as politicised ethnicity in that it makes similar types of claims for political and economic resources and symbolic recognition.²³⁸

2.4 Religious majoritarianism as an alternative prism

The concept of religious majoritarianism provides both an alternative analytical prism through which to analyse the state–religion relationship over time and a means to categorise the organisation of a state with respect to the delineation of the national community. As previously noted, religious majoritarianism refers to a political structure in which a religiously demarcated group’s dominance and monopoly over political and economic resources and power is legitimated on the basis of its numeric majority within the nation. The degree of religious

²³¹ Smith 1986.

²³² Balibar 1990.

²³³ Friedland 2001; Asad 1999.

²³⁴ As Brubaker states, it is difficult to delineate between secularised religion or religiously tinged language. See Brubaker 2012; Ruane & Todd 2010: 1–8; Jacobson 1997.

²³⁵ Conversi 1999: 28.

²³⁶ Zubaida 1993; Fox 2002; Ruane & Todd 2010: 1–8.

²³⁷ Brubaker 2012.

²³⁸ Brubaker 2012.

majoritarianism of the nation-state is determined by the combination of i) the extent of social closure and ii) the particular configuration of institutional structures. In this sense, it is a modern phenomenon related to the project of nationalism and the nation-state construct which necessarily involves both the demarcation of boundaries and a majoritisation of a 'core' ethnic group. Kaufmann and Haklai argue that the advent of popular sovereignty (i.e. democracy) in parallel with the emergence of the nation-state has meant a shift from dominant minority rule to dominant majority ethnicity.²³⁹ Since the 'state embodies the idea and political practice of *national* sovereignty', the perceived ethnicisation of the state will mean that competition for resources will appear to be determined on the basis of belonging to that particular majority and as such can lead to contestation and a sense of discrimination.²⁴⁰ It can be argued that the project of secularism of the nation-state can serve to reinforce this process. This is because rather than just drawing the boundaries between the private and public roles of religion, it can involve a process of drawing boundaries of national identity, especially in cases where religious identities perform the function of ethnic markers. This is in the sense that Calhoun et al. highlight, whereby 'the secular realm is sometimes constructed in a manner that implicitly privileges one type of religion, while more or less expressly delegitimizing other sorts of religious engagement'.²⁴¹ By delineating the borders of the majority and minority religious populations of the nation-state, therefore, it facilitates group-making and the politicisation of religio-ethno identities. As argued by Asad, 'in a secular, democratic state whose citizens are seen, by religious as well as secular-nationalist observers, to be divided into "the majority [religious] community" and "religious minorities", there will tend to be an elision between the politically representative character of government on the one hand and the state's national presentation of itself on the other. Assisting this elision will be the dominant nationalist discourse which identifies the history of "the nation" with the history of "the [religious] majority"'.²⁴² Given the underpinnings of the notion of popular sovereignty, the ways and means by which religious majoritarianism becomes embedded in the nation-state project necessarily

²³⁹ Kaufmann & Haklai 2008; Smith 1991.

²⁴⁰ Wimmer 1997.

²⁴¹ Calhoun et al. 2011: 16.

²⁴² Asad 1992: 11.

relate to questions of power;²⁴³ ‘the assertion of secularism may often seem to be no more than an assertion of neutrality vis-à-vis religion or religions. But when it is written into a constitution, it typically reflects events that are not in any way neutral: the ascendancy of a new political party, a revolution, or an interstate conflict. So there is always a kind of political context, and it needs to be asked of particular secular regimes what they express in that political context and how they shape distributions of power and recognition.’²⁴⁴

To specify, religious majoritarianism as a concept is distinguished from Islamism or religio-political movements. Such movements (e.g. Islamists or Hindutva) may wish to augment the religious majoritarianism of the state in positing the hegemony of the religiously defined majority, but they are also committed to a wider goal of the transformation of the state and society on the basis of religious doctrine. Similarly, religious majoritarianism differs from communalism since, rather than just ethnic allegiance, it refers to the particular structure of the state that elevates a majority religious identity. Lastly, it would be misleading to depict religious majoritarianism of the nation-state as a type of religious nationalism as distinct from a secular type of nationalism owing to the problems of such a distinction, outlined above.²⁴⁵

2.5 Conclusion

The theoretical chapter has sought to outline a framework for thinking about the rise of religio-politics and the contexts that facilitate it. The key elements of the framework are i) the understanding of state institutions, both constitutive and constraining of actions, and the state more broadly as an arena of struggle for different actors; ii) approaching groupness as a process rather than a given; iii) the concept of religious majoritarianism as a tool to think about state–religion relations.

²⁴³ Power is understood here as ‘action of humans on other humans to impose their will on others, by the use, potential or actual, of symbolic or physical violence’. See Castells 2000.

²⁴⁴ Calhoun et al. 2011: 16.

²⁴⁵ Friedland 2002; Juergensmeyer 1993.

Chapter 3: Tracing ‘constitutional identity’: religious majoritarianism and nation-state building

3.1 Introduction

The principles we lay down here will span our children and grandchildren.²⁴⁶

(Lawmaker during debates on the 1924 Constitution).

Constitutions are key documents that establish a framework of politics, specify the locus of sovereignty within a given territory and stipulate a people to whom they are addressed. Aside from determining the ‘rules of the game’ or the macro structures of political life, it could be argued, therefore, that constitutions also say something about the identity of the national construct and the codified political vision of the nation of the framers or nation-state builders.²⁴⁷ Consequently, this chapter attempts to illustrate and locate the constitutive vision of nation-state builders or constitutional framers by tracing the Ottoman legacy and continuity and change in the Turkish Republic. In doing so, the analysis draws on the insights of constitutional theory and, particularly, works on ‘constitutional identity’, a concept which is approached critically. This chapter will thus commence with a discussion of the Ottoman legacy and the level of social closure at the end of empire as the antecedent conditions that impacted independence leaders during the foundational years of the Republic, defined as a ‘critical juncture’. This will be followed by a thematic overview of the three main periods of constitution-making: 1921–37, 1961 and 1982. Continuity and change in terms of the political vision of the constitutional framers will be traced through an exploration of constitution-making, with a focus on what are widely recognised within Turkish studies as the two constitutive principles of the Republic, Turkish nationalism and laicism, which are also codified in the constitution. This will involve analysis of the constitutional framers’ debates on articles on laicism, citizenship and religious freedom, as well as draft proposals and recommendations made by constitutional committees.

²⁴⁶ ZC 9.3.1340, 244.

²⁴⁷ Jacobsohn 2010.

3.2 The matter of locating ‘constitutional identity’

In October 2011, as an initiative of the governing AKP, a Constitution Reconciliation Commission (CRC) comprising the four main parties was established and tasked with drawing up a new constitution. The need for a new ‘civil’ constitution to replace the current constitution imposed (through a plebiscitary referendum) by the 1982 junta regime had been one of the central calls across the party divide during the 2011 general elections.²⁴⁸ Behind the AKP’s drive for a new constitution had been the experiences related to the military and Constitutional Court. On 28 February 1997²⁴⁹ the *Refahyol* coalition, comprising the Islamist Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, RP) and Right Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi*, DYP), had been issued with an 18-point memorandum during a National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*, NSC) meeting demanding government measures against political Islamism/reactionism. Accusations, especially by the military, that the RP had become a ‘centre of reaction’ referenced demonstrations by Islamists calling for an Islamic state, Prime Minister Erbakan’s attempts to shift foreign policy towards the Muslim world, the party’s anti-NATO stance and desire to form an alternative security bloc, calls for the scrapping of interest in banking, ‘anti-secular’ remarks by RP deputies and close relations with *tariqat* leaders.²⁵⁰ Rather than directly intervening following the memorandum, however, the military subsequently facilitated the government’s fall in June 1997 by building a coalition of ‘unarmed forces’ comprising civil members including business organisations, trade unions, civil society organisations, the media and academics.²⁵¹ In January 1998 the RP was abolished by the Constitutional Court, which also imposed a five-year ban on political activity for the party’s leaders on the grounds that the party had become a centre of ‘anti-secular’ activity. The RP had been succeeded by the Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*, FP), which was also closed for ‘anti-secular’ activities in June 2001. The subsequent ascent to power of the AKP was followed by the machinations of the military and Constitutional Court in 2007 to prevent the election of the AKP’s candidate to the presidency, as well as the top court’s

²⁴⁸ Gönenç May 2011.

²⁴⁹ See Chapters 3 and 8 for further analysis on the dynamics of the 1997 military intervention.

²⁵⁰ *Al Jazeera* 27 December 2013.

²⁵¹ Akpınar 2001.

decision in 2008 to reject a constitutional amendment to lift restrictions on the headscarf.²⁵²

Partly in reaction to these developments, the AKP had proposed constitutional amendments to restructure the judiciary, which were approved in a referendum held in September 2010. However, the amendments were not deemed sufficient by the government, as reflected by the AKP's CRC representative lawmaker Mustafa Şentop's statement that: '60% of the constitution has changed, but it still cannot meet needs. According to the bureaucratic oligarchy the constitution has first an [written] expression and also a soul. You make a law, it is not against the constitution, there is no problem, but the authorised institutions say "it is against the soul of the constitution" and reject it. They call upon the spirit and ask, if that spirit doesn't agree then they reject it. This is why we have to bury this soul of the constitution.'²⁵³ Similarly, critics of the constitution had argued that the Europeanisation reforms undertaken in the late 1990s and early 2000s²⁵⁴ had not been sufficient to challenge the 'Kemalist'²⁵⁵ or 'authoritarian'²⁵⁶ soul of the constitution, regarded as legitimating a system of tutelage by the bureaucratic–military elites and hence military interventions.²⁵⁷

The cross-party efforts to draw up a new constitution based on a negotiated consensus subsequently failed, however. In November 2013, after just over two years of deliberations, the AKP announced it was withdrawing from the CRC, blaming slow progress and inability to reach consensus; agreement had been reached on only 60 articles, with 112 remaining.²⁵⁸ In reaction, the other parties blamed the AKP for the collapse of the talks, alleging that the government lacked sincerity in negotiations. The published records of the deliberations suggest that the AKP's dominance is likely to have hindered negotiations, as evidenced by the AKP negotiators' emphasis on the party's electoral legitimacy and '50% support',

²⁵² Kentel et al. October 2011–January 2012.

²⁵³ *Mynet Haber* 17 March 2013.

²⁵⁴ *Hürriyet* 26 November 2014.

²⁵⁵ *NTV-MSNBC* 30 July 2007; *Bianet* 2007.

²⁵⁶ Constitutional professor Özbudun has argued that the constitution reflects the will of 'five junta leaders': *Hürriyet* 15 April 2012.

²⁵⁷ Bulaç 12 April 2010; *Haber Sol* 31 March 2010.

²⁵⁸ *Milliyet* 19 November 2013.

the presentation of the CRC as an act of goodwill by the government and the insistence on a presidential system (in part) as a bargaining tactic.

Conversely, it may be argued that negotiations were always going to be difficult given the fundamentally different constitutive visions of the different parties and the adoption of a consensus decision-making method, which required unanimous agreement. The CRC had agreed to adopt an ‘inductive’ approach,²⁵⁹ which had involved negotiating on articles individually and building consensus, rather than what was considered to be the more difficult track of first determining the fundamental principles, vision and ‘soul’ of the constitution and then establishing the individual articles accordingly. Despite this approach, the proceedings on the articles suggest that the parties struggled to bridge the divide on key matters such as religious freedom, citizenship, language and the irrevocable articles as well as the system of government, the powers of the Constitutional Court and judiciary, and local government.²⁶⁰ Ultimately, the CRC debates demonstrated that, aside from the matter of the system of government (parliamentary vs. presidential, majoritarian vs. consensus models), the role of religion and nationalism lay at the heart of the conflict between different constitutive visions for the polity. Indeed, laicism and Turkish nationalism have been widely identified as the constitutive principles of what is commonly described as the ‘Kemalist’ state order established in 1923, which historian Erik Zürcher has argued constituted the distinguishing features of Young Turk ideology since 1913.²⁶¹

For example, the drive of the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi*, BDP) for a more pluralistic concept of citizenship was at odds with the emphasis of the Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP) on the indivisibility of the Turkish nation and state.²⁶² Equally, the AKP’s focus on the majoritarian 1921 and 1924 constitutions as a point of reference and emphasis on unrestricted religious freedom and the sovereignty of the parliamentary majority contrasted with the stress placed by the Republican

²⁵⁹ AUK 2012–2013.

²⁶⁰ Kılıç 10 September 2013.

²⁶¹ Mert 2002: 197; Zürcher 2004: 181; Fırlı et al. 1999; Köker 2007.

²⁶² AUK 2012–2013.

People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) on what they viewed as the fundamental achievements of the Republic, including laicism, republican reforms and checks and balances on parliamentary majorities.²⁶³ Similarly, a further division centred around the irrevocability (Article 4) of the first three articles of the current 1982 constitution, which outline: i) the form of the state as a republic (Article 1); ii) the characteristics of the republic as including 'Atatürkist nationalism' and 'laicism' (Article 2); and iii) the integrity, official language, flag, national anthem and capital of the state (Article 3).²⁶⁴ The matter of irrevocability in the 1924 and 1961 constitutions had referred only to the article establishing the state as a republic (Article 102 in 1924 and Article 9 in 1961 constitution), and, as such, the expansion in 1982 of the number of irrevocable provisions suggested a more prescriptive approach by the constitutional framers.

Yet, whilst actors and scholars typically refer to the 'Kemalist' ideology of the Republic, what was also clear from the deliberations within the CRC was the diverging interpretations of the present 'constitutional identity' of the Turkish Republic. For instance, the AKP lawmaker Mustafa Şentop said that 'in my opinion Turkey's fundamental problem is with the new state ideology established following 27 May [1960 coup] In terms of continuity, we are against a mentality of tutelage, a bureaucratic, oligarchic mentality, a mentality that bases political power with the constitution rather than the nation ... But, if by continuity it is meant the philosophy that has been since the Ottoman [Empire], since the establishment of the republic, the state's correct ideology, then we accept it, we can maintain this continuity. But, we are for abandoning the break in between, the break that arose with 27 May [1960].'²⁶⁵ For the BDP, too, it was not possible to speak of continuity. Instead, the party's representatives argued that for the 'period between 23 April 1920 and 3 March 1924, there are no approaches or expressions that creates problems for us currently', but 'there are differences in the period between 1924 to 1960 ... the second article of the first constitution of the republic, states that "the religion of the state" is the "religion of Islam"'.²⁶⁶ Conversely, the CHP members

²⁶³ AUK 2012–2013.

²⁶⁴ AUK 2012–2013.

²⁶⁵ AUK 2012–2013.

²⁶⁶ AUK 2012–2013.

emphasised continuity in terms of the overall spirit of the constitution, arguing that the new constitution could not constitute a break since the fundamental principles could not and would not be allowed to change: ‘we are not doing something new or from scratch, we are not establishing a state ... we insist on these principles, they have to stay but they can be expressed differently’.²⁶⁷

The wider question raised by the CRC debates, therefore, is one of locating ‘constitutional identity’. The concept is certainly a controversial one. Constitutional scholars sceptical of the notion of ‘constitutional identity’ have contended that the inherent pluralism and inconsistencies within constitutions preclude the identification of a unitary vision established by the framers.²⁶⁸ Others, however, have argued that ‘constitutional identity’ should be at the heart of constitutional theory.²⁶⁹ According to Rosenfeld, identity is central to constitutions since ‘the three general features of constitutionalism ... – namely, limited government, adherence to the rule of law, and protection of fundamental rights – [acquire their] legitimacy in relation to a sociopolitical reality oriented towards conflicting poles of identity and difference’.²⁷⁰ Consequently, he states that ‘working constitutional order must revolve around a predominant identity’.²⁷¹ Constitutions, therefore, are regarded as playing a fundamental constitutive role in identity formation within the polity and its subsequent reconstitution. It is not necessarily assumed that the location of ‘constitutional identity’ is itself a straightforward process. In particular, Jacobsohn has argued that identity can be located in the very disharmony of constitutions, which contain ‘identifiable continuities of meaning within which dissonance and contradiction play out’.²⁷² For the most part, constitutional identity theorists therefore posit the existence of both ‘continuities of meaning’, arguing for endurance of identity, on the one hand, and its fluidity on the other hand, suggesting that identity is also acquired through experience (or dialogically²⁷³) as a ‘product of a dynamic process that is always

²⁶⁷ AUK 2012–2013.

²⁶⁸ Jacobsohn 2010.

²⁶⁹ Jacobsohn 2010.

²⁷⁰ Rosenfeld 1992: 499.

²⁷¹ Rosenfeld 1992: 500.

²⁷² Jacobsohn 2010: 4.

²⁷³ Jacobsohn 2010: 5.

open to further elaboration and revision'.²⁷⁴ In this sense, they acknowledge that 'constitutional identity' remains by nature elusive and ambiguous, abstract and complex as well as incomplete, given its evolution over time,²⁷⁵ but argue at the same time that there is a 'bounded fluidity'.²⁷⁶ Alongside such propositions, the analysis by Kissane and Sitter of the relationship between constitutions and national identity over different regions and periods in Europe underlines the need to distinguish between different constitutional traditions. According to Kissane and Sitter, unlike the earlier European constitutional tradition whereby constitutions represented a contract between different actors over the distribution of power, the later constitutions adopted following the collapse of empires in the aftermath of World War I (WWI) drew a more explicit link between national identity and the constitution.²⁷⁷ Reflecting the latter tradition, the Turkish constitutional experience was less a liberal effort to constrain and set bounds on the exercise of power but rather a 'nationalising' one, concerned with the construction of a majority to form the social base of the nascent nation-state. The section below will therefore first seek to elaborate the historical context of constitution-making in the Turkish case, reviewing the Ottoman legacy, before it subsequently explores areas of continuity and change throughout the Republican history of constitution-making.

3.2.1 The Ottoman legacy

The idea of 'bounded fluidity' in terms of the evolution of 'constitutional identity' reflects the fact that constitutions are not written on a *tabula rasa*. Despite the revolutionary circumstances under which the first two constitutions of the Turkish Republic were written, they were crucially shaped by the Ottoman legacy and high levels of social closure at the end of empire that can be regarded as antecedent conditions. It is in this sense that constitutions can incorporate path-dependent effects. Accordingly, any exploration of 'constitutional identity' requires an understanding of the historical circumstances and legacies that shaped the processes of constitution-making. At the same time, the structural context of the

²⁷⁴ Rosenfeld 1994: 1049.

²⁷⁵ Rosenfeld 1994: 1049.

²⁷⁶ Jacobsohn 2011: 132.

²⁷⁷ Kissane & Sitter 2010.

Ottoman Empire is important in identifying why certain boundaries were constructed over others. As a type of theocratic monarchy, the Ottoman order had religion as a key element.²⁷⁸ In theory, laws and decisions had to be in compliance with Islamic law (sharia) and the sultan was the protector of the faith and Muslims, whilst being a Muslim (by birth or conversion) was a requirement for statesmen wishing to climb to higher ranks.²⁷⁹ In practice, however, despite the concept of *din u devlet* (the unity of religion and the state),²⁸⁰ in reality the sultan had ruled through a combination of religious laws and sultanic decrees (*ferman*) based on customary law and practices.²⁸¹ In addition, the social structure of the empire was organised on the basis of ‘ethnic segmentation’, a hierarchical system whereby the Muslims (the *millet-i hakime* or ‘sovereign nation’) were positioned on top, whilst the non-Muslim communities were organised under the *millet* system. Systemised only in the nineteenth century during the Tanzimat, it was never a fully codified system.²⁸²

The transformation of this structure and the basis of the legitimacy of the state began to change with the adoption of centralisation and modernisation reforms from the late eighteenth century, which were triggered by a confluence of factors, including successive military defeats, economic decline and European imperial penetration. The reforms, concerned with ‘saving the state’, reflected efforts to reconcile the dilemma of empires of continental size comprising multi-ethnic and multi-religious communities in an age of rising nation-states and diffusion of the concept of popular sovereignty following the French Revolution.²⁸³ The evolution of official ideology during this period was summarised in 1904 by one of the key ideologues of Turkish nationalism, Yusuf Akçura, in his essay entitled *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (Three Ways of Politics).²⁸⁴ The three currents described by Akçura – Ottomanism, pan-Islamism and Turkism – were concerned chiefly with how to save the Ottoman state and resolve the state’s legitimacy crisis by creating a reliable

²⁷⁸ Eligür 2010: 37.

²⁷⁹ Toprak 1981: 1–2.

²⁸⁰ Toprak 1981: 1–2.

²⁸¹ Hekimoglu 2010.

²⁸² Barkey 2005; Braude 1980.

²⁸³ Findley 2010; Lieven 2000.

²⁸⁴ Alkan 2009: 60.

social base.²⁸⁵ In reality, all three currents were intertwined and, as Bein has argued, ‘hardly any Ottoman thinker argued for one of these referents to the exclusion of others. Instead, major controversies revolved around what should be the prevailing component in the state’s official ideology.’²⁸⁶ Emerging in the early nineteenth century, Ottomanism had involved efforts to constitute a territorially based Ottoman national identity by unifying different communities within the empire based on the equality of all subjects regardless of religious affiliation or ethnic origin. These efforts had found reflection in the Tanzimat reforms, including the key imperial edicts of the *Gülhane* in 1839 (Imperial Edict of the Rose House) and the subsequent *Islahat* edict in 1856 (*Hatt-ı Hümayun*). The first Ottoman constitution (*Kânûn-ı Esâsî* – ‘Fundamental Law’) was promulgated by Sultan Abdülhamid II in 1876 under pressure from reformist bureaucrats²⁸⁷ and was drafted by two soldiers, sixteen civilian bureaucrats (three of whom were Christian) and ten members of the ulema.²⁸⁸ The 1876 constitution comprised five fundamental principles including the definition of the state as i) a monarchy, ii) unitary in form, iii) Islamic (laws could not contravene sharia law), iv) having Turkish as the official language, and v) having Istanbul as the capital.²⁸⁹ The sovereign was defined as the sultan, who as the Caliph was the designated protector of Muslims and implementer of sharia law. Freedom of worship was granted to all religions (Article 11). However, despite the establishment of an assembly comprising Muslims and non-Muslims following the first elections in the empire, ultimate power had remained in the hands of the sultan, who ended the first constitutional period in 1878 for 30 years by proroguing the parliament.²⁹⁰

Nevertheless, a key element of the Tanzimat reforms was the granting of legal equality to non-Muslims,²⁹¹ as outlined in the edicts and codified in the Ottoman

²⁸⁵ Deringil 1998.

²⁸⁶ Bein 2007: 614.

²⁸⁷ Özbudun 2011: 3.

²⁸⁸ Tanör 1998.

²⁸⁹ Kanun-u Esâsî.

²⁹⁰ Devereux 1963; Özbudun 2011: 3–4. Following the restoration of the constitution in 1908 by opposition movements a key concern had been the introduction of constraints on sovereign power. The second constitutional period, however, descended into the dominance and dictatorship of the CUP, coming to an end in 1918, when the government fell following the defeat in WWI (Zürcher 2012; Özbudun 2011).

²⁹¹ Zürcher 2004.

nationality law of 1869 incorporated in Article 8 of the constitution.²⁹² This was driven by the desire both to eliminate the privileges enjoyed by non-Muslim communities (the capitulations regime), thereby undermining the basis of imperial penetration, and to stem the tide of nationalism by forging unity on the basis of a new Ottoman identity (as epitomised in the ideology of Ottomanism).²⁹³ Ottomanism, in this sense, was also at odds with the existing social structure underpinned by the *millet* system. According to Akçura, Ottomanism had failed in part owing to negative views of equal citizenship held by Muslims and Turks loathe to give up ‘600 years of sovereignty’, and Islam, which could not accept the equality of non-Muslims.²⁹⁴ The trauma and polarisation caused by the Tanzimat reforms and the granting of equality, at times leading to violent reaction by Muslim subjects, can also be traced within the writings of various Ottoman officials.²⁹⁵ In 1872 the Ottoman statesman Ahmed Cevdet Pasha described the reactions of Ottoman Muslim subjects in the following lines:

‘According to this decree, Muslim and non-Muslim subjects had to become equal before law. This affected the Muslims particularly hard. Many of the Muslims started complaining, saying, “Today, we lost our sacred rights as a religious community, [those rights] which had been won by the blood of our fathers and forefathers. The Muslim community, which had been the dominant community, has been deprived of such a sacred right. This day is a day of mourning and despair for the Muslims.” For the minority subjects [instead], this was a day of joy.’²⁹⁶

In addition, the efforts in 1868 of Ziya Pasha, an Ottoman bureaucrat, intellectual and member of the New Ottomans, to distinguish between legal equality (*müsavat fi'l-hukuk*) and equality of moral values or honour (*müsavat fi's-seref*) reflected such tensions and resistance to the principle of equality for Muslim and non-

²⁹² Article 8 of the Ottoman Constitution of 1876 (Kanun-u Esasî) which states that ‘All subjects of the empire are called Ottomans, without distinction whatever faith they profess; the status of an Ottoman is acquired and lost according to conditions specified by law.’

²⁹³ Toprak 1995: 51. Historians have traced the matter of equality of non-Muslims to the declarations of Sultan Mahmud II (1789–1839) to his foreign guests that, for him, there was no difference between his Muslim and non-Muslim subjects (Akyol 1998: 102–7; Bozkurt 2000: 45–51).

²⁹⁴ Akçura 1976.

²⁹⁵ See Göçek 1993: 517; Kara 1997; Taştan 2012; Göçek 1996: 114.

²⁹⁶ Ahmed Cevdet Pasa; quote from Göçek 1993: 517.

Muslim subjects.²⁹⁷ The polarisation of ethnic segmentation and sharpening of boundaries between Muslims and non-Muslims was also underpinned by the dominant economic position of the non-Muslims and the bifurcation of the bourgeoisie²⁹⁸ (see Chapter 7). The emergence of pan-Islamism can be traced back to this period of a loss of privileged status and competition over resources, as well as to a search for a means to reverse the decline of the empire, which they believed could be achieved through a re-emphasis of Islam and its fundamental texts (see Chapter 8). Ottomanism, however, was ultimately unsuccessful in stemming the spread of nationalisms in the empire, whereby the religiously defined *millets* had begun to form the base of nascent ethno-national communities.²⁹⁹

The subsequent propagation of pan-Islamism by Sultan Abdulhamid (1876–1909) was in part a response to rising nationalism, the loss of vast non-Muslim populations with the 1877–78 Russo-Ottoman war and emergence Muslim religious revivalist movements especially following 1856.³⁰⁰ War and migration, particularly from the late eighteenth century, had led to the increasing ‘Muslimisation’ of the land, which was to result in the near elimination of most of the non-Muslim populations by the establishment of the Republic, through, among other events, the Armenian genocide and population exchanges with Greece. Crucially, the Hamidian period marked the first self-conscious drive to construct a homogenous social base, a (Sunni) Muslim *millet*. The Ottomanisation of the sharia and efforts to ‘monopolise official sacrality’ had also underpinned the drive for a nationalisation process that had subsequently begun to frame and differentiate this Muslim entity as specifically Turkish.³⁰¹ Subsequently there was a greater shift towards Turkish nationalism when the CUP took power in 1908, as the project of pan-Islamism had appeared insufficient to hold the empire together following the outbreak of the Balkan³⁰² Wars (1912–13) and the beginnings of Arab nationalism.³⁰³

²⁹⁷ Kara 1997; Taştan 2012.

²⁹⁸ Göçek 1996.

²⁹⁹ Berkes 1964: 96.

³⁰⁰ Deringil 1991.

³⁰¹ Deringil 1990; Deringil 1998b: 50–53.

³⁰² Comprising 69% of the population and 83% of territory in Europe. See Çağaptay 2006.

³⁰³ See Zürcher 2000; Kayali 1997; Findley 2010; Lewis 1968; Ahmad 1993; Kushner 1977; Hanioglu 1995.

Pan-Islamism may have looked less realistic, but Islam remained a constitutive element of Turkish identity under construction. Equally, a key debate during this period pertained to the nature of the relationship between religion and state, including the question of the extent to which western constitutionalism was in line with the Islamic tradition.³⁰⁴ During the 1908 constitutional amendments, the ulema and Islamists had also asserted influence that led to the incorporation of the obligation for the sultan to swear in his oath that he would behave in accordance with sharia law (see Chapter 5 for further details of CUP reforms). The emphasis on Islam is also evidenced by the three documents of the national struggle: the Erzurum and Sivas Congress declarations and the National Pact (*Misak-ı Milli*).³⁰⁵ For example, the Erzurum congress society statutes articulated the population as comprising ‘all Islamic elements’ while declaring that ‘all Muslim compatriots are natural members of this society’,³⁰⁶ with Turks and Kurds constituting one *umma* (Muslim community).³⁰⁷ Similarly, the National Pact ‘affirmed the strategy and complete independence of the “territories inhabited by Ottoman Muslims”’.³⁰⁸ In sum, the confluence of various factors, including institutionalised ethnic segmentation, demographic developments, war, migration, class bifurcation and the state’s self-conscious efforts to establish a Sunni Muslim majority, resulted in high levels of social closure by the establishment of the Republic.

3.3 The Turkish Republic and ‘constitutional identity’

Having elaborated the Ottoman legacy, the following section will trace the constitutive vision of nation-state builders and constitutional framers through the analysis of constitutional debates and the codified articles. In doing so, it will attempt to highlight areas of continuity and change with respect to the interpretation of constitutive principles within the Republican experience of constitution. I will focus on the debates on articles regarding laicism, nationalism and citizenship, and religious freedom and minorities.

³⁰⁴ Yakut 2005: 94–95.

³⁰⁵ Özbudun 2012: 64.

³⁰⁶ Zürcher 2000: 164.

³⁰⁷ Zürcher 2000: 164.

³⁰⁸ Findley 2010: 222.

Compared with the centrality of religion within Ottoman constitutionalism, the principle of laicism alongside Turkish nationalism has been regarded as constitutive of Turkish ‘constitutional identity’. In early Turkish historiography, the notion that the establishment of a secular nationalist Republic constituted a break from the (theocratic) Islamic Ottoman Empire was canonised.³⁰⁹ Such narratives reflected the chosen self-representation of the early nation-state builders and official historiography. A typical example is presented by Ahmad, who presents the ‘Turkish revolution’ as a ‘new era’ following the destruction of the Ottoman state, when the Turks were ‘free to discover themselves and make a fresh start by abandoning a decadent past’.³¹⁰ The emphasis on a ‘break’ by extension leads Ahmad to argue, therefore, that, compared with the Islamic Ottoman state, in the new Republic ‘Turkishness was also defined in contrast to the rest of the Islamic world, thus the emphasis on secularism, or at the very least a Turkish Islam’.³¹¹ A reformulated ‘break’ approach is presented by Kuru, who argues that the period of ‘secular state-building’ during 1923–27 constituted a ‘critical juncture’ whereby the ‘secular state replaced the old types of state–religion regimes’.³¹² Conversely, other studies have tended to emphasise lines of continuity with the Ottoman state by focusing on the intellectual roots of the ‘Kemalist’ reforms of the Republic and nationalism,³¹³ national identity³¹⁴ or state practices.³¹⁵ Likewise, it has been argued that the Turkish ‘revolution’³¹⁶ was rooted in the policies of the CUP from 1908,³¹⁷ while studies premised on the secularisation thesis, such as Berkes’, have regarded it as a culmination of a long period of secularisation/modernisation starting in the eighteenth century.³¹⁸ In taking the middle ground, some studies have asserted that the quantitative changes accumulated during the modernisation period

³⁰⁹ Ayhan Aktar in Koraltürk 2011: 11; Zürcher 2002.

³¹⁰ Ahmad 1993: 77.

³¹¹ Ahmad 1993: 77.

³¹² Kuru 2007: 585.

³¹³ Zürcher 2000; Deringil 1993b. See also Gözaydın 2009: 14; Mardin 2005; Hanioglu 1995; Zürcher 2002; Karpas 2002; Erşahin 2008; Beriş 2000; Seufert 2004; Heyd 1950; Ortaylı 2012.

³¹⁴ Çetinsaya 1999.

³¹⁵ Heper 1985; Heper 2000.

³¹⁶ Mardin 1971: 197–211.

³¹⁷ For Mardin, ‘foundations of the Republican regime were laid in 1908’ (Mardin 1971: 210; Zürcher 2002).

³¹⁸ Berkes 1964.

of the late Ottoman Empire produced qualitative change, or revolutionary transformation, during the Republic.³¹⁹

The foundational years of the Turkish Republic are regarded here as marking a critical juncture in which decisions were taken in a moment of heightened contingency. Within the path-dependence scholarship, the identification of ‘critical junctures’ and ‘antecedent conditions’ are central, given the focus on when and how certain institutional patterns arise.³²⁰ A common understanding of critical junctures within historical institutionalism has been their identification as periods of significant change that generate new institutions and patterns of path dependency that are persistent or difficult to change.³²¹ However, critical junctures can also be considered as periods of heightened contingency in which there is the potential for significant change but that also may result in the ‘re-equilibration of the already existing institutions and the entrenchment of the status quo’.³²² Yet, despite the heightened contingency, scholars have also argued that antecedent conditions are important in influencing the range of options available for agents during the decision-making process. The variation in the forms of institutional arrangements considered during the 1921 and 1924 constitutional discussions or adopted during the founding years of the Republic suggests that Ottoman institutional structures were not all constraining.³²³ Independence leaders in the founding years dominated a parliament with no institutional checks to constrain decisions, as in later periods, and were therefore able to make decisions that led to significant change. At the same time, antecedent conditions in terms of the Ottoman legacy meant that there was a significant level of continuity involving the re-equilibration of existing institutions. The sections below will trace the elements of continuity and change within this framework.

³¹⁹ Alkan 2004.

³²⁰ Koinova 2013.

³²¹ Lerner 2014.

³²² Lerner 2014.

³²³ See Chapter 4.

3.3.1 Religion and laicism

In terms of the secularisation reforms and the extent to which they were novel or not, a prevalent feature of Turkish historiography has been its presentation as what Charles Taylor has called ‘subtraction stories’ in which religion, having filled a certain space, contracts and becomes replaced by secular norms.³²⁴ The grand narrative of secular modernisation is pervasive within Turkish studies, where secularisation/modernisation by the nation-state builders has been conceived in zero-sum terms as involving a subtraction of religion and its replacement by secular Turkish nationalism through oppressive means by the state, and then a subsequent reversal following democratisation in the 1950s owing to a failure of ‘Kemalism’ to fill this space as an emotional equivalent.³²⁵ In a classic exposition of this argument Mardin has written that ‘by replacing the official religion with the principle of laicism, Atatürk erased the possibilities of legitimation offered by the framework’.³²⁶ Similarly, for Findley, ‘secular Turks’ attempted to ‘tame Islam or replace it with nationalism and secularism as alternative belief systems’.³²⁷ On the secularisation of the one-party era Çarkoğlu writes that ‘the objective of the Republican regime, which by now became fully controlled by the secularist camp, was to roll back the realm of religion into the private lives of individual citizens’.³²⁸ The adoption of the TIS, in effect an Islamisation programme, by the 1980 junta leaders is therefore commonly regarded as comprising a ‘sharp deviation from the original nationalist creed’.³²⁹ Much of the emphasis of these narratives has been on ideological or identity-based conflict and they have to some extent mirrored official historiography, as outlined by independence movement leader Mustafa Kemal in *Nutuk*, taking for granted the assumption that the reforms undertaken in the early Republic were part of a wider grand plan of secularisation that was unfolding in a staged manner so as not to irk the conservatives.³³⁰ Such approaches have also been

³²⁴ Calhoun et al. 2011.

³²⁵ Lewis 1968; Kalaycıoğlu 2005.

³²⁶ Mardin 1971: 197–211.

³²⁷ Findley 2010: 256.

³²⁸ Kalaycıoğlu 2005: 55–56.

³²⁹ For example: Eligür 2010: 20; Can & Bora 2004: 150–89; Gültekin 1995; Oran 1999; Çarkoğlu & Kalaycıoğlu 2009: 10. Also see (Can & Bora 2004) for the international context, the project of ‘green belt’ comprising Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Pakistan and Kuwait against the Soviet Union from 1977 and also Mumcu (1993) for the funding of Islamist organisations and ulema by Saudi Arabia.

³³⁰ Atatürk 1997 [1927]; Fırlı et al. 1999; Parla 2007.

reflected within the wider literature on secularism and constitutional studies that presents Turkey as the archetypal example of separatist secularism³³¹ or a paradigmatic case of conflict between state secularism and popular support for religion.³³² Similarly, Lerner claims that the ‘Turkish constitution represented a revolutionary model of imposed secularism’.³³³ From a different perspective, in his historical study Findley has argued that, as opposed to a linear secularising trend, as often argued for within Turkish studies, there was a dialectical interaction between two thought currents: Islamic (conservative) and radical (Westernist). This draws especially from the efforts of the prominent Turkish nationalist Ziya Gökalp to ‘identify the Turks’ three essential reference points as Turkishness, Islam, and modernity’ and to synthesise them. Findley argues, therefore, that during the period 1908–1950 secularists governed Turkey, with the conservatives gaining prominence with the transition to multipartism. However, Findley’s argument for secularist government in 1908–1950 is problematic, as will be outlined below.

Many of these analyses draw from and are supported by the explicit commitment to the principle of laicism contained within the so-called six arrows of Kemalist ideology.³³⁴ This was adopted as part of the party programme of the ruling one-party CHP regime in 1935 and subsequently incorporated into the Turkish constitution in 1937, with laicism becoming one of the irrevocable provisions (as part of Article 2, outlining the characteristics of the state) in the 1982 constitution imposed by the junta regime. Indeed, according to Gary Jacobsohn, the Turkish constitution defines the nation’s identity according to the ‘(extreme secular) principles of its founder’.³³⁵ Drawing on Tushnet’s works, he argues that such a reading is supported by the expressivist nature of Turkish constitutional preambles, which ‘are exceptionally informative in conveying the underlying meaning of the collective enterprise that is the constitution’.³³⁶ Yet the reality of constitution-making, as Jacobsohn also points out, is more fluid, and a focus on such proclamations can often yield a static view of ‘constitutional identity’.³³⁷ The

³³¹ Stepan 2011.

³³² Zucca 2009.

³³³ Lerner 2013.

³³⁴ Köker 2007.

³³⁵ Jacobsohn 2010: 12–13.

³³⁶ Jacobsohn 2010: 4.

³³⁷ Jacobsohn 2010: 4.

analysis below focuses on the evolving approaches to the role of religion and the principle of laicism by constitutional framers and suggests that this particular construction of laicism implicitly and at times explicitly privileged one religion, thereby not just delineating relations between state and religion but also constructing the nation as a (Sunni) Muslim majority. It is in this sense that I argue that the concept of religious majoritarianism offers a better tool than does secularism for tracing religion-state relations.

1921 constitution

The principle of laicism was not adopted as a constitutional article until 1937. Instead, the Turkish Republic's first constitution, the *Teşkilat-ı Esasiye*, drafted by the most representative parliament in Turkey's constitutional history,³³⁸ outlined the duty of the parliament as the implementation of sharia law (Article 7). Nevertheless, marking as it did an important step towards the secularisation of authority, the *Teşkilat-ı Esasiye* was the first constitution to introduce explicitly the concept of national sovereignty, departing from the order as embodied in the 1876 constitution (including the 1909 changes), which ultimately rested sovereignty in the 'sacred' person of the sultan-caliph (Articles 3 and 5).³³⁹ The *Teşkilat-ı Esasiye* was adopted in 1921 by the independence movement based in Ankara, while the 1876 constitution was still in effect, in order to establish a separate executive authority and its working principles in parallel with the Ottoman government in occupied Istanbul.³⁴⁰

Religion, however, was not among the two most debated issues during constitutional drafting in 1921, which were the basis of representation (the initial proposal was for a type of corporatist representation) and the extent of local government (or autonomy).³⁴¹ This was partly due to the fact that both the declaration of national sovereignty and the matter of how to reference the sultan-caliph within the 1921 constitutional debates were handled by a fudge, essentially

³³⁸ Özbudun 1992.

³³⁹ Articles 1 and 5 in ZC 18.11.1336: 201–02.

³⁴⁰ Özbudun 1992: 5–8. Reflecting this and the probable concern with maintaining unity during a time of war, the *Teşkilat-ı Esasiye* is a short document comprising 24 articles.

³⁴¹ Özbudun 1992: 50.

postponing agreement and debate until after the independence struggle. In response to challenges by a number of lawmakers that the principle of national sovereignty was at odds with the 1876 constitution and that sovereignty could rest only with god, various revisions were incorporated into the final document.³⁴² These revisions included reference to the enforcement of sharia law within Article 7, which outlines the legal remit of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*, TGNA)³⁴³ and the replacement of the word parliament (*meclis*) with ‘*shura*’ (*şura*)³⁴⁴ in order to reflect what some lawmakers described as the ‘Muslim character’ of the population. Consequently, the 1921 constitution emerged to some extent as a contradictory document in comprising both the principle of national sovereignty (Article 1) and sharia law (Article 7)³⁴⁵ alongside the continued link to the 1876 constitution. On the other hand, debates on the Caliphate, conducted in a secret parliamentary session, had been triggered following the removal by the Constitution Committee of Article 5 of the draft constitutional proposal (submitted to parliament by the executive), which had made a direct reference to the rescue and reinstatement of the sultan-caliph following independence. Based on the argument that they reflected a government programme rather than constitutional principles, Article 5, along with Articles 1 to 4 of the original proposal, had been removed by the Committee, thereby moving the principle of national sovereignty (originally Article 6) to the top as the central organising principle of the *Teşkilat-ı Esasiye*.³⁴⁶ Conservative lawmakers in particular argued for its reinstatement, protesting that it could lead to the mistaken impression that the Ankara government was against the Caliphate.³⁴⁷ The lawmakers, however, subsequently withdrew their motion, following reassurances from Mustafa Kemal and his supporters that the primary goal of the TGNA was to protect the sultan-caliph and that it would be unwise to abandon the office given its importance to the Islamic world.³⁴⁸ Reiterating that no one was against the Caliphate³⁴⁹ and that ‘our aims are one’,³⁵⁰ they argued that mentioning the

³⁴² ZC 20.1.1337: 329; Özbudun 1992: 37.

³⁴³ ZC 14.12.1336: 369; ZC 20.1.1337: 328.

³⁴⁴ ZC 14.12.1336: 371; Özbudun 1992: 37.

³⁴⁵ Özbudun 1992: 37.

³⁴⁶ Özbudun 1992: 21–23.

³⁴⁷ ZC 25.9.1336.

³⁴⁸ ZC 25.9.1336: 134–35.

³⁴⁹ ZC 25.9.1336: 134.

³⁵⁰ ZC 25.9.1336: 137.

Caliphate could be damaging during the independence struggle, whilst reasoning that the 1876 constitution (which was still in force) already contained the relevant articles. As a result, only an indirect reference was included in the final constitution at the end of the document.³⁵¹

1924 constitution

While the 1921 constitution had reflected a fudge of fundamental principles during a time of war, their resolution had become necessary following the declaration of the Turkish Republic on 29 October 1923. The secularisation reforms continued with the declaration of the Republic in 1923, which was followed by various reforms in the period 1923–1937 and a new constitution in 1924. The original 1924 constitution had featured Islam as the state religion after it was included explicitly for the first time within the *Teşkilat-ı Esasiye* (Article 2), together with the amendments on the declaration of the Republic in 1923. This enmeshment of the Republic and religious identity was reflected in the comments of one lawmaker, the prominent Turkish nationalist writer Mehmet Emin (Yurdakul) Bey, who excitedly declared that ‘today the Turkish nation has established at Ankara what Prophet Muhammed established fourteen centuries ago within the walls of Mecca’ which was followed by chants of ‘long live the Republic’ within the assembly.³⁵² Lawmakers emphasised that the adoption of Islam as the state religion had been a matter of explicitly stating the obvious, with the new amendments making the constitution more Islamic than previous constitutions, which were argued to have had un-Islamic elements (defined as support of the tyrannical sultanate).³⁵³ While both Article 2, declaring Islam the state religion, and Article 7, on sharia law (as Article 26), from the *Teşkilat-ı Esasiye* had been maintained in the subsequently adopted 1924 constitution³⁵⁴ with no discussion or opposition, in effect they had

³⁵¹ The additional article at the end of the document states that the TGNA will function in accordance with the parliamentary bylaw of 1920 (Nisab-i Muzakere). The first article of this bylaw establishes the TGNA’s role as meeting under conditions specified in articles of the law until the Caliphate and Sultanate, country and nation, are saved and the nation is freed (Özbudun 1992: 15, 26; see also Law 85 ZC 7.II.1337: 91).

³⁵² ZC 29.10.1339.

³⁵³ ZC 29.10.1339: 96–97; ZC 3.3.1340: 340.

³⁵⁴ Özbudun argues that the 1924 constitution was necessary because, despite the adoption of the 1921 constitution and subsequent amendments (in 1923–24), the 1876 constitution still in force had given rise to a legal oddity (Özbudun 2011: 6).

already been rendered practically meaningless by the prior introduction of three key reforms. The three secularisation laws adopted on 3 March 1924 included the unification of education (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat*, Article 430), the abolition of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations (*Şeriye ve Evkaf Vekaleti*, Article 429) and the abolition of the Caliphate (Article 431). These have indeed been regarded as an important turning point both within official historiography and for Islamist scholars and actors, who regard it as the break with the historical interaction of religion and state.³⁵⁵ The 1928 amendments could be seen in effect as the final steps of changes introduced since 1923, along with the adoption in 1926 of the Swiss civil code, which left no areas for implementation of sharia law.³⁵⁶ They were justified on the basis that they were in line with the legal practices of ‘contemporary civilisation’ in designating religion to individual consciences and protecting religion from being used by the state and politicians, whilst it was emphasised that this did not imply the irreligiosity of the state or the government.³⁵⁷ Laicism, alongside republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism and revolutionism (or reformism), comprised the CHP’s ‘six arrows’ that were incorporated in the constitution in 1937. Previously adopted within the CHP programme in 1931, the six arrows came to represent what was called Kemalism or Atatürkism in the 1930s, which formed ‘the basis for indoctrination in schools, the media, and the army’.³⁵⁸ The 1928 and 1937 amendments were adopted with minimal debate in a period in which all opposition had been successfully suppressed.³⁵⁹ The rationale for the amendments contended that the adoption of these principles were necessary in order to respond to the needs of the times, the desire to reflect the political programme of the state,³⁶⁰ to legally express the nation’s commitment to Atatürk’s principles³⁶¹ and to ‘not rest the state and nation’s administration in mystical and dogmatic principles’.³⁶² The discussions evinced an anti-clericalism, with lawmakers blaming the ulema for the ‘disasters’ that had befallen the Turks.³⁶³ This was the contention of Interior Minister Şükrü

³⁵⁵ Fırlı et al. 1999: xviii; Kara 2002: 178–79.

³⁵⁶ Özbudun 2012: 8–9.

³⁵⁷ TGNACC 6.4.1928.

³⁵⁸ Zürcher 2004: 128.

³⁵⁹ Özbudun 2012: 8–9.

³⁶⁰ ZC 5.11.1937: 49.

³⁶¹ ZC 5.2.1937: 60.

³⁶² ZC 5.2.1937: 60.

³⁶³ ZC 5.2.1937: 60.

Kaya, who declared that, ‘since we are determinists in history, and since we are pragmatic materialists in execution, then we have to make our own laws only this will save the material state of the country. The development of the Turks’ clean morality will help their spiritual state. This is why we declared our laicism first. We do not intervene in individuals’ freedom of conscience or freedom to belong to any religion. What we want is freedom, what we mean by laicism is to avoid religion influencing or motivating country matters.’³⁶⁴

While these reforms have been portrayed as the unravelling of a secularisation agenda or a break with the Ottoman past, such a narrative tells a partial story for a number of reasons. Firstly, alongside anti-clerical positivist attitudes, a religious delineation of the nation remained predominant, as highlighted by the words of the same interior minister in 1937 that ‘no religion can find a more determined and devoted nation than Turks if Islam is alive in the world for last 10 centuries ... it owes it to the Turks that protected it with its arms, blood and heads ... our case is superior to these facts. We are saying that religion should remain in consciences and places of worship and not interfere in worldly matters a bad legacy of the Turks is that they joined some *tariqats* [sufi orders]. What we know is that for the Turk, the only correct road and path is nationalism based on positive sciences ... that is why if there are any bonds to these wrong paths amongst our citizens we have to erase them from their root with the decision of the TBMM [TGNA].’³⁶⁵ These two perspectives were therefore not necessarily mutually exclusive as also evidenced by the approaches of leading nationalist figures such as Ziya Gökalp, for whom Turkism, Islamism and Westernism went hand in hand. Contrary to this, the idea of Turkey as a ‘torn nation’, in the words of Huntington, has been prevalent in scholarly and popular approaches and to some extent a reading that retrospectively imposes subsequent polarisation into earlier periods. At least during the more open and pluralistic 1923 and 1924 parliaments, before the consolidation of the one-party regime,³⁶⁶ a significant or irreconcilable division

³⁶⁴ ZC 5.2.1937: 60.

³⁶⁵ ZC 5.2.1937: 61.

³⁶⁶ While the parliament was dominated in 1924 by Mustafa Kemal’s People’s Party following the 1923 elections, it had nevertheless remained relatively pluralistic and open at least until the declaration of martial law on 4 March 1925 (*Takrir-i Sükûn*), following the Sheikh Said rebellion. Following this the regime effectively became an authoritarian one-party dictatorship. See Demirel 2013: 59; Zürcher 2004: 169–76.

is not clearly evident in constitutional debates. Özbudun argues that it was not possible to observe during the 1924 constitutional debates the radical/republican–conservative/liberal division that crystallised a couple of months after the adoption of the new constitution.³⁶⁷ Significantly, around 30% of the assembly during the adoption of the 3 March 1924 laws had been members of the ulema.³⁶⁸ Yet, with the exception of the abolition of the caliphate, both of the first two changes generated minimal discussion in parliament.³⁶⁹ In contrast the 1924 constitutional debates show greater concern with and successful resistance against the expansion of presidential powers in the new constitution. This is likely to have been a reflection of the fact that framers regarded themselves fundamentally as the Muslim legislators of a Sunni Muslim (Turkish) *millet*, with articles relating to religion and state generating comparatively less discussion than those relating to presidential or parliamentary powers. Equally significantly, the bills for the abolition of the Caliphate and Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations were proposed by members of the ulema, Shaikh Saffet Efendi and Halil Hulki Efendi,³⁷⁰ whose arguments ran that the caliphate was not required by Islam and that other schools of Sunni Islam did not recognise the Caliphate of the Hanefi Sunni Ottoman Empire.

Secondly, various scholars have noted that the secularisation reforms had showed marked continuity, rather than a break, with, especially, the policies of the CUP period, including Zürcher and Deringil, in particular, have argued that the intellectual roots of the early Republican reforms can be traced to the modernisation efforts of the late Ottoman era. Equally, it is of crucial importance to trace and understand the context in which the principle of laicism arose and was interpreted and conceptualised by nation-state builders during the late Ottoman period. For instance, the first explicit discussion and defence of the principle of laicism can be traced to Ali Suavi, considered an early Turkist and Islamist, and, importantly, a prominent member of the intellectuals forming the New Ottoman society/movement established in 1865 to push for constitutional government

³⁶⁷ Özbudun 2012: 6.

³⁶⁸ Fırlı et al. 1999: xviii.

³⁶⁹ For the proposal see ZC 3.3.1340: 21; for discussions, ZC 3.3.1340: 23–26.

³⁷⁰ Altunya 2009: 13.

(based on Islam).³⁷¹ The matter of laicism and women's rights was also increasingly debated within the public realm during the second constitutional period.³⁷² Over this period, the principle of laicism had begun to emerge as a means to both ensure unity of the Empire and prevent western imperial penetration on behalf of the various non-Muslim communities. Crucially, therefore, the debate over the secularisation of law was fundamentally tied to the national question. For the Ottoman authorities and founders of the Republic, the status of non-Muslims within the Islamic Empire was used as a pretext for imperial penetration and the undermining of the sovereignty of the state, particularly as evidenced by the expanding capitulations regime of privileges. Following the independence war and during the Conference of Lausanne in 1922–23, preceding the declaration of the Turkish Republic, the status of non-Muslims and capitulations had been a key sticking point amongst the imperial powers and the representatives of the nascent nation-state. The lifting of the capitulations regime could be secured and further future intervention on behalf of non-Muslims prevented if the equality of non-Muslims under secular laws could be granted.³⁷³ In other words, laicism had come to be regarded as essential to eliminating the privileges of the non-Muslims. Consequently, the promise of the adoption of a secular civil code had been given in 1923 during the Lausanne negotiations in order to avoid the continuation of privileges for non-Muslims (in the manner of capitulations) on the basis that they were not protected under sharia law, which was still in force.³⁷⁴ Reflecting this, the rationale for the adoption of the 1926 civil code stated that the acceptance of the law was a necessity for 'national sovereignty ... Because if laws are based on religion, in a state that is required to adopt religious freedom, we will have to make separate laws for its various subjects. This state of affairs is against political, social and national unity necessary for civilised states.'³⁷⁵ In addition, the establishment of the PRA (discussed in Chapter 5) suggested that laicism was just as much about concern with the Sunni Muslim majority and the constitution of its boundaries.

³⁷¹ Bozkurt 2000: 54; see also Tunçay 2005.

³⁷² Bozkurt 2000: 54.

³⁷³ Bozkurt 2000; Akyol 1998.

³⁷⁴ Aktar 2000: 109–10; Bozkurt 2000; Akyol 1998.

³⁷⁵ Aktar 2000: 111; Bozkurt 2000.

Thirdly, the over-emphasis on ideological or identity-based conflict (e.g. secularism vs. Islam) in Turkish historiography has facilitated the tendency to neglect power struggles underlying constitutional developments. In this vein, contrary to the narrative of the abolition of the caliphate reflecting the unfolding of a modernisation programme,³⁷⁶ historians have also pointed to fears of the nationalist government that saw the caliph as an alternative centre of power and opposition.³⁷⁷ In this vein, Zürcher has argued that anti-republican feeling had reflected both the concern for the caliphate's future and attachment to the dynasty, as well as views that regarded the caliph as the only counterweight to the growing dominance of Mustafa Kemal.³⁷⁸ These arguments are partly based on the version of events that General Kâzım Karabekir related in his memoirs, detailing that the matter of the caliphate reflected more a concern with Mustafa Kemal's consolidation of power.³⁷⁹ Another historian, Koçak, has suggested that disagreement between different factions during the early one-party period related to the details of policies rather than ideological splits. In particular, Koçak argues that, contrary to allegations made by the regime, the leader of the opposition Rauf Orbay, who had protested the manner of the declaration of the Republic and the abolition of the Caliphate (and had later established the first opposition party, the Progressive Republican Party), had shared its ideology.³⁸⁰ Aside from the domestic struggles, however, as the historian Edward Mead Earle observed in 1925, 'the association of the Caliphate with the internationalism of Islam was deemed inconsistent with the independence of a purely nationalist program; support of the Caliphate by reactionaries caused fear that traitors might use the prestige of the office for the promotion of counter-revolution'.³⁸¹ Reflecting these concerns during the debates on the Caliphate, lawmakers argued that the institution constituted a danger for Turkey both externally and internally. They noted the contradictions involved with declaring a Republic and national sovereignty while being tied to the

³⁷⁶ Berkes 1964; Rustow 1973.

³⁷⁷ Tunçay 2005; Zürcher 2004: 166–67.

³⁷⁸ Zürcher 2004; 166–67.

³⁷⁹ Karabekir's allegation that Mustafa Kemal wanted to become caliph has tended to be dismissed given Kemal's long-standing stance on the matter. See Mumcu 1990; Atay 2000.

³⁸⁰ Koçak 2011.

³⁸¹ Earle 1925; according to Tunçay, the abolition of the caliphate also related to the existence of the Alevi (Tunçay 2005: 216).

(transnational) institution of the Caliphate, which was seen to have been unsuccessful in uniting Muslims.³⁸²

Within the parliamentary debates on the abolition of the Caliphate, both sides argued from the premise that Islamic government was already embodied in the TGNA as the representative of the Muslim community of the land³⁸³ and that ‘Islam is already a part of the spirit of the 300 members of the great assembly’.³⁸⁴ This view was held by Tunali Hilmi Bey, part of the ‘first group’ close to Mustafa Kemal, who argued that ‘it is not the caliphate that is being abolished. The office of the caliphate is being abolished. Whereas the caliphate is already in existence friends. The imamate and the caliphate is here.’³⁸⁵ The proponent of the bill, Shaikh Sahvet Efendi, a member of the ulema, emphasised that the Republican administration’s fundamental and primary duty was the protection of the rule of the Islamic religion,³⁸⁶ whilst another lawmaker maintained that ‘the caliphate is not separate from government’³⁸⁷ and that, if they did not abolish the Caliphate, it would over time turn into a sultanate because ‘in history there is no caliphate without a government’.³⁸⁸ There were only two challenges in the discussions of the abolition of the Caliphate, which probably partly reflected the fact that Mustafa Kemal had already undertaken manoeuvres to ensure that the bill passed through by curbing opposition participation.³⁸⁹ Independent lawmaker Zeki Bey protested that, since the parliament was elected on the basis that it would protect the Caliphate and Ottoman dynasty, new elections were necessary to make such a momentous change.³⁹⁰ The second opponent, People’s Party member Halit Bey, questioned whether retaining the caliphate was really the threat that had been presented,³⁹¹ arguing that it had been useful in bringing Muslims together and should be maintained, at least as represented (symbolically) within the body of the

³⁸² ZC 3.3.1340; ZC 3.3.1340: 28.

³⁸³ ZC 3.3.1340: 28.

³⁸⁴ ZC 3.3.1340: 37.

³⁸⁵ ZC 3.3.1340: 34.

³⁸⁶ ZC 3.3.1340: 34.

³⁸⁷ ZC 3.3.1340: 33.

³⁸⁸ ZC 3.3.1340: 33.

³⁸⁹ Demirel 2013: 66–67.

³⁹⁰ ZC 3.3.1340: 32.

³⁹¹ ZC 3.3.1340: 35.

TGNA, rather than declared abolished.³⁹² This was indeed reflected in the language of the final article, which stated that the caliphate was immanent within the Republic itself, and that it was the office of the Caliphate that would be abolished instead.³⁹³ In terms of wider public reaction, the sociologist Tayfun Atay has noted that there was no significant resistance following the abolition of the caliphate and that it is questionable whether the Sheik Said rebellion a year later was related to this or to nascent Kurdish nationalist sentiment.³⁹⁴

1961 constitution

The 1961 constitutional debates suggests evolving and more diverse approaches to the principle of laicism. Prepared following the 1960 military coup, the 1961 constitution was drafted by a Constituent Assembly composed of the National Unity Committee (*Milli Birlik Komitesi*, NUC) comprising the military junta leaders and the partially indirectly elected Assembly of Representatives, which was largely dominated by the CHP or its sympathisers. The abolished DP (owing to the experiences under DP government in the 1950s) had no representation.³⁹⁵ The 1961 constitution is widely regarded as the beginning of the establishment of a tutelary system with the military at the helm.³⁹⁶ Despite the military's involvement and lack of a (democratic) representative element, there was nevertheless active debate and, significantly, in contrast to other periods of constitution-making, representation of minority communities.³⁹⁷

The principle of laicism in the 1961 draft constitutional proposal was defended in similar terms to those employed when it was first adopted in 1937, stating that 'the Turkish Republic is laic; it rejects the interference of religion in state matters and influence of irrational sources on law. Without doubt this does not mean that religion is denied but that religion is left to individuals' conscience.'³⁹⁸ However,

³⁹² ZC 3.3.1340: 36.

³⁹³ ZC 3.3.1340.

³⁹⁴ Atay 2000: 226–27.

³⁹⁵ For further detail on the make-up of the assembly see Özbudun 2011: 10.

³⁹⁶ See, for example, Parla 2007.

³⁹⁷ The period 1946–1960 was an exception in Republican history given the involvement of members of minority communities in politics (Cop 25 April 2011).

³⁹⁸ TD 30.3.1961: 35.

the debates suggest that the 1961 framers were also seeking or attempting a reinterpretation of laicism. For instance, members of the assembly made frequent requests for greater clarification of the principle, while numerous speeches attempting to define laicism were made, describing it as non-interference of religion in state matters or separation of religion and state,³⁹⁹ or as encapsulating the principle of freedom of conscience and worship⁴⁰⁰ while insisting there was a need to avoid ‘unfortunate misunderstandings’ that presented laicism as ‘irreligiosity’⁴⁰¹ or being an ‘enemy of religion’.⁴⁰² The framers’ particular focus on the exploitation of religion reflected in part the accusations and perceptions that the DP government during the 1950s exploited religious sentiment to bolster its power prior to being militarily toppled in 1960. It is this concern with the utilisation of religion by alternative centres of power that appears to have underpinned the insistence of framers on the particularity of Turkey, in contrast to the ‘West’, and the necessity of state control over religion to prevent religion from taking over the state or organising itself outside of the state.⁴⁰³ Conversely, the relative plurality of approaches was highlighted by some members, who argued that the ‘nature’ of the Turkish nation required the state to ‘help religious affairs and revitalise it’,⁴⁰⁴ whilst others objected to the state control of religion through the PRA maintain that the state should be un-involved in religion.⁴⁰⁵ Yet others posited that the state should be equal or neutral in the provision of religious services for both the majority and minority.⁴⁰⁶ Similarly, anti-majoritarian impulses could be observed in the debates over religious education. In particular, a clause on the state’s involvement in providing religious education (in Article 19) was rejected by two⁴⁰⁷ dissenters amongst the ten members of the original Istanbul University Committee that prepared the first draft of the constitution, who protested that the provision of such services, even if to the majority religious group, was contrary to laicism and

³⁹⁹ Hermine Kalüstyán and Seyfi Öztürk in Öztürk 1966b: 983, 1359.

⁴⁰⁰ Öztürk 1966b: 1376–77, 1380–87.

⁴⁰¹ For examples, see Öztürk 1966a: 679; 778–779; Öztürk 1966b: 1357–1358.

⁴⁰² Kasim Gülek in Öztürk 1966a: 748; Turhan Feyzioglu in Öztürk 1966b: 1405.

⁴⁰³ Nurettin Ardiçoğlu in Öztürk 1966a: 1395. Tarik Zafer Tunaya, who was involved in the preparation of the 1961 constitution, also argued that religion in Turkey is different from that in the West and, if left free, and given a largely uneducated public, would become a political force leading to a theocratic state (Albayrak 1979: 300).

⁴⁰⁴ Abdülhadi Toplu in Öztürk 1966b: 1346.

⁴⁰⁵ Öztürk 1966a: 721; Öztürk 1966b: 1346–49, 1410–11.

⁴⁰⁶ Öztürk 1966b: 1350, 1365.

⁴⁰⁷ Professors İlhan Arsel and Bahri Savcı.

democracy.⁴⁰⁸ Despite the overwhelming majority of opinion on the necessity of state involvement in religion to avoid political exploitation,⁴⁰⁹ such voices were nevertheless influential, precipitating the removal of the clause on state-run religious education from Article 19 by the Constitution Commission. The rejection of the clause on religious education at the same time as minimal discussion of the PRA (see Chapter 5), often defended by assembly members owing to Turkey's 'particularity',⁴¹⁰ may have reflected the wishes of the junta leaders, who regarded the institution as a means of maintaining religion under state auspices.⁴¹¹

Such perspectives can be observed in the statement made by Committee member Muammer Aksoy: 'A state cannot have a religion. Only individual humans have religion ... However thinking of the constitutions in our country, we have witnessed people who have tried to define laicism more widely and dangerously as the state coming under religion's tutelage ... Without a doubt laicism is not to be without religion however, there will be negative not positive results if we accept 100% the concept of laicism as in the West which has had different social and political development and conditions. In the West, the separation of religion and state is enough to ensure laicism. However, for us this can never ensure our purpose. If religion becomes organised outside of the state... ... religion will become a political power and from time to time it has done so ... the public's lack of awareness can be exploited to reach the goal of a theocratic state ... this is the reason we do not find suitable for our country the type of laicism in Europe where it means the separation of religion and state or rather no control of religion by the state ... Those who defend laicism are never those that belittle religion or unbelievers ... amongst those that defend laicism there are those that committed to their religion and Allah.'⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁸ Öztürk 1966a: 87–88; also see, in a separate opposition report, Dr Lütfi Duran's opposition; Öztürk 1966a: 120–21.

⁴⁰⁹ Öztürk 1966a: 748, 768; Öztürk 1966b: 1362.

⁴¹⁰ See above for justifications used by members for state control of religion. Also see Öztürk 1966b: 1396, 1438–39.

⁴¹¹ See comments by Minister Hayri Mumcuoğlu in the minutes of the 1960–1961 military government; Koçak 2010.

⁴¹² Committee Speaker Muammer Aksoy in Öztürk 1966b: 1386.

1982 constitution

In contrast to the diversity of interpretations seen during the 1961 constitutional debates, the 1982 debates on laicism were more in keeping with the focus on the Muslim–Turkish majority of the earlier periods. This partly reflected the less representative (e.g. no minority representatives) bicameral Constituent Assembly⁴¹³ that prepared the constitution during a period of direct military rule (1980–83). The 1980 military coup is commonly regarded as marking a turning point in the history of the Republic in terms of the adoption of the TIS and the prorogation of religion by the state.⁴¹⁴ It may appear puzzling, therefore, that, while maintaining the article on laicism, the 1982 constitution also introduced its irrevocability for the first time and adopted a more expressive preamble, declaring: ‘laicism requires that sacred religious feelings should never interfere in state matters and politics’.⁴¹⁵ Yet, compared to the 1961 constitutional debates on the article on laicism, there was little focus by Assembly members on trying to identify the bounds of the state vis-à-vis religion but rather a shift towards its interpretation as being compatible with religion, with many reiterating that laicism did not mean ‘irreligiosity’⁴¹⁶ (*‘dinsizlik’*; to be without religion) or being an ‘infidel’.⁴¹⁷ For instance, this was evident in the statement made by a member of the Constitution Committee that ‘the most important principle Atatürk introduced with regards to religion was laicism. While some either intentionally or unknowingly misinterpret it, laicism has never meant irreligiosity. Laicism means for religion not to interfere in state affairs or politics. Religious education and teaching are never against laicism. We have to learn our religion truthfully, so that bad intentioned religious men do not shake our commitment to the principle of laicism and steer them away from being a Muslim.’⁴¹⁸ Similarly, another member contended that if laicism was explained clearly people would see that it was not against the Islamic religion or

⁴¹³ With the NSC comprising one chamber, the second chamber, the civilian Consultative Assembly, was composed purely of NSC-appointed members.

⁴¹⁴ Sakallıoğlu 1996; Yavuz 2003; Oran 1999.

⁴¹⁵ DM 15 September 1982.

⁴¹⁶ See Prof. Dr Feyzi Feyzioğlu in DM 15.9.1981; Nedim Bilgiç in DM 9.8.1982; İsa Vardal Aynı in DM 9.8.1982; 250; Feyzi Feyzioğlu in DM 12.8.1982: 519; Bekir Tünayın in DM 1.9.1982: 289; Turhan Güven in DM 4.8.1982: 40; Doğan Gürbüz in DM 1.9.1982: 273.

⁴¹⁷ DM 12.8.1982: 504.

⁴¹⁸ İhsan Göksel in DM 1.9.1982: 280. Also see the proposal for the adoption of compulsory religious education (DM 15 September 1982: 16).

against the values of the ‘Muslim Turk’.⁴¹⁹ Numerous members elaborated that the Turks were the saviours of Islam, with many positing that laicism protected religion,⁴²⁰ declaring that ‘the principle of laicism has been well reconciled with the Islamic religion for years in this country’.⁴²¹ It is possible to argue that these constitutional framers may have regarded laicism as involving both ‘private’ religiosity alongside restriction of religious authority or ‘public secularity’.⁴²² Yet dynamics such as the absorption and subsequent expansion over time of the role of the ulema, as actors comprising the state (see Chapter 5 and 6), suggest a more complex relationship between state-society and religion than is not fully captured by designations such as private and public secularism.

Summary

The above analysis traces the evolving approaches to the principle of laicism and the role of religion within Turkey’s constitutional history, drawing attention to underlying power struggles and the specific dynamics of nation-building. It highlights the formative years of the Republic as a critical juncture owing to the fluidity and change in terms of institutional choices, while noting the levels of continuity in terms of the vision of the community, owing to the high levels of social closure, which was crucially influential in later periods. This contrasts with analyses that portray laicism as a fixed and timeless principle and the approach to religion as determined by the unravelling of a secularisation plan that had shaped political life since the establishment of the Republic. As Tunçay has noted, laicism has never been regarded as an anti-religious stance by statesmen.⁴²³ What is common to all periods is the engagement and concern with the majority religion (also highlighted by the establishment of the PRA, discussed in Chapter 5) and the interpretation of laicism in relation to the majority religion. The concerns raised for ensuring neutrality towards minorities and majorities in 1961 did not signal a pluralistic turn in the interpretation of laicism but reflected efforts to prevent

⁴¹⁹ DM 1.9.1982: 273.

⁴²⁰ Turhan Güven in DM 4.8.1982: 40; Abdullah Pulat Gözübüyük in DM 1.9.1982: 294; PRA is there to protect religion, says Mehmet Hazer in DM 1.9.1982: 301.

⁴²¹ İbrahim Göktepe in DM 1.9.1982: 293.

⁴²² Bruce 1998.

⁴²³ Tunçay 2005.

monopolisation of power by one faction of the political/ruling class, the toppled DP party. Equally, despite being the most expressive in terms of laicism, the 1982 constitutional drafters interpreted the article chiefly as meaning a natural partiality towards what they conceptualised as the Muslim majority Turkish nation. In addition, compared to constitution writing in the single-party era, constitutional framers were significantly more focused on the matter of religion and state and the article on laicism article presented a more controversial and significant focus of debate during the 1961 and 1982 constitution-making periods. This reflected not only evolving interpretations of the principle of laicism but also its increasing relation to a system of tutelage following the 1961 military coup, with interventions justified on the basis of protecting the characteristics of the state as defined by the irrevocable articles. In sum, it is argued that a static approach to the principle of laicism facilitates the risk of retrospectively imposing current conflicts and polarisation on the early Republic.

3.3.2 Minorities and religious majoritarianism

Having traced the evolving interpretations of the principle of laicism and the underpinning power struggles, this section will trace approaches to minorities by constitutional framers. I identify the ways in which the project of secularisation also involved the demarcation of community boundaries and the consequent majoritisation of a ‘core’ ethnic group,⁴²⁴ and hence how it reflected the prevalent forms of social closure. That the project of secularism also involves a process of delineation of majority religious identity in the Turkish context is highlighted by the words of Ahmet Cevdet Aydın, a member of the 1961 Assembly of Representatives who posited that ‘laicism is the separation of religion and state ... a laic state is a state that is neutral towards members of various religions and denominations. Our constitution has accepted laicism. However, we are a state where the population is 99% Muslim ... Our constitution, according to its own view has accepted the system where from an administrative point of view, a system

⁴²⁴ Kaufmann & Haklai 2008.

of religion bound to the state. This is why there is the Religious Affairs Presidency within the state organisation.’⁴²⁵

1921 and 1924 constitutions

The early constitutional drafting periods demonstrated a clear concern with the creation of and focus on a Sunni Muslim (Turkish) majority, reflecting the dynamics of nation-building, the Ottoman legacy and post-war demographics. Just as there had been an appeal to unity on a religious basis during the independence struggle, the drafters of the 1921 and 1924 constitutions conceptualised their roles as the representatives of the remaining Muslim majority, which was regarded as forming the social base of the nascent nation-state. Reflecting this, an explicit reference to the ‘Islamic majority’ was inserted into the 1921 parliamentary declaration outlining the duties of the TGNA as ensuring the life and freedom of those within the national boundaries.⁴²⁶ Likewise, the constitutional debates clearly suggest that, despite differences of opinion concerning the adoption of popular sovereignty and the remit of sharia law, lawmakers were united in perceiving the TGNA as the embodiment and representative of the Muslim community.⁴²⁷ Consequently, the approach towards non-Muslim minorities was dismissive⁴²⁸ and exclusionary, as indicated by the comments of one member of the Constitution Committee, Mahmut Esat (Bozkurt) Bey,⁴²⁹ who declared that the fears relating to Christians entering parliament were misplaced because Muslims constituted the majority and Christians had lost their rights since ‘they resigned from citizenship owing to their betrayal [during the late Ottoman Empire]’.⁴³⁰

1961 constitution

The reference to the Muslim majority was also a persistent theme of subsequent periods of constitution writing. This can be observed in the debates over the

⁴²⁵ Cevdet Aydin in Öztürk 1966b: 1350–1351.

