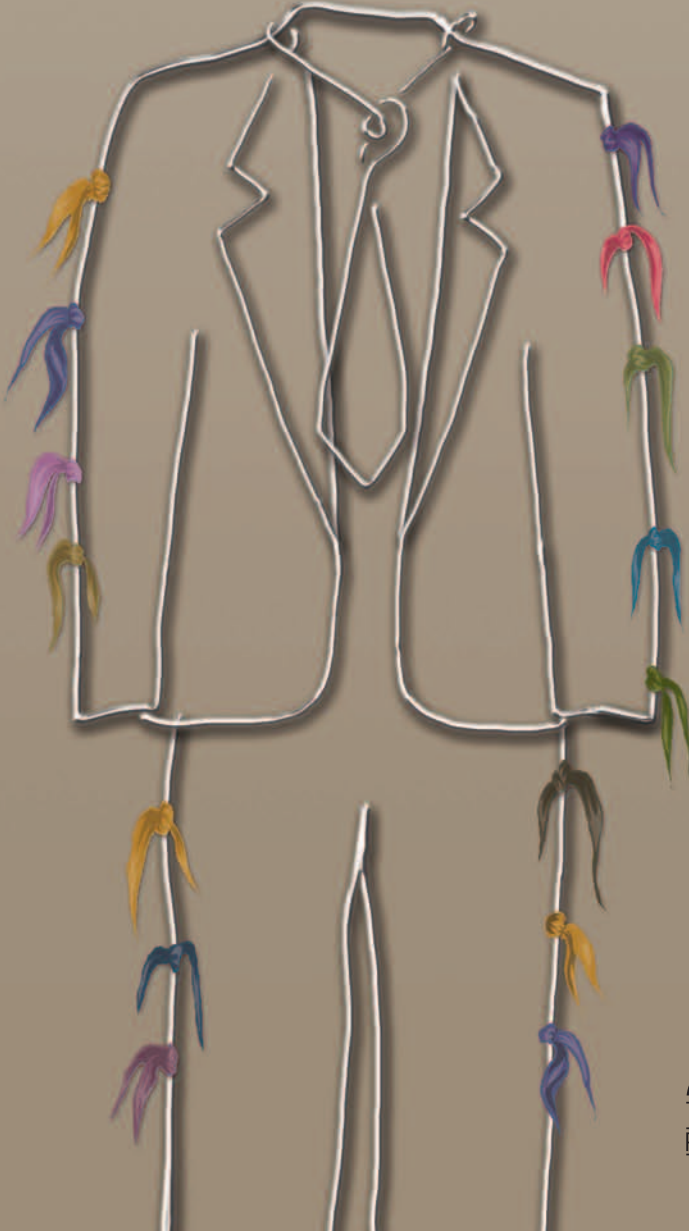




“MODERNITY DOES NOT TOLERATE SUPERSTITION”

The Religious and Seculars in the Democratization Process

Ali Bayramoğlu



**“MODERNITY DOES NOT TOLERATE SUPERSTITION”
THE RELIGIOUS AND SECULARS IN THE
DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS**



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TESEV

**DEMOCRATIZATION PROGRAM
PERCEPTIONS AND MENTALITIES:
RELIGIOSITY - SECULARISM AXIS**

**“MODERNITY DOES NOT TOLERATE SUPERSTITION”
THE RELIGIOUS AND SECULARS IN
THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS**

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Why Perceptions and Mentalities?

The claim that change is a one-way process is quite outdated. We have begun to realize that integration across the world does not necessarily require becoming like the West, but rather implies a process of mutual adaptation. This realization enhances efforts to obtain an “insider’s view” of societies’ problems.

Turkey is a country that has been modernizing for almost three centuries and attempting to integrate with its surroundings by going through such an adaptation. Major changes have occurred from the economy to judicial, educational and social rights. However, a range of issues from the lack of religious freedom to the Kurdish problem, latent inclination towards violence, and the practice of utilitarian political analysis also shows that with certain issues the traditional public opinion resurfaces without going through any change.

Therefore, we have an inevitable question before us: how can it be that, despite all the effort towards modernization and the dynamics of change, we fail to solve some of our problems and continue to live with them? Although one is justified in criticizing the state for its failure to solve these problems, can only the state be held accountable? Or does the society, either consciously or implicitly, support the state’s resistance to problem-solving?

These questions led TESEV to conduct a series of studies, which focus on issues such as secularism, religiosity, nationalism, family, the state, and rights. Through these studies TESEV attempted to unveil the mentality and the way in which Turkish people perceive themselves and their surroundings, as well as their references and the value systems implied by these references. We tried to grasp how the mentality change works, what kinds of breakpoints it creates, and how the conflicts created by these breakpoints are rationalized.

We hope that the resulting assessments will not only create an effective reference in defining and conceiving the chaotic change dynamics of contemporary Turkey, but also serve to initiate new, more expansive and in-depth studies.

Etyen Mahçupyan

TESEV Democratization Program

Perceptions and Mentalities - The Axis of Religiosity and Secularism

Ali Bayramoğlu's study titled *"Modernity Does Not Tolerate Superstition: Religious and Seculars Within the Democratization Process"* is the third book in TESEV's "Perceptions and Mentalities" series. We shaped this "project cluster" around the idea that society-wide perception-based problems and mentality-based problems exist in the face of democratization, and that these cannot simply be overcome by "the harmonization laws" or requiring the "reluctant" bureaucracy to implement a few reforms. The series consists of four distinct, yet related, titles that are contributing to and influencing one another. Previously, we have published *"Home Sweet Home: Women and Men in the Democratization Process"* by Aksu Bora and İlknur Üstün, *"Let Us Reign the State Forever: State and Citizens in the Democratization Process"* by Suavi Aydın, and *"The Indivisible Unity of Nation: Nationalism(s) That Tear Us Apart"* Tearing Nationalism in Democratization Process by Ferhat Kentel, Meltem Ahıska and Fırat Genç. These four "axes" are not separate and independent from each other, but are dealt with on a relational basis.

As the series attempts to gain an understanding of Turkish society beyond well-known and simplified stereotypes, Ali Bayramoğlu examines the axis of "religiosity and secularism". Bayramoğlu masterfully argues that, because of the Republican administration's attempts to silently resolve this axis through a "separation of state affairs and religion", it nevertheless has become the fulcrum of both varying and conflicting, and even polarised, political and social positions. As such, this axis also refracts the "real" social situations and demands like a broken mirror, thereby eliminating alternative categorizations. Bayramoğlu also tries to gain an insider's view of the intellectual atmosphere in Turkey. The author argues that this atmosphere is being impoverished by the religiosity-secularism tension, and shows how positions thought to be different and conflicting can, in fact, intersect at common grounds of authoritarianism and patriarchy. Those settling in religious and secular "poles" actually position themselves not against these well-known and comfortable positions, but against the reactions to dynamics of change. Bayramoğlu asserts that both religious and secular positions consist of "change-resistant" and "changing" spheres, and that the way to a democratic transformation can be paved not by reverting to the "favorable" positions of the religious-secular polarization, but by understanding the relations and differentiation dynamics between these circles, and seeking ways of empathy and dialogue.

Volkan Aytar

TESEV Democratization Program

Summary

This study aims to map the relations between democratization, religiosity and secularism by focusing on the perceptions and mentalities of people who predominantly identify themselves as “religious” or “secular”. The research employed three different methods at different stages: in-depth interviews, observations in different cities and environments, and short and thematic interviews. Within the framework of the study, 40 in-depth interviews as well as 50 short and thematic interviews were conducted in 8 different cities. In this vein, the study does not claim quantitative representation and instead locates itself as a qualitative “social trend” interpretation effort.

The general findings of the report prove the fact that lately Turkey has been going through an immense transformation on the level of perceptions and mentalities, that challenge the simplicities involved in the facile scheme of religiosity versus secularism as a grand simplification, pitting mental attitudes against others, and largely determining political and behavioral stances.

The study suggests, unlike what the popular wisdom and mainstream media accounts would have us believe, that the religious and secular “camps” do not constitute homogeneous entities that are polar opposites of, and mutually exclusive of, each other. Instead, there exist interesting similarities and entanglements (especially in terms of shared attitudes and behavioral stances as they pertain to authority and patriarchy) between the “members” of each “camp”.

On the other hand, within each “camp” there actually seem to exist two “spheres” of people differentiated according to their positions vis-à-vis the social dynamics of change. While the tougher, harder cores in each “camp” seem to resist change and cling to lingering forms of social attachment and identification, the more flexible spheres seem to embrace social transformation and creatively adapt to its requirements, as well as its newer forms of identification.

Within the religious “camp,” the flexible sphere could be identified according to three areas: the first area has to do with the ways in which people organize new political positions via their mental devices (among which the “guidance” mechanisms as exemplified in the “model character” of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, or as is the case in some religious communities of the “*Nurcu*,”* primarily stand out). The

* The term *Nurcu* loosely and primarily refers to the followers of Said Nursî (b. circa 1877-d. 1960), the influential Islamic scholar and leader. His followers are highly inspired by his seminal work, *Risâle-i Nur* (“The Pamphlets [or “Treatise”] of Light [*Nur*]”), among others. Denoting a social as well

second area concerns the relations with the external world, such as economic, religious and political fields. This area links ideas and practices of democracy, human rights and freedom. The third area has to do with relations with the internal world, whereby a considerable “secularization” seems to prevail. Interpretation and re-interpretation of religious precepts according to time and space appear as important mechanisms.

Again, within the religious “camp,” the tougher, harder core resists change in myriad ways. As social transformation proceeds, reactive and Islamic utopian tendencies abound, as well as political positions similar to nationalism. Within this harder sphere, an orientation towards embracing right-wing or conservative positions seem to gain support to help cope with the informal secularization processes of social transformation.

Same social transformation processes (coupled with the AK Party’s (Justice and Development Party) electoral victory and recent formal and substantive political changes) have a great impact on the members of the secular “camp”. The supposed homogeneity and uniformity of this “camp” seems weak and an interesting, though not rigid, two-tiered structure seems to emerge. While the flexible sphere is relatively more open to accept the “Islamic other,” but still uneasy with political developments, the harder, tougher core employs and recasts “nationalistic”, “anti-imperialist”, “anti-EU” and “anti-US” positions as defence mechanisms in the face of – increasingly globalizing – social and political transformations.

The report helps prove that the tough and mutually animosity-driven confrontations as well as rigid positionings (symptomatic especially of the “February 28th process,” or the “post-modern coup” in 1997) seem to have weakened, and new situations have emerged that further undermine the facile dichotomies of the religious *versus* secular “camps”. The report helps us better comprehend the *emerging, lived* and *experiential* dynamics in contemporary Turkish society, and has a potential to take the democratization debate beyond those powerful yet imagined dramatic polarizations that hardly explain the complex social realities in Turkey. The report stands as an important contribution towards helping us better understand this process.

as a cultural community, *Nurcu* circles currently have various wings, some of which are more politically engaged and oriented than others. *Nurculuk* as a religious/social movement appears as a particular type within *Nakşibendi* tradition and its understanding of Sufism (*tasavvuf*). This understanding refutes the hierarchical relationship between the *şeyh* (sheikh) and his followers. Instead, it promotes increased religiosity through educational means. It believes that a society with religious persons in majority would become an Islamic society. In this perspective, education and educational technologies are among the building blocks and basic instruments of the *Nurcu* community.

Preface to the Third Turkish Language Edition

We, Turks, inhabit a challenging land and possess a challenging imperial heritage.

Our problems with developing a sense of society and reaching social consent run deep. Beneath a modern and standardized facade lies our fragmented social fabric. A contemporary interpretation of the Ottoman *millet* system, wherein communities which belong to different regions, cultures, localities, and ethnicities coexist without crossing paths on a mentality, expectations, demands and political level, arguably lives in Turkey today.

We have a communitarian political culture. What we understand from politics is the expansion of an individual's private sphere and more importantly the arbitrary expansion of one segment's living space at the expense of others. Consequently, intra-community solidarity and ungoverned inter-community competition form the basis of our understanding of politics. Thus, our actions and quests are determined by self-interest and utilitarianism instead of rules and principles. This explains our political mechanism designed solely for resource distribution, and our natural tendency for populism.

Although the regime is formatted to rest on rule of law and democracy, we have a tradition of an authoritarian state. The military is traditionally a central actor in running the state. Close historical and social ties between the search for or the notion of security, based on a migrant past and mentality, and national identity emulate a military-nation, characterized by militarist tendencies and an acceptance of the military's legitimate involvement in politics.

Making problems governable has always been the most fundamental preoccupation of societies like ours. They accomplish this conversion by adapting themselves to contemporary dynamics and simultaneously striving to protect themselves against these contemporary dynamics. They are thus subjected to a perpetual social pressures for change in response to internal and external inputs. At the political level, they suffer from a limited capacity for change and adaptation to contemporary dynamics. This situation manifests itself, in Turkey for example, as a relationship of power-and of conflict even- as much as an interaction between the story of a society and its politics. This complex relationship may be summarized along the lines of a transforming social fabric and a political structure, which honors a static society and is anxious and resistant towards change.

Understanding societies like Turkey is more difficult than explaining them. It is therefore advisable to analyze the "dominant national model" to partially overcome

the difficulty in understanding Turkey. This model is based on “migration, religion and political transformation”. Let me put it this way: At the core of “nation-building” in Turkey lies a ceaseless wave of migration, which started in 1800s and lasted for 150-200 years, into Anatolia. This wave of migration is so strong that in the first years of the Turkish Republic, almost half of Anatolia’s population consisted of migrants who were not ethnically Turkish or Turks who were unaware of their ethnic background. These circumstances explain very well the two basic nation-building projects of the Turkish Republic that was founded in 1923.

The first of these two nation-building projects is ‘Turkifying’ Muslims of different ethnic backgrounds. The second project is taming Islam while trying to build a nation out of Muslims. These two projects also underlie the foundations of an authoritarian system of rule. An authoritarian structure and the fast, effective ve coercive influence of the center over the periphery are staples of both nation-building projects.

The “regime” achieved to realize both projects with considerable success despite serious consequences and a heavy price. Over the years, all Muslims except for those of Kurdish origin have been ‘Turkified’ and a large majority of Muslims have been “tamed”.

However, this success is nevertheless partial and political sensitivities are intense and continuous. Muslims, who have not been “tamed” and are thus identified today as the Islamic segment, and Muslims, who have resisted “Turkification”, i.e. Kurds have been the two main sources of conflict for the system to this day. Consequently, there are two axes of conflict in contemporary Turkey: The axis of religiosity and secularism and the axis of conflict centered on the Kurdish problem.

Two important parameters ought to be set at this point:

1. Islam is engrained in the social fabric of Turkey to embrace the society as a whole and is thus not reserved for the Islamic segment alone. Islam is essential to understanding Turkish society.
2. Accordingly, secularism’s foundational role in governing the relationships between politics and society *and* state and society clearly depicts the framework of state ideology in Turkey.

In other words, understanding the ‘Islamic’ and the politics of secularism is the precondition for fully comprehending Turkey, its nationalistic tendencies, social psychology, and its interpretation of conservatism and Kemalism.

This research attempted to fulfill the precondition stated above. Taking the dichotomy between religiousity and secularism as its point of departure, the research was carried out to observe the society and social change and to understand social segments, the transformation that these segments have undergone in the last twenty years, and most importantly, their interaction. In other words, the research strove to reflect the individual stories of change of each segment within the society and Turkey's collective story of change and of society-building.

The "fieldwork" component of this research was completed in 2005. Naturally, questions may arise with regard to the 3 year gap between the completion of research and the third edition. The following may be said about the conceptual relationship between "the time that has passed" and "the findings and conclusions of the research": This research attempted to present a qualitative assessment of a collection of sociological and cumulative observations and key structural trends spawning a twenty-five year period from 1980 to 2005. These trends are longitudinal and have lasting effects.

"The time that has passed" and "the findings and conclusions of the research" are directly proportional in practice also: The fast and fierce period of transformation that Turkey is passing through and the deep issues and crises that Turkey experienced during this period proved and underlined the findings of this research. Furthermore, this research may serve as a guide to understanding the social and political undercurrents of this period of transformation.

