

Religion and Politics in Turkey

Edited by
Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin



Religion and Politics in Turkey

Over the last decade the once marginal extreme right of the Turkish ideological spectrum has grown in size as well as influence and has effectively reshaped party competition in Turkey. Policy mandates and electoral bases of the rising extreme right rely on potentially explosive social cleavages in the country. One such confrontation is between the secularist and pro-Islamist forces, which has always been one of the centrepieces of modern Turkish politics.

The rise of pro-Islamist electoral forces from a marginal to an undeniably imposing position in Turkish electoral politics has led many to worry that a deep-rooted schism has come to the forefront of Turkish politics. The frontline of this secularist vs pro-Islamist confrontation is quite widespread; ranging from a debate around the ban of turban and headscarves in universities to Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle Eastern countries.

This volume was previously published as a special issue of the journal *Turkish Studies*.

Ali Çarkoğlu is an associate professor at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Sabanci University, Istanbul.

Barry Rubin is the director of the Global Research in International Affairs Center and of its Turkish Studies Institute (TSI), both of which are part of the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya, Israel. He is the editor of *Turkish Studies* journal and of the *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA)*.

This Page intentionally left blank

Religion and Politics in Turkey

Edited by
Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin

First published 2006 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
270 Madison Ave, New York NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

Transferred to Digital Printing 2009

© 2006 Taylor & Francis Ltd

Typeset in Times by Genesis Typesetting Ltd, Rochester, Kent

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN10: 0-415-34831-5 (hbk)

ISBN10: 0-415-56836-6 (pbk)

ISBN13: 978-0-415-34831-7 (hbk)

ISBN13: 978-0-415-56836-4 (pbk)

Publisher's Note

The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this reprint but points out that some imperfections in the original may be apparent.

Contents

Notes on Contributors	vi
Introduction	1
1. Turkish Islamic Exceptionalism Yesterday and Today: Continuity, Rupture and Reconstruction in Operational Codes <i>Şerif Mardin</i>	3
2. Islam and Democracy in Turkey <i>Binnaz Toprak</i>	25
3. Explaining Religious Politics at the Crossroad: AKP-SP <i>Fulya Atacan</i>	45
4. Religion, Transnationalism and Turks in Europe <i>Gamze Avcı</i>	59
5. The Justice and Development Party Government and the Military in Turkey <i>Metin Heper</i>	73
6. The Mystery of the <i>Türban</i> : Participation or Revolt? <i>Ersin Kalaycıoğlu</i>	91
7. An Exercise in Denominational Geography in Search of Ottoman Alevis <i>Hülya Canbakal</i>	111
8. Political Preferences of the Turkish Electorate: Reflections of an Alevi–Sunni Cleavage <i>Ali Çarkoğlu</i>	131
9. Christian Democracy and the AKP: Parallels and Contrasts <i>William Hale</i>	151
10. Conclusion <i>Ali Çarkoğlu</i>	169
<i>Index</i>	177

Notes on Contributors

Fulya Atacan is a professor in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Yıldız Technical University in Istanbul. She has published several articles and books on Sufi orders and social change, Islamic movements in modern Turkey.

Gamze Avcı has been a research fellow at the Department of Turkish Studies at Leiden University since 2003, and served as an assistant professor at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul (1997–2002). She specializes in Turkish immigration to Western Europe and Turkey's relations with the European Union. Her work has appeared in *European Foreign Affairs Review*, *European Journal of Political Research* and *European Journal of Migration and Law*.

Hülya Canbakal received a Ph.D. in History and Middle Eastern Studies from Harvard University (1999) and has worked at Sabancı University as assistant professor since 1999. Her areas of interest include state–society relations, urban history and legal culture.

Ali Çarkoğlu is an associate professor at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Sabancı University, Istanbul. He received his Ph.D. at Binghamton University-State University of New York in 1993. His areas of research interest include voting behavior, political parties, political economy of the informal sector, water conflict and regional development issues in Turkey and the Middle East. His publications have appeared in *Middle Eastern Studies*, *Political Studies*, *European Journal of Political Research*, *Turkish Studies* and *New Perspectives on Turkey and Electoral Studies*.