⁴²⁶ Özbudun 1992: 22.

⁴²⁷ See, for example, ZC 18.11.1336: 205; Özbudun 1992: 37.

⁴²⁸ ZC 30.11.1336: 156.

⁴²⁹ Bozkurt later served as Justice Minister and is regarded as a prominent Turkish nationalist owing to his statements on the superiority of the Turkish race.

⁴³⁰ ZC 7.11.1336: 43.

constitutional articles on religious freedom and the perceptions of lawmakers on the rights of the majority and minority religions. More specifically, it can be clearly seen that, in interpreting religious freedom, constitutional framers were more concerned with the majority religion than in ensuring equal protection of rights and freedoms for minorities. Various members in the 1961 Assembly, for instance, argued for greater religious freedom and respect for the ‘99.5%’⁴³¹ or ‘90%’⁴³² Muslim majority, or ‘our religion’,⁴³³ while contending that full religious freedom required the freedom to organise and carry out religious education (whereas the constitution guarantees only belief and worship).⁴³⁴ Yet two factors distinguished the 1961 constitution-making process from other periods: the inclusion of non-Muslim members in the Assembly, and the common experience of DP rule in the 1950s that had precipitated a desire to introduce checks on majoritarianism, but did not necessarily reflect a pluralistic approach (see Chapter 4). Consequently, the 1961 constitutional process is the only example in which representatives with non-Sunni or non-Muslim roots featured in the Assembly and were able to voice their request for equal rights and religious freedom⁴³⁵ whilst the Constitution Committee members highlighted the importance of equality in the treatment of both minorities and majorities.⁴³⁶ These concerns were reflected by Hikmet Kümbetlioglu, a representative of the judiciary in the Assembly, who opined that it was contrary to laicism to make other religions and denominations fund (through taxes) the PRA, which represented only one denomination of one religion (Islam);⁴³⁷ ‘in this country where 99% of the population are Muslim, there has to be the same respect for the beliefs of the members of the 1%’.⁴³⁸ Because of similar concerns, a draft proposal referring to the provision of religious education by the state was revised within the final version of the constitution, designating it as a matter of individual choice: ‘religious education and teaching shall be subject to the individual’s own

⁴³¹ Kadircan Kafli in Öztürk 1966b: 1404.

⁴³² Öztürk 1966b: 1345.

⁴³³ Öztürk 1966b: 1345.

⁴³⁴ Mehmet Altinsoy in Öztürk 1966b: 1354; Abdülhadi Toplu in Öztürk 1966b: 1345.

⁴³⁵ For the Alevis see Öztürk 1966b: 1360–1362; for the Greeks see Öztürk 1966b: 1260–1263; another member, Hermine Kalüstyán, also requested religious rights for non-Muslims and spoke of the difficulties they faced; Öztürk 1966b: 983–984.

⁴³⁶ A concern for other religions and denominations (*mezhep*) vis-à-vis the PRA was also voiced by Kasım Gülek. See Öztürk 1966a: 748.

⁴³⁷ Öztürk 1966a: 721.

⁴³⁸ Öztürk 1966b: 1365.

will and volition, and in the case of minors, to their legally appointed guardians'.⁴³⁹ Still, religious education was supported and justified by most members that spoke on the basis of the Muslim majority, the '95%'⁴⁴⁰/'99% Muslim' character of the Turkish nation,⁴⁴¹ alongside what they contended to be a need to teach true and correct religion to enlighten the population.⁴⁴² Somewhat telling with regard to the attitudes towards minorities were the comments by Constitution Committee speaker Muammer Aksoy, who, in responding to the protests over the unequal treatment of minorities, rejected the existence of discrimination, referring to 'mistakes in implementation' and 'precautionary measures' against minorities owing to 'painful' past experiences impacted by 'external players'⁴⁴³ – thus confirming systemic suspicion of non-Muslims.

1982 constitution

Compared with 1961, the 1982 constitutional debates demonstrated the augmentation of religious majoritarianism, with framers focused largely on the Sunni Muslim–Turkish majority and minimal reference made to other denominations or religions, and was therefore more in keeping with earlier periods of constitution-making. One of the most explicit markers of religious majoritarianism was the introduction of compulsory religious education – essentially the propagation of Sunni Islam – as part of the article on the freedom of religion and conscience.⁴⁴⁴ Despite the fact that compulsory religious education had already been announced in a speech on 23 June 1981 by the leader of the 1980 junta regime General Kenan Evren, the clause was one of the items most discussed by the NSC and Consultative Assembly, with members overwhelmingly supportive (just two objections were raised). In 1982, as in 1961, there was a concern for

⁴³⁹ Translation from Balkan et al. 1962: 216.

⁴⁴⁰ Öztürk 1966b: 1351–52, 1364–65.

⁴⁴¹ Only a few members contradicted this line of reasoning. For example, Hifzi Veldet Velidedeoğlu argued that, while the state needs to provide religious education to combat 'ignorance', it will be able to maintain its laic character if it provides it for both the majority and the minority. See Öztürk 1966b: 1372–73. For supporters see Abdülhadi Toplu, Cevdet Aydın, Fehmi Alpaslan, Alaettin Ergönec, Rauf Gökçen, Nihat Reşat Belger, Salih Türkmen in Öztürk 1966b: 1346–47, 1350–52, 1358, 1364–65, 1378–79.

⁴⁴² Bahri Savcı says 'the Islamic religion that is steeped in superstition' (Öztürk 1966b: 1367–1372).

⁴⁴³ Öztürk 1966b: 1263–1264.

⁴⁴⁴ Article 24, which is otherwise largely based on Article 12 of the previous 1961 constitution.

teaching ‘correct religion’, whereby religious education was conceived as being necessary to preventing the ‘exploitation’ of religion or the influence of ‘reactionary forces’.⁴⁴⁵ However, in 1982 religious education was also conceptualised and highlighted as being essential for the attainment of national unity and solidarity, providing an ‘antidote’ or ‘national cement’ against ‘anarchy’, ‘communism’, ‘reaction’ and ‘nationally divisive currents’.⁴⁴⁶ A common sentiment voiced was the desire to raise an anti-materialist ‘faithful’ [*imanlı*] generation.⁴⁴⁷ As one member stated, ‘let’s remember what preceded 12 September. It came about because of irreligiosity in high schools and universities which underpins anarchy.’⁴⁴⁸ Similarly, members argued that it was the nation, conceived as ‘90%’/‘95%’/‘99%’ majority Muslim, that wanted and desired religious education.⁴⁴⁹

Compulsory religious education, justified by reference to the ‘Muslim majority’, sat uncomfortably with part of Article 24 on freedom of religion and conscience. Nonetheless, the framers of the 1982 constitution were concerned only with the freedom of the Sunni Muslim–Turkish majority and its needs⁴⁵⁰ rather than with neutrality or the protection of minority religions. This sentiment was pithily summarised by the declaration of one member of the Assembly that ‘the vast majority of the Turkish nation is Muslim. Given this, it is necessary for the Islamic religion should be the focus of freedom of religion and conscience.’⁴⁵¹ Based on similar reasoning, many members also objected to Article 24 by arguing that it gave

⁴⁴⁵ For examples see: Turhan Guven in DM 4.8.1982: 41; DM 15 September 1982: 78; Mahmut Nedîm Bilgîç in DM 1.9.1982: 299; Feyzi Feyzioğlu in DM 12.8.1982: 519; Evliya Parlak in DM 4.8.1982: 116; Mehmet Velid Koran in DM 12.8.1982: 503; R. Adli Onmuş in DM 12.8.1982: 464; Nazmi Önder in DM 12.8.1982: 458; Mehmet Pamak in DM 10.8.1982: 294; Şadan Tuzcu in DM 10.8.1982: 328.

⁴⁴⁶ For examples see: Evliya Parlak in DM 5.8.1982: 116; DM 1.9.1982: 289; Fuat Yılmaz in DM 1.9.1982: 215; Nihat Kubilay in DM 1.9.1982: 287.

I. Doğan Gürbüz in DM 1.9.1982: 299; Mahmut Nedîm Bilgîç in DM 1.9.1982: 297; Mehmet Velid Koran in DM: 12.8.1982: 502–503; Beşir Hamitoğulları in DM 1.9.1982: 278.

⁴⁴⁷ Recai Dinçer in DM 12.8.1982: 478.

⁴⁴⁸ İ. Doğan Gürbüz in DM 1.9.1982: 299.

⁴⁴⁹ Bekir Sami Dağ in DM 9.8.1982: 265.

⁴⁵⁰ Mustafa Alpdündar in DM 1.9.1982: 295; Nedim Bilgîç in DM 9.8.1982: 266–67; Beşir Hamitoğulları in DM 1.9.1982: 292; A. Âvni Şahin in DM 10.8.1982: 346; M. Rahmî Karahasanoğlu in DM 11.8.1982: 388; Alâeddin Aksoy in DM 12.8.1982: 476; Fuat Yılmaz in DM 1.9.1982: 275; Nurettin Âyanoğlu in DM 1.9.1982: 277–278; Bekir Sami Dağ in DM 9.8.1982: 265; İbrahim Göktepe in DM 1.9.1982: 291.

⁴⁵¹ İ. Doğan Gürbüz in DM 1.9.1982: 273.

too much protection to non-believers,⁴⁵² with one member stating that the article ‘gives the impression as if this has not been prepared for the Turkish nation which is 99.14% Muslim ... the article that is claimed to be concerned with freedom of religion, but guarantees the freedom of action of those that are not religious rather than that of the religious’.⁴⁵³ It was to ‘please’ this ‘Muslim majority’ that some members called for the punishment of those offending religion:⁴⁵⁴ ‘the Turkish nation which is largely a Muslim majority and is sensitive to these matters, will be pleased to see a sentence like this in the constitution’.⁴⁵⁵ Compared with the 1961 constitutional framers, therefore, in 1982 there was a significantly more hostile and exclusionary approach towards minorities reminiscent of that of early constitutional periods. For instance, it is clear that the Constitution Committee regarded the expression of denominational differences (an implicit reference to Alevis) as constituting the grounds for the restriction of religious freedom.⁴⁵⁶ Additionally, a reference to the educational rights of minorities or even the word ‘minority’ was rejected by the assembly,⁴⁵⁷ with minorities, at best, tolerated: ‘we will not force anyone towards *our* [my emphasis] religion’.⁴⁵⁸ In sum, the approach of the 1982 constitutional drafters towards religious freedom can be summarised in the sentence of one member: ‘thank God, we live in a country that is 99.9% Muslim’.⁴⁵⁹

Summary

Throughout Turkish constitution-making history, the constitutional framers were concerned with delineating the interests of the Muslim majority that reflected the prevalent forms of social closure during nation-state building efforts, which was

⁴⁵² Turhan Güven in DM 4.8.1982: 41; A. Asim İğneciler in DM 11.8.1982: 446; A. Âvni Şahin in DM 10.8.1982: 346.

⁴⁵³ Mehmet Pamak in DM 10.8.1982: 294.

⁴⁵⁴ Halil İbrahim in DM 1.9.1982: 277–78; Nurettin Âyanoğlu in DM 1.9.1982: 272–73.

⁴⁵⁵ Nurettin Âyanoğlu in DM 1.9.1982: 272–73.

⁴⁵⁶ DM 15 September 1982: 11.

⁴⁵⁷ In response, the Constitution Committee stated that they included the word merely ‘not to make anyone uncomfortable and to satisfy them with this sentence even though this country is 99% Muslim’ (Sener Akyol in DM 1.9.1982): 284. See also Mustafa Alpdündar in DM 1.9.1982: 295; M. Fevzi Uyguner states that there is no such thing as a minority; ‘everyone is a Turk’ (DM 1.9.1982: 275). Beşir Hamitoğulları objects to the word ‘minority’, stating that ‘in Atatürk’s Turkey there is no minority, there are citizens’ (DM 1.9.1982: 292).

⁴⁵⁸ Sener Akyol in DM 1.9.1982: 283.

⁴⁵⁹ Mustafa Alpdündar in DM 1.9.1982: 295.

important in embedding religious majoritarianism. The 1921, 1924 and 1982 constitutional framers in particular were explicitly exclusionary towards ethnic and religious minorities. It is in this sense that framers were involved in the majoritisation of what they defined as the core ethnic group, demarcating its privileged status and boundaries and institutionalising it. As a member of the 1961 Assembly declared, laicism has ensured the ‘sacredness’ of ‘our religion’.⁴⁶⁰ Likewise, a preoccupation with the religious freedoms of the Sunni majority could also be observed in the various constitutional amendments in the years following the 1982 constitution. In his study on the discourse of democratisation within the TGNA during the debates on the 1995 constitutional amendments, Doğanay has observed that the discourse on fundamental rights and freedoms referred predominantly to religion and was conceived ‘as exclusively connected to cultural rights of the Sunni-Muslim majority’.⁴⁶¹ Yet again, perhaps the only partial exception was in 1961, when the Assembly contained representatives of non-Muslim communities and where there was the common experience of the majoritarianism of the DP. This in turn highlights the importance of the context and experience within which constitution-making emerged and was conducted. Conversely, by the 2011–13 constitutional debates, greater division was apparent across the party divide. For instance, the AKP was concerned with lifting restrictions on religious freedom and maintaining compulsory religious education, again demonstrating ongoing concern with the Muslim majority, while the CHP and BDP displayed a pluralistic approach towards minorities and opposed compulsory religious education.

3.3.3 National identity and religion

The exploration of the constitutional debates offers a window into understanding how lawmakers and military authorities envisaged, constituted and reinterpreted national identity over time. Analyses of Turkish nationalism commonly differentiate between its ethnic and ‘civic’ forms.⁴⁶² Consequently, studies that have focused on its ethnic forms have pointed to discriminatory practices against

⁴⁶⁰ Öztürk 1966a: 668–69.

⁴⁶¹ Doğanay 2007: 398.

⁴⁶² Bora & Gültekingil 2003.

non-Muslims and non-Turks, while those that have emphasised its civic forms have highlighted legal definitions and constitutional principles in claiming the inclusivity of the concept of citizenship. Other scholars such as Çetinsaya and Parla, on the other hand, have also highlighted continuities between Turkish nationalism and Islam since the Ottoman era and the TIS of the post-1980 era.⁴⁶³ Similarly, Kehl-Bodrogi has argued that Turkish nationalism conceived the nation as an ‘ethnically and culturally homogenous unity. As nation was imagined as Turkish by “race” (ırk) and (Sunni) Islam by religion ... expressions of deviating collective identities, may they be ethnically or religiously determined, were regarded as threats to the nation’s unity and treated as separatism.’⁴⁶⁴ One can point to numerous examples of the constitutive role of religion, from the use of religion as a criterion in the exchange of populations with Greece in the 1920s to the discrimination against non-Muslims in the 1942 tax laws. Likewise, in his study of Turkish immigration policies, Kirişci has demonstrated that there has been a bias ‘in favour of people of “Turkish descent and culture” and then only as long as such persons were of Sunni-Hanefi background’.⁴⁶⁵ The focus here is on the ways in which religious majoritarianism became embedded in conceptions of national identity and citizenship as codified in Turkish constitutions and how these delineations evolved over time.

1921 and 1924 constitutions

The 1921 constitution, adopted during the independence struggle, made no reference to a particular national identity, reflecting the plurality of the movement at the time and the need to maintain unity. It was only following the declaration of the Republic in 1923, and as nation-building continued, that Turkish was adopted as the official language of the new state (Article 2),⁴⁶⁶ as had been the case with the 1876 Ottoman constitution. In seeking to constitute the nation through the introduction of a concept of ‘Turkish’ nation and citizenship, and nationalisation of the constitution, the subsequently adopted 1924 constitution therefore marked a

⁴⁶³ Çetinsaya 1999; Can & Bora 2004: 160.

⁴⁶⁴ Kehl-Bodrogi 2003: 64.

⁴⁶⁵ Kirişci 2000.

⁴⁶⁶ ZC 29.10.1339.

departure from the 1921 *Teşkilat-ı Esasiye*. Indeed, while the 1921 constitution had introduced the concept of national sovereignty, the 1924 constitution established the concept of the ‘Turkish nation’. The criteria of ‘Turkishness’ – such as the necessity of being a Turk to enter the public service or the requirement for members of parliament to speak Turkish – is stamped throughout the document. Compared to its complete absence from the 1921 constitution, there are altogether 19 references to ‘Turk’, ‘Turkish’ and ‘Turkishness’ in the 1924 constitution, alongside a significant focus by lawmakers on the need to ‘Turkify’ the language of the constitution away from Arabic.⁴⁶⁷

The conceptualisations of national identity as Sunni Muslim Turkish can be observed in the debates over the citizenship law (Article 88).⁴⁶⁸ Article 88 was essentially based on Article 8 of the Ottoman Constitution of 1876 and the Ottoman Nationality Law of 1869, both of which determine nationality on the grounds of either *jus soli* (right of soil, as including those born on the specified territory) or *jus sanguinis* (right of blood, as including children of subjects/nationals). The debates about Article 88 suggest that constitutional framers differentiated between what constituted the nation and what was comprised by citizenship, the demarcation of which was largely made on the basis of religion. For instance, within the initial proposal of Article 88 Turkish citizenship was delineated as follows: ‘all people in Turkey without distinction of race and religion are Turks’.⁴⁶⁹ A number of lawmakers objected to this, however, arguing that there was a need for a distinction between a Turkish national and a Turkish citizen.⁴⁷⁰ Consequently, Article 88 was revised to state that ‘all people in Turkey without distinction of race and religion are Turkish citizens’.⁴⁷¹ For the Turkish nationalist and writer Hamdullah Suphi (Tanrıöver) Bey, only those that had accepted Turkish culture fully and assimilated could be considered Turkish, and this did not include Greeks or Armenians; an Armenian could become a Turk only if he gave up his ‘Armenianness’, which included a different language, school and state.⁴⁷² A telling

⁴⁶⁷ ZC 9.3.1340.

⁴⁶⁸ Article 88: All people in Turkey without distinction of race and religion are Turkish citizens.

⁴⁶⁹ ZC 20.4.1340: 908.

⁴⁷⁰ ZC 20.4.1340: 908–911.

⁴⁷¹ Final Article 88: ‘Türkiye ahalisine din ve ırk farkı olmaksızın vatandaşlık itibariyle (Türk) ıtlak olunur.’

⁴⁷² ZC 20.4.1340: 909.

exposition on the nature of Turkish citizenship was offered by the Constitution Committee spokesperson during the 1924 constitution debates on citizenship: ‘our genuine citizens are those that are Muslim, of the Hanefi sect and speak Turkish ... there used to be the title of Ottoman which was inclusive. We are abolishing this title. In its place a Turkish Republic has come to exist. Not all of the individuals in this Turkish Republic are Turkish and Muslim. What are we going to do with them? There are Greeks, Armenians, Jews, there are all sorts of elements. Thankfully they are a minority. If we do not give the title of Turk to them what do we say? (noises ‘of Turkey’ [from the TGNA]).’⁴⁷³

What these debates suggest is that, despite the adoption of a putatively inclusive citizenship, for the constitutional framers religion remained a clear marker of what comprised a Turk. In addition, the constitutional drafters’ reference to the conditions of the Lausanne Treaty in obligating them to grant equal rights to non-Muslims,⁴⁷⁴ thereby restricting their ability to introduce a more exclusivist definition of Turkish citizenship, parallels the circumstances (e.g. capitulations, imperial pressures) preceding the introduction of a more inclusive definition of the Ottoman subject and the granting of equality to non-Muslims.

1961 constitution

The approaches to Turkish nationalism of the constitutional framers of the 1961 constitution differ to an extent from both the 1924 and 1982 constitutional framers, particularly with regards to the relationship to religion. The dilemma over whether the words ‘nationalism’ or ‘national’ should be included within the constitution resulted in one of the longest debates amongst constitution framers, whilst the most commonly repeated definition of Turkish nationalism was that it was not racism (or Turanism) or *ümmetçilik* (pan-Islamism, the unity of the Islamic community or *ummah*),⁴⁷⁵ ‘We are nationalists because we are not pan-Islamist, we are nationalist

⁴⁷³ ZC 20.4.1340: 910.

⁴⁷⁴ See the Treaty of Lausanne. Article 37 states: ‘The Turkish Government undertakes to assure full and complete protection of life and liberty to all inhabitants of Turkey without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race or religion.’

⁴⁷⁵ Muammer Aksoy in Öztürk 1966a: 688; Yıldız Ahmet, Özgünes Mehmet, Şemsettin Günaltay, Şevket Raşit Hatiboglu, Mucip Atakli, Suphi Karaman in Öztürk 1966b: 1032, 1080–1, 1065–8, 1081–82, 1085, 1107. Some members describe nationalism as ‘secular’. Sadettin Tokbey states that,

because we are not racist.’⁴⁷⁶ In this sense, while the importance of religion was not necessarily denied as a constitutive element of Turkish nationalism, the debates suggest efforts to distinguish between essentially Turkish Islam and transnationalist pan-Islamism. This can be observed in the attempts by numerous members of the Assembly to elaborate a historical account of the evolution of Turkish nationalism and the failure of pan-Islamism and Ottomanism to save the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁷⁷ ‘Albanian, Arab and Turk are all Muslim. Pan-Islamism lost its power. When we say Turkish nation it is the beginning of a completely new era. The Empire was wrecked. This country was established on the wreckage of the empire ... Atatürkist nationalism has tied individuals living in this country, has bound on language, history and fate regardless of their race. Consequently, our nationalism is not racism, it is cultural unity.’⁴⁷⁸ Nationalist Abdülhadi Toplu stated similarly that ‘since 1070 ... up to the Tanzimat, religion filled the inside of our society. All the sacrifices were made for being a Muslim and to remain Muslim ... the Ottoman Empire which was established over our motherland, maintained the ideal of Islam in its world view within its Ottomanism consciousness which started with the Tanzimat ... However, the 1912 Balkan war was the clear blow to this ideal and opened the eyes of our nation like an earthquake ... at the last point the real owners of this country also accepted the ideal of nationalism and embraced political Turkism.’⁴⁷⁹ Such sentiments were shared by the head of the NUC,⁴⁸⁰ who argued that ‘Islamism is the biggest element that ruined our nationalism. The Islamic creed made us forget our nationalism, due to ignorance our nation couldn’t have a Turkish spirit’⁴⁸¹ and that if you ask a citizen in Anatolia what they are, they will first say they are Muslim, not a Turk.⁴⁸² Conversely, other members of the Assembly also emphasised Turkish citizenship as being inclusive: ‘since the time

unlike theocratic states that are based on religious spirit, in a laic state this is based on nationalism; in Öztürk 1966b: 976. In addition, Emin Soysal claims that a nation is a united political society that shares the same history, language and traditions and that a Christian that goes to fight with him is also a Turk, in Öztürk 1966b: 1046–47; For Kasim Gülek, the Turks’ principle ever since Atatürk is that everyone who says they are of ‘this land’ is seen as a Turk and treated as a Turk, whatever their religion or denomination Öztürk 1966b: 1265.

⁴⁷⁶ Öztürk 1966b: 1028–29.

⁴⁷⁷ Öztürk 1966b: 1032, 1066–68, 1075.

⁴⁷⁸ Şemsettin Günaltay (former PM 1949–50) in Öztürk 1966b: 1032.

⁴⁷⁹ Abdülhadi Toplu in Öztürk 1966b: 979–80.

⁴⁸⁰ Sami Kucuk in Öztürk 1966b: 1082.

⁴⁸¹ Gürsel Cemal in Öztürk 1966b: 1086–87.

⁴⁸² Gürsel Cemal in Öztürk 1966b: 1079–80.

of Atatürk the principle of the Turk, has been to see as a Turk and treat as a Turk whoever says he is a Turk, and is a son of this soil and believes this ... We recognise equality of those belonging to another religion. As long as they remain committed to the country, sees himself as a Turk and sees the country's interests as his own interests.'⁴⁸³

1982 constitution

Reflecting the shift towards greater religious majoritarianism, the drafters of the 1982 constitution have more in common, in terms of their conceptualisation of national identity in religious terms, with the 1924 constitutional framers than with those of 1961.⁴⁸⁴ This approach is pithily summarised by one member of the Consultative Assembly (appointed by the NSC) in his statement that 'in Turkey there is only one society that is of Turkish origin ... Every Turk of Turkish origin is Muslim. The language of our Prophet is Arabic, and despite the fact that the Koran is Arabic, not all Arabs are Muslims. In contrast to this all those of Turkish origin are Muslims.'⁴⁸⁵ Indeed, nationalism was defined essentially as 'a political union of citizens committed to the nation, religion, culture and unity of ideals'⁴⁸⁶ and, as the right-wing nationalist (and later Islamist)⁴⁸⁷ member Mehmet Pamak declared, 'the Turkish language and our religion are the fundamentals of our national culture, our national life's main element, the fundamental base of our national unity and integrity'.⁴⁸⁸ Based on similar reasoning⁴⁸⁹ to that of the 1961 constitutional framers, Turkish nationalism was defined in opposition to *ümmetçilik*⁴⁹⁰ and to communism.⁴⁹¹ Drafters envisaged an explicit synthesis of

⁴⁸³ Kasım Gülek in Öztürk 1966b: 1265.

⁴⁸⁴ Fuat Yılmaz in DM 1.9.1982: 274.

⁴⁸⁵ Nuri Özgöker in DM 11.8.1982: 424.

⁴⁸⁶ Selçuk Kantarcioğlu in DM 5.8.1982: 125.

⁴⁸⁷ Pamak was active in the Nationalist Hearths as a student and later went on to establish the Conservative Society in 1983; subsequently he was one of the founders of the Islamist rights body Mazlum-Der.

⁴⁸⁸ Mehmet Pamak in DM 10.8.1982: 280.

⁴⁸⁹ It is argued that 'Ottomanism and pan-Islamist politics has for centuries made people forget Turkish nationalism': İhsan Göksel in DM 17.8.1982: 659.

⁴⁹⁰ Avdin Tuğ and Enis Muratoğlu in DM 6.8.1982: 147, 150; Fikrî Devrimsel in DM 9.8.1982: 198; Mehmet Pamak in DM 10.8.1982: 280; Abdülbaki Cebeci in DM 4.8.1982: 18.

⁴⁹¹ Selçuk Kantarcioğlu in DM 5.8.1982: 125.

Atatürkism and Islam:⁴⁹² ‘the reality is that the Turkish nation is a Muslim nation. The synthesis of Turkishness and Islam is the source of life of the unity and strength of our great nation. This source can never be neglected. The natural duties of the laic state therefore include servicing the needs of the nation that it has emerged from.’⁴⁹³ An outcome of these efforts was the subsequent adoption of what has been described as the TIS project, which had been developed by the Hearth of Enlightened (*Aydınlar Ocağı*, AO), a movement comprising anti-communist, rightist intellectuals (closely working with state actors), who aimed to unite the religious/conservative and radical/ultra-nationalist right.⁴⁹⁴ The National Culture report prepared by the SPO in 1983 is an exemplary document in terms of the TIS programme, with its vision of reorientating society around ‘the mosque, barracks and the family’, regarded as the three pillars of Turkish national culture that were undermined by ‘Westernisation’. Islam was defined by the report as the most important aspect of national culture within the context of a country characterised as ‘99.8%’ Muslim.⁴⁹⁵ The political crises of the preceding years and ‘regionalism’, identified as a by-product of democratisation, were outlined as damaging of national culture and integrity.⁴⁹⁶ In this manner, ‘national culture planning’ was embraced as a weapon against ideological movements.⁴⁹⁷ A comprehensive strategy of cultural engineering was proposed, including the creation of a ‘model human’⁴⁹⁸ and a pious (‘*dindar*’) Turkish nation through the expansion of religious education (including compulsory lessons) in schools, hospitals, prisons and workers’ associations, as well as the promotion of Islam by the PRA (for example, by teaching families how to provide religious education to their children) and the state public broadcasting organisations.⁴⁹⁹ The 1980 coup therefore was followed by considerable augmentation of religious majoritarianism of the state with the religious infrastructure significantly expanded.

⁴⁹² Beşir Hamitoğulları and Constitution Committee spokesperson Şener Akyol in DM 1.9.1982: 291, 295.

⁴⁹³ DM 1.9.1982: 300.

⁴⁹⁴ See Can & Bora 2004: 150–89; Taşkın 2007 for further details on the AO and its relation to the 1980 coup.

⁴⁹⁵ DPT 1983: 518.

⁴⁹⁶ DPT 1983: xxii.

⁴⁹⁷ DPT 1983: 23.

⁴⁹⁸ DPT 1983: 542.

⁴⁹⁹ DPT 1983: 143–59.

Summary

The constitutional debates on Turkish nationalism underline the deeply intertwined nature of religion and national identity, reflecting the Ottoman legacy and prevalent forms of social closure by the time of the establishment of the Republic. By 1924, the constitutional framers were addressing a predominantly Muslim population and regarded Islam as constitutive of the nascent Turkish nation. As the constitutional theorist Pitkin has observed, how ‘we are able to constitute ourselves is profoundly tied to how we are already constituted by our own distinctive history’.⁵⁰⁰ On the other hand, the increasing focus on Turkishness alongside attempts to reconcile or synthesise Turkish nationalism and Islam in 1961 and 1982 reflected as much a fear of the transnationalism of religion. During the 1960s Islamists in Turkey had started becoming influenced by movements in the broader Muslim world and questioning whether nationalism was an alien ideology⁵⁰¹ (see Chapter 8). For the constitutional framers, therefore, Turkish identity, while being deeply intertwined with Islam, had to be distinguished from the wider *ummah* or Islamic community. This demonstrated continuity with the debates in the late Ottoman Empire, in which the Turkish nationalists had increasingly seen pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism (Turanism) as insufficient and dangerous for securing national unity. This was also the conviction articulated by Mustafa Kemal in *Nutuk* in 1927 – that pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism have never been successful and that the rational choice suggested by history is the adoption of ‘national politics’.⁵⁰² A similar reasoning can be observed within the official military documents from the 1997 coup unearthed by the parliamentary commission investigating coups in 2012; there, pan-Islamists were emboldening Kurdish separatism.⁵⁰³ The concern with the nationalisation or Turkification of Islam is evidenced in the efforts by constitutional framers during 1961 and 1982 to elaborate on the role of Turks as the saviours and loyal carriers of Islam throughout history, whilst warning, through references to Ottoman history, that pan-Islamism was not enough to save the Empire or produce unity amongst Muslims.

⁵⁰⁰ Pitkin 1987: 169.

⁵⁰¹ Çetinsaya 1999: 371.

⁵⁰² Atatürk 1997 [1927]: 358.

⁵⁰³ DMAK 2 November 2012: 1120.

3.4 Rethinking ‘constitutional identity’

Jacobsohn has argued that ‘a constitution acquires an identity through experience. Its identity exists neither as a discrete object of invention or as a heavily encrusted essence that is embedded in a society’s culture and requires only to be discovered. Rather, identity emerges dialogically and represents a mixture of political aspirations and commitments that express both a nation’s past and the determination of those seeking in some ways to transcend that past.’⁵⁰⁴ Based on this, Jacobsohn posits that dissonance and contradiction play out within identifiable continuities of meaning, and, as such, maintains that the very ‘constitutional disharmony’ of constitutions is crucial to the development of constitutional identity.⁵⁰⁵ The above analysis has suggested that the manner in which constitutional drafters interpret even fundamental principles are fluid, context-specific and reflective of power struggles. In the Turkish context, the 1928 and 1937 amendments and to some extent the 1961 constitution appear to suggest different visions of constitutional identity than pertained in 1921, 1924 and 1982. However, in line with the notion of bounded fluidity,⁵⁰⁶ degrees of continuity and persistence can also be observed, which reflects the fact that constitutions are not designed on a *tabula rosa*⁵⁰⁷ and that there are ‘limited degrees of freedom’ in which change can occur, even during times of crisis.⁵⁰⁸

Yet the use of the concept of ‘constitutional identity’ is not without problems. In their critique of the use of ‘identity’ as an analytical category within the social sciences, Brubaker and Cooper have argued that the term is often put to use in a way that is too analytically ambiguous to be useful, in positing both an emphasis on sameness over time at the same time as alluding to identity’s constructed, contingent and changeable character.⁵⁰⁹ In the case of ‘constitutional identity’, the emphasis on sameness can result in methodological nationalism in which constitutions are perceived as fundamentally reflecting identity or ideological

⁵⁰⁴ Jacobsohn 2011: 129–130.

⁵⁰⁵ Jacobsohn 2010: 8.

⁵⁰⁶ Jacobsohn 2011: 133.

⁵⁰⁷ Lichtenstein 1996.

⁵⁰⁸ Streeck & Thelen 2005.

⁵⁰⁹ Brubaker & Cooper 2000.

conflicts. Lerner's analysis of incrementalist constitution-making, for example, appears to be open to such an interpretation by positing the existence of a 'deeply divided' society in Turkey, essentialising a secular vs. religious conflict as a foundational division influencing the nature of constitution-making throughout the Republic. As the above historical analysis has suggested, these approaches appear to be partial or retrospective readings that impose the current divisions into previous periods.

An exploration of the 2011–13 constitutional debates suggests that there are not only different constitutive visions across the party divide but diverging perceptions amongst actors of the 'constitutional identity' of the Republic. For instance, the AKP's conception of the 1961 constitution as marking a break from the 1924 document contrasts with the CHP's approach, which places the emphasis on continuity, focusing instead on the achievements of the Republic. The determination of 'constitutional identity' is therefore deeply embedded in wider political struggles. Consequently, a narrow conception of 'constitutional identity' that places too much weight on expressive legal texts or constitutional documents and the principles they outline as evincing a timeless message is deeply problematic in assuming monolithic and unitary intentions on the part of the framers or state-formers. More importantly, as has been suggested, such a narrow focus on value conflicts neglects the very power dynamics at the heart of the constitutional order that defines the state form and, by extension, constitutional identity. Value struggles were equally intertwined in power struggles, such as in the case of the caliphate, which was regarded as a counterbalance to the emerging dominance of Mustafa Kemal, while another example is the subsequent association of laicism and military tutelage.

Conversely, the over-emphasis on the fluidity of 'constitutional identity' could serve to rule out any possibility of identifying commonality and continuity, thereby negating its use as an analytical concept. Nation-state-building inescapably privileges and constructs a majority culture.⁵¹⁰ As a 'nationalising' constitution,⁵¹¹

⁵¹⁰ Kymlicka 2001; Taylor 1997.

⁵¹¹ See the analysis of differing patterns of relationships forged between constitutions and the nation over time and space in Kissane & Sitter 2010.

the Turkish constitutional tradition has been inherently majoritarian at its heart, positing the absolute and unconstrained sovereignty of what is understood as the Turkish–Muslim nation. There is, therefore, significant consensus on the delineation of the polity as a (Sunni) Muslim–Turkish majority towards which the framers perceive themselves as responsible and as representing. In this vein, during the constitution-making processes the minority clauses introduced by the Lausanne Treaty had continued to be regarded as concessions to external powers and regarded as undermining the sovereignty of the new Turkish nation-state.

These reflected high levels of social closure which in turn triggered and reinforced path-dependent effects through institutionalisation, thereby embedding religious majoritarianism. Contrary to the assertion by the constitutional theorist Zucco that secular constitutions are value-free (not pluralistic) or neutral towards religion,⁵¹² the Turkish case demonstrates that laicism was constructed in a way that explicitly and implicitly privileged and delineated a Muslim majority and its interests. Laicism appears not to be about neutrality or tolerance but rather a project embedding religious majoritarianism. Jacobsohn has argued that Israel, India and Ireland do not have established religions, but that religion is at the centre of their constitutional identities.⁵¹³ The Turkish constitutional experience began with Islam at the heart of the constitution until it was removed from the text in 1928 and the principle of laicism was adopted in 1937. However, despite the narratives of state laicism⁵¹⁴ and ‘constitutional commitment to secularism’,⁵¹⁵ the Turkish experience of constitution-making suggests, likewise, that religion remains at the centre of constitutional identity.

3.5 Conclusion

Scholarly studies on Turkey, as well as political actors, have typically emphasised Kemalism, comprising Turkish nationalism and laicism, as if it constitutes the unchanging essence of the official ideology of the Republic.⁵¹⁶ In contrast, this

⁵¹² Zucca 2009.

⁵¹³ Jacobsohn 2010: 30.

⁵¹⁴ Kandiyoti 2012.

⁵¹⁵ Jacobsohn 2010: 14.

⁵¹⁶ Köker 2007.

chapter has argued that the literature's over-emphasis on value struggles and its static conceptualisation of a 'constitutional identity', with codified principles evincing a timeless message, have been problematic. Instead, through the analysis of constitutional framers' debates, I have identified a dynamic of change and continuity in terms of: i) an evolving/changing conceptualisation of constitutional identity shaped by power struggles; and ii) persistence in terms of the constitutional framers' focus on the construction of and concern with the nation as a (Sunni) Muslim majority, reflecting social closure and embedding high levels of religious majoritarianism within the nation-state project. In conclusion, therefore, it is suggested that the prevalent forms of social closure and Ottoman legacy allowed a 'bounded fluidity' for the nation-state builders of the Republic, with the secularism project reflecting community boundary-building. At the same time, this chapter highlights that decisions taken by nation-state builders in the foundational years of the Republic proved sticky. While subsequent constitutional framers could act to strategically reformulate this tradition, they were nevertheless constrained by the previously existing structures, pointing to path-dependency effects. In summary, it is argued that social closure and its institutionalisation is important to understanding constitutions which are a key aspect of the state. In addition, it is suggested that religious majoritarianism is a more useful tool for constitutional analysis and for tracing continuity and change than is the prism of secularism.

Chapter 4: Structuring politics: Turkey's majoritarian political system

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter attempted to illustrate the ways in which the Ottoman legacy shaped the decisions made by constitutional framers in terms of the construction of and concern with the (Sunni) Muslim–Turkish majority and the ensuring of its dominant position within the polity. This chapter will focus on how these concerns have influenced the institutional design of the state. The ‘hegemony of identity politics’⁵¹⁷ has tended to result in an oversight of the role of institutions in structuring behaviour and incentives within this symbiotic relationship. In this vein, this chapter contains two sections. The first traces how the majoritarian vision of constitutional framers has shaped institutional design and how this has become a persistent feature. Studies of the Turkish political system have typically focused on the existence of a strong ‘state tradition’⁵¹⁸ stretching back to the Ottoman Empire or have emphasised ‘Kemalist ideology’.⁵¹⁹ These analyses can at times be guilty of essentialism as well as of adopting an ideological frame of reference. This can hinder both systematic analysis of change and continuity of the Turkish case as well as comparative analysis. As an alternative, I employ Arend Lijphart’s typology of majoritarian and consensus democracy to examine and locate the constitutive vision of the Turkish political system and its evolution, in terms of change and persistence, from 1924 to 2014.⁵²⁰ The second section evaluates the findings while reflecting on how these institutional structures have impacted on party political competition and facilitated the augmentation of religious majoritarianism.

4.2 The majoritarian logic of Turkey's ‘nationalising’ constitution

As outlined in the previous chapter, in the ‘nationalising’ state nation-builders were concerned with establishing a ‘core nation’ that involved the elevation and

⁵¹⁷ Heyes Spring 2002.

⁵¹⁸ Heper 1985.

⁵¹⁹ See note 9.

⁵²⁰ The statistical analysis is from 1950 to June 2014. The pre-1950 period and the periods of military rule are not included because open political competition or minimal criteria of democratic politics were absent.

construction of a dominant majority ethnicity that was to be the owner of the state.⁵²¹ The Ottoman legacy and prevalent forms of social closure were crucial in shaping the boundaries of the nascent nation, which involved the construction and elevation of Muslim Turkish identity. Non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman polity had been largely eliminated and come to be regarded as a symptom of imperial penetration and domination, undermining state sovereignty. The institutional structure that was established in the founding years marked a critical juncture in terms of high levels of contingency and institutional fluidity. For instance, the 1921 constitutional debates, during the independence struggle, had focused chiefly on the principles of representation and levels of regional autonomy and governance. Following the declaration of the Republic, reflecting the ‘nationalising’ (or majoritising) concerns of the nation-builders, the 1924 constitution proposal was decisively majoritarian, with no consideration of autonomy. Consequently, it was the heavily majoritarian 1924 constitution (the longest surviving one, at 36 years), which incorporated no checks on executive power and established a centralised unitary state, that has been foundational in influencing the evolution of the Turkish political system.

This majoritarian logic has infused all aspects of Turkish politics and parties across the political divide. In the same way, the ‘national will’ discourse of the Turkish right, comprising the Islamists (see Chapter 8), also reflects this vision of the uninhibited sovereignty and monopoly of the Muslim majority. Similarly, any checks on the ‘majority will’ have tended to be dismissed by various political actors as anti-democratic, elitist or ‘secularist/Kemalist’ and against the (Sunni) Muslim masses. In this sense there is a fundamental homology between the so-called ‘Kemalist’ nation-state building project and the ‘national will’ discourse of the right in terms of the vision of the undivided sovereignty of a Sunni Muslim–Turkish majority that constitutes the nation.

How these dynamics have translated into institutional design and generated path-dependency will be explored in this section through Arend Lijphart’s regime typology of consensus and majoritarian democracies (as laid out in Figure 3).

⁵²¹ Brubaker 2011.

According to Lijphart, there are two visions of democracy that underpin the diversity of democratic regimes: ‘one based on the majority rule principle, and one based on the idea of legitimising decisions on the basis of the widest consensus possible’.⁵²² The application of this typology to the Turkish case is arguably problematic because Turkey is better classified as a hybrid regime owing to the frequent violations of the basic criteria of liberal democracy, such as freedom of speech, information, media, association and assembly alongside the military’s tutelary role, which, despite its recent pacification under the AKP, historically acted as a key veto player over the political system. Equally, the Lijphart framework cannot capture the effects of the informal institutions and executive discretion over implementation in a hybrid regime such as Turkey, where the gap between the letter of the law and what happens in reality can be wide.⁵²³ Nevertheless, the fact that hybrid regimes comprise both democratic and authoritarian features opens up the possibility of using this typology. A systematic application of this typology is a useful means of identifying the constitutive vision underpinning the political system as well as tracing the patterns of change and persistence since the move to multipartism in 1950.

Consequently, to undertake this analysis I have divided Turkish history into four periods, which are chiefly demarcated by the adoption of new constitutions that signify important turning points. The first period is 1924 to 1960. The 1924 constitution essentially remained until the military intervention of 1960 and the subsequent adoption of a new constitution in 1961, since the transition to multi-party politics took place without a fundamental overhaul of the 1924 constitutional framework. The second is 1961 to 1980. The 1961 constitution was introduced by junta leaders in light of the experience of the unrestrained majoritarianism of the governing party of the 1950s. While constitutional changes were also imposed following the 1971 coup, a new constitution was not adopted. The third period is 1983 to 2001. The 1982 constitution, introduced during the period of military rule from 1980 to 1983, significantly altering the political landscape by partially reversing the institutional changes adopted in 1961. Despite the anti-majoritarian

⁵²² Bulsara & Kissane 2009.

⁵²³ See Chapters 3 and 8 for discussion of ideational context and informal institutions, respectively.

institutional arrangements introduced by the 1961 constitution, the persistence of majoritarianism is exemplified by the unitary and centralised structure, the concentration of executive power and minimal interest group participation in policy process. The final period is 2002 to 2014. While 2002 did not mark the adoption of a new constitution, it began the period of AKP government, which is widely considered as a turning point given the rise of an Islamist party, the AKP, to power. Taking this period as a separate unit of analysis, therefore, is helpful in terms of comparison and situating change and continuity in the AKP era (see Chapter 8). Not only is the AKP the most durable party government in Turkish history, but this period has seen the erosion of the military-tutelary order as well as constitutional changes such as the introduction of popular elections for the presidency, greater executive control over the judiciary and increasing executive dominance. Coupled with a potential move to a fully presidential system in the future, the AKP period appears to be more in line with the pure majoritarianism encapsulated in the 1924 constitution and hence represents greater majoritarianism than does the 1960–2001 period. The section below will examine each of these periods through a systematic analysis of each of the variables identified by Lijphart that comprise the two dimensions of a regime type: firstly, the nature of executive power, party and electoral systems and interest groups; and, secondly, the macro structure of the system and overall centralisation of power.

Figure 3: Two dimensions of majoritarian vs. consensus democracy

Executive–Parties Dimension

1. Concentration of executive power in single-party majority cabinets versus executive power-sharing in broad multi-party coalitions.
2. Executive legislative relationships in which the executive is dominant versus executive–legislative balance of power.
3. Two-party versus multi-party systems.
4. Majoritarian and disproportional electoral systems versus proportional representation.
5. Pluralist interest group systems with free-for-all competition among groups versus coordinated and ‘corporatist’ interest group systems aimed at compromise and concertation.

Federal–Unitary Dimension

1. Unitary and centralized government versus federal and decentralised government.
 2. Concentration of legislative power in a unicameral legislature versus division of legislative power between two equally strong but differently constituted houses.
 3. Flexible constitutions that can be amended by simple majorities versus rigid constitutions that can be changed only by extraordinary majorities.
 4. Systems in which legislatures have the final word on the constitutionality of their own legislation versus systems in which laws are subject to a judicial review of their constitutionality by supreme or constitutional courts.
 5. Exclusively representative democracy versus systems where there is direct involvement of citizens in decision making.
 6. Central banks that are dependent on the executive versus independent central banks.
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References: Lijphart 1999; Bulsara & Kissane 2009.

4.3 Turkey’s majoritarian political system

4.3.1 The executive-parties dimension

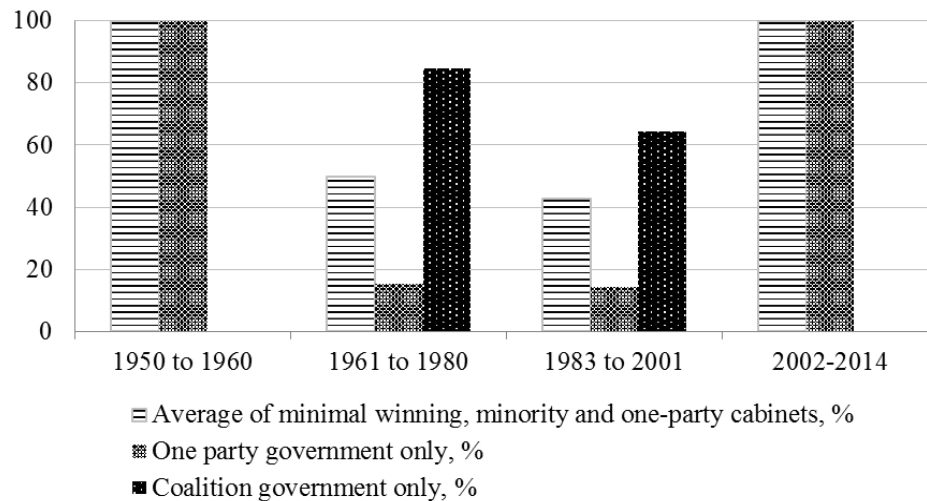
This study shows that in terms of the executive-parties dimension (comprising five variables) related to the configuration of executive power, the pure majoritarianism of the single-party era was modified with the transition to multipartism, while the post-1983 period marks a shift towards the majoritarianism of the first period.

The concentration of executive power

A clear majoritarian bias and an aversion to power-sharing in Turkey are highlighted in the concentration of executive power dimension. According to Lijphart’s model, the most cogent contrast of majoritarian and consensus democracy is the existence of one-party government where there is a concentration of executive power and coalition governments, which epitomise the principle of power-sharing. In this scheme one-party cabinets are the most majoritarian, while minimal-winning and minority governments are seen to reflect an ‘intermediary

position'.⁵²⁴ Meanwhile, oversized cabinets reflect the consensus model of democracy given broader power-sharing.⁵²⁵ Aside from the single-party era, as indicated by Chart 3, in the multiparty period one-party, minimal-winning and minority (MW/OP⁵²⁶) governments have been the predominant types of cabinet. In the 1950s the Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*, DP), which had splintered from the CHP and established the transition to multipartism, was highly adversarial towards the opposition CHP, partly reflecting both its lack of experience in dealing with political competition or opposition and fears of the continued loyalty of bureaucratic elites to the CHP.⁵²⁷

Chart 3: Concentration vs. sharing of executive power



Sources: Taagepera 2002; 'Election of Representatives Statistics' from the Turkish Statistical Institute [Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, TÜİK] , <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=1061>; Kalaycıoğlu 2005. Calculations are my own.

In addition, the highly adversarial two-party system and politics of the 1950s was reinforced by the plurality/majoritarian electoral formula. The two-party system was eroded in the second period following the adoption of proportional representation (PR) in 1961, which resulted in party system fragmentation, leading to the preponderance of coalition governments. In the third period the results are mixed, since, alongside the one-party governments of ANAP in the 1980s, the

⁵²⁴ Taagepera 2002.

⁵²⁵ Lijphart 1999: 90–91.

⁵²⁶ MW/OP = (one-party) + 1/2 [minimal winning coalition + minority government]. See Taagepera 2002: 3.

⁵²⁷ Heper & Landau 1991: 127.

1990s were marked by extreme fragmentation, with many short-lived and unstable governments that were nevertheless largely minimal-winning/minority coalitions. On average, one-party governments have tended to last three times longer than coalition governments, which have endured for an average of 0.9 years, again underscoring the distaste for power-sharing. Oversized and minority cabinets have tended to be formed only following military coups. The 2002–2014 period is the most majoritarian on this front given that the AKP has been able to establish majority one-party governments, a situation that is comparable only to the 1950–1960 period.

Executive–legislative relations

In terms of executive–legislative relations, the Turkish system is majoritarian in that it is typified by executive dominance and a weak parliament. In Turkey, the tradition of centralised and concentrated executive power from the single-party era continued in the post-transition period with the dominant place of the prime minister, who heads both the cabinet and the largest party in parliament.⁵²⁸ The PM ‘sets the political agenda and determines top level of bureaucratic appointments (with the president’s approval) and has the last say in the substance of policies, laws, regulations, statutes’.⁵²⁹ Oligarchical political parties have enabled governments to dominate parliamentary life through their majorities, with lawmakers remain beholden to the party line. One example of the weakness of the parliamentary mechanism was highlighted in June 2013, when governing AKP lawmakers ‘accidentally’ rejected a bill they had proposed themselves, following a kneejerk reaction when they saw that the opposition had accepted the bill.⁵³⁰

In addition, military interventions negatively impacted the institutionalisation of the TGNA, and thus the legislature’s capacity to hold the executive to account.⁵³¹ The 1982 constitution imposed by the military exacerbated this trend in seeking to inhibit autonomous legislative action and to encourage autonomous executive

⁵²⁸ Kalaycıoğlu 2005.

⁵²⁹ Kalaycıoğlu 2005.

⁵³⁰ *Vatan* 8 July 2013.

⁵³¹ Kalaycıoğlu 1990.

action⁵³² through various mechanisms including: i) the use of executive decrees (which later needed to be approved by parliament) to bypass parliament; ii) restrictions on the use of parliamentary investigations and interpellations used largely by opposition parties to delay or prevent bills in the pre-1980 period;⁵³³ and iii) the introduction of extra-budgetary funds, which gave the executive branch considerable fiscal power outside of parliamentary supervision, acted as a major channel of rent distribution⁵³⁴ and thus augmented the prize and power of office.

The extent of executive dominance relative to the legislature is measured by cabinet durability (Chart 4),⁵³⁵ with short-lived and less dominant cabinets better encapsulating the consensus model while one-party durable cabinets typify the majoritarian model. During the single-party era the TGNA was essentially a rubber stamp. With the transition to multipartism achieved with only small changes in the election, press and association laws of the 1924 constitution,⁵³⁶ the same majoritarian framework of the single-party era helped to produce the similarly dominant party system under the DP in the 1950s. With the separation of powers and a proportional representation (PR) electoral system which introduced coalition politics, the 1961 constitution moderated previous executive dominance.

⁵³² Kalaycıoğlu 2005.

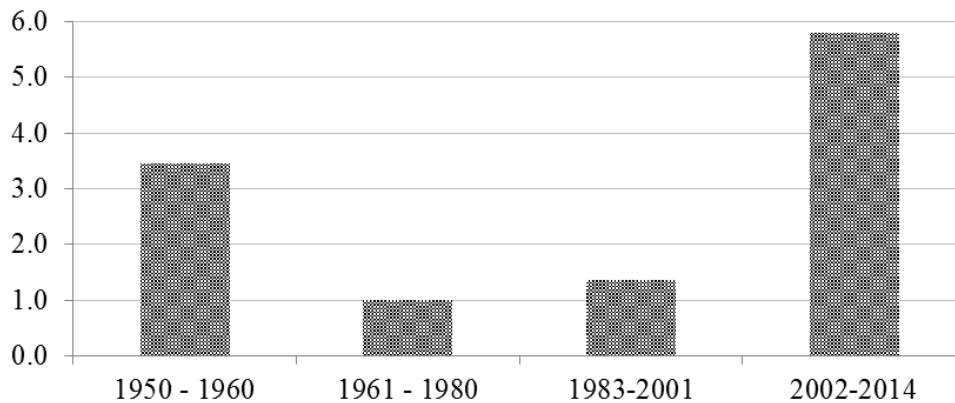
⁵³³ Gençkaya 1996.

⁵³⁴ Demir 2005.

⁵³⁵ Taagepera 2003.

⁵³⁶ Özbudun 2000.

Chart 4: Average cabinet duration (years)



Sources: Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi [Turkish Grand National Assembly of Turkey, TGNA], http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kutuphane/e_kaynaklar_kutuphane_hukumetler.html; Kalaycıoğlu 2005. Calculations are my own.

With the exception of the short-lived cabinets of the 1990s, the third and fourth periods have marked a return to executive dominance in two ways. First, the 1982 majoritarian re-engineering of the electoral system, with the establishment of a 10% national threshold, again introduced the bias towards a strong executive by enabling parties to gain a majority of seats with just a plurality of the vote. In particular, the 2002–2014 period saw the most durable government – and therefore also the most majoritarian, according to Lijphart’s criteria – in Turkey’s history of multi-party politics.

Second, there has been a move towards presidentialism,⁵³⁷ with the 1982 constitution establishing the presidency as a ‘guardian’ of the state,⁵³⁸ in keeping with the designation of the president as ‘national chief’ during the later years of the single-party era. Despite not having political and legal responsibility or accountability (Article 105),⁵³⁹ the president has significant powers, chiefly of veto and of appointment (Article 104). In practice, much has depended on the personalities, with the partisan presidencies of Özal and Demirel using the

⁵³⁷ Özbudun argues that there is no area specified in the constitution where a countersignature by the PM is not needed, though an exception may be the discretion with which the president can call a referendum or refer laws to the Constitutional Court. Plus, the president has no power to decide the composition of the cabinet (Özbudun 2000).

⁵³⁸ Kalaycıoğlu 2005.

⁵³⁹ Kalaycıoğlu 2005.

presidential office as an alternative locus of decision-making, and Sezer's presidency from 2000 to 2007 seeing the return to a more parliamentary system.⁵⁴⁰ For example, the former president Ahmet Necdet Sezer (2000–2007), a former head of the Constitutional Court, holds the record for the most number of vetoes, totalling 73 laws.⁵⁴¹ Conversely, the AKP affiliated former president Abdullah Gül vetoed only 4 out of 836 laws between 2007 and 2014.⁵⁴² Similarly, while Sezer referred 26 laws to the Constitutional Court, Gül referred none (see Table 1).

Table 1: Laws referred to the Constitutional Court by the president

Period	Presidents	Referrals to the Constitutional Court by the President	%
1961 to 1966	Cemal Gürsel	0	0%
1966 to 1966	İbrahim Şevki Atasagun	0	0%
1966 to 1973	Cevdet Sunay	0	0%
1973 to 1973	Tekin Arıburun	0	0%
1975 to 1980	Fahri Korutürk	6	13%
1980 to 1980	İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil	0	0%
1982 to 1989	Kenan Evren	7	16%
1989 to 1993	Turgut Özal	2	4%
1993 to 1993	Hüsamettin Cindoruk	0	0%
1993 to 2000	Süleyman Demirel	4	9%
2000 to 2007	Ahmet Necdet Sezer	26	58%
2007 to 2014	Abdullah Gül	0	0%
Total		45	100%
Sources: Anayasa Mahkemesi [Constitutional Court of Turkey], < http://www.anayasa.gov.tr/Istatistik/ >.			

The 2007 constitutional amendments have further solidified semi-presidentialism⁵⁴³ by introducing a popularly elected president, previously elected indirectly by a two-thirds majority in parliament. Given the dual structure of the executive, the Turkish system can be argued to be at its most majoritarian when one party captures both the presidency and the parliamentary majority, as was the case in the period 1989–1991 and also since 2007. This is because i) under the 1982 constitutional regime the presidency and Constitutional Court are seen as the two key institutions with veto powers against parliamentary majorities;⁵⁴⁴ and ii) the

⁵⁴⁰ Kalaycıoğlu 2005.

⁵⁴¹ *Haberx* 20 July 2010.

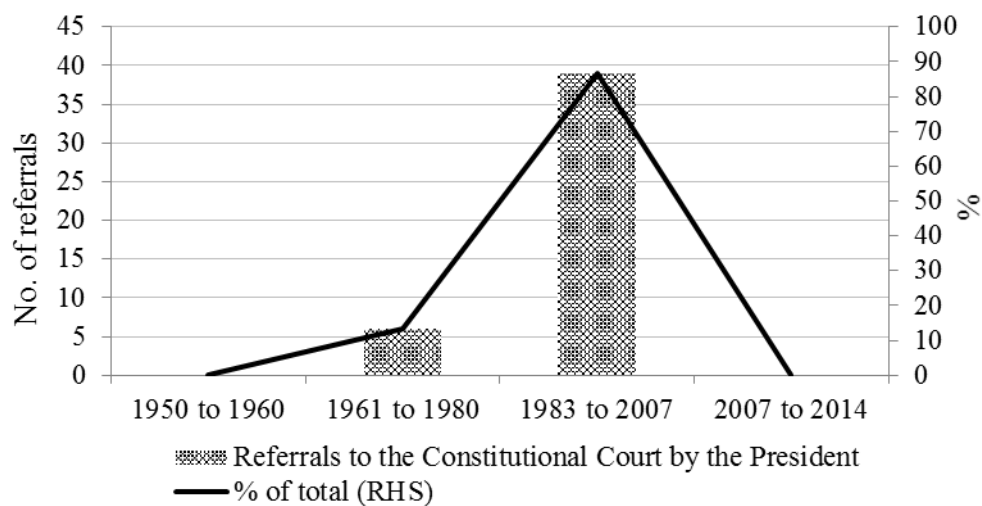
⁵⁴² *Sözcü* 20 February 2014.

⁵⁴³ Gönenç 2008.

⁵⁴⁴ Sayari 2007.

capture of the presidency means that the parliamentary majority can also exercise far more influence over appointments that are determined by the president. Political controversy surrounding the appointment of the AKP's candidate as president in 2007 was based on fears over greater partisan and Islamist control of presidential powers and perceptions of the symbolic meaning of the presidency as the 'last bastion of secularism'.⁵⁴⁵ Given President Erdogan's declared preference for a presidential system, Turkey may shift towards more majoritarianism in this dimension. However, as discussed, the system already allows for flexibility over the degree of presidentialism depending on the personality of the leader (for detailed discussion of the AKP period see Chapter 8).

Chart 5: Referrals to the Constitutional Court by the president



Sources: Özbudun 2009; Anayasa Mahkemesi [Constitutional Court of Turkey], <http://www.anayasa.gov.tr/Istatistik/>.

Party system

The nature of the party system is the most typical point of divergence between the majoritarian and consensus regimes since two-party systems typically lead to greater executive dominance than multi-party systems in which there is a tendency for coalition building. The Turkish party system has been shaped by: i) military interventions which have constrained party institutionalisation and encouraged

⁵⁴⁵ Gönenç 2008.

strong oligarchical tendencies;⁵⁴⁶ ii) post-coup party closures which resulted in increased voter volatility⁵⁴⁷ and political party fragmentation; and iii) frequent changes of the electoral system, which ‘disturbed the natural evolution of party politics ... and have contributed to weakening of party system’.⁵⁴⁸ With the exception of Islamist parties, political parties have tended to lack any ‘mass party’ characteristics such as strong grassroots support or a paying membership base.⁵⁴⁹ Indeed, patronage networks remain more institutionalised and effective than political parties.⁵⁵⁰

The evolution of the party system in Turkey can be measured through Laakso and Taagepera’s index of effective number of parties (Chart 6).⁵⁵¹ This suggests that Turkey has wavered between ‘two-party with a dominant party’ and ‘two and a half party with a dominant party’ systems with the exception chiefly of the 1970s and 1990s, when political fragmentation facilitated a move to multipartism. A key result of the adoption of the 10% threshold in the 1982 constitution has been the divergence between the effective number of parties based on actual votes and seat shares, with the biggest gap apparent in the 2002 election. With the emergence of single-party government in 2002 there has been, therefore, a return to the two-party system with a dominant party, a situation similar to that of the 1950s and 1980s. Owing to the AKP’s ‘electoral hegemony’⁵⁵² it appears that Turkish politics has again shifted towards majoritarianism as regards this variable, following the excessive fragmentation that defined the 1990s.

⁵⁴⁶ Özbudun 2000.

⁵⁴⁷ See Çarkoğlu 1998.

⁵⁴⁸ Sayari 2002: 27.

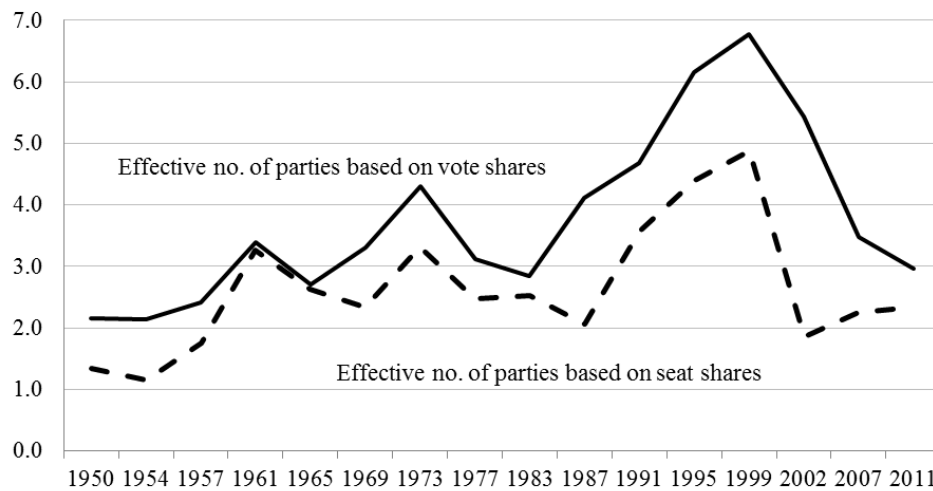
⁵⁴⁹ Sayari 1976: 187–99.

⁵⁵⁰ Kalaycıoğlu 2005.

⁵⁵¹ Laakso & Taagepera 1979.

⁵⁵² Keyman 2009.

Chart 6: Effective number of parties



Sources: Laakso & Taagepera 1979; Gallagher & Mitchell 2008; 'Election of Representatives Statistics' from the Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [Turkish Statistical Institute, TÜİK], <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=1061>; Calculations are my own.

Electoral system

Despite the frequent changes in the electoral system, the Turkish case is, with the exception of the 1961–1980 period, typified by majoritarianism as regards this variable. These changes to the electoral system (Table 2) have been chiefly driven by constitutional engineering by junta leaders and the use of electoral laws as a political instrument⁵⁵³ by political parties. Under majoritarian electoral systems there is less congruence between parties' vote share and seat share than is seen in PR systems. The Gallagher Index⁵⁵⁴ is a means of measuring proportionality, in which higher numbers signal greater disproportionality. As shown by Chart 7, the least proportional elections were held in the 1950s, when a multi-member plurality formula was used. The 'winner takes all' electoral system was in line with the tradition of using plurality elections during both the Ottoman constitutional period and the single-party period from 1924 to 1950. In 1961 the move to PR was spurred on by the large artificial majorities created by the previous plurality formula that had underpinned the DP government's power. However, with the ensuing fragmentation and factionalisation of the party system in 1961–1980, PR came to

⁵⁵³ Turan 1994.

⁵⁵⁴ Gallagher & Mitchell 2008; Lijphart 1999.

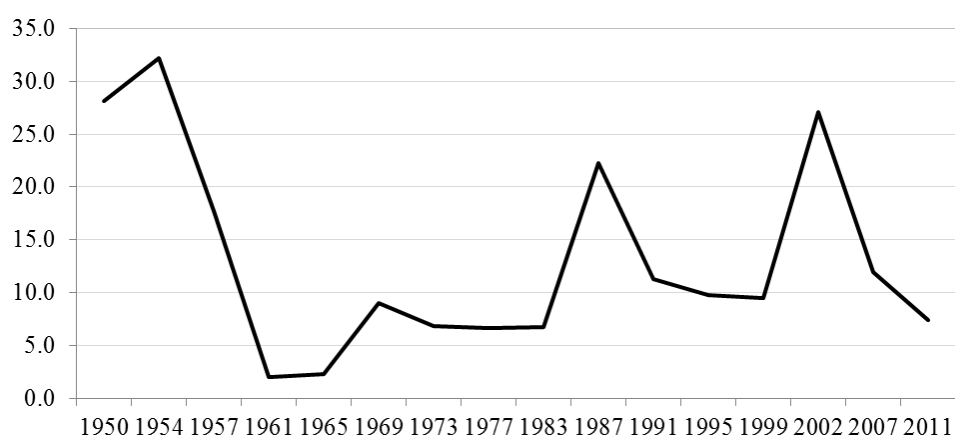
be associated with social polarisation and ineffective government dominated by unstable coalitions. This experience in turn influenced the military's decision to move towards a more majoritarian electoral system in the 1982 constitution.

Table 2: Turkish election laws and types of government

Election Year	Election Law	Type of Government
1950	Multimember Constituency - Majority (plurality)	One-Party
1954	Multimember Constituency - Majority (plurality)	One-Party
1957	Multimember Constituency - Majority (plurality)	One-Party
1961	Multimember Constituency - PR (largest average, d'Hondt with district level quota)	Coalition
1965	Multimember Constituency - PR (largest average, d'Hondt with national remainder)	One-Party
1969	Multimember Constituency - PR (largest average, classical d'Hondt)	One-Party
1973	Multimember Constituency - PR (largest average, classical d'Hondt)	Coalition
1977	Multimember Constituency - PR (largest average, classical d'Hondt)	Coalition (Minority Government)
1983	Multimember Constituency - PR with national quota (d'Hondt)	One-Party
1987	Multimember Constituency - PR with national and district quota (d'Hondt)	One-Party
1991	Multimember Constituency - PR with national and district quota (d'Hondt with preferential vote)	Coalition
1995	Multimember Constituency - PR with national quota (d'Hondt)	Coalition (Minority Government)
1999	Multimember Constituency - PR with national quota (d'Hondt)	Coalition
2002	Multimember Constituency - PR with national quota (d'Hondt)	One-Party
2007	Multimember Constituency - PR with national quota (d'Hondt)	One-Party
2011	Multimember Constituency - PR with national quota (d'Hondt)	One-Party

Sources: Kalaycıoğlu 2005.

Chart 7: Gallagher Index (Least Squares Index of Electoral Disproportionality)



Sources: Gallagher & Mitchell 2008; 'Election of Representatives Statistics' from the Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [Turkish Statistical Institute, TUIK], <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=1061>; Calculations are my own.

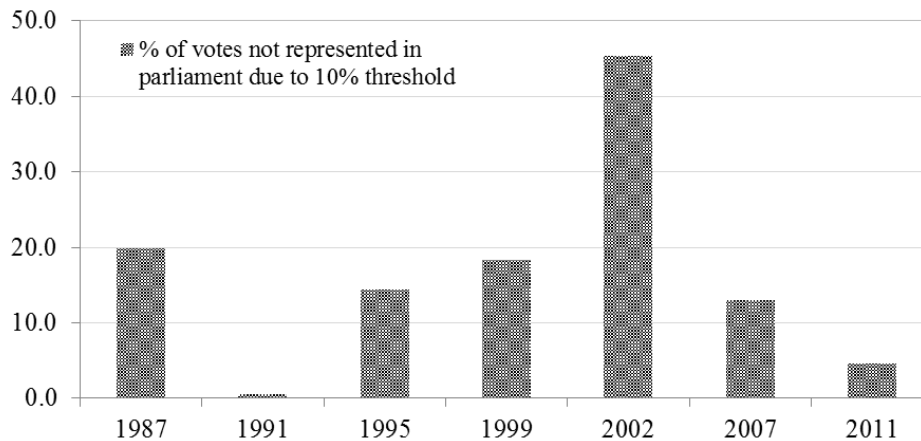
Two key changes were introduced in 1982 with the aim of establishing a less populous party system capable of achieving strong government: i) cut-off provisions, which meant an electoral quotient at the district level and a national threshold of 10%; and ii) redistricting, which saw the introduction of a ceiling of seven deputies per electoral district, resulting in the subdivision of large electoral districts.⁵⁵⁵ As a result, despite the existence of a PR framework, the electoral system works as if it were a majority system⁵⁵⁶ because the 10% threshold discriminates against parties which have strong regional representation but are unable to garner enough votes elsewhere to pass the national threshold. However, as Hale demonstrates, experience from elections in the 1990s and 2000s show that the impact of the 10% threshold has been largely inconsistent, partly because of voting behaviour and preferences.⁵⁵⁷ For example, in the 1995 and 1997 elections the 10% threshold did not prevent party system fragmentation, while in the 2002 election the 10% threshold enabled the AKP to transform 34% of the national vote into a 66% seat share, leaving 45% of the national vote unrepresented in parliament (Chart 8). Without a 10% threshold the AKP's vote share in the 2002 and 2007 elections would have garnered 35% and 47% of the total seats, compared with the 66% and 62% received under the current system. Likewise, as Hale notes, in the 2007 elections the seat share of the other remaining parties (including the independent lawmakers derived mainly from the Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*, DTP) were largely proportional to their actual vote share despite the 10% threshold. Regardless, despite the varied outcomes of the existing electoral framework and the exemption of independents from the 10% threshold rule, which allows some representation for smaller parties, the logic of the system is largely majoritarian in approach since it attempts to block out smaller players while favouring larger parties.

⁵⁵⁵ See Turan 1994. While this system has been largely maintained, the introduction of a district level quota for the 1987 and 1991 elections led to increased disproportionality due to very high threshold levels which worked against small parties.

⁵⁵⁶ Kalaycıoğlu 1994: 420–22.

⁵⁵⁷ Hale 2008.

