Political Islamists in Turkey and the Gülen Movement

Recep Dogan

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PREFACE

The Justice and Development Party (the AKP) and the Gülen movement (aka Hizmet Movement) are religious groups that aim to serve Islam and religious life. Both groups had a relationship for their mutual benefit for a long time. The main issue in common for both groups was the repression and restraining of the rigid secularists within the state institutions and the military. Following the elimination of the ultra-secularists from the state apparatus, the positive relationship between the AKP and the movement has turned into a brutal fight, especially after the corruption investigation against the AKP government and the members of Erdogan's family in 2013. This book aims to discuss the ideology of political Islamists and its effects on religion and social life. Moreover, it seeks to understand how and why the positive image of the Gülen movement has been changed from a faith-inspired community to a "terrorist organization" by the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his ruling party, the AKP. Due to the great polarization, hatred and enmity of the ruling Erdogan government against all members of the Gülen movement and its huge effect on society, it has become a necessity to analyze political Islam and its fight against the Gülen movement.

After decades of rigid secularist rule which constantly threatened the Islamist parties as well as religious groups in Turkey, political power was finally transferred to the political Islamist AKP, the Justice and Development Party, in the 2002 general elections. Nevertheless, the AKP's Kemalist and secularist rivals in the judiciary, military, and various parts of the state bureaucracy continued to challenge the party.

Thus, the Gülen Movement's support was essential for the AKP to gain control over the state institutions. For the Gülen Movement, aligning with the ruling party was desirable too, because the success of political Islamists enabled the Islamic civil society organizations, including the movement, to grow rapidly with less interference from the secularist elites, particularly during the first two terms of the AKP government. Both groups cooperated in the Ergenekon and Sledgehammer (Balyoz) trials to neutralize the tutelary capacity of the secularist military caste. The strategic alliance peaked during the constitutional referendum of September 12, 2010. Although it was easy for both groups to put aside their differences in the ideologies when fighting the common enemy, it was not easy for both to maintain their strategic alliance when the Erdogan government exerted itself to bring all civil society organizations into subjection. The alliance between the AKP and the Gülen movement thus began to fall apart in 2011; it dramatically collapsed in 2013 and finally evolved into an intense fight in the subsequent years.

Although the clash between the AKP and the Gülen movement is usually described as a power struggle within the state, this does not give the full picture of the situation. The most powerful reason for the split of the two groups from each other is directly related to their understanding of Islam or, in other words, how each group interprets Islam in theory and practice. The split between them is, in reality, the difference between political Islam and civil Islam. While giving the history of relations between the AKP and the Gülen movement, the book aims to explore the reasons that caused a dramatic split between them. It also explains human rights violations, restrictions on the media and the destruction of democratic institutions in Erdogan's "New Turkey" project. Moreover, in order to help readers to better understand the difference between Political Islam and civil Islam, the book explains the political theology of each group. In this respect, political theologies of the AKP and the Gülen movement are compared to each other in order to give a clear picture of the differences between them. The book concludes with how this fight would shape the future of Turkey as well as how it may direct Muslims' understanding of Islam when they adopt the ideology of Political Islam or the ideology of civil Islam.

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CONTENTS

Abbreviations

Aramco	The Saudi-American oil company
BDP	Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party
CHP	The Republican People's Party
DP	Democrat Party
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ETÖ	Ergenekon Terror Organization
EU	European Union
FETÖ	Gülenist Terror Organization
FP	The Virtue Party
FRA	Freedom Research Association
HSYK	Supreme Council of Judges and Prosecutors
IHH	The Turkish Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief
IMF	The International Monetary Fund
KCK	The Kurdistan Communities Union
MGK	National Security Council
MHP	The Nationalist Movement Party
MIT	Turkish National Intelligence Agency
MNP	The National Order Party
MSP	The National Salvation Party
MÜSIAD	The Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPR	National Public Radio
Oda TV	Oda TV which was founded in 200 is an online news portal based in Turkey