William Hale is professor of Turkish Politics, and formerly Head of the Department of Political and International Studies in the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London. He is a specialist on the politics of the Middle East, especially Turkey, and has written a number of books and papers on modern Turkish politics and history. He is currently working on a study of Islamism, conservatism and democracy in modern Turkey.

Metin Heper is dean of the Department of Political Science, Administrative and Social Sciences, Bilkent University, and a Founding and Council Member of the Turkish Academy of Sciences.

Ersin Kalaycıoğlu is a full professor of Political Science and Rector (President) of Işık University. He is a student of comparative politics and specializes in political representation and participation. He has published on those two fields internationally.

He has recently been involved in a research project on political participation and women's socio-political status in Turkey as well as in studies of political participation and voting in Turkey.

Şerif Mardin teaches at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabancı University. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Stanford University in 1958. His areas of interest are the sociology of religion (Islam, in particular), fundamentalism, political sociology, historical sociology (the Ottoman Empire) and the intellectual history of the Ottoman Empire.

Barry Rubin is director of the Global Research for International Affairs (GLORIA) Center, Interdisciplinary Center, and editor of the *Middle East Review of International Affairs* (MERIA) and of *Turkish Studies*. His books include *The Long War for Freedom: The Arab Struggle for Democracy in the Middle East*; *Hating America: A History*; *Yasir Arafat: A Political Biography*; and *The Tragedy of the Middle East*. His works on Turkey include *Istanbul Intrigues*, and as an editor, *Turkey in World Politics*; *Political Parties in Turkey*; *Turkey and the European Union*; and *Turkey's Economy in Crisis*.

Binnaz Toprak is a professor in the Department of Political Science and International Relations of Boğaziçi University, Istanbul. Her major area of research is Islam and politics in Turkey, on which she has published numerous articles in English-language scholarly journals and edited books. Her most recent book is a survey research-based study in Turkish with Ersin Kalaycıoğlu on women in the workforce, top administration and politics in Turkey.

This Page intentionally left blank

Introduction

From the perspective of a few years ago, it seems incredible that we now take for granted the idea that Turkey is in a post-Atatürk era. For the ideology and structures created by Atatürk and his followers in the 1920s dominated the country so long and thoroughly—and with a relative record of success—that their rapid demise seemed unlikely.

Nevertheless, by the turn of the century from twentieth to twenty-first, this outcome is precisely what happened. In part, of course, the chain of events can be traced precisely to the success of the Atatürkist program. And in large part, too, its framework continues to be the foundation of modern Turkey.

It is easy to list the multiple factors that accompanied this development, both inside and outside the country. Domestically, these positive changes include higher living standards, economic progress, urban migration, educational advancement, and a readiness to demand more from one's government and society. Negative aspects, problems which demanded new solutions, included the failure of the existing party system, the lack of good leadership, an outgrown statist economic system and patronizing political one, as well as cultural and ethnic clashes.

These were the problems that animated Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s, combining with such international changes as the end of the Cold War, Turkey's ever-tightening relations with Europe, rise of Islamist movements, and so on. In the end, debates gave way to new realities. What is most striking is the principal political solution which came for Turkey: the rule of a moderate-led Islamic party with significant (though subordinate) Islamist elements.

The phenomenal success of the new party—while in large part due to the statistical accident of its landslide victory caused by the other parties' failure to achieve ten percent in the critical election—was soon consolidated. Helped along by economic recovery, good leadership, and the continuing failure of all its party opponents to function, the new era of Islamic political leadership seemed to have established itself as the norm.

Suddenly, history was stood on its head. Political Islam, long regarded as a marginal phenomenon in Turkey, had now seized center stage. How had this happened? The most basic issues of Turkey's history, psyche, ideas, and institutions had to be re-examined in light of these developments.

I will let the following essays speak for themselves. Let me offer, though, a cautionary note. A change in the direction of history does not mean that previous

2 *Religion and Politics in Turkey*

interpretations have been wrong. The ripening of new conditions over time, the imposition of external factors, the human element especially when it comes to effective leadership (or lack thereof), and chance (which in this case means events which could easily have turned a different way) all play their parts.