Since 2003, Turkey is in a profound and striking period of transformation as Turkey's bid for European Union membership and convergence with Copenhagen criteria continue. These changes derive their legitimacy from Turkey's active social dynamics and accelerated these social dynamics in the direction of an open society. Meanwhile, the sphere of basic rights and liberties is expanded, de-militarization of the state is expedited; subsequently, different segments within the society acquired a platform on which new forms of social expression and interaction are developed.

Stemming from the nature of state actors and structures and resisting the transformation outlined above, a reactionary period is simultaneously played out in Turkey. During this reactionary and counteractive period, Turkey had a narrow escape from two military coups, which were to be staged in 2003 and 2004 according to intelligence that leaked into the media in 2007. In April 2007, a soft coup coaxed the Ak Party administration to call for early elections. Six months after AK Party won a sweeping victory in the July 2007 elections, held with a voter turnout of 85%, a legal motion, with a political rather than a judicial basis, was filed to close it down.

Social reaction, resistance and the progressive period of transformation have collectively contributed to overcoming potential crises and circumventing two possible military coups. An important indication of this situation is the result of the latest general elections when the AK Party, which was targeted by the military soft coup held only three months prior to the elections, earned 47% of the votes. At the time, the results of the elections were evaluated by the Turkish media as a product of a combination of factors: 75% of the population was not bothered by the fact that President Gül's wife wore a headscarf; there was a coalition of liberal and democratic voters around AK Party; the era of September 12th military regime and military constitution was over; and the Turkish society backed the "period of transformation".

Certainly, the result of the latest general elections (Temmuz 2007 and March 2009) may be interpreted as a significant outcome of the longitudinal and profound period of transformation whose main dynamics are documented in this research. As we have professed in the conclusion, "the transformation process has basically originated and been led by the middle class. On the other hand, the transformation process also works backwards and includes elements that reshape the middle class in relation with political attitudes and expectations. As a matter of fact, the majority of the secular and the Islamic segments share similar views on issues such as democracy, freedom and human rights. The poles in both segments resist the transformation or experience a *transformation in reverse*, however they seem to gradually be thinking more similarly..."

This research basically asserts that while the Islamic segment is becoming secular on its own, the secular segment is also democratizing. These are the dominant attitudes of the majority. Rigid Islamic and secular attitudes constitute the minority. Today the election results, other political manifestations, and all societal indicators and measures confirm these general attitudes.

Finally, it is an improvement when a society, through experiences and encounters, either spontaneously or by its own hand, develops democratic and secular attitudes as tools for socialization and coexistence. In this sense, we hope that this study will provide a tool for understanding Turkey's current social fabric from within.

On the other hand, the final section of the study draws a picture of the socio-political history of the secular-authoritarian understanding that has been predominant in its power and position at the national level but trivial at the political level. In other words, the study aims to elaborate on the question of what happens when the 'old regime', or 'radically centralist tutelage order', is unable to keep pace with the social,

cultural and political changes that are opening Turkish society and reducing the gap between society-politics and politics-state. From this perspective, this study will help explain the crisis that the Turkish ruling elite and social center find themselves in and the political attitude they embrace. Today, given the deep crisis and depression in which Turkey lives and interventions from outside politics, the greatest guarantee that “political processes” will be safeguarded is the social change that has accumulated over the past twenty years.

Ali Bayramoğlu
April 2009

INTRODUCTION

This study titled “*The Axis of Religiosity and Secularism*”, conducted under the “Perceptions and Mentalities” heading of the TESEV Democratization Program, deals with the social and cultural functions of different attitudes to religiosity and secularism, and illuminates the common grounds between these two. Moving on further, the purpose of the study can be expressed as follows:

“Determining how mentalities take form on the axis of religiosity and secularism, and pointing out the obstacles these mentalities pose or the opportunities they create for the democratization of Turkey; in other words, seeking the opportunities for and boundaries of change within the framework of mentalities.”

Neither the methodology, scope or preferences of the research aim to provide a quantitative map, but have attempted to establish a qualitative and structural framework. This study is best regarded as a “social trend interpretation study”. Predominant inclinations and the undercurrents of these inclinations are defined by how the Islamic sect and the secular-modern public view each other based on the concepts of *religion*, *religiosity* and *secularism*, their relations with their own identities or attitudes, and the breakpoints that surface within this context.

As such, the study not only uncovers findings, but also points at new questions, problems, fields of work, and issues that need to be examined. These fields do not consist solely of thematic points, but include the founding elements and questions regarding possible new definitions of some concepts like identity, individual and belonging.

Method

Three methods were combined throughout the study. The principal method was in-depth interviews. Observations of different cities and surroundings during the field work comprise the second method, while short and thematic interviews with different participants from the secular and Islamic sects comprise the third method. Forty indepth interviews and fifty short thematic interviews have been conducted in eight cities.

First and foremost, four participant groups have been defined: “*the Islamic segment*”, “*the moderate religious segment*”, “*the moderate secular segment*”, and “*the rigid secular segment*”. Participants in these four groups were chosen by age, gender, cultural environment, socio-economic status, location and education, and in-depth interviews were conducted.

In-depth interviews followed two parallel “thematic” paths: on the one hand, the practical and symbolic meanings of religiosity and secularism in daily life were understood through examples, personal attitudes, association mechanisms, convictions and values. On the other hand, a mentality assessment was conducted with regard to daily life, culture, micro-cultural relations (subjective experiences and assessments of the private and public spheres), and public themes (mass TV programmes, persons, facts and events from pornography to the mafia, lotteries, rape, and the relationship between women and their bodies).

Within the framework constructed by these two parallel paths, common grounds, points of separation, key mentality attributes, relations with tradition (disruptive and affirmative), the perception of time within change, and depictions of the personal past and future were sought within the two segments as well as among them. Therefore, the thematic structure of in-depth interviews was established as follows:

1. The determination and observation of material, cultural and political belongings;
2. Entry to the world of personal and cultural values through examples concerning the general public;
3. Grasping the social, cultural and economic bases of attitudes by current events and experiences;
4. Tracking how the mentality reflects not only on political attitudes and behavior, but also on daily life, and how it is reproduced from daily life.

The “*ordinary and average person*” criteria was strictly adhered to when choosing participants, and opinion leaders and institution representatives were excluded from the study to the maximum possible extent. This selection process was preferred to ensure that intrinsic attitudes were not confused with those learned or acquired in the role, and to reach the average values of the middle class with their actual and symbolic meanings.

In-depth interviews aimed for active dialogue and interaction between the participant and the interviewer. Those interviews that did not achieve this result due to problems or resistance arising from the interviewer or participant were excluded and repeated with other participants. As such, interviews depicted details of private lives, critical experiences, determining encounters, quasipsychological confrontations, breakpoints, confessions, discussions, memory exercises, and opinion-based arguments, more often than not resembling a psychiatric session with their intensity and tension.

Sometimes, especially with women of the Islamic segment in Anatolia, participants brought their close friends to the interview, which transformed the interview into a focus group.

The purpose was to engage the participants as deeply as possible, feel their paradigms and references to values, and to understand the relations between this underlying structure and their outward opinions. In other words, we have attempted to understand the political opinions and experiences of participants within their own paradigms and personal stories, which in return offered important clues regarding mentality patterns.

The relationship between method and content

The study has firmly tied the targeted conclusions of introductory questions to the method of reaching these conclusions. Therefore, the method has always been dynamic throughout the study. The sampling and definitions of selected groups attained a structure that is in constant renewal and that is in control of content questions due to some of their aspects such as making the political and cultural definitions of ‘actors’. The reason for this attitude can be explained as reconstructing the social with aspects from within itself, and discovering the line that extends from the social to the political. In other words, a method which arrives at the political through the social instead of arriving at the social through the political was adopted as the precondition of obtaining healthy information.

Although the study assumes a political polarization of *“Islamic-secular-moderate Islamic-moderate secular”* as a given, it has also tested this structure throughout the study and modified it when necessary.

The mechanism of this main dynamic is comprised of reaching the values behind given political positions, establishing the kind of integrity formed within these values with no regard to political attitudes, investigating why, how and through what means different paradigms create political positions, and finally trying to establish the actual stratification and politicization arising out of this value spectrum.

This dynamic was implemented in field work as follows:

1. Instead of testing given concepts and forming a knowledge hierarchy; the situations, structures and interim concepts derived from the surroundings and discourses of the participants were taken as the center point. In other words, conceptualizations, relations and conflicts were produced from within the discourse and the world of the participant.

2. Preconcepts were charged with the function to protect the study from the wave of subjectivity emanating from the participant.
3. Instead of testing the social and political situation with given concepts, we have moved on from the situation to test the given concepts, and finally have merged the concepts and information produced from the participant with tested macro-concepts.

The problematic

The study has focused on the idea of “*social experience*” and has tried to follow the situations and elements that define this experience, and to grasp their common grounds. Accordingly, instead of seeking “*pure situations*” like identity, gender, political attitude, women and belonging, or the “*pure products*” of isolated circles like the political, social and cultural, we have tried to interpret “*hybrid situations*” like daily life, inner and outer world inputs and relations, and the construction or disruption of fields of power, and to try to understand the social experience from within these hybrid situations. The principal instrument in this effort was the “*rupturing mechanism*”.

The attitudes of persons and communities towards new inputs, the collision and intertwining of old and given paradigms with new paradigms, and the reaction or adaptation mechanisms developed in light of these movements were carefully observed on the basis of each individual and community.

This mechanism was restructured within the method to reach the internal depths of participants, understanding the discourse and experiences of each, defining how they perceive, react to, and internalise any relation, new occurrence or difficulty, and was carefully employed to “*follow through to the end any revelation given by the participant*”.

Contrary to practice, the rupturing mechanism was not utilized within the concepts of “*sociological or psychological adaptation and integration*”, nor was it viewed as an “*element that defines conflicting natural situations*”. The rupturing mechanism as adopted by the study can be summarised as follows:

A set of values, attitudes and situations that confront each other in the individual world through various inputs and the passage of time; their multiplication and the change or resistance platform created by this multiplication or the increase of conflicting interests; moving towards or managing these interests, creating new systems, closing old fields, and merging different fields.

This mechanism was important in explaining hybrid situations, determining the intersections between political attitudes and mentalities, and defining the singular and common grounds and boundaries regarding change.

Content

The first basic and natural information the study encountered is the existence of a change, or even “*circumstances of change*”, that extends from the 1980s to the 2000s, or even today. This process of change has evolved from a series of subsequent political and social conjectures, and extends from a change of values to a change of political attitude, all the while portraying an image of a “*large rucksack*”. This rucksack naturally contains an environment of political and social change, political and social conflicts, and a series of social experiences shaped by the interactions lived within the context of these conflicts. As explained above, this study has no quantitative claims due to its scope, method, and especially the “*methodological intentions*” of the researchers, but attempts to perceive and understand the qualitative movements and their internal mechanisms. As such, the “*process of change*” or the “*circumstances of change*” have been investigated with some constraints.

The boundaries and contents of the “*process of understanding*” with regard to change are defined by the changes and shifts in the relations established by the participants within the “*religious sphere*”, the “*secular attitude*”, or the “*Islamic identity*”.

At the center of the process of understanding are the experiences of actors and actor groups, the chaotic situations created by these experiences, the rupture encountered during these experiences due to conflicts and confrontations of different paradigms, the “*reflexive or organised responses*” given by the actors to this rupture, and the definitions of the internal mechanisms related to the creation and realization of the above factors.

THE AXIS OF RELIGIOSITY: BETWEEN CHANGE AND RESISTANCE

Framework

Despite inherent cultural, social and economic differences, the Islamic segment has always created a structure that defines itself with more or less similar demands, actions and sensitivities on the basis of religion-society and religion-politics relations.

The fact that a strong and dominant sense of belonging or “*cultural otherness*” is built upon this relation basis allows the analysis of the Islamic segment to be designed as a whole. The past two decades, which have helped the Islamic segment gain visibility and which form the critical period of its political story, have further strengthened this structure. As for the development of identity dynamics– the contact of the Islamic actor with the modern sphere in terms of interactivity and conflict, their inner evolution, restructuring, and associated waves of change – this period has created, or at least helped shape a social pattern that has internal consistency with its sociological and political story.

Meanwhile, the problematic and questions of the study (the relation of religion and the religious, religiosity and secularism, and the political results of these relations) necessitate a holistic approach, since these questions and their answers appear not as a political standpoint, but a social existence problem for the Islamic segment. In other words, research questions appear intertwined with the principles, emotions and postulates that regulate the public and private lives of the Islamic actors.

Accordingly, the flow of the study led us to consider the subject in light of elements such as “*contact with mentality instruments*”, “*social and political experiences*”, “*instruments enabling relations with belonging*”, and “*the network and differentiation of identity-individual-community*”. The analysis of change and mentality relations in the Islamic segment was based on making sense of the actors’ relations with themselves and their identities and the above political-social story.

Principal findings

The first, most important finding with respect to the above elements and change-mentality relations in the Islamic segment shows that there is a “*separation*” with regard to the relation with the identity that is above and beyond the existing breakpoints, divisions and differences on the basis of religion, organization, class, region and others. This separation causes two main tendencies or spheres, one of which is flexible, and the other rigid.

The flexible sphere

On the one hand there is a new group of ‘actors’ and a new tendency towards change that shapes its relation to the Islamic identity with political, cultural and moral instruments as well as women, children and “*secular mentors*” or with values and postulates. This tendency is chiefly constructed upon the ongoing heterogeneity of the “*Islamic sphere*”, and the heterogeneous perception of “*the Islamic*” without rationalization, but with religious motives, religious interpretations, and practices that are centered around religion. In this context, the “*Islamic sphere*” is perceived in pieces, and the bonds between pieces like religion, economy, culture and public and private life are flexing. “*The Islamic*” is subject to a similar separation without compromise from Islamic identities and symbols, and is seated upon a practical secularization that emanates from within the religion with a human-oriented perception.

This circumstance of change encompasses various groups and classes within the Islamic segment with different instruments and vectors, and appears as the “*dominant trend*”.

The rigid sphere

On the other hand, there is a segment and trend that reacts against, or at least maintains its distance from, the change in the country and the Islamic sphere, which meets waves of new inputs by closing in on itself and restructuring its inner mechanism. This trend generally points at a retreat from the political sphere to the public sphere, and especially to the sphere of tradition. The rigid sphere restructures the “*public sphere-private sphere*” division with the “*extended privacy*” mechanism that encompasses the close social surroundings, and produces a closely-woven fabric that does not contain differences. This naturally works in tandem with a toughening of political attitude. The cornerstones of this attitude are wariness of political steps toward change, adopting a “*repeating rightist*” dynamic with a “*developmental-statist-solidarist*” attitude, and viewing the West as the natural “*other*” with which it is impossible to reach a consensus.

I. THE FLEXIBLE SPHERE AND CHANGE

Changes in social and political perceptions with regard to religion and religiosity are examined under the following three headings: “*Mentality instruments and channels as vectors of change*” with a political reference, “*The heterogenization of the Islamic segment*” with a social reference, and “*The heterogeneous perception of the Islamic*” with a personal reference.

1. MENTALITY INSTRUMENTS AND CHANNELS AS VECTORS OF CHANGE

Islam has a strong tradition of leadership and guiding. Some social scientists claim that this has to do with the natural difficulty in Islam to reach the divine truth. According to them, these difficulties have “*spawned the need for an informal and traditional guiding mechanism in Muslim societies*”.¹

Robert Bellah’s classic diagnosis of the case is as follows: “Ancient Israel (...) had developed an understanding of a transcendent God. God was above the King and the Master. Christianity continued this comparative attitude, and added the emphasis on God as the Father. However, in the Koran, God is neither the King nor the Father; it is God and only God. God is the only comparison to God...”²

Şerif Mardin follows in the footsteps of Bellah across Anatolia, and says, “Both the educated and the masses need a mentor to provide liaison in the relationship between man and Allah. The reason that many orthodox scholars (in the Ottomans) were members of certain orders was probably the strong need for a link that connects man to Allah. For the traditional Anatolian masses, this liaison is the image of a prophet that emphasises right and justice with his affection, physical build, and personal care. The spiritual guide, on the other hand, appears as the sublime person that represents a link in this chain. This sublime person paves the way that leads to Allah. Sainthood in Islam was the result of the prestige individuals earned throughout their life. The saint was a person to whom extraordinary powers were conferred. As such, daily life provides for what theology does not. The image of the sublime person is in harmony with the organization principles that emphasise similar roles of the teacher...”³

1 Gellner, Ernest. *Doctor and Saints in Scholars, Saints and Sufis: Muslim Institutions in the Middle East since 1500*, pp. 307-326, 1972.