OFAC	The Office of Foreign Assets Control
PEJ	The Equality and Justice Party in France
PKK	The Kurdistan Workers' Party
RP	The Welfare Party
SP	The Felicity Party
The AKP	Adalet and Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
The DENK	Dutch for "think" and Turkish for "equality", self-styled as DENK is a political party in The Netherlands that calls itself a "movement"
The Diyanet	Turkish Directory of Religious Affairs
The NBZ	The Freedom Party of Austria is a right-wing populist, national-conservative political party in Austria
The UN	The United Nations
The YÖK	Council for Higher Education
TURGEV	Youth Education and Service Foundation of Turkey
Türksat	Turkish Satellite Communications Company
TUSKON	The Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Islam has been interpreted in various ways by individuals since its birth and Political Islam is one of its interpretations. Political Islam has a long history, and Turkey's Justice and Development Party—the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi)—is a new face of it in the twenty-first century. The main goals of writing this book are to define political Islam, especially in the Turkish context with respect to the AKP, a political party which has been in power in Turkey since 2002, and to try to understand the nature of conflicts between the two Islamic groups: the AKP and the Gülen Movement, a transnational social movement emerging originally in Turkey in the early 1970s.

The Justice and Development Party (the AKP) and the Gülen movement (aka Hizmet Movement) are religious groups that aim to serve Islam and religious life. Both groups had a relationship for their mutual benefit for a long time. The main issue in common for both groups was the repression and restraining of the rigid secularists within the state institutions and the military. Following the elimination of the ultra-secularists from the state apparatus, the positive relationship between the AKP and the movement has turned into a brutal fight, especially after the corruption investigation against the AKP government and the members of Erdogan's family in 2013. This book aims to discuss the ideology of political Islamists and its effects on religion and social life. Moreover, it seeks to understand how and why the positive image

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of the Gülen movement has been changed from a faith-inspired community to a "terrorist organization" by the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his ruling party, the AKP.

Although the Justice and Development Party (the AKP) has long benefitted greatly from the valuable support of Fethullah Gülen and his followers in the way of democratizing the state and its institutions, the two groups have clearly separated from each other since the 2013 corruption scandals or perhaps a little earlier.[1] This separation has created a massive impact on practicing Muslims as well as on others. Due to the great polarization, hatred and enmity of the ruling Erdogan government against all members of the Gülen movement and its huge effect on society, it has become a necessity to analyze political Islam and its fight against the Gülen movement.

Fethullah Gülen and Recep Tayyip Erdogan have great influence on Turkish people. Both use Islamic concepts to revive Islamic life in Turkey and receive support from Muslims. Erdogan and AKP's elite come from the late Necmettin Erbakan's[2] National Outlook Movement[3] (Milli Görüş), the religiopolitical movement which seeks a religious revival through the ideology of political Islam, whereas Fethullah Gülen aims to promote civil Islam among different segments of society without seeking to establish an Islamic state. Gülen refrained from partisan politics and employed a gradualist approach focusing on a bottom-up spiritual progress of society. Thus, the Gülen movement has invested its capital and energy mostly in education and dialogue. In order to avoid confrontation with the secularist Turkish state, the movement stayed away from political Islamists, including the National Outlook.

Looking back to its recent history, the National Outlook Movement pursued a political path of forming political parties that would ultimately establish an Islamic state much like the Muslim Brotherhood[4] tried in Egypt. Erbakan adopted a discourse infused with anti-Western and antisecularist sentiments, thus experiencing military intervention several times. Avoiding the mistakes of the past, the reformists led by Tayyip Erdogan, Abdullah Gül, and Bülent Arınç, ultimately split from the National Outlook Movement and formed the AKP on August 14, 2001.

After decades of rigid secularist rule which constantly threatened the Islamist parties as well as religious groups in Turkey, political power was finally transferred to the political Islamist AKP, the Justice and Development Party, in the 2002 general elections. The ruling AKP has increased its control over the government and consolidated its power

further in the succeeding years. At the beginning of its rule, Erdogan's AKP avoided direct confrontation with the secularist institutions. It claimed to have changed, and described itself as a representative of conservative democrats, rather than Islamists. Nevertheless, the AKP's Kemalist[5] and secularist rivals in the judiciary, military, and various parts of the state bureaucracy continued to challenge the party. Thus, the Gülen Movement's support was essential for the AKP to gain control over the state institutions. For the Gülen Movement, aligning with the ruling party was desirable too, because the success of political Islamists enabled the Islamic civil society organizations, including the movement, to grow rapidly with less interference from the secularist elites, particularly during the first two terms of the AKP government. As a matter of fact, Gülen and his followers had been treated negatively and suppressed by the former secularist elites and the military caste, especially in the aftermath of the frequent military interventions and post-modern coups. They were subjected to many antidemocratic sanctions, accusations, and implementations by the secular state for decades. This harsh attitude toward the movement was eased during the AKP rule until 2012. During the February 28, 1997 post-modern coup,[6] a video which leaked to the media showed that Gülen advised his sympathizers to cover their religious identities; otherwise, they would be sacked by the secularist state. In the lawsuit, opened in 2000 at the Ankara State Security Court, Gülen was accused of undermining the secular order. The lawsuit described the Gülen movement as the strongest and most effective Islamic group in Turkey which camouflages its methods with a democratic and moderate image. However, Gülen was cleared of all the accusations through the process of the Turkish judiciary system. The Ankara Criminal Court acquitted Fethullah Gülen of subverting the secular regime in 2006.