Turkey was ready for a new phase but was its specific nature inevitable? Such questions cannot be definitively answered but the maintenance of that open space of indeterminacy is necessary to ensure that arguments do not become reductive and reasoning circular. Having said this, the following essays lay the basis for understanding the roots and nature of the new period in Turkey's history.

One theme that deserves underlining is that the success to date of the new ruling group depends in large measure on its ability to be different things to different people, always a balance difficult to maintain. It must persuade some forces that it is Islamist, Islamic, conservative, moderate, technocratic, or merely pragmatic. By the same token, it survives better precisely because of a broader belief that this is a temporary situation, a good sail under which to navigate into Europe and then to be discarded. Only time will tell which interpretations are most correct.

The editors would like to thank the Oriental Institute-Turkey for hosting the July 2004 workshop on which this special issue was based. They also appreciate the assistance of the staffs of the GLORIA Center, Interdisciplinary University, especially Elisheva Brown, and of Sabancı University for making this special issue of *Turkish Studies* possible.

BARRY RUBIN

Turkish Islamic Exceptionalism Yesterday and Today: Continuity, Rupture and Reconstruction in Operational Codes

ŞERİF MARDİN

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabancı University, Istanbul, Turkey

“Only one that is like us and yet distinct from us, and that can coexist with us in the proximity of likeness and the distance of otherness can authenticate true otherness.”¹

The dramatic victory of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) in the Turkish general elections of 2002 caused stupefaction that was most visible among the secular Turkish establishment. The fact that various surveys had predicted this outcome really brought home the shock.

There had been precedents to the Islamization of governments since the 1970s, but the overwhelming superiority of the AKP in Parliament was new. The Welfare (*Refah*) Party, relying on support from conservative, but essentially secular, parties had been in power for a time in 1996–97.² It was forced out by the restrained but, in the end, effective influence of the Turkish armed forces.

Altogether, the political situation created by the success of the AKP was unprecedented. An interesting aspect of the period following this victory was the dearth of studies investigating in depth the Islamic component in the life of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the new prime minister, a former torch bearer of Islam.

Correspondence Address: Şerif Mardin, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabancı University, Orhanlı-Tuzla, 34956 Istanbul, Turkey. Email: mardin@ihlas.net.tr

4 Religion and Politics in Turkey

No serious study of the role of Islam in the prime minister's career emerged from academic circles. His effortless hobnobbing with American presidents and Eurocrats between 2002 and 2003 may have, by contrast with his intellectual origins, highlighted an unexpected cosmopolitanism that became the only focus of speculation.

Yet, at this very juncture, the fierce debate as to whether Islam was an organic component of Turkish culture, a combat between "laics" and Islamists, continued unabated. This age-old controversy was almost detached from issues relating to AKP success. Fears about creeping political Islam, as usual, occupied much space in the media. What was missing was curiosity about the long-range influence of an Islamic "voice" in Turkey, one product of which certainly was Erdoğan himself.

For social scientists—both Turkish and foreign—the issue was one of finding a foundation of laic legitimation for Turkey's modernity rather than attempting to understand the AKP phenomenon. Among Islamists, on the other hand, the obverse of the laic position prevailed, namely that what had happened was an aspect of reintegration of Islam into Turkish society as part of a trend towards greater cultural authenticity.³ For both groups, Durkheim, Weber, Wuthnow, Berger and Luckmann were "good" for Western religion but irrelevant for Turkish Muslims.⁴

This stand was also a denial of the world-over revitalization of religion in modern times about which so much had been written.⁵ What we still need today is a reconstitution of the *process* that has led to the emergence of the AKP. This reconstitution requires a dialectical approach in which a number of opposites are recuperated in a historical setting.⁶

One theme developed here, for instance, is that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the discourse of increasingly powerful Ottoman bureaucracy already carried aspects of a type of "positivism" long before the mid-nineteenth-century reforms of the *Tanzimat*,⁷ and that Islam—both with regard to its institutions and ideology—had only had scattered moments of hegemony in the history of the Ottoman Empire. The ubiquity of a peculiar mix of state and religious discourse in the Ottoman Empire promoted a modern Turkish Islamic "exceptionalism" with distant Ottoman roots. It is the concentration of Islamic studies on the Islam of Arabs⁸ that has hidden this character of Ottoman religious structure, a character that antedates and adumbrates the secularism of the Turkish Republic.