Chart 8: Impact of the 10% threshold on parliamentary representation



Sources: 'Election of Representatives Statistics' from the Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [Turkish Statistical Institute, TÜİK], <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=1061>; Calculations are my own.

A further element of disproportionality in the Turkish electoral system relates to malapportionment. As part of the subdivision of the large electoral districts in the 1982 electoral system overhaul every province was automatically given one seat regardless of size. This automatic allocation and the existing apportionment system in Turkey has the effect of over-representing the 'primarily small, predominantly agricultural sector dominated East and South-eastern provinces', which are also areas more susceptible to patronage distribution.⁵⁵⁸ In short, owing to the configuration of a high national threshold and the level of malapportionment, the electoral system can produce highly majoritarian outcomes. The AKP has outlined a preference for the heavily majoritarian single-member constituency plurality system,⁵⁵⁹ which enhances majoritarianism in this dimension if adopted.

Interest group system

The efficacy of interest groups was undermined by the 1982 constitution, which placed heavy restrictions on associational life (lifted only in 1995), clawing back the (relatively speaking) more pluralistic approach of the 1961 constitution, which had granted significant autonomy to various associations. Majoritarian systems are

⁵⁵⁸ See Çarkoğlu & Erdoğan 1999.

⁵⁵⁹ *Today's Zaman* 26 April 2014; *T24* 6 October 2013.

typified by the existence of a pluralistic interest group system comprising competitive, uncoordinated and independent groups, in contrast to consensus democracy, which consists of corporatist systems in which interest group consultation is incorporated into the policy process.⁵⁶⁰ Özbudun argues that associational life in Turkey consists of private associations and public professional organisations (such as trade unions and business organisations), with the former approximating the pluralistic model and the latter resembling the corporatist model.⁵⁶¹ However, neither is effectively institutionalised, as policy-making remains extremely centralised with minimal input from economic interest groups.⁵⁶² In turn, the restrictive and confined nature of interest representation in Turkey has encouraged the private sector to rely on particularistic ties to the authorities and also a rent-seeking environment.⁵⁶³ In short, the ‘Turkish state and policymaking process lack any significant mechanism of policy coordination’.⁵⁶⁴ During the post-1980s economic liberalisation and the 2000–2001 crisis environment there was greater involvement by international financial institutions and independent domestic regulatory agencies in shaping economic policy. However, the increasing centralisation and personalisation of power under the executive during the AKP period has led to greater majoritarianism in this dimension (see Chapter 8).

4.3.2 Federal-unitary dimension⁵⁶⁵

The nature of the Turkish system reflects a pronounced majoritarian streak in terms of the federal-unitary dimension, characterised by a heavily centralised and unitary structure. This framework has been a persistent feature of the system under the Republic and reflects the decisions of the constitutional framers during the ‘critical juncture’, the formative period of nation-state building.

⁵⁶⁰ Lijphart 1999.

⁵⁶¹ Özbudun 2000.

⁵⁶² Özbudun 2000.

⁵⁶³ Özler & İnaç 2007; Öniş 1992: 20.

⁵⁶⁴ Özler & İnaç 2007: 391.

⁵⁶⁵ In contrast to the executive-party dimension, where indices are largely quantitatively measured and are logically connected, the federal-unitary dimension (see Figure 3) consists of ‘intelligent’ estimates of indices which have weaker logical connectivity. See Taagepera 2003.

Unitary and centralised government

The Turkish state, like its Ottoman predecessor, does not have a tradition of regional self-government.⁵⁶⁶ Since its establishment it has been a heavily centralised unitary state which reflects a persistent majoritarian approach as regards this variable. Within the constitution the commitment to remain a unitary state is epitomised by Article 123: ‘the Turkish state is an indivisible whole comprising its territory and people’. Within the Ottoman polity, local government was perceived simply as an extension of the central administration, largely for the purposes of improved tax collection, and as such resulted in a process of deconcentration rather than devolution or delegation.⁵⁶⁷ Fears regarding separatism and territorial integrity, underpinned by the experiences of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, reinforced the centralising tendencies of the nation-state builders following the establishment of the Republic.⁵⁶⁸

With rapid socio-economic change leading to mounting pressures on local government in the multi-party era, the first substantive change in this dimension followed the return to multi-party politics in 1983. The authorities adopted a ‘small state’ discourse coupled with decentralisation and an expanding civil society, in line with its embrace of neo-liberal economic policies. In reality, this new turn, however, did not mark a major departure from the Ottoman approach to local government in representing a ‘deconcentration of authority to the local branches of the central bureaucracy’.⁵⁶⁹ The result was further centralisation and a reconfiguration of power in which the locus of decision-making shifted from traditional bureaucratic elites to political elites surrounded by technocrats chosen from the outside.⁵⁷⁰ In a manner not dissimilar to that in the Ottoman polity, therefore, local government in the Republic was introduced for and by the state in a bid to tackle the administrative and fiscal priorities of the central administration, as opposed to being an exercise in local participation and governance.⁵⁷¹ The extent

⁵⁶⁶ Heper 1989: 3.

⁵⁶⁷ Heper 1989: 4.

⁵⁶⁸ Heper 1989.

⁵⁶⁹ Kalaycıoğlu 1994.

⁵⁷⁰ Öniş 1992.

⁵⁷¹ Köker 1995.

of executive dominance and intervention in local government matters was most recently highlighted by President Erdogan's insistence on the construction of a replica Ottoman military barracks over Gezi park in Istanbul despite protests from local communities.⁵⁷²

Concentration of legislative power

Given Turkey's highly centralised and unitary political system, unicameralism is the logical corollary. The unicameral structure adopted by the Republic was a departure from the bicameralism of the Ottoman constitutional periods (1876–1878 and 1908–1918), when the upper house was conceptualised as a conservative check on the lower house.⁵⁷³ In the founding years of the Republic, the unicameral parliament was a symbol of national sovereignty and in this sense the period 1924–1960 typified the pure majoritarian model in which the parliament 'as a representative of the people, controlled the legislature, the executive and the judiciary'.⁵⁷⁴ Following the experiences of majoritarian party rule in the 1950s, in the second period (1961–1980) there was a return to the bicameral format with the 1961 constitution. This represented a shift towards the establishment of a tutelary regime, heralding the greater involvement of the military and bureaucracy in the sharing of sovereignty.⁵⁷⁵ With the Senate membership comprising junta leaders as life members alongside elected members, the body was envisioned as a conservative check on the lower house much like its Ottoman predecessor, rather than a step towards more power-sharing. In practice, the Republican Senate lacked real muscle, however, and it was scrapped following the 1980 coup.

Constitutional rigidity

The rigidity of a constitution, which can act as a constraint on parliamentary majorities as a form of 'higher law', is a key feature of the consensus model, while a completely flexible constitution which leaves parliaments unchecked reflects

⁵⁷² *The Globe and Mail* 15 June 2013.

⁵⁷³ Devereux 1963: 227.

⁵⁷⁴ Koçak Cemil 2005.

⁵⁷⁵ Mardin 1973.

majoritarianism. Turkey's preference in this dimension has chiefly been a 'rigid' constitution,⁵⁷⁶ and, as such, it can be said to be closer to the consensual model as regards this variable. Despite the degree of flexibility introduced since 1987, there remain the three 'irrevocable provisions' of the 1982 constitution which pertain to the nature of the state as a republic, its form and characteristics (see Chapter 3). In addition, the 1924, 1961 and 1982 constitutions all required a minimum of two-thirds majority of the total members of parliament to make constitutional changes, which was also in keeping with the tradition of the Ottoman constitution of 1876.⁵⁷⁷ Despite the tradition of rigid constitutions, this was compromised in the third period under the more majoritarian constitutional framework drawn up by the military. The introduction of an optional referendum in 1982, which later became compulsory in 1987, eased the process of constitutional amendment by lowering the acceptance requirement to three-fifths majority of the total parliamentary membership plus referendum. The level of rigidity has been an important anti-majoritarian restriction on the AKP, which, despite its large parliamentary majorities, has lacked the required two-thirds majority to change the constitution. On some occasions this has spurred the AKP government to seek support from opposition parties on matters such as the constitutional change of the introduction of a presidential system.⁵⁷⁸

Judicial review

Alongside rigidity, the strength of a constitution also depends on the existence of judicial review. This is because, in the absence of judicial review, a parliament would have the final say on the constitutionality of its own laws, resulting in a heavily majoritarian dynamic. In this sense, the first period in Turkey epitomised parliamentary sovereignty, since the parliament's control of all three branches of government meant that it was the sole authority on the constitutionality of its own laws. The 1924 constitution, however, was adopted by a transformative parliament during the formative stages of nation-state building. Following the DP era of the 1950s, military bureaucrats established the Constitutional Court in 1961 as a

⁵⁷⁶ Mardin 1973.

⁵⁷⁷ Article 71 (Devereux 1963: 176).

⁵⁷⁸ *Taraf* 25 February 2013.

constraint on parliamentary majorities. Since 1964 over half of the cases referred to the Court have been nullified,⁵⁷⁹ establishing the body as an important veto player within the political system and ranking Turkey as one of the highest in Europe in terms of number of referrals and nullity decisions in abstract constitutional review.⁵⁸⁰ In the context of a system marked by executive dominance and weak parliament, judicial review has been a key measure used by the opposition parties to defeat government bills, with 90% of nullity decisions referred by opposition groups.⁵⁸¹ The period 1961–1980 was the high point of the Court’s powers, at which time it had come to interpret its role as reviewing the constitutionality of constitutional amendments in accordance with protecting the irrevocable provisions.⁵⁸² Following the 1971 and 1980 military interventions, the Court’s powers were greatly curtailed and limited to procedural grounds, as opposed to substance (Article 148), while the number of referring authorities was reduced.

With the growth of the electoral appeal of Islamist parties in the 1990s, the judiciary became an ideological battleground, with the Constitutional Court held up as a ‘bastion of secularism’. This was followed by increased judicial activism and a highly controversial move by the Constitutional Court in which it arguably went beyond its remit by adjudicating on the substance of constitutional amendments as opposed to focusing on procedural issues.⁵⁸³ In response, the AKP held a referendum in 2010, accepted by a 58% yes vote, on constitutional amendments introducing reforms including: i) increasing the number of Constitutional Court judges from 11 permanent and 4 substitute to 17, with parliament selecting 3 members and the president choosing the rest from a list of candidates put forward by various bodies; ii) expanding the members of the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (*Hakimler ve Savcılar Yüksek Kurulu*, HSYK) from 7 to 22 members; and iii) restrictions on the ability of the courts to review administrative matters by

⁵⁷⁹ Belge 2006.

⁵⁸⁰ During 1984–1992; see Hazama 1996.

⁵⁸¹ Hazama 1996.

⁵⁸² This reasoning was used a total of four times to strike down constitutional amendments in the 1970s. See Özbudun 2009; Özbudun 2000.

⁵⁸³ An amendment on the headscarf was struck down in June 2008 on the basis that it contravened the fundamental principles of the Republic. The move has been described as a ‘usurpation of power’ by the judiciary for violating Article 148. See Özbudun & Gençkaya 2009.

stating that judicial power cannot be used as a review of expediency.⁵⁸⁴ The reform package was considered by various scholars and defended by the AKP as comprising measures that would deepen democratisation and pluralism within the judiciary by undermining what was described as the ‘Kemalist’ orientation of the judiciary.⁵⁸⁵ However, the reforms also meant greater executive control over the judiciary owing to the expanded parliamentary and presidential control over the appointment process, and increased the number of appointed seats at the Constitutional Court and HSYK, allowing the executive to place its own appointees.⁵⁸⁶ Consequently, the increasing ‘democratic’ control over the judiciary in fact resonates more closely with the majoritarianism of the 1924–1960 period in augmenting the power of the parliamentary majority.

Further judicial changes were catalysed following a corruption probe launched against the AKP government in December 2013 and the AKP’s struggle with former allies, the *Gülenists*,⁵⁸⁷ who allegedly hold positions within the judiciary.⁵⁸⁸ Alleging that the judiciary had been captured by ‘parallel forces’, the AKP sought to exert greater control over judicial appointments, thereby eroding the separation of powers. In February 2014 the AKP passed a new law that essentially annulled the HSYK changes following the 2010 referendum. Under the original law the

⁵⁸⁴ SGEU 2010.

⁵⁸⁵ Tezcur 20 September 2011; Tezcur 15 September 2010.

⁵⁸⁶ Jenkins 2011; Özbudun 2011b.

⁵⁸⁷ The Gülen movement/community (cemaat) or Gülenists can be described as an offshoot of the Nurcu movement of Islamist (and Kurdish) Bediüzzaman Said Nursi (1877–1960), which itself is an offshoot of the Sunni Nakşibendi *tariqat* order. Nursi had initially supported the 1908 Young Turk revolution, but later became a critic of the CUP and was arrested following the 1909 counter-revolution. While the Nurcu movement had largely gone underground owing to the restrictive environment of the one-party era, it re-emerged with the transition to multipartism. According to Yavuz, the adherents of the Nur movement (Nurcular) number five to six million believers in Turkey. The Nur community has extensive formal and informal networks, schools and reading groups, and has been involved in political life (aligned particularly with the political parties on the right as well as having relations with the military) throughout the Republic, as with other Nakşibendi offshoots. The Gülen movement, led by Fethullah Gülen, arose in the 1960s and has become one of the most prominent Islamist movements in Turkey. The movement gained considerable power and influence over the levers of the state, such as the security forces and judiciary, which has been supported by its vast educational infrastructure that also expands across the globe. According to Çobanoğlu, Gülen’s vision can be summarised as a conservative, nationalist and statist Islamist movement that seeks to reconstitute social morality and society by raising a ‘golden generation’ (to realize a ‘golden age’), seeking the replacement of state bureaucracy with ‘believers’ in place of ‘unbelievers’ (Çobanoğlu 2012). Until December 2013 the movement enjoyed close relations with the AKP government, but since then a split has emerged or become public, with the latter conducting a major ‘cleansing’ of state bureaucracy. On the influence and power of Gülen cemaat see Sık 2012; Avcı 2010; Gürsel 18 November 2013; Tol March 2014; also see Yavuz 2003; Bilici 2001.

⁵⁸⁸ Yetkin 3 May 2014; For the allegations see, for example, *Sabah* 5 February 2014.

powers of the HSYK were largely transferred to the justice minister, thereby ending any independence from the executive.⁵⁸⁹ For example, the justice minister, who was already the head of the HSYK council, was granted more direct control over the organisation and its decision-making and over the judicial academy (involving training of judges) and given powers to authorise investigations into misconduct and disciplinary matters concerning council members.⁵⁹⁰ In addition, the law was designed to remove various levels of personnel within the HSYK, thereby opening the way for restaffing with pro-government appointees.

The AKP's amendments to the HSYK law was passed despite criticism from human rights organisations and the EU Commission⁵⁹¹ that it undermined the separation of powers and judicial independence given the granting to the Ministry of Justice of sole control over all appointments and missions within the judiciary for which the HSYK is responsible. In addition, the authority to launch investigations against council members raised the possibility of politically motivated decisions and increased pressure on the council.⁵⁹² However, the HSYK law was later partially annulled by the Constitutional Court.⁵⁹³ The Court judged unconstitutional the transfer of powers such as the justice minister's control over the HSYK's inspection and control board and sweeping powers over personnel and appointments to HSYK departments, but maintained the executive's new control over the Turkish Justice Academy.⁵⁹⁴ However, despite the Constitutional Court's partial annulment, the decision had no retroactive effect;⁵⁹⁵ the AKP Justice Minister Bekir Bozdağ simply declared that he disagreed with the decision and did not overturn the removal of around 600 personnel replaced by new appointees by the government.⁵⁹⁶ Other measures to curb the independence of the HSYK have been interpreted as government attempts to curb investigation into corruption allegations.⁵⁹⁷ For example, the HSYK subsequently launched disciplinary and criminal investigations against a number of the prosecutors involved in the

⁵⁸⁹ Gürsel 24 June 2014.

⁵⁹⁰ HRW 21 February 2014.

⁵⁹¹ *Today's Zaman* 14 April 2014; HRW 21 February 2014.

⁵⁹² HRW 21 February 2014.

⁵⁹³ *Al Arabiya* 11 April 2014.

⁵⁹⁴ *Zaman* 11 April 2014; *CNN-Türk* 11 April 2014; *EuroAsia News* 11 April 2014.

⁵⁹⁵ European Commission October 2014.

⁵⁹⁶ *EuroAsia News* 11 April 2014.

⁵⁹⁷ European Commission October 2014.

December 2013 corruption investigations.⁵⁹⁸ The government's attitude towards separation of powers and judicial independence was further highlighted by comments from an AKP Ankara deputy, who suggested adopting a new law to curb the Constitutional Court's powers for the 'sake of the national will'.⁵⁹⁹ In addition, alongside these efforts to exert greater control over the judiciary, leaked corruption tapes (those confirmed by the government) have also shown direct intervention in judicial matters by the executive, including in appointments and decisions against government adversaries.⁶⁰⁰ In sum, the steady erosion of the separation of powers marks an increasing shift toward majoritarianism on this front.

Representative or direct democracy

Referendums have not been a frequent feature of Turkish political life, with most of the polls held in the post-1980 period. According to Lijphart, the extent to which referendums act as a majoritarian device depends on whether they are the sole method of constitutional amendment. Under cases in which it is an instrument used in addition to a three-fifths or two-thirds majority in parliament, it can serve as an anti-majoritarian, consensus-inducing device, since minorities are also able to voice their objections through campaigning, forcing the majority to take account of their opinions.⁶⁰¹ However, Lijphart has also suggested that 'when governments control the referendum, they will tend to use it only when they expect to win',⁶⁰² reflecting the view that referendums can be a form of plebiscitarian democracy⁶⁰³ rather than a manifestation of the principle of popular sovereignty. Using Gordon Smith's distinction between 'controlled' (by government) and 'uncontrolled' (popularly initiated) referendums, Qvortrup has shown that the former type of referendum tends to result in 'pro-hegemonic' outcomes – that is, they are supportive of the regime.⁶⁰⁴

⁵⁹⁸ European Commission October 2014.

⁵⁹⁹ Daloğlu 19 March 2014.

⁶⁰⁰ *Eyvensel* 5 March 2014.

⁶⁰¹ Lijphart 1999: 230.

⁶⁰² Lijphart 1984: 204.

⁶⁰³ Qvortrup 2000.

⁶⁰⁴ Qvortrup 2000.

Chart 9: Number of referendums



Sources: 'Referendum Statistics' from the Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, [Turkish Statistical, TÜİK], <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/YayinListe.do?method=YayinListe&alt_id=1049>.

The six referendums in Turkish history were all initiated by state or government authorities and thus none were ‘uncontrolled’. The most ‘controlled’ referendums were the 1961 and 1982 constitutional referendums, held under military rule. The 1982 constitution adopted referendums for the first time as a means for constitutional amendment. The decision to call a referendum remains largely optional, and is mandatory only in cases in which parliamentary approval rests between more than three-fifths and less than two-thirds of the total membership. Rather than being construed as consensus-building instruments, in the post-1983 period referendums have been utilised mainly to resolve political crises as well as being used by the ANAP government to attempt to buttress its declining electoral fortunes (which produced the only ‘no’ vote). In this sense, all Turkish referendums have displayed plebiscitarian elements, including the two conducted under the AKP government. Given their limited use and ‘controlled’ nature, Turkish referendums tend to be ‘pro-hegemonic’ and, as such, Turkey rests more towards the majoritarian angle as regards this variable.

Independent central banks

The extent of central bank independence has arisen as an important indicator of the growing majoritarianism of the AKP government. This is because the government

and President Erdogan have sought to influence the level of interest rates, which are consequential for growth, particularly in the lead-up to elections. Consequently, undermining central bank independence can be considered as increasing the (economic) power of the executive (apart from the question as to whether it would be deleterious for the economy in the long run). Under the Lijphart typology, central bank independence, in relation to freedom in setting monetary policy, is therefore a corollary of dividing power in a political system and hence is identified as a characteristic of the consensus model.⁶⁰⁵ Accordingly, dependent central banks typify the majoritarian model in concentrating power with the executive.

Given the history of a state-led economy, instrumental legal independence⁶⁰⁶ was granted to the Central Bank of Turkey (CBT) only following the crises of 2000–2001. In this sense, the early AKP period had marked a decisive shift towards consensus in terms of this variable. Nevertheless, the gradual personalisation and centralisation of power under the AKP period has led to an erosion of the autonomy of the central bank. This is evidenced by the (widely recognised) political pressure over interest rate setting⁶⁰⁷ and the government’s purges of CBT (and other agencies’) personnel since December 2013 on the allegation that they are *Gülenists*.⁶⁰⁸

4.4 The persistence of majoritarianism and its effects

The above analysis has sought to demonstrate that, despite change, involving frequent praetorian interruptions and political engineering by junta leaders, a consistent feature of the Turkish political system is the endurance of its majoritarian framework of politics. Clearly, the evolution of institutional change and persistence in Turkey is far more multifaceted than can be encapsulated using only the Lijphart typology. However, it provides a common analytical framework for the purposes of categorising and analysing institutional evolution and is useful

⁶⁰⁵ Central bank independence is measured by four groups of variables including 1) the appointment and tenure of the governor, 2) policy formulation, 3) central bank objectives and 4) limits on lending (Lijphart 1999: 235).

⁶⁰⁶ See Law No. 4651, (Resmi Gazete 5 May 2001 No: 24393).

⁶⁰⁷ See, for concerns on central bank credibility, *Reuters* 21 January 2014. For allegations of PM’s interference in interest rate decisions see *CNN-Türk* 23 July 2013; *Financial Times* 2 February 2015.

⁶⁰⁸ Yetkin 3 May 2014; *Reuters* 25 April 2014; *Reuters* 18 January 2014.

for identifying the ‘spine’ of the political system. This section analyses the summary of the findings (Figure 4) and discusses its implications in terms of political competition and religious majoritarianism.

Figure 4: Summary of institutional change in Turkey, 1950–2014

Variable	Majoritarian	Consensus	1950-1960	1961-1980	1983-2001	2002-2014	Shift to majoritarianism
Executive-party dimension							
1. Party system	Two Party system	Multi-Party system	1.4	2.8	3.5	2.1	Yes (distorted by electoral 10% threshold)
2. Cabinets	Single Party majority cabinets system	Power-sharing multi-party coalitions	100%	50%	59%	100%	Yes (since 1961)
3. Executive- Legislative	Dominant executive	Executive-legislature balance of power	3.4	1.0	1.4	5.8	Yes (since 1961)
4. Electoral system	Disproportional first-past-the-post system	Proportional representation	26.0	5.4	11.9	15.5	Yes (since 1961)
5. Interest groups	Informal pluralist interest group interaction	Co-ordination and 'corporatist' interest group interaction	Low	Low	Low	Low	Always majoritarian/no change
Federal-unitary dimension							
6. Federal-unitary	Unitary and centralised government	Federal and decentralised government	1	1	1	1	Always majoritarian/no change
7. Unicameralism- bicameralism	Concentration of power in a unicameral legislature	Division of power between two equally strong but differently constituted houses	1	2	1	1	Always majoritarian except for 1961-1980 interlude
8. Constitutional amendment	Flexible constitution	Rigid constitution	3	3	2.5	2.5	No
9. Direct democracy/ referendum	Low level of public involvement in decision making	High level of public involvement in decision making	0	1	3	2	No
10. Legislative supremacy	Legislature has the final word on the constitutionality of legislation	Legislation subject to a judicial review of their constitutionality by a supreme or constitutional court	High- 1	Medium-3.5	Medium-3	Medium-3	No
11. Central Bank Independence**	Dependent on the executive	Independent central bank	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	No
<p>*To June 2014 **Central Bank independence granted in April 2001.</p> <p>Sources: Lijphart 1999; Flinders 2005; Bulsara & Kissane 2009; Taagepera 2002; Özbudun 2009; Kalaycıoğlu 2005; Laakso & Taagepera 1979; Gallagher & Mitchell 2008; Anayasa Mahkemesi [Constitutional Court of Turkey], <http://www.anayasa.gov.tr/Istatistik/>; 'Election of Representatives Statistics' from the Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [Turkish Statistical Institute, TUIK], <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=1061>; 'Referendum Statistics' from the Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [Turkish Statistical Institute, TUIK], <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/YayinListe.do?method=YayinListe&alt_id=1049>; <Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (T.B.M.M) [Turkish Grand National Assembly of Turkey, TGNA], <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kutuphane/e_kaynaklar_kutuphane_hukumetler.html>; Calculations are my own.</p>							

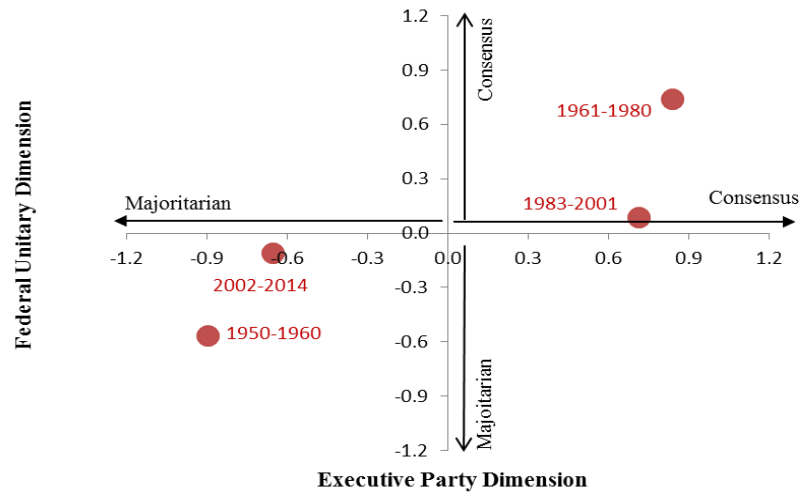
The scores for each dimension, which are shown on Figure 4, were standardised by converting the variables into Z-scores whereby scores above zero indicate higher consensus and negative, lower scores are indicative of majoritarianism.⁶⁰⁹ For the first period (1924–1960) only the 1950s were statistically documented, since the single-party era was a closed one-party authoritarian system of government. As illustrated by Charts 13 and 14, the first period most fully exemplified the majoritarian model, scoring negatively on both of the executive-party and federal unitary dimensions, with highly centralised government and no checks and balances to the sovereignty of the parliamentary majority. The scores suggest a significant shift towards a more consensual model of government in the second period and the gradual return to majoritarianism following the 1980 military coup and the adoption of the 1982 constitution. In the second period the introduction of a separation of powers, judicial review, a PR electoral system and a bicameral parliament were the factors that had a moderating influence on the majoritarianism of the framework established by the 1924 constitution. The subsequent change in the electoral system with the introduction of the 10% threshold and the erosion of the powers of the Constitutional Court were key in terms of the shift towards majoritarianism in the third period. The enhanced majoritarianism of the fourth period (2002–2014) is underpinned by factors such as cabinet duration as well as the highly disproportional results of the 2002 elections, which have occasioned greater executive dominance, concentration and centralisation of power (see Chapter 8 for further discussion of the AKP period).

⁶⁰⁹ See Bulsara & Kissane 2009. The Z-score is calculated in the following way:

$$z = \frac{x - \mu}{\sigma}$$

where: x is the original score; μ is the mean of data set; σ is the standard deviation of the data set.

Chart 10: Majoritarian vs. consensual democracy (composite Z-scores)



Sources: Lijphart 1999; Flinders 2005; Bulsara & Kissane 2009; Taagepera 2002; Özbudun 2009; Kalaycıoğlu 2005; Laakso & Taagepera 1979; Gallagher & Mitchell 2008; Anayasa Mahkemesi [Constitutional Court of Turkey], <<http://www.anayasa.gov.tr/Istatistik/>>; 'Election of Representatives Statistics' from the Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [Turkish Statistical Institute, TÜİK], <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=1061>; 'Referendum Statistics' from the Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [Turkish Statistical Institute, TÜİK], <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/YayinListe.do?method=YayinListe&alt_id=1049>; <Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (T.B.M.M) [Turkish Grand National Assembly of Turkey, TGNA], <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kutuphane/e_kaynaklar_kutuphane_hukumetler.html>; Calculations are my own.

Chart 11: Overall composite score



Sources: Lijphart 1999; Flinders 2005; Bulsara & Kissane 2009; Taagepera 2002; Özbudun 2009; Kalaycıoğlu 2005; Laakso & Taagepera 1979; Gallagher & Mitchell 2008; Anayasa Mahkemesi [Constitutional Court of Turkey], <<http://www.anayasa.gov.tr/Istatistik/>>; 'Election of Representatives Statistics' from the Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [Turkish Statistical Institute, TÜİK], <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=1061>; 'Referendum Statistics' from the Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [Turkish Statistical Institute, TÜİK], <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/YayinListe.do?method=YayinListe&alt_id=1049>; <Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (T.B.M.M) [Turkish Grand National Assembly of Turkey, TGNA], <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kutuphane/e_kaynaklar_kutuphane_hukumetler.html>; Calculations are my own.

However, it can be argued that there has been greater continuity than implied by the typology, since both the shift to greater consensus in the second period and majoritarianism from the third period are over-represented and under-represented, respectively. This is attributable firstly to the limitations of the typology, since Lijphart places equal weight on each variable, as well as the overall consistency of

the typology.⁶¹⁰ Secondly, it reflects the hybrid nature of the Turkish regime. A crucial dynamic, which cannot be captured by the Lijphart typology for instance, is related to the role of the military within the Turkish political system. The military, as the self-designated guardians of the state order, played a central role in Turkish political life as a type of ‘veto player’ or tutelary power. The military has undertaken various direct interventions, including in 1960, 1971 and 1980, along with the 1997 ‘post-modern’ coup by memorandum, in which the Islamist-led coalition government was forced to resign. During the AKP period, there has been a process of civilianisation or push-back of the military (though the irreversibility and permanence of this remains to be seen) with various measures adopted including the Europeanisation reforms undertaken since 2001 and the 2007 *Ergenekon* trials⁶¹¹ that resulted in the imprisonment of senior members of the general staff. This process was catalysed especially following an e-memorandum issued by the military in April 2007 against the AKP government’s efforts to appoint its own presidential candidate. The pacification of the military removed an important veto player within the system that could constrain the realm of political action, as was experienced by the AKP’s predecessor, the RP, in 1997.

In addition, under the typology the institutions introduced by the junta leaders in 1961 are classified as moving the system more towards the consensus model. However, this move had reflected the intention of establishing bureaucratic tutelage as the primary means of checking the parliamentary majority, not an attempt to introduce greater pluralism and consensus government. Characterising the Constitutional Court, for example, as typifying a consensual institution within the Turkish context is therefore problematic given its constitutive ideological underpinnings. Indeed, the Court has acted in a manner antithetical to deepening consensus democracy in being ‘selectively activist, protecting social and political members of a particular coalition but not other political groups’ and adopting a narrow take on civil liberties which has entailed blocking the increased representation of excluded groups.⁶¹² It is this dynamic of judicial politics in Turkey that has complicated efforts to analyse the constitutional amendments and

⁶¹⁰ For similar critiques see Bulsara & Kissane 2009.

⁶¹¹ Cizre & Walker 2010; Gürsoy 2011.

⁶¹² Belge 2006.

interventions in the judiciary during the AKP period. However, neither the tutelary dimension of the Court nor the AKP's erosion of judicial independence can be classified as representing pluralistic or consensus government.

Instead, it can be argued that at the heart of the matter are two dominant conceptions of Turkish democracy as reflected in the 2011–12 constitutional debates between, chiefly, the AKP and the CHP (see Chapter 3). Bourdieu has stated that the construction of a state involves the manifestation of itself 'simultaneously in objectivity, in the form of specific organisational structures and mechanisms and in subjectivity in the form of mental structures adapted to them'.⁶¹³ In this sense, the subjective dimensions of institutional structures should also be considered. It can be argued that one perspective sees democracy in a Rousseauian sense, resting sovereignty solely with the 'general will' or 'nation' – in effect, meaning the majority.⁶¹⁴ The other perspective is still majoritarian but also harbours a Rousseauian distrust of the majority and seeks to constrain it through a system of guardianship (as opposed to liberal checks on majority); the 'general will' or majority is supreme but is ignorant and needs to be 'enlightened'.⁶¹⁵ Neither approach to democracy contains a consensual or pluralistic approach to government, and both are in essence majoritarian. This in turn should be understood within the context of the 1924 constitution, which as a 'nationalising' constitution left little room for pluralism. Lacking a liberal legacy, Turkish constitutionalism has been inherently majoritarian at its heart, therefore, positing the absolute sovereignty of what is understood as the Turkish–Muslim nation. The existence of seemingly contradictory political institutions which reflect both the specific historical experience and the dominant institutional impulse does not negate the weight of the latter. As such, it can be argued that the 1961 changes did not mark a major departure from the majoritarian heart of the system. Indeed, even during the least majoritarian periods, usually times of coalition government, majoritarianism was apparent in the heavily centralised and unitary administration, the lack of interest group participation in policy, the executive as the locus of power and the preference for one-party government or minimal-winning coalitions.

⁶¹³ Bourdieu 1994.

⁶¹⁴ Özbudun & Gençkaya 2009: 12.

⁶¹⁵ Rousseau 1968.

In addition, it can be argued that the shift towards majoritarianism in the third period was under-represented owing to the statistical impact of the short-lived coalition governments resulting from party system fragmentation in the 1990s. The wider pattern of periods of short-lived coalitions and longer-lasting one-party stable governments is suggestive of the majoritarian, zero-sum logic of political competition imparted by the political system. This is attributable to the fact that the state remains the centre of rent distribution, underpinned by the centralised structure, the importance of the state in the economy, weak interest groups and the prevalence of clientilistic ties. The ‘winner-takes-all’ dynamic is reflected in the disdain for power-sharing and is conducive to majoritarian rule since it facilitates the accumulation of power when government office is captured.

This has important implications for how political parties shape their strategies and hence the nature of party competition. Michael Hechter has argued that ‘governments in majoritarian democracies ... tend to produce collective goods that are earmarked for the electorally dominant cultural group’ since ‘the median voter belongs to the cultural majority: he speaks the dominant language, attends the dominant church, and lives in a core rather than a peripheral region’.⁶¹⁶ Indeed, this can be seen particularly in the case of the parties on the right, with their employment of the discourse of the prominence of the ‘national will’, referring to the (Sunni) Muslim–Turkish majority. In fact, conservative, ‘right-wing’ and (from the 1990s in particular) Islamist parties have been the ‘natural’ parties of government, holding power either by themselves or in coalitions for around 84% of the time since the transition to multipartism. This is not to say that there was a natural homogenous majority vote waiting to be captured. The so-called ‘99% Muslim’ majority of the country, of course, was and is at most a ‘census majority’ and highly heterogeneous (on the basis of class, language, sect, religion and so on). However, parties wanting to capture majority votes could adopt the strategy of appealing to an imagined majority. For instance, for most of the multi-party period the expansion of the budgets of the PRA was supported by political parties across the spectrum on the basis of this continued focus on a Muslim majority (see Chapter

⁶¹⁶ Hechter 2004: 28–29.

5). Religious education was also expanded owing to similar dynamics. These in turn not only served to create their own constituencies and vested interests, expanding the infrastructure of religion, but also reproduced and augmented the religious majoritarianism of the state, leading to the persistence of the religious delineations of the community.

Constitutional changes in the fourth period represent not an overhaul of the 1982 constitution but an erosion of the (*relatively* speaking) anti-majoritarian institutions established in 1961 and, in some sense, a return to the pure majoritarianism of the 1924 constitutional framework in removing any remaining checks on parliamentary sovereignty. While Turkey's EU membership efforts and integration within the global economy have, in certain periods, fostered a degree of consensus and pluralism on the political as well as the societal level, changes have been largely 'a product of institutional adaptation, but "adaptation" implies that some core institutions have remained unchanged'.⁶¹⁷ This is clearly demonstrated by the ease with which the AKP has been able to undermine the judiciary or autonomous regulatory agencies and the independence of the central bank by representing them as embodying sectional interests that undermine majority wishes or the 'national will'.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to demonstrate: i) how the 'nationalising' constitutive vision of the foundational years of the state influenced the institutional framework; ii) the ways in which this institutional framework has evolved, employing Lijphart's typology to do so; and iii) how this vision and framework in turn has influenced the logic of government and party political competition. The analysis has been useful in distinguishing longer-term historical patterns. Turkey's heavily majoritarian 1924 constitutional framework was both foundational and critical in setting the bounds of its institutional evolution and has also been a key reference point particularly for the Turkish right. The persistence of this majoritarian 'spine' despite change as identified through the Lijphart framework suggests, therefore,

⁶¹⁷ Bulsara & Kissane 2009.

strong path-dependent effects. This meant that, despite the 1961 military-imposed changes, Europeanisation reforms and the 2000–2001 economic crisis, a majoritarian logic of party political competition endured that involved a disdain for power-sharing. This, in turn, facilitated over time the augmentation of religious majoritarianism, as parties were in effect incentivised to develop strategies to appeal to an imagined Muslim majority highlighted by the prevalence of the ‘national will’ discourse.

Chapter 5: Embedding religious majoritarianism: the role of the ulema

5.1 Introduction

The following chapters focus on how the extent of social closure became reflected in the incorporation of a specific institution within the state – the Presidency of Religious Affairs (PRA) – and demonstrate the ways in which it played a key role in shaping and constraining political actors and strategies, and articulating and reproducing religious group boundaries. Despite its important and expanding role, the PRA, comprising the official ulema, which can be defined simply as religious scholars and functionaries, has been neglected in Turkish studies. Indeed, if not overlooked, the PRA has been considered as merely a submissive apparatus of the ‘laic state’ for the purpose of controlling religion. This chapter proceeds by firstly situating the role of the ulema in a historical context, drawing lines of continuity with the religious institutions of the Ottoman state. Secondly, it examines the role of the ulema within the Turkish Republic. It is suggested here that, rather than acting in a submissive manner, the ulema, as in the Ottoman period, have utilised new resources provided by the modern state and have been involved in a dynamic struggle within the state to expand their domain of action, displaying agency of their own and pursuing the Islamisation of public space within the Republic.

5.2 Re-assessing the role of the ulema

Legally, the PRA is tasked with carrying out ‘affairs related to the beliefs, worship and moral foundations of Islam, to enlighten Turkish society about religion and to manage places of worship’.⁶¹⁸ PRA officials and proponents maintain that the organisation is tasked with and merely operates in the domain of ‘beliefs and prayers’.⁶¹⁹ It is possible to observe through media reports alone that the PRA’s role is far more expansive, both domestically and in terms of foreign affairs.⁶²⁰ For instance, the PRA has issued views on abortion, mothers’ milk banks, the Kurdish

⁶¹⁸ Gözaydın 2008. For the latest organisational law of the PRA see Law 6002, (Resmi Gazete 13 July 2010 No: 27640).

⁶¹⁹ Interviews with PRA personnel and related academics during March 2013.

⁶²⁰ The PRA operates across the globe via its overseas wing, the Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB), with over 1,000 personnel on duty abroad.

question and language, organ transplants and whether Alevi *cemevis* can be considered places of worship. Organisationally, the PRA consists of central and provincial units as well as organisations that operate outside Turkey. The main service units of the PRA consist of the following:

- The Higher Board of Religious Affairs, an advisory committee to the PRA comprising 16 elected distinguished religious scholars that is the highest decision-making body. Its main duty is to research religious issues, answer religious questions and issue *fatwas*.
- The Board for the Investigation of Copies of the Qur'an, charged with examining and ensuring the accuracy of copies of the Qur'an that are to be published in written and audio-visual form by the PRA and other organisations.
- The Department of Religious Services, charged with 'enlightening' and educating Turkish citizens about religion, giving guidance and communicating of religious messages (*irşad and tebliğ*), and organising conferences on religious issues. The Office of Family Guidance was established in 2002 'to support healthy family life'. It also determines the correct times of prayer, sacred days, worship and mosque-related services such as the maintenance of mosques, the administering of Ramadan programmes and preaching services, Friday sermons and funeral services. The content of sermons has been centrally controlled but in 2006 the PRA relaxed the rules, enabling imams to prepare and deliver their own sermons provided they are approved by muftis.
- The Department of Religious Education, responsible for the educational and professional development of religious functionaries as well as running Qur'an courses and religious education centres for the public.
- The Department of the Pilgrimage, charged with organising services related to citizens performing pilgrimage.
- The Department of Religious Publications, responsible for published material intended for 'enlightening' society about religion.
- The Department of External Relations, which provides religious services to Turkish citizens abroad.⁶²¹

⁶²¹ Erdem 2008: 209–10; TDVİA; Er 2008.

The ulema – religious scholars and functionaries – has been described as the transmitters and protectors of Islamic learning – which they play a fundamental role in shaping and defining – and as the guardians of tradition, thereby constituting a key pillar of the social order within Muslim populations.⁶²² Despite the plethora of scholarly works on religio-political movements there has been a neglect, at least until recently, of the role of the religious establishment, the ulema, in Muslim communities. This oversight reflects two key factors. First, owing to the focus on modernisation/secularisation and westernisation, the ulema were commonly regarded as having been consigned to history, or to only a marginalised and anachronistic status within the modern and secular nation-state. The ulema, it was argued, had been confined to mosques or religious schools (*medreses*) owing to the secularisation policies of nation-state builders.⁶²³ Second, since the emergence of religio-political movements in the 1970s, scholars have tended to focus on ‘grassroots’ Islamisation and Islamists movements, widely regarded as comprising reactions to the secular state or the effects of modernisation. This reflected presumptions of a sharp demarcation between state and society, upon which the status of ulema, often integrated within the state machinery, sat uncomfortably. Such evaluations further served to reinforce perceptions of ulema as a marginalised and passive institution under the control of secular elites and differentiated from the more radical Islamists.⁶²⁴

Similar theoretical assumptions about the Turkish Republic’s ostensibly secular nature have also underpinned the oversight of the ulema and reductionist approaches within Turkish historiography, despite the PRA’s role as a vast state institution charged with overseeing all religious activity and ‘enlightening’ the public on the Islamic faith. As Bein has noted, Turkish historiography typically adopted a dismissive or negative approach towards the Ottoman ulema that presented them as reactionaries, opposed to reform and modernisation.⁶²⁵ With the

⁶²² Kara 2005: 163; Hatina 2009: 3.

⁶²³ Hatina 2009: 4–5; Keddie 1972: 7.

⁶²⁴ For example, Olivier Roy argues that, unlike the ‘anticlerical’ Islamists, the ulema accepted modernity and allowed for positive laws in areas not covered by sharia (Roy 1994; Keddie 1972: 13).

⁶²⁵ Bein notes that Islamists, on the other hand, have depicted the ulema more favourably as the victims of an anti-religious attack, chiefly by the CUP (Bein 2013).

establishment of the Republic and the adoption of secularisation reforms, by the 1930s the concept of ulema had been abandoned by the one-party regime.⁶²⁶ However, at the same time, the role of the ulema in the Turkish case differ in some significant ways to the examples in the wider Muslim world. Most importantly, owing to the secularisation of the legal framework in the Turkish case, the PRA's domain of action is significantly constrained compared to ulema operating in most Muslim majority contexts (with the exception of Central Asian states). For instance, in countries such as Egypt and Pakistan, where personal status law are derived from Islamic law ulema are able to issue legally binding judgments based on Islamic doctrine (*fatwas*). The role of the ulema in theocratic systems such as Saudi Arabia and Iran is clearly more extensive. The comparatively more narrow and limited domain of the PRA is partly related to the anti-clericalist and positivist approaches within factions of the nation-state builders of the early Republic, despite the fact that Sunni Islam was regarded by all as constitutive of nascent Turkish national identity. This is clearly observed within the debates of the constitutional framers, as discussed in Chapter 3, where the conservatism of the ulema and clericalism are seen as contributing to the decline of the Ottoman state, alongside emphasis on the Muslim identity of the Turkish nation.

The limited number of scholarly works focused on the PRA, as well as more general studies on state–religion relations in Turkey, have commonly conceived of it as an apparatus of the ‘Kemalist’/‘laic’ state for the purposes of controlling religion, serving as a legitimising mechanism and transforming/nationalising religious life,⁶²⁷ in contrast to the Islamic Ottoman state. For modernisation scholars such as Berkes, the PRA's establishment reflected the modernisation agenda as a means to lead religious reform.⁶²⁸ Others, however, have tended to ignore the PRA within the meta-narrative of top-down sweeping secularisation implemented by nation-state builders who possessed the positivist ideology of secularism and were determined to ‘cleanse’ the public sphere of religion, confining it to the private sphere.⁶²⁹ Within such analyses the PRA, if mentioned,

⁶²⁶ Bein 2013: 152.

⁶²⁷ Gözaydın 2009; Kara 2008; Aktay 2000; Koylu 2005; Norton 1988: 403; Mardin 1982: 171–98; Seufert 2006: 137–38.

⁶²⁸ Berkes 1964: 490.

⁶²⁹ Yavuz 2000.

is regarded as an inconsistency or anomaly. For Kuru, the PRA is a part of the ‘assertive secularist agenda to keep Islam under control’,⁶³⁰ while Axiallis argues, similarly, that it serves the purpose of ‘perpetuating the dominant political ideology of Turkey: Kemalist secularism’.⁶³¹ In her study of the PRA Gözaydın concludes, through an analysis based on the concept of laicism, that the institution is a ‘means of “securing” the secular nature of the state in Turkey’.⁶³² Islamist theologian Ismail Kara has likewise claimed that the Republic constituted a break with the Ottoman past with regards to religion, with the ‘laic’ state, through the PRA, attempting to confine, dominate and oppress religion, while transforming religious life to establish a ‘national and modern religion’ and use it as a legitimating tool.⁶³³

Nevertheless, as recent scholarly works on the religious establishments across the Muslim world have demonstrated, the reality of the role played by the ulema is more complex than reductionist approaches allow in three key aspects. First, the bureaucratisation and absorption of the ulema within the modern nation-state, despite being transformative in terms of functions and status, represents some degree of continuity with Islamic history. Second, new studies, including those on the Egyptian ulema at al-Azhar and the Pakistani *deobandi* ulema, have demonstrated that the ‘decline’ of the authority of the ulema has been relatively less than that previously assumed.⁶³⁴ Accordingly, in one of the most important recent studies on the role of the ulema within modern-day Islam, Zaman has argued that the question is not whether the authority of the ulema has declined or increased, but ‘how that authority is constructed, argued, put on display, and constantly defended’.⁶³⁵ Rather than a passive acceptance by the ulema of attempts under the modern nation-state to control the religious field and subordinate them, a far more dynamic relationship of conflict, cooperation and strategic collaboration can be observed. Similarly, what was lost in terms of status and autonomy was supplemented by gains such as access to the resources of the modern state which involved the creation of a religious monopoly, allowing the ulema to expand and

⁶³⁰ Kuru 2009: 166–68; Also, for similar views, see Avcı 2006: 66; Rabasa & Larrabee 2008: 11; Axiallis 2014: 49.

⁶³¹ Axiallis 2014: 49.

⁶³² Gözaydın 2008; Gözaydın 2009: 273–75. See also Baran 2010; Başgil 1960; Feyzioğlu 1987.

⁶³³ Kara 2008; Kara 2000: 46. See also Gurbey 2011: 44.

⁶³⁴ Hatina 2003.

⁶³⁵ Zaman 2010: xx.

re-assert themselves following the liberalisation of politics and also more opportunistically.⁶³⁶ In the case of al-Azhar in Egypt, for instance, this meant a reassertion of the ulema in the post-Nasser era, taking advantage of Islamisation under Sadat while bargaining with state elites to expand the institution's domain of action and monopoly over religious life in order to combat the challenge by radical Islamists.⁶³⁷ Third, recent studies have shown that the line between the ulema and Islamists is more blurred than previously assumed, involving a greater degree of cooperation than conflict. Moving on from dichotomous scholarly approaches and the emphasis on bottom-up reaction/Islamisation by religio-political movements, the ulema's complex relations with Islamists as well as top-down Islamisation are also important for the understanding of the politicisation of religious identities and the emergence and sustenance of religio-politics.⁶³⁸ As Hatina has asserted, 'the struggle of the "ulama" to set moral limits to the national impetus in Arab societies, prevent the erosion of the Islamic ethos in the public sphere, and delegitimise the foreign culture and missionary activity had the effect of preparing a more responsive environment for the Islamists in which to promote their cause'.⁶³⁹ Conversely, it is important to note that the ulema, while possessing more agency than typically assumed and being shaped by institutional memory and interests over time, is not considered as a monolithic entity itself. For instance, in the Ottoman period there were divisions between conservatives and reformists over matters such as support for Abdulhamid and the CUP, and in the Republic religious functionaries have displayed support for different political parties and movements.⁶⁴⁰

5.3 The historical development of the ulema and Turkish historiography

Despite the transformation of the status and authority of the ulema with the establishment of an ostensibly laic republic, the PRA represents an important case study in terms of deciphering patterns of change and continuity with the Ottoman period and Islamic history as well as the embedding of religious majoritarianism in

⁶³⁶ Zeghal 1999; Zaman 2010; Hatina 2003; Moustafa 2000.

⁶³⁷ Hatina 2003; Moustafa 2000.

⁶³⁸ Zaman 2010; Hatina 2009.

⁶³⁹ Hatina 2009b: 264.

⁶⁴⁰ For example, Borak 2004; Özkes 2012; Özdemir 2014; Sevva 2003.

the nation-state project. The ulema were a key pillar of the social order within the Ottoman state, where religion and state were conceptualised as a unity and as inseparable⁶⁴¹ (compared with their bifurcation within the Christian world). The lack of a formal designated institutional authority in Islam, equivalent to the church within Christianity, had nevertheless meant that the authority of the ulema was (and is) not always recognised or accepted. Historians of Islamic history have traced the emergence of the institution of the ulema to some time around the eleventh century, or the Abbasid dynasty (749–1258), and connected it with the expansion of the *medreses*.⁶⁴² The rise of the ulema, however, had been concomitant with its greater integration within the state apparatus and bureaucratisation, rather than with the establishment of an autonomous or independent authority. What developed was a dynamic and symbiotic relationship with the military rulers, who sought to enhance their authority and legitimacy through religion, while the ulema gained access to state power and resources through which they could shape the community construct. In particular, the ulema played the role of a conservative force that could reinforce and protect the authority of the Muslim sovereigns through the propagation of adherence to the principle of prohibition of revolt against the ruler in order to avoid civil strife (*fitna*).⁶⁴³

It was in the sixteenth century, following the conquest of Egypt which brought an end to the Abbasid Caliphate, that the Ottoman sultan's status as the caliph of all Muslims had been bolstered. Subsequently, greater centralisation and supervision of the *medrese* system under the Ottoman state had enhanced the integration of the ulema, most of whom had become the state's salaried officials.⁶⁴⁴ In its heyday, the Sunni ulema in the Ottoman Empire referred to a vast network of institutions headed by the *Meşihat-i İslâmiyye*, office of the top religious authority the *Şeyhülislam*, comprising judicial (as *kadı* and *kazasker*) and educational (at the *medreses*) responsibilities alongside the muftis (ulema charged with giving Islamic legal judgements known as *fatwas*), the imams, preachers, Sufi sheikhs and *waqfs* (religious charities).⁶⁴⁵ The ulema constituted a privileged class, enjoying

⁶⁴¹ Kara 18 July 2010.

⁶⁴² Keddie 1972; Berkey 2001; Hatina 2003.

⁶⁴³ Hatina 2003.

⁶⁴⁴ Bein 2011.

⁶⁴⁵ Kara 2005: 163; Yakut 2005: 33–38.

exemption from taxes and military service as well as protection from the appropriation of their wealth by the sultan. More importantly, the *Şeyhülislam*, as the chief religious authority, played a crucial role in the legitimation of the sovereign, issuing *fatwas* and ensuring that laws were in compliance with Islam.

The extent of the power of the ulema within the Ottoman Empire has remained a contested issue amongst scholars, particularly owing to the level of the dependence on the state. In theory, the *Şeyhülislam*, who was ultimately an appointee of the sultan, could decide to refuse to issue a *fatwa* and contravene the sultan's will, acting as a constraint on the sovereign. Despite cases of the ulema playing a role in the dethroning of sultans, contravention of the sovereign's authority was, in reality, rare. Consequently, it could be argued that the 'legitimatory force of Islam in the Ottoman polity was a distinctively ambivalent one'.⁶⁴⁶ A case in point was the existence, alongside sharia law, of administrative laws of the state,⁶⁴⁷ *kanun*, which were decrees of the sultan that did not need the ulema's seal of approval.⁶⁴⁸ Pixley has asserted that the strength of the office should not be confused with that of its holder, and that the *Şeyhülislam* was 'little more than a sacred figurehead in the affairs of state', while 'Islamic legal theory, as represented by the *Şeyhülislam*, was a tool of the empire, readily used or reshaped in order to befit the circumstances of the moment'.⁶⁴⁹ Conversely, it has been suggested, based on the evidence of decisions made by muftis and *kadis*, that the ulema were able to carve a sphere of authority and had the ability to criticise the government on the basis of their religious authority and elevation as a key pillar within the Ottoman state.⁶⁵⁰ In this vein, Winter has argued that 'they did not possess political power vis-à-vis the rulers, and they could be bought or intimidated. Yet even the most determined and tyrannical sultan ... could not bend the principles of the sharia to their will without being criticised.'⁶⁵¹

⁶⁴⁶ Cook quoted in Sunar & Toprak April 2007: 4.

⁶⁴⁷ Sunar & Toprak April 2007: 4.

⁶⁴⁸ Gözaydın 2009: 13.

⁶⁴⁹ Pixley 1976.

⁶⁵⁰ Berkey 2001; Winter 2009; Hatina 2009.

⁶⁵¹ Winter 2009: 31.

In parallel with the contestations over the ulema's power, a prevalent view has been the transformation and decline of the institution with the onset of the modernisation reforms in the Ottoman Empire and, crucially, with the establishment of the Republic. Similar to the reforms undertaken in Egypt by Muhammad Ali (1805–48) to reduce the power of the ulema and bring them under his control, three key reforms in the Ottoman case were: i) the abolition of the Janissary corps in 1826, robbing the ulema of its military allies; ii) the centralisation and expansion of the state and the reorganisation of the civil bureaucracy; iii) the declining *medreses* and the emergence of new educated elites from the new military schools trumping *medrese* graduates.⁶⁵² The establishment of new 'secular' courts and schools, as well as institutions such as the Charitable Foundations Administration (*Evkaf-ı hümayun nezareti*), in 1826 as part of modernisation reforms had begun to encroach on the powers and domain of the ulema, while curbing its administrative autonomy and economic power.

Nonetheless, against the thesis of decline, it can be argued that centralising reforms had also expanded the monopoly of the *Şeyhülislam* over religious life in the Empire. Indeed, according to Kushner, the remit and power of the ulema was accentuated as the central state sought to both impose greater control over the institution and at the same time facilitate reform schemes.⁶⁵³ An example of the latter was the creation in 1866 of the Council of Shaykhs (*Meclis-i Meşâyih*) to supervise and make appointments to the Sufi brotherhoods or *tariqats* (religious orders).⁶⁵⁴ In addition, the ulema were represented in various decision-making bodies, played an active role in modernisation reforms and the promulgation of the 1876 constitution, and in fact often filled positions within the new 'secular/modern' or rival educational and legal institutions that had been established in parallel with traditional religious ones. Despite challenges to their authority and sphere of activity, the ulema had been able to 'hold their own'⁶⁵⁵ with flexibility, such as in accepting canonical law for areas not covered by sharia but resisting encroachments on private law.⁶⁵⁶ Consequently, while modernisation appeared to

⁶⁵² Keddie 1972.

⁶⁵³ Kushner 1987: 55.

⁶⁵⁴ Kara 1992; TDVİA.

⁶⁵⁵ Kushner 1987.

⁶⁵⁶ Shaham 2009: 187; Hatina 2009b.

have challenged the monopoly of the ulema over areas such as education and justice, it also created new spaces and opportunities for them.⁶⁵⁷

The decline of the empire, the expansion of the state and encroachments upon the traditional sphere of activity had precipitated greater debates within the ulema over its future and reforms. Common interests such as saving the state (and hence Islam) and centralisation had underpinned the cooperation of some members of the ulema with the modernising reformers in a manner similar to that of their counterparts at al-Azhar in Egypt.⁶⁵⁸ The ulema were by no means a monolithic entity, and had become increasingly divided between traditionalists, who advocated a defensive strategy with incremental change, those pushing extensive reforms and rapid overhaul of the *medrese* system, and those who opposed or joined active politics by becoming members of political parties and opposition groups.⁶⁵⁹ The more liberal political environment of the second constitutional period had precipitated debate within the ulema and Ottoman elites over the relationship between religion and state and the need to reform the *Meşihat* and *medreses*. The ulema had come under increasing criticism, not just from positivists and radicals within the CUP, which had assumed power in 1908, but also from Islamists and conservative intellectuals, who censured what they dismissed as clericalism and obstructionist conservatism leading to the decline of the Empire.⁶⁶⁰ Despite Abdulhamid's pan-Islamism, towards the end of his rule significant numbers within the ulema had joined the opposition CUP and supported the restoration of the constitution. Over time, however, relations, particularly between the traditionalist ulema and the CUP, worsened, deteriorating further after the 1909 anti-CUP rebellion, which had been supported by parts of the religious establishment and *medreses*.⁶⁶¹ Nonetheless, those of the ulema's reformists who had allied with the CUP, such as Musa Kazım Efendi, had also gained the opportunity to implement the radical reforms they had advocated, at least until the Unionist regime deteriorated into a dictatorship.⁶⁶²

⁶⁵⁷ Kushner 1987.

⁶⁵⁸ Moustafa notes similar processes at Al-Azhar in Egypt (Moustafa 2000: 4).

⁶⁵⁹ Examples include the staunchly anti-CUP traditionalist Mustafa Sabri Efendi (who became Şeyhülislam in 1919 and also later in 1920) and the pro-CUP reformist Musa Kazım Efendi.

⁶⁶⁰ Bein 2007.

⁶⁶¹ Mertcan 2013: 64.

⁶⁶² Bein 2009: 31; Erşahin 2008.

5.4 The Turkish Republic and the PRA

The nascent modern nation-state involved a transformation of the locus of sovereignty, new forms of power, territorial centralisation, as well as the introduction of rationalised bureaucracies (described as embodying what Weber has termed rational-legal domination)⁶⁶³ that sought to penetrate all aspects of social life, including the family, and to encroach on the traditional domains of the ulema. Simultaneously, the ulema was facing further challenges to their authority from growing anticlericalism and the (first generation) Islamists who, during the late Ottoman period, had contested their monopoly over religious knowledge, calling for a renewed focus on original religious texts. In the last days of the Empire the CUP had continued the centralisation and modernisation efforts of their predecessors, reforms which were later to form the basis of modernisation efforts under the new Republic. This was the driving logic of CUP intellectuals such as Ziya Gökalp, who had advocated the reform of the office of the *Şeyhülislam*, arguing in effect for the reduction of its remit to beliefs and worship, whilst ending its involvement in the worldly matters of politics and, particularly, its legal authority by according legislative functions to secular authorities.⁶⁶⁴ Gökalp's proposal was based on a (novel) reinterpretation of Islamic texts and history that was contested by the ulema, who argued that Islam differentiated between piety (*diyanet*) and jurisprudence.⁶⁶⁵ Following the outbreak of WWI and the suppression of opposition, the CUP gained the opportunity during its congress in 1916 to push through its reform agenda, including Gökalp's proposals. Consequently, it was decided that the *Meşihat*'s role should be confined to belief and worship and the supervision of three institutions, the *medreses*, the *tekkes* (lodges) and mosques, while in 1917 control over the sharia courts was transferred to the Justice Ministry. Following the collapse of the CUP government after the end of WWI the traditionalist ulema taken action to reverse these reforms, including reassigning sharia courts to the *Şeyhülislam*. In parallel with the efforts of Istanbul, however, the new nationalist government in Ankara had pushed ahead with its state-building efforts along the lines established by the CUP and Gökalp's

⁶⁶³ Mann 2003.

⁶⁶⁴ Yakut 2005: 199–201; Ziya Gökalp quoted in Erşahin 2008.

⁶⁶⁵ Erşahin 2008: 189.

proposals. On 2 May 1920 the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations (*Şeriye ve Evkaf Vekaleti*, MoRF) was established and, despite its narrower official remit, it was still a significant authority, encompassing both the *fatwa* authority of the *Şeyhülislam* and control of the charitable foundations. The minister's status was similar to that of the *Şeyhülislam* in being second after the prime minister, and, as head of the Sharia Committee (*Şeriye Encümeni*) within the legislature, he was to give opinions on all matters.⁶⁶⁶

5.4.1 Increasing institutionalisation of the ulema within the state

Recent revisionist historical accounts have demonstrated that the collapse of traditional empires and the transition to modern nation-states were not as destructive for the ulema in the Muslim world as commonly thought.⁶⁶⁷ The reconfiguration of the status of the ulema varied across the Muslim world, with the 'nationalising' (and at times anti-clerical) state-builders, such as in Turkey or Egypt, attempting to bring religious institutions entirely under central control, while in the monarchical regimes in the Persian Gulf and North Africa the ulema played a more fundamental role in state-building itself.⁶⁶⁸ In the Turkish case, the establishment of the PRA in place of the MoRF on 3 March 1924 has been commonly regarded as a turning point, sealing the long-term decline of the ulema⁶⁶⁹. The foundational law of the PRA, Law 429, had delineated its domain as 'faith and worship' and the administration of all religious organisations, while conferring all legal authority to the TGNA. Meanwhile, the sphere of activity of the ulema had been further narrowed by the secularisation of the legal framework, the unification of education leading to the closure of *medreses* and further curbing of financial autonomy following the establishment of a separate Directorate

⁶⁶⁶ Kara 2008: 61–63.

⁶⁶⁷ Hatina 2009: 11.

⁶⁶⁸ For the case of Al-Azhar in Egypt see Moustafa 2000.

⁶⁶⁹ The justification for the abolition of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, part of the same bill proposing restrictions on the military's involvement in politics, was based on the stated rationale that the interference of religion and the military in politics 'is objected to by most civilised nations and regarded as disadvantageous'. For the proposal ZC 3.3.1340: 21; for discussions: ZC 3.3.1340: 23–26. Karaman 2008: 284.

General of Foundations (DoF).⁶⁷⁰ According to some PRA functionaries⁶⁷¹ and Islamist scholars, such a narrowing of authority made the PRA, as a department tied to the office of the prime minister, incomparable to the office of the *Şeyhülislam*, which, as a key pillar of the Ottoman state, had been on a par with the Grand Vezir, with extensive powers over education and law.⁶⁷² Perhaps reflecting the priorities of the new regime, the administrative structure of the PRA was not specified until the 1927 Budget Law, while the first organisational law of the PRA (Law 2800) was adopted only in 1935. In 1931 the PRA's remit was narrowed further with the transfer of the management and personnel of all mosques and prayer rooms (*Hademe-i Hayrat*), totalling 4,503 personnel, to the DoF.

Despite the secularising reforms, however, the ruling CHP elites had continued the Ottoman state's practice of relying on the ulema as an important mechanism for the generation of legitimacy and support for reforms. Documentation of the period demonstrates the PRA's role in legitimising modernisation reforms and routine state policies. Examples include a 1924 sermon to pray for the salvation and felicity of the nation and Republic following the abolition of the Caliphate;⁶⁷³ a 1928 circular by the PRA to muftis to encourage the public to give hides of sacrificed animals during Eid al-Adha to the Turkish Air Force;⁶⁷⁴ a 1939 circular to muftis to encourage private saving and domestic consumption;⁶⁷⁵ requests in 1926 for the PRA to issue statements on the permissibility of praying wearing a hat or without a head covering.⁶⁷⁶ Similarly, a 1944 circular to muftis illustrates how the PRA propagated the new nationalist and Republican values whilst demanding loyalty and submission to the state. After describing sorcery and fortune-telling as

⁶⁷⁰ Article 6 of Law 429. See ZC 3.3.1340: 22. This marked a process that had begun with the modernisation reforms in the late Ottoman Empire. The Charitable Foundations Administration was established by Mahmud II in 1826 as part of the modernisation reforms of the era, centralising the organisation and administration of the charitable foundations. A key driver of the reform was the wish to utilise the economic potential of the foundations, which was significant, and channel resources to other parts of the state, and, importantly, to constrain the power of the religious establishment by curbing their financial autonomy. See TDVİA; Kara 1992.

⁶⁷¹ Interviews with Subaşı and publications; Yazıcıoğlu 2013: 198. Other PRA representatives have stressed continuity with the Ottoman tradition of state–religion interaction (Bardakoğlu 2008; Erdem 2008; Karaman 2008). See also Coskun 2005.

⁶⁷² Kara 2008: 61–64.

⁶⁷³ PMAD 7/3/1924.

⁶⁷⁴ PMAD 7/3/1928; PMAD 16/10/1947.

⁶⁷⁵ PMAD 20/2/1939.

⁶⁷⁶ PMAD 10/4/1926)

superstitious beliefs that have no place in Islam, the PRA declared Islam a rational religion which dictated the love of the fatherland [*vatan*] as well as willingness to give one's life for god and the fatherland. Being a Muslim, it concluded, meant obeying the orders of the authorities, respecting elders and obeying and loving god and the prophet.⁶⁷⁷ Numerous heads of the PRA have voiced criticism of these practices, lamenting that they can have a diminishing effect on the institution's standing and authority.⁶⁷⁸

The role of the PRA as a legitimating apparatus of the state continued in the multi-party era, together with the relaxation of restrictions of religious activity towards the end of the one-party period. Documentation of the multi-party period comprises abundant examples of PRA circulars on topics as varied as encouraging people to abide by traffic rules, sending children to nurseries, 'blood' feuds and forest fires.⁶⁷⁹ Equally, a 1960 circular to muftis following the coup d'état on 27 May 1960 highlights the military's reliance on the PRA for legitimacy. Within the circular, the PRA encourages preaching and sermons to communicate the 'great meaning' of the 27 May 'revolution' to the public and villagers through the use of religious verses and hadiths, on the basis that 'to support our government is a sacred duty' and because 'our religion orders us to be united and disapproves of any dissention and factionalism'.⁶⁸⁰ Official documents detailed by the parliamentary commission investigating military interventions (established in 2012) are also revealing in terms of the perception of military leaders during the '28 February process', with the PRA considered as a means to fight radical Islamists, Kurdish nationalists and Alevis.⁶⁸¹ According to the Commission, documents provided by the PRA spanning from the period between 1997 and 2002 suggested that the military authorities attempted to influence the workings of the PRA, including the subject matter of sermons, the content of mosque classes, activities abroad, conferences by religious personnel, the handling of PRA personnel accused of reactionism, and the dispatch of 'enlightenment' teams to

⁶⁷⁷ PMAD 16/2/1944.

⁶⁷⁸ Yazıcıoğlu 2013: 268–69; Altıkulaç November 2013.

⁶⁷⁹ PMAD 9/6/1950; PMAD 14/7/1954; PMAD 28/4/1961; PMAD 1/12/1960; PMAD 17/9/1960; PMAD 31/8/1962; PMAD 17/1/1963; PMAD 28/5/1963; PMAD 16/5/1964.

⁶⁸⁰ PMAD 28/9/1960.

⁶⁸¹ DMAK 1 November 2012; DMAK 2 November 2012.

‘enlighten’ citizens.⁶⁸² Other ways in which the military has attempted to assert itself over the PRA have included the appointment of retired generals to its ranks.⁶⁸³ For instance, a retired general (and tariqat member),⁶⁸⁴ Sadettin Evrin, was appointed to the post of vice president of the PRA following the 1960 coup d’etat. According to scholar Ismail Kara, Evrin tried to force the PRA’s then president Hasan Hüsnü Erdem into publishing under his own name a booklet against the Nur Movement (‘Nurculuk Hakkında’), which, after provoking Erdem’s resignation, was published by the PRA with the PRA as an author.⁶⁸⁵ Similarly, during the 28th February process a retired general staff officer was appointed as an advisor to the president of the PRA to teach Atatürkism to religious functionaries.⁶⁸⁶ During this period, in a highly symbolic move, the first female member (and without a headscarf) was appointed to the Religious Affairs High Committee (RAHC), the highest decision-making and consultative body within the PRA. The move, which was probably engineered by the military, followed the reaffirmation of the headscarf ban by the Council of Higher Education (*Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu YÖK*), and was made despite the number of fatwas and declarations by PRA stating that the wearing of the headscarf was a requirement of Islam.⁶⁸⁷ In addition to the military, political parties too have seen the PRA as a potential political tool in gaining power. Former head of the PRA Tayyar Altıkulaç relates in his memoirs that the leader of the Islamist MSP, Necmettin Erbakan, while in government in the 1970s sought both to pressure the PRA into promoting the party’s cause through various means, such as in mosques, and to investigate the *Süleymanî tarikat* order⁶⁸⁸ to declare them un-Islamic if necessary.⁶⁸⁹ Criticisms of the politicisation of the PRA under the AKP government have also been made, with opposition politicians accusing the organisation of government-friendly announcements,

⁶⁸² DMAK 1 November 2012; DMAK 2 November 2012.

⁶⁸³ *Aktüel* 1998.

⁶⁸⁴ *TimeTurk* 15 December 2013.

⁶⁸⁵ Kara 2002: 59–60.

⁶⁸⁶ *Nokta* 18 October 1998.

⁶⁸⁷ *Yeni Şafak* 26 April 2001.

⁶⁸⁸ An offshoot of sufi *Nakşibendi* order. See note 587.

⁶⁸⁹ Altıkulaç 2011: 481–89; see also the memoirs of Yazıcıoğlu and Kara (Yazıcıoğlu 2013: 242–5; Kara 2002: 91).

statements against the *Gülenists* and censorship of Quranic verses on theft in the light of corruption allegations against the AKP.⁶⁹⁰

The reliance on the ulema for the legitimisation of policies by other actors of the state or the government, however, is not a one-way street and has also in turn given the PRA more opportunity to assert its authority and pursue its own agenda. Works by Zehgal and Zaman have pointed to similar dynamics in other contexts, such as Egypt. As Zaman has noted, ‘the support of the Azhar establishment comes at a price. For the dependence of the Egyptian state on the Azhar has enabled the latter to insist, with considerable effectiveness, on its own prerogative to authoritatively define the perimeters of all that would be Islamically acceptable.’⁶⁹¹ The two sections below will attempt to demonstrate how this process evolved in the Turkish case, firstly examining the expansion of the role and monopoly of the PRA and secondly demonstrating how this has in turn enabled the PRA to engage in a dynamic struggle against other actors and to pursue the Islamisation of public space, preparing an amenable environment for religio-politics.

5.4.2 Expansion of the PRA’s religious monopoly and resources

In his study on al-Azhar, Hatina has argued, for instance, that the ‘decline’ of the ulema was relative, since, despite the loss of political and economic assets, the ulema in Egypt gained access to new, modern forms of power, institutions and budgets.⁶⁹² At the same time, the process of centralisation under the new, modern nation-state enabled the ulema to expand a monopoly over religious life that perhaps reached beyond the Ottoman period. The PRA’s resources has grown considerably since its establishment in 1924 (see Appendix 2 for the evolution of its organisational structure). After entering a period of decline from 1929 (which marked the beginning of the global Great Depression), the PRA’s budget began a steady increase with the transition to multipartism. As indicated by Charts 12 and 13, the PRA budget has averaged around 0.6% of the total budget over the history

⁶⁹⁰ *Cumhuriyet* 14 April 2014; *Yeni Çağ* 3 September 2014; *Gerçek Gündem* 27 March 2014; *İnternet Haber* 28 March 2014; Baydar 18 May 2014; *Cumhuriyet* 12 April 2014; PRA 25 March 2014.

⁶⁹¹ Zaman 2010: 146–47.