Following the institution of European Union (EU)-oriented liberal changes to the Counterterrorism Law on May 5, 2006, Gülen and the movement he inspired were acquitted of the accusations. Similarly, the AKP survived the military's indirect intervention on April 27, 2007 with the support of the Gülen Movement. Both groups cooperated in the Ergenekon[7] and Sledgehammer (Balyoz)[8] trials to neutralize the tutelary capacity of the secularist military caste. The strategic alliance peaked during the constitutional referendum of September 12, 2010. This referendum altered the composition of the judicial bodies and weakened the power of the ultra-secularists in the judiciary. Gülen publicly encouraged

his sympathizers to cast affirmative votes in the referendum and in return, Erdogan offered his gratitude to Gülen and the movement.

As a matter of fact, all three strongholds of the secular establishment in the presidency, military, and judiciary were neutralized in 2010. As a result, the movement was no longer an open target for the repression of the secularist elites during the AKP rule and a grand alliance was formed between them. After all the years of suffering from the suspicious, negative attitudes of the secularist and Kemalist elite, the movement enjoyed the restoration of its honor through the glorification of the AKP elite. Nevertheless, it did not last long. Indeed, it was a great opportunity for the victims of secular oppression to have more power in the state and public life. However, this was also the beginning of conflict between the two groups and termination of the strategic alliance. Although it was easy for both groups to put aside their differences in the ideologies when fighting the common enemy, it was not easy for both to maintain their strategic alliance when the Erdogan government exerted itself to bring all civil society organizations into subjection. The alliance between the AKP and the Gülen movement thus began to fall apart in 2011; it dramatically collapsed in 2013 and finally evolved into an intense fight in the subsequent years.[9]

Each group attacked the other using the control they had gained over particular state functions in the preceding years. The AKP used its control over the executive and legislative branches to subjugate the movement; the sympathizers of the Gülen Movement contended against the AKP through their connections in the bureaucracy. It seems the AKP government neutralized the influence of the movement over the state apparatus during its fight against it.

The differences in the ideology, worldview, and interpretation of Islam have eventually caused a dramatic split between the movement and the AKP. Familiarity breeds contempt: the dramatic differences in each group came to be known and the split between them became an inescapable result. This separation turned into one of the fiercest political battles in the history of Turkish politics.[10] The conflict between these two groups has many roots. At the ideological level, the most important divergence is their approach to Islam for the AKP stems from the Muslim Brotherhood tradition or the ideology of political Islam while the Gülen Movement comes from a Sufi and Turkish brand of Islam which has disdained from the Arab world's Muslim Brotherhood tradition.

Political Islamists see Erdogan as the leader of the Muslim world; hence, they cannot tolerate Gülen sharing the same status with him. Secondly, Erdogan wants to be the president with unrestricted power, with no checks and balances. He is very ambitious to hold all power in his own hands. He perceived Gülen and the movement he inspired as rivals to his goal; thus, he declared them the arch enemy. Through controlling the executive and legislative power in the state, the AKP has been purging the followers of the movement from the state as well as from the public sphere.

Although the clash between the AKP and the Gülen movement is usually described as a power struggle within the state, this does not give the full picture of the situation. The most powerful reason for the split of the two groups from each other is directly related to their understanding of Islam or, in other words, how each group interprets Islam in theory and practice. The split between them is, in reality, the difference between political Islam and civil Islam. While giving the history of relations between the AKP and the Gülen movement, the book aims to explore the reasons that caused a dramatic split between them. It also explains human rights violations, restrictions on the media and the destruction of democratic institutions in Erdogan's "New Turkey" project. Moreover, in order to help readers to better understand the differences between Political Islam and Civil Islam, the book explains the political theology of each group. In this respect, political theologies of the AKP and the Gülen movement are compared to each other in order to give a clear picture of the differences between them. The book concludes with how this fight would shape the future of Turkey as well as how it may direct Muslims' understanding of Islam when they adopt the ideology of Political Islam or the ideology of civil Islam.