2 Bellah, Robert N. *Beyond Belief*. New York, Harper and Row, 1970 [Quoted in Şerif Mardin, *Bediüzzaman Said Nursi Olayı*, p.39, 1992.]

3 Mardin, Şerif, *Bediüzzaman Said Nursi Olayı*, p. 39, 1992.

However, it must be noted that the reason for the mentorship mechanism to develop into an instrument and channel of mentality is not solely religious.

The source is partly traditional and partly religious, and may be summarised as fealty and obedience to the mentor. It evolves saints, sages and other persons into charismatic movement organisers, and both nourishes and is nourished by the authoritarian and patriarchal mentality indigenous to Eastern societies.

Accordingly in the East, “the authoritarian mentality that seeks truth on the basis of the material hierarchically separates those who have the knowledge of the truth from the rest of the society, and creates a unilateral dependency relationship with the leaders and the led (...) The patriarchal mentality seeks truth in a mental, later sublime, source. Therefore, it needs informal liaisons between people that depend on natural guiding...”⁴

Personal or institutional loyalty to leaders, the quest for leaders that create a link between politics and the individual, represent power, establish targets and symbolise the ordinary and the superior simultaneously, and the functions conferred to them have followed both religious and nonreligious paths in their interaction with the authoritarian and patriarchal mentality. By becoming the “*common value, reference and technique*”, it has become one of the founding elements of the social and political tradition of Turkey.

The religious source in religious communities, orders and Islamic sects is the umbrella for the patriarchal mentality. However, as far as the political sphere is concerned, the authoritarian and patriarchal mentality has become the umbrella of the religious source, been reinforced, and even gained meaning with the religious source.

The religious root that underlines the patriarchal and authoritarian mentality and the need for a mentor fulfils an indirect function in political culture. Even the secular political behavior is not free of the indirect yet coding and normative effect of this mentality cornerstone.

With regard to political attitudes and voter behavior, the function fulfilled by the religious root is indirect for the Islamic segment as well. It is bound to the representative not only in terms of this person’s world of meanings, but also the

⁴ Mahçupyan, Etyen, *Zibniyet Yapıları ve Değişim*, p.43, 2000.

power of that person against the outside world, other segments, symbols and threats. This very situation points out that religious codes serve an indirect and complementary function. More importantly, they confer a secular appearance to the mentorship mechanism. The secular appearance is a result of the duality of material-spiritual, temporal-ethereal references to the mentor, and the legitimatization of such references. The second aspect of the secular appearance is the phenomenon that the ethereal in the mentor expresses the required but inadequate, and that adequacy is brought by temporal power. The trajectory of the relation between the political leader and the masses is created by the strong commonality of the world of meanings, a mode of service that is not immune to paradigms politically and materially, and an expectation of protection. The mentor is not perceived to have religious attributes. He is perceived as religious, close to the religious, representing the temporal and political power for and on behalf of the religious, and personifying the political utopia.

The determining factor here is the temporal, specifically political power of the mentor and the period of this power. The attribute of being a mentor exists insofar as the representation of the power and the world of meaning exists, and the demands for justice are undertaken. In other words, it exists only as long as power is represented and represents justice.

The *“trinity of power-justice-mentor”* corresponds to an element that determines the political perception of lower and middle classes in Turkey, and appears as a common denominator of the findings of this study. In light of research findings, this *“element”* can be roughly defined as *“alternations between intense attention to and natural distrust of politics or the politician”*. More often than not, these alternations are a result of the disjoint between the person's expectations of their own benefit and their search for integrity in the politician. In this context, integrity becomes the key expectation in politics, the anxiety and experience of injustice or dishonesty forms the core of political attitudes, and political behavior is expressed as reactions, stemming as much from an expectation of service and ideological consistency, and the tension between integrity and benefit. This is one of the significant reasons of mass political attitude shifts. The other facet of this *“element”* is formed by the fact that a person's disposition towards politics in Turkey is considerably influenced by their cultural and symbolic reflexes of their own world and the place that they belong. When traditions and belonging are taken for granted, elements of belonging and of symbolic nature come to the foreground in the quest for righteousness and justice as supported by class positions. Class attitudes are determined more by symbolic or cultural elements or class affinities based on cultural similarities and symbolicity. Finally, this trend, insofar as it encompasses utilitarianism, directs the quest for justice away from law and

toward politics and power, and creates an environment that compels people to loyalties, political camps, and polarization.

The mentor or the charismatic authority has been affecting the political behavior and attitudes of masses, and especially of the Islamic and conservative segments. However, the distance between the attitude-behavior cluster and the values-mentality cluster is large. Radical changes are defined within the second cluster and in relation to the differentiation in the second cluster.

At which point we must ask:

Moving on from attitude changes instigated by the mentor, is it possible or legitimate to argue that the mentorship mechanism affects paradigms, or at least the “*outer truth*” references that form the outer shell of these paradigms?

It may be considered a conflict to claim that mentality instruments and channels such as mentors, patriarchy, belief systems and authoritarian politics perceptions also serve as the “*bearers of change*”, or at least that the waves of change encountered by a society are legitimised by the mentality instruments which are the indirect targets of these waves. What is more, the mentality channel that is based on mentorship and leadership points at community-based over-politization and the adoption of community politics without questioning. As such, it is positioned against the individualism trend, which may be defined by the multiplication, separation and differentiation of interests before the individual. The “*micro-physical function*” of this situation also creates a conflict: when a person belongs to a society, expands their area of existence with the support of the society as the society strengthens, and consequently defines politics as a strength-building activity “*for and within the society*”, utilitarianism becomes the norm and individualism is reduced to minimums. This constitutes an expression of a political and societal patriarchal structure.

On the other hand, it is obvious that societies resort to this method in adapting to strong trends of change and fit the inputs of change to their own characteristics over their cultural, mental and social instruments, thereby both legitimising and altering the wave of change. This research has uncovered that the “*mentorship mechanism*” as an instrument and channel of mentality acts as a limited but important bearer of the “*circumstances of change*” employed in the “*flexible sphere*” of the Islamic segment.

The limits are the change-resistant structure of the mentality, the ability of this structure to reproduce itself under new conditions, and most importantly, the fact that the guiding actors are the products of the change themselves insofar as they are the

accelerators of change experienced in the Islamic sector. This platform of change reinforces the mentorship function.

The mentorship mechanism operates as the changing vector in two channels.

One of these is the Justice and Development Party (*AK Parti*), and especially its leader, Tayyip Erdoğan. The prestige Tayyip Erdoğan earned because of his lifestyle and struggle has made him an implicit guide in and before a community. Erdoğan being a guide fits in with the temporal mentorship mechanism of secular appearance, which we discussed above. Mentorship is neither actually nor referentially religious in this channel. There is a relations network that is based on the “*closeness of the fellow believers*”. The cornerstones of the relations network are the struggle signified by this closeness, a common memory, trust in and consistency and integrity conferred upon the mentor, mechanisms of symbolic similarity and identicalness, and the acceptance of the mentor as an instrument of renewing strength and confidence.

The second channel are the *Nurcu* communities. While religious belonging and loyalty are more visible here, secular properties are not altogether ineffectual. The expansive social solidarity network created by these communities encompasses a lateral organization from education to the media, women’s organizations, youth, and professional groups. These dynamics have caused belief and belonging to become a superidentity, while the material area and the relations within it have become more determining. As far as the mentorship mechanism is concerned, this structure supports religious attributes as much as utilitarian and secular attributes. In other words, it points at the links between mentorship and a trend of religious-based secularization.

A. AK PARTY AS A VECTOR OF CHANGE

The Justice and Development Party is an “*umbrella party*” for the segments that are close to Islamic parties, who live in either the rural areas of the country or the outskirts of large cities, and belong to the lower and middle classes. It is a leading factor in terms of political attitudes and religious life, and is a model that recreates trends and attitudes.

These attributes comprise the grounds for the mentorship that the AK Party and its leader fulfil.

Change that comes with mentorship or leadership is a two-way process within the limits described above. It both reinforces the patriarchal structure, and also refers to a mobility that allows the patriarchal structures to change from inside.

The change that appears before us with respect to the AK Party and its leader is not much of a “*change of values*” but a “*change of political position and perception (or sentiment)*”. The newly-obtained political position brings together a reproduction and adoption of the actions and steps of the political party, viewed as a pioneer and a center of power by its supporters with the sense of belonging to a community, through “*talking, spreading and repeating*”. The change in political perception appears with regard to associating with the success and superiority of the mentor. This feeling of success and superiority prepares the ground for the Islamic actor to do “*superiority-tolerance exercises*”, and establish economic and cultural contacts with both the system and ‘the different’.

What matter here are the functions of the “*change of position*” and the consequences of these functions. These consequences refer to both a “*utilitarian and conjectural change*” and to a set of behaviors that is organised and consistent in itself.

The mentorship mechanism can be said to carry three functions:

a. First function: Sense of confidence

The first function is the “*sense of trust*” created by the AK Party administration in the Islamic segment. This sentiment symbolises a shift from the “*opposing and aggrieved state of mind*” to a “*sense of confidence*” through the political actor with which it is associated.

The effects of the sense of confidence or a shift in the state of mind appears as a primary or complementary factor in various fields.

This sentiment as a primary factor is evident in the relations some Islamic actors such as businessmen, tradesmen and the unemployed build with their social-political surroundings and the public authority. A diversification of resource-building possibilities, expanded work, investment and employment opportunities, compensation for competitive inequality in the economy, and prioritization due to closer circles, are predominant. These become most apparent in rural areas where relations with municipalities, local investments, tenders and affairs between businessmen and the political center are prominent. In other words, the AK Party administration is viewed as a channel that leads to overcoming certain barriers and obtaining some advantages. The sense of confidence is nourished as such.

Evident directly or indirectly at almost all phases of the study, this situation is explained by a tradesman from Konya, who is actively involved in the Islamist movement:

“With the AK Party administration, we feel more confident when we enter a government building. We feel better in a government office. I see this around as well. Everyone feels the same. It’s because Mr. Erdoğan is self-confident; he is not afraid of what he believes in. Now with the AK Party we can join any tender we want. Of course, we have the confidence that we may win, that’s why...”

The first thing that comes to mind is the clientist mechanism and the partisan system. However, it must be immediately noted that the study has shown that the confidence mechanism and its material basis cannot be reduced to simple “*patronage mechanisms*”. This material factor points at the opening of new channels to resources and opportunities with economic integration, but has sociological and mentality-related functions as well. These functions encompass an articulation to the system, an acceptance by the center, a vision to become a part of the center, and the cultural possibilities for the periphery to flow into the center. The feeling of becoming a part of the system has first of all resulted in the renewed and powerful adoption of the logic of the system, and the creation of new contact points between the identity and the system. The fact that grievances and losses are, albeit imaginarily, compensated for, and a sense of cultural satisfaction and relief are important elements of the widespread conditions marked by the sense of confidence. This element rises with the deterioration of the worry and depression experienced in the public sphere and before the authority. Accordingly, the damage or separation created in the mentality, and especially the idea of unity of nation and state of the Islamic segment with the attitude of the “*state*” towards this segment during the February 28th encounters are now being healed with the same method. All-in-all, the existing frame reinforces the feeling of becoming a part of the system or integrating with the system, reduces the passive identity perception, facilitates building relations with elements that are outside the adopted identity, and relieves the reflex of introverted defence, thinking and living.

A typical example of the sense of confidence instilled by the functions of the AK Party administration is given by the words of the following small business owner from Central Anatolia, who has a background of fundamental Islam and who is trying to reposition himself today:

“There was immense relief with AK Party. I can feel that. I no longer watch the news, because I trust the AK Party. I have regained this confidence. I don’t fear that the police can just take me away, that’s psychological. When the Hizbullah operations started, I waited in fear for four days, although I had no connection whatsoever. Now everyone feels the relief.”

Associating actual or imagined losses with the Islamic identity had nurtured a process of building a community from the 1990s to the 2000s, and the “*state of passive*

opposition” had closely tied all elements of the Islamic sphere, from economy to politics, culture and lifestyle. The new circumstance, namely the social, political and even international legitimacy of the AK Party administration and the “*state of power*” as a result of its dominance in the National Assembly points at becoming equal with, or sometimes surpassing other actors with regard to the protection of the Islamic identity. This leads to a loosening of the bonds between elements of the political, social and economic life, and provides grounds for the independent perception of each. In other words, as integration with the system merges with the state of power, it helps facilitate the separation between the Islamic sphere and doing business, procuring services, the relation of service and politics, and economic existence.⁵ This has led to a mental possibility of interaction with the system, while causing separations in the “*holism perception*” of the Islamic segment. These separations are not limited to economic and political activities, but also extend to belief, religious practice, and identities. The state of power nurtures the feeling of “*being superior and dominant*”, which psychologically enables the adoption of the different, and the acceptance of different Muslim practices.

A small business owner from Ankara explains his inner questioning and the process of normalization he lived through with the partial help from the AK Party:

“I now accept that the general public is not like us. But I believe that the great majority of this public is Muslim. AK Party has shown us this. There are some youngsters here who get up for the morning prayer. My folks met a university student; she doesn’t cover her head, but never misses the morning prayer either. I was surprised. Many of them voted for us, AK Party I mean...”

b. Second function: Muslim behavior code

The second function of the AK Party as a mentor and change vector occurs especially in reference to the “*Tayyip Erdoğan factor and model*”. This function causes the actors of the Islamic segment to review the “*Muslim behavior code*” vis-à-vis Tayyip Erdoğan’s style, attire, ideas and attitude to reconsider religion-society and religion-politics relations. The mentorship mechanism reaches to the “*cultural and social stance*” and its new symbols of the “*devout*”. The infrastructure of this situation is created by the trial of the mentor’s behavior by pride and courage, and the connection of new, different and secular modes of behavior with the Islamic tradition and legitimacy. On the one hand, the mentor is transforming into a sociocultural model that encompasses, facilitates and legitimises the inner motive of change, thus

⁵ This subject is explained in detail in the section dealing with the heterogeneization of Islam.

meeting a need. On the other hand, he is becoming the accelerator for raising the tolerance limits of the Islamic segment both within and without itself.

Another reason why Tayyip Erdoğan is perceived as a model is the qualification of “*religiosity*” symbolised by his personality, and his “*sociological*” attributes. In other words, the “*religious closeness*” and “*sociological affinity*” between the Islamic segment and Tayyip Erdoğan are among the fundamental elements of this mentorship mechanism.

The “*religious closeness*” has a lot to do with the “*struggle against the fear*” made by Tayyip Erdoğan, his evolution into a religious politician through this struggle, and the persona of a “*legitimate political guardian*” that has come out of this evolution. Before we resort to the words of a 40-year-old tradesman running a small bookshop in Konya to witness how he was affected by Tayyip Erdoğan, we should first seek to understand the background of the participant, who chose to adopt fundamentalism at the end of the 1980s with the aid of the political situation and his business circles:

“Of course, I began to support Iran. We were going to change the society. Your city has a lot to do with this. We assumed that everyone was thinking like us. Konya was a very different place. Just go over to Aksaray; they were stuck in decade-old arguments. They still are. But Konya could compete with Istanbul. Arguments were very fast, very forward-looking. It could easily have been a great supporter, if not the leader, of an Islamic revolution. We would even make recommendations to the Hizbullah members in the Southeast. Don’t side with the state and don’t get involved in these matters, we said. We were trying to obtain some influence (...)

“I tried to refrain from using social security and building other bonds with the state. My wife had diabetes. Her blood sugar would up all the way to 700s, and we would still be walking down the street. I can’t get over what I did to her. I could have taken precautions before. But, to hell with it, I said. Everything is from Allah. A friend of mine said last year, dear friend, isn’t your wife diabetic? What do you think you’re doing?”

The same participant explains the influence of the AK Party and Tayyip Erdoğan on himself and the Islamic segment:

“Now AK Party says to the Muslims, take your place in life; plant your feet firmly in it. This kind of idiocy has no place in Islam, brother. That’s why I despise the Taliban (...) The man dresses up neatly, takes his wife with him. Everyone knows he’s a Muslim. He can go anywhere, he can build social relations. You know what, you can still be a Muslim even when you dress neatly and modernly. (...)