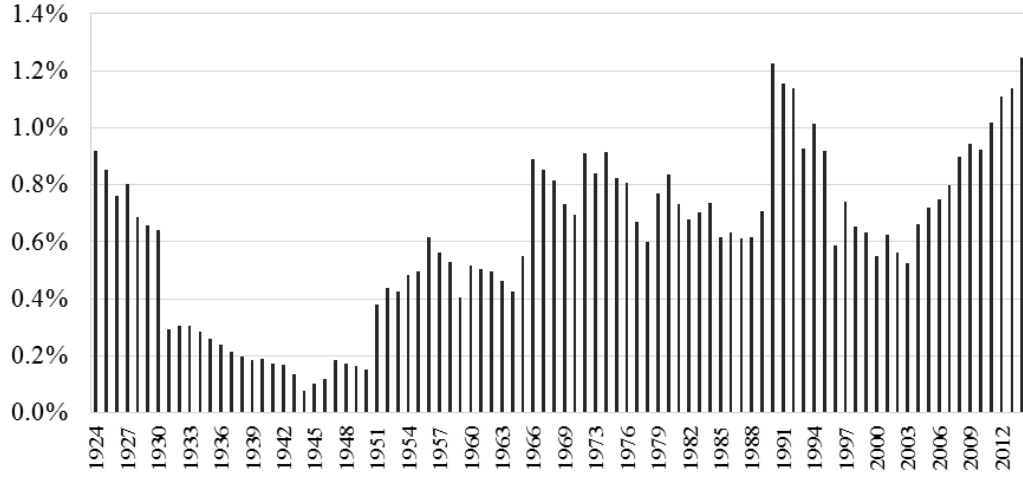
⁶⁹² Hatina 2003.

of the Republic: 0.4% from 1925 to 1951, 0.7% in the multi-party period and 0.9% over the AKP period. The PRA's budget spending, the sixteenth largest (as a % of the total) in the 2014 budget expenditures, was greater than those of the development ministry, foreign ministry, health ministry, interior ministry and science, industry and technology ministry. The highest increases in the PRA's budget allocation in real terms (adjusted for inflation), averaging 18.1% annually, occurred during the 1938-1950 period, and particularly the years 1946, 1947 and 1950 when it expanded by 135.5%, 63.3% and 87.6%, respectively. This reflected the decision to expand religious infrastructure in the late 1940s. Subsequently, the PRA's budget in real terms increased by an average of 12% year on year during 1951-1960, 13.6% during 1961-1980, 5.5% during 1981-2002 and 9.8% during 2003-2014. These real rates of expansion of PRA budgetary spending was significantly higher than overall (real) budget spending increases of 9.3% between 1938-1950, 6.2% between 1951-1960, 7.4% between 1961-1980, 9.2% between 1981-2002 and 3.4% between 2003-2014.⁶⁹³ This highlights the ongoing importance of the PRA within the state. While around 97% of the PRA's budget is spent on personnel, the PRA also has access to other resources, such as those from arranging pilgrimages and from the *Diyanet Waqf* (*Diyanet Vakfi*, DV), with which it pays for the construction of Quran courses and contributes to the building of mosques (which are not typically funded directly by the state).⁶⁹⁴ The PRA employed 121,845 people (Chart 17) and oversaw 85,412 mosques in 2013 (Chart 14). Charts 15 and 16 show that while the number of primary schools per capita has decreased, indicating that there are fewer schools per citizen (one school for 2666 people in 2013, compared with 1012 people in 1084), the number of mosques per capita has been fairly stable since the 1980s, at around one mosque for every 866 people.

⁶⁹³ BUMKOb.

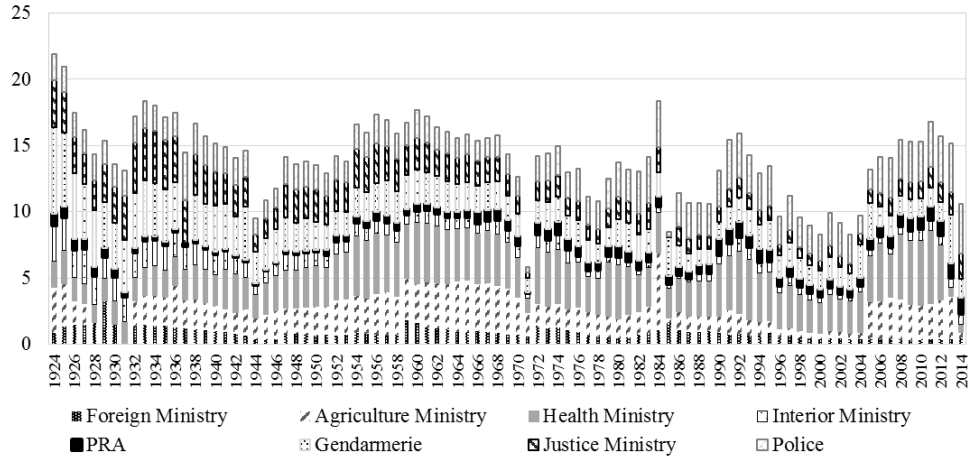
⁶⁹⁴ Yazıcıoğlu 2013: 290; Akay 2011: 38; *Ekonomist* 2 January 2000.

Chart 12: PRA budget as % of total budget



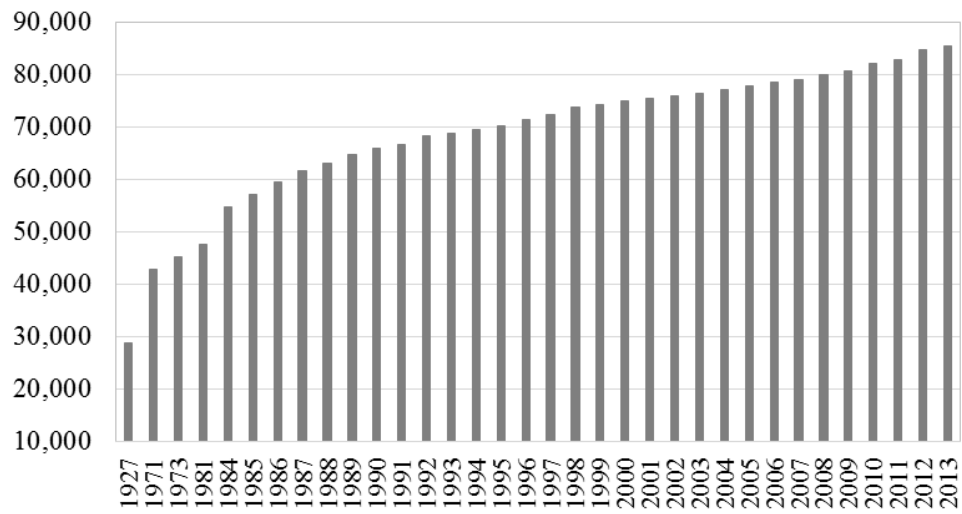
Sources: Maliye Bakanlığı Bütçe ve Mali Kontrol Genel Müdürlüğü [Ministry of Finance General Directorate of Budget and Fiscal Control, BUMKO], <<http://www.bumko.gov.tr/TR,157/butce-buyuklukleri-ve-butce-gerceklesmeleri.html>>.

Chart 13: PRA vs. other ministries budgets as % of total



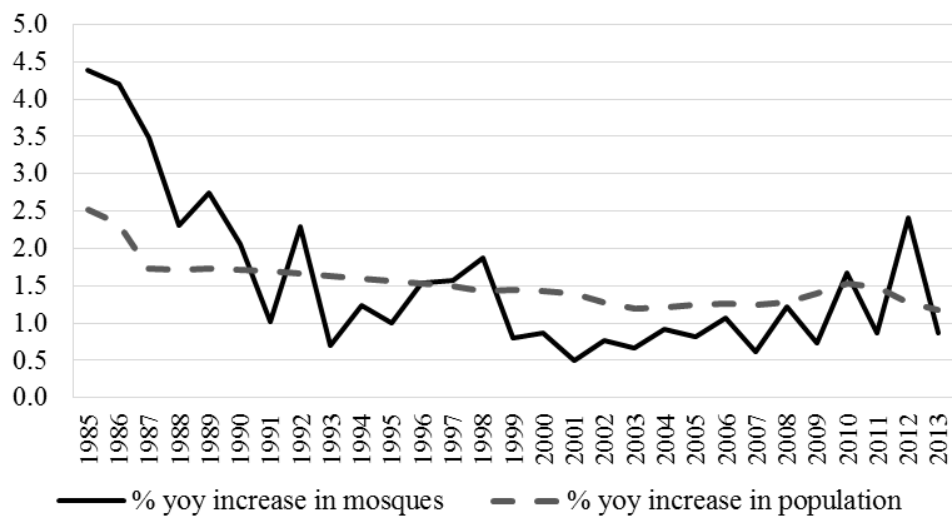
Sources: Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Başkanlığı Kütüphane ve Arşiv Başkanlığı [Grand National Assembly of Turkey Library and Archives, TBMMKA], <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kutuphane/tutanak_sorgu.html>; Maliye Bakanlığı Bütçe ve Mali Kontrol Genel Müdürlüğü [Ministry of Finance General Directorate of Budget and Fiscal Control, BUMKO], <<http://www.bumko.gov.tr/TR,162/konsolide-butce-ve-dahil-kurumlarin-yillar-itibariyle-od.html>>; 'Statistical Indicators, 1923-2013' from the Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [Turkish Statistical Institute, TÜİK], <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/Kitap.do?metod=KitapDetay&KT_ID=0&KITAP_ID=160>.

Chart 14: Number of mosques



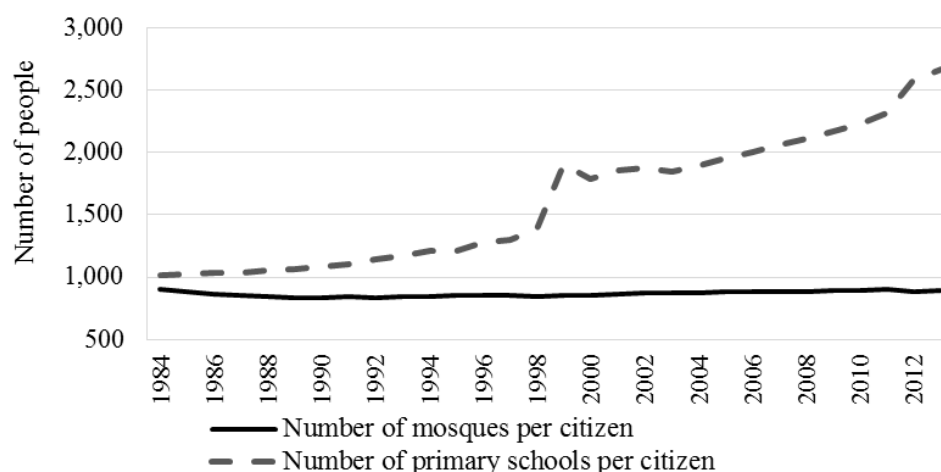
Sources: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı [Presidency of Religious Affairs, PRA],
<http://www.diyanet.gov.tr/tr/kategori/istatistikler/136>; TESEV 2005; Tunçay 2005: 222; ZC 17.4.1927.

Chart 15: Annual increases in mosques and population



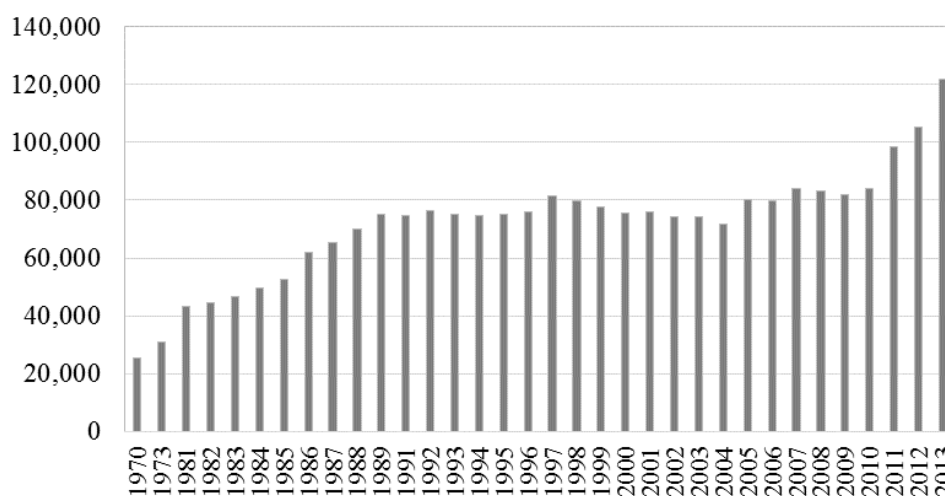
Sources: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı [Presidency of Religious Affairs, PRA],
<http://www.diyanet.gov.tr/tr/kategori/istatistikler/136>; 'Population and Demography' from the Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [Turkish Statistical Institute, TUIK],
<http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/UstMenu.do?metod=kategorist>.

Chart 16: Mosques and primary schools per capita



Sources: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı [Presidency of Religious Affairs, PRA], <http://www.diyaret.gov.tr/tr/kategori/istatistikler/136>; 'Statistical Indicators, 1923-2013' from the Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [Turkish Statistical Institute, TÜİK], http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/Kitap.do?metod=KitapDetay&KT_ID=0&KITAP_ID=160.

Chart 17: Number of PRA functionaries and personnel



Sources: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı [Presidency of Religious Affairs, PRA], <http://www.diyaret.gov.tr/tr/kategori/istatistikler/136>. TESEV 2005.

Although the PRA's domain of action and authority had narrowed from 1931 with the loss of control over mosques and personnel, this began to be reversed from 1946 with the onset of what Kara describes as 'official Islamisation'.⁶⁹⁵ This was partly driven by the regime's wish to fight communism as well as the CHP's concerns over securing electoral success with the transition to multipartism, and

⁶⁹⁵ Kara 2002: 130–31.

had involved the appointment of an Islamist, Şemsettin Günaltay, to the prime ministry, the introduction of religious education in primary schools, the opening of Quran courses, the reopening of tombs and shrines closed since 1925 and the establishment of the Ankara Theology faculty.⁶⁹⁶ The PRA, too, had begun to garner greater attention during this period, with parliamentarians raising concerns over the need to boost the institution in order to enable it to deal with spreading ‘superstition’,⁶⁹⁷ to teach ‘true’ Islam and enlighten the public on religious matters,⁶⁹⁸ to better serve the ‘95%’ Muslim population⁶⁹⁹ and to combat the ‘danger of communism’.⁷⁰⁰ Consequently, a new period of centralisation of religious activity began, which, in turn, facilitated the expansion of the PRA’s domain of action and religious monopoly. As part of its package of reforms of religious activity, in 1950 the CHP adopted Law 5634, which saw the creation of new units and the return of the management and personnel of mosques back to the PRA. For the first time, previously independent ‘mobile preachers’⁷⁰¹ were incorporated within the PRA. Other measures included the scrapping of local elections for muftis, with future appointments to be decided by the central authority (Article 4), while it became a requirement for all village imams to gain permission from the muftis to operate.

Despite the ostensibly ‘secularist’ orientation attributed to the army in Turkey, it was during periods following military interventions that the PRA’s functions saw the greatest enlargement, thereby providing an opportunity for the reassertion of the ulema. The PRA was incorporated as a constitutional body for the first time in the constitution prepared under the auspices of the junta leaders in 1961.⁷⁰² After numerous attempts and proposals, including ones indirectly sponsored by the military,⁷⁰³ a comprehensive new organisational law (Law 633) for the PRA was adopted in 1965.⁷⁰⁴ The final draft bill of Law 633 had referred to the PRA as the ‘spiritual leader of the Muslim Turkish public’, charged with handling three of the

⁶⁹⁶ Kara 2002: 130–31.

⁶⁹⁷ Hamdi Şarlan in TD 23.2.1949: 446.

⁶⁹⁸ TD 27.12.1947; TD 23.2.1949.

⁶⁹⁹ TD 23.2.1949.

⁷⁰⁰ TD 23.2.1949.

⁷⁰¹ Erdem 2008.

⁷⁰² 1961 constitution translation from Adanah 2008.

⁷⁰³ Twenty-one since 1947. See MM 12.6.1965: 70; MM 28.1.1965 [20.1.1962].

⁷⁰⁴ See MM 23.3.1964:2; translation from Adanah 2008.

four domains defined by Islam – belief, worship and morality – with the fourth, law, being the duty of the TGNA. The PRA was key to developing the spirituality of the nation,⁷⁰⁵ according to lawmakers, since religion was considered an important means to secure the social order⁷⁰⁶ necessary for material development.⁷⁰⁷ In her study of the PRA, Gözaydın has argued that Law 633 compromised laicism⁷⁰⁸ by explicitly referencing for the first time the PRA's role in providing 'moral' guidance to the nation: the PRA's responsibilities were 'to carry out affairs related to the beliefs, worship and *moral* [my emphasis] foundations of Islam, to enlighten Turkish society about religion and to manage places of worship'.⁷⁰⁹ Contrary to this argument, archival evidence suggests that such a role for the PRA was envisaged even during the most 'laicist' years of the one-party period, with a 1935 draft bill outlining the responsibilities of the PRA as 'the enlightenment of the public on religious and *moral* [my emphasis] matters directly or through preachers'.⁷¹⁰ Conversely, it was clear that a greater role for the PRA was envisaged in terms of its involvement in defining the parameters of the nation-state and national identity. In this vein, Article 7 stipulated that the PRA was responsible for 'ensuring precautionary measures to protect Muslim citizens' loyalty to national ideals and prevent exploitation of belief and differences of belief'.⁷¹¹

The decision to enlarge the provincial organisation and presence of the institution, dedicating 2,000 personnel annually to meet the needs of town and village mosques, also considerably expanded the reach and religious monopoly of the PRA. Supporting the bureaucratisation and modernisation of the ulema, the 1965

⁷⁰⁵ See MM 19.2.1965.

⁷⁰⁶ See, for example, Mustafa Amil Artus (senate member) in CS 21.6.1965: 10–13; Kadircan Kafılı (CKMP) in MM 12.5.1965: 74–76; Hamdi Özer (CHP senate member) in CS 8.4.1975: 419–421.

⁷⁰⁷ See, for example, Kadircan Kafılı (CKMP) in MM 12.5.1965: 74–76; İhsan Ataöv (AP) in MM 15.5.1965: 84; Mehmet Geçioğlu (CHP) in MM 15.5.1965: 87; Hıfzı Oğuz Bekata (CHP) in CS 21.6.1965: 7–10; Vasfi Gerger (senate member) in CS 22.6.1965: 97–98; Hamdi Özer (CHP senate member) in CS 8.4.1975: 419–421; Lûtfi Doğan (CHP) in CS 8.4.1975: 424–425; Ahmet Yeni (AKP) in TD 1.7.2010: 63; Mehmet Akif Hamzaçebi (CHP) in TD 1.7.2010: 86–87.

⁷⁰⁸ Gözaydın 2009.

⁷⁰⁹ Article 1; Translation from Gözaydın 2008.

⁷¹⁰ However, these, along with various other articles defining the tasks of different departments of the PRA, were removed by the Budget Committee on the basis that they would be included in separate regulations to include the duties of each division. See Article 2n and 6b; these clauses were not included in the organisational regulation 7647 of 1937.

⁷¹¹ Law 633.

law introduced new requirements in terms of educational qualifications and skills for religious personnel as well as the introduction of a Higher Council of Religious Affairs (*Din İşleri Yüksek Kurulu* – Article 5) as the highest authority within the PRA. Yet, partly reflecting the parallel and illegal continuation of the *medrese* system,⁷¹² not all independent religious scholars possessed these new minimum educational requirements and, as such, exemptions were made in order to absorb them into the PRA. Some 12,000 religious scholars who lacked the minimum requirements of being a graduate of an ‘imam and preacher high school’ (*imam hatip okulları*, IHS), were incorporated into the PRA, a move that was justified on the basis of the needs of the institution.⁷¹³

Until the adoption of a new organisational law in 2010, the PRA expanded ‘organically’ through cabinet decrees and other administrative regulations that scholars of law have criticised as a ‘legal oddity ... lacking a technically legal basis’.⁷¹⁴ This was owing to various failed reform attempts, including a proposal to introduce an electoral element into the selection of the head of the PRA, which were either vetoed by the president or annulled by the Constitutional Court.⁷¹⁵ For the 1980 junta regime the PRA was a key mechanism through which to implement the TIS, a policy of Islamisation justified as a means to stem intense social contestation and polarisation in the 1970s and to ensure national unity. Consequently, the 1982 Constitution, written under the auspices of the junta regime, further reaffirmed the PRA as a constitutional body while adding that it would ‘implement its duties as outlined by its law in accordance with the principles of laicism, remaining outside all political views and thoughts and with the aim of national solidarity and integrity’.⁷¹⁶ The central role of the PRA in the implementation of the junta regime’s TIS agenda is observable in the 1983 National Culture report, which outlined a need to expand the PRA’s capacity and personnel to implement measures such as the expansion of religious education and guidance for youths, families, prisoners, hospitalised citizens and civil society organisations

⁷¹² See the former head of the PRA; Yazıcıoğlu 2013.

⁷¹³ TDVİA.

⁷¹⁴ Gözaydın 2008.

⁷¹⁵ Examples include Law 1893 and 1982 in the 1970s. See also Adanah 2008: 231.

⁷¹⁶ Article 136, 1982 constitution. In addition, political debate on the PRA itself was curtailed with Article 89 of the Political Parties Law of 1983 (Law 2820), which forbade political parties from opposing the PRA’s constitutional status and responsibilities.

such as trade unions, and the increase of Islamic media broadcasts and publications (see Chapter 3 for more discussion of the TIS).⁷¹⁷

A similar focus on increasing the capacity and authority of the PRA could be observed following the 1997 coup. Documents detailed in the parliamentary committee on military coups demonstrate that a key policy of the NSC was to bolster the PRA, owing to their evaluation that the PRA's 'passive' stance had led to a gap filled by proliferation and mobilisation of *tariqats* and Islamists domestically and abroad.⁷¹⁸ In another report prepared by the National Intelligence Organisation, (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı*, MIT), it was recommended that the PRA's religious learning capacity and personnel should be improved to enlighten religious citizens against radical Islamist formations, and that a commission should be established within the PRA to provide constant religious interpretations.⁷¹⁹ Consequently, some of the measures implemented in line with these recommendations included giving the PRA greater control over mosques and personnel to prevent the occurrence of independent mosques and imams outside of the PRA's oversight.⁷²⁰

Under the Islamist AKP government the PRA's role and responsibilities have continued to expand. The organisational law adopted in 2010 (Law 6002) largely provided the legal basis for the changes that had been adopted since the 1970s. Nevertheless, aside from addressing the organisational structure, personnel and duties and responsibilities of the central and provincial units, as well as appointment and dismissal rules, key changes and new responsibilities introduced by the law included: i) the limitation of the president of the PRA's term to five years and a maximum of two appointments in order to prevent political interference⁷²¹ (Article 3); ii) the responsibility of the Religious Services department to conduct 'studies on different religious communities and religious-social formations that are members of the Islamic religion' (Article 5); iii) the responsibility given to the Strategy Development Department (Article 7, clause ğ,

⁷¹⁷ DPT 1983.

⁷¹⁸ DMAK 2 November 2012: 1062.

⁷¹⁹ DMAK 2 November 2012: 1023–1030.

⁷²⁰ Law 4379; translation from Er April 2008.

⁷²¹ TGNA 16/3/2010.

5) ‘to examine from a legal perspective and give feedback on laws, statutes, regulations and draft laws sent by the prime ministry, other ministries and the presidency from a legal perspective’.⁷²² Another example of centralisation and absorption can be seen in the announcement (of a previously attempted but failed policy) in 2011 that the PRA would employ ‘*mollahs*’, the Kurdish religious scholars educated within the (illegal/unofficial) parallel traditional *medrese* system, based in the south-east of the country, that functioned outside the monopoly of the PRA.⁷²³ Other changes introduced by the AKP have included the granting of the right to the PRA to censor religious content on the internet,⁷²⁴ projects to introduce ‘family imams’ to encourage greater interaction with local communities,⁷²⁵ the introduction of Family and Religious Counselling Services in 2003 aimed particularly at women,⁷²⁶ and plans to introduce a *fatwa* board for the Islamic banking sector.⁷²⁷ Two further examples of the growing importance accorded to the institution by the AKP are the symbolic move to raise the chairman of the PRA in the state’s protocol list from 51st place to 10th⁷²⁸ and the decision to attach the PRA directly to the prime minister, compared with the previous practice of being attached to a deputy prime minister.⁷²⁹

5.4.3 A dynamic struggle, evolution and expansion

The role of the ulema is far more dynamic than the narrative of the control of religion by the laicist state allows. While not a unified and monolithic body in itself, members of the official ulema embedded in the state could advantage of

⁷²² See Kamer Genç’s views in TD 1.7.2010: 79.

⁷²³ *Radikal* 12 December 2011; Yazıcıoğlu 2013: 219–20.

⁷²⁴ *Radikal* 14 July 2010.

⁷²⁵ *Radikal* 10 March 2011.

⁷²⁶ The aim of these bureaus is described by the PRA as being ‘To enlighten, guide and prepare projects on religious matters for families, women, youths and other segments of society; enable religious services being offered in social service organizations like affection homes, orphanages and women’s guest houses; enable religious and cultural activities being organized for women and families and enable religious counselling services being offered to solve family problems’ (PRA 1 January 2014). Karaman 23 December 2010; *Sözcü* 1 February 2014; *T24* 15 December 2011.

⁷²⁷ *Yeni Şafak* 18 November 2013.

⁷²⁸ *Today’s Zaman* 20 May 2012; *Sabah* 14 May 2012.

⁷²⁹ The standing of the PRA has been a constant concern voiced by PRA functionaries, who contend that it is not granted sufficient respect by other state actors. See Altıkulaç November 2013; *Daily Sabah* 2 September 2014; *Anadolu Ajansı* 2 September 2014. The former head of the PRA, Yazıcıoğlu, for example, said that the PRA should be on a par with the NSC and that, despite being envisaged in this way at the time of its establishment, the PRA for various fell down the protocol list. See also Yazıcıoğlu 2013: 282–83.

centralisation to establish a religious monopoly. The continued reversion of the 'laic' state to the ulema for legitimation in turn afforded members of the institution leverage to negotiate a broadening of its authority and domain of action. Rather than being a submissive institution of the 'laic' state, official documentation suggests that the PRA functionaries have been engaged in a dynamic struggle, adopting multiple strategies of accommodation, cooperation or opposition for power and influence over public morality and communal boundaries.

The absorption of the Ottoman ulema within the body of the PRA had not only facilitated continuity following the establishment of the Republic but also allowed for the preservation of the identity of this class, and of collective memory and consciousness, endowing with its own sense of mission compared to other state actors. The modernisation reforms had initially narrowed the role of the ulema through the closure of the *medreses* and the adoption of a secular civil code. Kara has argued that, while religious functionaries had been displeased with the loss of their status under the Republic, they had chosen not to go into active opposition, and neither had the new regime challenged them head on. Instead, many religious functionaries were absorbed within the new state and given the right to retirement regardless of years of service or age, whilst those that fulfilled certain conditions were employed by the PRA or Education and Interior ministries (as judges or teachers), or joined the bureaucracy (while continuing to receive their retirement salaries).⁷³⁰ At least until the 1960s, the ulema of the PRA consisted of religious functionaries that had been raised and educated in the Ottoman era, and, subsequently, their relatives or children.⁷³¹ Yanardağ argues that the PRA's preference for hiring the relatives of existing functionaries, and those trained under the traditional *medrese* system, within its body, led to the resistance to accepting graduates of the new official religious schools (IHS) established in the early Republic, thereby facilitating their closure by the 1930s.⁷³² Equally, the memoirs of religious functionaries confirm that, for the generation raised during the early

⁷³⁰ Kara 2008: 109; Kara 2000: 74.

⁷³¹ Kara 2008: 109.

⁷³² Yanardağ 2012.

Republic, the unofficial/illegal *medrese* system continued to be the main source of religious education at least until the reopening of the IHS in 1950.⁷³³

Faced with an onslaught of reforms during the early Republic, the ulema had in some sense engaged in a constructive rapprochement with state-builders⁷³⁴ and ‘used their moral/spiritual authority and implemented the duties given to them by the political centre by loosening or widening their content and boundaries ... with mosques primarily, they ensured the survival and opening of new religious institutions (Quran courses, *imam-hatip* schools, charitable organisations)’.⁷³⁵ In 1933 the first president of the PRA, Rıfat Börekçi (1924–41), expanded religious services by issuing a decision to enable, for the first time, Friday prayers in all village mosques; during the Ottoman period this had not been practised owing to religious interpretation, and had been subject to permission. The Islamist Necip Fazıl Kısakürek has related his conversations with the former head of the PRA, Ahmet Hamdi Akseki (1947–51), who is reported to have stated that he accepted working at the PRA despite the restrictive environment in order to prevent further harm to religion.⁷³⁶ In this vein, the prominent theologian İsmail Kara has argued that Akseki’s rapprochement allowed him to make important contributions in the period 1924–45 by, among other things, publishing Islamic works used for religious education and paid for by the state budget.⁷³⁷

It has been commonly argued that the PRA has served the function of interpreting and propagating an ‘enlightened version of Islam’ or ‘state Islam’, as determined by the boundaries of the laic state.⁷³⁸ The PRA, too, has used similar language, projecting itself as a purveyor of ‘authentic’, ‘true’, ‘correct’ Islamic knowledge⁷³⁹ above all sects and divisions. However, official documentation suggests that the PRA has in fact utilised this discourse to pursue its own mission and expand its role, while fending off challenges to its position as the top religious authority from

⁷³³ See, for example, Kara 2000; Yazıcıoğlu 2013; Efe 2013. The unofficial *medrese* system still operates, particularly in south-east Turkey.

⁷³⁴ Kara 2002: 30–37.

⁷³⁵ Kara 2008: 109–10.

⁷³⁶ Kara 2002: 30–37.

⁷³⁷ Kara 2002: 30–37.

⁷³⁸ Sakallıoğlu 1996: 234; Yavuz 2011.

⁷³⁹ Gözaydın 2014.

alternative religious groupings. One document from 1950, an internal report prepared by former PRA head Akseki, demonstrates how the PRA adapted the discourse of ‘enlightened Islam’ in order to expand its domain of action and authority and to pursue a sectarian agenda. Distributed to government authorities, this report argued that the closure, restrictions of and inadequate capacity of religious institutions in the country had led to an increase in superstitious and false beliefs and *tariqat* orders, and the spread of [Shi’a] sectarian movements ‘with foreign roots’ and non-Muslim missionaries. It was religious education, he argued, that had prevented the youth becoming communists. Therefore, it was a national necessity for religious institutions to be strengthened in order to combat these harmful currents, which, he argued, was possible only through religion and by religious functionaries. Significantly, key demands made by the report were greater autonomy for the PRA, the reassignment of control of the General Directorate of Foundations and its financial resources back to the PRA alongside significant expansion of religious education under the auspices of the PRA, and compulsory religious education in all schools.⁷⁴⁰ Such calls for the autonomy of the PRA, which began in the 1950s, were also mirrored by prominent Islamist journals such as *Sebilürreşad*, which was closely associated with the PRA. Members of the ulema and Islamists had argued that ‘real’ laicism required autonomy, but these proposals in fact reflected efforts to negotiate an expansion of the PRA’s domain of operation and the sphere of religion. The insistence on the differentiation between state and religion, as Zaman has noted in his works on the Pakistani ulema, was not driven by a commitment to secularisation. Rather, it reflected both a strategy to limit the encroachment of other state actors on to the ulema’s territory and the mission to increase their capacity in order to pursue greater Islamisation of state and society.⁷⁴¹ It is notable, therefore, that while Islamists and the PRA have been particularly vocal with respect to what they have described as the interference of the secular state in religious affairs, such critiques have lessened since the Islamist AKP rose to power in 2002. At the same time, the PRA’s differentiation of itself from the (banned) *tariqat* orders, as can be seen in Akseki’s report, reflected a strategy to protect the official ulema body’s religious monopoly and its authority. In this vein,

⁷⁴⁰ Akseki 1997 [1950].

⁷⁴¹ Zaman 2010.

the Kara has argued, regarding the Akseki report, that the PRA is cognisant of alternative challenges to its authority and, as such, typically exaggerates the threat of *tariqat* orders and non-official religious formations in such reports in order to gain concessions to further expand its monopoly and standing.⁷⁴² Accordingly, even if the PRA's actions and aims are in line with those of these unofficial religious groupings, they claim to go about things in the 'correct' way.⁷⁴³

Conversely, despite the narrative of distinction between the official ulema of the PRA, representing the state, and *tariqat* orders, representing 'civil society', in reality boundaries have been fluid. While they had played an important role in the transmission of religious authority and legitimacy in the Ottoman state, *tariqat* orders were denounced as 'centres of reaction' by the one-party regime following the Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925.⁷⁴⁴ Despite an official ban in 1925, however, it was under the umbrella of the PRA that *tariqats* continued to survive and ensured the survival and continuity of their spiritual culture, since many were embedded in mosques.⁷⁴⁵ Autobiographies of former PRA members have also detailed the involvement of *tariqats* within the PRA in different capacities, such as imams and preachers, including *tariqat* sheiks and prominent Islamist actors, such as Fethullah Gülen, Mehmet Zahit Kotku and Mahmut Efendi.⁷⁴⁶ An example of an 'overlapping consensus'⁷⁴⁷ leading to a dynamic interaction and cooperation between the PRA, *tariqat* orders and other ostensibly secular state actors can be observed in the correspondence regarding a request for information from the PRA on the *Ticani tariqat* order⁷⁴⁸ by the CHP Minister İbrahim Saffet Onay in 1964. The *Ticani tariqat* had attracted official ire after coming to prominence in the 1950s following a series of attacks on Atatürk statues. The PRA's response to the request was significant because, after having emphasised the importance of dialogue as

⁷⁴² Kara 2002: 59.

⁷⁴³ Kara 2002: 58–59.

⁷⁴⁴ Deringil 2009: 125, 145.

⁷⁴⁵ Zarcone 1993; Kara 2008: 112; Günay 2006: 146–47.

⁷⁴⁶ Altıkulaç 2011; Yazıcıoğlu 2013. Kara and Altıkulaç note the employment of *Süleymancı*s (an offshoot of sufi *Nakşibendi tariqat* order) within the PRA. The relationship with *Süleymancı*s broke down for some time before improving after 1980. See Altıkulaç 2011; TimeTurk 15 December 2013.

⁷⁴⁷ See Chapter 6.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ticanis* were officially vilified owing to their destruction of the Atatürk statues. In 1951, following their activities, the Atatürk Law was adopted led by President Celal Bayar; Bora 2002: 550.

opposed to oppressive means in handling *tariqat* orders, it was suggested that, given the anti-communist nature of the *Ticani tariqat*, the leader of the *Ticanis* should be made a mufti in İmroz (Bozcaada), which is populated by Turks of Greek origin, in order to impede efforts at ‘Enosis’.⁷⁴⁹ The comparable matter of the ‘overlapping consensus’ between the sectarian and religious agenda of the PRA and the Republican nationalist project with respect to the Alevis is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Alongside these strategies of cooperation, tactical accommodation and struggle it is also possible to distinguish active opposition by the PRA ulema even during the one-party period. Official documentation, including memos from the PRA and other state institutions, detail religious functionaries acting against the centre’s orders, including muftis spreading propaganda against the government⁷⁵⁰ and issuing unauthorised *fatwas*⁷⁵¹ and preachers criticising uncovered women, thereby opposing the central government’s reforms.⁷⁵² Another document from 1930, for example, warns the PRA that it should take the necessary measures during Ramadan to avoid mosque functionaries preaching against the principles established by the national assembly as in previous years.⁷⁵³ In her work on the PRA’s reactions to the Turkification of the *ezan* (call to prayer) in 1932,⁷⁵⁴ Umut Azak has highlighted multiple strategies of the ulema, including i) those who refused outright to implement the policy; ii) those who did it reluctantly or employed someone else to do it; iii) those who did both Arabic and Turkish versions; and iv) those who recited the Arabic *ezan* while looking out for gendarmerie.⁷⁵⁵ The ability of the PRA to engage in active opposition increased in the multi-party period and is evidenced in the examples related within the memoirs of the former PRA heads, as well as their public statements contravening other state institutions.⁷⁵⁶ The issue of the headscarf is one raised by the PRA during my interviews with its representatives, where the institution describes its role as

⁷⁴⁹ PMAD 1/4/1964.

⁷⁵⁰ PMAD 7/3/1929; PMAD 7/3/1929b.

⁷⁵¹ PMAD 22/5/1923.

⁷⁵² PMAD 21/2/1929; PMAD 19/8/1944; PMAD 5/9/1944; PMAD 24/1/1936.

⁷⁵³ PMAD 6/1/1930.

⁷⁵⁴ In terms of reactions to this: Hür 7 February 2010.

⁷⁵⁵ Azak 2014.

⁷⁵⁶ Yazıcıoğlu 2013: 68–9; Altıkulaç November 2013.

‘resisting the state’.⁷⁵⁷ The headscarf issue has been highly controversial and a symbol of contestation over which the PRA has come under pressure to issue *fatwas* designating that covering was not required by Islam following an official ban introduced in universities in 1982.⁷⁵⁸ In response, the PRA has repeatedly ruled that covering was a requirement of Islam, including during the ‘28th February process’.⁷⁵⁹ Despite criticism from other state actors, the PRA has issued stern statements, with the former head Mehmet Nuri Yilmaz declaring in 1998 that ‘the Turkish citizen should not be left face to face with a need to make a grave preference between the commands of God or the principles of Atatürk’.⁷⁶⁰

5.5 The PRA, the Islamisation of public space and the reproduction of religious majoritarianism

In recent scholarly works on modern Muslim polities, it has been argued that the ulema have acted not only as ‘guardians of the faith’ but also as ‘custodians of change’.⁷⁶¹ Despite the assault of the modern state on the ulema’s traditional legal authority and influence in tandem with the institution’s increasing monopoly, related above, the PRA’s establishment also reflected the embedding of religious majoritarianism in the nation-state project and ensured its subsequent reproduction. Indeed, the very establishment of the PRA formed a fundamental part of the project of secularism, reflecting, beyond the control of religious activity, a process of boundary-drawing of the national moral community and Islamisation. State-builders in the early Republic had defended the establishment of the PRA as proof of the Muslim character of the assembly.⁷⁶² The continuity and reproduction of these dynamics can be observed in the annual parliamentary debates on the PRA’s

⁷⁵⁷ Interviews conducted in 2013 and 2014.

⁷⁵⁸ See Yıldız 2000: 223; the first PRA and headscarf controversy dates back to 1955, when the PRA issued a circular stating that women working for the organisation should be covered. The headscarf was banned by the Higher Education Authority in universities in 1982, then allowed in 1984, but subsequently banned again in 1987. The ban was lifted by the ANAP government in 1988 through a legal change but this was overturned in 1989 by a Constitutional Court decision after referral by General Kenan Evren, leader of the 1980 coup. In 1990 another law saw the lifting of the ban. Following the 28th February 1997 post-modern coup, the headscarf was banned again in 1997, although this ban was lifted in 2008 by the AKP government (Hür 24 October 2010; *Hürriyet* 10 February 2008).

⁷⁵⁹ Altıkulaç 2011: 636–54.

⁷⁶⁰ *Sabah* 1 March 1998.

⁷⁶¹ Zaman 2010; Hatina 2009; Hatina 2003; Zeghal 1999.

⁷⁶² See Vehbi Bey in ZC 21.2.1341; 213–14.

budget, which came to offer a stage, particularly in the multi-party period, for political leaders to showcase their commitment to religion by calling for bigger budgets and a better-resourced PRA while reiterating the ‘95%’, ‘98%’, ‘99%’ or ‘majority’ Muslim character of the nation.⁷⁶³ Indeed, parliamentary debates on the PRA were closely followed by highly influential Islamist journals such as *Sebilürreşad*, which made a point of reporting in detail lawmakers’ comments. Equally, the degree of cross-party support for the PRA over the multi-party period in particular is highlighted by the fact that throughout the period 1924–2011, more critical approaches to the PRA’s budget were represented by the (pro-Kurdish) BDP such as in 2011. Over this period, almost universally in discussions regarding the PRA, lawmakers across the party divide praised the Islamic religion and its importance for the Turkish nation and contended that being a Muslim was a defining characteristic of being Turkish, while narrating how much Turks had served Islam.⁷⁶⁴ In the 1948 budget debates, for example, one lawmaker contended that ‘in my view the Diyanet [PRA] is also a ministry. In fact the old phrase is that it is the office of the Şeyhülislâm ... we are laic but not as laic as elsewhere in the world. Laicism does not mean irreligiously. Minorities may be at stake in party life but the majority will always be superior. Within our assembly there may be one or two non-Muslims or one or two masons, but when it comes to being a Muslim we

⁷⁶³ See, for example, the budget debates: ZC 21.2.1341; ZC 22.5.1940; TD. 23.11.1949; TD. 14.2.1950; TD 22.11.1951; TD 23.11.1952; TD 20.11.1953; TD 20.11.1953; ZC 21.11.1955; ZC 24.11.1960; MM 19.2.1962; MM 17.2.1966; MM 15.2.1969; MM 22.5.1970; MM 20.5.1974; TD 12.12.1984; TD 4.1988; 12.12.1996. More specific examples include; Fehmi Cumaloğlu (Millet Partisi – Nation Party, MP) in MM 15.2.1969: 237; Feyzullah Değerli (AP) in MM 20.5.1974: 413; Ali Şahin (SHP) in TD 12.12.1996: 12; İzzet Akçal (DP) in ZC 24.11.1960: 365; Mehmet Kabasan (DP) in ZC 24.11.1960: 361; Muammer Alakânt (DP) in TD 20.11.1953: 553. M. Sabri Güner (DYP) in TD 12.12.1996: 404; Baki Durmaz (DYP) in TD 8.4.1988: 408; İlhan Araş (ANAP) in TD 12.12.1984: 31; Kazım Oksay (ANAP) in TD 12.12.1984: 40; Ahmet Sırrı Özbek (Halkçı Parti – Populist Party, HP) in TD 12.12.1984: 40; Enver Kaplan (AP) in MM 15.2.1969: 249; Refet Sezgin (AP) in MM 17.2.1966: 316; Ahmet Yıldız (military member in senate) in CS 3.2.1962: 645; Fuat Börekçi (CHP) in MM 19.2.1962: 618; Cevdet Geboloğlu (Senate member) in CS 3.2.1962: 642; Kadircan Kafılı (CKMP) in MM 19.2.1962: 611–12; Nurettin Ok (CKMP) in MM 19.2.1962: 621; Turgut Çulha (AP) in MM 19.2.1962: 612; Muslihittin Güner (AP) in MM 19.2.1962: 617; Abdullah Aytemiz (DP) in TD 19.11.1953: 526; Gazi Yiğitbaş (DP) in TD 23.2.1952: 606; Mahmut Güçbilmez (DP) in TD 22.11.1951: 453; Abdürrahman Fahrî Ağaoğlu (DP) in TD 22.11.1951: 429; Kemal Zeytinoğlu (DP) in TD 14.11.1950: 558; Ahmet Hamit Selgil (CHP) in TD 23.11.1949: 450; Sinan Tekelioğlu (CHP) in TD 23.11.1949: 447; Nihat Erim (CHP) in TD 23.11.1949: 450; Vehbi Bey in ZC 21.2.1341; 213–14; Ali İhsan Ulubahşi (AP) in MM 18.2.1972: 273–74; Turgut Topaloğlu (MGP) in MM 18.2.1972: 279; Vehbi Meşhur (CHP) in MM 18.2.1972: 287; Nuri Ocakcıoğlu (CHP) in ZC 21.11.1955: 426; Hilmi Türkmen (DP) in MM 20.5.1974: 408.

⁷⁶⁴ See, for example, Ali Ak (AP) in TD 20.2.1978: 297–99; İlhan Araş (ANAP) in TD 12.12.1984: 30–32; Hasan Tosyalı (*Cumhuriyetçi Güven Partisi* – Republican Reliance Party, CGP) in MM 18.2.1972: 306–07.

are all one/united ... at least villagers should learn to be able to read prayers from imams so that they say they are Muslims ... so when they are asked what nation they are from they won't just say Turk, they should say *elhamdülillâh* I'm a Muslim ... there is no nation without a religion, and our religion is Islam.'⁷⁶⁵

Cross-party consensus on the importance of Islam and calls for the expansion of the PRA's budget and role can be observed even throughout the 1970s, a period of significant polarisation and violence that preceded the 1980 military coup. The PRA's existence as an institution was rarely questioned throughout the period under observation, and was not an issue that reflected a party political divide. In this vein, lawmakers from the CHP/DSP alongside those of the DP/AP typically related narratives of the Turkish nation's relationship with Islam. A DP lawmaker, for instance, declared during the 1952 budget debate that 'our ... the nation by its nature was created Muslim and lives as and will live as Muslim'.⁷⁶⁶ Another example is the comment of a CHP parliamentarian in 1972 that 'this Turkish nation has been fused with the Islamic religion for centuries. Our nation has served Islam ... Islam has kneaded our nation, and has had big input into the creation of our culture and civilisation ... it is impossible to separate the Turkish nation from Islam'.⁷⁶⁷ A CHP lawmakers argued in 1978 that 'we are the children of a nation that has served Islam with its sword and pen ... for over a thousand years our nation has been fused with Islam'.⁷⁶⁸ Similar statements are made by former PRA presidents such as Fuat Bökçü, who were members of the CHP.⁷⁶⁹ Another CHP parliamentarian (for Tunceli) in 1962 argued, for example, that it is expected that the PRA will enable citizens to apply the true dictates of the Quran in terms of morality in an 'Islamic country', 'because our religion dictates this'.⁷⁷⁰ At least until the 1990s, when the 'Alevi revival' and Kurdish issues became more prominent in the public agenda, the question of religious services for other minorities was rarely mentioned, while non-Muslim minorities were considered to have been taken care of under the Lausanne Treaty.⁷⁷¹ When the non-Muslim

⁷⁶⁵ See Ahmet Kemal Silivrili's speech in TD 27.12.1947: 420–21.

⁷⁶⁶ See Gazi Yiğitbaş (DP) in TD 23.2.1952: 606.

⁷⁶⁷ See Ali İhsan Ulubahşi's speech in MM 18.2.1972: 273–74.

⁷⁶⁸ See Yakup Üstün (AP) in MM 20.2.1978: 289–91.

⁷⁶⁹ See Fuat Bökçü (CHP) in ZC 24.2.1960: 357–58.

⁷⁷⁰ See Fethi Ülkü (CHP) in MM 19.2.1962: 626–27.

⁷⁷¹ See, for example, Muammer Alakânt (DP) in TD 20.11.1953: 551–53.

communities were mentioned it was often in the context of missionary activities⁷⁷² or complaints that they were freer than Muslims owing to the independent religious organisations and charitable foundations that supported them.⁷⁷³ There was, in this sense, still a dominant feeling that, as outlined by a 'centre-left' DSP lawmaker in 1996, 'being Muslim, is the shared belief of the totality of our society'.⁷⁷⁴

The PRA's active role in the Islamisation of public space is also underlined by a number of matters, including, crucially, the expansion of religious education. The differentiation of the education system (discussed in Chapter 7) was important in terms of imparting a distinct habitus. The matter of restarting and expanding religious education had begun to be discussed particularly from 1946 by the one-party regime and was driven by two imperatives. Firstly, the authorities saw the introduction of religious lessons in conventional schools as a means to fight communism. Secondly, the establishment of IHS or religious education came to be regarded as necessary to train religious functionaries for the PRA. For the one-party regime, this was once more defended on the grounds of expanding the PRA to fight communism and immoral behaviour, strengthen national unity and raise 'enlightened' functionaries to teach 'true' Islam.⁷⁷⁵ In addition, various lawmakers argued that there were not enough religious functionaries to conduct basic services such as funerals.⁷⁷⁶ These concerns were reflected in the 1947 CHP congress debates, where religious education, the expansion of the PRA and the relaxation of restrictions on religion were discussed and decided upon.⁷⁷⁷ For instance, prominent nationalist lawmaker and writer Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver (who later joined the DP) emphasised the importance of religion and, during the Congress, argued for the need to ensure that there was a mosque in every village (40,000), for which they needed to train religious functionaries.⁷⁷⁸ Based on these decisions, and

⁷⁷² See, for example, Mehmet Çiçek (AKP) in TD 24.3.2003: 19; Gazi Yiğitbaş (DP) in TD 23.2.1952: 606–07; Gani Âşık (CHP) in MM 20.2.1978: 287; M.Sabri Güner (DYP) in TD 12.12.1996: 406; Reşat Doğru (MHP) in TD 14.12.2010: 98.

⁷⁷³ See, for example, Burhanettin Onat (DP) in TD 19.2.1953: 532–35; Mehmet Kabasan (DP) in ZC 24.2.1960: 361; Muslihittin Gürer (AP) in MM 19.2.1962: 617; Fehmi Cumalıoğlu (MP) in MM 15.2.1969: 234–38; Kadircan Kafılı (CKMP) in MM 19.2.1962: 611–14.

⁷⁷⁴ See Abdülbaki Gökçel (DSP) in TD 12.12.1996: 417.

⁷⁷⁵ See the PRA budget (TD. 23.11.1949; TD. 27.12.1947) and CHP Congress discussions (CHP 1948).

⁷⁷⁶ CHP 1948: 450, 558.

⁷⁷⁷ Cündioğlu 1999: 115–18; CHP 1948.

⁷⁷⁸ CHP 1948: 457.

the proposals made by committees tasked subsequently, it was decided that *imam-hatips* and theology faculties would be opened to train functionaries for an expanded PRA.⁷⁷⁹ Importantly, both policies had been urged by the PRA and by conservative/Islamist actors, as evidenced by articles in *Sebilürreşad* magazine⁷⁸⁰ and reports prepared by the PRA. The 1950 report of the PRA head Akseki, discussed above, for instance, outlines the lack of qualified religious functionaries to carry out basic functions such as funerals and to guide the public in true religion and against superstition, ‘fake’ *tariqats*, other ‘external’ religions and communism.⁷⁸¹ In order to achieve these goals for Akseki the opening of IHS controlled by the PRA and the expansion of religious education at all levels of the conventional education system were necessary; he concludes in a press statement reported by the conservative *Sebilürreşad* magazine in 1950 that the PRA had been pushing for these policies for a long time and that the government had finally accepted them.⁷⁸² In addition, the Islamic charity associated with the *Nakşibendi* movement,⁷⁸³ the Association for the Dissemination of Science (*İlim Yayma Cemiyeti*, IYC),⁷⁸⁴ which received direct and indirect support from the state, was established in 1951 with the stated goal of expanding religious education to train religious functionaries.⁷⁸⁵ According to Malika Zehgal, in the case of Egypt, the state’s efforts to modernise education for the ulema and the creation of two systems had eventually blurred the lines between the ulema and the Islamists, as the ‘transformation of their educational background transformed the religious scholars into intellectuals who had the same references and vocabulary as their Islamist colleagues educated in modern universities’.⁷⁸⁶ In the Turkish case, the PRA played an important role in the expansion of religious education, which over time facilitated the creation of a constituency that in turn supported further Islamisation.

⁷⁷⁹ Ünsür 2000: 47–48.

⁷⁸⁰ Kırboğa 1975: 23–28; CHP 1948: 457; a plethora of articles can be found in *Sebilürreşad* magazine.

⁷⁸¹ Akseki 1997 [1950]. 362–79.

⁷⁸² Akseki 1997 [1950]. 362–79; *Sebilürreşad* 1950: 163–66.

⁷⁸³ *Sol Portal* 7 August 2012; *MerhabaHaber.com* 29 March 2013.

⁷⁸⁴ The aims of the association include the raising of a youth that embraces national, moral and cultural values (Kavalcı 2007: 31). The IYC has played an important role in working for the development of IHS infrastructure and has cooperated with the MoE and the PRA. For example, the PRA has requested help from IYC for facilities for training for PRA muftis (IYC 1964).

⁷⁸⁵ *Sebilürreşad* 1952: 132.

⁷⁸⁶ Zehgal 1999: 386–87.

There are various historical documents, such as correspondence with other state actors that demonstrate the role of the PRA in Islamisation. For instance, a draft proposal for a new organisational law prepared by the PRA in 1942 defined the ulema's role as being 'to spread the Islamic religion high truths as far as the villages, raise the public's religious feelings in a pure and chaste manner to work for a society composed of the most puissant and moral individuals with regards to spirituality and religion as with the material field'.⁷⁸⁷ An example of how the PRA has opposed pluralistic culture and reproduced the Sunni-Muslim character of the nation-state is illustrated by its battle with the state-owned television station TRT in the 1960s. In response to the airing of programmes about other religions, such as Baha'ism, on TRT, several warnings were issued by the then president of the PRA, İbrahim Elmalı, who argued that the TRT had been 'established with the 100% Muslim Turkish money' and should be careful given the '99.5% Muslim' population and the nation's religious feelings, which were that 'the Islamic religion is the world's most eminent and advanced religion'.⁷⁸⁸

How the PRA negotiated the greater Islamisation of public space and the expansion of its domain of activity in return for supporting the maintenance of social order is shown by internal correspondence in 1957 between an inspector based within the PRA, Dr Fuat Sezgin, and the prime ministry's office. Addressing the prime ministry's consultative body, Sezgin reasoned that 'protecting the social order is in essence the primary aim of our religion ... It is clear that [the PRA's] function is wider than the implementation of all provisions concerning faith and worship of the religion of Islam and concerned with the country's spiritual and material development ... thanks to men of religion, we can achieve many things by taking advantage of religious input and as such making them more attractive so that they adopt it, and we can get rid of elements that we perceive to be harmful to our existence.'⁷⁸⁹ Religious functionaries, according to Sezgin, could be useful in tackling everything from literacy to smuggling and crime. Significantly, the response of the prime minister's office that the PRA could be useful in reducing

⁷⁸⁷ PMAD 14/4/1942.

⁷⁸⁸ Bedir Yayınevi 1966: 3–7.

⁷⁸⁹ PMAD 8/8/1957.

crime as well as in increasing public acceptance of policies⁷⁹⁰ demonstrated the nature of the bargaining process between the different actors of the state. In the same vein, PRA functionaries have presented the ulema's role as playing a vital unifying function based on Islamic identity, as in the late 1970s, when 'Special Guidance Teams' (*Özel İrşat Ekipleri*) were dispatched to the south-east regions following sectarian violence and, later, owing to the rise of the Kurdish nationalist movement. The use of 'Special Guidance Teams' were also resurrected more recently, in 2010, under the Islamist AKP government in order to combat Kurdish 'separatism'.⁷⁹¹ Former heads of the PRA, such as M. Said Yazıcıoğlu and Tayyar Altıkulaç, have described their attempts to integrate the influential Kurdish mollahs as part of anti-'terror' efforts⁷⁹² and have argued that they would have been more successful if the PRA had been granted more power and authority.⁷⁹³

5.6 Conclusion

Recent scholarly works on the role of the ulema in the modern Muslim world have underlined i) the ongoing importance of the ulema, contrary to previous assertions of decline with the transition to the modern nation-state; ii) the active involvement of the ulema in politics, rather than passivity; and iii) the ulema's common cause with, cooperation with and enabling of Islamisation and religio-politics. In this chapter I have argued firstly that the Turkish ulema, or the PRA, has played a more critical and dynamic role than hitherto assumed, which should lead to a reassessment of our approaches to Turkish historiography and the narrative of top-down secularisation and a sharp state-society demarcation. The PRA, it has been shown, has been engaged in a dynamic struggle for influence with other state actors, adopting multiple strategies of accommodation, opposition and active struggle and negotiation. Policies of absorption, common cause and cooperation with *tariqat* and Islamists also suggest more fluid state-society-religion boundaries and relationships. Secondly, it has been argued that the PRA plays an important role in the embedding and reproduction of the religious majoritarianism

⁷⁹⁰ PMAD 8/8/1957.

⁷⁹¹ *Haber Sol* 13 November 2010.

⁷⁹² Yazıcıoğlu 2013: 219–20. This can also be regarded as an effort to co-opt Kurdish religious leaders to pacify the Kurdish nationalist movement.

⁷⁹³ Yazıcıoğlu 2013: 115, 219–20, 323; Altıkulaç November 2013.

of the state, ensuring the Islamisation of public space and reinforcing community boundaries that both mark crucial steps to politicisation and provide a receptive environment for Islamists.

The new revisionist literature on the ulema has commonly concluded that the ‘revival’ of the institution was the unintended outcome of state efforts to control religion and use it as a legitimating tool,⁷⁹⁴ and, consequently, that modernisation does not lead to secularisation.⁷⁹⁵ Moustafa has argued in this vein that state policies appear ‘schizophrenic’.⁷⁹⁶ Similarly, for Zeghal state-led modernisation has meant that ‘unexpectedly, once the political arena liberalised, the modernisation policy which the political elites had imposed earlier on the religious sphere backfired on the state’, giving ‘al-Azhar its best chances for political revival and prov[ing] that secularisation is a self-limiting process’ as well as that ‘the political elites who decided to transform the religious sphere and its relationship with the secular world were probably aware of the intricacies of this program. Thinking that they were finally controlling the political power of religion, they could not foresee that the reform of the religious institution and the transformation of the ulema’s world would help them re-emerge on the public scene more than thirty years later.’⁷⁹⁷ Based on my research, detailed above, I suggest that the PRA should be considered as one amongst other persisting institutions (the military, etc.) that comprise the state and are engaged in a dynamic struggle for influence and power, rather than being the result of unintended outcomes or the schizophrenic policies of a monolithic, unitary and autonomous secular state.⁷⁹⁸ The ulema were empowered by the reliance of other state actors on the PRA for legitimacy, by the Cold War-related anti-communism policies and by areas of ‘overlapping consensus’ with other state actors. This not only allowed the PRA to expand its monopoly of religious activity and endow it with the resources of the modern nation-state, but also enabled it to pursue its own prerogatives.

⁷⁹⁴ Moustafa 2000.

⁷⁹⁵ Zeghal 1999.

⁷⁹⁶ Moustafa 2000.

⁷⁹⁷ Zeghal 1999.

⁷⁹⁸ Brass 1985.

Chapter 6: Institutions and boundary-building: the ulema and the case of the Alevi ‘minority’

6.1 Introduction

In focusing on Alevism, this chapter will attempt to illustrate how the PRA embeds and reproduces the religious majoritarianism of the nation-state by shaping and maintaining community boundaries along religious (and sectarian) lines. Accordingly, the first section will explore the question of Alevi identity with respect to Turkish nationalism. The second section will illustrate the role of the PRA in shaping national identity, and the parameters of inclusion and exclusion, through the tracing of its evolving relationship with Alevism, with reference to the project of establishing a Department of Denominations (*Mezhepler Müdürlüğü*, DoD). Based on archival research, I show the ways in which the PRA plays a key role in carrying, preserving and transmitting Sunni (Hanefi) Muslim Turkish identity through the generations. I contend that this role has parallels with the office of *Şeyhülislam* (*Shaykh al-Islām*) in the late Ottoman Empire and the Hamidian project of imagining and constructing a Sunni Muslim *millet*, suggesting areas of continuity between the Ottoman and Republican periods in the domain of national identity. At the same time, it will be demonstrated that this role of the PRA contributes to the construction of the national community as a homogenous Sunni Muslim–Turkish majority bloc, which is reflected in the common public and official discourse on Turkey as ‘99%’ majority Muslim.

6.2 Institutions, national identity and the PRA

In an essay on the PRA’s role within the ‘laic’ Republic, the scholar Necdet Subaşı, subsequently appointed as the head of strategy of the PRA, states that ‘the Alevis, as a significant element of insurance of social unity, are faced with provocations from internal and external centres aimed at ruining this harmony’.⁷⁹⁹ Subaşı’s observation is emblematic of the double discourse of state actors towards the Alevis, in the sense that the Alevis, comprising some 15–20% of the population,

⁷⁹⁹ Subaşı 2006.

are regarded both as the necessary constituents that enable the construction of the Muslim–Turkish majority bloc embodied in the discourse of the ‘99%’ Muslim–Turkish majority, and also, precisely because of this role, as a threat. Any visible manifestation of difference is thereby regarded as not only divisive of the unity of the nation and, as such, as a national security threat, but as potentially undermining the hegemony of the Muslim–Turkish majority.

Given the focus on secularisation and the ulema’s role in shaping religious life, there has been little focus on the ways in which the ulema in the Muslim world play a role in shaping national identity. Yet the PRA plays a vital role in defining not just the boundaries of religious life and public space but also the parameters of the nation and the criteria of exclusion and inclusion. In his work on ethnic group construction, Brass has drawn attention to the role of the state (alongside competition within and amongst groups) in the construction of ethnic categories and as a differentiating force that distributes privileges amongst groups.⁸⁰⁰ Institutions, whether through educational establishments, the national media, the legal framework, ‘ethnically-linked resource policies’⁸⁰¹ or immigration laws, play an active role in the construction and reproduction of national identities. As described by Bourdieu: ‘through classificational systems ... inscribed in law, through bureaucratic procedures, educational structures and social ..., the state moulds mental structures and imposes common principles of vision and division And it thereby contributes to the construction of what is commonly designated as national identity.’⁸⁰² It is possible to designate a dual function of institutions with respect to national identity production. Firstly, institutions can be considered as ‘carriers and preservers of collective identities’⁸⁰³ which underpin their persistence, as, through them, ‘individuals are united into social groups that can perpetuate themselves down the generations’.⁸⁰⁴ As such, they play a key role in the processes of social closure. Secondly, institutions are crucially involved in the process of producing and negotiating national identity, thereby shaping the

⁸⁰⁰ Brass 1985.

⁸⁰¹ Nagel 1994; Koraltürk 2011.

⁸⁰² Bourdieu 1994: 7–8.

⁸⁰³ Smith 1998; Özkırımlı 2000: 184–85; Bechhofer and McCrone 2009.

⁸⁰⁴ Smith 1998: 69; Özkırımlı 2000: 184–85.

contours of the nation-state.⁸⁰⁵ Beyond its role as a religious bureaucracy, therefore, it is the contention of this chapter that the Turkish official ulema establishment, the PRA, has a central role in terms of framing Turkish national identity as Sunni-Muslim–Turkish and, ultimately, in the embedding and reproduction of religious majoritarianism.

More specifically, this chapter’s focus on the PRA’s approach towards Alevism reflects not a predetermined choice but an outcome of my archival work. Within my research, the Alevis stood out as the one community that has engaged the PRA more than any other. Shafī’i⁸⁰⁶ Kurds, missionaries or non-Muslims all featured comparatively less in the documentation. Alongside theological conflicts, this is partly a reflection of the fact that the Alevis constitute the second-largest faith community after Sunni Muslims in Turkey. But in addition, I argue, it reflects the ‘overlapping consensus’, in the Rawlsian sense, between the PRA’s agenda of religious unity and the nationalist/nation-building project of ethnic homogenisation. This is understood in the sense that, while both sides may hold different (but not mutually exclusive) conceptions of the nation, political union or the purpose of life, the same conclusions by actors may still be reached, and, consequently, ‘essential elements of the political conception, its principles, standards and ideals, are theorems ... at which the comprehensive doctrines in the consensus intersect or converge’.⁸⁰⁷ The PRA’s emphasis on Sunni Islam (as well as Islamists) and the founding Republican nationalist project’s emphasis on Turkish ethnicity, which itself is deeply imbricated and shaped by Muslim identity, both ultimately come to consensus on the vision of a homogenous Muslim–Turkish nation. This is facilitated by the essentially ‘overlapping systems of meaning’ that connect ‘self, community, polity, the highest good, the totality’⁸⁰⁸ across religion and nationalism. Within the discourse of the PRA, therefore, the link between (Sunni) Islam and Turkish nationalism is ‘reinforced by the symbolic construction of meaning’⁸⁰⁹ seen in the framing of the nation (*millet*) with Islamic terminology.

⁸⁰⁵ Bechhofer & McCrone 2009.

⁸⁰⁶ The Shafī’i school is one of the four schools of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence.

⁸⁰⁷ Rawls 1987.

⁸⁰⁸ Lapidus 2001.

⁸⁰⁹ Lapidus 2001.

As previously outlined, nationalism is a novel form of group identity,⁸¹⁰ with the modern nation-state involving a ‘press toward homogeneity, which is simultaneously a process of exclusion’.⁸¹¹ The process of homogenisation and the criteria of exclusion and inclusion are not neutral. Brackette Williams has argued that the formation of a nation-state involves a transformist hegemony in which heterogeneity is homogenised through ‘appropriations that devalue and deny their link to marginalised others’ contributions to the patrimony’.⁸¹² Within this process, those that are marginalised from this form of the imagined nation (e.g. Alevism as marginalised from Turkish nationalism) then either continue to insist on their putative ‘root’ identity and are rejected as ‘true’ members of the ‘nation’ or adopt the new identity and are ‘constantly required to show proof of their contribution to the nation as they search for a place in its political and economic structure’, but ‘soon learn that such proofs are often considered by the “non-ethnics” as little more than feathers and flourishes’.⁸¹³ Williams concludes that elites of the constructed ‘race/class/culture/nation conflation go on to direct the construction of a link between putative homogeneity and civil society’. Following this, non-elites that share some (imagined) commonality with this conflation take their place in a ‘historical bloc’ that represents and protects this imagined past. The subsequent assimilation of the ‘marginals’ into this constructed majority bloc consequently only ‘further expand[s] and reinforce[s] the bloc’s control over the state through its symbolic representation of civil society and the links between this representation and policies that define the just distribution of goods and services among citizens. The ethnic person, in the guise of “role model” or “exception to the rule”, becomes all the more ethnic for having assimilated.’⁸¹⁴ On the other hand, in the context of this study, it can be argued that the process of absorption both underpins and is disrupted and counteracted by institutional persistence. Put another way, the dynamics of institutions produce ‘social closure’ that locks in the privileges of the constructed majority bloc, thereby leading to resistance against the process of ‘absorption’ of ‘marginal elements’.

⁸¹⁰ Calhoun 1993: 229.

⁸¹¹ Verdery 1993: 43.

⁸¹² Williams 1989: 401–44.

⁸¹³ Williams 1989: 401–44.

⁸¹⁴ Williams 1989: 401–44.

In general, approaches to Turkish nationalism and identity have incorporated a tension or a wavering between civic and ethnic forms.⁸¹⁵ For instance, Bora argues that “Atatürk nationalism”, the official nationalism of Turkey since the founding of the republic, is in a crisis due to the difficulty of balancing the tension between a “French-style” conception of nationalism, based on the principle of citizenship and territoriality, and ethnicist variations (“German-style” nationalism).⁸¹⁶ Such representations, it has been argued (see Chapter 2), are problematic. Rather than a false dichotomy between civic and ethnic nationalism, focusing on the criteria of inclusion and exclusion suggests that religion (Hanefi Sunni Islam) was a constitutive element of Turkish national identity, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 5.

6.3 The transformative hegemony of Turkish nationalism: Islamisation and Turkification of Alevis from empire to Republic

Before analysing the approach of the PRA towards Alevis, and the means by which this approach leads to the embedding and reproduction of the religious majoritarianism of the state, the section below will trace the evolving and differing approaches of state actors towards Alevism, from the Ottoman era to the Republic. The designation ‘Alevi’ is taken here as an umbrella (but not necessarily synonymous) term for various heterogenous communities, such as *Bektashi* and *Kızılbaş*, which have been estimated to comprise 15–25% of the population of Turkey.⁸¹⁷ The question of Alevi identity has been approached from many angles, with Alevis defined in ethnic, cultural, political and religious terms.⁸¹⁸ The plethora of narratives include numerous assertions: i) Alevis as representing ‘true Turkish Islam’ vs. ‘Arab Islam’;⁸¹⁹ ii) Alevis as ethnic Kurds, within or outside Islamic tradition;⁸²⁰ iii) Alevis as representing an Islamised pre-Islamic syncretic Turkish heterodoxy;⁸²¹ iv) Alevis as representing a predominantly Anatolia-based heterodox Islamic tradition.⁸²² This chapter’s concern, however, is not with the

⁸¹⁵ Ateş 2006.

⁸¹⁶ Bora 2003: 437.

⁸¹⁷ See Sökefeld 2002: 5–38; Erdemir 2005: 938; Zırh 2012; Bruinessen 1996.

⁸¹⁸ Sökefeld 2008; Verkuyten & Yildiz 2011.

⁸¹⁹ Şener 2003.

⁸²⁰ Bayrak 1997; Çem 2009.

⁸²¹ Ocak 1983; Melikoff 1998: 237.

⁸²² Shankland 1999.

‘cultural stuff’ but with ethnic identity as a ‘contingent political project’,⁸²³ exploring the ways in which group boundaries have been constructed and maintained with a particular focus on the role of state actors.

i. From Abdulhamid II to the Republic: imagining the Sunni-Hanefi Muslim millet

Despite the transformation of the remains of the Islamic Ottoman state to the ostensibly ‘secular’ Turkish Republic, it is possible to distinguish notable parallels of approaches towards heterodox communities or Alevis. The emphasis on Sunni orthodoxy within the Ottoman Empire is generally traced to the rivalry between the Shi’a Safavids of Iran and the Sunni Ottoman state during the sixteenth century (culminating in the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514), which, it has been commonly argued, was ‘essentially a political, not a religious struggle’.⁸²⁴ In particular, aside from doctrinal differences, Shi’a Persia as well as the *Kızılbaş* were regarded as challenging the Ottoman claim to be the Caliph of all Muslims and hence Islam’s universal authority.⁸²⁵ In the nineteenth century a renewed focus on orthodoxy emerged owing to a ‘legitimacy crisis’ resulting from domestic and external challenges to the empire, including the loss of land and nascent nationalisms.⁸²⁶ With the aim of ensuring the survival of the Ottoman state against the threat of disintegration, the modernisation/centralisation reforms of the Tanzimat era sought to address this crisis by the promotion of a new social base and ideology of legitimation.⁸²⁷ The policy of Ottomanism had been reflective of these concerns (see Chapter 3). The pan-Islamist policy of Abdulhamid II was characterised by the increased propagation of the Sunni Hanefi School of Islamic jurisprudence as the ‘official belief’ (*mezheb-i resmîye*) and involved both the active encouragement of conversion and coercion in order to create a (Muslim) majority ‘reliable core population who would be duly imbued with the “correct” ideology’.⁸²⁸ As Deringil argues, ‘religious uniformity was thus seen as a means by which normative

⁸²³ Brubaker 2002.

⁸²⁴ Ocak 1998; Deringil 2000: 555; Kehl-Bodrogi 2003: 54.

⁸²⁵ Deringil 1990: 46; Gündoğdu & Vural 2013: 17.

⁸²⁶ Deringil 1998: 166.

⁸²⁷ Deringil 1993: 3–4.

⁸²⁸ Deringil 1998b: 48; Deringil 1998: 220; Gündoğdu & Vural 2013: 19.

standards of behaviour could be imposed on the population'.⁸²⁹ For Ateş, Ottoman modernisation can be described as a process of Sunnification, which also involved the outlawing of the *Bektashi* order following the abolition of the Janissary Corps by Sultan Murad II in 1826 and their handover to the Sunni *Nakshibendi tariqat*.⁸³⁰

After the struggle against the Safavids the Ottoman state had over time begun to use the designation *Kızılbaş* not just against those considered to be pro-Shah loyalists but all heterodox and Shi'a communities regarded as a threat and suppressed.⁸³¹ In 1548 a *fatwa* was issued by *Şeyhülislam* Ebussuud Efendi in which the *Kızılbaş* were declared heretics and their killing proclaimed permissible by Islamic law. Subsequently heterodox communities, perceived as open to infiltration by external enemies and missionaries and thereby regarded with suspicion, became the most marginalised elements under the Ottoman state, whilst non-Muslim communities had been recognised under the millet system and acknowledged as the 'people of the book'.⁸³² During the Hamidian period in particular, communities such as the *Yezidi* Kurds, *Kızılbaş* Alevis, *Zaidi* Shi'a in Yemen and Shi'a in the Iraqi provinces that were perceived as potential fifth columns became systematically targeted by state policies and Sunni-Hanefi missionaries.⁸³³ Propagation of Sunni orthodoxy was ensured through military means as well as through education policies and the ulema, who, together with the (Sunni) Sufi sheikhs, were tasked with fighting heresy.⁸³⁴ Various measures were taken against the *Kızılbaş*, including state surveillance, religious education, the government-financed construction of mosques in their villages and the appointment of Sunni Hanefi imams to these mosques to 'teach the right faith' to *Kızılbaş* who had 'digressed from Islam'.⁸³⁵

⁸²⁹ Deringil 1990: 53.