Notes

1. The 2004 National Security Council (MGK) document indicates that Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) agreed to a planned crackdown on the movement. The MGK document asked the government to develop an action plan to follow the MGK's recommendations and instructed the Prime Ministry's Implementation and Monitoring Coordination Council (BUTKK) to coordinate the ministries and monitor whether the steps were being implemented. The MGK decision urged the Foreign Ministry, Interior Ministry and National

Intelligence Organization (MIT) to closely monitor and report on the activities of the Gülen movement at home and abroad. It advised the government to instruct the Interior Ministry and Ministry of Education to investigate and monitor schools affiliated with the Gülen movement and report their activities to the Information Technologies and Communications Authority (BTK). A termination plan on the Gülen movement, which was drafted back in 2004, has been in action since then.

2. Erbakan (29 October 1926–27 February 2011) was the founder of political Islam and National Outlook Movement (Milli Görüş) in Turkey. He was the Prime Minister of Turkey from 1996 to 1997. He experienced military interventions a few times and was later banned from politics by the Constitutional Court of Turkey due to violating the separation of religion and state. On the basis of National Outlook ideology, Erbakan established several Islamic political parties in Turkey from the 1960s to the 2010s, namely the National Order Party (MNP), the National Salvation Party (MSP), the Welfare Party (RP), the Virtue Party (FP), and the Felicity Party (SP). He died on 27 February 2011.

3. It is a religio-political movement founded by Necmettin Erbakan and a series of Islamist parties inspired by its founder on the basis of the ideology of political Islam.

4. It is s an Islamic organization that was founded in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna 1928. The Muslim Brotherhood is an Islamist religious, political, and social movement which aims implement Islamic sharia law into government based on an Islamic ethos of altruism and civic duty, in opposition to political and social injustice and to British imperial rule.

5. People who follow the ideology of Kemalism also known as Atatürkism. Kemalism was founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founding ideology of the Republic of Turkey. Kemalism was a serious of reforms designed to separate the new Turkish state from its Ottoman past and implement a western lifestyle, including the establishment of democracy and secularism.

6. It refers to the decisions issued by the Turkish military leadership on a National Security Council meeting on 28 February 1997 which initiated the process that precipitated the resignation of Islamist prime minister Necmettin Erbakan of the Welfare Party, and the end of his coalition government.

7. It is a mythical place located in the inaccessible valleys of the Altay Mountains. The name was given to an alleged clandestine, secularist ultra-nationalist organization in Turkey with possible ties to members of the country's military and security forces. It was accused of terrorism in Turkey. It is believed to be a part of the deep state in Turkey which

alleged members had been indicted on charges of plotting to foment unrest, by assassinating intellectuals, politicians, judges, military staff, and religious leaders, with the ultimate goal of toppling the incumbent government.

8. It is the name of an alleged Turkish secularist military coup plan dating back to 2003, in response to the Justice and Development Party (AKP) gaining office.

9. Demiralp, Seda, "The Breaking Up of Turkey's Islamic Alliance: The Akp-Gulen Conflict and Implications for Middle East Studies," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 20, no. 1 (2016): 1–7.

10. Gursel, Kadri, "AKP-Cemaat Savasinda Neyi Savunmalıyız?" (What Should We Defend in the AKP-Cemaat War?), *Milliyet*, December 8, 2013, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/kadri-gursel/akp-cemaat-savasinda-neyi-savunmaliyiz--1804154/.

Political Islam

2.1 Definitions of Political Islam

Islam is a religion which offers a number of general principles and guidelines to its followers in relation to individual, familial, social, and governmental life on the basis of the Qur'an and Sunnah (Prophetic Traditions). The interpretation of Islam by individuals, nations, and cultures is different than Islam itself for it can be interpreted in many different ways including in relation to systems of government.[1] Islamism or political Islam is about political order and it is a powerful instance of the global phenomenon of religious fundamentalism.[2] Hence, Political Islam is a particular approach to interpretation of Islam on the basis of certain doctrines, beliefs, and values as the foundation of a political structure. The supporters of this ideology use some key concepts from Islamic history such as Islamic State, Caliphate and the Sharia to constitute their doctrines. For Political Islamists, there is no distinction between religion and politics.[3] The slogan "Islam is *din* and *dawla*" (religion and state) is common among them. Political Islamists aim to religionize politics for the promotion of a political order that is believed to emanate from the will of God and is not based on popular sovereignty.[4]

The interaction of Islam and politics continues to draw the attention of scholars and the concern of policy makers. Political Islamists have come to power through duly democratic processes in their respective countries and are eager to have a significant impact on world events.[5] Their activities not only cover politics but also social, financial, economic,

and educational spheres. This book aims to explain the relationship between Islam and politics in Turkey for it attracts the greatest attention from both Muslim societies and the international community.