Tayyip Erdoğan brushed over the radicalism that was not inherent in Islam. He learned this from Islamic doctrines. He said, so this is also in Islam. He says that he’s a Muslim. He’s at peace with the society and the world (...)

If the Prophet was to live today, he wouldn't wear a robe and a turban. I started reviewing my standpoint three years ago. I stopped reading commentaries and took up reading interpretations of the Koran. I took the knowledge passed down from generations and distilled them through the holy book. That's when a lot changed in me. For instance, we would read the Alak sura before. What would it say? 'Read in the name of God the creator.' What did we understand? 'Read Islamic books.' No! It says, 'Read the Koran in the name of Allah.' This all corresponded to the emergence of the AK Party and Tayyip Erdoğan..."

The following unemployed young Islamist living in Ankara, who tries to maintain his fundamentalism but is affected by the state of power brought by the AK Party, voices a sentiment that is often stated by participants, either directly or indirectly:

"See his past, where he came from, what he did. He has proven himself. He has a strong character. When I look at Tayyip Erdoğan, I don't see any faults. I've never voted for anyone, but I will vote for Tayyip Erdoğan from now on. They say he couldn't solve the religious school issue. Come on, it's not overnight that we had the problem. It built up over years. He can solve this and many others in due time. We must have patience..."

The "*religious closeness*" and the mentorship mechanism based on this is evident not only in lower and middle classes, but upper classes and the elite of the Islamic segment. The words of the following participant, who is a professor at the Theology Department of Ankara University, are important:

"Mr. Erdoğan is a man of my own world. He wants to see the fundamental motives of religion reflect on the public sphere. But I don't think his external appearance corresponds entirely with his natural state. I do believe and think that he's in a phase of change. His Muslim identity draws my attention. He's important for me, and he deserves my attention."

As for sociological affinity, Erdoğan evokes an image of authenticity that leads others to view him as a "*man of the people*" and "*one of us*." At the same time, this authenticity derives from superior attributes such as integrity, affection, physical build, family life, righteousness and justice, determination morality, and implicit power.

The words below of some participants represents the outline of the flexible sphere's view of Tayyip Erdoğan:

"I like Mr. Erdoğan. I've never seen a prime minister or another official who gained such acceptance. He's close with the Italian prime minister; he goes to the United States, he receives awards, he makes people listen to his speeches; all-in-all, I think our prime minister is a good administrator. I like his straight-forwardness..."⁶

6 A participant running a restaurant in Okmeydanı, İstanbul. He is distant to AK Party, and has preferred to remain in the *Saadet Partisi* (Felicity Party).

“Although he’s the prime minister, he still engages in street talk. Some of what he says still belongs to the street. I find him close to me because he’s not distant from the public...”⁷

“I like him very much. He represents the identity of the majority in Turkey; unlike, say, Demirel. Neither did Erbakan. They weren’t close to me...”⁸

“I like him very much, and I think he’s successful and courageous. He can pretty much intervene in anything...”⁹

Although sociological affinity has significance of its own, it also supports and nurtures religious closeness. When sociological affinity and religious closeness intersect, Erdoğan is distinguished from similar characters, for example from his predecessor Erbakan, and his mentorship function is reinforced.

This is expressed by a founding member of Mazlum-Der and a low-rank bureaucrat of National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP*) - Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi, RP*) background as follows:

“Here’s the difference between Tayyip Erdoğan and Erbakan: Tayyip Erdoğan’s first-marrying son married the daughter of a taxi driver. Erdoğan would never imagine this to be a problem of prestige. However, Erbakan would never have allowed his son to marry the daughter of a taxi driver...”

“Mr. Erdoğan is one of us. I believe that he has good intentions. I also admire Emine Erdoğan. I don’t find her to be hypocritical. Her modesty, her actions—she is unique. Erbakan’s wife was nothing like this at all...”

Tayyip Erdoğan’s style corresponds to the “*expectation of both consensus and power*” in the Islamic segment, and makes Erdoğan serve a function of a pioneer or a model that deepens and legitimises these expectations.

Two participants express the value they give to the consensus-oriented disposition of AK Party. The first participant is a tradesman from Aksaray, who was actively involved in the sentiment and process of conflict. The second one is an illegitimate imam of a village in Mardin, who, despite not being a member of the Hizbullah, comes from a similar background in terms of traditions and interpretation.

“They know the reality of Turkey and the reality of the world. They also know the reality of America. Most importantly, they do not create tensions.”¹⁰

⁷ A housewife in Trabzon, who is deeply rooted in the Islamic segment.

⁸ A bureaucrat living in Ankara, who represents the “ideal type actor” of the Islamic segment with his lifestyle, beliefs and expectations.

⁹ A veiled young woman of lower middle class, who prefers to stay away from politics

¹⁰ A tradesman from Aksaray

“I have an Islamic standpoint. We pray for Tayyip. AK Party is a party that has more tolerance and has adopted the values of the society. SP seems more sharp, but actually it's more loose. Tayyip is more tolerant, but serious.”¹¹

With respect to Tayyip Erdoğan, sociological affinity provides the grounds for the relations between the mass and the mentor to appear “*lateral*”, even if only in perception. What reinforces this lateral appearance is the conviction that the social and the popular is personified in Tayyip Erdoğan. As such, sociological affinity and religious closeness give birth to the “*full symbolic representation*” mechanism.

c. Third function: Political division

The evolution of the Islamic identity is closely related to certain traumas.

The most significant trauma has arisen from the changing climate due to increased contact with the West in a changing climate, which has led to the confrontation of local and global values. The problem of the West has been an identity-forming element that nurtures the “*superiority*”, “*distrust*” and “*otherness*” mechanisms of the dominant mentality of the Islamic segment.

On the other hand, the EU project has advanced parallel to certain expectations of the Islamic segment for the last five years, which has naturally led to a dual, even conflicting meaning with regard to the Western problem. The EU project is regarded as both of Western origin in political and cultural inputs and as an instrument for interfering with the true identity, but has also become the subject of the desire for and expectation of change and welfare across the Islamic segment. Alternations between these two extremes have led to identity ruptures, and have deepened the traumas that started at the end of the 1990s.

The European policy of the AK Party has to some extent exacerbated this trauma, but more often it has compensated for the damage and healed the scar with its mentorship mechanism. The fact that the AK Party’s European policy has taken steps that are in contrast to the dominant mentality of the Islamic segment has facilitated the quest for and establishment of a relation between these steps and the Islamic identity (on a level of symbols, utility and principles).

This is the third function that the AK Party and Tayyip Erdoğan serve in the change of the Islamic segment via the mentorship mechanism.

This function appears as the attempt to assimilate steps of change and democratization, which challenge the established political mentality, with the help of Tayyip Erdoğan’s function as a mentor.

11 Informal *imam*

A tradesman from Istanbul, whose lifestyle, opinions, and reflexes are a typical representation of the Islamic segment expresses the adaptation and attitude change resulting from this conviction as follows:

"I absolutely don't agree with those who say the EU will divide and split Turkey. Tayyip Erdoğan knows what he's doing. He knows this thing..."

A low-ranking public servant from Altındağ, Ankara, who defines himself as a staunch Muslim and who comes from a *Millî Görüş** (The National Outlook) background, says the following on the same subject:

"Now... of course, we have opposed the EU for years. We called it the Christians' Club. Now I believe that Mr. Erdoğan is doing this knowingly. I don't think he'll compromise... from our fundamental philosophy that is. I think it's even less likely that Bülent Arınç will do something like this. You remember his sacrifice when the bill was being voted for. I don't believe that these people will allow Europe to gobble us up."

In addition, emphasis on religion, identity and pride, and suspicions about integration with the West, do not undermine the utilitarian argument for EU membership based upon political and economic reasoning. These suspicions and attitudes are brought to light via the AK Party and Tayyip Erdoğan as a form of mental and political exercise.

The following examples outline an attempt at compensation for identity-based concerns and rupturing identities by pointing at Tayyip Erdoğan. The quotes are from a young male student, a businessman from Konya, and a worker from Istanbul, who are clear representatives of the Islamic mentality.

"I support the EU. There are already millions of Muslims in Europe, Turks and others. They say that our religious and cultural identity will be lost. I don't agree. There's also the fact that, should we enter Europe as a representative of Islam, by protecting that identity, Europe will benefit from this. It will be diversity for them. So, we must come to terms with our culture and our past. I mean, we shouldn't be mimicking them. Of course, we should fulfil the conditions for entering the union..."

* *Millî Görüş* ("National Outlook") is the most important wing emerged through the restructuration of the Islamic movement since the 1960s. As a political solidarity group, this wing emerged and was organized mainly in the context of the increasing power and influence of socially and politically engaged Muslim circles. *Millî Görüş* constitutes the basis of the most, if not all of Islamic currents and formations from 1960s to 1990s. It also formed the main ideological framework of political parties such as the National Order Party (*Millî Nizam Partisi*, MNP), National Salvation Party (*Millî Selamet Partisi*, MSP), Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, RP), Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*, FP) and Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*, SP). The ruling AK Party (Justice and Development Party, in power since 2002) contain elements of *Millî Görüş* and numerous administrators within the party have *Millî Görüş* backgrounds. However, AK Party's experience in power and policies could be defined within a liberal field, outside of the *Millî Görüş* current.

“Mevlana doesn’t fight against the Mongols when he is in Konya. So some people call him a Mongolian spy. But he says, ‘I’ll convert the sons of 200 Mongols to Islam.’ Then why should a Muslim be afraid of the EU? I am not. Tayyip Erdoğan wants to enter. Isn’t he a believer then?”

“Okay, let’s enter the EU. But pleading at their doorstep shatters our pride. If that’s the case, I’ll never accept Europe. Yet I don’t agree with those who say that Tayyip Erdoğan will divide Turkey with the EU. Europe might be imposing some things on us, but they are good things and they are also found in Islam. Human rights are also in Islam.”

Although such quests for adaptation initially exacerbate concerns and fears, they lead social actors to accept the global, merge it with the local, and also view change as a natural structure.

The important issue at this point is dispelling the absolute fear and distrust of the West, emerging from the “*state of conflict*”, and opening the doors to a “*state of cooperation*”. It is important that all inputs and demands of the West are not reflexively interpreted solely as interference and pressure. It can be asserted that this situation breaks the single-centered and non-interactive structure and perception of the local identity, and subjects the single-faceted definition of politics to “*multiplication*”.

Within this framework, the influence of the mentorship mechanism surpasses that of the political and the conjectural, and touches some cornerstones of paradigms.

A determining attribute here is the fact that the AK Party prefers “*human rights, basic rights and freedoms, and a secular attitude towards religion-politics relations*” in its policies for integration with the West through the EU, and not “*traditional discourse, structure and mentality*”. Considering the rupture explained above, this attitude causes two series of effects on paradigms.

On the one hand, the holistic structure of the dominant mentality undergoes a pressure of separation, the absoluteness of the natural cultural order and local values are shattered, and mentality patterns move towards a structure that is open to interactivity with external inputs.

On the other hand, references to definitions of political, identity and belonging are facing important changes due to new catalysts between religion and politics as well as between identity and politics.

It should be noted that a more general wave of change created with the experiences of the last decade, which will be examined in detail in the next section, was as effective, if not more, in this development as the AK Party and the mentorship of Tayyip Erdoğan. The mentorship function provides some kind of response to the rupture experienced by actors, and owes its effectiveness to the response it provides.

Changes within this framework are not possible simply because the mentor wishes and does so, but because the existence and attitude of a mentor is a solution to a problem and provides a response to a need.

B. COMMUNITIES AS A VECTOR OF CHANGE

The losses suffered by the Islamic segment during the decade of conflict in Turkey, as for example obstacles in terms of dress code, create an “*important individual problem area*” for this segment of society. It can be said that this problem area is created by the traumas that arise from the confrontation of identity values and new legal requirements.

A solace and a compensation for these traumas can be provided in a “*communitarian language and solution*.”

Such a language is has emerged especially in the *Nurcu* community, which is no coincidence.

The *Nurcu* community of Turkey has a structure with an inherent secularization tendency due to its internal patterns and modes of action.

Some of the factors that have caused this community to sway between religion and secularism include an informal mentorship mechanism where rituals are kept to a minimum; developing religious beliefs through education; aiming for material modernization; harnessing well-educated, qualified people; ensuring constant contact between this type of person and the modern sphere; and adapting to the language of the era. Meanwhile, they have adopted behaviors that are in line with the regime in order to protect their legitimacy, and have always used a markedly “*secular*” discourse, which have reinforced this inherent buoyancy.

Due to its inner patterns and natural evolution, and to the drive to protect its members and its activities, this community recommends civilized and modern behavior to its members, and mentor them into taking on the desired identity and the behavior codes that go with it.

The possibility for communities to act as models in the creation of personalities and identities, and to reflection central attitude changes to the members, and thereby creating an action plan for its members, triggers a mechanism of change that has a relatively low effectiveness of individualism, but a high effectiveness of secularity.

Although changes in political and social attitudes are subject to the limits imposed by a “*hard mentality core and patriarchal patterns*”, they also help understand the long-

term changing of the same mentality. Although utilitarian aspects are dominant, the metamorphosis of instruments creates differences in targets as well as among the actors that move towards these.

For example, these recommendations allow members, especially young ones, to put some distance between each other. This legitimises the use of wigs in place of scarves in the public sphere, and so stops the headscarf from being a primary condition for public participation. It replaces the “*religious attitude*” that encompasses the “*politics-culture-society*” triad with a secular language that is seated upon a partial perception.

This issue is explained by the following excerpt from a long interview conducted with a university student who is a member of the Fethullah Hoca* community.

“I’m 20 years old. My father is a bus driver in Saudi Arabia. He’s been there for 20 years. He comes home for a month every year. You can’t assess his attitude in that one month. It doesn’t become clear. My thoughts had not matured until a few years ago. I lived through hard times and depression. I read somewhere that when a father is alive but away, it affects children worse than if he was dead. This is very apparent in my older brother. I had it too, but, thank God, I overcame it. I can look my father in the eyes more comfortably now. First of all, I belong to a group of ideas. This has brought some effect and some benefits. That’s how I overcame my problems. I believe that it has brought me somewhere. I’m within a community. I take responsibilities. If I wasn’t in this, I wouldn’t be able to establish the kind of relations that I’m now establishing with certain communities. I’m having different experiences. It’s all very nice (...)

I listen to the news on the radio, on Moral FM. Especially the morning news (...)

I take off my headscarf when I enter school. How did I decide to do this? My family persuaded me. We focus on things more important than a scarf. Okay, taking off the headscarf does really take something away from us, but it wasn’t a big deal. For those who don’t remove their headscarves, I’ve got nothing to say. Not to all of them. If a capable person has to sit at home just because she doesn’t want to uncover, that’s different. I’m not very rigid about the scarf. Can Turkey handle this or not? More important for me is my longing for an education in order to progress. So a covered woman cannot enter public institutions. That’s not too important. How effective is the professor whose class I attend? Can he

* Fethullah Hoca community is among the most modern examples of *Nurculuk* understanding (see page 8). It was initiated via activities along education and educational institutions. It has increasingly expanded its aim of making good believers (*mümin*) towards non-educational means. Its expansion policy by the establishment of associations, professional organizations, solidarity networks, and formations within civil society and state institutions, transformed the Fethullah Hoca community a politically and socially powerful and influential movement.

deliver his class fully? That's more important. The professor may be praying five times a day; but I don't want him to throw his family into shambles because of his personal whims (...)

There's something I say to my covered friends who stay at home. I know there are obstacles. But these obstacles should not make you stay at home and blunt your abilities. Open up, go outside. I say this all the time to the people around me. They should come take part in society. I believe they will become more ambitious about their future (...)

Yes, I do ask questions about the structure of the community. Not in a purely critical fashion. But I'm one of them, I know that it's there. How can it be better? You are a part of it and you want things to be better. You can also criticize, but criticism should also be constructive. If they say something in the community, for example that such-and-such is correct and they will do it, I'll first check to see if it is. Does it fit my family values? You never know."

This young woman is from Central Anatolia, has grown up in Ankara, and comes from a poor family with three other children. Like many actors, her relations with the community exist in three layers. The first is the voluntary belonging that comes with a need for mentorship. Second is the importance she places on education, bringing about a sacrifice of the Islamic way of life. She sees the sacrifice as a trial for the future (in other words, a modernity that is based on the future and is founded upon sacrificing the present), the adoption of community doctrines such as a country existing for its people, development, welfare and morality. The third level is the questioning of communitarian demands by the members of the community, whereupon individual and collective ethics of questioning arise.