⁸³⁰ Ateş 2012: 252.

⁸³¹ Ateş 2012: 239; Massicard argues that the Ottoman state tried to use Bektashi dervishes against the *Kızılbaş* but that instead the Bektashis came under the influence of Shi'ism: Massicard 2007: 32–34; Kehl-Bodrogi 2003; Ocak 1997: 95; Deringil 2000: 568.

⁸³² Deringil 1993: 13; Massicard 2007: 39; Ateş 2012: 240, 251; Kehl-Bodrogi 2003.

⁸³³ For example, Dersim clans were perceived as being too close to Armenians, Russians and Shi'a Iran, and a target of Protestant missionaries; Gündoğdu & Vural 2013: 21, 31–32; Dressler 2013: 75.

⁸³⁴ Deringil 1993; Gündoğdu & Vural 2013: 46.

⁸³⁵ Enver Behnan Şapolyo quoted in Kehl-Bodrogi 2003: 56. Küçük and Ateş relate a *fatwa* from 1920 that outlines such activities. See Ateş 2012: 282; Küçük 2002.

ii. The CUP and Alevis: ‘Sunnification’ and ‘Turkification’

With the drift towards Turkism under the CUP in the aftermath of the Balkan wars in 1912–13, Turkish nationalism had begun to influence state policies towards the Alevi communities. During 1914–15 investigations on Alevis commissioned by the CUP and conducted by Baha Said Bey marked the beginning of the period of systematic Turkification alongside ongoing Islamisation. These investigations were part of the CUP’s broader ethnographic research on the loyalties and characteristics of non-Sunni Muslim communities in Anatolia, which were partly motivated by fears that these communities were coming under the influence of and were the target of Christian missionaries and Armenians.⁸³⁶ Baha Said’s research aimed to prove that Alevis were of Turkish origin by drawing links with Alevi practices and central Asian shamanism, thereby rearticulating Alevis as ‘real Turks’ who had carried and preserved Turkish customs and traditions, race, blood and language since the pre-Islamic and pre-Ottoman era.⁸³⁷ Through this rearticulation, the reimagined Alevi identity was instrumentalised in the construction of Turkish national identity in order to posit ethnic continuity with Central Asia.⁸³⁸ Yet, while elements of this reimagined Alevi identity were then integrated into the nationalist project by being ethnicised, Alevi identity was itself not recognised and was consigned to invisibility, reflecting the dynamic of absorption under the transformist hegemony of nationalism.

iii. The Turkish Republic and Alevis: continued ‘Sunnification’ and ‘Turkification’

Studies of the Republic’s approach to Alevism have been heavily politicised and steeped in the meta-narrative of the battle between Kemalist secularism and religion, articulating Alevis firmly with the former but ignoring or masking the organic nexus between the ‘Turkish state’, ‘society’ and Sunni Islam.⁸³⁹ Emma Sinclair Webb has argued, for example, that a ‘widespread, retrospective reading

⁸³⁶ Kieser 2002; Ateş 2006: 269–70; Dressler 2013: 127.

⁸³⁷ See Ata 2007; Küçük 2002: 907–08; Ateş 2006: 269–70.

⁸³⁸ Ateş 2006: 269–70.

⁸³⁹ Verkuyten & Yildiz 2011.

of history among the Alevi minority today propels the group on to centre stage by constructing them as the main allies of the “Kemalist project” from the War of Independence onwards and as stalwart and unwavering, though unappreciated, “Kemalists”, through the history of the Republic’.⁸⁴⁰ Various works have argued that Alevis are natural allies of the Republic and a guarantor of laicism, insuring it against Sunni radicalism.⁸⁴¹ Such narratives are not only primordialist in essence but reflect selective historical readings that cannot be taken as neutral and mask a complex reality of social engineering by state elites.⁸⁴²

The politics of social and demographic engineering, in terms of policies of Islamisation and Turkification to construct a homogenous nation, had continued under the new Republic.⁸⁴³ Consequently, Alevi identity, which had been rejected and perceived as heretical by the Sunni Ottoman state, was absorbed within an Islamic framing under the ‘laic’ Republic as constituting a ‘Turkish Islam’ as opposed to ‘Arabised Islam’.⁸⁴⁴ The works of Baha Said and the articulation of Alevis as ‘real Turks’ (*öz Türk*) came to form the basis of nationalist historiography, as seen by the writings of prominent politicians and historians Hasan Reşid Tankut and Fuat Köprülü.⁸⁴⁵ Tankut, a CHP lawmaker between 1931 and 1960, had been a key proponent of the Turkish History Thesis and Sun-Language Theory, part of nation-building efforts, and the founder of the Turkish Language Association. In his 1937 report on the Alevi-Zazas of Dersim, he defined Alevis as belonging to the Turkish race and related to the Sumerians;⁸⁴⁶ he drew a similar conclusion in his 1938 report on the Nusayris as Turks related to the Hittites.⁸⁴⁷ For Tankut Alevism had become a fusion of shamanism and Shiism and, consequently, owing to the Sunni–Shi’a schism, had turned into a hatred of Turks, who were identified as Sunni Muslims. Alevism, with its ‘grudge’ against Sunni Muslims, therefore, was regarded as posing the main barrier to Alevis accepting that they were ‘real Turks’, which also made them open to incitement by Armenian

⁸⁴⁰ Sinclair-Webb 2002; see these types of claims in: Soner & Toktaş 2011; Poyraz 2005; Ocak 1996: 192.

⁸⁴¹ Poyraz 2005; Ocak 1996: 192; Koçan & Öncü 2004.

⁸⁴² Sinclair-Webb 2002: 218; Bozarslan 2002: 7; Erdemir 2005.

⁸⁴³ Dressler 2013: 107–08; Deringil 1993: 14, 28; Toprak 2010; T24 22 November 2010.

⁸⁴⁴ Massicard 2007: 45.

⁸⁴⁵ Ateş 2012: 263.

⁸⁴⁶ Tankut 2000 [1937]: 30.

⁸⁴⁷ Tankut 1938.

‘traitors’ to divide the Turks.⁸⁴⁸ Similarly, as Dressler has shown through his study on the policies of the early Republic towards Alevis, the works of Fuat Köprülü involved continued efforts to rewrite Alevism within an Islamic framework.⁸⁴⁹ An example of this can be seen in a report submitted to the Ministry of Education in 1926 which describes ‘*Kızılbaş Turkcomens*’ as being in reality ‘Turkish Muslims’ who could be distinguished from Arabised (Sunni) Muslims.⁸⁵⁰

The propagation of Alevis as ‘Turkish Muslims’ as part of nationalist historiography is also observable in the official documentation of the one-party period, demonstrating the ways in which it shaped Republican practices of demographic and social engineering through education policies, religious services and forced resettlement. Common threads of the documentation, alongside efforts to reconstruct Alevism as Turkish and Muslim, are the identification of the *Kızılbaş* faith as antithetical to Turkish identity because of its perceived hatred towards Sunni Muslims and what is regarded as a mistaken identification of the *Kızılbaş* with Kurdishness. Consequently, *Kızılbaş Alevis* are regarded as posing a danger to national unity, driving ‘real Turks’ towards Kurdishness and making them a potential fifth column of Iran.⁸⁵¹ The documentation related to Dersim in the 1930s, such as the confidential Dersim Report produced by the Gendarmerie General Command around 1933–34⁸⁵² and the public inspectorates reports on Dersim,⁸⁵³ comprise examples of such attitudes. Within the Dersim Report, Alevis are argued to be real Turks who have come under the influence of Shi’a currents and Kurdishness, leading Dersim’s Alevis to identify themselves as *Kızılbaş*. It is the development of this *Kızılbaş* identity, it is claimed, that has created a ‘cliff’ between Alevis and Turkishness, since they equate Sunni Islam with Turks and thus regard them as enemies. It is recommended, therefore, that education and Turkification policies are undertaken in order to teach ‘national consciousness’ to

⁸⁴⁸ Tankut 2000 [1937].

⁸⁴⁹ Dressler 2013.

⁸⁵⁰ See a report written on 7 May 1926 by an anonymous writer addressed to the Education ministry: ‘Hülasa: Kürtlere Dair’ in Yıldırım 2011: 62.

⁸⁵¹ Yıldırım 2011: 62; see also the works of Naşit Hakkı Uluğ, a key member of the CHP elites, who describes Alevis as coming under Safavid influence against the Ottoman Empire (Uluğ 2007 [1939]: 89–92).

⁸⁵² Only 100 copies were published (Çalışlar 2010 [1933–34]).

⁸⁵³ Koçak 2010 [1927–1952]: 143.

Alevis who have come under the influence of Shi'a currents and 'superstition'.⁸⁵⁴ Similar comments were made in 1930 by the Chief of Staff of the military, Fevzi Çakmak, who argued that the Kurds in Erzincan 'are using Alevism to Kurdify currently Turkish villages and spread the Kurdish language' and that 'many Alevi Turkish villages that are by custom Turkish are abandoning their mother tongue and speaking Kurdish owing to the mentality that Alevism denotes Kurdishness'.⁸⁵⁵ Likewise, these conceptions were mirrored in the reports on the Tunceli province submitted in 1936 by the military commander Ragıp Gümüşpala, who reasoned that the *Kızılbaş* in Dersim were called Kurds because in the Ottoman Empire religious schisms led to Sunnis being called Muslims and Shi'a being called Kurds. Such divisions were ruinous for the Turkish community, according to Gümüşpala, and were being exploited by Armenians.⁸⁵⁶ The perception of the *Kızılbaş* faith as a barrier to the integration of peoples that needed to be 'corrected' via education and missionary activity (Sunnification) marks continuity with the approaches of the late Ottoman state.⁸⁵⁷ A secret report prepared for the CHP government by Tankut in 1949, which warned that the Alevis, despite their affinity with the values of the Republic, harboured socialistic characteristics and hence were open to communist infiltration,⁸⁵⁸ suggests that 'correction' or 'assimilation' was insufficient to overcome the marginalisation of Alevis in relations to Turkish national identity.

The transition to multipartism at the end of the 1940s had coincided with rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, migration and consequent social differentiation. In this period the Alevis, previously under the 'republican cloak of invisibility', became visible again in aspects of public life.⁸⁵⁹ Likewise, the increasing competition for access to resources precipitated the politicisation of identities, and was partly responsible for stoking numerous bouts of ethnic violence against the Alevis.⁸⁶⁰ The ways in which Alevi–Sunni divisions and boundary creation became

⁸⁵⁴ Çalışlar 2010 [1933–34].

⁸⁵⁵ Ateş 2012: 268.

⁸⁵⁶ See 7 May 1926 Education ministry report (Yıldırım 2011 [1926]: 90).

⁸⁵⁷ Gündoğdu & Vural 2013: 37, 45.

⁸⁵⁸ Tankut 2000 [1937]: 36–38, 107–10.

⁸⁵⁹ Zırh 2012: 140–41.

⁸⁶⁰ Massicard 2007: 54. Despite minimal research on the matter, it has been argued with regards to the various bouts of ethnic violence against Alevis, as in Maraş, Sivas, Çorum and Malatya, that some of the underlying reasons were the unease of the Sunni bourgeoisie and locals who felt

intertwined in growing competition in multi-party life is indicated by the recently published historical documentation, including 13 reports prepared during the period 1939–1953 by Necmeddin Sahir Silan, a CHP lawmaker and later DP deputy for Tunceli. In one example, a 1952 report prepared for the DP, Silan details how, following the election of majority ‘Alevi Turks’ to the party’s administrative board in the Erzincan district, others in the party opposed the results by alleging ‘Turkish–Kurdish’, ‘Sunni–Alevi’ matters and manoeuvred to remove the Alevis from their elected positions by establishing a new administrative board. Silan relates commentary by party members outlining their objection and refusal to work with the originally elected board owing to their Alevi identity and commitment to communist views. The CHP is also accused of provoking community tensions and reinterpreting history to blame the DP for Alevi massacres in order to prevent Alevis from joining the DP. In his recommendation to the DP Silan concludes that, for Alevis, Zazas or Kurds, the common denominator was Islam, which urged that the DP embrace the citizens of eastern Turkey under the bond of Islam.⁸⁶¹

Against this context of sharpening group boundaries and the DP’s subsequent closer association with Islamist and conservative movements such as the *Nurcus*, Alevis, articulated as Turkish Muslims, were promoted as the natural allies of the ‘Kemalist’ republican project.⁸⁶² Nonetheless, despite the intensifying political competition, an analysis of parliamentary debates demonstrates that, across the party divide, there was a structurally homologous approach towards the question of Alevis.⁸⁶³ Throughout the period from 1950 to the 1990s, conservative (DP, AP, ANAP, DYP) and Islamist (MSP/RP) parties conceived any differentiation within the Muslim community (or *millet*) as sowing discord (*tefrika*) and division and hence as dangerous to the unity of Muslims (*tevhid*). The typical referencing and recourse to Islamic terminology is highlighted by the commentary of an AP minister during the annual PRA budget debates in 1966: that,, ‘in Islam, amongst Muslims there is no separatism, there is no divisiveness, there is no separatism,

threatened by the economic involvement and ascendancy, as well as the increased visibility of Alevis, particularly in cities that experienced significant internal migration. See Doğan 2007; Yılmaz 2004.

⁸⁶¹ Akekmekci & Pervan 2010 [1939–1953]. However, the Alevis distanced themselves from the DP by the 1954 elections following the closer association of the DP and the Nurcu movement.

⁸⁶² Bozarslan 2003: 6–7.

⁸⁶³ Alevism within the PRA budget debates in the period 1924–2011.

there is no *tefrik* [division]. There is *tevhit* [oneness] and unity ... we are against all tendencies that are divisive in terms of religion.’⁸⁶⁴ Such language was mirrored in 1995 in the words of an ANAP deputy, who declared that ‘it is wrong to divide our people into Alevi-Sunni. Both of these are the Islamic community. To make these customs [*meşrep*] conflict is treason and sinful.’⁸⁶⁵ The opposition – the CHP/Social Democratic People’s Party (*Sosyaldemokrat Halk Partisi*, SHP)/Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti*, DSP) – adopted a similar emphasis against Alevi differentiation, focusing on the need to protect the ‘unity and integrity of the nation’ (*birlik ve beraberlik*), but through a discourse that emphasised the importance of laicism and the role of the establishment of the Republic in the defeat of the ‘ills of sectarianism’. Thus, even when these parties warned of discrimination against Alevi or of sectarianism, it was not within the context of equality or religious freedom but instead reflected the agenda of preserving national unity that ultimately said little about and served to mask the role of the state as the propagator of Sunni Muslim–Turkish identity.

On the other hand, despite these efforts to absorb Alevi through their reimagining as Muslim Turks, they continued to be regarded with suspicion as a fifth column by state actors as well as by conservatives and the Islamists. The influential Islamist journal *Sebilürreşad* depicted them as potential communists and atheists, and as dangerous for the Muslim community.⁸⁶⁶ The projection of Alevi as a potential fifth column was evident even in the mainstream media’s coverage of tensions in 1951 in Hatay province following the killing of an Alevi youth. In the newspaper *Milliyet*, for instance, it was alleged that Alevi destroyed Atatürk’s statues and burnt the Turkish flag on the directions of external forces (Alevi in Syria) and communists.⁸⁶⁷ Such conceptions of Alevi became most explicitly articulated in the so-called 3 Ks – *Kızılbaş*, Kurds (*Kürt*) and communists (*Komünist*) – as constituting a key threat to national security as evidenced by the official

⁸⁶⁴ Refet Sezgin (AP) in TD 17.2.1966: 318.

⁸⁶⁵ Yahya Uslu (DYP) in TD 15.12.1994: 430.

⁸⁶⁶ For instance, in one article published in 1950 *Sebilürreşad* argues that the Turkish nation doesn’t have to be dragged along the ‘red path [communism]’ of ‘three and a half [million] Alevi and *Kızılbaş*’, and if they have such an agenda that ‘they will be dealt with’. See (*Sebilürreşad* 1950b: 237).

⁸⁶⁷ *Milliyet* 24 July 1951; *Milliyet* 1 August 1951; Akekmekci & Pervan 2010: 458.

documentation of the period.⁸⁶⁸ A handbook for the police force published in 1969, for example, defined within the section on ‘internal enemies’ ‘different denominations’ that were conceived as a security risk to the state.⁸⁶⁹ Likewise, in an internal confidential report prepared by the military just before the military intervention in 1980 titled ‘Internal Threats aimed at Turkey’ (*Türkiye’ye Yönelik İç Tehdit*), Alevism, defined as comprising a mix of *Bektashi* Turkish customs and Sunni principles, was designated as an internal threat incited by internal (Kurdish) and external forces against the Turkish state.⁸⁷⁰ Similarly, writing in the Islamist Gülenist newspaper *Zaman* in 2003, the former general secretary of the National Security Council (2001–2003) Tuncer Kılınç (later detained under the Ergenekon case) described Alevi demands as a separatist threat to national unity and Islam as the most suitable religion for laicism.⁸⁷¹

Reflecting these perceptions in the period 1994–2000, a series of purportedly academic studies were commissioned by the military and conducted particularly in provinces with large Alevi or Kurdish communities.⁸⁷² In reality, the content of these PhD and masters theses confirm that, rather than being academic studies, they were largely intended for the observation and surveillance of Alevis, comprising a standard format which listed the number and location of Alevis, the extent of their religious observance compared with Sunni citizens⁸⁷³ and their close relations with non-Muslim communities such as Baha’i.⁸⁷⁴ Significantly, among the reports’ key concerns are the proportion of Alevis to Sunnis and the size of the majority of the Muslims, which appears to be conceived as being related to the magnitude of the ‘threat’ that Alevis could pose.⁸⁷⁵ For example, the thesis on Amasya argued that the Alevis revolted against the Ottoman state as a result of the influence of Iranian

⁸⁶⁸ Erdemir 2005: 950. Mehmet Bayrak argues that this was propagated by the *Nurcu* movement, as evidenced by a booklet published in 1971 called ‘Hakikî Aleviler Müslüman’dır’ (‘Real Alevis are Muslims’) by Mustafa Ramazanoğlu. Key leaders of the *Nurcu* movement, alongside key members of the state such as the subsequent junta leader and President Cemal Gürsel, were involved together in the establishment of the state-supported anti-communist Association for Fighting Communism (*Komünizmle Mücadele Dernekleri*, KMD), associated later with the IYC and Hearth of the Enlightened (see Chapters 3 and 8) (*Yeni Özgür* 24 December 2009).

⁸⁶⁹ Şenel & Şenel 1969: 113.

⁸⁷⁰ *Radikal* 11 July 2013.

⁸⁷¹ *Zaman* 17 May 2003.

⁸⁷² Çakır 26 August 2004; Ata 29 December 2013.

⁸⁷³ Ünalán 1997: 294.

⁸⁷⁴ Ünalán 1997: 204, 230.

⁸⁷⁵ Erdoğan 1996: 50; Demirpolat 1997: 53.

Shi'a propaganda, but that they were emboldened to this only as they had comprised a high proportion of the population.⁸⁷⁶ The thesis on Van, an area predominantly populated by Shafi'i Muslim Kurds, emphasised, in contrast, that there were no Alevis in the city as a result of the 'continued effects of the battle of Chaldiran', with the Sunni *medreses* playing a key role in preventing 'Shi'a propaganda', and that there were no Alevi cultural spaces there because Alevis had not been able to establish colonies in the city through migration.⁸⁷⁷

A final example that highlights the role the state has played in group-making and boundary construction is the provision of budgetary funds to 'state friendly'⁸⁷⁸ Alevi organisations. State privileges, resources and budgetary funds have been typically granted to generally Sunni Muslim faith-based organisations, with the 1998–2002 period constituting one significant break.⁸⁷⁹ For instance, two Alevi organisations, *Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı* and *Cumhuriyetçi Eğitim ve Kültür Merkezi Vakfı (Cem Vakfı)*, were granted public benefit status in 1998 while a further one, *Malatya Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür Merkezi Vakfı*, was granted this status in 2002. According to a 2010 Ministry of Finance report, the ANAP–DSP government allocated funds from the 1998 budget to the *Alevi-Turkist Anadolu Erenleri Culture and Art Foundation* and *Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı*. Out of a total of US \$1.8m of budgetary funds allocated to non-governmental organisations, 90% was destined to Alevi foundations.⁸⁸⁰ In 1999 US\$0.4m was allocated to four civil society organisations, 85% of which went to Alevi organisations. Similar dynamics are recorded for 2000, 2001 and 2002, in which 84%, 92% and 92%, respectively, of funds went to Alevi organisations. Notably, the Alevi or related organisations that received public benefit status and funding were generally those that were either close to the state and/or supportive of efforts to rearticulate Alevism within an Islamic and Turkish nationalist framework. Most importantly, these moves, adopted during the '28 February' process, reflected efforts by the military to revive the narrative of Alevism as constituting real Turkish

⁸⁷⁶ Erdoğan 1996: 53–54.

⁸⁷⁷ Demirpolat 1997: 52–53.

⁸⁷⁸ Shankland 1999: 162.

⁸⁷⁹ Owing to a change of reporting by AKP, there is no transparency from 2003 onwards.

⁸⁸⁰ Cangöz 2010: 138.

Islam against certain Islamist groups, rather than its recognition as a faith in its own right.

6.4 The PRA and Alevis

Within the Turkification and Islamisation agenda of state actors the PRA had a critical role. However, as outlined above, the role of the religious establishment in the construction and reproduction of national identity has largely been ignored. The PRA, as a key institution of the Republic, can be considered both a bearer of identity and at the same time a channel through which it is reimagined, institutionalised and reproduced as Sunni (Hanefi) Muslim Turkish. With the formation of the Turkish nation-state, the institutional identity of the ulema and continuities of practice were largely aided through the absorption of the Ottoman ulema into the body of the PRA. In addition, the PRA's interventions against Alevis and the rearticulation of Alevism demonstrate the role played by the ulema in determining the boundaries of the national community. The approach of the PRA towards the Alevis can therefore be considered within the broader historical perspective (outlined above) and mission of the ulema, which overlaps with the nationalist project of homogenisation and majoritisation.

i. The PRA's role as 'carrier and preserver' of Sunni Muslim–Turkish identity

As outlined above, the ulema constituted a key mechanism through which Abdulhamid sought to propagate Sunni-Hanefi Islam against heterodox communities in order to create a social base for the state comprising a loyal majority. For instance, reports prepared by the former *Şeyhülislam* Hüseyin Hüsnü Efendi emphasised the role of the ulema as missionaries against the Shi'a in Iraq, who 'secretly report[ed] to the authorities those among them whose activities were harmful to the interests of the state' while claiming that the instillation of Sunni Islam in the population would 'accomplish more by education than his illustrious ancestor Selim I did by the sword'.⁸⁸¹ Since its inception the PRA has been characterised as the representative and propagator of the nationalised 'high Islam',

⁸⁸¹ Deringil 1990: 51.

cleansed of ‘divisive’ sectarian rifts and superstition.⁸⁸² In general, the PRA has emphasised its authority in relation to alternative faith communities (such as Alevis) and hierarchies (including *tariqat* orders) on the basis of being ‘above’ sectarian or denominational divisions, representing itself as the authority in providing ‘healthy’, ‘true’, ‘correct’, objective knowledge of a universal Islam that is ‘encompassing of all groups’.⁸⁸³ Nevertheless, it has been widely acknowledged on the basis of its interpretation of Islam that the PRA propagates Sunni Hanefi Islam.⁸⁸⁴ The PRA’s role as a central institutional site and a key carrier and preserver of Sunni Hanefi Muslim–Turkish identity can be observed through the institution’s approach towards Alevism. In this it is possible to identify historical continuity between the role of the PRA in the Republic, the office of *Şeyhülislam* in the late Ottoman Empire and the Hamidian project of imagining and constructing a Sunni Muslim *millet*. A common thread of documentation in the Republican era, including internal organisational reports, official institutional publications, memoirs and public statements, demonstrates that, as in the late Ottoman period, the PRA perceived Alevism as separationist or, read from the institution’s Islamic–nationalist framing, as sowing factionalism (*nifak*), disunity (*tefrika*) or sedition (*fitne*) as opposed to the unity or oneness of god (*tawhid*) that is argued to underpin Islam.

Such an attitude is evident and outlined most clearly in the PRA’s own publications, where there are numerous and predominantly negative references to Alevism. For example, in a book published by the PRA in 1948 (and reprinted in 2004), former head of the PRA Ahmet Hamdi Akseki (1947–1951) argued in the foreword that Shiism and its different formations, such as *Batiniyya*,⁸⁸⁵ were propagated by Iranian Zoroastrians and Jews to sow sedition within Islam to

⁸⁸² This can be seen in debates on the PRA in parliamentary discussions.

⁸⁸³ See, for example, *Zaman* 26 February 2005; PRA 13.09.2006; PRA 13.11.2007; PRA 28.02.2006; PRA 30.06.2005; PRA 21.03.2007; PRA 30.05.2008; PRA 22.01.2014; Bardakoğlu 2006: 165; Gültekin & Yüksel 2005: 5; Gözaydın 2014: 13.

⁸⁸⁴ This is also recognised by PRA representatives and widely by civil society organisations and scholarly research. Gözaydın relates that the highly important and significant interpretation of the Quran by Elmalı Hamdi Yazır commissioned by the one-party government in 1936 was based on a Hanefi Sunni reading of Islam (Gözaydın 2014: 13; TESEV 2005; Doğan January 2009; Gümüş 2010; Gözaydın 2009: 27; Demirci 1997).

⁸⁸⁵ Sometimes used as a pejorative term to refer to various groups condemned by Sunni orthodoxy, such as Alevism or Ismailism, which are described as distinguishing between the inner/esoteric meaning of religious texts.

destroy its unity and corrupt its belief; he declared that ‘our nation must be protected from falling into the trap of these evil spirited peoples’ that are ‘corrupting the pure beliefs of our people’.⁸⁸⁶ Similarly, another booklet, titled ‘Religion and Nationalism’ (*Din ve Milliyet*), published by the PRA in 1956, declared that ‘to reach the unity that is required by religion, there is a need to prevent the entry of false and *Batiniyya* sectarian currents’.⁸⁸⁷ It is unsurprising, therefore, that the PRA’s hostility towards Alevism was noted in the same year by American diplomats in their internal communications, within which the following evaluation was made: ‘this powerful minority [Alevi] has no contact with the official religion. It has no representative at the Direction [sic] of Religious Affairs; to the contrary it is there that it encounters its worst enemies and the Director of Religious Affairs, Mr Eyup Sabri Hayirlioglu, did not hesitate to say to a foreign journalist some time ago that the Alevi follow a false faith.’⁸⁸⁸

Internal memos, documents and memoirs of former PRA heads also confirm that these sentiments were generalised across the organisation. A 1959 circular to muftis from the PRA headquarters, for instance, highlighted the negative opinions that religious functionaries held of Alevi by censuring imams for refusing to conduct funeral services of Alevi, adding that Alevi too were considered Muslims.⁸⁸⁹ The former president of the PRA Tayyar Altıkulaç (1978–86) has also observed in his memoirs that many of the muftis had a similarly inimical stance towards Alevi.⁸⁹⁰ The persistence of these discourses and institutional biases can be observed in two policy reports based on widespread surveys and interviews published by the Turkish think tank TESEV in 2005 and 2006 which reaffirm the negative perceptions held by the official ulema regarding Alevi.⁸⁹¹

Yet, even when the PRA has articulated Alevism within an Islamic framework, particularly from the 1980s, the ongoing distrust and depiction of Alevi as a potential fifth column – open to infiltration by Iran, communists and atheists,

⁸⁸⁶ Hammadi 1948: 3.

⁸⁸⁷ Kürkçüoğlu 1956: 17.

⁸⁸⁸ Bali 2011: 34.

⁸⁸⁹ PMAD 13/4/1959.

⁸⁹⁰ Altıkulaç 2011: 664.

⁸⁹¹ TESEV 2005; TESEV 2006.

against the state and Muslim Turkish national unity – has continued. The numerous books written and published in the 1990s by Abdulkadir Zengin, an inspector at the PRA,⁸⁹² epitomised such conceptions in arguing that Alevis (defined by him as Sunni Hanefis) were impressionable and coming under the influence of Iranian culture and ‘Khomeneism’, masons, Christians and atheists,⁸⁹³ that Alevism was the biggest danger and threat after Kurdish currents to ‘national unity’⁸⁹⁴ and that *cemevis* were established by ‘anarchists’.⁸⁹⁵ For Sezgin, it is the duty of the PRA to act in order for Alevis to be ‘enlightened’, so that they would not be left in ‘darkness’.⁸⁹⁶ Likewise, the current head of strategy of the PRA, Necdet Subaşı, has argued in a report in 2006 that ‘emotionally sour’ Alevis were being rapidly politicised and could be ‘easily incited’ by internal and external enemies trying to ruin ‘social unity’ and ‘harmony’.⁸⁹⁷ Precisely this logic was reflected in the PRA’s 2009–2013 Strategic Plan, which identified as a ‘threat’ the ‘efforts to show different views and interpretations of Islam as a different religion’ and ‘the demands by some circles to remove compulsory religious education’, both of which have been linked with Alevi organisations.⁸⁹⁸

Accordingly, a discourse of ‘divisiveness’ and ‘separatism’ has typically been employed by the PRA against key Alevi demands such as the recognition of *cemevis*, Alevi places of worship.⁸⁹⁹ Altıkulaç has argued, for instance, that Alevi leaders ‘do not want other pure Alevis to come face to face with the reality of Islam ... that is why you use the issue of the *cemevis* to distance Alevis from the Islam which is the true religion and Alevism that is within Islam. By presenting *cemevis* as alternatives to mosques you are being separationist.’⁹⁰⁰ These discourses of ‘Alevi separatism’ have culminated in the equating by some of Alevis with illegal, ‘terrorist’ organisations. In a book published in 1997 by ISAM (part of the DV and

⁸⁹² Sezgin was based at the PRA for 38 years and his books were published by the Turkish Religious Foundation (*Diyanet Vakfı*, DV) and Ministry of Culture throughout the 1990s (*Radikal* 21 August 2012).

⁸⁹³ Sezgin 2012 [1990, 1991, 1995]: 270.

⁸⁹⁴ Sezgin 1996.

⁸⁹⁵ Sezgin 1996: 274.

⁸⁹⁶ Sezgin 2012 [1990, 1991, 1995]: 269.

⁸⁹⁷ Subaşı 2006: 49–50.

⁸⁹⁸ PRA 2008: 39.

⁸⁹⁹ *Egenin Sesi* 11 December 2012.

⁹⁰⁰ Altıkulaç 2011: 660.

associated with the PRA), İlyas Üzüm (appointed to the PRA High Council in 2008⁹⁰¹) argued that Alevi *cemevis* could not be an alternative to mosques and claimed that they were used ‘inappropriately’ by illegal political organisations: ‘for example those that have been involved in armed action have their funerals conducted here ... and open banners of foreign countries ...’.⁹⁰² In turn, these allegations have been mirrored in public discourse particularly by Islamist politicians, including an AKP lawmaker who declared in 2013 that ‘*cemevis* are homes of terrorists’.⁹⁰³

The above examples highlight the ways in which the PRA, as a carrier of Sunni Muslim identity, has played a crucial role in the construction and reproduction of the national community as Sunni Muslim while presenting any Alevi distinction as a potential security threat.⁹⁰⁴ For the PRA, therefore, Alevis are accepted only in so far as they are invisible, or do not exist as ‘themselves’; and yet, even then, they are not to be trusted and have to remain under surveillance. As a result, and reminiscent of the role played by the ulema, who acted as missionaries and informants on non-Sunni communities in the Hamidian era, the PRA’s internal documentation indicates that religious functionaries were tasked with observing and informing on Alevis and Alevi currents in the context of security measures. In one document, a circular to muftis from the PRA headquarters dated 1946, it is stated that ‘it has been observed and heard that in some areas some unknown people are making propaganda for particular purposes. Their propaganda especially is against the Hanefi denomination and sometimes against the prophet’s hadiths and sunnah and aimed at forming another denomination and as such is a form of tariqat and therefore illegal ... those that are making propaganda create factionalism amongst the public intentionally and there is no doubt that they are trying to damage national unity that we need more than ever. We must be very sensitive to do this and if we hear or see anything like this, you must immediately inform the presidency.’⁹⁰⁵ That this was a systemic and routinised policy towards Alevis is further suggested by another document, a booklet published in 1961 and circulated

⁹⁰¹ Ateş 2012: 362.

⁹⁰² Üzüm 1997: 40.

⁹⁰³ *Radikal* 8 October 2013.

⁹⁰⁴ Ateş 2012: 303.

⁹⁰⁵ PMAD 15/4/1946.

to muftis outlining the principles and matters that muftis and preachers have to bear in mind while conducting their guidance duties.⁹⁰⁶ This document contains the warning that preachers ‘while preaching should try to avoid at all costs ... sectarian disputes that will confuse the minds of the community. Anyone seen or heard that confuse our public’s minds with thoughts that are against the Sunni denomination whatever the intentions, and those that spread Shiism and Alevism propaganda by raising events that occurred 1300 years ago and in this way become a means of causing damage to national unity, must be reported immediately to the Presidency ... it is not permissible by religion to factionalise public by being against the four great sect imams and in this way confuse minds of public in relation to worship and other matters.’⁹⁰⁷ The continuation of these practices can be observed through the military-sponsored research on religious communities in the 1990s, outlined above, in which data relating to the patterns of worship and levels of observation of the different faith groups were sourced from religious functionaries in mosques.⁹⁰⁸

ii. The PRA and national identity construction

The PRA’s approach towards and articulation of Alevism has evolved, in some ways, in parallel with that of other state actors, albeit from a more religious framing. Alevism is perceived as a divisive danger to be rejected and eliminated and is rendered ‘invisible’ and thereby ‘decapitated’ through its absorption and rearticulation within an Islamic framework. Consequently, the PRA has constituted an important arm of efforts by state actors to redefine Alevism in line with the religious and nationalist agenda, thereby embedding and ensuring the reproduction of religious majoritarianism. Concomitant to its role as a site of reproduction of the Sunni colouring of the nation-state, it was the transition to multipartism and particularly the 1960 military coup that marked the beginning of a broader mandate for the PRA. This period involved a more active role by the PRA in shaping national identity as well as in fighting communism, against which (according to the ulema and others) Islam was the antidote.⁹⁰⁹ The propagation of Alevism as

⁹⁰⁶ PRA 1961a.

⁹⁰⁷ PRA 1961a: 4.

⁹⁰⁸ Ünalán 1997: 294.

⁹⁰⁹ Ahmet Hamdi Akseki in *Sebilürreşad* 1950: 163-66.

‘Turkish Islam’ had gathered momentum in the late 1940s with the relaxation of restrictions on religious activity. Practice of the Alevi faith had effectively been driven underground through the closure of dervish lodges in 1925 and restrictions on worship and violent campaigns during the one-party era. From the late 1940s, the reintroduction of religious lessons in schools, the establishment of theology faculties and the reopening of certain tombs/shrines, however, had raised questions not only of how the boundaries of this religious activity would be drawn but also regarding the reappearance of differentiation within the community, which had been regarded by republican elites as damaging to national unity. In 1948, when a book titled ‘The Muslim Child’s Book’ (*Müslüman Çocuğunun Kitabı*), co-authored by Nurettin Arman, regarded as a staunch ‘Kemalist’ poet, was published by the National Education Ministry for use in primary schools, it was criticised in conservative circles close to the PRA for including references to prominent Alevi leaders such as Hacı Bektaş Veli and Pir Sultan Abdal. *Sebilürreşad*, for instance rejected the book, arguing that such figures represented divisive and dangerous currents brought to the country by Safavi leader Shah Ismail against the ‘sacred’ beliefs of the ‘millet’, and that these ‘tariqats’, ‘Batini’ beliefs, steeped in ‘superstition’, had wanted to destroy the Ottoman state.⁹¹⁰ The mere mention of these figures, it was declared, ‘sows division [*tefrika sokmak*] amongst Muslims’.⁹¹¹ Subsequently, another book authored by Artam, published in 1953 and titled ‘Muslim Turks, Beware of Division!’ (*Müslüman Türkler, Ayrılıktan Kaçın!*), warned against divisions between Alevis and Sunnis. Bayrak has argued that, in the 1950s, prominent Alevi figures such as Halil Öztoprak acted almost as an arm of the state in promoting the state-friendly articulation of Alevis as Turkish Muslims.⁹¹² The fourth edition of Halil Öztoprak’s book on Alevism, for example, had been published with permission from the National Education Ministry in 1956.

This was the context in which the origins of the idea of a Department of Denominations (DoD) within the PRA was developed, initially by the military government that took power following the coup d’état of 27 May 1960. The

⁹¹⁰ *Sebilürreşad* 148: 381; *Sebilürreşad* 148: 386-88; *Sebilürreşad* 1948c: 12-16.; *Sebilürreşad* 1954: 119-120; *Sebilürreşad* 1949: 213-14; *Sebilürreşad* 1949b; 6:

⁹¹¹ *Sebilürreşad* 1948c: 12-16.

⁹¹² Bayrak 2004: 63.

minutes of the military cabinet meetings held in October 1960, at which the 1960 junta leaders were present, suggest that the idea was conceived largely as an effort to dissolve manifestations of ethnic difference and Kurdish identity through the means of (Sunni Islam) religion, as represented by the PRA.⁹¹³ In another words, Sunnification was conceived as a means of Turkification. For instance, following his comments regarding Kurdish nationalism being stoked by the Russians after WWI and what he claimed were the ‘Turkish origin’ of ‘80%’ of these ‘rebels’, President Cemal Gürsel⁹¹⁴ argued that ‘for instance, we regard people that are Alevi as Kurds. The public regard them this way and they, saying “if that is the case”, quickly learn Kurdish and become Kurds. Because, for some reason Sunnis see them as enemies. For this reason, Shiis, Alevi and Bektashis have an inclination to become Kurdish ... Whereas we have to admit that Alevis have continued the original Turkish customs ... If we don’t do serious work, teach them the truth and take possession of this country, it will certainly be a disaster for the future of Turkey.’⁹¹⁵ Just as telling was the response of the Minister of National Defence Fahri Özdilek that ‘there has been insistence on differences between Shii, Shafi’i, Tahtaci⁹¹⁶ etc. which lead to sectarian separationism [...] it is necessary to put an article in law that abolishes sectarian disputes’. President Gürsel in turn reassured him: ‘I have made them include this in the Constitution. This is an abhorrent affair. However it is regarded as natural. From now on this country will be free from actual divisions and animosities. Actually, I will have studies conducted and publications prepared.’⁹¹⁷ One of the chief mechanisms for this policy of Turkification and Islamisation, therefore, was envisaged as being the PRA, which the Minister of State Hayri Mumcuoğlu asserted ‘has duties with regards to this matter. We have to establish an Alevi department within the Presidency of Religious Affairs. The Alevis, like the Sunnis will easily separate themselves from Kurdishness once then find a point of authority in the [Presidency] of Religious Affairs.’⁹¹⁸

⁹¹³ Koçak 2010 [1960]: 555–58.

⁹¹⁴ Between 1960 and 1961; appointed by the military following the 27 May 1960 coup.

⁹¹⁵ Koçak 2010: 555–58.

⁹¹⁶ Considered to be an interpretation of Alevism.

⁹¹⁷ Koçak 2010: 555–58.

⁹¹⁸ Koçak 2010: 555–58.

The military's efforts, led by President Cemal Gürsel, to 'Turkify' Alevis by drawing them firmly into the Muslim identity subsequently proceeded with legislative efforts to institute a DoD within the PRA as well as trying to recruit selected Alevi figures in support of Gürsel's project. Just a couple of months later, in April 1961, the idea of a 'Department of Denominations ... to meet the needs of denominations that are included *within the Muslim establishment* [my emphasis]⁹¹⁹ was proposed by the nationalist CKMP during the debates on drawing up a new constitution within the Assembly of Representatives.⁹²⁰ Significantly, this proposal had enjoyed some support from 'conservative liberals' such as Ali Fuat Başgil,⁹²¹ who, in his column in the newspaper *Yeni Sabah* in July 1960, had outlined a proposal identical to the one made by the CKMP.⁹²² While the proposal itself was rejected without further discussion in the Assembly, it continued to resurface under proposals made by former military members or politicians close to the army. The establishment of a 'Religious Cultural Matters Directorate' (*Dini Kültür İşleri Müdürlüğü*) was proposed in January 1962⁹²³ by the permanent members of the Senate (composed chiefly of former members of the junta NUC)⁹²⁴ as well as by the CHP government around the same time.⁹²⁵ Similar to the DoD, but with a wider remit, the 'Religious Cultural Matters Directorate' was envisaged as a point of reference, within the state, for all religions and denominations. Yet again, rather than equality or recognition, the key concern for the proponents of the bill was to expand state supervision over all communities for the purposes of 'national unity',⁹²⁶ with the draft outlining the responsibilities of the body as being to 'report to relevant authorities and take precautions to protect the commitment to national ideals and prevent exploitation of disputes arising from divisions of faith amongst members of various religious and sects'.⁹²⁷ The last legislative push led by President Gürsel in 1963, returned to the idea of a DoD only for Muslims that would 'consider the Muslim community in a completely equal manner' and would be responsible for 'enlightening [*tenvir*] and showing the right

⁹¹⁹ TM 25.4.1961: 231–32.

⁹²⁰ TM 25.4.1961: 231–32.

⁹²¹ See Ateş 2012.

⁹²² Başgil 1960.

⁹²³ MM 28.1.1965 [22.1.1962].

⁹²⁴ NUC governed between 27 May 1960 and 15 October 1961.

⁹²⁵ MM 28.1.1965 [24.1.1962]; TİTYEDF 1962.

⁹²⁶ MM 21.2.1961: 127.

⁹²⁷ MM 28.1.1965 [22.1.1962].

path [*irşad etmek*] to followers of Sunni and Shii denominations, which do not differ in terms of the essentials of the religion of Islam, by settling according to the Islamic creed and purifying from superstition the matters related to detail and manifestation of difference owing to the particular geography and places of residence'.⁹²⁸

In parallel with these legislative efforts, from 1961 President Gürsel had begun to engage with Alevi figures who had been invited by him to raise their concerns and demands, including their views on the idea of a DoD. In 1961 the military cabinet had even suggested bringing to the PRA a leading Alevi figure, Fezyullah Ulusoy, part of the Ulusoy family, the hereditary representative of the *Hacı Bektaş Veli* lodge, who also had a conceptualisation of Alevism that was in line with the military's articulation.⁹²⁹ Following these engagements, various *Hacı Bektaş* associations were founded and the *Hacı Bektaş* lodge was reopened in 1964 as a museum. The shadow of the military could also be seen in the establishment in 1966 of what was widely perceived as the first Alevi party, The Unity Party (*Türkiye Birlik Partisi*, TBP), which was headed by a retired general and former member of the nationalist CKMP, Hasan Tahsin Berkman. Significantly, the TBP had called for the representation of Alevis within the PRA and stressed the Turkishness of Alevis.⁹³⁰

Despite these persistent efforts in the early 1960s to establish a DoD on the part of the military, the Republic's most powerful institution, the matter encountered significant opposition, both within the PRA and from conservative groups, resulting in the subsequent withdrawal of the proposal by the CHP government.⁹³¹ The PRA's reaction to the proposal can be deduced from the writings of *Sebilürreşad*, which was closely associated with leading PRA functionaries and regularly featured their writings. In a 1961 article on the proposal it was argued that there were no 'real Shi'a' in the country, and that those 'associating themselves with Shiism', Alevis, were 'extremist and perverted tariqats' steeped in

⁹²⁸ Article 10 (Bilimer 1963: 13).

⁹²⁹ Ulusoy rejected the post, stating that he was not suitable (*Haberiniz* 7 March 2012).

⁹³⁰ Ata 2007.

⁹³¹ Gözaydın 2009: 72; Kara 2008: 99; Savcı 1967: 97, 119–40; Yıldız July 2002; Massicard 2007: 55; Ata 2007: 51; *Taraf* 20 December 2010.

‘superstition’ which could not be recognised by a ‘laic’ state as a ‘denomination’ (*mezhep*). Instead, it was the ‘national and religious duty’ of the PRA to ‘save these citizens’ brains from darkness and enlighten them’.⁹³² Importantly, the theological arguments made by *Sebilürreşad* against the Alevis were based on the 1948 book on *Batiniyya* currents published by the PRA (outlined above). Disquiet amongst the ranks of the PRA could also be seen in a 1963 statement made by a group of unnamed preachers referring to themselves as ‘İstanbul Vaizleri’ (preachers).⁹³³ Again the emphasis was on national–religious unity and the conceptualisation of Alevis as a fifth column of Iran: ‘since today in our country there are no denominations that are openly Shii and they don’t have a doctrine, it is well placed to ask those that defend Shiism on an individual basis: do they have a book that explains that Shiism’s belief, worship and other provisions are against or in line with Ehli Sünnet [Sunni Islam] or, by according rights to Shiism in the proposal, are they going to import their books from Iran and in thus re-ignite historical wounds? It is a catastrophe to bring about for no reason Shi’a and Sunni conflict that has been extinguished for centuries, and to divide into two our national and religious unity. The only elements that will benefit from this are foreign ones.’⁹³⁴

Similar views were expressed by conservative papers such as *Yeni Sabah* (New Morning), *Zafer* (Victory) and *Adalet* (Justice), which harshly criticised the proposal, arguing that it would reignite Sunni–Shi’a schisms and destroy national unity, and targeting Alevis by using the centuries-old *Kızılbaş* stigma.⁹³⁵ Recognition of Alevism was considered a ‘serious threat to the spirit of unity enunciated by Islam’ and equating this group to Sunnis was seen as ‘tantamount to mocking 27 million Muslims’.⁹³⁶ The Islamist Vehbi Bilimer associated with the *Nurcu* Islamist (and state-supported) IYC also rejected the proposal, commenting that the ‘gates of separatism/division [*tefrika*] would officially be opened’.⁹³⁷ In response to the conservative reaction, an ‘Alevi Declaration’ was issued in 1963 by a number of Alevi university students, who referred to Alevis ‘as Turks by race,

⁹³² *Sebilürreşad* 1948: 381-82; *Sebilürreşad* 1948b: 386-88; *Sebilürreşad* 1960: 338-52.

⁹³³ İstanbul Vaizleri 1963: 3.

⁹³⁴ İstanbul Vaizleri 1963.

⁹³⁵ Zırh 2012: 150; *Sebilürreşad* 1961b: 363-367.

⁹³⁶ Ata 2007: 49.

⁹³⁷ Bilimer 1963: 13.

and Muslim by religion' and gave support to the idea of a DoD.⁹³⁸ However, the question of any accommodation or representation of Alevism within the PRA was firmly closed in 1966 following the derogatory statements made by the former PRA president İbrahim Elmalı (1965–66), who remarked in a speech that “‘Alevilik sönmüştür’” (Alevism has burned itself out), alluding to an old stigma attached to “‘mum söndü [the candle has burnt out]’”.⁹³⁹ This was followed by numerous incidents of Alevi funerals being barred from mosques, attacks against Alevis not fasting and heightened sectarian tensions and violence.⁹⁴⁰

The subsequent revival of the idea of a DoD was not to take place until the 1990s. Given the predominance of the idea of the *Kızılbaş* (as part of the 3 Ks) constituting the major threat to national security throughout the 1970s, it was following the adoption of the TIS by junta leaders in the 1980s that a new wave of Islamisation efforts against Alevis began. The 1983 National Culture report, a key TIS document (see Chapter 3), argued with reference to Fuat Köprülü's works on Alevis that there was 'no logical or rational reason' for sectarian divisions in the country and that Turkish culture and Islam had 'unified and made everyone alike'.⁹⁴¹ The PRA had been identified as a key mechanism for the propagation of the TIS and, indeed, embraced this role, which was in line with its mission of Islamisation of public space and the national community, as demonstrated by the memoirs of Tayyar Altıkulaç, PRA president from 1978 to 1986.⁹⁴² During this period the PRA's formulation of Alevism shifted towards a greater emphasis on its rearticulation within an Islamic framework compared with the more rejectionist stance of previous periods. Such a turn is evident, for example, in the works of a long-term PRA official and inspector Abdulkadir Sezgin, whose numerous publications in the 1990s claimed that Alevis were in reality Sunni-Hanefis. This approach was reflected more recently in the PRA's 'survey on religious life', published in 2014, where Alevis did not feature as a separate faith group or a Muslim denomination because they were defined as Hanefi Sunnis.⁹⁴³ In parallel,

⁹³⁸ See Ata for details (Ata 2007: 47–50; *Radikal* 12 November 2008).

⁹³⁹ See Zırh for details on this (Zırh 2012: 141).

⁹⁴⁰ Ata 2007: 49, 52.

⁹⁴¹ The reports also mentions Hacı Bektaş, Mevlana and Yunus Emre, key Alevi and Mevlevi figures (DPT 1983: 129, 144).

⁹⁴² Altıkulaç 2011; Taşgetiren 23 September 2014.

⁹⁴³ *Bugün* 16 July 2014; PRA 2014a.

the 1990s had seen an intensification of social contestation, the rise of Kurdish nationalism, the emergence and electoral success of Islamist parties and the ‘Alevi revival’.⁹⁴⁴ What followed was the reappearance during this period of narratives – resembling those of the 1950s and 1960s – of Alevis as stalwart allies of Kemalism and as ‘real’ Turkish Muslims, protecting laicism against radical (Arabised) Islam. The attendance of state representatives and members of the far-right Turkish nationalist MHP at *Hacı Bektaş* annual celebrations was one indication of this turn.⁹⁴⁵

Since the 1990s ‘state friendly’ Alevi associations, such as the Cem Foundation, have raised and advocated the representation of Alevism within the PRA. This was/is not, however, a widely supported policy among the Alevi organisations that had sprung up during this period, which have tended to reject integration within the PRA, as an assimilationist policy of the state.⁹⁴⁶ Yet the idea of a DoD continued to be raised by various (‘centre-left’) parties, including the SHP in 1991,⁹⁴⁷ during constitutional debates by the DSP in 1993⁹⁴⁸ and in parliamentary debates throughout the 1990s and 2000s by the SHP/CHP and DSP.⁹⁴⁹ Despite these efforts, however, the PRA has continued to view these proposals negatively,⁹⁵⁰ as reflected in the 2001 statement by the former PRA president Ali Bardakoğlu, who protested that a DoD would be ‘completely against the nation-state and society project as aimed for by the will that established the Republic’.⁹⁵¹

⁹⁴⁴ Zırh 2012: 173.

⁹⁴⁵ Çakır 11 July 1995.

⁹⁴⁶ The final report of the ‘Alevi workshops’ concedes that ‘many Alevis have given up on their request to be represented within the Diyanet [PRA]. See AÇ 2010: 131.

⁹⁴⁷ Schüler 1999: 171.

⁹⁴⁸ Schüler 1999: 171.

⁹⁴⁹ See parliamentary debates on the PRA budget.

⁹⁵⁰ Conversely, Sezgin, a PRA member, argued for the creation of ‘*Tariqats* Department’, similar to the Council of Shaykhs incorporated within the office of the *Şeyhülislam*, instead of a DoD, which is in line with his articulation of Alevism as a Sunni Hanefi *tariqat* order. For Sezgin the chief purpose of this department would be maintaining adequate supervision of ‘*tariqat*’ activities rather than reflecting a principle of equality or religious freedom. See Sezgin 2002: 95.

⁹⁵¹ *Milliyet* 18 August 2001.

6.4.1 The PRA and Alevis during the AKP period

The historical continuity of the matter of the DoD emerged recently emerged recently as part of the recommendations of the AKP's 'Alevi Opening'.⁹⁵² Launched in 2007, a series of workshops on Alevism were held as part of the broader policy of 'Democratic Opening', addressing problems related to various ethnic and religious groups, including Kurds, Alevis, religious minorities and the Roma community.⁹⁵³ The workshops, which were criticised by many Alevi organisations as a hidden strategy of assimilation,⁹⁵⁴ have nevertheless been portrayed within the media and scholarly accounts as a 'turning point'⁹⁵⁵ in the state's approach towards Alevism and as constituting the first step towards official recognition of Alevi identity. Yet, analysis of the official reports containing transcripts of the workshops suggests a comparable logic towards Alevism as in previous attempts (including that by the military in the 1960s): to incorporate Alevis within the PRA. The workshops conclude that Alevism is 'fundamentally' part of Islam, 'with particularities specific to Anatolia' and those that reject this categorisation are branded 'separationist', 'marginal' and 'extremists'.⁹⁵⁶ The comments of Necdet Subaşı, currently the PRA's head of strategy, are perhaps the most telling. In the third workshop, following the mufti of Tunceli's description of religious life in the majority Alevi-populated province and the increasing attendance of mosques by Alevi religious leaders, Subaşı declared that 'you have given us hope. I hope this hope, can be understood in the following way: if there is good work done there [in Tunceli], then the public can be Sunnified in a short amount of time.'⁹⁵⁷ Rather than providing recognition or acknowledgment of Alevi demands for equal citizenship rights, therefore, the 'Openings' can be characterised as a part of the process of 'absorption' of what are regarded by the state as 'marginal elements'. Yet, the absorption has its limits; Alevism must be invisible, but nevertheless remains suspect. In this vein, the workshops concluded that any manifestation of Alevism as differentiation from (Sunni) Islam was to be regarded

⁹⁵² *Milliyet* 18 November 2010; *Bianet* 12 August 2010.

⁹⁵³ Köse 2010: 5.

⁹⁵⁴ Zırh 2012: 12.

⁹⁵⁵ Köse 2010: 5.

⁹⁵⁶ AÇ 2010: 20–21, 40, 43.

⁹⁵⁷ AÇ 19 August 2009: 115.

as a ‘multileveled security problem’, while the commitment of Alevism to national unity and loyalty to the state was questioned.⁹⁵⁸ The PRA, on the other hand, has continued to reject the idea of a DoD,⁹⁵⁹ while the AKP government also appeared to have subsequently abandoned the idea. By 2011 an AKP lawmaker speaking on behalf of the government in parliament stated that the PRA was open to the idea of Alevis being included within the organisation, but that the question of a separate Alevi organisation was another matter, owing to ‘our state’s unity and integrity policies’.⁹⁶⁰

6.5 The PRA, religious majoritarianism and the Alevis

The Turkification and Islamisation policies since the late Ottoman Empire and attempts to incorporate Alevis within a DoD since the 1960s can be understood within the framework of the transformist hegemony of nationalism. This is understood in the sense of the drive towards the homogenisation of nationalism, involving the continuous absorption of antagonistic elements to render them obsolete or ‘decapitate’ them in the construction of the historic majority bloc.⁹⁶¹ Accordingly, the homogenising impulse of Turkish nationalism, also a fundamental element of the ‘overlapping consensus’ with the PRA’s religious agenda and the achievement of *tevhid* (unity), has led to a drive to absorb Alevism by reconstructing it within an Islamic and Turkish framing. For both, Alevis have to be Sunnified to become Turks because Alevism is regarded to be too intertwined with Shiism and Kurdishness. Attempts to incorporate Alevism within the PRA, therefore, could not be considered as reflecting a concern for equality or religious freedom. Rather, it marked a process of rejection simultaneous with an effort to absorb Alevism within a more acceptable framework for the state that meant its consignment to invisibility.

The processes of absorption of Alevism through Turkification and Islamisation therefore ultimately reaffirm and reproduce the Sunni (Hanefi) Muslim character

⁹⁵⁸ Yalçınkaya & Ecevitoglu 2013: 65.

⁹⁵⁹ *Milliyet* 18 November 2010.

⁹⁶⁰ Abdurrahman Dodurgalı (AKP) in TD 14.12.2010: 159.

⁹⁶¹ Williams 1989: 401–44; Gramsci 1998.

of Turkish national identity and hence the hegemony of the constructed historic majority bloc. This is reflected in the prevalent discourse in Turkey that stresses the ‘99%’ majority Muslim nature of the country, underpinned by the implicit reasoning that the majority Muslim community has the right to the monopoly of political and economic resources and power. Any recognition of Alevism outside the Turkish–Islamic framework, whether as Kurds or as non-Muslims, as has been demonstrated, is considered by state actors as posing a danger to the constructed Muslim–Turkish bloc, the hegemony of which is underpinned by the numeric majority. Despite these Turkification and Islamisation efforts, however, Alevism continued to be regarded not just as a heretical other (to Sunni Muslims) but as both marginal and suspect, as evidenced by the continued surveillance of Alevi and perceptions of the community as a potential fifth column within the Republic.

The PRA’s part in the rearticulation of Alevism and the failed attempts to establish a DoD can be considered in the framework of the institution’s role in the embedding and reproduction of the religious majoritarianism of the state. The PRA, as a state actor and institutional preserver and carrier of Sunni Muslim–Turkish identity, has facilitated the process of social closure, contributing to the ‘ethnicisation’ of political competition and the hardening of boundaries. As Wimmer has noted, competition for state resources hardens boundaries between ethnic groups and multiple identities become increasingly reduced ‘to a single ethnic dimension. Not until the final stage of this process of “social closure” are political associations of loyalty in fact reduced to ethnic categories.’⁹⁶² These underlying processes have, in turn, reinforced path-dependency effects, making it difficult to restructure the PRA by, for example, opening it up to Alevi or non-Muslims by establishing a DoD (even in the context of absorption rather than recognition). Ultimately, this dynamic ensures the continued reproduction of the religious majoritarianism of the state in privileging Sunni Muslim identity and endowing it with resources which in turn ensures the persistence of religious (sectarian) delineations of group boundaries and their political salience. An example is the AKP’s ‘Alevi Opening’, where the ‘Alevi problem’ is redefined as

⁹⁶² Wimmer 1997.

a theological matter that has to be reconciled with the ‘Sunni public’⁹⁶³ rather than a matter of equal citizenship and access to public resources. This suggests that institutions can become barriers to the hegemonic practices of absorption of nation-building. In this manner, the institutionalisation of identities, the very process which ensures the stability of the dominant hegemonic bloc or status quo, can also over time harden categories in a way that forms barriers of resistance to the transformation and absorption of what are perceived as ‘marginal elements’.

6.6 Conclusion

Through the case study of the PRA’s approach to the Alevis, this chapter has shown i) the role of state institutions in articulating and reproducing group boundaries; ii) the generating or reinforcing of social closure through the partial distribution of state political and economic resources and by acting as a carrier and preserver of identities (underpinning their persistence). Consequently, I argue that the ulema’s absorption into the state have also played a role in shaping Turkish nationalism and the evolution of the criteria of inclusion and exclusion.

In addition, this chapter highlighted a further aspect of nation-states that incorporate high levels of religious majoritarianism. Religious majoritarianism, given the elevation of the religious majority, can share an overlapping consensus with the nation-state project in its dynamic of majoritisation. In contrast to the nation-state project, however, which comprises a homogenising dynamic that can transcend the delineation of the community as the religious majority, religious majoritarianism depends on the particular configuration of institutions that privilege and endow a particular majority religious group. In other words, there is a tension between nation-building and religious majoritarianism embedded through the PRA, since the institution restricts the ability to ‘absorb’ the Alevis, reinforcing the ‘ethnisation’ of the state and politics.

⁹⁶³ AÇ 2010; Yalçınkaya & Ecevitoğlu 2013: 28–29.

Chapter 7: The political economy of religious majoritarianism

7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines how the prevalent forms of social closure and institutionalisation have influenced political and economic competition in the Republic through the case of the rise of ‘Islamic’ business organisations. The Turkish case is interesting since despite the constant reiteration by various actors and conservatives/Islamists that the population is ‘99% Muslim’, often the same actors emphasise the ‘Muslim character’ of these business organisations as a mark of distinction against what they describe as traditional ‘secular/minority’ business elites. Yet, at the same time, given the elimination of non-Muslims by the establishment of the Republic, Turkey is unlike Indonesia or Malaysia, where religious tensions and the political salience of religious delineations have in part been related to the role of the Christian minority in the economy.⁹⁶⁴ This chapter comprises two sections. The first traces i) how community boundaries were constructed through the processes of social closure in the late Ottoman Empire; and ii) the ways in which these boundaries persisted in the Republic despite the change in their ‘content’ (i.e. the elimination of non-Muslims). Here I survey the religiously coded ways in which the dynamics of class formation have unfolded since the Ottoman Empire and what Göçek has described as the bifurcation of the bourgeoisie into non-Muslims and Muslims.⁹⁶⁵ In the Republic both the elimination of non-Muslims from the economy and the policy to privilege and establish a Muslim bourgeoisie continued. Consequently, the religious majoritarian dynamic that could be observed in the constitutional discussions over the political system found a reflection in economic policy. These religious boundaries did not disappear, however, but persisted in shaping political and economic competition as, in the Republic, they were transposed to new distributional conflicts that had resulted from the dynamics of nation-state building and late capitalist development. The second section of the chapter examines the factors underpinning this persistence by discussing three structures that have acted as reproduction

⁹⁶⁴ Sidel 2008.

⁹⁶⁵ Göçek 1996.

mechanisms for these boundaries. It is argued that religious education, Islamic charities and Islamic finance augmented the religious majoritarianism of the state and played an important role in imparting a distinct ‘habitus’ that has reinforced the reproduction and persistence of religious boundaries.

7.2 The matter of ‘Islamic’ business organisations

The emergence of ‘Islamic’⁹⁶⁶ business organisations in the Turkish case is significant in understanding not only the rise and success of the Islamist movement but also the dynamics of the persistence of religious delineations in shaping political and economic competition. The political ascent of AKP in 2002 has been widely linked to the expansion of religious/conservative Anatolian capital⁹⁶⁷ (see Chart 18), which these business organisations purportedly represent. In the 1970s the provincial merchants and craftsmen of Anatolia⁹⁶⁸ had formed the basis of support of the Islamist MSP. Subsequent economic liberalisation in the 1980s spurred on the transformation of Anatolian provincial petty bourgeoisie into a group of entrepreneurs fronting medium-sized and large companies⁹⁶⁹ that, by the 1990s, formed the backbone of support for the Islamist RP and, later, the AKP. Additionally, the expansion of conservative/Anatolian capital and Islamic business organisations has been associated with the bifurcation of the bourgeoisie classes in terms of increasing physical distinction and differentiation in socio-political life, including in fashion and dress and the restructuring of social space (venues without alcohol; ‘Islamic’ holiday destinations with segregated spaces for men and women).⁹⁷⁰

⁹⁶⁶ The identity claims made by these actors are not taken for granted and this term is only used given that it is the self-depiction of these organisations, not because it reflects any essence or their necessarily Islamic nature.

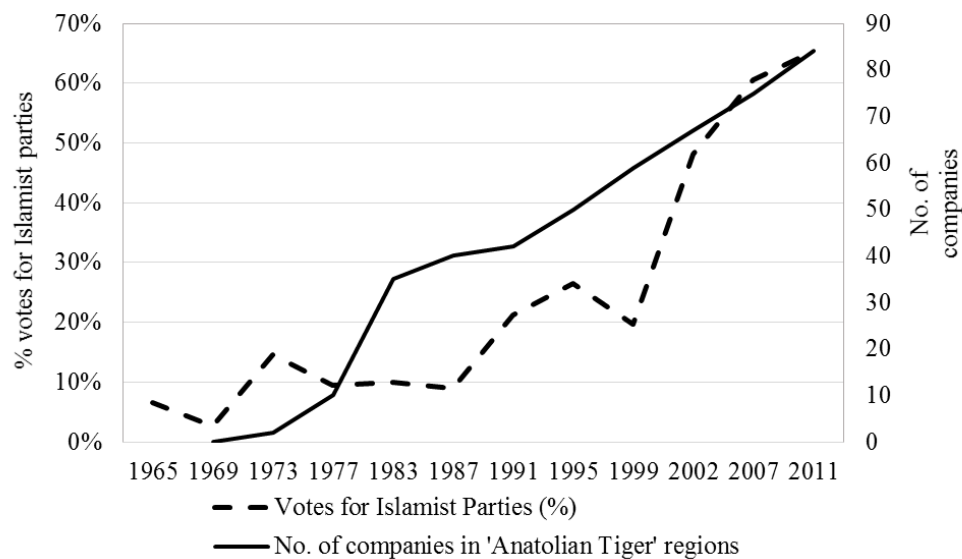
⁹⁶⁷ Yavuz 2003; Yankaya 2014; Şen 2010: 71.

⁹⁶⁸ Şen 2010: 71–72; Yavuz 2003.

⁹⁶⁹ Şen 2010: 71–72.

⁹⁷⁰ Atay 25 February 2004.

Chart 18: Support for Islamist political parties (%) and number of İSO top 500 companies in 'Anatolian Tiger' regions



Sources: İstanbul Sanayi Odası [İstanbul Chamber of Industry, İSO], <<http://www.iso.org.tr>>; İstanbul Sanayi Odası Dergisi [İstanbul Chamber of Industry Magazine]1968-2013; 'Election of Representatives Statistics' from the Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [Turkish Statistical Institute, TÜİK], <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=1061>. Calculations are my

The most visible manifestation of the maturation and growth in economic power of this social group was the establishment in 1990 of the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association (MÜSİAD). MÜSİAD described their approach as 'moral capitalism' underlined by their concept of '*homo Islamicus*', the vision of an economic actor that was presented as an alternative to the profit-maximising '*homo economicus*' and the '*homo traditionalus*' – the traditional Muslim artisans and shopkeepers.⁹⁷¹ The distinctive aspect of MÜSİAD (which has been followed by the establishment of similar associations) as a business association is the emphasis on their identity as 'Muslims'. They present themselves as a social group distinct from the traditional business establishment represented by the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD),⁹⁷² which has been described in public discourse and especially by Islamists as representing Istanbul-based 'secular' 'minority' capital.

⁹⁷¹ Şen 2010: 74.

⁹⁷² It is not argued here that all MÜSİAD members are Islamist or religious/pious. Çokgezen, however, notes that MÜSİAD members have always brought their Islamic identity to the foreground (Çokgezen 2000).

The manner in which MÜSİAD, like other Islamist actors, differentiates itself as a distinct social group can be observed from its publications. For instance, in a special report marking its 15-year anniversary, an article charting the success of the association declared that: ‘the history of MÜSİAD is a story of one walking uphill. As “indigenous” entrepreneurs that first emerged towards the end of 1829, and were protected and developed since the *Hayriye Tüccarları* [Muslim tradesmen], they were for the first time stalled by fabricated events [‘*yapay dalga*’] after the 28 February process.’⁹⁷³ This narrative of continuity with the *Hayriye Tüccarları* of the Ottoman Empire is particularly pertinent. During the reign of Sultan Selim III (1789–1809) the Ottoman state had established its own system of privileges for its non-Muslim tradesmen subjects as a countermeasure against the expansion of the capitulations system of privileges for foreign tradesmen.⁹⁷⁴ Following disquiet by Muslim tradesmen over these measures, the status of the *Hayriye Tüccarları* was established and Muslims granted the same privileges and protection enjoyed by the non-Muslim tradesmen.⁹⁷⁵ In this sense, these policies had marked the first efforts in the empire to support Muslim subjects in the economic sphere, which had hitherto been dominated by non-Muslim subjects.

The article’s reference to the *Hayriye Tüccarları*, therefore, is firstly an example of how MÜSİAD articulates itself as a social group that comprises the ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ and ‘national Muslim bourgeoisie’ based in Anatolia, and that has roots in and continuity with the Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, MÜSİAD publications commonly describe its members as a ‘Muslim people’,⁹⁷⁶ committed to Islamic lifestyles and morality,⁹⁷⁷ raised on ‘Turkey’s traditional and religious values’⁹⁷⁸ in which ‘economic development is not end but a means to an

⁹⁷³ MÜSİAD 2005. During the ‘28 February process’ initiated with the 1997 ‘post-modern’ coup, a number of MÜSİAD companies were targeted by the military authorities as ‘green capital’ and blacklisted as having links with ‘reactionary’ forces. The claims that the 1997 coup targeted Islamists/conservatives and the ‘Anatolian Tigers’ to prevent their rise has been a prevalent discourse of Islamist actors, including the AKP (*Olay* 28 April 2012).

⁹⁷⁴ Masters 1992: 579–80.

⁹⁷⁵ Ulutaş 2012: 503.

⁹⁷⁶ MÜSİAD 1994b; Yarar 1997.

⁹⁷⁷ MÜSİAD 2005.

⁹⁷⁸ MÜSİAD 2005.

end'.⁹⁷⁹ Secondly, the allusion to the *Hayriye Tüccarları* and the 28 February process (as constituting a break from this '200 year old' tradition of protection of Muslims owing to the blacklisting of a number of Islamist businesses by the military) represents an effort to construct a narrative of historical oppression of the Muslim majority, a discourse which has been utilised by Islamist and conservative actors in their populist politics of *ressentiment*.⁹⁸⁰ In this vein, MÜSİAD (alongside conservative-Islamist actors) has typically asserted that they represent 'Anatolian' 'national capital',⁹⁸¹ a 'bottom-up' social (Muslim) movement in a Muslim society⁹⁸² that they claim has been deprived of access to resources previously dominated by 'minority', 'monopoly' Istanbul 'rentier capital'⁹⁸³ that comprises an elitist group composed of secularist/Kemalist bureaucrats and big business and dependent on state patronage. In this vein, MÜSİAD's discourse is defined by narratives of victimhood, with MÜSİAD's journey described as a 'painful walk from periphery to the centre'⁹⁸⁴ whilst facing discrimination and being impeded by the Kemalist elite/centre. They stress, therefore, that the M in MÜSİAD stands for '*müstakil*' (independent, rather than Muslim) because they claim they have not been supported by the state.⁹⁸⁵ From this perspective Özal's policies in the 1980s and the economic liberalisation agenda are described as 'revolutionary' and much of MÜSİAD members' success and opportunities are attributed to this neoliberal turn.⁹⁸⁶ In line with this, a persistent feature of MÜSİAD's discourse is a staunchly liberal and pro-free market stance⁹⁸⁷ championing a minimal state,⁹⁸⁸ liberalisation⁹⁸⁹ and privatisation.⁹⁹⁰

It can be argued that both the assertion of continuity and the narrative of aggrievement have at their root the premise of the Muslim majority's privileged position and right to the monopolisation of economic and political resources, as

⁹⁷⁹ Yarar 1997.

⁹⁸⁰ See Kandiyoti 2014; MÜSİAD 2005.

⁹⁸¹ MÜSİAD 1998: 10.

⁹⁸² MÜSİAD 2005; MÜSİAD 2010.

⁹⁸³ MÜSİAD 1991: 7; see also Buğra & Savaşkan 2014: 57.

⁹⁸⁴ MÜSİAD 2010.

⁹⁸⁵ MÜSİAD 2005.

⁹⁸⁶ MÜSİAD 2005; MÜSİAD 2010.

⁹⁸⁷ MÜSİAD 1998.

⁹⁸⁸ Yarar 1997: 45.

⁹⁸⁹ MÜSİAD 1993.