Islamism is often nurtured in local conditions that must be understood. There have been different kinds of Islam, at different moments, for different people, and in different settings.[6] Interpretation of Islam by individuals and groups range from reformist political and social protest movements to ultraconservative movements focused on morality-related issues rather than economic redistribution.[7] Some Islamists are strongly nationalist in orientation as seen in Turkey.[8]

Political Islam has many faces, as manifested by the diverse and divergent Islamist parties and movements operating in Muslim-majority states and beyond.[9] It has cycles of success and failure, intertwined with hope and despair. The political reverting of formerly "moderate" Muslim-majority government (the AKP) in Turkey has disappointed many Muslims who hope for more democratic political reforms in the heartland of the Muslim world. Moreover, the bloody Egyptian military coup in 2013 and brutal civil wars in Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Iraq have destroyed the expectations and hope of many Muslims.

Political Islamic ideology proposes that Islam as a body of faith has something important to say about how politics and society should be ordered in the contemporary Muslim world and implemented in some fashion.[10] Political Islam is an interpretation of Islam by individuals, groups, and organizations that pursue political objectives. It provides political responses to today's societal challenges by imagining future with the concepts borrowed from the Islamic tradition.[11] It dictates political values to its followers and Muslim rulers such as the notion of justice for all citizens. But political Islam is not independent of particular social and political contexts in which Islamist groups and parties operate.

Political Islamists aim to implement their vision of Islamic law in political sense; therefore, they are incapable of making political compromises or building coalitions with other political forces/parties. The mainstream ideology of political Islam is anti-democratic in its nature, because according to this ideology, the caliph, the head of Muslims, represents God's sovereignty and everyone must obey him. Thus, mainstream political Islamists use democracy in an instrumentalist fashion to come to power. But, once in power they are likely to abandon the democratic system in order to give all power to one person.

While Political Islamists have many goals, the ultimate one is establishing a worldwide caliphate and Islamic state.[12]

Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328),[13] an influential Hanbali theologian argues that the essence of government is applying force to people so they live in obedience and their solidarity is not ruined. Thus, the ruler can demand obedience from his people, even if he is not just, because, an unjust ruler is better than strife and the dissolution of society.[14] It is obvious that ibn Taymiyya advocates a particular political order that can operate against social harmony and basic political freedoms. This approach paved the way for the current Muslim political dictators across the Middle East and North Africa to justify their authoritarian rule. The politicization of religion and the induction of religion into politics are the unique characteristics of political Islamists. For example, Saudi Arabia is a hereditary monarchy legitimized in religious terms by the Wahhabi religious establishment.

2.2   A Brief History of Political Islam

Political Islam has a long history and has appeared in various forms in different contexts.[15] Since it is very difficult to cover all the history of political Islam and its various forms, we have mainly focused on the Political Islam that has emerged in the last decades of the twentieth century until present. The representatives of this ideology have primarily resorted to political aspect of Islam to illustrate the perceived threat of Westernization in the Muslim world to Muslims.

Initially, Western colonialization and the evolving sociopolitical conditions in the Middle East caused some Muslim leaders/groups to conceptualize Political Islam as a response to the west and foreign ideologies. They advocated the notion of political power, caliphate, and unity of Muslims to protect Islam and Muslim world.[16] It was a reaction to more powerful and more successful western state model. Moreover, many Muslims, including traditionally educated, reformist-minded Muslim scholars such as M. Abduh, started to question their own values with the feelings of inferiority against the west and its civilization.

Western colonialization of Islamic lands has been interpreted by scholars in various ways. Some scholars identified it as the clash of two conflicting state models[17] while others deemed it as the fight between the west and the east. Muslim scholars who live in a country occupied/colonialized by the west have developed some responses including

the ideology of Political Islam to protect Muslim identity and culture. However, in reality, the decline of Islamic civilization has a long history, starting from the tenth century when science was separated from religion and religious scholars did not produce any original work rather than repeating/imitating the previous ones. Thus, it is not accurate to blame the west and its colonial legacy as the only reason for the backwardness of the Muslim world.