Two levels of the theme of "exceptionalism" are developed here: first, that of Ottoman tacit, deeply embedded, shared "background understandings."⁹ The main point, that secular as well as religious elites shared a space provided by the state in the Ottoman Empire, becomes much more compelling when one introduces the tacit aspect of the sharing, as discussed by Charles Taylor. In the present case, the supporting tacit element is the semi-ontological status of the collective good as a "hypergood" in Islam.¹⁰ The general argument has been made by Patricia Crone,¹¹ the more specific treatment for the Ottoman Empire is found in a brilliant article by Tahsin Görgün.¹² Both works show that in Islam, political and social structures do

not operate on a *foundation* of religiosity, but are considered to be made of the same “stuff.” This mode of thinking has been replaced in contemporary Islam by a post-Cartesian idea of religion and society as distinct but organically connected levels of organization, a “modern” way of posing the problem. There was, then, a foundation of Islamic legitimation for collective organization, the form of which has been forgotten or, at least, neglected in our times. Such a foundation would allow a prior, sophisticated culture of political organization to go on to make political organization the fulcrum of a society. The pre-Ottomans did have that sophisticated political culture and they used what amounted to an Islamic dispensation to focus on the political—one may say with only a slight exaggeration—at the expense of religion in a way that was not anticipated by the original Islamic theory. These two elements are the tacit facets of Ottoman socio-political organization. A second theme in this essay, linked to these organizational precedents, is that of Ottoman reform and bureaucratic *practice* in the nineteenth century as well as its transformation in the late nineteenth century.¹³

The developments regarding Islam in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire covered here only partly overlap with the clash of *Ijtihad* and *Taklid*,¹⁴ a foundational framework of studies of Islamic modernization. In the case of Turkey we should concentrate, rather, on specific developments linked to the organizational novelty and proselytizing work of the Mujaddidi-Nakşibendi religious order.¹⁵ Two points should emerge from this essay. First, that in the Ottoman Empire the process of learning on the road to modernization was more than simply an accumulation of facts and comprises the carving of a new qualitative sphere, i.e., that of the legitimation of knowledge produced in the Western post-Cartesian style. Second, that there exists an autonomous line of development of the Nakşibendi “Sufi” order that takes it into that new cognitive sphere and from there into politics. Finally, another main argument of this essay is that the somewhat diffuse story about “multiple modernities” conceals the necessary attention one should accord to specific historical developments.

The term “operational code,” which appears in the title to the essay, goes back to Nathan Leites’ book on *The Operational Code of the Politbureau*.¹⁶ It refers to a specific type of *praxis*, of dealing with social reality.¹⁷ The praxis of Ottoman bureaucrats, which, typically, focused on institution building, ultimately led to the Turkish Republic. The continuity of this praxis was “ruptured” by that of the Nakşibendi Sufi orders, which like all Islamic brotherhoods, used network organizing for their praxis.¹⁸ As for “reconstruction,” each of these codes changed with time, eventually converging toward the field of politics. “Exceptionalism” is the way in which this very special dialectic has marked Islam in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. In the most general sense this means that the Ottomans as well as the modern Turks shared the feeling that after all was said and done, despite skirmishes and rebellions against the state, they possessed a state; that the state was a life-form through which channels all authorities, whether secular or religious, operated to achievement and success. That sharing, however, did not mean that a variety of *practices* could not develop.

Turkish-Islamic Exceptionalism

In the contemporary literature on Islam and modernity the primary—and in fact overwhelming—voice is that of a concentration on Arab or Salafi Islam. Aziz al-Azmeh's *Islams and Modernities*, an example of an informed, philosophically declamatory and sociologically aware prototype of the genre, is, despite its pluralist title, primarily a comment on Arab Islam. This selectiveness, which can only be described as sectarianism, does not take into account—*pace* Indonesia, Pakistan and the Balkans—the case of Ottoman and modern Turkish Islam. Possibly, at the time *Islams and Modernities* was written, Islam in Turkey did not hold out the prospect of an investigation that did not fit ready-made categories.¹⁹ Yet it is exactly this particular *sui generis* aspect of Turkish Islam that today seems in need of an explanation. This essay will categorize this contrary²⁰ and non-conformist aspect of Turkish Islam as that of “Turkish exceptionalism,” using this adjective by example of a book by Seymour Martin Lipset, on American exceptionalism.