Another member of the *Nurcu* group will serve as a different example.

This 23-year-old male participant is one of the "ideal types" encountered during the study. Beside his patriarchal and communitarian attributes, he lives comfortably with the developments of the modern sphere, and bears the conflicts of this confrontation in himself. More importantly, he is in the identity-building phase. He has completed his primary and secondary education in Van, and he is from Ahlat, a town that is both pro-Turkish and deeply religious. His family is within the "reader" groups of the *Nurcu* community, and family and neighbourhood relations fit in with an Islamic environment and community. His maternal grandfather is a prominent figure in the community. He has witnessed many *Nur* discussions and *Risale-i Nur* conversations. He has started going to "reader houses" as of the tenth grade. The most important part of his existence is the aim to be at the top of the male hierarchy. He views prestige as a transcendent value, and believes that success, money, work and respect will earn him prestige. Moving on beyond the attributes of his family and community,

he has adopted the role of a mentor and a leader, which is the zenith of the closed patriarchal system.

Below is an excerpt of the interview where the participant introduces himself:

"I'm a nationalistic person. I'm religious, but I never go to extremes. My nationalism isn't fanatical, and neither is my religiosity. Faith is something personal, and gains importance with regard to his intentions. That's why I never go tell anyone that I'm religious, that I'm this or that. But it does reflect on my surroundings. To put it simply, I always want to complete my services (...)

I'm a part of the reader group. They found me when I came to Trabzon for university. Some members of the community are close to my father. They sought me out and found me. I met them. They have a house where they have conversations, I sometimes stop by. People around me don't know that I'm a member of the community, but I'm striving to make people realize. For example, I grew a mustache (...)

I read *Risale-i Nur* over and over. I read many books, but none of them can replace that. One believe I have a mission. I have a lot of friends. I'm in contact with 200 to 250 university students here. I think I can be their guide. I know everyone who has come from Van. I treat those from Sivas and Kayseri as my townfolk. I met some of them during bus trips. Newcomers are very obvious, I try to introduce myself. I cook at home, invite them for dinner. I see people who are completely unaware of anything. Of course I don't preach to them, do this, do that. If I can encourage the person to read just one more book, I'm happy. I work hard to achieve this; almost all my gifts are books. I know this is less formal and more personal, which is important to me (...)"

The participant's views on the Islamic movement, secularism and the dress code, given below, overlap with that of his community's:

"The Islamic segment is not homogenic. The ignorant cause harm everywhere. I'm against twisting the truth. So sometimes I even react against those protesting the headcover ban. I have come to a point where, although I have relatives and acquaintances who are aggrieved by this issue, I say some of them deserved it (...)

I don't believe that the concept of Islam conflicts with the republic or with secularism. That is something I learnt from the *Risale-i Nur*. Bediüzzaman would eat the broth of the soup, and give its grains to ants. When people asked him why, and he says, 'Ants are more republican than we are.' In fact, Bediüzzaman is an admirer of the republic. I think this has been completely misunderstood (...)

Secularism does me no harm. I prefer to live in a secular Turkey. But I believe there are problems in its implementation. I mean, covered girls should be able to go to university. Their rights to education should not be taken away. It's contrary to humanity. Although I have seen some of those girls contradict the symbol of the veil with their attitudes and behavior. It's not a generalization, but

I've seen it in many people around me. I dislike their attempt to make this a symbol. You can have faith, do your services, think in a certain way, but to put that out to everyone (...)"

This and similar examples lead us to the following conclusion:

The discourse of the *Nurcu* community, created by relatively “*elite*” people, serves the function of legitimising change when faced with pressure, especially among the young generation that experiences a lot of ruptures. This change is on the one hand exceeding the boundaries of the given mentality and political memory, and on the other hand, it is reproducing patriarchal values from within. However, the trend of changes continuing points at a possible ground shift for these values.

2. THE HETEROGENIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC SEGMENT

The rise of the Islamic movement in Turkey occurred around the mid-1980s with the obvious influence of the Iranian Revolution. The movement reached its zenith in the 1990s and led to a severe polarization of religion and secularity. This 20-year period is of uttermost importance for the inner buoyancy of the Islamic segment and the recreation of an Islamic identity. It is both a time of integration, and a period of differentiation due to the conflicts and interactions experienced by the Islamic segment both within itself and with the secular segment. In other words, while this period created the politically and socially differentiating cornerstones of the Islamic identity after 1980, the experiences and confrontations during that time have had radical effects on the Islamic segment and have triggered a wave of change.

A series of confrontations, conflicts and rupture of values, and then the individual, collective and political responses to these ruptures have not only created “*attitude changes*”, but also had important effects on “*perception and value systems*” in some areas.

These effects can be collected under the heading “*the heterogenization of the Islamic community*” with regard to their content and the problems they caused.

Heterogenization expresses the changing of the Islamic community’s perception of Islamic actors – which created strong bonds between religion, economy, culture, the private and the public within a rigid hierarchy – over experiences and through its internal dynamics. Expressed in other way, the heterogenization of the Islamic segment points at the partial perception of religion, economy, politics and other elements of social life, as pieces tied together loosely, and at a wave of secularization coming from within.

Heterogenization appears as both a spherical differentiation and a spherical division.

The separation is sparked by experiences and occurs in an individualization and rationalization of expectations. People's references to their search of benefits (individual, economic, religious and political) and their means of getting there, come together and diversify in nonreligious areas, which causes flexibility in convictions. This situation refers to a systematic separation, and therefore a differentiation. On the other hand, "*identity rupturing*" traumas such as steps towards democratization and changing political alliances are chaotic in appearance, which points more at a division or multiplication of areas than a differentiation of areas.

A. THE LEVEL OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL EXPERIENCES

The period between 1980 and 2000 is a critical threshold in the publicization and politicization of the Islamic identity. This threshold has a sociological aspect of visibility, activity, demands and interactions by the Islamic segment in the public sphere. A surge of actors and conflicts based on lifestyle due to contact between the Islamic identity and other segments in the public sphere, points at a political story. In other words, the acceleration of the Islamic movement during this period is directly related to the wave of change. It is during this period that the Islamic movement ceases to be an independent variable, and as a carrier that includes some aspects of change, is nurtures some of them, and also produces some more. Insofar as this process emphasises the inevitable interactivity between the Islamic actor and the "*modern*" or "*secular*" actor, the sociological, intellectual and political inner structures of the Islamic movement have been surrounded by a mechanism of change. This mechanism has proved to be a "*catharsis*", a confrontation with oneself due to external factors, for the Islamic segment, and has played an important part in its inclination towards becoming heterogeneous. In other words, this period comprises an interval that encompasses not only the Islamic segment's struggle with the "modern sphere", but also its contact with the modern world, causing a series of interactions and subsequent questionings.

It should be noted that internal factors are also important in the heterogenization trend. Internal and external "*Islamic factors*" such as the crisis of the Iranian model for the Islamic segment of Turkey, the Taliban movement and the activities of the Hizbullah, have played important parts in this questioning and separation process.

Points of contact and interactivity fields of experience and vectors of change are numerous.

Findings of the study reveal four areas of experience during the 1990s and 2000s. These areas are intertwined, factual in nature, but belong to a general climate of change.

The first area concerns the actions leading up to “February 28th” and its consequences. This was not only a period when the Islamic segment was investigated and followed. It was also a period when the Islamic segment held political power through the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi, RP*) government. The segment lived through introversion and extroversion simultaneously. The first process expresses a state of mind that extends from the economy to unions and associations, from politics to municipalities, collecting cultural and social elements under a religious roof, it is an act of political organization and corporatist structuring, in short, a “*homogenization of segments*”. The second process introduced this segment to problems and structures beyond it, providing grounds for a gradual differentiation within itself. The two processes have caused a series of ruptures, conflicts between value systems and subsequent attitude changes. It has caused changes due to factors from the outside, as well as due to experiences produced inside.

The second area of experience is the experience of religion and economic relations through the revenue-sharing model that arose during the same period. The catastrophic failure of this model led to filters being placed between religion and economic relations.

The third experience is the emergence of models and organizations centered on violence, both in Turkey and across the world. This caused the Islamic actors to differentiate their perception of the Islamic movement and instigated a review of the relations between religion and politics.

The fourth area of experience is the distance the Turkish Islamic movement placed between itself and the Iranian model, which had played an important part in the mass restructuring of the movement in the 1980s. This distance caused the global and anti-traditional Islamic philosophy to break down, and paved the way to a markedly local Islamic movement and philosophy in political terms.

Each of these experience areas have loosened the firm bonds between religion, economy and politics, and have resulted in each part being perceived differently in accordance with its inner dynamics. This heterogenization and the secularization it brought about has without doubt occurred under the umbra of the Islamic segment internalising and including in its identity universal values such as democracy, human rights and freedom due to the pressures and interactions it has encountered. This determining umbrella and its elements will be explained in the next chapter.

a. Welfare Party (RP) and February 28th

As stated before, the experiences and polarization that cover the second half of the 1990s and the “February 28th” period have played an important part in the heterogenization of the Islamic sphere and in the loosening of the tight bonds between the perceptions of religion and politics.

The developments of “February 28th” are still perceived as an “*injustice*” and the sense of grievance and the reaction have acquired places in the “*collective memory*” of the Islamic segment.

In spite of this and despite the fact that the sense of grievance never evolved into a psychology of defeat, the RP administration and the subsequent interference seems to have triggered a “*catharsis*” mechanism toward the inner patterns of the Islamic segment. Elements of this mechanism are involved in Erbakan’s crisis policies, a retrospective critical look at the RP administration and its activities, and distancing oneself from some religious discourses and trends that surfaced during that period.

The rupture between the experiencing of government power – which spawned involvement, hope and association – and the sentiments of loss – losing ground, and the religion coming to harm – created one of the legs of the change process. These ruptures have resulted in the level of individualization within the Islamic segment. The RP period and the conflicts revolving around this period have opened both Islamic and political information channels for the Islamic communities, and initiated a differentiation – more precisely, a “*perception through differentiation*”, “*existence through differentiation*”, and an investigation process.

The following words of a worker living in Istanbul, who lived through the “February 28th” period, illustrates the above well:

“I was infuriated with “February 28th”. Unbelievably so. But I showed patience. I prayed a lot. But I knew; I knew what was going to happen. We are now relieved, the 36% of the AK Party had me relieved. But I know better today. We made mistakes in the past. Take that mosque in Taksim, for instance. Build it if there is need. But don’t do it just to disturb the beehive. This was purely political at best. At a time when the secular-anti-secular conflict was at its height, it was unnecessary. It only created more tension, that’s it...”

A public servant in Ankara, who comes from an MSP-RP background, makes a retrospective analysis of that period, and underlines the relation and separation of religion and politics:

“We saw Muslims deceived by these phony orders. The religion suffered in the end. Ali Sandıkçı and the likes of him... that’s why I believe there is no harm in controlling these. Open them up. Everyone should know...”

“Erbakan is at fault concerning “February 28th”. There’s some megalomania. He comes from an aristocratic family. Erbakan had influence over all religious communities in Turkey, whether they accepted it or not. He had absolute authority. Things like the Islamic Dinar. It’s just a laugh, but you do secretly like it... But we saw it was all pointless...”

b. The experience of Islamic violence

Another factor triggering the differentiation – more correctly, a perception through differentiation and existence through differentiation – was the anxiety about the relation of terrorism and the Islamic movement. With regard to the inner arguments and divisions of the Islamic segment, the dimension of “*radicalism*” attained with the Hizbullah organization seems to be a determining element at this point. Operations against Hizbullah and the uncovered murders, as well as the rupture brought about with the confrontation of this matter, created questions and worries about the relation of Islam and politics, and about the use of religion within a political framework. On the one hand, Islamic actors strove to pull away from such activities and organizations. On the other hand, mental and political distance was enlarged between the actors and such actions to preserve the Islamic sphere and the religion. In other words, the questioning initiated by the Hizbullah issue unseated the mentality that Islam and the Muslim were associated with each other, and injected the difference between Islam and the Muslim into the minds of people, preparing the grounds for the idea that the Muslim is multiple and plural. The experiences of two respondents, one from Konya and the other from Kayseri, are as follows:

“There was this book fair. Two guys came up. Playing marches like this. They were from the Malatya group. Two tall kids... if you’re looking for Turkish Hizbullah, you’ve definitely got the wrong man, I said. You are partisan murderers. They said, there are things you don’t know. I said, a man kills a man, a Muslim kills a Muslim with no motive. That’s murder. We argued awhile, they left. (...) I was glad that the Hizbullah issue surfaced. It should. Someone’s setting up an organization, doing this kind of stuff, all in the name of Islam... How can such a thing happen?”

“This changed my stance towards Islamic politics. Erbakan is a great man, I said. He never allowed these kinds of people around him. I thought about it; he never supported this, all the way from the 70s. I said to myself, he was right. If he were to go with our excitement then, the country would have turned into a slaughterhouse. Using the religion is very dangerous. Take those bombings in Istanbul. How do you explain that? 80 to 85 Muslims died.”

The following retrospective questioning is from an illegitimate village imam, who has been interrogated, even tortured several times. He cannot enter urban areas due to his multicoloured religious-traditional attire that harkens at the Aczimendi order wear, and he is a possible target of death *fatwas*.

“Islamic law prescribes death for turncoats, but not in this society. What the Hizbullah did was wrong. They gave death fatvahs behind closed doors. I never was close to that. I spoke to them about this. They were siding with Iran. They knew no boundaries when it came to violence. This would harm the religion. And it did...”

c. The Iranian model and a return to historicity

Another consequence of the political and social events is that the Iranian model lost its grip of the Islamic segment. This breakpoint initiated a “*quest for a return to the roots*”. Instead of only perceiving Islam in a framework that encompasses public demands, it now also appeared as the interaction point with universal values and concepts of Western origin.

The quest to return to the roots expresses both a human-centered reorientation to the Koran, and a movement towards a historical standpoint that prioritises the circumstances of its own society. In other words, the universalistic disposition, feeding off the Iranian Revolution that concerns the purification of Islam from local and national traditions is being replaced by a disposition that prioritises local elements and perceptions. However, this change is less an adoption of mystical and similar traditions strongly opposed by the universalistic movement and its followers in the '80s, but more an individual adaption in the public sphere.

At this point we encounter the indirect consequences of the “*Islamic modernity*”, which may be defined as an organization of anonymous and massified human elements in the public sphere with public demands, and a movement that was significantly dominant in the Islamic movement of Turkey after the Iranian Revolution.

Although the traditional structure and organization maintained its existence, it had lost its monopoly and its general legitimacy following this modernization.

It should be noted that the globalization had also lost its power after the experiences of the 90s.

This dual effect has spawned an inner differentiation and pluralization process that brings an end to the close kinship between religious acts and perceptions. This is an

important indicator of the distance between religion and politics, and the return to the human-centered roots.

A tradesman from Istanbul, who used to be an avid supporter of Islamic universality and the Iranian model, has arrived at the following conclusion:

“Turkey has realities of its own. Isn’t there a Persian nationalism in Iran? Maybe this pro-Iran attitude is why they couldn’t export the revolution. There’s this magnificent letter written by Imam Houmeyni to Gorbachev as the Iranian Islamic Revloution is underway. We didn’t know of that. We would take just a couple of words by Mevlana, things like that pumpkin and all, and judge him on that. But this obscene narration style was very predominant in Khorasan and other places in those days. Then it came over to Anatolia; nothing wrong with that. I now call this a rugged, fascist idea of religion. Fortunately, I moved over to the enlightenment of Islam.”

A faculty member who is from the Central Anatolian region and who lives in Ankara explains his experiences:

“I began to change after the second year of theology. I mean, after two years of background information, I noticed that those so called disciples only fought each other for personal gain. That’s when our feelings began to change towards those people that we used to call the golden generation. Some of our friends fell into depression as a reaction to the miserable condition of religious orders in 1982 and 1983. Mind you, they still aren’t any better. I started to oppose mysticism. With the influence of the Iranian revolution, I became closer to an internationalist Islam with public demands. This could be called a radical attitude in me. But I never sided with any organization. There was already some distance between order members, mysticists and me due to arguments. I became a kind of pro-Iranist and saw Iran as a world apart. But I had a more rational understanding of religion. I saw the success of Iran as the success of the downtrodden, and I sympathised with them. Some friends became Shiites. I never went to such extremes. The fundamentalism had some positive influence on me: I could understand what the Muslims in Turkey and across the world were dealing with, and I also decided where I would move on to professionally. Many people experienced this return to the past.”

d. The economic experience

“Alternative economic organization models” were among the mechanisms that connected elements of humanity, morality and order in Islamic political projects and community-building trends of the 80s and 90s.