⁹⁹⁰ MÜSİAD 1993.

they are assumed to be the natural owners of the state. At the same time, the emphasis on Islamic identity and the narrative of historical exclusion have provided useful rhetorical resources in MÜSİAD's bid to gain greater access to political and economic resources through, for example, the channelling of state funds to Anatolia or incorporation into the clientilistic networks enjoyed by big business. For instance, when MÜSİAD was established in 1990 it had limited access to clientalist networks with political parties which were dominated by established business associations; TÜSİAD was close to the Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*, ANAP) while the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (*Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği*, TOBB) had links with the DYP⁹⁹¹. Instead, relations with the Islamist RP, with which MÜSİAD enjoyed common networks, had begun to deepen as the party ascended to government and began to provide opportunities to gain easier access to state resources, such as state incentive schemes and important public tenders in privatisations and the domestic defence industry.⁹⁹² These clientalist links continued under the AKP, as MÜSİAD members undertook roles in the party,⁹⁹³ with one member also amongst the founding members of the party.⁹⁹⁴ In 2007 30 out of 341 AKP lawmakers were MÜSİAD members. During the AKP period, as Buğra and Savaşkan note, the narratives of disadvantage and exclusion imposed by secularists have been useful in masking favourable relations between Islamic business associations and the government.⁹⁹⁵ The AKP has undertaken several reforms to benefit small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including a controversial tax amnesty law in 2005 and banking reform in 2004 to increase the availability of credit for SMEs⁹⁹⁶ (for further discussion of clientalism see Chapter 8). Accordingly, it can be argued that religious identity has also served in part a functional/symbolic purpose in which Sunni Islam is utilised 'as a resource to bind the businessmen whom it represents into a coherent community and to represent their economic interests as an integral component of an ideological mission; as a basis for cooperation and solidarity between producers; as a device to create secure market niches or sources of

⁹⁹¹ The formation of MÜSİAD had also been encouraged by former president and leader of the ANAP Turgut Özal to bolster his declining political position: Yankaya 2014.

⁹⁹² Demiralp 2009; Yankaya 2014: 105–09.

⁹⁹³ Yankaya 2014: 161.

⁹⁹⁴ List of founding members from AKP website.

⁹⁹⁵ Buğra & Savaşkan 2014: 138.

⁹⁹⁶ Demiralp 2009.

investment finance; and as a means of containing social unrest and labour militancy'.⁹⁹⁷

Yet, at the same time, the functional/symbolic usefulness of religious identity alone does not explain the persistence of these particular delineations of a distinct Muslim identity or why these differentiations have arisen in an already 'Muslim majority' context. Why does a business association in a 'Muslim majority' context choose to emphasise their Muslim identity to distinguish themselves as a social group? Why does the Muslim majority versus non-Muslim minority delineation persist? Before a particular identity can be utilised by political actors, group consciousness needs to be raised and boundaries have to be constructed. The section below will trace how the prevalent forms of social closure (religious delineations of social groups) that persisted in the Republic can be traced to processes of class formation in the late Ottoman Empire.

7.3 The political economy of religious majoritarianism

7.3.1 The Ottoman Empire and the formation of a 'Muslim' bourgeoisie

The emphasis of Islamist/conservative actors such as MÜSİAD on their Muslim group identity raises questions regarding the persistence of these delineations given the monopolisation of Muslim control over the economy in the Republic and the near elimination of non-Muslims since the late Ottoman Empire. Consequently, this section will trace the intertwining of social class formation with religious community identities. In particular, it will focus on elements of continuity and change in how these boundaries have been articulated from the late Ottoman era to the Republic and how they were transposed onto new distributional conflicts even when the initial conditions and conflicts had disappeared. It will attempt to highlight the process of social closure, the hardening of community boundaries and the subsequent persistence of these boundaries.

⁹⁹⁷ Buğra 1998: 522; Şen 2010.

In this sense, what the historian Fatma Müge Göçek has described as the bifurcation of class during the Ottoman Empire⁹⁹⁸ is critical to understanding the triggers for this process of social closure. According to Göçek, in the Ottoman Empire the formation of a segmented bourgeois class was catalysed by the differentiated impact of the Western commercial penetration on a social structure that was stratified on an ethnic and religious basis under the *millet* system.⁹⁹⁹ The rising military, commercial and industrial strength of Europe had precipitated increased imperial penetration of the Ottoman economy, as demonstrated by the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, signed with Russia in 1774,¹⁰⁰⁰ and the expansion of the capitulations regime that comprised privileges granted to foreigners. From the eighteenth century, these developments had also supported the increasing economic prominence of non-Muslim subjects.¹⁰⁰¹ Over time, greater numbers of Ottoman non-Muslims employed by the foreign powers in different capacities had also begun to be incorporated within the remit of the expanding capitulations regime, allowing them to gain significant privileges (such as tax exemptions) and eventually Western protection over the communities.¹⁰⁰² Efforts to redress the disadvantaged position of Ottoman merchants, starting with Selim III (1789–1807), had been abandoned or undermined, however, by the expanded concessions the waning Ottoman state was forced to make to imperial powers. The 1838 Anglo-Ottoman commercial Treaty of Balta Limanı, which had fully opened up Ottoman markets to British merchants (and its allies, including France),¹⁰⁰³ had been imposed on the Ottoman state after it sought British help in thwarting the challenge posed to the empire by the governor of Egypt, Mehmet Ali Pasha. In addition, the Ottoman state's efforts to address this decline through modernisation reforms spurred by military defeats had in turn resulted in a cycle of indebtedness, funds for which were sourced either through foreign borrowings or domestically through the so-called 'Galata bankers', comprising the newly emerging minority bankers.¹⁰⁰⁴ This eventually led to the establishment of the Public Debt Administration in 1854, underlining the semi-colonial status of the Ottoman

⁹⁹⁸ Göçek 1996; Kuran 2004.

⁹⁹⁹ Göçek 1996: 109, 139.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Ahmad 2000: 3–4; Masters 1992: 579.

¹⁰⁰¹ Kuran 2004.

¹⁰⁰² Göçek 1996: 93, 97.

¹⁰⁰³ Geyikdagi 2011; Keyder 1987: 29–32.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Göçek 1996: 110.

state.¹⁰⁰⁵ The consequences of economic liberalisation and concessions granted to the imperial powers, and by extension the non-Muslim minorities, had been devastating, particularly for the domestic Muslim merchants, having left them unable to compete.¹⁰⁰⁶

By the nineteenth century the Ottoman state was facing a 'legitimacy crisis' related to its ongoing military, political and economic decline.¹⁰⁰⁷ The loss of land and nascent nationalist agitation had both induced greater imperial penetration and exacerbated these trends by hardening religious demarcated community boundaries. In particular, the expanding economic privileges enjoyed by the non-Muslim communities and their economic dominance had precipitated the polarisation of ethnic segmentation.¹⁰⁰⁸ As Göçek has described, the rise of Western trade and the Europeans' exclusive association with the non-Muslim minorities of the Ottoman Empire meant that 'Ottoman merchants began to differentiate their fields of activity according to religion'.¹⁰⁰⁹ Ottoman authorities had become increasingly cognisant of the state's inferior status in relation to the European powers and its loss of sovereignty, triggering renewed modernisation efforts during the Tanzimat reform era (1839–1876) and the promotion of a new social base and ideology of legitimation to ensure the survival of the state against the threat of disintegration.¹⁰¹⁰ Within this context, the abrogation of the capitulations regime, which had expanded to include non-Muslim subjects under the imperial powers' pretext of granting protection to compensate for their unequal political status, had become a central policy goal of the Porte by 1839.¹⁰¹¹ The subsequent declaration of legal equality had not been enough, however, to ease or lift the capitulations regime, whilst increased imperial economic penetration and capitalist integration with Europe¹⁰¹² had ensured the continued economic demise of Muslim subjects vis-à-vis non-Muslims. Consequently, the granting of equality to non-Muslims came to be perceived by Muslim subjects not only as the loss of

¹⁰⁰⁵ Boratav 2003; Kaplan 1998; Tezel 1972.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ahmad 2000: 5.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Deringil 1998: 166.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Göçek 1996: 114.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Göçek 1996: 96. Göçek notes that statistics from 1885 show that minorities comprised 60% of the merchants and artisans in Istanbul with less than 5% employed by state.

¹⁰¹⁰ Deringil 1993: 3–4.

¹⁰¹¹ Ahmad 2000.

¹⁰¹² Tezel 1972: 89.

their politically privileged status but also as involving the expansion of (political and economic) privileges of the non-Muslims¹⁰¹³ (see Chapters 3 and 8 for further discussion).

These dynamics of class bifurcation and ethnic segmentation¹⁰¹⁴ on the basis of religion fundamentally shaped the evolving (Turkish) nationalist consciousness and movement. In the context of a disintegrating multi-religious and multi-ethnic empire and an economy dominated by ‘comprador bourgeoisie’¹⁰¹⁵ whose interests were beholden to their external sponsors and partners under the capitulations regime, the construction of a ‘national bourgeoisie’¹⁰¹⁶ came to be regarded by the nationalists as a vital element of nation-state building. State-led efforts to expand and advantage the Muslim bourgeoisie within the economy vis-à-vis non-Muslims accelerated in the second constitutional period, starting from 1908.¹⁰¹⁷ For the CUP and Turkish nationalist thinkers such as Ziya Gökalp, ethnic homogeneity was necessary for the establishment of a ‘national economy’.¹⁰¹⁸ The success of these policies was limited, however, since, as historian Zafer Toprak has noted, the economic liberalism of the CUP government resulted instead in the further impoverishment of the Muslim tradesmen and accentuated the economic prominence of the non-Muslims. This came about because of the continuation of privileges afforded by the capitulations, making it difficult for the Muslim tradesmen to compete. Alongside the growing realisation of these effects of liberal economic policies, the Balkan wars of 1912–13 had marked a decisive turning point towards Turkish nationalism.¹⁰¹⁹ War and economic segmentation consequently exacerbated social closure in the Ottoman polity following campaigns such as the Muslim boycott in 1913–14 of non-Muslim businesses that were accused of supporting the enemy side during the Balkan wars.¹⁰²⁰ Consequently, this period marked the acceleration of ‘Turkification’ policies which involved the support by the state of Muslim–Turkish elements to make them

¹⁰¹³ Kara 1997: 164–65.

¹⁰¹⁴ Göçek 1993.

¹⁰¹⁵ Boratav 2003: 13.

¹⁰¹⁶ Toprak 1995.

¹⁰¹⁷ Koraltürk 2011: 30.

¹⁰¹⁸ Toprak 1995: 19.

¹⁰¹⁹ Koraltürk 2011: 28; Toprak 1995: 4.

¹⁰²⁰ Toprak 1995: 5.

dominant over foreigners, the definition of which increasingly came to include domestic non-Muslims who were subjects of the Empire.¹⁰²¹ The nationalist goal of establishing a ‘national economy’, therefore, also involved the construction of a Muslim–Turkish majority-based and -dominated economy, further reinforcing community boundaries. It was the subsequent outbreak of WWI that provided the opportunity for the CUP to push ahead with its efforts to establish a Muslim bourgeoisie through active direct state intervention in the economy and incentive schemes, such as the establishment of joint stock companies by Muslim tradesmen, alongside the abrogation of the privileges of non-Muslims enjoyed under the capitulations regime. In large part, however, Muslim domination of the economy was achieved by war and demographic engineering, including migration, population exchanges, genocide and ethnic-cleansing, which together enabled the (violent) transfer of wealth from non-Muslim to Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire and, later, citizens of the Republic.¹⁰²² The independence movement had also declared that no privileges should be granted to non-Muslims that would impact upon the political sovereignty of the new state.¹⁰²³ The capitulations regime was abrogated with the outbreak of WWI and officially abolished by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, in return for a commitment to the protection of the rights of the remaining non-Muslim minorities.

7.3.2 The ‘Muslim’ bourgeoisie in the Republic and the ISI regime, 1923–1980

Aside from the homogenisation involved in nation-building,¹⁰²⁴ scholars have also pointed to the differentiated outcomes that are produced by uneven development within the national territory. In this vein, Rokkan has argued that the structuring of mass politics cannot be understood without ‘going far back in history, without analysing the differences in the initial conditions and the early processes of territorial organisation, of state building, of resource allocation’.¹⁰²⁵ As described above, in the Ottoman polity social class bifurcation followed by war had hardened community boundaries, raising the level of social closure, and had been followed

¹⁰²¹ Koraltürk 2011: 30–31, 56.

¹⁰²² Koraltürk 2011: 56.

¹⁰²³ Kaplan 1998.

¹⁰²⁴ Verdery 1993: 43.

¹⁰²⁵ Rokkan 1999.

by the homogenisation of the social structure on a religious basis, achieved through the near elimination of non-Muslims. By 1927 the Republic's first census showed that the share of the non-Muslim population had declined to just 2.64% from 20% in 1912 (over the same territory).¹⁰²⁶ The new Republic would construct the nation upon this 'Muslim majority', which was also to become the new owners of the state and its resources. To ensure the monopolisation of the economy by the Muslim-Turkish majority, the Republic continued the 'Turkification' efforts of the CUP adopted from 1908 to 1922.¹⁰²⁷ Examples of these policies include the displacement of the Jewish population with the Thrace Incident in 1934; the discriminatory Wealth Tax of 1942–44; the adoption in 1932 of Law 2007, reserving certain professions only for Turkish citizens; and the Turkish language campaigns from 1937. Archival material also confirms that businesses were instructed by central government to replace non-Muslim workers with Muslim-Turks during the early Republic.¹⁰²⁸ Following the 5–6 September 1955 attacks against minorities, involving the violent appropriation of their wealth, non-Muslims had fallen to below 1% of the population.

Despite the homogenisation strategies of the nation-state builders, however, the bifurcation experienced between the non-Muslim and Muslim tradesmen was supplanted by regional economic segmentation, which was largely the consequence of the differentiated effect of European imperial economic penetration during the Ottoman Empire. Traditional industry had been decimated during the late Ottoman Empire following the 1838 Anglo-Ottoman treaty.¹⁰²⁹ This increasing external penetration and dependence had resulted in the growth of harbour cities in western Anatolia (Istanbul and Izmir) that enjoyed trade links with Europe and better transport links, while exacerbating the decline of the inner Anatolian regions.¹⁰³⁰ The results of a 1915 industrial survey (see Table 3) demonstrate the sharp regional economic divergence, with Istanbul and Izmir accounting for 76% of workplaces (Istanbul 57%, Izmir 19%)¹⁰³¹ and minimal industrial activity occurring outside

¹⁰²⁶ Koraltürk 2011: 26–27; Çağaptay 2002.

¹⁰²⁷ Koraltürk 2011: 11, 240; Zürcher 2004; Boratav 2003

¹⁰²⁸ PMAD 7/10/1924; PMAD 3/3/1925; PMAD 7/5/1925; PMAD 27/9/1928. See also Serçe 1995; Koraltürk 2011.

¹⁰²⁹ Keyder 1987: 29–32.

¹⁰³⁰ Dinler 1994: 181–82; Keyder 1987: 33.

¹⁰³¹ Dinler 1994: 186–87.

these regions. These effects of the integration of the Ottoman economy with the European capitalist order reflected the ‘common experience of capitalist integration in the periphery. What was specific to Turkey was the overdetermination of the class conflict accompanying this restructuration with religious and ethnic differences.’¹⁰³²

Table 3: Industrial activity according to type of economic activity and regional distribution (from the 1915 Industrial Survey)

Industry	Istanbul	Izmir	Other areas	Total
Food industry	45	23	10	78
Land industry	20	1	-	21
Leather industry	11	2	-	13
Tree industry	15	9	-	24
Textile industry	15	8	55	78
Paper and publishing industry	44	11	-	55
Chemicals industry	5	8	-	13
Total	155	62	65	282
% of Total	55%	22%	23%	100%
Source: 1913-15 Industrial Survey results are from Tevfik Çavdar. (1974). Milli Mücadelenin Ekonomik Kökenleri. İstanbul, Kız Yayınları. which is sourced from (Dinler 1994).				

During the early Republic these dynamics were further exacerbated during the process of nation-building, which Rokkan has described as involving both centralisation and (geographic, economic, political) peripheralisation as various political units are incorporated within the new territorial borders.¹⁰³³ In line with efforts to build a ‘national bourgeoisie’, which formed a fundamental part of nation-state building, and in response to the economic crisis following the Great Depression of 1929, the one-party regime in the 1930s adopted statism (*etatism*), a strategy of state-led industrialisation.¹⁰³⁴ This also involved efforts to incorporate the periphery through the establishment of state-run factories located outside the traditional and more developed centres of Istanbul and Izmir. The first five-year plan, for example, specified investments in the Anatolian cities of Zonguldak,

¹⁰³² Keyder 1987: 32–33.

¹⁰³³ Rokkan 1999; Loughlin 2005.

¹⁰³⁴ Boratav 2003: 27; Dinler 1994: 193.

Isparta, Kutahya, Kayseri, Eregli, Igdir and Kastamonu¹⁰³⁵ and envisaged factories in Konya, Eregli, Nazilli, Kayseri and Malatya.¹⁰³⁶ While these efforts during the one-party era comprised an important expansion of industrial infrastructure that would bear fruit over the long term, in the short term results were limited in terms of generating economic growth.¹⁰³⁷ At the end of the one-party era, industry remained concentrated in the traditional centres, such as Istanbul, Izmir, Adana and Bursa. A more concerted and systemic effort to address regional inequalities was adopted in the 1960s, with the establishment of the State Planning Organisation (SPO) following the 1960 military coup. This was precipitated in part by rapid social and economic change as well as accelerating industrialisation from the 1950s, which had exacerbated social contestation and led to a greater focus on uneven development. For instance, minutes of the military cabinet meetings of the 27 May 1960 junta leaders during 1960–1961 suggest that the SPO was established partly to address socio-political issues in the south-east of the country and especially Kurdish ethnic unrest.¹⁰³⁸ During the 1960s and 1970s various policies were adopted, such as the 1968 strategy demarcating ‘priority development areas’ (*Kalkınma Öncelikli Yöreler*, KÖY) to address regional economic imbalances in the country, which meant a greater channelling of investment and resources into poorer regions, especially in the south-east and inner Anatolia.¹⁰³⁹ Despite these efforts, the distribution of state funds remained concentrated in the traditional centres. For example, the Five Year Development Plans in the period 1963–1983 envisaged that only around one-third of total planned public investments would be destined for the forty least developed provinces, where just under half the population resided.¹⁰⁴⁰

¹⁰³⁵ Dinler 1994: 194.

¹⁰³⁶ Soylu & Yaktı 2012: 9.

¹⁰³⁷ Tekeli & Soral 1976: 100.

¹⁰³⁸ Koçak 2010: 556.

¹⁰³⁹ Gökçen 2011.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Barkey 1990: 132–33.

Chart 19: Sectoral growth, % total real gross domestic product (GDP)



Sources: Statistical Indicators, 1923-2013' from the Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [Turkish Statistical Institute, TUIK], <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/Kitap.do?metod=KitapDetay&KT_ID=0&KITAP_ID=160>.

Despite these (partial) efforts at regional planning, the state-led efforts to support the development of a national bourgeoisie under the 'import substitution industrialisation' (ISI) regime during 1960–1980 resulted in the sharpening of regional disparities and the eventual concentration of economic power in the hands of a small number of business conglomerates largely based in the traditional industrial centres. Various economic studies have described the impact of ISI regimes within late developing capitalist economies as facilitating rent-seeking behaviour resulting in monopolistic competition or crony capitalism.¹⁰⁴¹ Turkish industrialisation from 1960 to 1980 had reflected these dynamics, as demonstrated by Barkey, who describes the resultant increase in the degree of capital concentration both in terms of size and geography, as well as oligopolistic practices. Consequently, by 1980, out of the 421 privately owned companies, 253 were based in Istanbul and 59 in the Aegean, both areas together accounting for 70% of private sector sales and capital.¹⁰⁴² The banking sector, too, was characterised by similar levels of concentration. Of the 24 private banks, 19 were controlled by individual holding companies or families who had acquired or

¹⁰⁴¹ Castañeda 2012; Bhagwati 1988; Krueger 1974: 291–303.

¹⁰⁴² Barkey 1990: 89.

established banks to increase their access to scarce credit, thereby further restricting the access of SMEs to bank credit.¹⁰⁴³

The dynamics of nation-building and the ramifications of the ISI regime, in terms of producing monopolistic competition and restricting access to funds, had two main outcomes; i) business sector fragmentation or ‘fractionalisation’ of social classes and ii) attendant resistance to (geographic, economic, political) ‘peripheralisation’¹⁰⁴⁴ by actors who wanted to increase their share of the distribution of state resources, particularly in Anatolia. The reflection of these dynamics in political life could be observed by the 1970s. The establishment in 1970 of the first explicitly Islamist party (see Chapter 8 for discussion of Islamism), the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*, MNP; it resurfaced as the MSP in 1971 after the military coup), by former members of the governing centre-right Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*, AP) including Necmettin Erbakan, reflected these contradictions and the monopolisation of economic resources by traditional business centres. Erbakan’s fame had followed his controversial election in 1969 to the leadership of the Turkish Union of Chambers (TOBB), a corporatist private sector body established by the state in 1952, which had reflected increasing dissatisfaction with the effects of the ISI regime. While he was eventually ousted from TOBB following political manoeuvrings by the governing AP, Erbakan had accused TOBB of becoming an instrument of a ‘comprador-masonic minority’, arguing that the Istanbul and Izmir groups were blocking the development of Anatolian business.¹⁰⁴⁵ Accordingly, while the MSP articulated itself through Islamic references, it had emerged as the representative of the Anatolian petty-bourgeois, seeking to increase their share of the economic pie: its party programme in 1973 showed greater concern with regional inequalities than with an Islamic cause or class inequalities.¹⁰⁴⁶ This was epitomised by Erbakan’s statement: ‘why shouldn’t the Anatolian person own a factory?’ and his arguments that the Anatolian bourgeoisie, with the help of the state, had to be strengthened against the Istanbul bourgeoisie, which he characterised as ‘the happy minority’.¹⁰⁴⁷

¹⁰⁴³ Barkey 1990: 124.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Rokkan 1999: 150.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Barkey 1990: 132.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Tekeli & Soral 1976: 37.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Tekeli & Soral 1976: 99–100.

The focus on Anatolia was not exclusive to the MSP. In the 1970s the CHP's 'People's Sector' programme outlined in the party's manifestos also promised 'social justice amongst regions',¹⁰⁴⁸ involving greater investment in Anatolia by generating a 'just and balanced development model'¹⁰⁴⁹ in a 'bottom-up' manner. A case in point is the 1973 CHP election manifesto '*Ak Günlere*' ('Towards Bright Days'), in which it was argued that the state's incentive schemes were being channelled to what was described as 'monopoly capital' – business elites in the traditional economic centres such as Istanbul – thereby depriving the state of resources for infrastructure investments.¹⁰⁵⁰ Particular emphasis was placed on the need to channel resources away from big capital to Anatolian businesses,¹⁰⁵¹ described as being more 'national' and at 'at one with the people', and not embroiled with foreign capital compared with established business elites.¹⁰⁵² In the early 1970s Anatolian holding companies had been established as envisaged under the CHP's 'People's Sector' programme in a bid to channel small family savings and expatriate workers' remittances to Anatolian businesses for the purposes of industrial diffusion.¹⁰⁵³ The companies were established in priority development areas, with 90% situated outside the traditional industrial centres.¹⁰⁵⁴ However, success was limited because of the shortage of credit availability, weak institutional guarantees, poor institutional and regulatory structures and capacity constraints that limited the number of companies created, whilst only a few survived once established.¹⁰⁵⁵

In summary, the 1923–1980 period can be considered as reflecting the 'uneven development'¹⁰⁵⁶ of a late-developing capitalist economy during nation-state building efforts. The bifurcation of social class in the Ottoman Empire and the hardening of social boundaries on the basis of religious identity had informed the development of Turkish nationalism. Against this context, the subsequent nation-

¹⁰⁴⁸ CHP 1973: 44.

¹⁰⁴⁹ CHP 1973: 16.

¹⁰⁵⁰ CHP 1973: 10, 83, 73.

¹⁰⁵¹ CHP 1973: 77.

¹⁰⁵² CHP 1973: 82; Tekeli & Soral 1976: 37.

¹⁰⁵³ Özcan & Çokgezen 2003: 2067–68.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Özcan & Çokgezen 2003: 2067–68.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Özcan & Çokgezen 2003: 2067–69.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Hechter 1999; Orridge 1981.

state building efforts under the Republic had two key consequences. First, the continued efforts to grow and advantage a Muslim–Turkish bourgeoisie institutionalised a religious majoritarian logic in state economic policy in terms of the right to the monopolisation of political and economic resources by the Muslim majority. This reinforced the processes of social closure catalysed by European economic penetration in the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Ottoman Empire. Second, the dynamics of nation-state building and the ISI regime of the late-developing capitalist economy further exacerbated economic segmentation on a territorial basis and the concentration of economic power, leading to peripheralisation. Despite the elimination of the non-Muslims by the establishment of the Republic, the religious articulation of social group boundaries in terms of the Muslim majority and non-Muslim minority was extrapolated onto discourses of regional inequality that involved the claim that the ‘Muslim’ Anatolian periphery had been excluded from what was described as the ‘secular’ centre, comprising ‘Kemalist’, ‘masonic’, ‘westernised’ Istanbul business and bureaucratic elites.

7.3.3 Post-1980 neoliberal restructuring and shifting economic balances

By the late 1970s the contradictions inherent in the ISI regime alongside global economic developments had triggered a systemic economic crisis that further accentuated deepening political contestation. The subsequent military coup d’état of 12 September 1980 could be characterised as a ‘critical juncture’ that triggered a significant restructuring of political and economic life which reinforced the bifurcation of the bourgeoisie or business fragmentation. The military regime undertook the implementation of the ‘24 January’ (1980) programme of economic liberalisation measures, commencing the move from the closed economy ISI regime to an open export-orientated economy. Crucially, liberalisation involved a move away from the monopolistic competition and economic concentration of the ISI regime, facilitating economic redistribution and the ongoing process of industrial diffusion into the Anatolian heartlands. This was driven by the shift of state incentives towards export-orientated industries, which, in conjunction with privatisation policies, opened up new opportunity spaces that allowed SMEs ‘to integrate more smoothly into the world capitalist system through sub-contracting agreements in labour-intensive industries like textiles and shoes and by taking

advantage of the post-Fordist production system'.¹⁰⁵⁷ Despite the neoliberal discourse of the small state, the Turkish state continued to play a central role in the economy in the post-1980 period, except that rent distribution was channelled not just to big business, as during the ISI period, but also to SMEs.¹⁰⁵⁸

In terms of the political realm, the military-led restructuring involved both an attempt to redesign the 'rules of the game' and the augmentation of majoritarianism, as well as the closure of political parties and associations such as trade unions. Crucially, these processes also included a new wave of systemic Islamisation, as seen in the embracing of the TIS and the expansion of religious education. The religious field was therefore privileged and endowed with significant organisational and material resources and networks not afforded to alternative currents and formations. For instance, the membership of Islamist trade union Hak-İş grew after the military regime suspended all other labour unions such as the left-wing Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions (*Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*, DISK) and allowed only the statist and right-wing Türk-İş and Islamist Hak-İş to operate; this also ensured the latter's support of the junta leaders.¹⁰⁵⁹

In sum, neoliberal economic restructuring, together with the TIS, was important in terms of the business or social class fragmentation/fractionalisation in the post-1980 period. The ISI regime of the pre-1980s and efforts to establish a 'national' (Muslim) bourgeoisie had accentuated territorial differentiation and peripheralisation in a way that supplanted the Muslim majority/non-Muslim minority bifurcation that had arisen within the nascent bourgeoisie of the late Ottoman Empire. In the 1980s a neoliberal ideology (inspired by the New Right) encompassing a critique of the big state coupled with the adoption of the TIS had aimed at the reconstitution of hegemony,¹⁰⁶⁰ following the economic crisis and

¹⁰⁵⁷ Madi 2014.

¹⁰⁵⁸ *T24* 3 March 2013; Yankaya 2014: 98; Buğra 1998.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Hak-İş had not taken root amongst the working class in the late 1970s, when it was first established by the Islamist MSP in 1976. The military's measures in the post-1980 period therefore gave the organisation a significant boost. See Duran & Yildirim 2005.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Yalman 2002; Yalman 2004; Ercan 2003. According to Yalman the Turkish state was facing a crisis of hegemony in the 1970s owing to economic and political crises accentuated by the increasingly non-functional parliamentary system.

political polarisation in the 1970s. According to Yalman, the new hegemonic strategy of the state had intended to end class-based politics.¹⁰⁶¹ Within this, the duality that state and (Muslim) society together comprised had provided ideological justification for the neoliberal structural reforms by presenting them as a process of democratisation.¹⁰⁶² This was in the sense that economic liberalisation became championed by Islamists and conservative actors as democratisation, involving the channelling of state resources to the majority ‘Muslim’ businesses, away from what was perceived as the ‘minority’, ‘secular’ and ‘Kemalist’ traditional centres. This rearticulation of Islam within a neoliberal framework and the TIS, which promoted Islamic identity and piety as the fundamental markers of national culture and society, reproduced and reinforced religious majoritarianism predicated on the notion of the rightful domination of the Muslim majority over resources of the state, while further accentuating the process of social closure and business fragmentation.

7.4 Economic diffusion and the rise of Anatolian capital

How the ongoing economic diffusion and, from the 1980s, the liberalisation policies outlined above accentuated the fractionalisation of business and led to the emergence of Islamic business organisations will be elaborated in this section. I will first trace the expansion of Anatolian capital and, following that, examine how MÜSİAD differs structurally from TÜSİAD in terms of factors such as size, sector and regional basis.

i. Economic diffusion and the expansion of Anatolian capital

As the above section has attempted to demonstrate, the increasing economic power of Anatolian regions in the post-1980 period can be described as reflecting a process of industrial diffusion, a ‘second wave’ of the revival of Anatolian holding companies in the 1990s,¹⁰⁶³ further spurred by economic liberalisation and the removal of the monopolistic ISI regime. Indeed, some of the key Anatolian cities,

¹⁰⁶¹ Yalman 2004.

¹⁰⁶² Yalman 2002; Ercan 2003.

¹⁰⁶³ Özcan & Çokgezen 2003: 2069.

such as Kayseri and Eskisehir, which emerged as ‘new’ industrial centres in the 1990s, were the very sites at which the state had been investing in expanding industrial infrastructure since the one-party period.¹⁰⁶⁴ For instance, one of the first large industrial factories was established in Kayseri in 1926,¹⁰⁶⁵ while other ‘tigers’, such as Gaziantep and Denizli, were already identified as development priority areas in 1968 and 1973 respectively.¹⁰⁶⁶

The evolution of the process of economic diffusion and the ascent of Anatolia-based capital can be observed through a useful proxy measure, the historical compilation of annually released top 500 companies (based on their turnover) published by the Istanbul Chamber of Industry (*İstanbul Sanayi Odası*, İSO).¹⁰⁶⁷ Chart 20 shows the compiled data of the number of companies by region since 1970. I have grouped the data to distinguish between traditional industrial centres and the areas referred to within scholarly literature and by organisations such as MÜSİAD as ‘Anatolian Tigers’.¹⁰⁶⁸ Alongside the clear expansion of Anatolian capital since the 1980s, as indicated in Chart 20, it is also possible to observe the continued dominance of traditional industrial centres such as Istanbul, Izmir, Bursa and Adana alongside the shrinking share of the public sector enterprises in the economy. According to the data, in 1970 just 1% of the top 100 companies were based in the areas dubbed ‘Anatolian Tigers’, while 7% of the top 500 companies were in these regions in 1981. By 2002, this had risen to 13% of the top 500 companies and then to 18% by 2013 (excluding public sector enterprises).¹⁰⁶⁹ One caveat here is that the number of companies based in these cities will be underestimated since some public sector enterprises (which İSO does not break down by region) are also based in these regions. I estimate that around 33% (6 out of 18) of public sector enterprises were based in ‘Anatolian Tiger’ regions, compared with around 19% in 1980 and 25% in 1988. Based on the 2010 and 2012

¹⁰⁶⁴ Göymen 2005; Cengiz 2013.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Cengiz 2013: 70.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Bedirhanoglu & Yalman 2009.

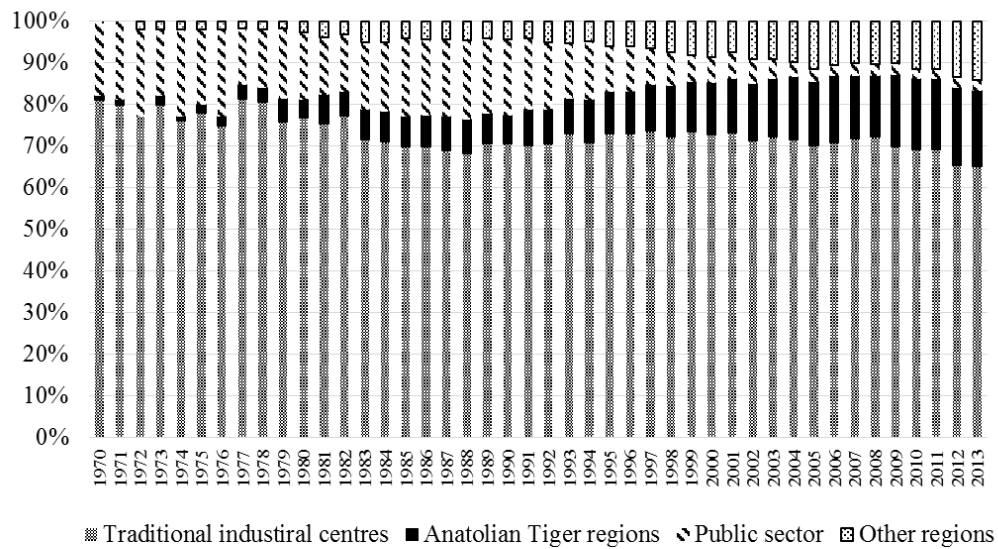
¹⁰⁶⁷ The data starts in 1968, listing the top 100 companies.

¹⁰⁶⁸ These were determined both on the basis of academic literature and MÜSİAD publications and are defined as Ayvalik, Bafra, Balıkesir, Bilecik, Carsamba, Corum, Denizli, Eskisehir, Gaziantep, Gediz, Kahramanmaraş, Karaman, Kayseri, Konya, Kutahya, Malatya, Nigde, Ordu, Samsun, Trabzon and Unye.

¹⁰⁶⁹ İSO data; between 1968 and 1976 only the top 100 companies were published; between 1977 and 1979 300 companies were published and from 1980 İSO began to publish the top 500 companies.

reports it is possible to identify 55 MÜSİAD and Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (*Türkiye İşadamları ve Sanayiciler Konfederasyonu*, TUSKON)¹⁰⁷⁰ affiliated companies in the İSO Top 500 list, 6 of which were established pre-1949, 22 of which were established during 1950–1979 and 27 of which were established after 1980. At least 24 of these companies, around 50%, were based in the ‘Anatolian Tiger’ regions. According to 2012 data, these companies accounted for 8% of the total turnover of the İSO Top 500 companies in Turkey as a whole. Data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (*Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu*, TUIK) shows that ‘Anatolian Tiger’ regions accounted for 11% of total foreign trade in 2013 (vs. 47% for Istanbul).

Chart 20: İSO top companies by region (% of total)



Sources: İstanbul Sanayi Odası [İstanbul Chamber of Industry, İSO], <<http://www.iso.org.tr>>; İstanbul Sanayi Odası Dergisi [İstanbul Chamber of Industry Magazine] 1968-2013.

ii. The emergence of Islamic business associations: the case of MÜSİAD

Economic diffusion, the particular dynamics of capital accumulation in the Turkish economy¹⁰⁷¹ and liberalisation which contributed to the growing wealth of Anatolia were important factors in the establishment of associations such as MÜSİAD. Since

¹⁰⁷⁰ A business organisation affiliated with the Gülen movement (see note 587).

¹⁰⁷¹ See Ercan 2002; Yalman 2004; Yalman 2002; Bedirhanoglu & Yalman 2009 for Marxist analyses.

its establishment, MÜSİAD has grown into one of the largest business associations in Turkey, with around 7,000 members and 35,000 affiliated companies employing around 1.5m workers.¹⁰⁷² MÜSİAD differs from TÜSİAD, however, in terms of factors such as size, membership, sector and regional basis (see Tables 2 and 3).¹⁰⁷³ The member companies represented by MÜSİAD are generally young, with around half established during the period 1980–1990 and a third after 1990 (see Table 4)¹⁰⁷⁴. MÜSİAD member companies are majority family-owned SME-scale enterprises, around half of which are located in Anatolia and, in particular, in politically conservative Anatolian cities such as Konya and Kayseri (see Table 5)¹⁰⁷⁵. According to 2009 data, 26% of MÜSİAD members were based in cities dubbed ‘Anatolian Tigers’, with 54% based in traditional industrial centres. In contrast, membership of TÜSİAD, which was established in 1971, is strictly restricted to large business enterprises, with 70% of member firms established before 1980¹⁰⁷⁶ and most located in Istanbul. Members of MÜSİAD are also active in all sectors, but especially in labour-intensive sectors such as textile, leather, clothing and the food industry, all of which were also the rising sectors of the post-1980 era owing to export-orientated industrialisation and flexible production.¹⁰⁷⁷

By comparison, TÜSİAD is widely considered as a more exclusive club of big industry. It comprised around 500 companies in 2013,¹⁰⁷⁸ although this number is exaggerated by the fact that firms of the same holding company are registered separately. It is estimated that TÜSİAD actually represents, in fact, around thirty holding companies, with around 20% accounted for by just six big holding companies (Koç, Sabancı, Doğuş, Tekfen, İş Bank and Çukurova).¹⁰⁷⁹ According to data published by TÜSİAD, around 35% of member companies were in industry, 13% in retail and wholesale trade, 11% in financial services and 10% in transport.¹⁰⁸⁰ Despite the expanding wealth of Anatolian capital, TÜSİAD has maintained its dominant role in the economy, with member companies accounting

¹⁰⁷² MÜSİAD website.

¹⁰⁷³ See also Demiralp 2009.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Şen 2010.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Şen 2010: 71.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Çokgezen 2000.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Şen 2010: 71.

¹⁰⁷⁸ TÜSİAD 2013.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Çokgezen 2000.

¹⁰⁸⁰ TÜSİAD <<http://www.tusiad.org>>.

for an estimated 50% of the value added of the economy, 65% of industrial production, 80% of foreign trade (excluding energy), 50% of employment and 85% of corporation tax.¹⁰⁸¹ In comparison, according to a 2010 MÜSİAD report, the association's member companies accounted for around US \$90bn of GDP (approximately 15% of 2009 GDP), 15% of total production and US \$17bn of exports (approximately 17% of total 2009 exports).¹⁰⁸²

In addition, despite MÜSİAD's identity politics and claims of moral capitalism, the primary theme that emerged during interviews I conducted with representatives of TÜSİAD and journalists who have been followers of Anatolian capital was that there was nothing that was inherently 'Islamic' about the nature of these economic activities. Rather, it was argued that there was no difference between TÜSİAD, MÜSİAD or TUSKON in terms of the ultimate focus on profit-making with no major disputes over matters such as constraining labour.¹⁰⁸³ Similarly, various extensive ethnographic sociological studies of Islamic business associations and capital have reaffirmed that, despite the emphasis on Islamic identity, they follow a capitalist rationality with the ultimate motivation of profit-making.¹⁰⁸⁴ In addition, as Buğra and Savaşkan argue, the 'political cleavages within the Turkish business community are impossible to reduce to a simple dichotomy between the conservative provincial Muslim bourgeoisie situated in the constituency of political Islam and the secularist business elite established in the old industrial centres'.¹⁰⁸⁵ This is partly demonstrated by the existence of numerous rival Islamic business associations, such as TUSKON and the Association of Anatolian Businessmen (*Anadolu Aslanları İşadamları Derneği*, ASKON).

¹⁰⁸¹ TÜSİAD <<http://www.tusiad.org>>.

¹⁰⁸² MÜSİAD 2010.

¹⁰⁸³ Interviews held February–March 2014.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Cengiz 2013: 422; Yankaya 2014: 240.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Buğra & Savaşkan 2014: 151.

Table 4: Breakdown of date of incorporation of TÜSİAD and MÜSİAD member companies

Date of Incorporation	TÜSİAD		MÜSİAD	
	No of firms	% total	No of firms	% total
Before 1950	15	5	29	2
1950-59	32	11	41	2
1960-69	56	19	85	5
1970-79	107	36	281	16
1980-89	85	28	742	42
After 1990	6	2	590	33
Total	301	100	1768	100

Source: Çokgezen 2000: 531.

Table 5: Geographic distribution of MÜSİAD members

		Individual members	% total
Traditional industrial centres	Adana	99	3%
	Ankara	230	8%
	Bursa	112	4%
	İnegöl	68	2%
	İzmir	59	2%
	Gebze	40	1%
	Kocaeli	74	2%
	İstanbul	938	31%
	Total	1620	54%
Anatolian Tigers	Balıkesir	31	1%
	Denizli	67	2%
	Eskişehir	37	1%
	Gaziantep	72	2%
	Kahramanmaraş	52	2%
	Kayseri	124	4%
	Konya	218	7%
	Malatya	74	2%
	Samsun	49	2%
	Trabzon	61	2%
	Total	785	26%
Others	Hatay	22	1%
	Kdz. Ereğli	50	2%
	Mersin	49	2%
	Mardin	27	1%
	Rize	62	2%
	Sakarya	68	2%
	Şanlıurfa	19	1%
	Bandırma	28	1%
	Aksaray	23	1%
	Antalya	104	3%
	Diyarbakır	36	1%
	Elağz	43	1%
	Erzurum	62	2%
	Total	593	20%
Total		2998	100%

Source: Buğra & Savaşkan 2010: 21.

7.5 Structures as mechanisms of reproduction: religious education, Islamic charities and Islamic finance

So far this chapter has outlined the ways in which i) class formation in the Ottoman Empire was religiously coded and influenced the forms of social closure in the Republic; and ii) how these boundaries persisted and were imposed onto distributional conflicts as a result of nation-building processes and the effects of economic development. This section of the chapter examines three further structural factors – religious education, Islamic charities and finance – which, in addition to the PRA, examined in previous chapters, underpinned the ongoing reproduction and persistence of religious delineations in shaping political and economic competition.

Institutional structures of the state have a constitutive role for actors, since they ‘privilege some actors, some identities, some strategies, some spatial and temporal horizons, some actions over others’.¹⁰⁸⁶ As outlined in Chapter 2, the state, as an ensemble of persisting institutions and competing power centres,¹⁰⁸⁷ plays, in particular, a crucial role in structuring political life, given that it has a ‘specific, differential impact on the ability of various political forces to pursue particular interests and strategies in specific spatio-temporal contexts through their access to and/or control over given state capacities’.¹⁰⁸⁸ Religious majoritarianism was embedded with the establishment of the PRA and the subsequent expansion of state-administered religious education, and Islamic charities and finance aided by the state should be understood against this structural context and as being facilitated by two contingent factors: Cold War-related anti-communism and the neoliberal economic transformation of the 1980s. The expansion of religious education was supported by and related to the role of the PRA but the timing of this policy – the fact that it gained prominence from the late 1940s – was also linked to the anti-communism drive of state actors. Likewise, the expansion of Islamic charities and finance was linked to the state’s withdrawal from welfare provision as well as the search for new sources of capital following neoliberal restructuring. Both opened

¹⁰⁸⁶ Jessop 2004.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Brass 1985; Jessop 2004; Jessop 2007: 37.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Jessop 2004; Jessop 2007: 37.

up ‘windows of opportunity’ for different actors and shifted the balance of power within the state. In addition, these institutional structures provided a conducive context for the emergence of religio-politics. As Göçek has posited, the education system and social networks ‘[articulate] the social and economic boundaries of the social group, [endow] them with a vision, and thus [transform] the group into a social class. Similarly, the state structure and the nature of the relationship a social group forms with it creates a social resource that trespasses the limitations economic production often places on such a group.’¹⁰⁸⁹ I employ Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus’¹⁰⁹⁰ in arguing that these institutional structures subsequently bestowed individuals with differentiated endowments of capital and differential socialisation. This shaped a collective set of dispositions or distinct habitus which, it can be argued, underpins the reproduction and persistence of religious delineations that shape political and economic competition, as evidenced by the rise of ‘Islamic’ business organisations.

i. The expansion of religious education

The role of the education system in shaping collective identities and the socialisation of citizens has been widely noted by various studies.¹⁰⁹¹ This has been the crux of the controversy around the expansion of religious education in the Turkish case, most notably in terms of the emergence of *imam-hatip* schools (IHS) as a parallel education system alongside the mainstream education system. The rise of IHS have indeed paralleled the rise of Islamist movements in the 1970s and their

¹⁰⁸⁹ Göçek 1996: 81.

¹⁰⁹⁰ The concept of habitus is defined as a system of internalised dispositions ‘acquired through lasting exposure to particular social conditions and conditionings, via the internalization of external constraints and possibilities’ (Brubaker 1985; Wacquant 2006). The nature of dispositions acquired depends on the particular endowment of capital, which is defined as comprising all forms of power including material (economic), cultural, social and symbolic (Mangi 2009). Crucially, the habitus represents the mutually constitutive means by which structure and agent shape each other (Wacquant 2006); it is ‘the product of structure, producer of practice, and reproducer of structure’ (Bourdieu 1979; Wacquant 2006; Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu 1989). It defines the nature of the competition and differentiation between social groups/classes/fractions composed of individuals that share similar dispositions which reflect their mutual conditioning and similar endowment of capital. The concept of habitus, therefore, is useful in allowing us to i) conceptualise the differentiated effects of particular configurations of structures in shaping actors; ii) explain persistence through an understanding of the reproduction of these structures underpinned by their self-reinforcing dynamic, whilst still allowing for change owing to the incorporation of agency that leaves room for strategic action.

¹⁰⁹¹ Bourdieu 1979; Giroux 1981.

wider electoral success in the 1990s, by which time the IHS had been firmly established.

Aside from the goal of developing a national consciousness, similar concerns about differentiated socialisation had underpinned the adoption of the 1924 law that had sought to establish a unified national education system. During Ottoman modernisation, bureaucrats had been concerned with the emerging duality of the education system between the westernised and religious schools, the *medreses*, which was regarded by elites as catalysing divisions in society.¹⁰⁹² The establishment of a standardised national education system was seen by nation-state builders in the Republic as a means to resolve this fragmentation and social differentiation. This is evidenced by the accompanying statement to the 1924 education bill: ‘since the beginning of the Tanzimat period following the 1839 Imperial Edict of the Rose House, the Ottoman sultanate that is no longer in existence, attempted to unify education but was unsuccessful, which led to the development of a duality. The members of a nation can only have one education. Two types of education results in the raising of two types of people. This in turn contravenes the unity of feeling and mind and aim of solidarity.’¹⁰⁹³ With the establishment of a centralised education system, religious schools were effectively closed,¹⁰⁹⁴ while religious education was brought under the control of the new Ministry of Education. The main formal channel of religious education was the IHS, opened in 1924 to train religious functionaries. However, while numbering 29 in 1924, they were closed by 1930 for reasons including regime restrictions, lack of student interest, lack of career opportunities and PRA resistance.¹⁰⁹⁵ Alongside the PRA’s Quran courses, the unofficial/illegal parallel *medreses* remained the main source of religious education until the reopening of IHS in 1950. It has been argued that, during the one-party era, the ‘Kemalist’ elites saw the national educational system as a means of ‘fostering a secular and patriotic collective consciousness. The Republican regime aspired to invent a new nation whose standardized subjects would be guided by a secular and positivist ethos

¹⁰⁹² Davison 1961: 295–96, 301.

¹⁰⁹³ ZC 3.3.1340: 25.

¹⁰⁹⁴ There were 479 medreses with around 18,000 students. See Ozgur 2012: 33; Dinçer 1998: 55.

¹⁰⁹⁵ See Chapter 5. Çakır et al. 2004; Ünsür 2000: 140–42.

hostile to all manifestations of tradition.’¹⁰⁹⁶ Conversely, Bayar has shown that the educational policies of the one-party era evolved over time from more religious conceptualisations of nationhood to more ethnic understandings, while noting, crucially, that there was never a ‘secularization moment’ in education.¹⁰⁹⁷ What took place, she argues, was not a separation but a unification of religious and secular teaching and the state’s involvement in both of these aspects of education.¹⁰⁹⁸ Despite the institution of secular education, the state, therefore, continued to promote ‘Islam as a social morality system that is, along with nationalism, also functional in providing the social cement to bind the community together’.¹⁰⁹⁹

The expansion of religious teaching in all segments of education began with the move towards multipartism in the late 1940s. In line with the one-party regime’s move to relax restrictions on religious activity, religious education (subject to parental choice) was introduced in primary schools in 1948, alongside *imam-hatip* courses and the establishment of a Theology Department at Ankara University. As outlined in Chapter 5, two key drivers of the decision to expand religious education were the PRA and the perceived threat of communism.¹¹⁰⁰ As with the PRA, religious education has involved the inculcation of Sunni-Hanefi Islam and, while, non-Muslims have been given the choice of opting out, for Alevis it has been compulsory despite opposition.

Different channels of official religious education include IHS, the PRA’s Quranic courses and courses run by mosques.¹¹⁰¹ There are two main ways in which religious education has been incorporated into mainstream public education: the introduction of compulsory religious lessons as part of the conventional education

¹⁰⁹⁶ Yavuz 2003.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Bayar 2008: 174. Conversely, both Bayar and Copeaux have drawn attention to the emphasis on Turkish race and ethnicity during the 1920 and 1930s, and the attempts of the regime to stress pre-Islamic and pre-Ottoman history. This reflected not only nation-building but also the influence of racist and fascist ideas that were prevalent and on the ascendant globally at the time. Copeaux argues that the shift from the focus on Turkish ethnicity and race occurred after Atatürk’s death in 1938, with the gradual increase in emphasis on Islam over time and finally with the development of the TIS (Copeaux 2000).

¹⁰⁹⁸ Bayar 2008: 164.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Parla & Davison 2004: 70.

¹¹⁰⁰ Ünsür 2000: 46; Gökaçtı 2005: 169.

¹¹⁰¹ Akpınar 2007: 162.

system and the (re)establishment of state-administered IHS, which have evolved into a parallel education system. Charts 15 and 16 show the evolution of the IHS. Their expansion has been a key policy of the conservative/right/Islamist governments that have dominated government since the transition to multipartism. For instance, IHS proliferated in the 1970s under the right-wing coalition National Front (*Milli Cephe*) government. During this period 230 new schools were opened to a total of 334, compared with 452 in total in 2003–04,¹¹⁰² while the number of IHS students rose from 48,895 in 1974–75 to 200,300 by 1980–81.

In addition, the other key actor in the expansion of IHS has been the military, with the exception of the 1997 coup. Following the 1960 coup the military displayed a favourable approach by opening seven new schools.¹¹⁰³ Despite initial restrictions, it was the technocratic transition government following the 1971 coup which adopted a new education law in 1973 enabling the transformation of IHS from vocational to mainstream schools and allowing their graduates to enter certain university programmes.¹¹⁰⁴ The 1980 junta leaders were the most supportive, removing restrictions on university for IHS graduates. In addition, IHS were utilised as a mechanism of assimilation. A case in point is the military's decision to open the first IHS during its rule in (majority Alevi) Tunceli on the grounds of the 'region's ethnic constitution, anarchy and dominance of terror'.¹¹⁰⁵ Likewise, the military forced thousands of Alevi children from Tunceli, among other areas, to attend IHS.¹¹⁰⁶ Following the 1997 coup, on the other hand, IHS were declared centres of 'reaction' and faced various restrictions that significantly weakened them, resulting in a decline in student numbers from the peak of 511,502 in 1996–97 to 64,534 by 2002.¹¹⁰⁷ Restrictions included the expansion of conventional compulsory education to eight years, a disallowance from entering employment in certain arms of the state, such as the police and army, and the introduction of the 'coefficient factor' (an automatic reduction in the entrance exam scores of IHS graduates) which limited entry into non-theology programmes at universities.¹¹⁰⁸

¹¹⁰² Çakır et al. 2004.

¹¹⁰³ Ozgur 2012: 41.

¹¹⁰⁴ Ünsür 2000: 175–176; Ozgur 2012: 45–46.

¹¹⁰⁵ Çakır et al. 2004.

¹¹⁰⁶ Kenanoğlu 11 April 2013.

¹¹⁰⁷ *Vatan* 15 August 2011; *Hürriyet Daily News* 8 May 2014; *Reuters* 20 March 2012.

¹¹⁰⁸ US DoS 2008.

Since the AKP's ascent to power in 2002 the military's '28 February' restrictions have been overturned and IHS graduates granted the unrestricted right to enter universities in 2012.¹¹⁰⁹ Not only has the AKP reversed the decline of IHS but, under new reforms, many conventional schools are effectively being transformed into IHS.¹¹¹⁰ This transformation was declared by, for example, an AKP parliamentarian Ali Boğa, who commented in 2012 that 'we are here as Imam Hatip graduates or as allies. We will increase the number of these schools in records. We have the chance to turn all schools into Imam Hatip schools.'¹¹¹¹ According to statistics published by the Ministry of Education for the education year 2013–14, there were 1,361 secondary level IHS comprising 8% of the total number of secondary schools.¹¹¹² In terms of student numbers, 240,015 students were enrolled in IHS, comprising 4% of total secondary school enrolment. In addition, Anatolian IHS high schools,¹¹¹³ classified as vocational schools, numbered 854, comprising 12% of total vocational technical education and 19% of enrolled students. Yet, according to the Ministry of Education's investment strategy, announced in 2014, around 37% (TRY 1.75bn) of the ministry's investment budget was allocated to IHS high schools, including the establishment of 109 new schools in 56 provinces.¹¹¹⁴

Secondly, alongside the IHS, there has also been a steady expansion of religious education within the conventional education system. After the reintroduction of religious lessons in primary schools in 1948 they became part of the curriculum in 1950 (with parents having only the right to opt out rather than opt in), and were incorporated into secondary education in 1956 and then as optional classes in high schools in 1967. 'Moral education' (*ahlak bilgisi*) was subsequently made compulsory in 1973 by the CHP–MSP coalition government. It was, again, the 1980 junta regime that introduced compulsory wider religious education in line with TIS policies, while ANAP carried out Islamisation of the curriculum.¹¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰⁹ *Milliyet* 19 August 2012.

¹¹¹⁰ *Memurlar.net* 25 July 2013; *Hürriyet* 23 August 2013; *Vatan* 24 August 2012.

¹¹¹¹ *Voice of America* 25 September 2012.

¹¹¹² MoE 2013/14 8 May 2014.

¹¹¹³ Which also focus on foreign language education.

¹¹¹⁴ *Milliyet* 23 February 2014.

¹¹¹⁵ Yavuz notes that education minister Vehbi Dinçerler was a Nakşibendi disciple (Yavuz 2003).

Under the AKP religious education in conventional schools has expanded further to include purportedly (in practice, compulsory) ‘optional’ classes on the Quran and the life of the prophet.¹¹¹⁶ Similarly, Quran courses also proliferated following TIS policies and under the AKP (Chart 23).

Aside from the general trend of Islamisation of the education system, the expansion of IHS is particularly important since they have not only become a key channel of social group reproduction of pious conservatives but are also the means through which the ranks of the Islamist movement have been reproduced and expanded. The first generation of IHS graduates (1951–1973) had chiefly been from similar socio-economic backgrounds, such as poor or lower-middle-class families, migrants from Anatolia to the cities, whilst by the 1980s (with the lifting of restrictions on university entry) the IHS had gained wider appeal for conservative citizens.¹¹¹⁷ The concept of *habitus* suggests that stratified and differentiated systems of education will endow actors with differentiated types of cultural capital or internalised dispositions. Based on her ethnographic study of IHS, Ozgur has argued in this vein that IHS ‘impart a *habitus*’ in that they ‘re-enforce students’ attachment to religious values and traditions and further their process of religious socialisation ... schools formally inculcate Islamic knowledge ... they also informally expose their students to an Islamic lifestyle through manners of speech, dress, and conduct. ... when they graduate, *imam-hatip* school students seek to mold their environments according to their beliefs’.¹¹¹⁸ IHS graduates have been prominent within the AKP,¹¹¹⁹ including President Erdogan, who has stated: ‘I owe everything to the Imam Hatip School I attended. My life was predestined in that school.’¹¹²⁰ Coşkun and Şentürk suggest that, under the AKP, religious schools have become the grassroots of Islamist parties, and that ‘the function of IHSs was redesigned as an instrument to create new modern, conservative intellectuals by articulating the AKP’s discourse and contributing to the dispersion of its ideology, and that IHS students are inspired by the AKP’s political discourse’.¹¹²¹

¹¹¹⁶ *Radikal* 27 April 2012; *Vatan* 29 March 2012.

¹¹¹⁷ Ozgur 2012: 42–43, 46, 50.

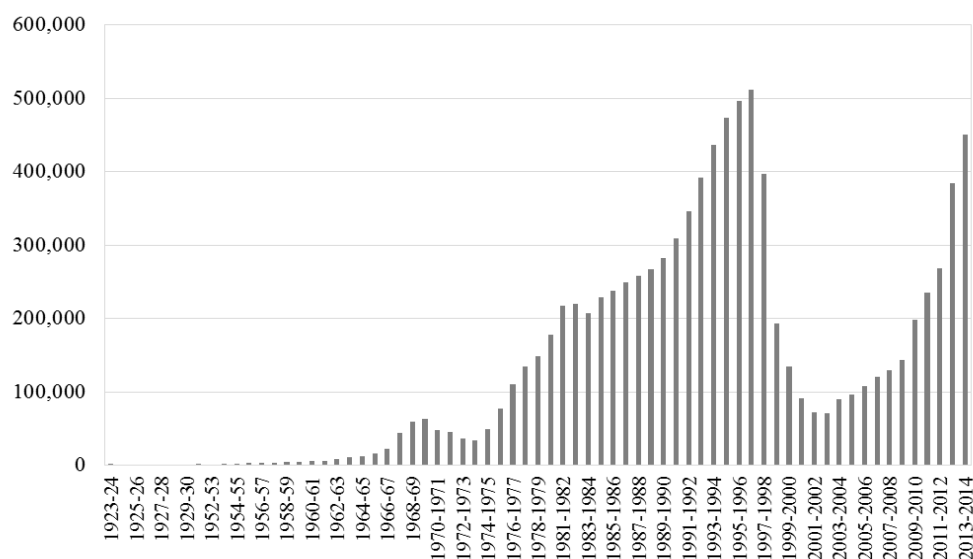
¹¹¹⁸ Ozgur 2012: 24;

¹¹¹⁹ For example, 73 out of 341 AKP deputies in the 2002 elections spoke Arabic, indicating a background in IHS (Sayari & Hasanov 2008: 355).

¹¹²⁰ Heper & Toktaş 2003: 7.

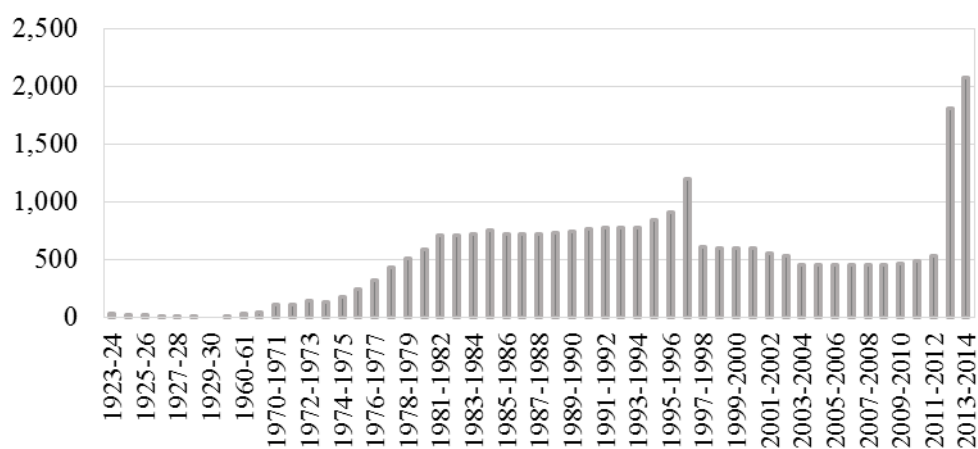
¹¹²¹ Coşkun & Şentürk 2012.

Chart 21: Number of students attending IHS



Sources: Çakır, Bozan, & Talu. 2004; 'National Education Statistics 2013/14' statistics from the Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [Ministry Of National Education, MoE], <[Http://Sgb.Meb.Gov.Tr/Istatistik/Meb_Istatistikleri_Orgun_Egitim_2013_2014.Pdf](http://Sgb.Meb.Gov.Tr/Istatistik/Meb_Istatistikleri_Orgun_Egitim_2013_2014.Pdf)>.

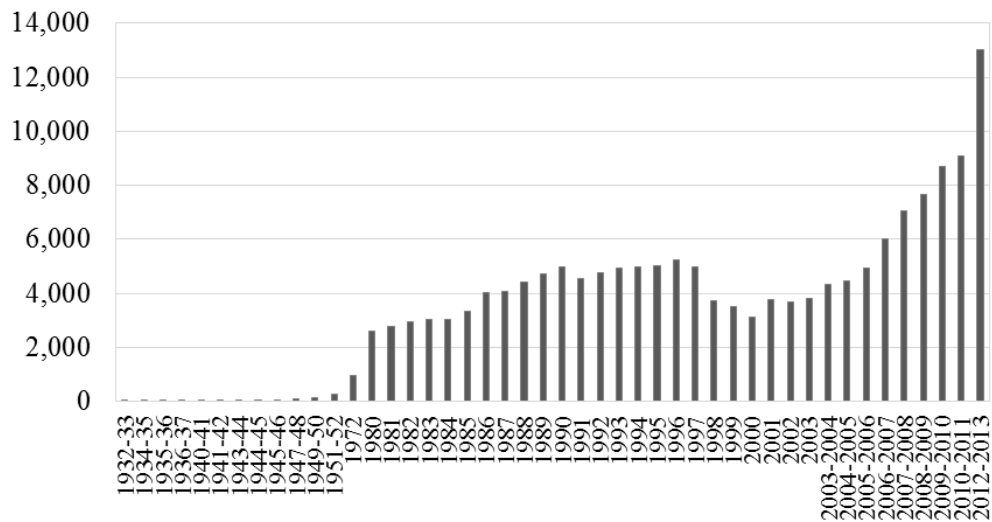
Chart 22: Number of IHS



Sources: Çakır, Bozan, & Talu. 2004; 'National Education Statistics 2013/14' statistics from the Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [Ministry Of National Education, MoE] 8 May 2014, <[Http://Sgb.Meb.Gov.Tr/Istatistik/Meb_Istatistikleri_Orgun_Egitim_2013_2014.Pdf](http://Sgb.Meb.Gov.Tr/Istatistik/Meb_Istatistikleri_Orgun_Egitim_2013_2014.Pdf)>.

*Data from 1970-1971 includes both secondary school and lycee

Chart 23: Number of Quran courses



Sources: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı [Presidency of Religious Affairs, PRA],
<http://www.diyanet.gov.tr/tr/kategori/istatistikler/136>.

ii. The expansion of faith-based organisations

The expansion of faith-based charities in the Middle East, particularly since the late 1970s, has been regarded as an important dimension in the advancement of political Islamism. Scholarly analyses of Islamic charities have typically depicted them as either counterhegemonic, in expanding the space of the civil sector vis-à-vis the state, or as comprising the neoliberal policies of the ‘redeployment’ of the state.¹¹²² The expansion of Islamic charities in the Middle East and Turkey in the late 1970s, however, was often supported by the state and coincided with the fiscal crises and implementation of neoliberal reforms that involved a retreat of the state from public welfare provision.¹¹²³ Partly owing to these dynamics, faith-based organisations comprising both foundations (*waqf*, *vakıf*¹¹²⁴) and associations (*dernek*) have emerged as alternative avenues of social welfare provision and have come to form a major component of Turkey’s associational environment. Through these activities, faith-based organisations have advanced Islamisation with their ‘vertical’ operations, that provide services for and recruit poorer, disadvantaged

¹¹²² Pierret & Selvik 2009.

¹¹²³ See, for example, the Egyptian case: Pioppi 2004.

¹¹²⁴ Foundations, which are another type of charitable organisation, are administered by the Directorate General of Foundations (DoF) and have their roots in the Ottoman Empire and Islamic history.

classes, whilst at the same time fostering ‘horizontal’ middle-class Islamist networks.¹¹²⁵ Accordingly, it can be argued that faith-based organisations have played an important role in expanding Islamist organisational networks and capital.

According to the Department of Associations (DoA), there are 100,312 active associations in Turkey with just under 9 million members, comprising around 12% of the population (as of 2014). Around 17% of these organisations are actively involved in the provision of religious services, including the building of places of worship and the running of Quran courses (Chart 24). This classification, however, is likely to greatly underestimate the vast number of religious/faith-based organisations in the field of welfare provision. There has also been a significant expansion in new foundations since the late 1980s: numbering less than a thousand in the early 1980s, there were just under 2,000 by the early 1990s following a 92% increase in 1986; by the mid-1990s they had climbed to 4,500 and by 2014 there were 5,192. The significant jump in the 1980s reflected the establishment of the Fund for the Encouragement of Social Cooperation and Solidarity (Social Solidarity Fund) by the ANAP government in 1986.¹¹²⁶ The fund was to provide means-tested social assistance to the poor through the establishment of local foundations to be managed and funded by the government. Göçmen has argued that ‘the idea of introducing a social-assistance institution modelled on *waqfs* is significant for two reasons: it is based on Islamic principles and it emphasizes citizens’ duty to care for the poor’.¹¹²⁷ Accordingly, it can be argued that the growth in associations and foundations has reflected not only the neoliberal redeployment policies of the state in delegating social welfare provision to ‘civil society’ but also the expansion and privileging of Islamic social group mobilisation and networks.

To gauge the level of state support for Islamic associations and foundations and its evolution over time I have focused particularly on faith-based associations that have been granted ‘public benefit status’ by the state and foundations that have

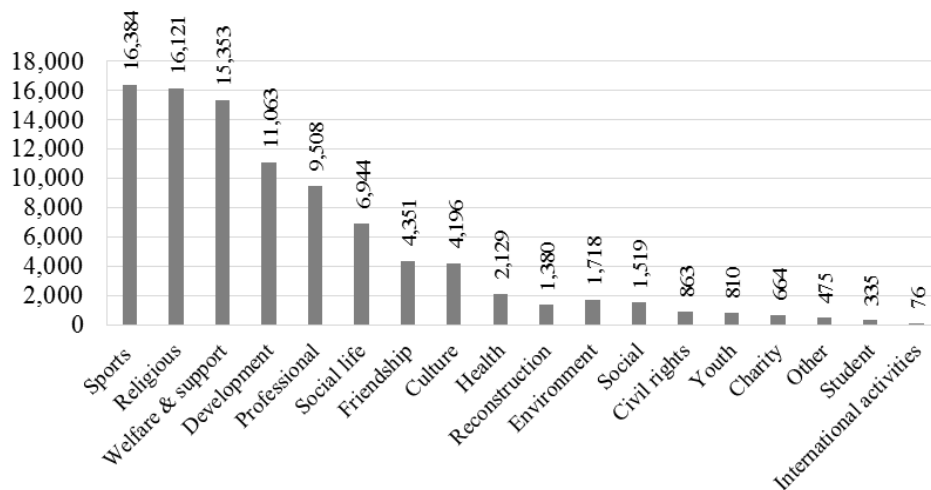
¹¹²⁵ See Pierret & Selvik 2009; Clark 2004; White 2011.

¹¹²⁶ Law 3294, (Resmi Gazete 14 June 1986 No: 19134).

¹¹²⁷ Göçmen 2014.

been granted exemption from paying taxes.¹¹²⁸ Government decrees¹¹²⁹ thus offer a number of foundations and associations significant financial privileges, including tax exemptions¹¹³⁰ and more freedom with regard to funding activities that are normally subject to various restrictions of and permission from the Ministry of Interior.¹¹³¹ Since the granting of these privileges is tied to the political authorities, decisions tend to be highly politicised. For instance, in 2004 the AKP government changed the law on foundations in order to grant public benefit status to one of the largest Islamic charities, Association of Lighthouse (*Deniz Feneri*),¹¹³² despite its decision being overturned twice by the Council of State (*Danıştay*).¹¹³³

Chart 24: Breakdown of associations by area of activity



Sources: Dernekler Dairesi Başkanlığı [Directorate of Associations, DoA], <<http://www.dernekler.gov.tr/>>.

Since historical statistics on public benefit status and tax-exempt associations and foundations are not readily available, data was compiled from the DoA, the DoF and the Council of Ministers decrees in the Official Gazette.¹¹³⁴ The historical data demonstrates a steady increase in the granting of public benefit status and tax

¹¹²⁸ Article 20 of Law No. 4962, (Resmi Gazete 7 August 2003 No: 25192); Law 213, (Resmi Gazete 10 January 1961 No: 10703);

¹¹²⁹ See Law 5253, (Resmi Gazete 23 November 2004 No: 25649).

¹¹³⁰ Yaltı n.d.

¹¹³¹ Kavalcı 2007: 65.

¹¹³² *Vatan* 10 September 2008.

¹¹³³ Article 27 Law 5253 made the decision solely of the Council of Ministers. The change also paved the way for foreign transfers to associations subject to permission.

¹¹³⁴ DoA refused to provide this data.

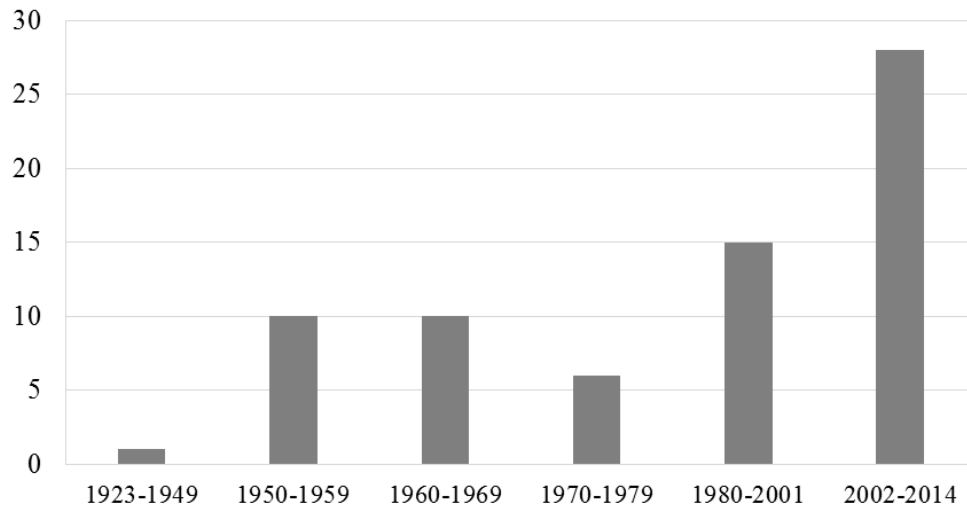
exemptions to (Sunni Muslim¹¹³⁵) faith-based organisations (Chart 25) that has accelerated under the AKP. In addition, it is notable that amongst the foundations and associations accorded these privileges Islamic (Sunni) organisations feature prominently in the field of social welfare provision. A collection and compilation of Council of Ministers decrees in the Official Gazette suggests that a total of 597 associations has been granted public benefit status during the history of the Republic. Less than 10% of these associations were established prior to 1950 and approximately 50% between 1950 and 1980. Of these organisations, around 47% were related to health, 8% to education, 7% to professional bodies and around 6% can be categorised as faith-based organisations acting in either cultural and education fields or social welfare. At least half of the associations acting in the area of social welfare provision were faith-based organisations. In terms of foundations, out of a total of 281 enjoying tax-exempt status, 44 (16%) can be categorised as faith-based organisations, of which 40 were Islamic (Sunni), 1 Jewish and 3 Alevi.¹¹³⁶ In addition to their tax-exempt status, as of end 2013 there were 20 foundations that had the status of ‘legal personalities having the status to collect charity without permission’. Of these, 30% were religious organisations, including the PRA-associated DV. As a comparison, historical data suggests that religious associations and foundations (including those close to the AKP) enjoying public benefit status and tax exemptions numbered around 36 and 43, respectively, while ones that could be classified as military-related or ‘Kemalist’/nationalist numbered, respectively, 19 and 8 (Chart 26).¹¹³⁷

¹¹³⁵ The 1998–2002 period is an exception when certain Alevi organisations also received funds – see Chapter 6.