What Lipset was underlining were those features of American society that had given it a special send-off in history, a country that had developed without the feudal baggage that had persistently stuck to West European modern history. This was, of course, an insight Lipset owed to Alexis de Tocqueville, the premier political sociologist of the transition to modernity.²¹ The point made in this essay is that the specifics of Turkish history have endowed the Ottomans and the Turkish Republic with characteristics that have worked cumulatively to create a special setting for Islam, a setting where secularism and Islam interpenetrate, which of course is quite different from saying that Islam and secularism have fused. This interpenetration or overlap is the real methodological obstacle that faces the investigator of Islamic modernism in Turkey. It establishes a field for study that shows much greater complexity than the research based on the essentialism of Islam, the core of contemporary studies of “political” Islam in Turkey and elsewhere.²² This essay has attempted to overcome this obstacle—at least partly—by basing itself on a specific study of social movements by Eyerman and Jamison, who concentrate on social movements as cognitive practice.²³

The three social forces that enter this narrative are the discourse of the Ottoman and Turkish state officials, the rise of the Mujaddidi-Khalidi Nakşibendi order and the voice of Ottoman and Turkish intellectuals trying to extract a meaning from Islam in an attempt to synchronize it with the European intellectual construction known as “civilization.”²⁴ As to the “Arab” Islam already mentioned as a foil to “Ottoman,” it is not a linguistic-religious category, but rather an extrinsic presence of Turkish history. First, in the sense of the condescension of the Ottoman bureaucratic center towards Arabs as “Bedouins” (*bedevî*); second, in the suspicion of the Young Turks that Arabs were seceding from the Ottoman Empire; and third, through the promotion of a *dolchstosslegende* (stab-in-the-back legend) of the “betrayal” of the Arabs during the First World War. This assiduously promoted Republican theme was found in all instructional texts on the history of the Turkish Republic; works in Arabic were found to ignore the specificity of Ottoman-Turkish-Islam. Today, in Turkey, the classical

texts of Islam are increasingly being retrieved, while writings by Arabs, on the other hand, served as short-lived sources of inspiration. Sayyid Kutub or Said Hawa were influential in the 1960s and in the late 1970s. The writings of these two Muslim revivalists, written in Arabic, were translated into Turkish but, as will appear in the following pages, they were overtaken by the local productions of Nakşibendis.

The Political Discourse of Ottoman Elites

There has now accumulated considerable information about the Ottoman political elite.²⁵ Halil İnalcık was the first to indicate that while the Doctors of Islamic Law (*ulema*) had a central role to play in the Ottoman Empire, there existed a rivalry that set the *ulema* against the carriers of the Ottoman political discourse formed in the Palace and the scribal class established in bureaus of the Ottoman administration.²⁶ This rivalry was in fact the rivalry of two discourses: one clearly targeted to the preservation of the Ottoman state and the second aimed at keeping a state of equilibrium in the complex social structure of the Empire, giving its due both to individuals and to the Ottoman equivalent of established social institution.

Although there existed an overlap between these discourses there also could be distinguished a dividing line separating the discourse of the bureaucracy—more secular—and that of the *ulema*—more religious. An early example of the “secularity” of the bureaucratic discourse may be found in the work of the seventeenth-century polymath Kâtip Çelebi. Both his organicist theories of the state and his adoption of the Khaldunian view of the rise and demise of states differ from the argumentation of the earlier, more moralistic classical discourse of Kınalızâde that has a more clearly Islamic foundation.²⁷