Being products of the Islamic discourse that associated money with property and interest with *haram*, the most active type of these economic models was *“profit*

sharing companies". These were not only a mode of economic activity, but they also became the favourite instruments of small investor believers, and leveraged the introverted, holistic organization and community-building trends of the Islamic segment. They were among the most important instruments of the tightly-wound corporatist structuring that collected different elements of the Islamic sphere such as religion, politics, economy and culture under one roof, and separated them from the "*modern sphere*".

This model emerged in the 1980s, became visible with private finance institutions, and spread through holdings in Central Anatolian cities like Konya, Kayseri and Yozgat after the local administration election success of the RP in 1994. After some four to five smooth years, the RP coalition administration left office; showing which they proceeded initial signs of distress, as did also the finance institutions based on profit sharing, to collapse catastrophically after the financial crisis of 2001.

This collapse seems to have had important effects, causing a rupture of businessmen, small investors and third parties with regard to the Islamic actors. This rupture pioneered the separation of the economy and religion both mentally and materially with a desire to protect both individual and religious interests. These concentric and intertwined experiences, direct for some and indirect for others, but nevertheless still a part of the crisis and the climate of change sweeping across the country, can be said to have the following consequence:

The rupture caused by the contact of different benefit and value systems has given rise to a simultaneous trend of separating the fields with a drive to protect and to be protected, and this has provided the grounds for an internalising of the separation that will be hard to revoke.

The following are the words of a businessman who owns a growing contracting company. As a student, he was a prominent member of one of the most visible pro-Iranian groups collected around the *Tevhit* magazine.

"We founded a profit-sharing company with a group of friends from an Islamic background. We acted first like a nongovernmental organization. We invited some writers and intellectuals to conferences in our city. Then we incorporated. We started industry and trade operations in the furniture sector and others. But we came to the brink of bankruptcy during the 2001 crisis. One link broke, and the others followed suit. That's when we realized that the company couldn't go on like this, and when everyone's the owner of a company, no one is. We had similar episodes as in Konya. I mean, some people collected money and just disappeared. Upon that, I realized that this would harm a large number of people, and, neglecting my work, tried for three years to end this thing

peacefully and not instil hatred among people. We somehow managed this. Then I founded my current company. We put in a tremendous effort at that time, and we have no problems remaining from the past. I think this episode and the fact that we could clean it up has a lot to do with the success of our business.”

The following participant is a prominent actor of the Islamic movement among the tradesmen in Konya. He maintains a distance from current political events and remains fundamentalist. His narration indicates a different angle and reasoning concerning the effects of the experience:

“The scandals at profit-sharing companies caused a huge loss of prestige for the Islamic segment as well as for Konya. Our prestige, respectability and trustworthiness were badly maimed. Actually, we Islamists have been going corrupt recently. We began to value money over everything. Support and solidarity have eroded away. This will and do harm the religion. We must separate some things now.”

Although the rise and fall the profit-sharing model is a very important factor in the separation of religion and economic relations, it is not the only reason for this separation. Economic crises and the process of narrowing down and rationalizing have affected the Islamic segment actors not only in terms of their Islamic identity, but as citizens and investors, and have sharpened the separation.

B. POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION THROUGH MENTALITY AND PERCEPTION

This section will deal with the relations between the Islamic identity and the concepts of democracy, human rights, freedom and secularity looking at the evolution experienced.

As the expectations of local Islamic actors mingled with concepts of universal values, the Islamic segment suffered traumatic effects. This trauma consisted of the ruptures occurring as local and global value systems contradict each other, and expressed “*two kinds of fragmentation*” for the Islamic actors.

The first fragmentation was a rupture of identity. This facilitated the separation of the reactionary hardcore and the more flexible sphere within the Islamic segment. The second fragmentation was the effect the flexible sphere was subjected to on the level of political perception. In other words, it refers to a process of change seated upon the effort to establish a relationship between new political inputs and the “*given mentality or memory*”.

First this mentality, and then the pressure that the mentality underwent and the boundaries of change, will be explained.

a. Given memory

The “*fundamental philosophy*” of the political perception within the conservative segment is built upon identity and belonging. The outline of this philosophy is; the replacement of a multifaceted society idea with a ‘monoblock’ nation; the definition of history as tension between nations and cultures; and an attempt to associate “*state-politics-society-individual*” with each other with an undercurrent of full mobilization. In other words, excessive emphasis on belonging, like in all patriarchal orders, renders the “*introverted natural order*” perception a natural value that every actor is born into. Introversion naturally nurtures a strong concept of otherness, and significantly instrumentalises the concept of the “*other*” in identity definition.

This mentality views the West as the source of “*constant and strongest other religion, identity and tradition*”.

This perception of the West serves a key purpose for two elements feeding each other: the relation between “*religion and belonging*” as well as between “*identity and history*”. On the one hand, it cultivates the otherness trend that emphasises differentiation and a search for power against the influence and identity of the West. On the other, moving on from the experiences of the last century and a half, it comprises the background of the “*historical memory*” that perceives the West as a threat to its own identity and integrity, and establishes its responses on alleviating this threat.

Within this framework, it is possible to define the given memory as a value, an identity, and even a personality/imagination that is constructed in close contact with the sublimated past.

Accordingly, the most important elements of “*identity and personality reflexes*” in the sense of belonging constructed with national and local common experiences and religious inputs, are an imagination, a “*utopization of the past*”, and a perception of strength and greatness of the past. Utopization of the past creates expectations and imaginations for the present, and even for the future, with historical references, symbols and aspirations. Meanwhile, it serves the function of a “thought map” in terms of action plans, the “*understanding and explaining*” activities that form the basis of these plans, and mental exercises for this purpose.

The concept of “*historylessness*” used by Şükrü Hanioglu may help understand the mentality beneath this powerful imagination of history:

“A thesis often brought up in our society, but not often expressed this way, is what we may call ‘historylessness’. The desire of historylessness is nothing more than a complete actualization of history, and a history-making based entirely on sections of history that are thought to be good for the present. (...) The main problem created by making history an inseparable part of the present and thereby expressing the inevitability of the creation of the actual is the attribution of unrealistic qualities such as ‘perfectness’, ‘infallibility’ and ‘flawlessness’ to the teleological past thus created retrospectively. It is not a coincidence that historylessness is shaped around persons, institutions and motifs thought to bear these qualities. This approach fosters the creation of such personalities, but also furnishes societies and nations with similar qualities. As a result, the persons around whom history revolves ascend to a superhuman level, while the state becomes a ‘divine’ institution, and the ‘nation’ a fabulous creature that was and will not be comprised of human beings.”¹²

The myth of the past not only provides the most important source for the legitimacy of the patriarchal thought and mode of existence, but also serves the purpose of the “*micro-physical function*” of this structure. The social actor is shaped with a “*succession of thought codes*” that establishes links between the past and the present within the mentality structure, believed to be representing historical continuity, and builds the sense of responsibility within this frame.

The judgements, perceptions and definitions in this concatenation consist of historical luggage from “*specific and actual experiences*”, transmitted and *acquitted* verbal-symbolic-written memory. In other words, it is produced from given “others” like the Western world, given “*facts*” like the siege of Vienna, and given “*problems*” like the Armenian issue.

This reduces the distance between the past and the present in the person’s mind and knowledge, thereby protecting the said thought codes. Perceiving the past with the present and the present with the past, producing symbolic meaning shifts between the two, and establishing an anachronic code system creates an ordinary and automated thought framework.

Finally, the close distance between the past and the present causes the subjectification and singulating out of different social groups, and multifaceted problems, in both societies and religions, thereby perpetuating the construction of an identity over the reproduction of the memory.

12 Hanioglu, Şükrü, “Is Historylessness a Solution?” *Zaman* Newspaper. Commentaries Section. June 21, 2005

This closed circle is the main organiser of the social sphere.

“A truth away from truth over a transmitted and acquitted past” results in the introversion of the community in terms of discourse, memory and action, and a sense of power and superiority that develops in tandem. This paves the way for roles, structures and institutions symbolising power and superiority, like man, state, chief and sheikh, to obtain a quality of *“transcendence”*.

With memory exercises on the one hand and this *“transcendancy”* on the other, the *“naturality”* with regard to the society and the order becomes inevitable. A history with linear progression, the primary mental source of the idea of a natural definition of nation, appears here.

“The natural” expresses both the *“unchanging”* and the *“private texture”* that must be kept under protection for the sake of its purity. Consequently, the primary reference of the natural is the system of traditions and beliefs that incorporates coded mechanisms of hierarchy, obedience, harmony and behavior. Within the frame of this system, a primary socialization process is the actor's harmonization of his behavior with the given codes of a given hierarchy, and completing this with instruments and positive enforcements like prestige, respectability, and criteria of collecting and producing anecdotes.

As with every patriarchal order, the *“body”* is the central theme in these processes. A morality that preaches purity and virginity surrounds a voluntary auto-control mechanism of a body controlled by fear, faith and virtue. Normalising codes, prohibitions and taboos by them implementing on the body, and recreating them as a discourse comes from linking together ideas of the *“purity of the individual and the society”*, with the *“association between the individual and the society”*. Any change in the public sphere, of human behavior, attitudes or value systems are regarded as corruption, and the inputs resulting from it are attempted to be alleviated.

This is where nationalism appears in the given mentality.

In this mentality, *“nationalism as an activated or politicized sense of belonging”* is not only the natural policy of an identity, but the main lever of the natural state and unchangeability.

Nationalism serves to build a bridge between the past and the present, and seats the association between the state-politics-society-individual on an idea of *“hierarchy and obedience”*. Therefore, it is utility-based. As with every utility-based structure, this is also nourished by the *“idea and use of power”*, which becomes the primary instrument

for reproducing nationalism further nourished by memories. The said reproduction will generate a sense of superiority and distrust with regard to the “*other*”.

This is how nationalism creates the main lever for the natural state and unchangeability, in other words, the stasis of the society.

On the other hand, nationalism as a natural policy of the identity surrounds the only dynamic mechanism of this mentality: the state. As the bearer of the national existence, the solitary authority that has a monopoly over freedom, and an instrument that represents and protects the nation over politics, it becomes “*sacred*” and is sublimated.

However, problems, corruption and tremors in the natural order are also blamed on the state, more correctly, the state administration.

The consequence of the combination of “*sacredness and ordinariness*” is as follows:

All arguments, expectations and opinions are restrained to the state, are legitimised within this framework, and become legitimate only when moving on from this. The responsibility and questioning mechanism that appears here points at a certain temporality beside holy references, which allows the social actor to associate himself with the state, and make sense of politics within this understanding.

In this mentality pattern, politics is the control of the state and a struggle for power towards determining national interests and appointing the actors who will make this determination.

This struggle for power is the fulcrum.

The arbiter of this struggle for power is “*coded violence*”. As such, violence takes on a meaning that defines and legitimises righteousness and the right, and evolves into a value. The principle or custom that the national interest is determined by the most powerful establishes a parallel between the value of the power and the appropriateness of the determination of interests. Insofar as the powerful is perceived as correct, right and legitimate, he deserves voluntary obedience, and power will be a value in itself.

A two-way mobility lies beneath the perception of politics:

Politics is both associated with the state, and appears as an instrument of utility and for obtaining personal prestige.

This structure, apparent in the field through observations, interviews and assessments, points at the sources of the “*wholeness of spheres*” with respect to the problem area of our study, where the relations between religion, politics, the state and the society are tightly wound.

What is shattering and homogenising in terms of mentality and political perception is this holistic structure.

b. The state of belonging – freedom/secularism – identity

The tendency of “*the flexing of bonds between the elements*” and the “*elements to start undergoing a change within themselves*” also becomes visible across these relationships through the concepts of identity and human rights and freedom and secularism.

One of the most significant changes that has taken place in the Islamic segment is the “*humanization*” of the concept of freedom. In other words, the weakening of an approach of freedom that perceives it as unique to the nation’s existence and in monopoly of the nation’s existence or a shattering of the perception of an “*excess freedom*.”

This situation has paved the way for the “*establishment of relations between the sense of belonging and freedom*”. As a matter of fact, the concepts of freedom and human rights are perceived today as the “*guarantor of a cultural-political stance and existence*”, thus, becoming a protective and integral element of the Islamist identity for the flexible ring.

This also weakens the mentality that confines the demands of the Islamist sector into the political area and the perception of identity related to the “*relationship of politics-identity-power*”. By having the actors interact with universal values, it enables the major area of sensitivity to shift from “*the political*” to “*the social*”. Expectations of solutions of identity problems start to operate through defining and expecting democracy, rights, freedom, pluralistic legality and legitimacy rather than elements such as “*Islamic politics*”, “*the expansion of the area of Islamic life*” or a “*religious society utopia*”.

We can highlight three factors that trigger this process.

The first one is about the local and Islamist identity’s need for universal concepts such as democracy, human rights and freedom in order to safeguard themselves. The

second factor is the tendency to integrate these concepts into their discourse and actions in accordance with the magnitude of their need. The third is that these concepts act as a filter that restructures identity over the communitarian-individualistic tension, thus indicating the recreation of the identity as well as shedding light on the rupturing of identity.

The relations between freedom, human rights and belonging emphasize a pluralistic inclination that defines the *“local and Islamist identity”* as an equivalent identity among others opposed to the patriarchal memory that preaches a monolithic and homogeneous society model. The politicization of local values through a demand for equality corresponds with a process that redefines the traditional elements pertaining to identity and that opens them to *“modern influence”*.

Naturally, the inner mechanisms of this transformation process include a series of shocks, fluctuations, conflicts, and ruptures.

We can define the major rupture on which this chaotic transformation process is based as the friction between *“the sense of belonging or identity practices”* and *“the practical current attitudes”*: While on the one hand, the secular and modern system’s fundamental instruments, which could be dubbed as non-religious, become engrained in the lifestyle and even in the thought processes of actors; on the other hand, these instruments are rejected either due to religious references or because of the oppressive environment they cause and are treated as sources of conflict.

The concept of secularism plays an important role in this rupture as it both indicates the issue of “covering” and forms one of the *“challenging aspects”* of the transformation process. Although an active anti-secular attitude is not pronounced in the flexible ring of the Islamist segment, there is a skeptical approach to the principle of secularism. Within the scope of religious references and practices in Turkey, this principle is perceived and treated as an instrument that opposes the Islamic identity or even religion.

The following remark of an intellectual from the Islamic segment in Ankara represents the common attitude:

“With the establishment of the Republic, a very important opportunity for change and a positive development took place perhaps not only for Turkey but for the entire world of Islam. I used to think differently when I had a radical approach, but when I adopt a more long term approach, I think that positive steps have been taken. Of course, not as things are right now, but I think there are certain gains. However, we can’t disregard a certain fact. The practice of Kemalism and secularism has been turned into a religion of its own in Turkey, and this caused

big problems, which still exist. There! Thousands of women are robbed of the freedom to have education... It's impossible for me to reconcile with the kind of secularism that set the exclusion religion from the public area as a prerequisite."

Although most of the respondents from the flexible ring of the Islamist segment kept a certain distance from secularism, they mentioned a *"secular approach"* as essential to their expectations concerning their private and public life as well as their political views; thus, they reflected the *"perception of a secular life and politics"*. Moreover, they also demonstrated, albeit indirectly, that they had substantially internalized this approach and perception.