¹¹³⁶ Granted public benefit status following the 1997 coup – see Chapter 6.

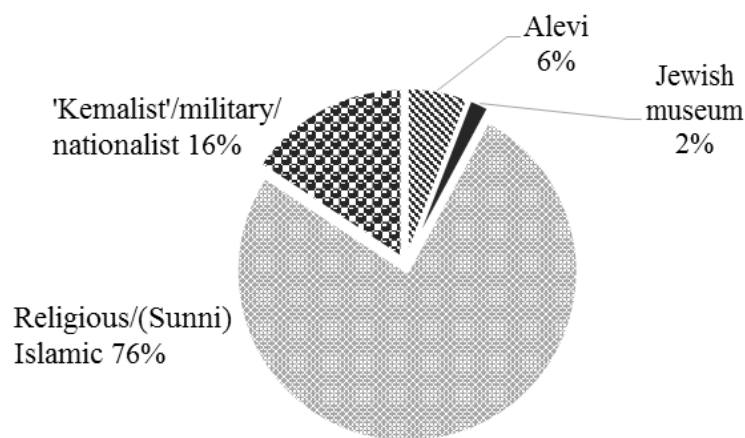
¹¹³⁷ For example: Turkish Armed Forces Foundation (*Türk Silahlı Kuvvetlerini Güçlendirme Vakfı*), Atatürkist Thought Association (*Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği*).

Chart 25: Religious associations and foundations granted state privileges



Sources: Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü [Directorate General of Foundations, DoF], <<http://www.vgm.gov.tr/>>; Dernekler Dairesi Başkanlığı [Directorate of Associations, DoA], <<http://www.dernekler.gov.tr/>>; T.C. Resmi Gazete [Official Gazette, RG], <<http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/default.aspx>>.

Chart 26: Tax exempt foundations, breakdown by ideological/religious activity



Sources: Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü [Directorate General of Foundations, DoF], <<http://www.vgm.gov.tr/>>; Dernekler Dairesi Başkanlığı [Directorate of Associations, DoA], <<http://www.dernekler.gov.tr/>>; T.C. Resmi Gazete [Official Gazette, RG], <<http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/default.aspx>>.

The data on foundations and associations also serves to highlight elements of continuity with respect to the state support offered to faith-based organisations. For instance, the Islamist-conservative IYC¹¹³⁸ has enjoyed public benefit status since

¹¹³⁸ See Chapter 5 and notes 783, 867.

1953.¹¹³⁹ The IYC has played an important role in promoting the expansion of religious education and supporting the establishment of IHS. Many of the founders of the IYC were originally members of Associations for Fighting Communism (*Komünizmle Mücadele Dernekleri*, KMD), established in 1948, while the IYC itself was closely associated with the Hearth of the Enlightened, which was formed in the 1960s against the left/communist movement and pioneered the TIS programme promoted by the 1980 junta regime. The case of the IYC therefore highlights the deeper roots of the TIS project adopted in 1980, which is commonly regarded as constituting a break with the Republican tradition.

Alongside the granting of public benefit status and tax exemptions, there is limited transparency on the allocation of direct transfers through the public budget.¹¹⁴⁰ According to a Ministry of Finance report published in 2010, the transfer of budgetary funds to faith-based organisations began in 1996 under the CHP–DYP government.¹¹⁴¹ However, the detailed breakdown of budget allocations to foundations and associations was halted in 2003 under the AKP government, making it difficult to analyse how these dynamics have shifted during this period. Nevertheless, the patterns of transfers for the period we can observe are significant. In particular, it is possible to see that transfers to Islamist charities took place both before and after the 1997 coup, which is typically regarded as an anti-Islamist military intervention. One such organisation was the Islamist Ahmet Yesevi Foundation, associated with the *İsmailağa* community, an offshoot of the *Nakşibendi tariqat* order. Other recipients of funding included the Turkish Religious Education Foundation (*Türkiye Din Eğitimi Vakfı*, TÜDEV), established by the Ministry of Education in 1996 to support IHS but which was subsequently accused of engaging in anti-laic and anti-Atatürk activities.¹¹⁴² The financial transfers to Islamist organisations following the 1997 coup therefore raise questions about the military’s objectives, suggesting a more complex relationship and engagement with Islamist organisations.¹¹⁴³

¹¹³⁹ Decision no. 4/169 (Resmi Gazete 6 March 1953 No: 8352).

¹¹⁴⁰ Cangöz 2010.

¹¹⁴¹ Cangöz 2010: 138.

¹¹⁴² *Hürriyet* 4 January 2001; *Hürriyet* 6 May 2001.

¹¹⁴³ For example, the clampdown of the military was selective, and did not include all Islamist communities.

Despite the lack of data on transfers during the AKP period, the award of public benefit status and tax exemptions to Islamic organisations have significantly increased, and include chiefly Islamist and pro-AKP foundations and associations.¹¹⁴⁴ Direct transfers to religious associations also take place at the municipality level but there is less transparency over these, making them harder to trace historically. One example is the 2012 grant of TRY 542,530 by an AKP-run municipality in Istanbul for the repair of a student halls of residence run by the IYC.¹¹⁴⁵

The relationships between Islamic faith-based organisations and the Islamist political movement and AKP were highlighted by the eruption on 17 December 2013 of a corruption probe against the governing AKP. A case in point is the Foundation of Youth and Education in Turkey (*Türkiye Gençlik ve Eğitime Hizmet Vakfı*, TÜRGEV) which was established in 1996 (and granted public benefit status in 2011), and includes on its executive board the President Erdogan's son and daughter as well as various AKP politicians. According to the allegations made under the corruption probe, TÜRGEV collected bribes (e.g. monetary or land¹¹⁴⁶) from businessmen, including an alleged large Saudi-sourced donation,¹¹⁴⁷ in return for support from the government in the form of prime real estate land and construction permits.¹¹⁴⁸ The case of TÜRGEV is not uncommon; various actors within the Islamist movement have written about the 'pool' (havuz) mechanisms.¹¹⁴⁹ Likewise, a number of studies of Islamist mobilisation in the 1990s have noted the important role played by Islamic charities in municipalities run by Islamist parties, in which businessmen submitting proposals for tenders (i.e.

¹¹⁴⁴ Examples include the Association of Lighthouse (*Deniz Feneri Derneği*), the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH), the Ensar Foundation, the Albayrak Foundation, the *Nakşibendi* Es-Seyyid Osman Hulusi Efendi Foundation, the Suffa Foundation (linked to the Nur movement), the Gülen movement, linked to the Journalists and Writers Foundation (*Gazeteciler ve Yazarlar Vakfı*) and the Is Anybody There Association (*Kimse Yok Mu Dayanışma ve Kalkınma Derneği*). Islamic business organisations MÜSİAD and TUSKON also enjoy public benefit status (as does TÜSİAD).

¹¹⁴⁵ *GazetecilerOnline* 9 September 2012.

¹¹⁴⁶ *İnternet Haber* 27 December 2013.

¹¹⁴⁷ *Today's Zaman* 31 January 2014.

¹¹⁴⁸ *İnternet Haber* 5 March 2014.

¹¹⁴⁹ Islamist writers have argued that Hayrettin Karaman, an influential Islamic theologian close to the AKP, issued a *fatwa* to encourage such 'donations' from businessmen to Islamic charities in return for favours and benefits. See Türköne 16 January 2014.

for construction or property development) would be encouraged to make ‘mandatory contributions’ to Islamic charities or to the party. In turn, these funds would be channelled through the party or Islamic charities close to the party to those in need of welfare support.¹¹⁵⁰ In sum, faith-based organisations generate important organisational networks between social groups, acting as multilevel intermediaries in terms of the horizontal mobilisation of business and the vertical mobilisation of the poor and, in turn, providing a pool of capital for the governing party. This supports the reproduction of religious social group boundaries in economic and political competition.

iii. The expansion of Islamic finance

Islamic banks have played an important role in the accumulation of economic capital and in institutionalising the links and pooling resources between various Islamist actors, businesses, politicians and the wider pious/conservative sectors of society that eschew interest-based commercial banking. Originating in the Middle East in the 1970s, the development of Islamic finance reflected a diversity of aims, including the desire to increase the poorer classes’ participation in banking of and to extend the strategy of Saudi-supported pan-Islamism during the Cold War against socialism and Arab nationalism.¹¹⁵¹ In this sense it was not necessarily a reflection of the rise in religio-politics.¹¹⁵² In Turkey the development of Islamic finance by the conservative/right-wing ANAP government in the 1980s was partly a means to augment the party’s strength and clientilistic networks by incorporating wider conservative–Islamist actors¹¹⁵³ and partly a search for new sources of capital (particularly from the oil-rich Gulf states) following neoliberal restructuring.

Islamic banking was introduced to Turkey under the name of Special Finance Organisations (SFOs) in 1983 by a prime ministerial decree.¹¹⁵⁴ Islamic banks were exempted from the conventional banking regulatory framework and accorded

¹¹⁵⁰ White 2011; Akinci 1999: 89.

¹¹⁵¹ Henry & Wilson 2004.

¹¹⁵² Henry & Wilson 2004.

¹¹⁵³ Yankaya 2014; Moore 1990.

¹¹⁵⁴ Decision no. 83/7506 (Resmi Gazete 19 December 1986 No: 18256).

significant advantages in terms of lower reserve requirements (funds required to be held at the central bank).¹¹⁵⁵ Being exempt from complying with legal ratios set by the central bank meant that Islamic banks were able to raise cheaper funds and pay their customers a higher return.¹¹⁵⁶ Consequently, Islamic banks offered a potential new channel for SMEs (or Anatolian capital) struggling to access credit from conventional banks that deemed them to be too risky. Following the 2000–2001 financial crisis they were integrated within the banking regulatory framework and gained equal status with conventional banks (involving customers' deposits being guaranteed under the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund).¹¹⁵⁷ While regulatory changes supported their expansion, the Islamic finance sector remains small compared with conventional banking, accounting for around 5.5% of total banking sector assets in 2013 the third quarter of 2013. As of January 2014 Islamic banks accounted for 6.6% of total banking sector deposits (up from 2.2% in 2002) and just under 7% of credit. The sector in Turkey is also fairly small, at around 5% of the total banking sector, compared with that in countries such as Malaysia, where Islamic banks comprise around 52% of the total banking sector, the UAE (25%), Saudi Arabia (22%) and Bahrain (20%).¹¹⁵⁸ Nonetheless, the Islamic finance sector gained further impetus under the AKP government. The 2007–2013 five-year economic development plan, for instance, outlined plans to boost interest-free banking¹¹⁵⁹ with the aim of raising the sector share in total banking from around 5% currently to 15% by 2023.¹¹⁶⁰

Despite its relatively small size Islamic banking provides a source of economic capital for the Islamist movement and a means to expand social networks between Islamist actors, such as the religious brotherhoods, politicians and businesses both within and outside Turkey. For instance, the Islamic bank Faisal Finance was founded in 1984 by the Turkish *Nurcu*¹¹⁶¹ groups together with Saudi capital. Various shareholders of Faisal Finance were also former Islamist MSP

¹¹⁵⁵ Moore 1990.

¹¹⁵⁶ These were scrapped by the central bank in 1994 but were restored by Ecevit following pressure. See *Hürriyet Daily News* 13 February 2001.

¹¹⁵⁷ Jang 2005: 146.

¹¹⁵⁸ Yahşi 2010.

¹¹⁵⁹ *Thomson Reuters Zawya* 2013.

¹¹⁶⁰ *Thomson Reuters Zawya* 2013.

¹¹⁶¹ An offshoot of the Nakşibendi Sufi (Sunni) order. See note 587.

lawmakers.¹¹⁶² Former PM/president Turgut Özal's brother¹¹⁶³ and leading member of a *Nakşibendi* Sufi order, as well as other *Nakşibendi* members, established Al-Baraka Turk, which was also linked to Bahraini Dallah al Baraka. Similarly, Kuveyt Turk was established with Gulf funds, being 62% owned by Kuwait Finance House, 9% owned by Kuwait Social Security Institution, 9% by Islamic Development Bank and 18% by the state body, the Turkish Directorate General of Foundations of Turkey.

7.6 Conclusion

Studies of the emergence of Islamic business organisations have typically focused on either the structural economic differences (MÜSİAD as representing SMEs and TÜSİAD as big business) or identity/ideological conflict (Islamic vs. secular elites). The meta-narrative that 'Muslim' entrepreneurs had been stifled by what was described as the Kemalist/secular state until the liberalisation policies of the post-1980 era has been a near hegemonic interpretation.¹¹⁶⁴ In this vein it was argued, for instance, that 'the economic policies following the 1980 military coup, which were implemented by Turgut Özal, helped the crystallisation and expansion of a countercultural bourgeoisie class with Anatolian roots Özal replaced the statist and corporatist Kemalist development strategy with a new vision of free-market policies that supported his neo-populist coalition.'¹¹⁶⁵ These approaches, however, as argued above, neglect the underpinning clientilistic relations and economic competition. Yalman's observation is thus pertinent in pointing out that the depiction of 'Anatolian Tigers' as winners of the neoliberal transformation of the post-1980 coup period has masked what in reality has been a highly anti-labour dynamic, given the reliance of Anatolian corporations on low wage, non-unionised and undeclared labour.¹¹⁶⁶

Conversely, classical Marxist analysis or the modernisation paradigm have suggested that, with economic development, 'all that is solid will melt into air',

¹¹⁶² Başkan 2004: 224–25.

¹¹⁶³ *Birgün* 9 January 2014; Mumcu 6 January 1987.

¹¹⁶⁴ Cengiz 2013: 16; Yavuz 2004b; Demir et al. 2004.

¹¹⁶⁵ Yavuz 2003; Yavuz 2004b.

¹¹⁶⁶ Bedirhanoglu & Yalman 2009.

which suggests a fading away of community boundaries. Within such approaches, as Parkin outlines, ‘class is characteristically held to be a systemic and universal feature of industrial society, and hence irreducible to specific cultural attributes, the temptation has been to treat communal antagonisms as a distorted version of class conflict or as residual, anachronistic features of an otherwise modern society’.¹¹⁶⁷ The persistence of religious delineated social group boundaries is difficult to explain through a purely economic reductionist approach.

This chapter has suggested that neither identity/ideological conflict nor class/economic reductionism is sufficient for understanding the persistence of religious articulations of group boundaries. Instead, the politics of Islamic business organisations/Islamist actors is situated within the context of the dynamic of the religious majoritarianism of Turkish nation-state building. Consequently, rather than considering the claims of actors such as MÜSİAD as a natural reaction of ‘religious society’ or as driven by economic interest, this study has attempted to deconstruct these by: i) tracing the ways in which class formation became religiously coded in the late Ottoman period; ii) examining the persistence of these articulations (Muslim majority versus minority) of group boundaries, despite their shifting ‘contents’ (with the elimination of non-Muslims) in the Republic, and the subsequent transposition of these delineations onto new distributional conflicts; iii) discussing how this persistence is facilitated by the structural context (religious education, Islamic charities and finance that expanded in conjunction with contingent events such as Cold War anti-communism and neoliberal restructuring in the 1980s) that acts as a mechanism of reproduction of these boundaries by imparting a distinct ‘habitus’. From a Bourdieusian perspective, therefore, it can be argued that the rise of Islamic business organisations reflects a symbolic struggle between class fractions, which coincide with differential and potentially contradictory economic interests as well as cultural capital, having been shaped by distinct habitus.¹¹⁶⁸ In other words, ‘classes always appear as status groups, whose culturally stratified tastes and goods legitimate the system of economic domination by presenting it in a misrecognized form’.¹¹⁶⁹ This symbolic struggle has the

¹¹⁶⁷ Parkin 2013: 3.

¹¹⁶⁸ Bourdieu 1979: 80.

¹¹⁶⁹ Gartman 1991.

purpose of ‘impos[ing] the definition of the social world that is most consistent with their [dominant actors/classes] interests’ in order to obtain ‘the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence, i.e. the power to impose (and even inculcate) instruments of knowledge and expression (taxonomies) of social reality’.¹¹⁷⁰ In short, the rise of actors such as MÜSİAD should be considered within the context of *longue durée* processes of boundary construction and reproduction, whilst also recognising they are, crucially, underpinned by a struggle over the monopolisation of economic and political resources. As Schumpeter has written, classes ‘coexisting at any given time bear the marks of different centuries on their brow ... Classes, once they have come into being, harden in their mould and perpetuate themselves, even when the social conditions that created them have disappeared.’¹¹⁷¹

In sum, the religious majoritarian logic of the state is not indicated just by institutional structures such as the PRA and religious education. The policies of privileging and establishing a Muslim bourgeoisie which entrenched the principle of ‘Muslim’ hegemony over political and economic resources also underpin the discourse of Islamists that the ‘Muslim majority’ is the rightful owner of state resources.

¹¹⁷⁰ Bourdieu 1979: 80.

¹¹⁷¹ Schumpeter 2007: 111.

Chapter 8: Situating change and continuity in the AKP Period

8.1 Introduction

The following chapter will examine the AKP period. The key argument is that the AKP period has augmented the religious majoritarianism of the state and the majoritarianism of the political system through the centralisation of power, particularistic channeling of rents and 'partisan social engineering' involving policies to prop-up pro-government constituencies, and also the expansion of religious infrastructure. It focuses on the following questions: how should we understand the post-2002 period of AKP rule and how should we assess and situate change and transformation alongside continuity? The first section will trace the evolution of the Islamist movement and examine the rise of the AKP and its public discourse (based on the party's published and verbal declarations), highlighting the manner in which it is able to occupy the ideological centre owing to the embedding of religious majoritarianism in the nation-state project. The second section assesses the reconfiguration of institutions under the AKP through expanding the analysis of the political system in Chapter 4, drawing attention to how the majoritarian framework has been employed to strategically reshape institutions.

8.2 The Islamist movement, the AKP and religious majoritarianism

There have been two predominant views with respect to the AKP period. The dominant interpretation has been premised principally on modernisation and transition theories, with the AKP period analysed in terms of marking a paradigm change in Turkish state and society relations owing to the transitioning of the ostensibly secular Republic away from military tutelage and towards democracy. These theories take for granted the assumption of top-down secularism/modernisation enforced by a 'Kemalist' civil-bureaucratic and military elite upon Muslim society. Others, in contrast, have stressed elements of persistence, conceiving the AKP period as constituting continuity with the previous 'oppressive and authoritarian state' remodelled in Islamist-conservative form,¹¹⁷²

¹¹⁷² Bedirhanoglu 2009.

with the adoption of the 1980 TIS project considered an important breaking point. Consequently, many of these analyses have argued either that the ascent of the Islamist AKP has led regime transformation or that the period marks continuity with authoritarian structures or a ‘Kemalist mentality’. Both of these perspectives, while useful, provide only a partial picture, as will be argued below.

8.2.1 The evolution of the Islamist movement in Turkey

The Islamist movement in Turkey comprises a diverse set of actors,¹¹⁷³ strategies¹¹⁷⁴ and traditions that cannot be encapsulated in the politics of the AKP. However, at the same time, the AKP is a product of the movement and its intellectual accumulation and experience. The party has arisen as the primary umbrella under which conservative/Islamist actors gather. Consequently, this section of the chapter will trace the general intellectual trends and evolution of the Islamist movement in Turkey and its relationship with the nation-state project in order to contextualise the AKP’s politics. Scholarship, including that of Islamist academics, distinguishes between two waves or periods of Islamism, one situated in the context of the Ottoman Empire and one that arose subsequently within the new Republic. Islamism was rooted in the late nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire and was a product and part of the modernisation and reform movements.¹¹⁷⁵ Islamism’s central concern during this period, as with other movements, such as Ottomanism, had related to ensuring the continuity and survival of the Ottoman state. Crucially, Islamism had gained strength following the granting of equality to non-Muslims in 1856 and the erosion of the privileged status of Muslim subjects following the Ottoman state modernisation reforms.¹¹⁷⁶ In this vein, Islamism also

¹¹⁷³ For instance, *tariqat* orders (Islamic Sufi brotherhoods) – which remain technically illegal owing to 1925 Law 677 closing all dervish lodges and orders – have played an active role in politics. In particular, the *Nakşibendi* and its various offshoots, particularly the Khalidi branch, has been one of the most active *tariqat* orders during both the Ottoman Empire and the Republic. See note 587 and Karpas 2001; Yavuz 2003.

¹¹⁷⁴ Most recently, the political split between the Fethullah Gülen community (*cemaat*) and the AKP, despite their initial alliance, is suggestive of the diversity and heterogeneity of Islamist movements and religious communities and their engagement in politics. Likewise, the Gülen *cemaat*’s call for its followers to vote for parties such as the CHP and MHP against the AKP highlights that religious motivations and sensitivities alone do not determine the political behaviour of Islamist actors and religious communities.

¹¹⁷⁵ Kara 2013.

¹¹⁷⁶ Bulaç 2004: 53; Kara 2013: 22; Koçak 2005: 27.

harboured a reaction to what Muslims regarded as the westernisation logic of the modernisation drive, and was concerned with what they attacked as ‘imitation’ of the West.¹¹⁷⁷ According to Bassam Tibi, Islamism involves, more than just a renewed focus on religious identity, a “‘religionised politics” that includes the promotion of an order based on religious tenets’.¹¹⁷⁸ Equally, the Ottoman-era Islamists had seen an Islamic revival and a ‘return’ to Islam as the remedy for the decline of the Islamic Ottoman state and the ‘backwardness’ of Muslims compared with the expanding power of Western countries. They advocated a thorough Islamisation based on the argument for the necessity of a return to what they perceived as the fundamentals, including the religious texts (the *Quran* and *Sunnah*), and an imagined ‘golden age’ (*Asr-i Saadet*).¹¹⁷⁹

Yet Islamism as an intellectual current was certainly overlapping and in a close relationship with the other two prevalent currents, Ottomanism and Turkism, with many of its prominent intellectual leaders involved with the CUP and the movement to restore the constitution in 1908. For instance, the official ideologue of the Young Turk movement and Turkish nationalist Ziya Gökalp was focused on synthesising what he identified as the necessary processes of Turkification, Islamisation and modernisation to save the state and ‘catch up’ with the West.¹¹⁸⁰ While acknowledging that Islamists played a constitutive and prominent role in the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the prominent theologian İsmail Kara has argued that 1924 marked a break in this relationship. For Kara, this is because of three key laws relating to the unification of education, the abolition of the caliphate and the ministry of sharia and foundations, which, he argues, resulted in a break in state–religion–society relations. Thus, in line with the master narrative of Turkish secularism, Islamist intellectuals have typically portrayed the Turkish Islamist movement within the Republic as a reaction of the ‘periphery’ against the ‘centre’, which is characterised as being out of touch with society.¹¹⁸¹ In this vein, a key demand of Islamists has been the Islamisation of society by the state and through cultural and societal organisations, alongside a greater share of the country’s

¹¹⁷⁷ Kara 2013: 22.

¹¹⁷⁸ Tibi 2012: 1.

¹¹⁷⁹ Kara 2013.

¹¹⁸⁰ Davison 1995.

¹¹⁸¹ Bulaç 2004: 49, 67; Çınar 2004.

resources, with the implicit or explicit drive for Muslims to gain a privileged position.¹¹⁸²

It is widely accepted amongst scholars that Turkish Islamism, particularly since the 1940s, became articulated within and an important pillar of the Turkish right or conservatism.¹¹⁸³ Deeply intertwined in nationalism and conservatism, Turkish Islamism has been comfortably rearticulated within the discourse of the conservative right and nationalist parties.¹¹⁸⁴ Bora has argued in this vein that nationalism, conservatism and Islamism together constitute the three pillars or organs nested harmoniously in the body of the politics of the right.¹¹⁸⁵ Examples include the party slogans of the centre-right AP in the 1970s: ‘We are right of centre and on the path of Allah’.¹¹⁸⁶ Likewise, the slogans ‘Islam is our spirit, Turkishness is our body’ and ‘Conscious and proud of Turkishness, ethics, and the virtue of Islam’,¹¹⁸⁷ of the far right nationalist MHP, are also illustrative of the central role of Islam. This had been influenced partly by restrictions during the one-party period, but, more importantly, by Turkish Islamism’s staunchly anti-communist positioning and its heavily statist orientation, unlike that of Islamist movements in post-colonial states.¹¹⁸⁸ Consequently, the identification of communism as a national security threat by the one-party regime and greater emphasis on Islamisation in the late 1940s heralded greater cooperation between state actors and Islamists. Certainly, as the previous chapters have tried to demonstrate, the state could not be considered a monolithic entity, and comprised a set of actors struggling for influence and power. The fluid boundaries between the PRA, a state institution, and the Islamists and *tariqat* orders is the most explicit example of this.

¹¹⁸² Çiğdem 2004: 26.

¹¹⁸³ It is not suggested here that the CHP/SHP/DSP can easily be positioned on the left of the political spectrum and in fact it has been widely argued that the CHP’s politics sits more to the right on various issues, such as Kurdish rights and basic freedoms. Historically, however, and within public discourse, they have been articulated within the left bloc and at least in the 1970s had adopted a social democratic discourse that differed from that of the traditional right parties. See also Mert 2004; Bora 2013: 519; Kara 2013; Duran 2004.

¹¹⁸⁴ This was also due to restrictions on Islamist politics owing to the constitution. See Mert 2004; Duran 2004.

¹¹⁸⁵ Bora 2003b.

¹¹⁸⁶ Quote from Eligür 2010: 83.

¹¹⁸⁷ Quote from Eligür 2010: 84.

¹¹⁸⁸ Bora 2013: 518.

The anti-communism drive was an area of ‘overlapping consensus’ between the different actors within the state and, to some extent, the Islamists, as has been the construction of a homogenous Turkish–Muslim nation. For instance, key leaders of the *Nurcu* (including Fethullah Gülen), alongside state actors such as the subsequent junta leader and president Cemal Gürsel had been involved in the establishment of the state-supported anti-communist associations, the KMD, in the 1940s. These *Nurcu* leaders later formed the *Nurcu* Islamic charity IYC, which played an important role in lobbying and working for the expansion of religious education, whereby state support was evidenced by the granting of public benefit status in 1953.¹¹⁸⁹ The close link that the closed DP and its successors had with *tariqat* orders and the *Nurcu* movement has been well documented,¹¹⁹⁰ while the CHP, although to a lesser extent, had also enjoyed links, as evidenced by the close relations between Fethullah Gülen and the CHP general secretary (1950–59) Kasım Gülek.¹¹⁹¹ Likewise, similar circles of Islamist and nationalist intellectuals, as well as state actors including military leaders that had formed the backbone of the anti-communist associations, later established the AO in 1970. It was the AO’s formulation of the TIS that envisaged a thorough Islamisation of society and inculcation of Turkish nationalism that was subsequently adopted by the 1980 junta regime and propagated as state policy, as evidenced in the 1983 National Culture Report (see Chapter 3 and 5).

It is also significant that waves of renewed state-led Islamisation have followed military interventions, despite the official discourse of the junta leaders over ‘reactionism’ (*irtica*).¹¹⁹² Policies have included the expansion of the PRA’s role, religious education and the TIS in the 1980s. Despite the closure of the first explicitly Islamist party following the 1971 coup d’état, it was the military which had subsequently convinced the Islamist leader Erbakan to return from exile and

¹¹⁸⁹ Decision no. 4/169 (Resmi Gazete 6 March 1953 No: 8352).

¹¹⁹⁰ The various *tariqat* orders and Islamist groups have tended to coalesce around either the traditional centre-right parties such as the DP in the 1950s, the AP in the 1970s and the ANAP in the 1980s, or Islamist parties such as the RP in the 1990s or the MSP in the 1970s. The former PM/president of the ANAP Turgut Özal, for instance, is known to have been a *Nakshibendi* order disciple.

¹¹⁹¹ *Zaman* 27 January 2005.

¹¹⁹² For example, it has been argued by scholars that, with the exception of the 1980 coup, the other military interventions were not legitimated or supported through religion and that in this sense the TIS was a break from this tradition. See Can & Bora 2004: 148.

reopen the party, which had been regarded by junta leaders as a useful counterweight against both communism and the dominance of the AP.¹¹⁹³ However, official documentation of the one-party period, the trial documents containing accusations against the DP government following its overthrow by the 1960 coup, the military government records of 1960–61 and the internal military reports on national security threats prepared in 1980, amongst others, suggest that the predominant concern has not been so much with the Islamists but with what was regarded as a close link between the Islamic *Nakshibendi tariqat* order and the Kurdish nationalist movement.¹¹⁹⁴ Documentation unearthed by the parliamentary commission investigating coups, for example, shows that the NSC was concerned that the Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanî*, PKK), referred to as the 'separationist terror organisation', was using radical Islamists to carry out its mission against Turkey.¹¹⁹⁵ It is equally striking that, even during what has been commonly regarded as an anti-Islamist coup, in 1997, budgetary support for Islamist organisations and foundations continued (see Chapter 7).

The narrative of an anti-Islamist/Islamic, secular military bureaucracy is therefore deeply problematic. Despite his argument that 1924 constituted a break owing to secularisation reforms, Kara has also claimed that Islamist communities and *tariqats* continued their existence under the umbrella of the state.¹¹⁹⁶ Equally, he has also argued that the Islamist parties, such as MSP and its successors, have not only performed an absorptive function in countering more radical Islamist formations but also provided these groups with a platform and ability to pursue their agendas.¹¹⁹⁷ The Islamist movement in general showed caution towards radical Islamism, which emerged in the late 1960s with its pan-Islamist and potentially anti-systemic revolutionary discourse influenced by the Iranian Ali Shariati or the Arab Egyptian Sayyid Qutb. This was largely owing to the Turkish–nationalist–conservative nerve of the Turkish Islamist movement, according to Bora, who notes that the traditionalist Islamist circles dismissed radical Islamists

¹¹⁹³ Yavuz 2003.

¹¹⁹⁴ The relationship between the Kurdish nationalist movement and the *Nakshibendi* order runs deep. For example, the first Kurdish book was published by the leader of the important and prominent *Khalidi* branch of the *Nakshibendi* order. See Kutlay 2010: 109.

¹¹⁹⁵ DMAK 2 November 2012: 1068.

¹¹⁹⁶ Çakır 24 June 2008.

¹¹⁹⁷ Kara 2013: 33.

as ‘foreign elements’, a delineation typically reserved for the communists. Parliamentary records analysed in Chapter 4 show a similar approach by the political authorities and the military to the specifically anti-systemic pan-Islamist current that was regarded as dangerous to the Muslim–Turkish national unity.

One way of interpreting and situating the Turkish Islamist movement is through Galip Yalman’s conceptualisation of a ‘dissident but hegemonic discourse’.¹¹⁹⁸ Yalman’s usage relates particularly to the neoliberal agenda propagated following the 1980 military intervention, which he describes as: i) dissident/oppositional because it presents itself as being against a state conceived of as governing since the Ottoman era that is cut off from society and a power in itself; and ii) hegemonic because it presents this picture of the state as if it is reality itself. In the same vein, the Islamist discourse situates itself as: i) oppositional to the ‘laic’ authoritarian ‘minority’ ‘Kemalist’ state, which is presented as being cut off from society and also conceptualised as majority Muslim; ii) a hegemonic discourse, since it has successfully presented (i) as if it is reality itself. The Islamist narrative has mirrored and subverted the official historiography of the modernity project to project itself as the authentic ‘victims’, a view which has been taken on board and widely accepted within Turkish scholarship. The embedding and reproduction of the religious majoritarianism of the nation-state project, whether through the operations of the PRA or the construction of national identity, already provides a vast lexis that is readily available for Islamists to appropriate, thereby occupying the ideological centre. However, whilst the different actors may vary in their conception of the ideal polity (more Islamist vs more Turkist, etc.), the growth and success of Islamist parties should be situated within these symbiotic webs of cooperation on areas of overlapping consensus and struggle over the rest amongst dominant actors within the state. As discussed in Chapter 5, it is the very strategies of state actors, such as the expansion of the PRA and religious education, that have played a critical role in, over time, shaping a collective set of dispositions or a distinct habitus within which it is possible to situate Islamists.

¹¹⁹⁸ Yalman 2002.

8.2.2 The AKP, Islamist party politics and the road to electoral success

i. MNP/MSP: the establishment of the first Islamist party in 1970

The AKP, which is a product of these wider intellectual trends and dynamics of the Islamist movement, is a successor to the first explicitly Islamist political party the MNP/MSP, established by Necmettin Erbakan in 1970, and the Islamist umbrella organisation the National Outlook (Millî Görüş) founded in 1969.¹¹⁹⁹ The ‘brainchild’ of the MNP/MSP was Mehmet Zahid Kotku,¹²⁰⁰ the leader of the *İskenderpaşa* community belonging to the *Khalidi* branch of the *Nakshibendi* sufi order,¹²⁰¹ with which Necmettin Erbakan, as well as prominent political leaders, including Turgut Ozal and the AKP leader Erdogan, have been affiliated.

As outlined in Chapter 7, the MSP had chiefly represented and had its roots in the small provincial businessmen and traders. Many of the leading members of the MSP had split off from the governing AP, which they had accused of favouring what they called ‘monopoly capitalists’ in Istanbul under the ISI regime,¹²⁰² campaigned for the reorientation of state resources towards Anatolia and pushed for greater ties with Muslim countries. The MSP’s discourse in this sense reflected a religious majoritarian logic, in that it had sought a privileged position for the ‘Muslim majority’ against a ‘laic’ or ‘masonic’ minority based in Istanbul (see Chapter 7). Reflecting this, upon the establishment of the party Kotku had declared that: ‘in the aftermath of the deposition of the Sultan Abdülhamid II, the country’s governance has been taken over by masons, who are imitating the west. They are a minority. They cannot represent our nation. It is a historical duty to give the governance of the country to the real representatives of our nation by establishing [a] political party.’¹²⁰³

¹¹⁹⁹ Of the 24 parties founded in 1946, eight had Islamic themes in their programmes, with one Nation Party (Millet Partisi, MP) gaining a seat in parliament. See Toprak 2005.

¹²⁰⁰ Yavuz 2003.

¹²⁰¹ See notes 1156, 1173.

¹²⁰² Şen 1995; Yavuz 2003.

¹²⁰³ Quote from Eligür 2010: 86.

The MSP's electoral support remained limited, however, and by the late 1970s it had declined further, which partly reflected the fracturing of alliances between the different religious groups, such as the creation of the rival Islamist Order Party (*Nizam Partisi*, NP) by the *Nurcus* after they withdrew from the MSP in 1977. Having gained 11.8% of the national vote in 1973, the MSP's votes had fallen to 8.56% by 1977. Nevertheless, the MSP's influence had stretched beyond its (small) size, as the party formed a coalition with the CHP in 1974 and subsequently took a place in the right-wing National Front coalition together with the AP and the MHP during the period 1973–80.

ii. RP/SP/FP: the rise of Islamist parties as mass parties

The MSP, along with all other political parties, was abolished by the 1980 military regime and it was only in the 1990s that Islamist parties emerged as mass parties that attracted widespread electoral support. The Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, RP), formed in 1983, was the heir of the abolished MSP. In the 1987 elections the party had not managed to cross the 10% threshold, garnering only 7.2% of the national vote. In 1991 the party had fought the parliamentary elections together with the MHP and received 16.9% of the national vote. The party's electoral fortunes began to change, first with the success in municipal elections in 1994, when the RP gained 19% of the vote and control of the key cities Istanbul and Ankara, and then later, in the 1995 general election, when it emerged as the leading party, with 21.4% of the national vote. Compared to the petty-bourgeois roots of the MSP, the RP had attracted both the urbanised poor¹²⁰⁴ and the new expanding Anatolian capital comprising the medium-sized and large companies that had benefited from the economic liberalisation of the 1980s. The RP's party programme comprised many of the themes elaborated by the MSP: criticism of secularism, the championing of the interests of Anatolian capital, anti-Westernism and anti-Zionism, packaged under the concept of the 'Just Order' (*Adil Düzen*). The 'Just Order' programme was declared to represent a third way between capitalism and socialism¹²⁰⁵ and has

¹²⁰⁴ Tuğal 2009.

¹²⁰⁵ Çaha 2003.

been described as utopian,¹²⁰⁶ socialistic,¹²⁰⁷ Third Worldist and as ‘populist fiction’, in that it comprised an economic model ‘supplemented by a leftist discourse of capitalist exploitation, without using a Marxist vocabulary, combined with anti-Zionist proclamations that verged on anti-Semitism’.¹²⁰⁸

Partly owing to constitutional restrictions, the RP had remained vague with respect to Islamist goals and the Just Order was a similarly ambiguous programme, full of contradictions in its emphasis on both redistribution for the poor while championing private enterprise directed by the state. Çakır has described the RP’s agenda as ‘neither sharia nor democracy’, given the ambiguity of its Islamist politics and lack of belief in and internalisation of democratic norms aside from an emphasis on the ballot box.¹²⁰⁹ Yet, as with the MSP, the predominant concern of the RP was the restructuring of state, society and economic relations in ways that privileged the ‘Muslim majority’. For instance, drawing on the work of Islamist intellectuals such as Ali Bulaç, the RP emphasised a legal pluralism that consisted of different laws for different religious communities in a manner similar to the Ottoman *millet* system, which effectively meant the institution of an Islamic state.¹²¹⁰

iii. Fracturing within the Islamist movement and the rise of the AKP

The subsequent fracturing within the MSP’s successors related to political strategies rather than the ideological vision.¹²¹¹ The so-called ‘traditionalists’ (*Gelenekçiler*) had wanted to maintain the party as an ideological cadre party, while ‘reformists’ (*Yenilikçiler*), comprising the new generation and backed particularly by newly expanding Anatolian capital, had sought to convert it into a mass party capable of seizing power.¹²¹² The reformists in particular had been cognisant of the experience of the 1997 military intervention. Crucially, however, the 28 February process had catalysed a process of what can be described as a pragmatic adaptation

¹²⁰⁶ Gülalp 2001.

¹²⁰⁷ Çakır 1994; Çaha 2003.

¹²⁰⁸ Toprak 2005; Tuğal 2002.

¹²⁰⁹ Çakır 1994.

¹²¹⁰ Toprak 2005.

¹²¹¹ Çakır 1994: 76.

¹²¹² Çakır 1994: 76.

amongst the Islamists, precipitating a split with the reformists forming the AKP and the traditionalists establishing the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*, SP). Following the party closures, the Islamists had begun to shift their public discourse, adopting ‘moderate’ language and ‘realism’ to avoid confrontations with the military.¹²¹³ Even before the AKP, this dynamic was evident in the adoption by the FP (which had won 15.4% of the national vote in the 1999 general elections) of a more liberal economic programme compared with that of the RP, having abandoned the Just Order and adopted a pro-EU and human rights stance (chiefly concerned with religious freedom).

In parallel to the evolution of the Islamist movement, the AKP’s ascent to power in 2002 came amidst a context of deep political and economic crisis. The 1990s had been marked by party fragmentation and unstable coalition governments with a lifespan of just over a year, resulting in the formation of nine cabinets between 1999 and 2002. Lack of stable government, populist measures, corruption and rent-seeking behaviour had precipitated four economic crises during the 1990s and catalysed one of the worst financial crises in Turkish history over 2000–2001. In addition, the sense of political crisis was further heightened by the conflict in the south-east of the country with the Kurdish nationalist movement, the outbreaks of sectarian violence against the Alevis, political assassinations, the unravelling of the ‘deep state’ with the *Susurluk* incident¹²¹⁴ and the state’s seeming inability to cope with the major earthquake in 1999 that had left thousands dead. It was in this environment of voter disillusionment with both the old parties and economic crisis that the AKP had managed to secure the first one-party majority in parliament since 1987, with former major parties such as ANAP, DYP and DSP falling below the electoral threshold for the first time since their establishment.

iv. The AKP and augmentation of religious majoritarianism

Since its emergence in 2001 and climb to power in 2002, and despite its fallout with the Islamist *Gülenist* movement in 2013, the AKP has continued to be the

¹²¹³ Cizre & Çınar 2003: 326–27.

¹²¹⁴ *Bianet* 30 January 2008.

primary address for conservatives and Islamist actors. In contrast, the ('traditionalist') SP received just 2.49% of the total vote in the general elections in 2002, 2.34% in 2007 and 1.27% in 2011, compared with the AKP's 34.3%, 46.6% and 49.8%. Reflecting the pragmatism of the reformists, the AKP disavowed its Islamist roots in its early years by characterising itself as a 'conservative-democratic'¹²¹⁵ movement. Accordingly, the party's 2002 election manifesto highlighted 'conservative democracy', in contrast to the that of the SP, which had continued to emphasise its commitment to the National Outlook agenda.¹²¹⁶ The AKP's strategy and adoption of a 'conservative-democrat' identity also played a crucial role in the party's ability to attract a wider vote base, including those of centre-right parties such as the DYP and ANAP.¹²¹⁷

The augmentation of the religious majoritarianism of the state under the AKP has been traced in previous chapters in terms of the expanding role of the PRA, religious education, and state support for Islamic charities and finance. In terms of the AKP's public discourse, there is continuity in terms of the 'national will' discourse, which has been a staple of the Turkish right, comprising the traditional centre-right, Islamists and conservatives, since the DP period in the 1950s.¹²¹⁸ The preference for the term *milli* (national) by the right has also been significant since it 'connotes [a] religious ethnos ... [it] easily could be used interchangeably with "religiously defined community"',¹²¹⁹ as was the case during the Ottoman Empire. The 'national will' therefore stipulates a monolithic and homogenous idea of the nation, defined largely as a Sunni-Hanefi Muslim majority, and is predominantly concerned with their demands.¹²²⁰ This is particularly significant since these parties have been electorally hegemonic. Aside from the authoritarian majoritarian one-party era between 1923 and 1950, within the 64 years since the transition to multipartism in 1950 the DP/AP and MSP/RP/AKP have either i) formed single-party cabinets just under two-thirds of the time; or ii) participated in coalition cabinets with the CHP/SHP/DSP around 20% of the time. In total, therefore, the

¹²¹⁵ AK Parti 2002; Akdoğan 2004.

¹²¹⁶ SP 3 November 2002.

¹²¹⁷ Akman 2010.

¹²¹⁸ Bora 2013: 532.

¹²¹⁹ Yavuz 2003.

¹²²⁰ Taşkın 2008; Yavuz 2004: 591–604.

Turkish right has been the predominant ‘natural’ government, holding power 84% of the time during the 64 years, while around 10% of the time was accounted for by military governments. The ‘national will’ discourse and notion of the ‘Muslim majority’ is extensively utilised by the AKP in matters ranging from Turkey’s Olympic bid¹²²¹ to speeches to the police academy¹²²² and government pronouncements on the military coup in Egypt.¹²²³ A corollary of this approach is that ‘the minority’ is conceived as largely encompassing non-Muslims, Alevis, atheists¹²²⁴ and leftists,¹²²⁵ or anyone identified with the Kemalist/CHP ‘mentality’.¹²²⁶ In addition, the AKP’s ‘2023 vision’ declaration underlines the party’s predominant concern with restructuring the state and society, characterised as ‘predominantly Muslim’, in a way that is essentially more favourable for the ‘Muslim majority’.¹²²⁷ In turn, this public discourse is precipitating a hardening of group boundaries, thereby increasing levels of social closure. This has been particularly evident with the increasingly sectarian framing of domestic and foreign policies.¹²²⁸ While discrimination and suspicion of the Alevis is not particular to the AKP, as demonstrated in the Chapter 6, the increasingly prevalent public articulation of these boundaries during party political campaigning is strikingly different. Erdogan’s statement in 2013 over the Reyhanlı terrorist attacks that ‘our 53 *Sunni* [my emphasis] citizens were martyred’¹²²⁹ constitutes a typical example of the increasing ethnicisation of politics. According to Alevi organisations, this has led to increased discrimination and hate crimes against the community under AKP rule.¹²³⁰ It can be argued that the politics of polarisation and the exacerbation of group boundaries also reflect preference-shaping strategies¹²³¹ undertaken to bolster the party’s electoral support amongst its Sunni conservative base and hence ensure its electoral success.

¹²²¹ AK Parti 8 October 2006.

¹²²² *Milliyet* 24 June 2013.

¹²²³ *Bugün* 5 July 2013.

¹²²⁴ *Milliyet* 1 February 2012.

¹²²⁵ *T24* 28 February 2014.

¹²²⁶ *Metiner* 5 September 2013.

¹²²⁷ AK Parti 30 September 2012.

¹²²⁸ *Radikal* 8 September 2011; Lord & Zırh August 2014.

¹²²⁹ *Radikal* 14 June 2013.

¹²³⁰ *Eyvensel* 1 February 2014; *Diken* 29 April 2014; *Sendika.org* 3 August 2014.

¹²³¹ Dunleavy 1992.

Yet, aside from the continuity with the traditional right as indicated by the ‘national will’ discourse, there is also a fundamental homology with the Republican nation-state building project in terms of the vision of the undivided sovereignty of a Sunni-Muslim–Turkish majority that constitutes the nation. This is in the sense outlined in Chapter 3, with the persistence of the focus on the constructing and privileging of the (Sunni) Muslim–Turkish majority by nation-state builders and later constitutional framers across the party divide, also epitomised by the mantra that ‘Turkey is 99% Muslim’. Conversely, the AKP and Islamist utilisation of this discourse in particular can be distinguished and characterised as reflecting a type of populism that is based on a ‘politics of *ressentiment* that encourages the projection of hatred onto groups or classes seen as privileged and exclusionary and as oppressors of the national “underdog”’.¹²³² This articulation of the conservative/pious masses as an oppressed underdog has been described by Açıkel as the most important denominator of the Turkish right, reflecting a quest for power.¹²³³ This is reflected in the mantra of the Islamist–conservatives and the AKP that the ‘era of minority domination of majority is over’,¹²³⁴ referring to the narrative that the ‘Kemalist’, ‘laicist’ civil and military bureaucracy, the ‘minority-elitist tyranny regime’, has oppressed the ‘excluded’ (Sunni) Muslim pious majority.¹²³⁵ Accordingly, Islamist actors frequently agree that Turkish democracy has been advanced and strengthened by Islamisation and the greater emphasis on its Muslim identity owing to the ‘Muslim majority’.¹²³⁶

In sum, there are elements of continuity both in terms of the AKP’s public discourse with the traditional conservative-Islamist right as well as in terms of the nation-building project, which is underpinned by a religious majoritarian logic characterised by the valorisation of a (Sunni) Muslim (Turkish) majority and its monopoly. Conversely, the AKP’s agenda, as an Islamist party, while comprising the augmentation of religious majoritarianism, goes beyond it in seeking a wider Islamisation of state and society rather than a logic of Muslim majority dominance.

¹²³² Kandiyoti 2014.

¹²³³ Açıkel 1996.

¹²³⁴ AK Parti 22 April 2014; AK Parti 16 June 2013; *Net Gazete* 4 February 2014; *Anadolu Ajansı* 23 April 2014; *Yeni Şafak* 22 April 2014; *Gündemotuzbes.com* 12 June 2012; *Düzce Yerel Haber* 1 June 2013; *Ajansesenler* 4 June 2013.

¹²³⁵ Metiner 5 September 2013; Saraçoğlu November 2011.

¹²³⁶ *Oda TV* 21 August 2013.

8.3 The augmentation of the majoritarian political system

Not only have the religious majoritarian structures of the state and the majoritarian political system (in terms of Lijphart's typology discussed in Chapter 4) shaped political competition, but actors constituted by these structures, such as the AKP, in turn shape the structures. For instance, the fetishisation of the 'national will' and the notion of 'Muslim majority' have been extensively utilised by the AKP in their professed struggle against military–bureaucratic tutelage to silence opposition¹²³⁷ and have facilitated the centralisation of power. This is evidenced by the AKP's defence of and willingness to undermine the constitution and the independence of the judiciary on the basis of 'the national will'¹²³⁸ and its (essentially majoritarian) emphasis on the ballot box, as well as the characterisation of the Gezi protests as an attack on the 'national will' and as an effort by 'the minority' to tyrannise the 'majority'.¹²³⁹ Accordingly, this discourse is being utilised by the AKP to curb any 'liberal' or anti-majoritarian checks on executive power. The section below outlines, therefore, how the AKP is engaging in path-dependent path-shaping through an examination of the evolution of formal and informal institutions.

8.3.1 Formal institutions

A key element of path-dependency within the Turkish political system is the majoritarian institutional framework (in terms of Lijphart's typology discussed in Chapter 4). This majoritarian framework, owing to its unitary and centralised character, weak separation of powers and the disproportional effect of an electoral system that favours large parties, has facilitated the concentration of power in the executive branch. According to the Lijphart model, the shift towards greater majoritarianism during the AKP period has been chiefly in the executive party dimension. This was principally the outcome of the long-lasting, durable cabinets underpinned by the AKP's large electoral majorities that enabled the establishment of one-party governments. Unlike other dominant party regimes, such as the PRI

¹²³⁷ Akman 2010; Bora 2013: 532.

¹²³⁸ Daloğlu 11 April 2014; Saraçoğlu November 2011.

¹²³⁹ AK Parti 16 June 2013; *Star Gazete* 16 June 2013; *Taraf* 3 November 2013; *Haber Türk* 15 June 2013; AK Parti 2013a.

in Mexico,¹²⁴⁰ the AKP's strong electoral majorities have not been simply a product of electoral system manipulation. The electoral system, despite being a PR framework, tends to produce a majoritarian outcome owing to the 10% threshold that discriminates against smaller parties or those that are geographically concentrated. The majoritarian outcome of the framework was most clearly observed in the 2002 general election, when the AKP was granted 66% of the seats in parliament having won only 34.3% of the national vote. As a result, around 45% of the votes cast were not represented in parliament. The current electoral framework, therefore, has a significantly disproportional effect in favouring the largest party, as Tables 6 and 7 demonstrate. This is indicated by the high values for the AKP in terms of all three calculated disproportionality indicators, which measure the divergence between the vote share and the final allocation of seats.¹²⁴¹

However, despite the majoritarian outcome of the 2002 elections, as Tables 6 and 7 illustrate, the disproportionality effect has moderated in subsequent elections, leading to greater proportionality. For instance, the Loosemore–Hanby Index, which is simply a measure of the difference between votes cast and seats gained, has declined from a high of 45.3 in 2002, indicating a high level of disproportionality, to 9.6 in the 2011 election (Table 6). Similarly, the Rae Index,¹²⁴² which measures disproportionality per party as opposed to per election, as under the Loosemore–Hanby Index, has declined from 6.8 in 2002, indicating higher levels of disproportionality, to 2.6 in 2011 (Table 6). Nevertheless, a closer look at variations in the disproportionality with regard to individual parties (Table 7) shows that the current electoral system clearly favours larger parties, allocating a larger boost to the incumbent party than others. For example, the Loosemore–Hanby Index score is 31.7 for the AKP in 2002, 15.4 in 2007 and 9.6 in 2011, compared with 13.0 for the CHP in 2002, 0.5 in 2007 and 1.4 in 2011. Declining levels of disproportionality suggests that the AKP's electoral dominance has not been purely a product of the majoritarian electoral system, which suggests a need

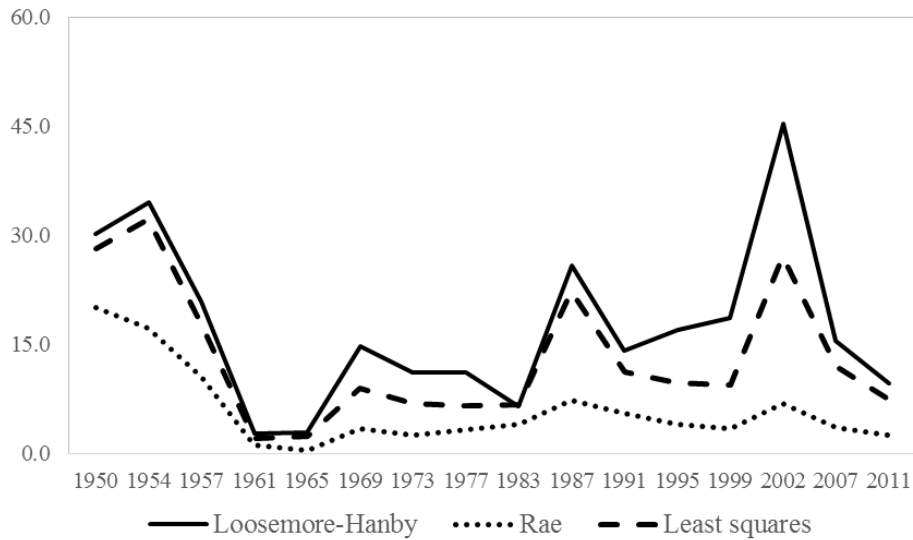
¹²⁴⁰ Diaz-Cayeros & Magaloni 2001.

¹²⁴¹ The Loosemore–Hanby Index measures the disproportionality per election. The Rae Index is a measure of disproportionality per party. Gallagher describes the least squares index as a 'happy medium' between the two. See Gallagher 1991.

¹²⁴² Gallagher 1991: 38–41.

to consider other factors, such as the monopolisation of rent distribution channels (discussed below).

Table 6: Disproportionality in Turkish parliamentary elections (higher numbers indicate greater disproportionality)



Sources: 'Election of Representatives Statistics' from the Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [Turkish Statistical Institute, TUIK], <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=1061>. Calculations are mine.

Table 7: Electoral disproportionality in Turkish parliamentary elections across parties (2002-2011)

2002 General Elections					
	Votes %	Seats %	Loosemore-Hanby	Rae	Least squares
AKP	34.3	66.0	31.7	31.7	1006.1
CHP	19.4	32.4	13.0	13.0	168.3
MHP	8.4	0.0	8.4	8.4	69.9
Independents	1.0	1.6	0.6		0.4
Total			90.7	88.5	1465.1
Value of Index			45.3	6.8	27.1
2007 General Elections					
	Votes %	Seats %	Loosemore-Hanby	Rae	Least squares
AKP	46.6	62.0	15.4	15.4	237.7
CHP	20.9	20.4	0.5	0.5	0.3
MHP	14.3	12.9	1.4	1.4	1.9
Independents	5.2	4.7	0.2		0.3
Total			30.8	29.1	1465.1
Value of Index			15.4	3.6	11.9
2011 General Elections					
	Votes %	Seats %	Loosemore-Hanby	Rae	Least squares
Party 1: AKP	49.8	59.5	9.6	9.6	92.6
Party 2: CHP	26.0	24.5	1.4	1.4	2.1
Party 3: MHP	13.0	9.6	3.4	3.4	11.4
Party 5: Independents	6.6	6.4	0.2		0.0
Total			19.2	17.9	109.4
Value of Index			9.6	2.6	7.4
Sources: 'Election of Representatives Statistics' from the Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [Turkish Statistical Institute, TÜİK], < http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=1061 >. Calculations are mine.					

Aside from greater executive control, a further dimension of the shift towards majoritarianism during the AKP period has been the curbs on checks on executive power. The modest shift on the federal-unitary dimension of the Lijphart framework, as observed in Charts 13 and 14, under-represents the extent of the majoritarian turn in this dimension during the AKP period. While there has been no change in terms of the overall unitary and unicameral framework, there have been increasing encroachments on the judiciary and erosion of the separation of powers, as discussed in Chapter 4, which have been justified on the basis of 'national will'. In parallel, the undermining of the autonomy of regulatory agencies during the later years of AKP rule (alongside questions over central bank independence; see Chapter 4) are also illustrative of enhanced majoritarianism and centralisation of power. For instance, a statutory decree introduced in 2011¹²⁴³ granted ministries greater executive oversight over regulatory bodies such as the Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency, the Capital Markets Board of

¹²⁴³ KHK/649, (T.C. Resmi Gazete 17 August 2011 No: 28028).

Turkey, the Radio and Television Supreme Council and the Competition Authority, thereby undermining their autonomy, which for some had been granted following the 2000–2001 crisis.¹²⁴⁴ In addition, the curbing of the powers of public professional organisations in 2013 was driven by efforts to undermine the Chamber of Turkish Architects and Engineers, which, owing to its ability to grant final approval for urban planning projects,¹²⁴⁵ was a constraint on executive action. Both laws have therefore expanded the bounds of executive power and discretion over enforcement. Partisan engineering of the political system and executive control will be further augmented with the AKP's plans to overhaul the Public Personnel Selection Examination, including the possible removal of standardised exams for all civil service applications and allowing departments and state bodies to issue their own exam or conduct interviews instead of exams.¹²⁴⁶

Further changes during the AKP period include the pacification of the military (discussed in Chapter 4) and the centralisation of the security apparatus. For instance, under new laws introduced in 2010 and 2014 the prime minister has been granted final authority over the conduct of investigations into military¹²⁴⁷ and national intelligence service personnel,¹²⁴⁸ effectively tying the security apparatus of the state to the executive.

8.3.2 Informal institutions

The majoritarian structure outlined above has, in turn, accentuated the executive's monopolisation of both informal institutions (including clientilistic¹²⁴⁹ networks) and mechanisms of rent distribution. Clientilistic networks and rent distribution play an important role in influencing expectations and hence political behaviour, with those on the receiving end cautious of losing their benefits if they withdraw support. Consequently, both of these dynamics have enhanced the AKP's ability to

¹²⁴⁴ For example, the AKP's deputy chairman has stated that the regulatory bodies have to be in line with the AKP's '2023 Vision' and the 'political will' which is 'responsible to the people' (*Radikal* 14 May 2014).

¹²⁴⁵ *Reuters* 10 July 2013.

¹²⁴⁶ *Cihan/Today's Zaman* 25 April 2014.

¹²⁴⁷ *Çandar* 23 January 2014.

¹²⁴⁸ HRW 29 April 2014; *Hürriyet Daily News* 25 April 2014.

¹²⁴⁹ Patronage politics has been a persistent feature of the Turkish political system, with political parties seeking to enhance their voter base through rent distribution (Sayarı 2011).

engage in ‘partisan social engineering’ involving propping up/privileging pro-government constituencies.¹²⁵⁰ Dunleavy identifies this as a facet of preference-shaping strategies adopted by political parties, particularly in majoritarian political settings comprising unitary and centralised states, weak separation of powers, a majoritarian electoral system, weak enforcement of codified constraints and strong ideological commitments. Figure 5 contains a summary – albeit not an exhaustive one – of key legislative changes adopted during the AKP period (2002–2014) that have augmented centralisation and patronage powers and in turn facilitated strategic action or path-shaping to reconfigure the institutional environment. Frequent adjustments in public procurement laws, the expansion of the role of the Mass Housing Association (*Toplu Konut İdaresi*, TOKİ) and the particularistic and partisan nature of the distribution of social welfare services (outlined below) are some of the key mechanisms that have supported AKP partisan social engineering, thereby bolstering/solidifying the party’s electoral support and executive power.

¹²⁵⁰ Dunleavy 1992.

Figure 5: Major legal changes adopted by the AKP

Figure 5: Major Legal Changes Adopted Under the AKP			
YEAR	LAW	SUMMARY OF LAW & CHANGES INTRODUCED	IMPACT
2002-14	Public Procurement Law (No. 4734) (changed 30 times and amended 168 times).	The law established rules with regards participation and awarding of public tenders. Some of the key amendments have included the extension of exemptions. For example, changes include domestic price advantage clause to privilege domestic tenders over foreign ones; the exemption of purchases of the state-owned Turkish Coal and Mine Management Company; exemptions of purchases of goods and services for research and development projects; exemption of certain contract award procedures by the Turkish Petroleum Corporation; exemption of acquisition of goods and services of the agencies under the Law Establishing the Regional Development Agencies and Investment Support and Promotion Agency.	Patronage politics; influence over private sector and rent distribution. Centralisation of rent seeking mechanisms.
2004	In 2004 TOKİ which had previously been under the public works ministry was tied to the prime ministry.	TOKİ was established in 1984 for the purpose of constructing social housing but its powers and role were expanded under the AKP to not just provide housing for middle and low income but also luxury housing and services. The new expanded remit of the company includes engaging in profit-oriented projects with the private sector; transformation of squatter areas and to undertake urban planning, while the responsibilities and power as well as land bank of 64.5mn square metres of Urban Land Office was transferred to it.	Patronage politics; TOKİ is an important mechanism of rent distribution under the AKP. Centralisation of rent seeking mechanisms.
2010, 2014	Laws related to the Court and the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK).	The HSYK Constitutional changes in 12 September 2010 include those related to the composition of Constitutional Court and the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK). The 2014 amendments to the law granted more direct control over the HSYK and decision-making within the body to the ministry of justice. This law was partially overturned by a ruling over the Constitutional Court although the ministry of justice retains control over the Turkish Justice Academy which is tasked with the training of judges.	Centralisation and undermining of separation of powers, executive intervention in judicial processes.
2011	Decree with the force of Law (Statutory Decree) no: 28028 on reorganisation of public bodies.	The decree grants ministries the power of supervision over regulatory bodies such as the Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency, Capital Markets Board of Turkey, Radio and Television Supreme Council, and Competition Authority, thereby ending their autonomy which had been supported in the aftermath of the 2001-02 crisis by international organisations such as the IMF.	Centralisation or power owing to the undermining of autonomy of regulatory agencies; points to increased majoritarianism and centralisation of power in government authority.
2012	Metropolitan City Law (No: 6360)	The new law involves redistricting whereby provincial cities with a population of more than 750,000 people will be turned into metropolitan cities with the borders extended to the province border thereby absorbing formerly separate villages.	Centralisation: This law leads to further centralisation by reducing local government in villages and involves redistricting to bolster the party's electoral strength, for example by adding conservative municipalities to opposition run districts to dilute and weaken its voter strength.
2012	Circular 12/15, No: 28325 stipulating that the prime ministry has to give permission regarding usage and allocation of immovables of public sector organisations.	This circular grants the prime ministry authority to grant Mining Licences.	Patronage and centralisation of power: The power to decide on granting of licences and revoke them is another means of intervening in the private sector and supporting or punishing businesses.

YEAR	LAW	SUMMARY OF LAW & CHANGES INTRODUCED	IMPACT
2012	'2B' Forest Law (No. 6292).	'2B' Law allows land formerly classified as forests belonging to the state treasury to be made available for sale and development. The ban on construction is lifted on the basis that these areas that have 'lost their forestry nature'.	Patronage: The sale of Treasury land is a key avenue of rent distribution for government.
2012, 2014	National Intelligence Services and National Intelligence Organisation Law (No: 6532 and No: 6278).	Following the amendment introduced in 2012, the investigation and questioning of MIT employees requires the prime minister's written permission. This means the PM can block investigation of MIT and summons by prosecutors.	Centralisation: The significant expansion of MIT powers which is responsible to the prime ministry is indicative of the accumulation of power within the executive body.
2013	'Sack Law' ('torba yasa') which includes amendments to reduce the powers of professional organisations.	The 'sack law' passed after midnight involved the curbing of the powers of the Chamber of Turkish Architects and Engineers (TMMOB), representing around 400,000 professionals, leading to the loss of its ability to grant final approval for urban planning projects. TMMOB was established in 1954 by Law 7303 as a corporate body and a professional organization defined in the form of a public institution.	Centralisation: Turkey is typified by majoritarianism in terms of its interest group system.
2013	Law on environmental impact assessments (EIA).	Law on EIA, originally adopted in 1983, 'refers to the studies to be carried out for the determination of the likely positive or negative impact that the projects will have on the environment'. The changes adopted in 2013 allow exemption of major infrastructure projects from environmental impact assessment.	Patronage and centralisation: The change removes another check on executive decision making on allocation of land and infrastructure projects.
2014	Sack Law (6518) incorporates internet law.	Under the new law the telecoms regulator is given powers to demand internet service providers bar access to websites within four hours if they are deemed to infringe privacy, without a court order as required previously. The law has been referred by the opposition party CHP to the constitutional court for its repeal.	Centralisation and curbing of freedom of speech and information: The new law enhances the already restrictive internet environment and delegates power to centrally controlled bureaucrats to make decisions on inappropriate content on the internet.
2014	Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS)	Government planning an overhaul of the Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS), including possibly the removal of standardised exams for all civil service applications and allowing departments and state bodies to issue their own exam or conduct interviews instead of exams.	Patronage and centralisation of power: Removal standardised exams for civil service jobs opens up the possibility of patronage based appointments to the civil service and also involves a centralisation of power for the executive authority with greater control over implementation of policies.

Sources: Gündoğdu & Gough 2013; Özbudun 2011b; Özbudun 2010; Sönmez 20 May 2011; Ekşi 2013; European Commission Progress Reports <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/turkey/index_en.htm>; Resmi Gazete [Official Gazette], <<http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/default.aspx>>; Toplu Konut İdaresi [Mass Housing Administration, TOKİ], <<http://www.toki.gov.tr/>>; Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği [Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects, TMMOB], <http://tmmob.org.tr/index_en.php>; HRW 6 February 2014 'Turkey: Gul Should Veto New Internet Rules'; *Financial Times* 6 February 2014 'EU Officials Raise Concerns on Turkey's Strict New Internet Law'; *T24* 9 June 2012 'Çevrecilerden "Yapı Yasası'na Tepki: Doğanın Sigortası ÇED Raporu Kalkıyor'; *Radikal* 2 May 2013 'ÇED Gerekli Değildir Yasası Geliyor'; *Monday* 25 June 2010 'Turkey: An Overview on Environmental Impact Assessment Procedures in Turkey'; *Today's Zaman* 10 July 2013 'Midnight Law Targets Architect Group at Center of Gezi Protests'; *Reuters* 10 July 2013 'Turkey Curbs Power of Architect Group Involved In Protests'; *Bloomberg* 23 December 2013 'Erdogan Retaliation Seen Hurting Gulen Companies: Istanbul Move'; *T24* 14 May 2014 'Maden Ruhsatları 2 Yıl Önce Başbakan'ın Onayına Bağlanmış'; HRW 29 April 2014 'Turkey: Spy Agency Law Opens Door to Abuse'; *Hürriyet Daily News* 25 April 2014 'Turkey's Spy Agency Granted Extraordinary Powers, As President Gül Approves MIT Law'; *CihanToday's Zaman* 25 April 2014 'Government Does Away With State Agency Entrance Exam'; *T24* 8 June 2012 'Prof. Keleş: TOKİ, Rant Yaratmanın Yeni Adı Oldu'; *Zaman* 15 February 2014 'Kamu İhaleleri İle İlgili 5 Bin Şikayet Yapıldı'; *Bianet* 20 April 2012 '2B'yle Satılan Ülkenin Geleceği'; *Gazeteciler Online* 21 December 2013 'Sabah Atv'yi, Erdoğan'ın "Tarikatı" Satın Aldı'; *Hürriyet* 20 December 2013 '100 milyar TL'lik İhale Devi Medyaya Girdi'; *Radikal* 28 September 2012 'Taksim'e 15 Bin Kazık'; *Hukuki Haber* 8 January 2014 '11 Yılda 168 Değişiklik İddiası Doğru Mu?'; *Hukuki Haber* 10 January 2014 'İhale Kanunu Değişim Serüveni!'; *Sol Portal* 29 January 2014 'Kamu İhaleleri Şeffaf Değil'; *Hürriyet Daily News* 18 February 2011 'Election Ploy' Charges Fly at Turkish Forest Gift'; *The Guardian* 6 February 2014 'Turkey Pushes Through New Raft Of 'Draconian' Internet Restrictions'.

These changes have facilitated the emergence of new rent-seeking coalitions consisting chiefly of construction companies, which contrasts with the big business–bureaucracy–military coalitions of former periods.¹²⁵¹ An example of a businessman who has gained prominence under the AKP is the owner of Kalyon Group, Hasan Kalyoncu, who has been closely associated with the Islamist movement, playing a role in the establishment of the AKP and launching a *Nakşibendi* foundation. The Kalyon Group has been a key beneficiary of public tenders under the AKP, having been awarded major infrastructure projects that are estimated at around TL 100bn,¹²⁵² including the construction of a third airport, TOKI projects, metro construction and the Taksim pedestrianisation project.¹²⁵³ In turn, the Kalyon Group has supported the government through the purchase of the Sabah and ATV media groups, which have adopted a strongly pro-government line.¹²⁵⁴ Equally, these relations have been facilitated by the frequent alterations in the public procurement law, which has been changed 30 times¹²⁵⁵ and amended 168 times¹²⁵⁶ by the AKP to expand the number of exemptions and thereby enable the government to intervene to advantage favoured capital groups and businessmen.¹²⁵⁷ According to Public Procurement Agency statistics, around 32% of procurement contracts were exempted from the PP law in 2013, with 36% exempted in 2012. This has risen from 23% in 2005, with an upward trend observable since 2008. Exemptions account for around 10% of the value of total public procurement. In addition, just under half of state-owned-enterprises tenders have been exempted.¹²⁵⁸

Another key mechanism of patronage politics utilised by the AKP is TOKI, which was transferred to the prime ministry from the public works ministry in 2004.¹²⁵⁹ TOKI was established in 1984 for the purpose of constructing social housing, but its powers and role were expanded under the AKP to include the provisioning not just of housing for middle and low income earners but also of luxury housing and services.¹²⁶⁰ The new expanded remit of the company includes engaging in profit-orientated projects with the private sector; the transformation of squatter areas and the undertaking of urban planning, while

¹²⁵¹ See Demir 2005; Buğra & Savaşkan 2010.

¹²⁵² *Gazeteciler Online* 21 December 2013; *Hürriyet* 20 December 2013.

¹²⁵³ *Radikal* 28 September 2012.

¹²⁵⁴ *Gazeteciler Online* 21 December 2013.

¹²⁵⁵ Ekşi 2013.

¹²⁵⁶ *Hukuki Haber* 8 January 2014; *Hukuki Haber* 10 January 2014.

¹²⁵⁷ Buğra & Savaşkan 2010.

¹²⁵⁸ *Sol Portal* 29 January 2014.

¹²⁵⁹ Sönmez 20 May 2011; Sönmez 11 July 2014; Geray 2009.

¹²⁶⁰ Gündoğdu & Gough 2013. It is estimated that only around 20% of TOKI housing is suitable for low to middle income earners (T24 8 June 2012).

the responsibilities and power of the Urban Land Office (including a land bank of 64.5mn square metres) was transferred to it.¹²⁶¹ TOKI's expansive urban planning powers and access to land has meant that revenue-sharing schemes are especially profitable for private developers.¹²⁶² For example, together with a local authority TOKI can mark out an area as requiring 'urban regeneration', often leaving tenants with little say over vacating the property, and 'in this way, the inner city squatter areas are cleared and redeveloped for luxury housing, with the MHA [TOKI] as well as developers reaping the profit'.¹²⁶³

Other legislation and government decisions that have expanded the mechanisms of rent distribution under the AKP include the '2B' forest law in 2012, the 2013 law allowing the exemption of major infrastructure projects from environmental impact assessments (EIA) and the granting of the prime ministry sole authority to grant mining licences. The power to decide on the granting and revoking of licences is another means of intervening in the private sector and supporting or punishing businesses.¹²⁶⁴ This was evidenced by the threat made by President Erdogan in December 2013 that he would revoke the mining licences of the Koza Group, a company affiliated with the *Gülenists*, political rivals of the AKP.¹²⁶⁵

Aside from the utilisation of state mechanisms to intervene in the private sector to privilege pro-government business groups, social welfare provision forms another leg of rent distribution mechanisms. As Buğra has shown, under the AKP the established social security regime for the formal sector has been eroded under neoliberal policies, while clientilistic and arbitrary distributions to the informal sectors have been emphasised.¹²⁶⁶ The expansion of this clientilistic social welfare regime in areas such as the health sector, the distribution of free school books and cash payments to the poor have also translated into political benefits for the AKP in terms of increasing the party's vote base.¹²⁶⁷ An example is the exponential growth in coal distribution to poor families since it was initiated by the AKP in 2003 from 66,000 families to 2.2 million families by 2012 (Chart 27).¹²⁶⁸

¹²⁶¹ Gündoğdu & Gough 2013.