Kâtip Çelebi’s indictment of the nefarious effects of the religious strife of his time as well as his critique of Ottoman Islamic religious education place him in a special locus even within the discourse of Ottoman scribal personnel. While we do not know whether this seventeenth-century Ottoman critique was a harbinger of more general secularist trends, it is quite clear that the eighteenth century brought about a number of cumulative changes that promoted the “secularist” aspect of the discourse of Ottoman bureaucracy. One of these changes was the creation of a new bureau (*Amedî Odası*) through which flowed all communication with Western states.²⁸ The employees of this bureau were now increasingly exposed to information about the major European states. Antedating this change already in the 1730s there had been an increase in the number of bureaucrats who were sent to various European capitals to observe Western “ways.” An innovation of the same years was the practice of these envoys to write reports about their missions upon their return. What is striking about these reports is the “materiality” of their content. The reports did not contrast the religious or political institutions they found in the West with their Ottoman equivalents, but focused on the material elements of life. They detailed technological advances such as the construction of stone buildings, both military and civilian, and they described the splendor of Versailles, its organization of leisure activities

8 Religion and Politics in Turkey

and in particular the theatre. The precision of the tables of astronomical observatories also impressed them.

In the case of 28 Çelebi Mehmed Efendi, the envoy to France in 1720:

What he evokes—principally—and with what astonishment and wonder are the achievements [of] science and technology and those of the different arts ... But his curiosity and interest also cover natural phenomena and animal species: the tides or the early bloom of hyacinths and violets in Bordeaux ... plants of the Jardin de Roi “unknown in Turkey,” ... the animals of the new world he discovers in the menagerie in Chantilly.²⁹

The most interesting part of his report, however, is Mehmet Çelebi’s summarizing of his experiences, i.e., the *hadis* to the effect that the world is the prison of the believer and the paradise of the infidel. This, of course, is pure irony and opens another window on the discourse of the Ottoman bureaucrats. An aspect of the Ottoman bureaucratic style in harmony with this bureaucratic irony is the strong influences in Ottoman state bureaus of Persian culture and its classics, an anathema to the more Orthodox *ulema*.

No Doctor of Islamic Law was chosen for these foreign missions, even though the bureaucrats that were selected had the same disadvantages of the *ulema* of not knowing the languages of the countries in which they were on mission. Such personnel did however emerge increasingly from the *Amedî* Bureau with time. A most extraordinary example of the emphasis on “materiality” is the report on Austria of Ebubekir Ratip Efendi.³⁰ During the 227 days he spent in Austria in 1792–93 Ebubekir Ratip Efendi was able to compile an extraordinarily detailed description of the military, financial and economic organization of that country. Only in one instance does one encounter a statement about religions in the entire report,³¹ and that relates to Islam being a better mobilizer of the military than the West.

In short, the reports of the envoys had a “positivistic” flavor, which recreated another shared tacit element, that of the bureaucrats’ discourse. No wonder, then, that the foundation of the nineteenth-century reform movement known as the *Tanzimat* was modeled on the theories of the Austro-German Cameralists, those reformers of state structures whose view adumbrated the later positivists and Saint-Simonians. The entire reform movement of the *Tanzimat* was based on the positivistic view of the social engineer.³² In the 1790s, a doorway into that worldview had been the similarly positivistic cast of military education.³³

The prevailing conceptual set of the bureaucrats was taken over by the main architects of the *Tanzimat*, headed by the Grand Vizier Mustafa Reşid Paşa (1800–58).³⁴ In the succeeding generation (the 1860s), we see the members of the first Constitutionalist-Liberal movement, the Young Ottomans, promoting a new version of the bureaucratic style, although with a new twist: they offered a constitutional project albeit with an Islamic foundation. The reason for this innovation is clear: already there had been protests on the part of groups of Muslims against the privileges

granted European powers in the Empire in 1856.³⁵ Signs appeared of a new ideological-religious threshold: in 1859 a conspiracy by members of the Nakşibendi brotherhood aiming to assassinate the Sultan was uncovered (*Kuleli Vak'ası*, the Kuleli Incident).³⁶ Nakşibendis did collaborate with the Young Ottomans in the sense of using the Friday prayers in mosques to promote constitutional reform. However, this collaboration was tainted by the Nakşibendis' dislike of and resentment against the reform policy of the *Tanzimat*, hostility that was expressed at great length by Sarıyerli Şeyh Sadık Efendi in his *Tanzir-i Telemak*.³⁷