In the last three centuries in particular, the overall condition of the Muslim World has become worse for it could not keep up with the west in relevance to scientific, political freedom, economic and human rights developments and this resulted not only in the occupation of their lands but also to a great disparity between the West and the Muslim World in terms of the power of science, human development and knowledge. Instead of understanding the multitude of factors that have caused Muslims to be in this position today, various Muslim scholars have developed a number of different ideologies including political Islam. The interpretation of Islam that separates science from religion has been exerting a strict control over Islamic thought and hindering its development since long time.

There could be many reasons for the stagnation of the Islamic world as well as its starting time. When we focus on the last three centuries, we notice that Muslims could not have succeeded in significant changes to their civilization. They strongly believed in the authenticity of their religion and God's favor upon them, and this led them to be oblivious with regards to scientific developments and the power of knowledge. Moreover, Muslim elites felt that they could ignore the rest of the world[18] for they do not need to learn/take anything from the infidels. Additionally, European expansionism in the last three centuries was traumatic and painful reality for Muslims, but it was too late to respond to it.

There was a great need for Muslims to adjust their civilization with the modern world, but this could undermine the traditional structures that constituted the base of ruling class' legitimacy. Nevertheless, some rulers such as Ottoman sultan Mahmud II (1785–1839) established a new military, bureaucratic, educational and judicial institutions based on the European model, but it was not sufficient, because, these attempts actualized modernization partially. Additionally, many people in the society were not happy with these changes, thus, the modernization efforts faced strong oppositions.

Some scholars such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839–1897) and Muhammad 'Abduh (1849–1905) argued that Islam itself needed to be reformed in order to maintain its relevance to modern time and overcome the hegemony of the west. They criticized Muslim scholars who had closed the door of ijtihad (exerting juristic opinions) in the third century of Islam. Because, after closing the door of ijtihad scholars had been reduced to the role which only preserve and comment on the interpretations of the early scholars.[19] They argued that modern scholars should return to original sources of Islam such as the Qur'an and Sunnah instead of commenting on the works of early scholars. They maintained that modern scholars should use their intellect and reason to interpret the primary sources of Islam when the circumstances demand as the pious early scholars did it during the first centuries of Islam. They also argued that the internal division and conflicts among Muslims, and the authoritarian rulers across the Islamic world made them too weak to confront the western challenge.

Additionally, some ideas, practices, and institutions developed by the west which could be reconciled with the principles of Islam and its higher objectives were ignored by scholars and rulers instead of adopting them in Islamic world. For example, democracy could be understood by modern Muslims as "the shura" (the system of consultation) and it could be adopted in Muslim world as a ruling system.[20]

For Muhammad 'Abduh, Islam is compatible with reason with the condition that if there appears to be any contradiction between them the human intellect is an authority to interpret the sources to overcome it in any way.[21] He tried to interpret the Qur'an according the theories of modern science such as Darwin's evolution and explained the creation accordingly. Obviously, this was a great challenge for Muslim scholars who felt inferiority against the west and its civilization. Because, when the theories of science are accepted as a final authority in relevance to interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah, Islam can be reduced to the level of Christianity which has been locked into churches since long time. It seems, modernists such as 'Abduh and Afghani aimed to restrict Islam and its appliance to morality and ethics only.

Opposing to 'Abduh and Afghani, Hasan Al-Banna (1906–1949), a school teacher provided a radical interpretation of Islam by labeling all modernist scholars as enemies of religion and henchmen of the colonial powers.[22] Shocked by the rapid westernization of Egyptian society Al-Banna developed a doctrine of Political Islam to protect Muslim

identity. He was deeply affected when witnessing how Islamic values started to be melted by western attack equipped with all the destructive arms of wealth, ostentation, gratification, strength and means of propaganda.[23] Thus, Banna and his followers struggled to protect Islamic values against the westernization for they believed that the European model of development was marred by ostentation and licentiousness.

Banna founded the Muslim Brothers (Ikhwani Muslimin) in the late 1920s to actualize his ideology. He conceptualized his ideology under the influence of the conditions surrounding Egypt; British occupation, party corruption, and political violence. He advocated Islam as a comprehensive system which should regulate all aspects of life including people, government, power, justice, culture, science, economy, creed, and worship.[24] He argued that Islam has a capacity to establish a system that allows the world to benefit from everything that is good and to avoid that is bad and evil. Banna was assassinated by the secret police in 1949 due to the suspicion that he and his followers might resort to violence. However, the Muslim Brothers accepted democracy and aimed to achieve power through peaceful means. They rejected the authoritarian regime like in Egypt and desired to have a Muslim version of a political party.