This assessment can be emphasized by the stories of two actors who have different social classes and cultural backgrounds. First a man in his fifties who comes from a low income, traditional background and who works in the subscription department of a pro-Islam newspaper in Istanbul shows how he is torn between his *"allergy against secularism"* and his *"perception of secular life and politics"* by giving examples from his own life, his set of values and political attitude:

"It was through Islamism that I first became politicized. In 1988. It's been 16 years. Maybe it was something to do with my age. Or maybe it was related to my social position back then. I had a smallware business. And next to my shop was the bookstore of a community. I was doing something on my own. You know, I got influences. At that time, my sister passed the university exam and was qualified to study at Middle East Technical University (METU). She was covering her head. Oh, in the meantime, my younger sister left METU when she was in grade 4 because of her head cover. She rejected the option of uncovering. Another sister, the elder, graduated from the Black Sea University Technical Education Department. She was kicked out of her post as a teacher because she cursed about Demirel. In other words, two victims of the regime. We used to read a lot in those days. We were trying hard to keep in line with the community... It was a pro-Iran group. We read the books they told us to read. But then, those books didn't seem that right to me. Seyyid Kutub's "Signs on the Road", Mevdudi, Ali Şeriatî. Actually, they were good books. God bless those who gave them to me. But now I don't think it's right to make someone read a book without even knowing about that person's real needs. If I hadn't broken up with those old friends of mine, I wonder if I would be like I am today. But if you ask me if I regret that I separated from them, no, I don't. (...)

My family is on my mind 24 hours a day... For example, if they're still awake when I come home, I ask them, let's go to the park near our home. We go there and I rock them on a swing. Or we say, let's go and have dinner outside. We spread a kilim in the garden. My wife and I try to create opportunities. We're a good family. We're not traditional. We know about our customs and traditions, but we don't have any strict rules. The earthquake was like a milestone for us. You know, being a man, and so on... So I can talk about anything with my wife. We're like two very close friends. (...)

When I vote, being sensitive about the Islamic approach is not important anymore at all. All right, I'm Muslim... I perform my ritual prayers... I do consider being a Muslim important. Or let me say it like this: the rule for me is respecting sacred things such as honor. It might sound trivial but for me swearing is something that is not good. There are of course things related to religion that I care about. For example, I perform the religious salute before I leave home and before I enter home. I say "*Elhamdülillab*" (Praise be to God) after I eat something. I teach my children to say "*kesene bereket*" (may you be more prosperous) when I give something to them. I don't know. For example, I practice the ritual ablution... If there's no disrespect involved, faithlessness, dissipation or other types of lifestyles don't disturb me at all. A genuine smile is more important for me as far as the relationship among people are concerned. I mean, I don't have prejudices. If my wife uncovered, I wouldn't divorce her. I don't mean to say I'd like it. I wouldn't be happy about it. I would think that we had grown distant to each other. And therefore, I'd feel disturbed. When she was about to leave METU, my sister asked me about my advice. I told her that I'd support her whether she covered or not. They all experienced these after the period I was an Islamist. I definitely would like it if my children covered themselves in the future. But if they don't, nothing will change. A person is not less valuable because she doesn't cover. My neighbor here is not covered. She wears jeans. And she also performs the ritual prayer five times a day. I know it because my wife told me... Maybe secularism is not a bad thing... It doesn't limit or adversely affect my life except for the problem of covering... But when you say secularism in Turkey... I'm still not over it. Look how all those girls suffer... I can be more aggressive when I discuss this subject. Concerning this aspect, I believe the Muslim men in Turkey have failed. We failed. We couldn't succeed..."

Secondly, a 42 year old man from Ankara who is a high ranked public servant with close contacts to a modern, elite lifestyle describes his status in life, his practical approach to the relationship between religion and politics, and the role of religion in everyday life, in other words, "*his perceptions and habits that reflect secular characteristics*":

"My wife is covered and suffers because she's covered. I don't really spend much time with other men. And I introduce my wife to the people I plan to see in my spare time... And I'm not a man who's really dominant at home. I request only a few small things from my wife. For example, I have sometimes told her that I'd be more pleased if she didn't go to meetings on Sundays and if she didn't return home too late in the evenings, and even if she did that she should inform me beforehand so that I can go and pick her up. That's all. At home, we take almost all decisions together. (...)

The school is influential concerning the religious education of our children. We don't teach them much. Actually, when I was a student, I had drawn away from music, thinking that religious people had to remain at a certain distance to music, but I do enjoy Neşet Ertaş's music. However, there's no one at home who

shares my music taste. The kids listen to hip hop or rap. They had even put up posters on their walls. I didn't ask them to remove the posters, but I tried different methods to convince them. My being a Muslim person naturally affects certain areas of my life. My whole life, actually. My views and whatever we now talk about. I started performing the daily ritual prayers when I was in middle school. Until two or three years ago, I continued to do that regularly five times a day. I never gave alms. Sacrificing an animal is a religious tradition... But if one person in a family does it than it's enough for that tradition to be practiced. For example, when we go to our hometown, my brother offers an animal as a sacrifice. I don't, and my father doesn't. Alcohol? I, of course, don't drink. Not because I think it's a sin. It's not a legitimization thing... I must be sincere: it's harmful in terms of our society. I believe that Islam's strong reaction against alcohol is favorable, but I don't think that God would take His subjects before him and question them about taking alcohol. I mean, until people started performing the ritual prayer, everyone was drinking. And there are people who still do that. Of course, 10-15 years ago, when I was a radical pro-Islam person I didn't think this way..."

However, when the subject of secularism is discussed, the same person gives a reaction, which does not reflect his lifestyle in terms of his ideas or practices:

"Religions consist of patterns to please God and to lead a life in accordance to His orders and principles. As a result of their religious books, maybe some religions, such as Christianity, don't dominate the public area. This doesn't only determine the private life but also the public life of the individual. In other words, if I'm the prime minister, I cannot say that certain religious principles should remain aside. This is against religion as a whole. It's against the behavior religion preaches. (...) So, secularism, especially the way it is practiced in our country, is destined to be perceived as an intervention of Islam. For instance, saying that the Koran doesn't mention the head cover doesn't solve the problem. I criticize them. I always have. This is an attitude that aims to legitimize the beating a certain segment of society (...) I don't think that secularism and democracy are indispensable for each other. What's indispensable for me is democracy. In this sense, secularism is just an instrument. At the moment, I believe our instrument isn't that good. It's used as an instrument to delay democracy or it has that function..."

Naturally, the "*secular view*" is mentioned at this point without referring to secularism; and from the moment it is mentioned, the political and religious tone of the remarks get stronger. However, the mechanism works backwards also at this point. The religious emphasis is limited to a general transfer of information about the relationship of secularism and religion, and in parallel to this, public and political attitudes are underlined, and consequently, the religious and the political areas are separated. Let us now take a look at the comments of a covered female student from Konya Karaman and a housewife from Trabzon respectively in order to see how they express

the prevalent viewpoint that neutralizes *“the secular”*, and isolates *“the religious”* despite the emphasis on religion, and that, as a result, politicizes the problem and points out democracy as the possible solution:

“The affairs of religion and state cannot be separated from one another because 99% of Turkey is Muslim. Secularism must be the same for every person, whether that person is covered or uncovered. All right, the Republic of Turkey is a secular state. We say we are secular, but secularism doesn't exist here. If secularism was really present, then there would be no such problem related to the headscarf or the act of covering. The people don't have a problem. As covered ones and uncovered individuals, we all live together. If the state was really secular, then there would be no such ban and no such oppression. It's really not good that people who dress extremely indecently are overlooked, but that the ones who cover themselves are criticized in a country where 99% of the people are Muslim. This is not something that goes along with secularism...”

“I believe that this is best represented in Islam. We all know the verse that says ‘your religion is yours, and my religion is mine’... Besides Prophet Mohammad had taught the religion to everyone around him. He never forced anyone. I mean, if Islam is correctly understood (...) In the end, do people live or not? The secular and non-secular people are living together... But I'm not able to practice my belief as I want to. Yes, it's true that I can perform the ritual prayer and practice my other duties. Nobody prevents me from practicing them. But I'm blocked when it comes to anything related to the state. But I'm a citizen of this state. If a patient doesn't have the right to receive treatment in a hospital, then secularism is nothing humane. I mean, we can't go to university because we're covered... And this is not a thing of just the university or not being able to become a judge and so on; to me, it looks as though it actually has a broader scope... I mean, secularism doesn't look like something reasonable to me (...) Having an Islamic system or religious laws in place would also be distressing. This time, people who don't want to cover themselves would feel distressed. I think everyone should be free to lead the life they want... It might be possible if secularism is understood in the right way...”

The situation which may be treated as a hint of secularisation of mentality is enhanced especially through the inclusion of political examples. In the political context, secularism is defined as a macro issue and one of freedom especially in regards to the headscarf problem. As a matter of fact, the headscarf problem is to be resolved with political instruments rather than religious ones. This situation indicates that a great majority of the flexible ring of the Islamist segment have begun to accommodate the separation of religion and politics in spite of their reactive behavior against the principle and the practices of secularism.

The words of a restaurant owner from Kasımpaşa who is a member of the Saadet Party and of a senior grade student studying computer engineering concerning this matter represent the common attitude.

“Tayyip Bey made a statement, saying that religion and politics should not be mixed with each other. Religion is a very haughty concept. There may be people who react to him, but I agree with him. I should be able to practice my religion freely. The head cover or religious schools should not turn into problems. democracy is important. I believe people should live in peace...”

“Covering should not have become a problem. I believe that this problem will be solved by generations who have free thought and conscience in a democratic Turkey. I also think about the broadcasting in Kurdish. So what happened? It was allowed. Consequently, the rating share dropped from 20% to 7%. Now it is played on the streets less frequently. I mean, it doesn’t mean that when something is allowed it will turn into a problem...”

When musing on secularism, making a clear distinction between the ideal situation, which is defined and internalized as a freedom of faith and belief, and the actual situation reinforces the political and religious emphasis on secularism. This insight emerges in the form of “*an intrinsic and sincere mechanism of compensation*” rather than the recurrence of the discourses by pro-Islamic parties and politicians or an instrument of disturbance or concealment. As can be observed through the excerpts below, this compensation mechanism is very common in the Islamist segment:

“We want peace now. For me, secularism means the free practice of one’s faith. What else can it mean...”¹³ I don’t think it’s right to separate religious and state affairs. But secularism... you see everyone should be able to have a place in the universities and in the parliament in a democratic way.... You know, the Jews and Christians are able to freely practice their religions.... If this is secularism, then I think it’s right... “¹⁴ No one has the right to claim ownership of secularism. I think no one should be accused and tried because of his religion or faith...”¹⁵ “Religious people do not cast a threat on secularism. Religious feelings do not disappear through oppressing people. The secularism practiced here is not the same kind of secularism as in the Western world...”¹⁶

The aforementioned rupture series, especially the “*intrinsic compensation mechanism*” ultimately indicate a dichotomy:

On one side, a clear disintegration concerning the perception of religion and politics as well as their daily life practices has been going on, and on the other hand, the same picture displays a tension between the “*flexing of identity*” and the

13 A lower ranked public servant from the outskirts of Ankara

14 A Black Sea Technical University student from Central Anatolia

15 A technician-worker from Istanbul who is a member of the Hak-İş Union

16 A cleric from Southeastern Anatolia

“enhancement of identity” while also indicating that political and social pressure is a tool for the protection of identity.

The point at issue is the rupture of the fundamental components of the Islamist segment in terms of both the links between them and their internal structures, and also the restructuring of this rupture through adopting its opposite through the basic identity postulates over oppression.

A perspective that adopts secularism as a parameter but that also defines it through the criticism of the existing secularism links identity with the criticism of the existing secularism on a social and political level. In other words, the disintegration within the field of identity is congested between the *“tendency to renew the identity”* and the *“pressure caused by the secular approach”*. This congestion acts as a support that stresses the urge to act and feel in accordance with the identity.

As a matter of fact, the remarks below of an academic staff member of the School of Theology, who had been occupied with radical Islamist thinking during his youth reflects this type of rupture or pressure we witnessed during interview, observation and evaluation levels of our research:

“I’m a theologian. My wife also graduated from the School of Theology. She used to work as a teacher. When the dress code was enforced, she stopped working... She had to... She was forced to resign. My wife is really an active person. She’s even more active than I am. She belongs to a platform where women come together to advocate the rights of religious and democratic women. The covering is naturally a part of their fight. I mean, the women who worked here were all dismissed from their jobs as public servants because they covered. (...) Covering is a normal act for Muslims. Uncovering is actually something that took place after covering. So, attributing a value to it is disputable. I attribute a value. It is something unique to us. However, covering is not a religious law. But if my wife stopped covering after all we went through, I’d feel disturbed. Anyway, my wife doesn’t think religion forces her to cover. She has grown up in this way since her childhood. She’s used to it. This is a matter of choice. I believe an attitude that intervenes in the liberty of choice people have cannot be considered legitimate. This is an important point. The practice of secularism in Turkey is far from being democratic... I mean, it’s really silly that this turns into a problem in this country...” (...)

“We, as theologians, have always criticized the vocational religious high schools, at least technically. The low quality of their education, the classrooms separated into two for male and female students, and so forth... But I wouldn’t be able to criticize these schools openly on a television program... I would face trouble then... Similar to the issue of covering, I think that I also don’t have the freedom of expression in front of the public. It’s not because I feel scared. I wouldn’t worry that religious people would exclude me. I’d think that I can’t bring myself

to not only the religious people but also each and every human being. Helping the beating of a person means betraying him. In this conjuncture in Turkey, how could I ever say: No covering..."

"The tension between value and benefit" is one of the ruptures pertaining to the covering of women, the crisis of religious covering, which has been the most serious problem posed by the practice of secularism on the Islamist segment, .

The perception of covering both as a requirement and an obstacle is a tendency displayed by young and urban actors from the middle and upper middle classes.

The rupture these actors experience between the advantages they have as a result of modernity and the existing values creates the dilemma consisting of both recreating the tradition and feeling uneasy because of the tradition. It can be said that this type of rupture paves the way for a new conservative definition of the individual (in the sense of a person) and that it refers to and *"open conservatism"* through public recognition and the search for legitimacy.

The opinion of a university student who comes from a very conservative family consisting of *"covered"* members and who is in close contact with religious circles is very symbolic:

"For instance, my mother asks me, 'What kind of a person would you prefer?' And I say, 'She has to be uncovered. She must be educated. Both her mind and her head should be uncovered... Even if she's just a high school graduate, she must have educated herself. But I would be pleased if she covered later. What I'm saying is that she shouldn't be a person who changes her lifestyle because of her family or because of the person she loves. Her attitude and approach after marriage concerns only me. Covering does not only mean wearing a head scarf. During the time of our Prophet, many people were not covered. The aim of covering is covering things that could affect the other side... I mean... When I told my family that I wanted to marry an uncovered person, I also wanted to point out something else. If my wife wants to work, then she shouldn't cover. If she's going to work, if that's what she wants, and if she's going to have a social life... What does this mean? It means that she's going to suffer a worse depression. I've seen people who suffered this... I've seen people who became depressed and gained 30-40 kilos in just a few months... Therefore, I'd like to leave it to her to make a decision..."

The reaction of the Islamist segment against the missionary activities in Turkey, which have been on the public agenda since the 2000s, is a subject that can be taken up within the scope of rupture since it has yielded very interesting results.

Contrary to common belief, the flexible ring of the Islamist segment is tolerant toward missionary activities, or at least, does not express a vehement reaction. Moreover, this segment does not support a ban on such activities.

The element often emphasized at this point is the confidence about faith, the society and one's self. The research data indicate that this mechanism of confidence is backed up by the neutralization of "the religious" and the fact that the protective social and political attitude concerning religions has been replaced by the self-protection of the individual. In this scope, we can mention certain clues pertaining to the micronization tendency of the relationship of humans and religion.

Various samples from different social categories have made the following remarks on missionary activities:

"The state should allow them. And allow us too... There should be a competition. Competition brings along quality. And Islam is quality..."¹⁷ "They shouldn't be banned. I believe this: Now, we want mosques to exist in Germany. And naturally they will want to have their churches here. If we want them to become Muslim, they also want us to become Christian. We should be intelligent and promote our religion in the best way... This is what I think is right..."¹⁸ "I'm not disturbed at all. Christians or others can come and try to spread their own religion. Fethullah Hodja's disciples do the same thing. They don't disturb me either..."¹⁹

In spite of such developments, we must stress that a resistance independent of the political conditions exists in the Islamist segment.