While the Young Ottomans were wary of discussing religious themes, an important development took place within the Ottoman religious worldview in their time, namely the capture by private individuals of discussions about religion, to that date only a legitimate field for the *ulema*. This new area of discussion was introduced by Ali Suavi, an extraordinary character who, though a graduate of the secular, state-sponsored Middle School of the *Tanzimat*, fabricated a religious personality for himself. While Suavi was dismissed by the Young Ottomans as a charlatan,³⁸ the new "private" voice of Islam, sometimes loud and sometimes more measured, was from now on a theme equally shared by secular and religious intellectuals. Members of a new intelligentsia—most of whom were no longer educated in religious seminars (*medrese*), but in the schools established as part of the reforms of the *Tanzimat*—began to discuss Islam as a fundamental social issue. This new venue first appeared in the 1870s. The aim, at this juncture, was the mobilization of Muslims in order to construct a new Islamic unity; the solidarity thus gained was to be used against imperialism. Later, in the 1890s, part of the intelligentsia promoted arguments that would allow Islam to be seen as the locus of progress and civilization. What is quite clear here is the overlap between the earlier discourse of the bureaucrats and this new utilitarian use of Islam. In the 1870s we still find Münif Paşa, the premier organizer of knowledge in the Western mode of the *Tanzimat*, speaking of the elimination of religious fanaticism through the spread of science.

Selim Deringil has shown how the state-centered, manipulative use of Islam (diluted by elements of superstitious fears) was the real foundation of the Islamic conservation of Sultan Abdülhamid II.³⁹ A doctoral dissertation from 2003 has also indicated how the Ottoman intellectuals—at first in the 1890s but more clearly after the Young Turks' revolution of 1908—were bowled over by the materialism of Büchner and Moleschott, the two best-known leaders of nineteenth-century German materialism. The only limit to the Turks' admiration seems to have been the potential of materialism to damage the state.⁴⁰ This transformation of the positivist element in the bureaucratic discourse appears once more in the positivist worldview of the leaders of the opposition to Sultan Abdülhamid in exile.⁴¹ No wonder then that it later also shows in the policies of the Young Turks in power.⁴²

The echo among religious circles of the theories of Büchner and Moleschott may be followed at two levels: first with regard to the slow but persistent penetration into the provinces of the media as instruments of communication. Second, in the continued interest in technology shown in the Hamidian era both by the Sultan and by the

Ottoman press. A third, less visible but as important level was the shifting of discussions of the creative power of the divinity from the description of the infinite variety of God's creative powers to that of the autonomy of forces of nature directed by God. In another work an attempt was made to show how a Nakşibendi, raised in the religious seminaries of North Eastern Turkey, availed himself of that shift of focus to make it an element of his Islamic "voice."⁴³ The latest versions of what I have called here the "private capture" of discussions about Islam were still a central discourse in the first years of the twentieth century, the poet Mehmet Akif (1873–1936) being one of its most prominent spokesmen.⁴⁴ Mehmet Akif is the archetypal agent of the stage Turkish "exceptionalism" had reached at that time: he projected the voice of an Islamic reformer, he was an Ottoman patriot, he sat as a representative in the Republic's Grand National Assembly, and he was the author of the Republic's anthem. In the meantime, one relatively silent movement, that of the Nakşibendis, had been gaining ground since the first decades of the nineteenth century.

The media of the Republican era has identified at least two Nakşibendi-led movements that emerged in the early twentieth century. One, the privates' rebellion of April 1909, eventually leading to Sultan Abdülhamid's abdication, and the second, the revolt of Sheikh Said in 1925. In the extant literature, the description of these two movements spotlights their "fanaticism," treachery and reactionary qualities. But this narrative dismisses the strength and vigorousness of the growth of Nakşibendism, an extraordinarily resilient revivalist movement that has to be studied in greater historical detail to feature its importance in Turkey.⁴⁵ All of the successful elements of modern Turkish Islamic politics have originated in later branchings of that group.