Banna was succeeded by Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) who systematized and developed the ideology of Political Islam. He redefined the concept of *jahiliyya* (pre-Islamic Arabia) as any society failing to submit to God's ruling as revealed in the Qur'an, including Muslims who adhere to the capitalist or the communist systems.[25] He believed that preaching alone would not be enough to establish an Islamic order, because, tyrants, dictators, and henchmen of the colonial powers would not give up power voluntarily. He argued that although there is no compulsion in religion,[26] it is necessary to remove the obstacles between people and God. He deemed the tyrannical regimes as obstacles which prevent people from following the guidance of Islam. Thus, he encouraged Muslims to struggle against tyrannical regimes and to bring a just system that guarantees freedom to everyone and the whole of humanity.[27]

Political Islam encompasses several tendencies, yet all of these are similar with regards to the demand for the immediate implementation of sharia and the condemnation of their opponents as secularists and agents of the West. Usually, extremists among political Islamists reject democracy for they regard it as an illegitimate, man-made system of

government which usurps God's sovereignty. They aim to reach power through armed struggle and violence. Most of the terrorist groups such as al-Qaida and ISIS have been influenced by this extreme ideology.

2.3   Various Types of Political Islam

Islam is a religion which encompasses every aspect of life,[28] and it offers principles, guidelines, and rulings to its followers in order to provide them happiness in both worlds. The interpretation of Islam can be different according to time, culture and conditions. Political Islamists focus on political aspects of Islam with their own interpretation and understanding. They argue that Islam has views on politics in relevance to government and in order to practice Islam in its totality the sharia should be implemented in an Islamic State.[29] Political Islam is not a single ideology that all political Islamists would agree on. In other words, it is impossible to accept a monolithic phenomenon with regards to political Islam, because, it is not independent of particular social and political contexts in which religious groups and parties operate.

Occasionally, religion has been used by individuals, groups, or organizations to dictate political action in the state. Since the Prophet represented various roles in his unique personality such as being a head of state, a judge, a commander of army and a law maker, Muslims could not separate religion from the state. Islam is like an instrument for political Islamists to achieve their targets. They seek solutions for today's societal challenges by referring to the foundations borrowed from Islamic tradition.[30]

Political activities in the name of Islam confuse Muslims. Because, although they are obsessed with implementing the sharia and enforcing God's sovereignty in the state, they may easily contradict basic Islamic teachings in their daily life due to their extreme interpretation of Islam. More than 90% of Islam is related to personal practice and it can be applied without having an Islamic state. It is a great hypocrisy to advocate political aspect of Islam before practicing majority of it in daily life. In this regard, Australia, America, and European countries are much better in terms of allowing individuals to practice their faith. Opposing to this, Muslims countries do not give much freedom to citizens with regards to basic human rights. Even, political Islamists who suffered from the secular state apply the same oppression toward their opponents. The case of AKP, the ruling party in Turkey is a good example for this.

Political Islamists do not believe democracy for they argue that it is against God's sovereignty. Nevertheless, they do not hesitate to advocate democracy until attaining political power. By using Islam and its key concepts in politics the AKP has obtained a massive political power and justified its authoritarian and antidemocratic approaches in the state. Initially, the AKP represented a moderate version of Islam claiming that it changed its radical Islamic understanding. It avoided direct confrontation with secularists. Once, Political Islamists obtained the power they abandoned democratic system. They believe that every means in the way of obtaining political power is permissible. Thus, they use force, apply violence and practice antidemocratic implementations to achieve their objectives. They use religion and its key concepts to legitimize their actions.

During the period of the Umayyad[31] and Abbasid[32] reigns, the religious and political spheres were not clearly separated. The state would impose its own understanding of Islam on society and punish scholars who opposed it. Although scholars (ulama) had religious authority on society in certain decree and the state generally recognized it they would be punished when they criticized the state. There was a peace between scholars and rulers when the formers accepted the legitimacy of rulers and the later recognized the religious authority of scholars. In order to prevent anarchy, political breakdown and divisions among Muslims, scholars recognized and justified rulers who were not just. They were extremely sensitive in protecting social fabric that could be torn asunder if they would engage in direct opposition to political authority. Nevertheless, some scholars did not hesitate to criticize unjust rulers and their wrongdoings.