¹²⁶² Gündoğdu & Gough 2013.

¹²⁶³ Gündoğdu & Gough 2013: 20.

¹²⁶⁴ Gasteci.com.tr 19 January 2014.

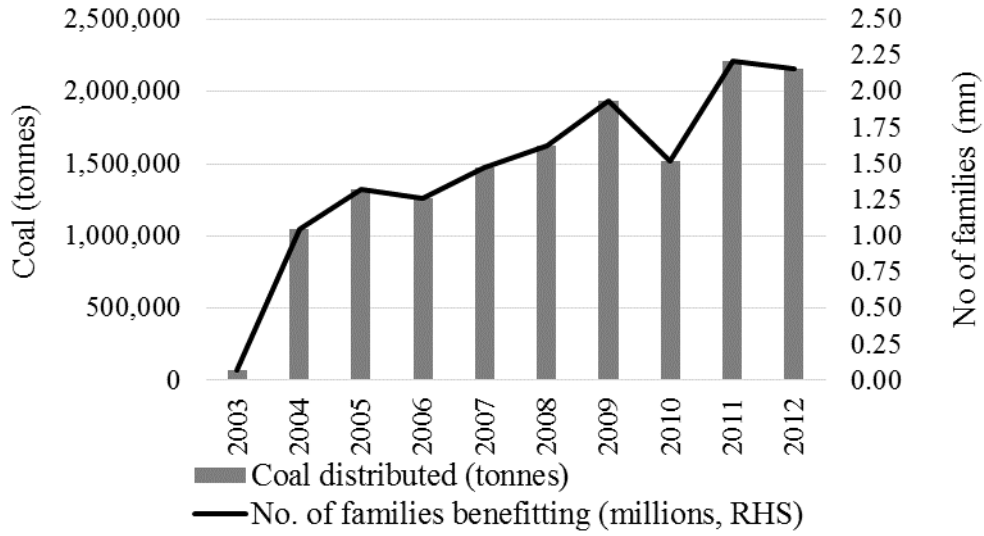
¹²⁶⁵ *Bloomberg* 23 December 2013.

¹²⁶⁶ Buğra & Candaş 2011; Buğra & Keyder 2006; Köse & Bahçe 2009.

¹²⁶⁷ For detailed studies on this, see Topak 2012: 280–81; Buğra 2013; Köse & Bahçe 2009.

¹²⁶⁸ TKİ 2013.

Chart 27: Distribution of coal to families as social welfare provision



Sources: '2012 Yılı Faaliyet Raporu' from Türkiye Kömür İşletmeleri Kurumu [General Directorate of Turkish Coal, TKİ] 2013, <[Http://Wwww.Tki.Gov.Tr/TKI/Yillikfaaliyetler/3c049c43-Ea7c-4baa-9cc7-D16c623604112012%20FAALIYET%20RAPORU.Pdf](http://www.tki.gov.tr/TKI/Yillikfaaliyetler/3c049c43-Ea7c-4baa-9cc7-D16c623604112012%20FAALIYET%20RAPORU.Pdf)>.

The particularistic and partisan nature of this type of distribution of social welfare services was underlined, for instance, during the 2014 local elections when the AKP mayor of Ankara pledged to give priority in the provision of services to the areas that voted for him.¹²⁶⁹ Partisan social engineering is also suggested by the differentiation of perceptions of economic wellbeing amongst voters, which was highlighted by surveys conducted by KONDA, a Turkish public opinion research and consultancy company, following the 30 March 2014 local elections.¹²⁷⁰ According to the survey, while 52% of AKP voters stated that they expected their economic position to improve over the next year, this compared with 19% for CHP voters, 20% for BDP voters and 20% for MHP voters; and while 36% of CHP, 32% of MHP and 31% of BDP voters said they expected a deterioration, this was just 7% for AKP voters. Similarly, in terms of the improvement in economic position experienced over the past year, 36% of AKP voters said they saw an improvement compared with just 8% for CHP, 12% for MHP and 11% for BDP voters. In turn, only 12% of AKP voters said their situation had worsened, compared with 42% of CHP, 32% of MHP and 38% of BDP voters.¹²⁷¹

¹²⁶⁹ *Bugün* 5 April 2014.

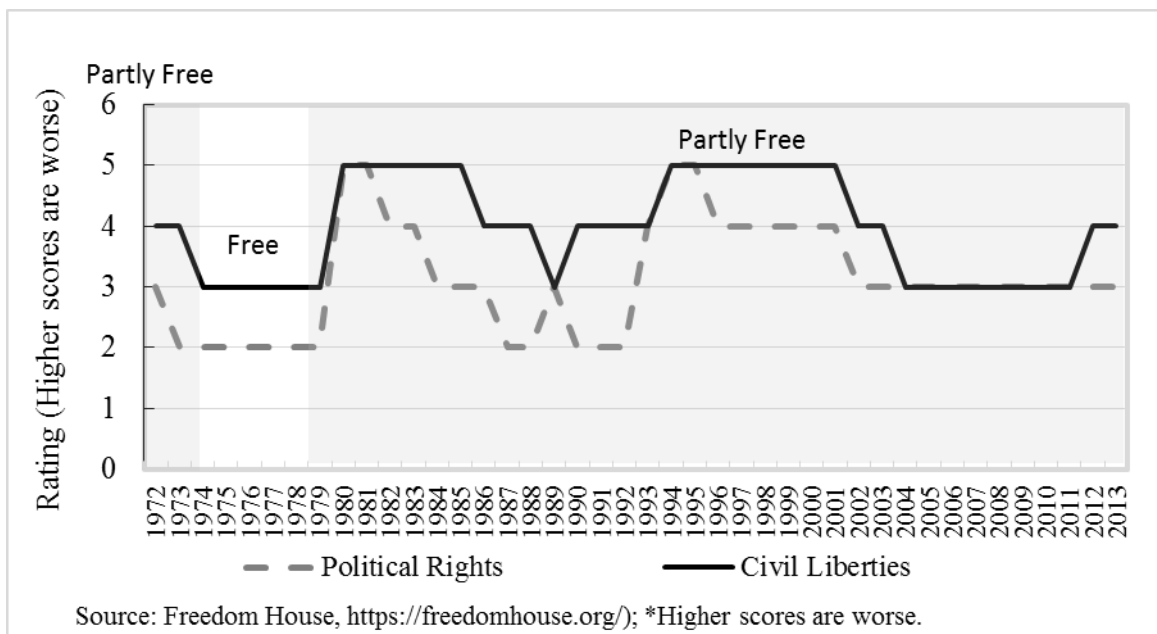
¹²⁷⁰ KONDA 16 April 2014.

¹²⁷¹ KONDA 16 April 2014.

8.4 Going beyond change and continuity

The above analysis of the AKP's public discourse and institutional change has sought to demonstrate the lines of continuity with previous periods, their path-dependent development as well as change. In particular I traced: i) the deployment of the 'national will' discourse and its reflections on policy that has led to hardened group boundaries and heightening social closure; and ii) the increasing centralisation and monopolisation of formal and informal institutions that has enhanced majoritarian structures and engagement in partisan engineering. Both of these dynamics are mutually constitutive in ensuring the reproduction and augmentation of religious majoritarianism. It is possible to argue that these developments reflect political cyclicity, a characteristic of hybrid regimes.¹²⁷² Characterised by a wide gap between codified law and rule enforcement,¹²⁷³ hybrid regimes in particular facilitate cycles of enhanced authoritarianism and contestation while supporting path-dependent path-shaping to effect transformation. For instance, the very institutional structures that facilitated enhanced majoritarianism under the ANAP government in the 1980s and under the AKP since 2002 also produced weak coalition governments throughout the 1990s. This cyclicity is also reflected in the Freedom House indices on political openness (democracy) for Turkey (Chart 28).

Chart 28: Political cyclicity (Freedom House Democracy Index)



¹²⁷² Hale 2005.

¹²⁷³ Levitsky & Murillo 2013.

Conversely, in enhancing the AKP's ability to engage in 'path-dependent path-shaping', it can be argued that the regime is evolving towards patronal presidentialism.¹²⁷⁴ Based on his analyses of Russia and post-Soviet states Henry Hale defines patronal presidentialism as comprising two key components: a directly elected president with significant powers relative to the other arms of the state and extensive informal power based on patron–client relationships.¹²⁷⁵ It is the control and ability to selectively distribute state resources (i.e. wealth, jobs etc.) that makes this form of regime type self-reproducing given the mutual dependence between the president and elites: 'the president depends on elites for implementing decisions and delivering votes while elites depend on the president for resources and/or continuation in their posts -patronal president has a decided advantage in that the elites must act collectively if they are to use the president's dependence on them to challenge that president'.¹²⁷⁶ Turkey currently does not have a presidential system, but the endowment of the presidency with significant political powers under the 1982 constitution and the 2007 amendments to allow for a popularly elected president have resulted in a hybrid system between parliamentarism and semi-presidentialism.¹²⁷⁷ The AKP, and particularly President Erdoğan, want to establish a presidential system,¹²⁷⁸ but have so far been constrained since the party lacks the two-thirds majority in parliament to change the constitution. Future changes may consolidate these trends, however, with Erdoğan's increasingly personalised presidential style of politics already evidenced by his significant intervention in various aspects of political and social life, including the media,¹²⁷⁹ the judiciary and civil service appointments.

8.5 Conclusion

The modernisation and transition paradigm and Marxist-Gramscian evaluations of the AKP period have offered important insights in terms of highlighting change and elements of continuity, respectively. This chapter suggested that a path-dependency approach premised on the insights of historical institutionalism provides a more holistic approach in identifying change and continuity while incorporating strategic action and agency. It has sought to demonstrate how Islamist actors were facilitated by these processes and in

¹²⁷⁴ Hale 2005.

¹²⁷⁵ Hale 2005.

¹²⁷⁶ Hale 2005.

¹²⁷⁷ Özbudun July 2012.

¹²⁷⁸ As has been noted by Özbudun, these debates are not new, with former presidents Özal and Demirel advocating such a change: Özbudun July 2012; *Rota Haber* 4 May 2014.

¹²⁷⁹ For example, Turkey ranks 149th out of 180 countries in the Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index (<http://en.rsf.org/>).

turn how, particularly under the AKP, they were able to strategically reshape institutional structures with their own vision. It is in this sense that the AKP period can be regarded not as ‘democratisation’,¹²⁸⁰ as has been commonly argued, but both an enhanced majoritarianism of the political system and an augmentation of religious majoritarianism of the state. This is not to conflate the religious majoritarianism of the state and the Islamist project. The former involves the elevation of the Muslim majority identity, while the latter can involve augmentation of the religious majoritarianism of the nation-state but is distinguished by the fact that it typically involves a wider agenda of Islamisation of society and state on the basis of doctrine.

¹²⁸⁰ Insel 2003.

Chapter 9: Conclusion: religious majoritarianism from a comparative perspective

9.1 Introduction

As the concluding chapter of the thesis, this section will: i) summarise the central argument of the thesis; ii) review the lessons from the Turkish case; iii) undertake comparative analysis to situate the Turkish case; and iv) outline areas for further research.

9.2 Central argument

The central argument of this thesis is that the variance in social closure and the particular configuration of institutional structures, which underpin the degree of religious majoritarianism of the state, facilitate the persistence of religious delineations of groups and structure political competition. This, it is argued, shapes the rise of religio-politics. More specifically, the degree of social closure at the point of nation-state building can trigger strong path-dependency effects through their institutionalisation. The stronger the social closure, the greater the influence on the types of institutions that are established. Institutions, in turn, act as mechanisms of reproduction and persistence owing to their self-reinforcing dynamic, whereby they shape and constrain actors' preferences and strategies, and in turn are shaped by them. This facilitates the salience and persistence of religion as an ethnic marker in the competition over political and economic resources and power and hence affects the possibility of religio-political movements. These structures, therefore, are argued to be important in terms of what contexts prove more conducive to the rise of religio-politics.

9.3 Lessons from the Turkish case

Functionalist or reaction-based explanations that treat religio-politics as a form of bottom-up reaction to modernity, secularism and their associated effects have been prevalent in literature on 'religious resurgence'. I have argued instead that there is a disjuncture between theory and the historical evidence explained partly by the binary conceptualisation of state–religion relations embedded within existing approaches. The dominant approaches have had a number of implications for the study of 'religious resurgence'. Firstly, they have a homogenising impact on the variables in question. The state is taken as a 'secular' unit, monolithic and as sharply demarcated from society.

Religion, in turn, is taken as a uniform, independent and transhistorical unit,¹²⁸¹ while the assumption of ‘religious society’ presumes a level of ‘groupness’. Secondly, the role institutional structures or the state play in facilitating and constraining certain types of strategies and politics is neglected. Thirdly, a more general point is that these assumptions distort the nature of change, continuity and overall political evolution. For instance, the rise of the AKP in Turkey, the adoption of the Islamisation programme by the military in 1980 or the establishment of the Republic are interpreted as breaks in state–religion relations, which overlooks very important elements of continuity.

The Turkish case study offers some important insights into these elements of continuity and how the problems with the dominant literature could be overcome. For example, the chapters 3, 5, 6 and 7 on constitutional identity, the PRA and the political economy trace how group construction occurred through the processes of social closure, and subsequently how they persisted despite change in ‘content’ or material reality. The Ottoman legacy was crucial in terms of the self-conscious drive to establish a (Sunni-Hanefi) Muslim majority from the nineteenth century under Abdulhamid, which was underpinned by war, migration, class bifurcation, genocide and ethnic cleansing. These dynamics had underpinned the high levels of closure which preceded the establishment of the Republic. Consequently, despite the constitutional principles of laicism and a purportedly ‘inclusive’ national citizenship, the establishment of the PRA and the continued efforts to privilege a Muslim bourgeoisie in turn embedded the religious majoritarianism of the nation-state project by institutionalising the prevalent forms of social closure. By identifying these dynamics it is possible to trace why these religious delineations become politically salient without assuming ‘groupness’ or reifying them as monolithic and homogenous. As Gupta has argued, ‘even though ethnic identities and cultural markers have always characterised human social existence, they cannot independently construct macro-ethnic political identities. Thus while ethnic awareness is a ubiquitous aspect of social life, its political manifestation is not.’¹²⁸² Equally, Chapter 3 suggested that laicism was a project not just of defining the domain of religion but, more importantly, of delineating community boundaries. The constitutional debates suggest that the constitutional framers were concerned with and remained focused on the construction of a Muslim–Turkish majority which left no room for the accommodation of minorities or diversity, reflecting the high levels of social closure. Consequently, while

¹²⁸¹ Asad 1992; Asad 2009.

¹²⁸² Gupta 1991.

the formative period of the Republic can be considered as a ‘critical juncture’, there were important dimensions of continuity embedded in the nation-state project. The focus on the constitutional principle of laicism as evincing an unchanging official ideology is a misleading reading. In short, social closure is proposed as a key factor in the explanation of why particular delineations of groups become prevalent and politically salient.

In addition, state institutions play a key role in the construction, reproduction and persistence of group boundaries and hence must have a bearing on their politicisation. The chapters 5-6 on the PRA show that institutions comprise self-reinforcing processes that make particular configurations resistant to change, thereby generating path-dependence, and that, crucially, they carry and preserve collective identities through which ‘individuals are united into social groups that can perpetuate themselves down the generations’.¹²⁸³ Furthermore, the PRA demonstrates that the concept of secularism is not suited to understanding religion and state. The PRA’s role in the reproduction of community boundaries as (Sunni-Hanefi) Muslim–Turkish, its agency and agenda of Islamisation (e.g. through the expansion of religious education) and its relations with the Islamist movement show that it is misleading to make sharp distinctions between a ‘secular state’ and ‘religious society’. Instead, it can be observed that Turkish state structures are not monolithic and autonomous but comprise an arena of struggle by different actors, where the balance of power can shift to facilitate certain actors and political strategies over others. For instance, the expansion of the PRA and religious education, particularly from the 1940s, was facilitated by i) contingent events such as anti-communism policies that opened up ‘windows of opportunity’ for state actors; and ii) a majoritarian political system that imparted a majoritarian logic to political competition. These, and the state’s provision of political and economic resources to expand religious infrastructure, which from the 1980s included Islamic charities and finance, were in turn important in facilitating the possibility of religio-politics.

Religious majoritarianism has been proposed as an alternative prism for studying state and religion that seeks to go beyond approaches to religion and state, centre and periphery. The phenomenon of religious majoritarianism is a means to analyse and describe the political structure and the extent to which a religiously demarcated group’s dominance and monopoly over political and economic resources and power is legitimated on the basis of its numeric majority within the nation. What transforms the processes and

¹²⁸³ Smith 1998: 69; Özkırımlı 2000: 184–85.

dynamics of majoritisation and homogenisation involved in nation-state building into religious majoritarianism in some cases and not others is the degree to which they result in particular institutional configurations. In the Turkish case, the establishment of the PRA elevated Sunni Muslim–Turkish identity and bestowed it with political and economic resources. In addition, religious majoritarianism facilitates the tracing of political change and persistence in ways that the concept of secularism does not. The concept therefore situates the rise of religio-politics or the AKP within the dynamics of longer historic processes of specific forms of nation-state building rather than just couching them as a reaction to modernisation or secularism. Consequently, these structural path-dependent processes are important for understanding why certain contexts facilitate the rise of religio-politics while others do not.

9.4 Comparative analysis

This section considers the usefulness of the prism of religious majoritarianism in a comparative context. A key limitation of this thesis is that it is a single case study. I have not considered contexts where these arrangements and interactions are different and may not produce similar outcomes. For example, in the Turkish case the religious authority, the ulema, is nested clearly within the state in a context of a putative Muslim majority. There are questions, therefore, as to how the proposed framework would be applicable to different religious contexts where religious authority is institutionalised in different ways, in post-colonial countries or in cases where there are sizeable recognised minorities.

A further difficulty is the lack of comparable case studies. Turkey remains the only Muslim majority and ostensibly secular country which has a comparatively more open political framework, as a hybrid regime with some elements of an electoral democracy. For example, out of the 56 members of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) of which Turkey is a member, excluding Occupied Palestine, 35 of the countries which have a majority Muslim population declare a state religion or/and have Islamic law integrated within their legal system. A further nine members of the OIC are African countries where the Muslim population is below 50% and the legal systems are either secular or have multiple religions. The remaining ostensibly secular Muslim majority countries include four African countries, where in general the size of the majority is lower, and the post-Soviet Union Central Asian states. The Central Asian countries, as Muslim majority polities with officially secular states, are potentially the most similar cases to Turkey.

However, from a comparative perspective the similarity is weak, given that the Central Asian states comprised part of the officially communist Soviet Union until as recently as 1991 and had or have highly authoritarian states with a lack of electoral competition.

Yet comparative analysis is useful not just because Turkey is typically treated as a *sui generis* case but also to test the wider applicability of the framework suggested in this thesis. Accordingly, I consider the cases of India, Malaysia and Ireland. These cases comprise significant variation in terms of the two independent variables: the particular forms/levels of social closure and institutional configurations. They also differ in terms of religion, region and regime types, while all three are post-colonial states, unlike Turkey. Turkey, unlike India or Malaysia, has no officially recognised ‘minority’. Conversely, both Malaysia and India demonstrate similarity in terms of the dependent variable – persistence of politically salient religious delineations – with clear variance in degrees. Ireland is a counter case, where despite the high degrees of religious majoritarianism of the state in the foundational stages, religious articulations have not shaped political competition in the way they have in Malaysia, India and Turkey. A selective historical account is presented below to draw out the key themes of interest.

i. India

India, as a post-colonial, non-majority Muslim, weakly federal and vastly heterogeneous polity, is significantly different to the Turkish case. Yet the rise of the Hindutva movement since the 1980s, as represented by the widening appeal and electoral success of the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP), part of the ‘Hindu majoritarian’ ‘Hindutva’ religio-political movement, has influenced numerous studies. Various studies comparable to scholarly approaches in the Turkish case have juxtaposed a secular nationalism and state epitomised by the Congress Party against a religious society, the Hindutva and the so-called ‘communalism’ of the Muslim minority.¹²⁸⁴ In this vein, Madan argues that in India ‘secularism is the dream of a minority which wants to shape the majority in its own image’,¹²⁸⁵ whilst ‘society seethes with ... expressions of a vibrant religiosity’.¹²⁸⁶ From the standpoint of these approaches the ascent of religio-politics is a natural reaction to the secularism project of the modernist/secular state elites. In contrast, as Bose points out, ‘to

¹²⁸⁴ Bose 2009.

¹²⁸⁵ Madan 1987: 748–49.

¹²⁸⁶ Madan 1987: 750.

explain the rise of Hindutva, we must critically dissect and challenge widely unquestioned dichotomies: such as the presumed antimony, whether in theory or practice, between categories such as “secularism and “communalism””.¹²⁸⁷ Indeed, these binary approaches, or the depiction of the Hindutva as merely an ideology of manipulative elites, neglects structure, context and, more importantly, the role of the ‘secular’ state in the rise of religio-politics.

It is important to trace the prevalent forms of social closure in the lead-up to the independence of India in 1947, following which the institutionalisation of the particular dynamics of majority–minority relations took place. The early stages of independence and nation-state building can be considered as a ‘critical juncture’ in which there were both significant elements of continuity with the colonial legacy and sharp breaks¹²⁸⁸ reflecting the concerns and motivations of the nation-state builders. Lerner has argued that the contingent nature of decisions made during this period is evidenced by the intensity of constitutional debates over matters pertaining to religion.¹²⁸⁹ However, the decisions of the constitutional framers were crucially influenced by antecedent conditions, or the prevalent forms of social closure that preceded the critical juncture. In the Turkish case, war, migration, territorial loss, demographic engineering involving ethnic cleansing and the project of creating a homogenous base had led to a gradual Muslimisation of the lands by the establishment of the Republic in 1923, and had facilitated the break with the system of ethnic segmentation under the Ottoman Empire. In comparison, both the sheer diversity and size, as well as the different colonial legacy, arguably made the abandonment of pluralist frameworks more difficult in the case of India. Brass has argued, for example, that the predominant tendencies in India are ‘towards pluralism, regionalism and decentralisation’.¹²⁹⁰ The notion of a ‘Hindu majority’ totalling 80% of the population (against a Muslim minority of around 13%) is as ‘imagined’ as the ‘Muslim majority’ is in the Turkish case: it is no more than a ‘census majority’, given the highly heterogeneous make-up of society in terms of class, caste, linguistic and regional differences.¹²⁹¹

¹²⁸⁷ Bose 1997: 105.

¹²⁸⁸ Brass 1990.

¹²⁸⁹ Lerner 2014: 405.

¹²⁹⁰ Bose 1997: 112; Brass 1988.

¹²⁹¹ Bose 2013.

Indian nationalism had evolved within this context and can be traced to the decline of the Mughal Empire and British imperial penetration. Within this context, part spurred by British colonialists and Christian missionaries,¹²⁹² upper-caste (Brahman) Hindus had begun to construct Hindu identity in the 1890s with the reimaginings of a 'Hindu' past resisting Muslim domination, which was blamed for the decline of the Hindu nation.¹²⁹³ This was a narrative that was later merged with the emerging anti-colonial critique of British imperialism.¹²⁹⁴ Subsequently, Indian nationalists, in a bid to establish a 'core nation' that involved the elevation and construction of a dominant majority ethnicity,¹²⁹⁵ set about trying to reconcile the anti-colonial nationalist movement with the existence of caste and religious difference.¹²⁹⁶ For Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the first leader of the independence movement, Hinduism was conceived as the spiritual essence of Indian civilisation or *dharma* (religion), which were considered as 'inextricable'.¹²⁹⁷ Through this logic the different religious communities, such as Muslims and Christians, could be absorbed by Hindu nationalism by positing that they were, at core, Hindus. The alignment of Hinduism with Indian identity under the '*dharmic universalism*' was seen to be compatible with Congress secularism since Hinduism was presented as an 'all-encompassing social system subsuming diverse peoples and cultures'.¹²⁹⁸ This has some parallels with the Turkish nationalist project with regard to Alevism, in the way that Alevis were initially rearticulated as 'real' Turks to absorb them. Similarly, underlying the seemingly inclusionary or even 'secular' Indian nationalism were Hindu ideals and myths,¹²⁹⁹ with those contesting this articulation or manifesting different identity claims, such as Muslims, branded as communal or un-national in a manner similar to the branding of difference in Turkey as separatist/marginal.¹³⁰⁰

These processes of social closure and the sharpening of communal boundaries were precipitated in crucial ways by the British colonial administration, which had shaped 'new ways of imagining Hinduism and Islam as communities'.¹³⁰¹ Actors were forced to articulate themselves through the language of religious tradition following various colonial measures, such as the population censuses initiated in 1872, the declaration of a

¹²⁹² Corbridge 2000.

¹²⁹³ Chatterjee 1992; Tejani 2008.

¹²⁹⁴ Vanaik 1992.

¹²⁹⁵ Brubaker 2011.

¹²⁹⁶ Tejani 2008: 96.

¹²⁹⁷ Tejani 2008.

¹²⁹⁸ Jalal 1995.

¹²⁹⁹ Jalal 1995.

¹³⁰⁰ Jalal 1995; Assayag 2003: 346.

¹³⁰¹ Corbridge 2000: 180; Hibbard 2010; Tejani 2008.

policy of non-interference in religious conflict in 1858, the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909, the separate electorates for different communities and the division of Bengal into a Muslim east and Hindu west.¹³⁰² In addition, with respect to religious infrastructures, Muslim personal law had been codified by the colonial government during the 1920–40s.¹³⁰³ By the 1930s, the idea of Indian nationalism as meaning the Hindu majority had been broadly established.¹³⁰⁴ Religiously defined ethnic boundaries became hardened, precipitating and being further reinforced following the experience of the Partition, with the split and establishment of Muslim-majority Pakistan in 1947. Consequently, Jalal argues that drawing hard and fast distinctions between Congress nationalism and the Hindutva is not possible and that such as an opposition comprises an ‘ideological edifice ...[upon which] the post-colonial Indian nation-state has rested’.¹³⁰⁵

These dynamics of majority–minority relations were important in shaping institutional design. According to Lerner, state builders adopted temporary compromise positions on religious legislation and postponed the secularisation of personal law for all citizens regardless of religion.¹³⁰⁶ Various studies describe India’s secularism project as reflecting the Congress party’s positivist modernist worldview and the principle of ‘equal respect of all religions’ (*sarva dharma sambhava*)¹³⁰⁷ or a ‘principled distance’.¹³⁰⁸ This contrasts with the common descriptions of secularism in the Turkish case as a top-down authoritarian project to remove religion from the public sphere and/or to control it. It is possible to argue, however, that the ideal of a ‘neutral’ state in India had reflected efforts, in the context of caste and religious differences institutionalised under the colonial government, to eradicate religious or communal violence,¹³⁰⁹ as well as the concern with the preservation of unity following the anti-colonial struggle and Partition. This has parallels with the Turkish case, in that secularisation reforms were a means of forging national unity and of preventing further imperialist penetration on behalf of minorities, as in the Ottoman state. The project of secularism should be understood, therefore, within the context of nation-state building efforts, rather than just as a matter of demarcating a line between public and private religion.

¹³⁰² Tejani 2008; Corbridge 2000.

¹³⁰³ Lerner 2014.

¹³⁰⁴ Tejani 2008.

¹³⁰⁵ Jalal 1998; 2183.

¹³⁰⁶ Lerner 2014.

¹³⁰⁷ Pantham 1997.

¹³⁰⁸ Bhargava 2011.

¹³⁰⁹ Van de Veer 2011; Kandiyoti 2009; Tejani 2008.

Consequently, it can be argued that, despite the lack of a state religion and no officially enforced education of a single religion in state schools, in reality the state and the ‘majority’ religion are deeply enmeshed in India.¹³¹⁰ The Congress party’s drive to reform Hinduism through the adoption of various Hindu reform bills post-independence, such as the 1955 Hindu Code Bill pertaining to Hindu personal law, meant that ‘by associating the Indian state with the reform of the social practices of people belonging to a particular religious tradition, it placed the state in a unique position in relation to that tradition’.¹³¹¹ In addition, state funding of religious educational institutions,¹³¹² reservations for seats in government institutions ‘scheduled classes and castes’, who were retained as a body of the Hindu community, and the Madras Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act of 1951 had ‘created an entire department of government devoted to the administration of Hindu religious endowments’.¹³¹³ At the same time, a pluralistic legal structure was maintained with the preservation of Muslim personal laws in the name of religious freedom, particularly following Partition.¹³¹⁴ In practice, therefore, India’s weak pluralism served to reproduce the boundaries between groups whereby citizenship rights were linked to communal identities,¹³¹⁵ furthering the process of social closure along religious delineations. The institutionalisation of majority–minority dynamics at the foundational stages and the issue of reservations and separate Hindu and Muslim personal laws essentially served to reaffirm the ‘outsider’ minority status of Muslims and their marginal status with respect to national identity. The pluralistic legal structure, initially considered as a temporary compromise, had instead ‘shaped religious regulations in ways that turned out to be difficult to change’.¹³¹⁶ This highlights the role that institutions play in reinforcing group boundaries in a path-dependent manner.

This institutional structural context was important for the expansion of the Hindutva movement from the 1970s. This was a period of increasing societal contestation owing to the economic crisis and frustration with corruption that had preceded the declaration of a state of emergency in 1975, with the increasingly authoritarian turn under Indira Gandhi. Gandhi’s centralisation of power had also involved greater emphasis on religious communalism and appeal to the Hindu majority¹³¹⁷ against what was declared as the threat

¹³¹⁰ Chatterjee 1994.

¹³¹¹ Chiriyankandath 2000.

¹³¹² Chatterjee 1994.

¹³¹³ Chatterjee 1994.

¹³¹⁴ Rudolph & Rudolph 2000.

¹³¹⁵ Hasan 1990.

¹³¹⁶ Lerner 2014: 409.

¹³¹⁷ Hibbard 2010: 140–44; Gupta 1991.

of Muslim minority separatism. In an environment where the predominantly Muslim National Conference party was depicted as ‘anti-national’ and ‘pro-Pakistani’, such policies had served to normalise the discourse of the Hindutva movement. In turn, group boundaries became sharpened, as evidenced by the subsequent increase in communal violence in which the state itself was implicated as acting on the side of Hindu actors.¹³¹⁸ Both the Shah Bano case in the 1980s¹³¹⁹ and the Ram Janmabhoomi campaign to convert the Babri Masjid mosque into a temple¹³²⁰ reinforced these trends. However, as Gupta has argued, Congress’s communalist policies had not reflected a bid to outdo the Hindutva movement or to contain a threat by it.¹³²¹ Indeed, Hindutva organisations in the 1960–1970s enjoyed weak electoral performance and limited popular support, as evidenced by the electoral defeats of Shiv Sena (another Hindutva party). Instead, the Hindutva movement began to grow and strengthen only after Indira’s reign, with the BJP emerging as a mass party only in the 1990s.¹³²² Shiv Sena was an ally, rather than an adversary, of Congress from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, helping to curb the growing labour movement.¹³²³ Against the broader dynamics of the nation-state project, it would be a misrepresentation to situate the rise of the BJP or religio-politics purely in terms of a reaction to the secularism–modernity project of Congress or as the secular state elite’s manipulation of religion in response to such a reaction.

Yet, the religious majoritarianism of the state has obviously been much weaker in India than in Turkey. Prevalent forms of social closure have developed not solely on the basis of religious delineations but also around other boundaries of caste, class, region and language, as is evidenced by the regionalisation of Indian political life since 1989 and caste-related protests and violence in the early 1990s.¹³²⁴ Nation-state building was, in a sense, forced to accept diversity owing to popular resistance over centralisation in the founding years. This facilitated the development of a loosely federal structure, which has moderated the degree of religious majoritarianism of the state in terms of the particular institutional structures established. For instance, the trend towards regionalisation and broad-based coalitions in the Indian case contrasts with the highly centralised and majoritarian political system in Turkey, which imparts a majoritarian dynamic to political

¹³¹⁸ Hibbard 2010: 142–44.

¹³¹⁹ Hibbard 2010: 156.

¹³²⁰ Hibbard 2010: 158.

¹³²¹ Gupta 1991; such arguments have been commonly put to use in Muslim majority states in the Middle East where dictatorial regimes often point to an Islamist threat to argue against democratisation.

¹³²² Gupta 1991.

¹³²³ Gupta 1991: 575.

¹³²⁴ Bose 2013; Bose 1997.

competition, thus facilitating the augmentation of religious majoritarianism.¹³²⁵ Consequently, while religious delineations of the community are politically salient, they form one amongst various other significant markers that shape political competition. Unlike the Turkish case, where distributional conflicts came to be articulated through religious identity markers with the growth of Islamic business organisations, in India the story was more complex. Caste and class dimensions were also important in terms of the Hindutva movement's traditional base, which comprised largely the urban lower-middle class and traditional upper-caste landed elites who had been threatened by changing economic policies that had benefited the 'intermediate caste' 'agrarian bourgeoisie'.¹³²⁶ Equally, these dynamics arguably limit the BJP's ability to dominate in the same way as the AKP has in Turkey.

ii. Malaysia

Compared with India and Turkey, the Malaysian state can be described as being highly religious majoritarian. Malaysia is 'majority' Muslim (51%¹³²⁷), alongside significant Chinese and Indian communities with overlapping ethnic and religious markers. It differs in this sense from the Turkish case. Like India, and unlike Turkey, Malaysia is a post-colonial state. Prior to independence, under the Federation Agreement of 1948, the role of religion had pertained only to state law. Following independence in 1957, the new constitution adopted (Sunni) Islam as the official religion of the Federation and declared that other 'other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the federation' (Article 3). Consequently, Malaysia has developed a pluralistic legal system in which, aside from the federal statutory laws, Islamic law (chiefly pertaining to personal law) is adopted at the state level and applied to Muslims only.

These institutional choices had reflected the high levels of social closure by the point of independence. Pre-independence Malaysia was 'populated by various Malayo-Polynesian groups, southern Chinese and Indian labourers, traders'.¹³²⁸ Identities were subsequently transformed under British colonial rule, which resulted in the institutionalisation of the privileges and rights of Malay over Chinese and Indians, considered as non-permanent settlers, over the three main areas of land law, recruitment

¹³²⁵ Bose 2013.

¹³²⁶ Bose 2013; Bose 1997.

¹³²⁷ Peletz 2002.

¹³²⁸ Lee 1990: 484.

and public services and education.¹³²⁹ These rights and privileges were expanded and given constitutional status in the post-colonial period.¹³³⁰ Religious identity, or Islam, became constitutive of Malay national identity alongside the Malay language and custom in the post-colonial nation-state, as defined in the constitution.¹³³¹ In this vein, it has been claimed that to be Malay in Malaysia is understood as to be Muslim;¹³³² ‘Malays viewed Islam not only as defining community boundaries, but also distinguishing between those who were believed to have legitimate domicile rights and those who should properly be excluded from participation in the political system because they were deemed to be “aliens”’.¹³³³ With parallels to the late Ottoman period, British colonial economic penetration had catalysed the rise and bifurcation of the bourgeoisie classes, with the emergence of ‘comprador capitalists’ composed chiefly of Chinese merchants that acted as middlemen.¹³³⁴ This bifurcation, coupled with war and a stratified education system in which Christian missionaries offered higher educational opportunities that were utilised by non-Muslims, had further reinforced group boundaries in the lead-up to independence. Following the introduction of elections in 1955, the protection of these system of privileges and status gained prominence, which translated into pressure for greater government support for Islam.¹³³⁵

Consequently, the establishment of Islam as the religion of the Federation in 1957 could to some extent be considered as a means to constitutionally guarantee the privileged position and rights of Muslim Malays: ‘a special status for Islam was but one way that constitutional guarantees could be given to the Malays to provide both material benefits, and psychological assurances that the country was still theirs’.¹³³⁶ Accordingly, Malaysia can be said to display high levels of social closure in that a clearly ethnicised bureaucracy has meant that competition over resources has also been ethnicised. This is in the sense that ‘resources and services dispensed by an ethnicised bureaucracy do not appear to be public benefits available to all, but rather collective goods attainable only by those who belong to the “proper” ethnic group’.¹³³⁷ In such an ethnicised state¹³³⁸ religious

¹³²⁹ Lee 1990: 484–85; Hirschman 1986; Means 1978: 393.

¹³³⁰ Means 1978: 393–94.

¹³³¹ Peletz 2002: 246; Lee 1990: 486.

¹³³² Sundaram & Cheek 1988; Means 1978: 393; Barr & Govindasamy 2010; Nagata 1980.

¹³³³ Means 1978: 386.

¹³³⁴ Brennan 2008.

¹³³⁵ Means 1978: 386.

¹³³⁶ Means 1978: 389.

¹³³⁷ Wimmer 1997: 643.

¹³³⁸ This is in the sense outlined by Wimmer that ‘state resources appear as collective goods accessible only to those belonging to the “proper” ethnic group’ (Wimmer 1997: 651).

majoritarianism pervades all aspects of state institutional configurations, authority and distribution of state resources. Indeed, the status of Islam and Muslim identity is directly tied to an elaborate system of special privileges, meaning that ‘religious issues intrude directly or indirectly into the whole area of inter-ethnic relations and become entangled in nearly all government social, economic, and educational policies’.¹³³⁹ The state bureaucracy, police and military are dominated by Muslim Malays. Group boundaries were further heightened with the policy of Bumiputraisim and the New Economic Policy (NEP) programme adopted in the aftermath of the 1969 race riots. Bumiputraisim, a system of ethnic privileges,¹³⁴⁰ had meant the formal institutionalisation of supremacy of the majority Muslim Malays.¹³⁴¹ The NEP (1971–1990) was adopted in order to improve the economic position of (predominantly Muslim) Malays compared with Chinese and Indians.¹³⁴² The stated goal of increasing Malay ownership of economic wealth to 30% by 1991 involved a major redistribution of income¹³⁴³ through the granting of various privileges, such as easier access to universities and public sector jobs.

Owing to these processes of social closure political loyalties are equally reduced to ethnic categories.¹³⁴⁴ Such a high degree of religious majoritarianism has therefore facilitated the persistence of religious delineations in shaping political competition. Political parties are largely divided along ethno-religious lines, which become reinforced by Muslim privileges and communal conflict. This is a self-reinforcing process: ‘Malay religious elites quickly developed a vested interest in the expansion of government support for Islam, and helped to stimulate increased demands that the government more actively defend and promote Islam. The Departments of Religious Affairs cultivated active advocates in various Islamic associations, and among Malay politicians who wished to exploit Muslim sentiments for partisan political purposes.’¹³⁴⁵ The salience of religio-politics has been commonly explained with reference to the *dakwah* movement, in part inspired by external Islamist movements and in part a reaction against modernisation or

¹³³⁹ Means 1978: 393.

¹³⁴⁰ Means 1978.

¹³⁴¹ Hamayotsu 2002; Brennan 2008; Lee 1990: 492; Hamayotsu 2002; while Malay privileges are not explicitly reserved only for Muslims, the constitutional definition of Malay, where being a Muslim is a criteria, restricts the nature of these awards. In addition, the importance of religion and ethnicity as markers of national identity is indicated by the ability of Arab and Indian Muslims to claim Malay status, while this is not allowed for Chinese converts. See Means 1978: 403.

¹³⁴² Hamayotsu 2002; Brennan 2008; Peletz 2002.

¹³⁴³ Means 1978: 395.

¹³⁴⁴ Wimmer 1997: 643.

¹³⁴⁵ Means 1978.

spiritual alienation.¹³⁴⁶ Despite the embeddedness of Islam within the constitution (rather than laicism or secularism) since the establishment of the Malaysian nation-state, religio-political movements such as Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (*Parti Islam Se-Malaysia*, PAS) have accused the governing ruling party United Malays National Organisation (*Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu*, UMNO) of not safeguarding the interests of the majority Muslim Malay community and Islam against the Chinese and Indian minorities.¹³⁴⁷ Consequently, it has been argued that the 1980s Islamisation policies of PM Mahathir bin Mohamad (1981–2003) marked an instrumental reaction of the ‘secular’ UMNO, a reaction to the rise of Islamism designed to reinforce the party’s declining authority. The Islamisation policies included the introduction of Islamic finance institutions, the official declaration of the state’s role as ‘instilling Islamic values into the government machinery’, the expansion of various religious institutions and education, the upgrading of the status of sharia courts, the increased construction of mosques and the greater utilisation of Islamic language and symbols in media and public life.¹³⁴⁸ However, the historical analysis above suggests that, rather than a break,¹³⁴⁹ Mahathir’s Islamisation policies marked continuity with the nation-state project of majority Muslim hegemony whilst being, at the same time, a consequence of the NEP, which had fostered a new ‘Muslim’ bourgeoisie.¹³⁵⁰ This Malay Muslim middle class had in turn seen their growing wealth and privileged position as being tied to the strengthening of the status and role of religion, which served to benefit the Islamist party PAS.¹³⁵¹ The institutional support and economic redistribution under the NEP policies therefore reinforced both community boundaries between the Muslim majority and non-Muslims and the salience of religio-politics by heightening religious majoritarianism. These boundaries have been further reinforced by events such as the declaration of Malaysia as an Islamic state by PM Mahathir and the ongoing debates on strict *hudud* (Islamic criminal) law in north-eastern Malaysia.¹³⁵² In this vein, as in Turkey, it is possible to argue that the growth of religio-politics particularly in the 1980s, was facilitated by the high degree of religious majoritarianism of the state as institutionalised in the foundational years.

¹³⁴⁶ Muzaffar 1987.

¹³⁴⁷ Peletz 2002: 247.

¹³⁴⁸ Hamid 2007; Barr & Govindasamy 2010; Lee 1990: 495.

¹³⁴⁹ Hamayotsu 2002.

¹³⁵⁰ See Barr & Govindasamy 2010 for similar arguments.

¹³⁵¹ Hamid & Fauzi 2009.

¹³⁵² WSJ 4 June 2014; *The Diplomat* 7 May 2014.

iii. Counter case: Ireland

Ireland raises an important further research issue in terms of the extent to which different forms of religious authority may impact upon the persistence of religious delineations in shaping political competition and the possibility of religio-politics. Ireland, a small and ‘majority’ Catholic (91%¹³⁵³) country, offers a contrasting case to the examples of Turkey, India and Malaysia. Despite the religious majoritarianism at the outset, religio-political movements have not emerged in the same way. Indeed, it has been argued that religious group boundaries have no salience within the party system or in political behaviour.¹³⁵⁴ At least until the 1970s, with the removal of Article 44 granting the special position of Catholicism the Irish state could be described as partly religious majoritarian. In terms of social closure, religion has been a dominant marker of ethnic identity in Ireland, where Catholicism and national identity have been significantly intertwined. Community boundaries were constructed and further reinforced by British colonisation and Catholic persecution, with the Plantation and policies such as the Penal Laws (1695–1829) leading to economic and political dispossession.¹³⁵⁵ Consequently, many scholars have posited that Catholicism became a ‘symbol of resistance’ and carrier of national identity against foreign domination by Protestant Britain¹³⁵⁶ in a manner similar to the case of Poland under the impact of Russian rule.¹³⁵⁷ Owing to this dynamic, Ireland, alongside Poland (and Greece), has been typically regarded as an exception to the general trend of declining salience of religion in Europe.¹³⁵⁸

In terms of institutional structures, despite the official separation of church and state, the state was nevertheless closely associated with the majority religion. This was codified in the 1937 constitution, ‘when a close identification between Irish nationalism and the Catholic religion developed, and nationalists defended the prominent role accorded the church in areas of public policy’,¹³⁵⁹ including Catholic Church control over primary and secondary education. According to Dillon, the ‘reach of Catholicism is well inscribed both institutionally (in law, education, social policy, etc.) and in the Irish collective memory, and its symbols and meanings’.¹³⁶⁰

¹³⁵³ Dillon 2002: 47.

¹³⁵⁴ Larkin 1976.

¹³⁵⁵ Dillon 2002.

¹³⁵⁶ Dillon 2002; Breen & Reynolds 2011.

¹³⁵⁷ Dillon 2002.

¹³⁵⁸ Warner 1993.

¹³⁵⁹ Kissane 2003: 75.

¹³⁶⁰ Dillon 2002: 47.

Given relatively high levels of social closure and the close association and co-operation of the state with the majority religion, what, then, explains the absence of religio-political movements? One possible answer, based on the theoretical framework suggested in this thesis, is related to the particular configuration of religious institutions and infrastructure. For instance, Kalyvas has argued that, in other contexts, the hierarchical nature of the Catholic Church compared with the decentralised nature of Islamic institutions has impacted political mobilisation and responses.¹³⁶¹ Within the Irish context, the Church acts as an autonomous or independent hierarchical force in the political sphere – in a sense, as a state within a state.¹³⁶² Accordingly, different forms of religious authority are an area for future study for the purposes of understanding which structures may facilitate politicisation over others. In addition, it is worth emphasising that the framework takes contingency seriously. In the Turkish case, for example, Cold War anti-communism was important in the expansion of religious infrastructure that led to the reproduction and persistence of religious delineations and their role in structuring mass politics. Likewise, in the Irish case, the integration into the European Union project is likely to be of importance.

iv. Summary of comparative analysis

The analysis above has sought to situate the Turkish case comparatively as well as raise avenues for future research. One obvious theme is that the concept of religious majoritarianism is useful for tracing continuity with earlier phases of nation-building. As Bose concludes, the Hindutva ‘is no chance, arbitrary phenomenon. It is deeply rooted in the historical development of India’s post-colonial political and social structures.’¹³⁶³ Religion served as an ethnic marker in each of the cases, although to varying degrees, with social closure occurring on the basis of religious identity. Consequently, religio-ethnic boundaries mattered during the process of national identity construction. In the Turkish and Indian cases the project of secularism was also tied to nation-state building, but ultimately involved a delineation between the majority and minority religions. Subsequently, as group boundaries became hardened, they were reproduced through accommodative institutional structures, facilitating their persistence in shaping political

¹³⁶¹ Kalyvas 2000; Gill 2001.

¹³⁶² Garvin 2004: 2–3.

¹³⁶³ Bose 2009: 162.

competition. In Malaysia, the high degree of social closure during the critical phase of nation-building meant that state was highly religious majoritarian, leading to an ‘ethnicisation’ of the established institutional configurations, including a system of religio-ethnic-based privileges and a pluralistic legal system. In all three cases, the state’s role was crucial in shaping the context in which religious delineations of groups mattered for access to and competition over political and economic resources to varying degrees. Conversely, the Irish example is an important counter case of a state that began to some extent as religious majoritarian but which moderated over time, with religious delineations ceasing to be politically relevant.

9.5 Contribution of the thesis and areas for future research

The findings of this thesis are of relevance both for the Turkish case and for the broader study of religio-politics. In terms of the Turkish case, the study demonstrates the problematic assumptions of the prevalent narratives of secularism, which have been used in explaining the emergence of religio-politics. It has done so through the historically grounded study of the role of the ulema as actors within the state, which challenges the common assumptions of the ‘secular’ state and the state elite manipulation of religion. It also deconstructs the taken-for-granted assumption of ‘religious society’ by tracing how religious delineations of groups arise, evolve and sharpen over the competition for political and economic resources, and persist even when the material reality or ‘content’ is changed. In contrast to primordialist or groupist approaches, the study points to the importance of tracing the process of group making and the maintenance and reproduction of boundaries by structural factors. In addition, this study presents an alternative historical reading of religion and state relations in Turkey, highlighting not only the strong elements of continuity over time but also the structures that facilitate the possibility of religio-politics.

In addition, this study raises important avenues for further research on Turkey. Firstly, it has focused on the role of state institutions. However, a case study of the evolving relationship between IHS graduates, Islamists and the ulema would provide further insight into the interaction between the state and other actors and consequently improve our understanding of how the mechanisms of reproduction function. One way this could be undertaken is through tracing the ways in which the official ulema constructs and defends its authority and distinguishes itself, and how this may be contested by Islamists,

who also comprise members of the ulema. A second avenue is the relationship between the state, Kurdish nationalism and religion. For instance, various archival data suggest that Islamisation was seen as an important means of absorbing Kurdish identity. With the Kurdish peace process today, the PRA, for instance, has provided Islamic justification for the recognition of the Kurdish language and made efforts to incorporate Kurdish ulema outside its remit. A third area is the external dimension. Cold War dynamics have been mentioned as contingent events, but foreign policy and wider international dynamics can also play a role in ‘ethnicising’ politics or sharpening group boundaries. For instance, there have been important spillovers from the Syrian crisis in terms of facilitating the construction and sharpening of group boundary delineations amongst Alevis and Sunnis communities within Turkey.¹³⁶⁴ A fourth avenue is the comparative analysis of Turkey’s religious institutions. As noted, comparative approaches to Turkey have been limited. However, the continuities of the PRA with the Ottoman ulema and its subsequent evolution suggests that there are important parallels with institutions of Islamic authority in the wider Muslim world. Comparative work in which the institutions of Islamic authority are related to religious education and to Islamist movements would potentially offer important insights. In addition, since the 1990s the PRA has assumed a more active role in Turkish foreign policy and sought to expand its role as an Islamic authority within the wider Muslim world. How this is in turn transforming the role of the PRA, and how this impacts upon wider debates within the Islamic world, is also a potential area for future research.

In terms of the study of religio-politics in general, this thesis demonstrates that the conceptual prism of secularism and the binary approaches to state, society and religion hinder our understanding of the phenomenon in crucial ways. Instead, this study situates religio-politics within the longer historical context of nation-state building rather than as purely primordial or contingent reactions to modernisation/secularism/secularisation. I have proposed an alternative framework for examining state–religion relations with the concept of religious majoritarianism in order to stress: i) how path-dependent this example of religious resurgence has been; and ii) how this concept is better suited for analysing the dynamics of the Turkish state. This is a probabilistic argument in that the degree of religious majoritarianism can only facilitate the possibility of religio-politics. The findings and the comparative analysis also raise various questions for further research. It has been argued that social closure matters in conjunction with the particular

¹³⁶⁴ Lord & Zirh August 2014.

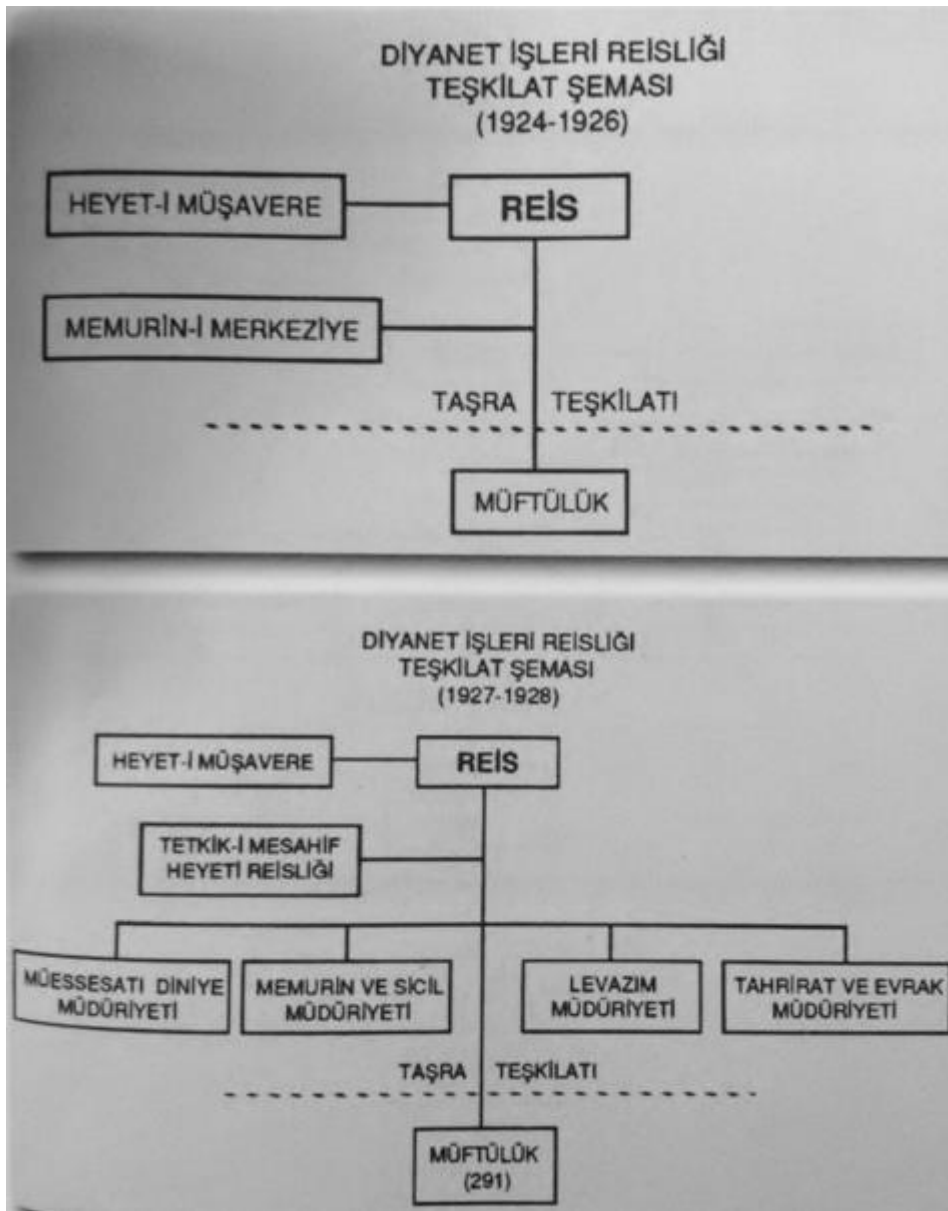
configuration of institutions that entrench majority–minority relations within the structure of the state. Consequently, this raises questions about the impact that different institutional configurations (decentralised or consensual) have on the persistence of politically salient religious group delineations. Such questions are raised by the Irish case, where social closure was strong but, unlike in the Muslim contexts, the Church was a hierarchical and autonomous religious authority. In the Turkish case the majoritarian political system facilitated the augmentation of religious majoritarianism over time. In India, the loosely federal structure moderates religious majoritarianism as well as the BJP’s efforts to augment it. This is related in turn to the question of how the politics of Hindutva or Islamists are influenced by the fact that India is a highly diverse and post-colonial entity, whilst Turkey is a non-colonial case where there was already a sizeable Muslim majority by independence. Hence, in explaining different outcomes, an important issue is the extent to which the imperial institutional legacies themselves were conditioned by the demographical and social realities before independence. Explaining which came first in the Turkish case would be impossible: the important point is that they have been mutually constituted for long periods of time.

Appendix

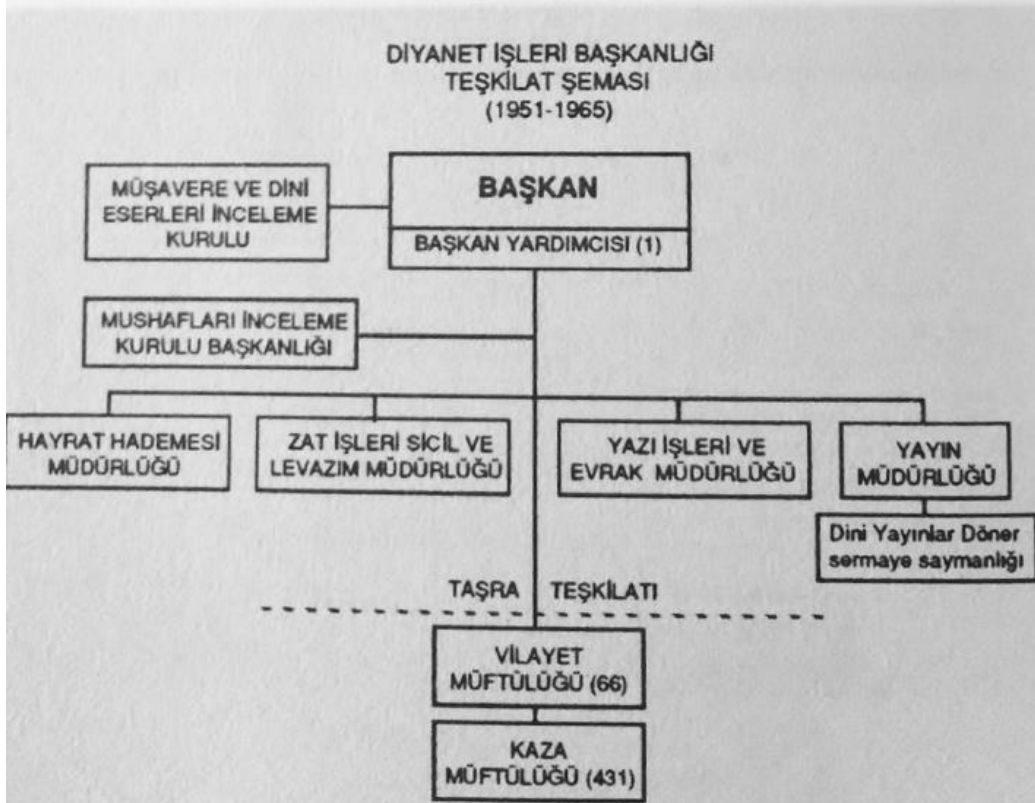
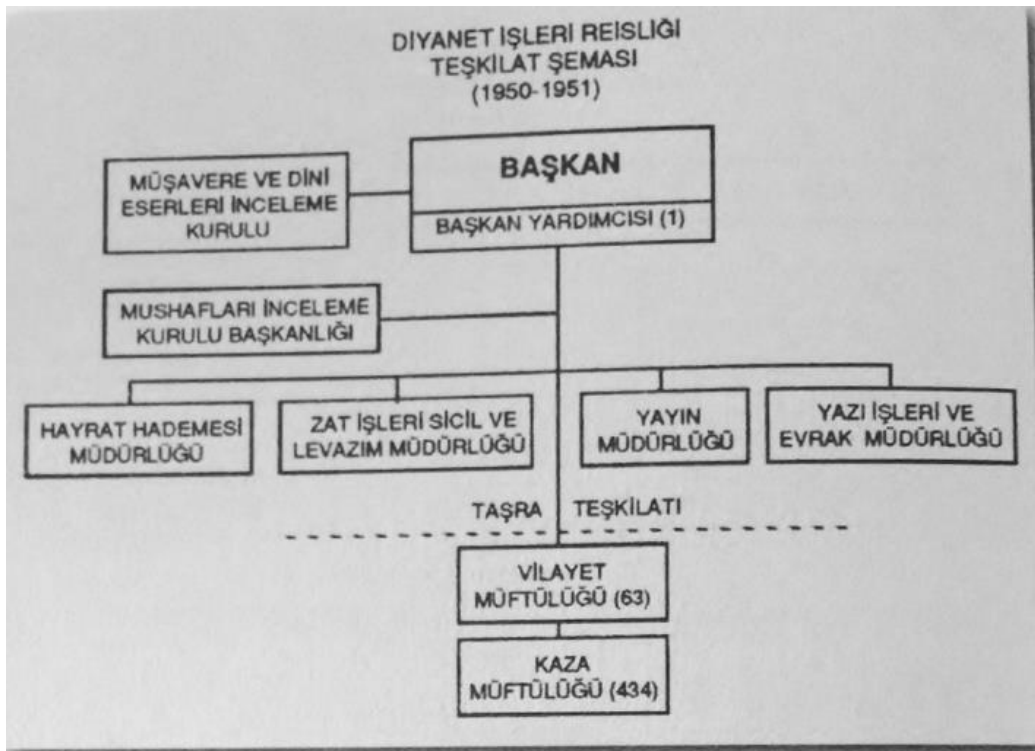
Appendix 1: Presidents of the PRA

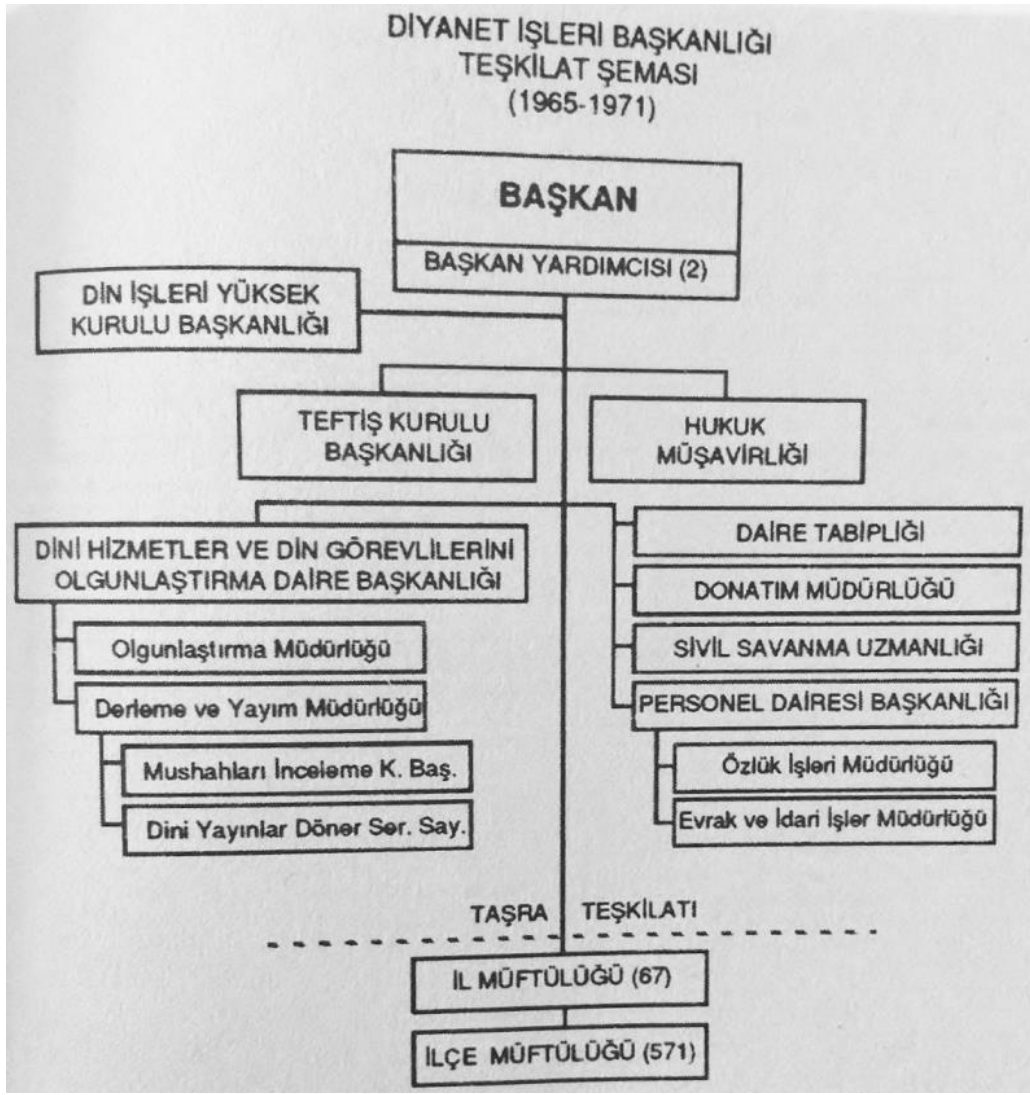
Appendix 1: Presidents of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (PRA)		
Presidents	Appointment	Departure
Mehmet Rifat Börekçi	01.04.1924	05.03.1941
Ord. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Şerafettin Yaltkaya	14.01.1942	23.04.1947
Ahmet Hamdi Akseki	29.04.1947	09.01.1951
Eyyüp Sabri Hayırlıoğlu	17.04.1951	10.06.1960
Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen	30.06.1960	06.04.1961
Hasan Hüsnü Erdem	06.04.1961	13.10.1964
Mehmet Tevfik Gerçek	15.10.1964	16.12.1965
İbrahim Bedrettin Elmalı	17.12.1965	25.10.1966
Ali Rıza Haksas	25.10.1966	15.01.1968
Lütfi Doğan	15.01.1968	25.08.1972
Dr. Lütfi Doğan	26.08.1972	26.07.1976
Doç. Dr. Süleyman Ateş	28.07.1976	07.02.1978
Dr. Tayyar Altıkulaç	09.02.1978	10.11.1986
Prof. Dr. Mustafa Said Yazıcıoğlu	17.06.1987	02.01.1992
Mehmet Nuri Yılmaz	03.01.1992	19.03.2003
Prof. Dr. Ali Bardakoğlu	28.05.2003	11.11.2010
Prof. Dr. Mehmet Görmez	11.11.2010	-
Sources: (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı - Presidency of Religious Affairs, PRA; http://www.diyaret.gov.tr/tr/icerik/diyaret-isleri-baskanlari/2373).		

Appendix 2: PRA organisational structure¹³⁶⁵

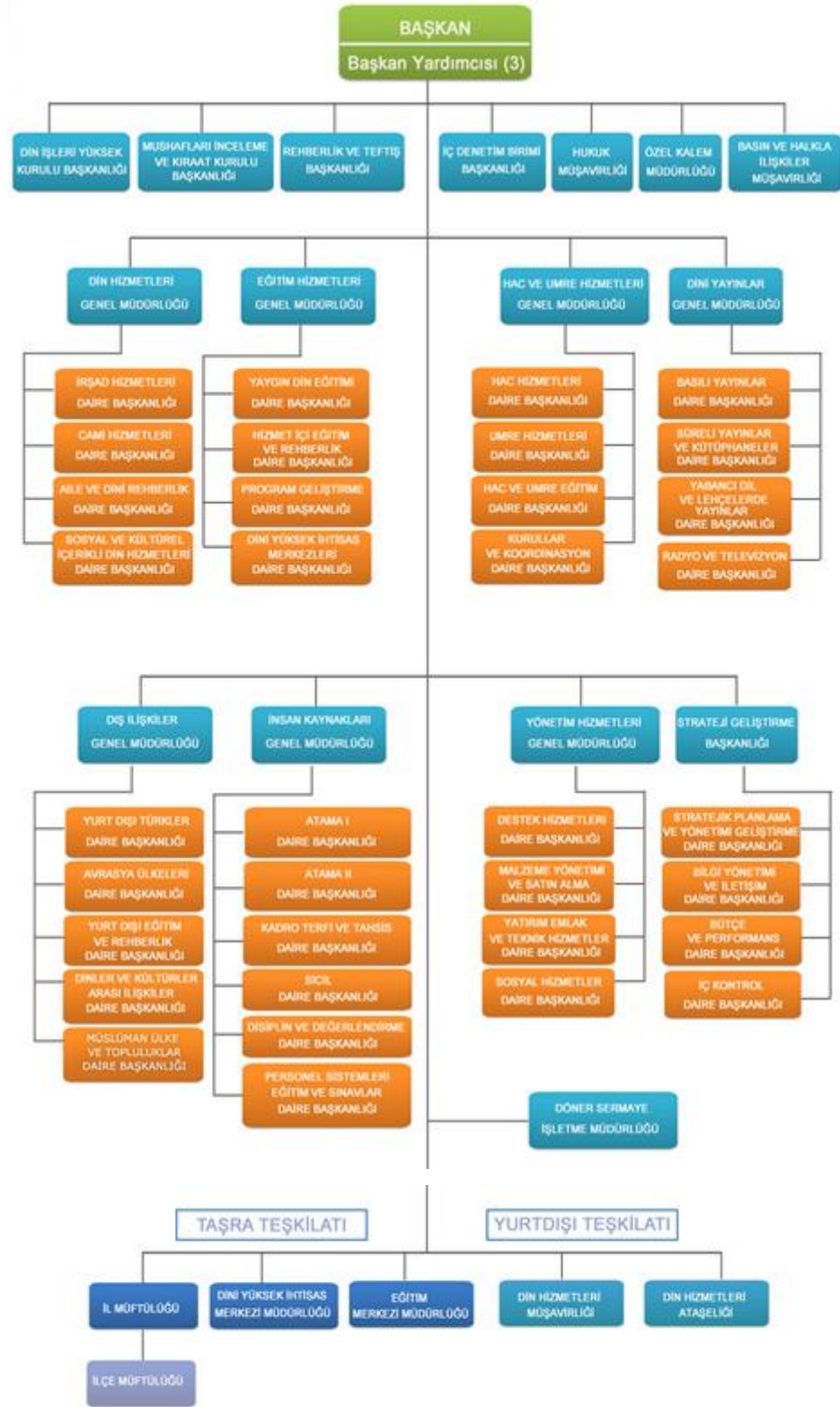


¹³⁶⁵ PRA <<http://www.diyanet.gov.tr/>>; Gözaydın 2009.





2014 Structure



Bibliography

Bibliography abbreviations

AÇ	T.C. Devlet Bakanlığı. Alevi Çalıştay [Alevi Opening' Meeting Minutes]
AUK	Anayasa Uzlaşma Komisyonu [Constitutional Reconciliation Commission]
BUMKO	Maliye Bakanlığı Bütçe ve Mali Kontrol Genel Müdürlüğü [Ministry of Finance General Directorate of Budget and Fiscal Control]
CS	Cumhuriyet Senatosu Tutanak Dergisi [The Journal of the Republican Senate]
DM	Danışma Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi [The Journal of the Consultative Assembly]
DMAK	Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Darbe Ve Muhtıraları Araştırma Komisyonu [Parliamentary Commission Investigating Military Coups]
DoA	Dernekler Dairesi Başkanlığı [Directorate of Associations]
DoF	Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü [Directorate General of Foundations]
DPT	Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı [State Planning Organisation]
GCZ	T.B.M.M. Gizli Celse Zabıtları [Secret Minutes of the Closed Sessions of the Grand National Assembly]
HRW	Human Rights Watch
JNSC	Milli Güvenlik Konseyi Tutanak Dergisi [The Journal of the National Security Council]
JTGNA	T.B.M.M. Tutanak Dergisi [The Journal of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey]
KM	T.C. Kurucu Meclis Tutanak Dergisi [The Journal of the Constitutive Assembly]
MM	Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi [The Journal of the National Assembly]
MoE	Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [Ministry of National Education]
NUC	T.C. Milli Birlik Komitesi Genel Kurul Toplantısı [The National Unity Committee General Assembly]

PMAD	T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü [Prime Minister's State Archives Directorate]
PRA	Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı [Presidency of Religious Affairs]
RG	T.C. Resmi Gazete [Official Gazette]
SGEU	Secretariat General for EU Affairs [SGEU]
SP	Saadet Partisi [Felicity Party]
TD	T.B.M.M. Tutanak Dergisi [The Journal of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey]
TDVİA	Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi
TGNA	T.B.M.M. Grand National Assembly of Turkey
TGNACC	T.B.M.M. Teşkilâtı Esasiye Encümeni [Grand National Assembly of Turkey Constitutional Committee]
TİTYEDF	Türkiye İlahiyat Tedrisatına Yardım Eden Dernekler Federasyonu [Federation of Turkey Theology Educational Helpers Organisations]
TKİ	Türkiye Kömür İşletmeleri Kurumu [General Directorate of Turkish Coal]
TM	T.C. Temsilciler Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi [The Journal of the Representatives Assembly]
TUIK	Turkish Statistical Institute [Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu]
US DoS	US Department of State
ZC	T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi [Minutes of the Grand National Assembly]

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