Nakşibendis

In the seventeenth century in India the potential for an Islamic resistance against the state was rediscovered by an *âlim* (Doctor of Islamic Law), Ahmed al-Sirhindi (d.1624), who went on to reorganize the Nakşibendi order for this very purpose. There is more here than a simple conflict of power in the sense that for him *din*, religion, was not just an ontological position, a metaphysical theory and a critical guideline, but in addition, revitalized Islam was an organizational means to stop its infiltration by creedal formulations of Hinduism, a policy he felt was encouraged by the Mogul ruler Akbar.⁴⁶ Sirhindi died in 1624 and by the early 1800s his mobilizing stance had been brought to the Kurdish region of Central, North East and South East Anatolia.⁴⁷ Here it achieved immense success, possibly because it established the foundation of Islamic civility in a mountainous region where organized Islam had not been able to penetrate. In addition, the leader of this movement, Shaikh or Mevlanâ Halid Bağdadi (1777–1826), was a brilliant organizer. As result, the area of Nakşibendi influence was enormously widened in Anatolia in the nineteenth century.⁴⁸

No attempt is made to reach for links between this revivalist Mujaddidi-Khalidi Nakşibendism and the wider revivalism in the Islamic world of a reformist

movement that has been named neo-Sufi.⁴⁹ The discussion is ongoing and a considerable amount of material has been produced, but appears to have been ignored by Turkish social scientists.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, specific studies of the Nakşibendi movement show its vast extension, and its extraordinary proselytizing zeal. Hamid Algar's description is the most apposite:

When taking leave of [his Pîr] Shah Gulâm Ali Dihlevî, Mevlanâ Halid informed him that his supreme aim was to seek this world for the sake of religion ... he therefore elaborated a veritable 'politics of guidance' (*siyasat al-irshad*) which led him to construct a network of no fewer than 116 khalfas, each with a carefully delineated area of responsibility, and in the case of some prominent recruits to relax the devotional discipline customarily imposed on *mürîds*. The sole novelty that Mevlanâ Halid contributed to the devotional life of the Nakşibendi order—an unprecedented emphasis on the practice of *râbita* (the establishing of an imaginary link with the Shaykh) and an insistence on confining it to himself—had a political aspect: that of unifying the Hâlidî-Naqshbandî order as a centralized, disciplined organization ... The ambiguous relations between the Ottoman authorities and Mevlanâ Halid, their would-be savior and guide on the path to rectitude, were most apparent in Istanbul. Mevlanâ Halid's first representative in the Ottoman capital aroused hostility because of his attempts to exclude non-initiates from a public mosque during the performance of Hâlidî rituals. His replacement, Abd'ülvehhâb es-Sûsî, played a more constructive role and recruited into the Hâlidî Naqshbandî order Mekkizâde Mustafa Âsım, several times Şeyhülislam; Keçecizade İzzet Molla, qadi of Istanbul; and members of the bureaucracy including Gürcü Necip Paşa and Musa Safveti Paşa. Precisely this swift expansion of the order led to anxiety on the part of Sultan Mahmud II, resulting in a series of expulsions of prominent Hâlidîs from Istanbul; the most comprehensive of these came in April 1828 when all Hâlidîs were banished and a ban was placed on the naming of any new Hâlidî representative to the city. Hâlidî influence was nonetheless strong in the upper echelons of the bureaucracy during most of the reign of Mahmud II and it may have helped to create a favorable climate for the abolition of the Janissaries and the proscription of the Bektaşî order. In the early 1830s Sultan Mahmud became better disposed to the Hâlidîs and in 1833 he reappointed Mekkizâde (*sic*) Âsım Efendi to the office of Şeyhülislam, which he continued to hold in the reign of Sultan Abdülmecid.⁵¹

During the nineteenth century, all of Anatolia began to be crisscrossed by Nakşibendi networks.⁵² The increasing penetration of Sufi orders in this area amounted to the implantation of elements of an Islamic civility at a time when the Ottoman Empire had been unable to intervene in inter-tribal conflict and the ensuing anarchy.⁵³ The Nakşibendi leaders also assumed roles of political leadership in this region.⁵⁴