Unfortunately, some scholars developed the defense of the political status of rulers to the extent that they could not defend the rights of individuals. For example, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) argues that a ruler whether just or unjust needs to be obeyed, because, it is better than strife and the dissolution of society.[33] He believes that the state has authority to use force to bring solidarity in society. This approach supports dictatorship and injustices done by the state. Usually, rulers desire to control scholars to use religion for their own benefits. In many parts of the Islamic world, state controls scholars. Religion with its own doctrines and concepts do not shape politics rather politicians and state use religion to protect their power.

The politicization of religion is not restricted to Islam only. Judaism and Christianity were/are politicized by some groups throughout

history. So, nothing unique in the history of Islam that sets it apart from other religious traditions in terms of the relationship between religion and politics. Islam has been misinterpreted by politicians and rulers to the extent to cover up their corruption and justify their violence. They use religion for political purposes. For example, Saudi Arabia is a country ruled by a hereditary monarchy and it has been legitimized by the Wahhabi scholars. The state is governed by Saudi royal family and Wahhabi scholars. Saudi family administers the politics and Wahhabi scholars control religious affairs. Politicians and scholars support each other to run the state smoothly.

Although oppression and persecution are not always inherent in political Islam the state may resort it to secure political power or cover up the corruption. For example, initially, the AKP advocated democracy and human rights but it started to abandon democratic values after obtaining the power. Political Islamists of Turkey applied oppression and persecution against opponents to establish monopoly in the state. Although it has come to power through democracy the AKP government has adopted antidemocratic practices since 2013 to destroy its opponents in Turkey and consolidate its own power. Political Islamists aim to destroy the far enemy, the United States and its allies in long term.

2.4   The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey

Political Islam has been a very effective oppositional ideology in countries where Muslims are suffering due to their Islamic identity. The rise of political Islam in Turkey can be connected to the reforms undertaken in the late Ottoman period. Trying to modernize the state and its institutions the late Ottoman Sultans offered some reforms but it did not succeed much. In 1923, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk implemented a revolution by military force to transform and westernize the state. He and a small military-bureaucratic elite imposed their secularist vision on a reluctant traditional society by overwhelming and intimidating any opposition without negotiating with the people.[34] The secularist elite attempted a radical break with the Ottoman past by condemning and discarding everything related to it. They carried out a series of reforms such as abolishing the caliphate and introducing the Latin alphabet instead of Arabic one to cut Turkey's ties to its Islamic past. They shut down religious institutions, banned traditional attires, and secularized the education system.

After the collapse of Ottoman, a number of ideological movements struggled for power. Each had its unique approach to save the country and offered solutions to citizens. Political Islamists knew that Islam had major effect on population, thus, they aimed to obtain political power by using the power of religion on society. The secular elites and the Turkish nationalists perceived political Islamists as a major threat for the state, thus, they aimed to remove Islam from politics as well as from society. They advocated that the Sharia was incompatible with European ideals of modernity, thus, it caused Ottoman to collapse. Therefore, they tried to change the identity of Turkish people through the secular education and linguistic reforms. They removed religion from politics. Through these reforms, the secularists aimed to free Turkish-Muslims from the restrictions of traditional Islamic concepts and practices. They believed that by modernizing all aspects of state and society they could create a modern national state and a new type of free individuals.

After the abolishment of the caliphate, religious groups in Turkey as well as in other parts of the Islamic world developed some strategies to restore Islamic life in society and politics. In this regard, some groups aimed to promote political Islam for they believed that Islam could only be practiced properly in a state governed by the sharia. They argued that if political power was achieved, they could shape religious identity by a top-down approach. It is very doubtful if Islam accepts an idea which imposes itself into society through using force but, political Islamist adopted a top-down logic to restore religious life.

Although religion was banished from the public sphere and strictly supervised by the state it could not be completely suppressed or eliminated. Thus, the state aimed to control religious education and life through the Directorate of Religious Affairs (the Diyanet) in Turkey. However, religious life in Turkey continued to have strong social roots with the past through religious-social movements. In spite the secular state excluded Muslims from the political sphere political Islamists established their own parties and movements to obtain power in the state. Indeed, when the secular elites tried to marginalize Muslims, this attitude caused them to develop a hidden Islamic identity within the Kemalist state.[35]

The state did not want autonomous groups to develop outside of its control for it regarded it as a potential threat to its ability to carry out its modernization effort and consolidate its political control. Thus, any opposition to regime's ideology whether individual or social was quickly