As a matter of fact, the actors of the Islamist segment strictly and strongly resist transferring the relationship they have established with the members of the world they define as "*the other*" in terms of history and religion to a symbolical level... As it can be seen in the reaction of a respondent, a housewife, who replied to our comment "*What a modern family life you have*" by saying "*Let's say that we're just leading a good life*". Or in their effort to stay away from even the word "*secularism*", the relationship with the symbols of "*the others*" is obstructed by the "*protective border barrier*" of identity. In spite of the indirect or fragmented relationship established with the secular

17 An Islamic interviewee from Central Anatolia who comes from a lower class background and who fully supports the policies of AK Party

18 A high-ranked bureaucrat from Keçiören, Ankara.

19 A university student from the upper middle class who studies computer engineering and who is a follower of the '*Nurcu*' circles.

lifestyle and the principle of secularism, this is one of the reasons that there exists a distant attitude toward secularism and related concepts.

However, we should immediately state that this problem appears not only as the *“ignorance towards the other’s symbol”* but also as a *“symbolical disorder”*. In the Islamist segment, this disorder can be defined as the tendency to actively stay away from all types of symbolic associations related to lifestyle, or in other words, the tendency to protect the adopted identity on the level of clear-cut symbolic approvals or negations. This disorder that we witnessed during our research throughout the sample refers to a mentality based on the drive to *“understand and explain by classifying and belonging”*.

c. The fragmenting sense of supremacy and the relationship of change and mentality

We had stated above that one of the most significant developments in the flexible ring of the Islamist segment was the ruptures in the *“integrity of the patriarchal political mentality”* as a result of both AK Party’s coercive policies and the social and political experiences during a period of ten years.

In comparison with the given mentality, the biggest problems the Islamist segment has faced in the last ten years are the growing rift between its own identity and the *“state-military”*, the discharge of employees after “February 28”, the files opened on people, and the potential for an ever greater rift as a result of the ban on covering in the universities in comparison with the previous periods. This distance, in other words, the fact that the state, which the Islamist segment identifies with and reveres, sees the Islamic identity as the major threat, manhandles and insults it, has been causing *“ruptures in the sense of supremacy and power”*.

On one hand, the rupture causes the *“direct representation and integrity of identity”* between *“state/society/individual”*.

On the other hand, it causes the sense of freedom, which is attributed only to the national-religious being at the mentality level, to become relatively autonomous and associated with the human being and notion of demand.

Finally, it paves the ground for the shifts concerning the definition of relationships based on power and attributed to politics and the control of the state within the scope of setting the national-religious benefits.

The preliminary signs of transformation

The sense of freedom achieves relative autonomy, or in other words, relative filters are placed between the state and politics, as a consequence of the ruptures and especially the “*rupture of the sense of supremacy*”. It appears before us through the Islamic identity and the state as well as the effort to set that distance.

The tearing originates from the tendency to identify the state with the segment defined as “*the other*” and the system controlled by this segment in terms of both the mentality of the personnel and the structure.

Although this situation is incapable of representing a radical and systematized diversification, it involves elements that are far from being simple or transitory political shifts. Thus, it paves the way for the concepts of rights and liberties to influence the perception of the state, causing the state to be identified with an “oppressive regime” and its supporters. In other words, the Islamic segment experiences a shift as well as many problems in its effort to identify with the state especially concerning “*the other*” and the “identification of the other”, and it faces these problems through the demand and discourse of “*rights-freedom-democracy-objective state*”. This situation puts the “*integral patriarchal mentality structure*” under pressure.

A young person who belongs to *Nurcu* circles where the unity of the state and the nation is determinative in terms of mentality, expresses the viewpoint he has been trying to adopt through the following words:

“First of all, the state must abandon the worry ‘In which situation will I fall down and go to ruin.’ This attitude is everywhere from the Kurdish issue to leftism... I mean, we’ve really exaggerated this. We did the same thing in the National Education, National Security, and so forth. You’ve just told me that I could work for the state. I really have no such dream. That’s really strange...”

A fragmented summary of the rupture that took place can be best observed through the summary of a long interview we had with an actor from the Islamist segment who works as a public servant:

“I didn’t like what took place in Süleymaniye, I mean the the sack incident, at all. But this isn’t a nationalistic feeling. But perhaps a reaction against imperialism. I believe my country doesn’t deserve this (...)”

Placing all of the terrorists up on the mountains in the same category is unfair. Some of them went there because they don’t have anything else to do, and

others do it because they are scared. Putting them all in the same category would be disregarding their human conditions... For example, the thing you mentioned about collecting the dead bodies of PKK, I mean the words of the general who said, 'I'm not going to make my soldiers pick up carcass' was absolutely disgusting. Something that's totally unacceptable... And I must add one more thing. This thing about the mothers of martyrs. If it is not a tool to exploitation, then what about Kurdish mothers? Didn't their children die too? (...)

In fact, I used to think in those days that Özal made sense. Aside from Özal, the rest was like a theater stage where the political actors were continuously replaced while the play always remained the same. Of course, this is the way politics are in Turkey. I always felt proud during the times when the politics stayed above a certain level. At the present time, we're experiencing such a period. So I have some hope. This country was never able to develop a tradition of politics based on strong principles. It is the interests that determine everything. And so definitively, that one can't help feeling ashamed (...)

The issue of "*the view on the military*" plays a role that stimulates the disintegration of the sense of supremacy and the ruptures on the total patriarchal mentality.

The shift of experiences within the Islamist segment takes place in the given mentality that adopts the structure and the functions of the existing state institutions and that emphasizes the approach to keep them under control within this scope.

While the views and approaches created through these experiences have a cyclical and utilitarian character, they also indicate that a thought track based on principles has also been put forth. The relations of politics and the state are distinguished from each other, and a tendency that defines the dependence of the military authority on the civil authority as a rule is put forth. As a matter of fact, the data gathered during this research clearly reveals a rupture that "*inverts the findings that represent the military as the most trusted institution*". The military function of the army is lauded whereas the political function of the military is severely criticized.

A young, male university student from Eastern Anatolia who belongs to the middle class expresses his opinion about the military through the following remark:

"I consider the military as very important. But not in the sense of radical nationalism... I, for instance, want Turkey to send troops to Iraq. So that Turkey can have a say in the matter. When that sack incident took place, I realized that Turkey didn't have any influence on what happens in a neighboring country and I felt hurt. My pride was hurt.... In a stronger country, the military must be like a shield...

But unfortunately, the military is presented to the people as something bad. And it's the military itself that does this. For example, I don't know anyone who

graduated from my high school and went to military college. They are all very successful people who have established families.... The military may have insufficient weapons, but people may embrace the army... It's not the case in our country. And the reason is the role the military plays in politics. This must change. The army should stay away from fussing with the leftists or the rightists..."

The following comments belong to a housewife with two children from Anatolia one who has a middle school diploma, and the other who is a tradesman from Bursa:

"When they put sacks around the Turkish soldiers in Süleymaniye, I felt really hurt. Our soldiers represent the Turkish nation and Turkishness. I'm a Turkish citizen. This behavior of the American soldiers against our soldiers hurt my pride. But today, the word soldier does not bring this to my mind. Today I believe that the military interferes in domestic politics too much. I think everyone should mind his own primary duty..."

"The military serves the nation. But in the end, I think the military shouldn't lead such a strong fight against the faith of the nation. I mean, as I've said before, the values of the nation and the practices of the military or the politicians shouldn't contradict each other so gravely. Now, if I was the Tunceli mayor or governor as a religious person who performs the ritual prayer, and if somebody told me when I came to Bursa, 'Did you build any mosques in Tunceli?', don't you think it is right to say, 'Most of the folk in Tunceli are Alevi. My duty is to serve them. They should pray in the way they want? And we also realized that everyone should mind his own business. And the duty of the military is to protect the country..."

We must underline that this development is stronger in the peripheral actors of the Islamist segment in comparison to the actors in the center. This fact alone points at a tendency to heterogenize within the Islamist segment.

Borders: The relationship of Mentality and Transformation

The oppression the Islamist segment is subjected to and the resulting rupture means that the mentality and transformation factors concerning the Islamist segment have become complex and scattered.

Within this scope, the borders of the transformation emerge in the form of a purification from the plenary aspects of tradition while the possibility of change is created within an experience-interaction frame. Each stage where systematic experiences take place present a clue for change; for example, the indirect tendency toward secularization that was mentioned in the secularism-identity section produces a driving force for change. The movement of the actors in different value systems in order to protect and develop their existence, the related experiences and the accomplishments are major mechanisms that trigger the process of transformation. As a consequence, the transformation is fragmented and occasionally utilitarian as stated above.

Obviously, utilitarian attitudes alone do not indicate a profound transformation. In fact, images of transformation based on utilitarian aims do not directly affect the value and mentality structure of the society. Therefore, comprehending “*what does not change*” is important in order to determine the borders of the transformation.

As is the case in every transformation, the ruptures that take place include certain alternations. The invariables related to mentality play a significant role for these alternations.

One thing has to be emphasized here:

The changes that take place in the “*state and politics area*” of the mentality structure are more constricted, more utilitarian and cyclical in comparison with in other areas. Thus, the effect of the invariables are more determining here.

As a matter of fact, the “*merging of the nation and the state*”, which is a popular expression of the above mentioned “*state/society/individual identification*”, continues to be valid concerning the actors of the Islamist segment in terms of both their feelings and their search.

Although the inclination is for freedom of the individual, the world of the human and social demands in addition for the state and religion as values influencing the political attitudes, it is not as profound as would be required for a break through in the mentality in terms of expectations and searching. The fragmented and conflicting perception of politics according to various issues is a typical example of this situation. While the “*idea of control*” that stresses power in terms of certain subjects such as developmentalism; the Armenian genocide; conspiracy theories; the “*Jewish fixation*”; or the “*unity of the state and the nation*” approach, still have ruling power, links between politics and the social demand concerning subjects such as the covering of women, YÖK (Higher Education Council) and the military are established, and the concept of a homogeneous nation is replaced by the concept of a heterogeneous nation.

It is possible to trace how a significant part of the sample group position themselves in relation to the character of the transformation as well as the effectiveness of the mentality.

The words of an interviewer around seventy years old from Istanbul, who is a voter for AK Party and who works in the import and export business, exhibit the details of this segment’s mentality:

“For us, Islam means following Allah’s orders and staying away from what he has banned. In order to be able to do all this, a state is needed. The lack of a state... Can you imagine the lack of state in everyday life? We have seen Bosnia. Why did those mosques stand erect for so many centuries but were then demolished just recently? If I’m able to go to a mosque and pray, it is because I have a state. No one can be disrespectful against my state or my soldiers. I respect everyone, but I’ll never tolerate any disrespect against my country, flag or army...”

Similarly, a low ranked public servant from Ankara Keçiören who supports AK Party completes the above example through his comment about the military and the military’s view of the Islamist segment:

“You see, if my son wanted to go into the military, they wouldn’t allow him because his mother and his sister are both covered. Don’t you think I want him to have such an honorable profession and serve there as a Muslim Turkish son? Being a soldier is very honorable. When I was a child, our home was very near the Martial School. I used to wish I would become a lieutenant. Not any small soldier but a lieutenant... But it didn’t happen... I wish that the head cover wasn’t a problem and at least our kids could become officers (...) I think we weren’t able to express ourselves in the right way. Or maybe we expressed ourselves in the wrong manner... Furthermore, certain people were in powerful positions in the military and they were against religious people. I mean by nature, they were against religion... All right, it can be because of their background and so on, but if they don’t approve of my religion, then I’m not going to approve of them either... Otherwise, of course nothing will happen... We love our country, our flag and our army... And we know how they actually are. You see, 80% of the military resembles us. But of course there are some rotten ones too. We know that there is a minority in there consisting of people who are against Islam because of their background. They are a small but very influential minority. But they’re no longer as powerful as they used to be. And the army is our army...”

When mental constructions within the Islamic segment are considered from the viewpoint of themes with symbolic power, Judaism as a religious-ethnic theme continues to maintain its role as the cement of the Islamic-conservative identity. Jewish people are bothered in an open, permanent and organized manner almost to the point of *“anti-semitism”*. Contrary to the social and pluralist tendencies that separate the elements of people-society-state and that underline the role of diversity in each of the elements, this situation is one in which the data indicates that excessive religious-national institutions and values rule the mentality of the actors. As a matter of fact, the blocked viewpoint that becomes effective when Jews are described and that turns the *“other”* identity into a particular subject, is in a way a reflection of the conservative actor’s blocked view of his own identity.

We can summarize as below views in the Islamist segment from the lower to the upper class.

“Go and take a look at the history of Islam. Hypocrites, liars. They killed prophets. In the Koran, Christians are always preferred to Jews. This is the truth of life.... Look at Palestine... They are unsound. First of all, the Jews and the religious people, they all took part in this massacre. No matter where he is in the world, every Jew is a MOSSAD agent.”²⁰

“There is a very clear verse in the Koran about the Jews. They are the damned people. I believe in and follow that verse. I don’t like them...”²¹

“In the end, the sons of Israel are damned as a tribe who are constantly fierce. What they’re doing in Palestine today is enough proof... They rule the world, and they are also behind the chaos in our country. The war in Iraq is a war that the Jews started...”²²

“Both the events of the past and the present days naturally incite a dislike against the Jews. In fact, the roles the Jews have played in the history of human kind... I believe something as a Jewish character exists. And it’s something that comes with education. And they also have things related to their own past. A blend of culture and various habits that have developed as a result of having survived under very difficult conditions for many centuries. When communicating with a Jewish person, I would like to know whether he or she approves of Israeli politics...”²³

The Armenian issue also acts as a lever in rigid mental constructions within the Islamic segment, posing a structure of three layers. The first layer is the denial of the claims about an Armenian genocide by making references to the founding elements of the given mentality such as the Turkish identity, historical memory, the utopia of the past. Respondents who perceived any link between a genocide and their ancestors as a threat against their identity made the following remarks:

“I understand the mentality to kill in return for all the cruelty done by the Armenians, and I think I also have the same feelings... This is the natural consequence of Millet-i Sadıka (Faithful People)...”²⁴ “This is how I think. The Armenians have always been easily influenced throughout history and have also paid their dues because of this. In other words, they have paid for their betrayal.”²⁵ “I mean 250 thousand of our people died. This wasn’t a single-sided act. What they call a genocide may have originated from the fact that they were

20 A lower class AK Party voter from Central Anatolia

21 A young middle class business owner from Ankara, who has radical Islamist views

22 A housewife from Trabzon who is from the upper middle class

23 A cultured theologian from Ankara, who belongs to the upper middle class.

24 A university student from Van

25 A tradesman from Konya

fewer in number.”²⁶ “I don’t think our ancestors would have done such a thing...”²⁷ “I don’t believe they were massacred... I think it was the Turks who were massacred. The condition of the Armenians during the Ottoman Empire, and what they did... They can offer proof, but I don’t think it’s true. Because there is no such thing...”²⁸

The second layer is created when the demands to recognize the genocide nourish *“the feeling of being wronged and aggrieved”* and turn into *“a process of inverse othering”* while at the same time putting the relationship of identity-nationality into motion:

“Actually it’s not the Armenians I’m angry at. I’m angry at the state. Yes, unfortunately... For example, if I thought my father had certain shortcomings, this thought would give me pain. It’s the same with the state... I’m disappointed with the state. Because it spends time on other things and neglects the lobbying activities abroad...”²⁹ “I mean these are things that some strong countries wishing to corner Turkey use in order to gain certain benefits...”³⁰ “What angers me the most are the Armenians’ demands and those laws about a genocide. Read the Armistice of Mondros.. They just couldn’t get hold of it. That’s why they’re so bothered. This country would be their back yard. This is why they insist on reminding it all the time...”³¹

The third layer is the approach that views the entire community of Turkish Armenians with scepticism and attempts to exclude it. This situation emerges through a process of differentiating between the nation-individual identification in terms of mentality or of the given memory:

“There’s something called heredity. You never know. I mean, when I see them saying something some place, I check to see whether they’re sincere...”³² “Having Armenian soldiers or judges is out of the question. How can that be! They’re non-Muslim...”³³ ...” “It’s normal that there are no non-Muslim people in the military or among our judges and state attorneys because the state wants to have people who are close to it. The state doesn’t want to be stabbed in the back...”³⁴ “When we were kids, they used to tell us that they take Christian children and educate them as fake imams. I used to believe that. But I could never think that they could become the head of the Department of Religious Affairs. As a Muslim, it’s

26 A university student from Trabzon

27 A housewife from Istanbul

28 A public servant from Ankara

29 A businessman from Kayseri

30 A lawyer from Trabzon

31 A restaurant owner from Istanbul

32 A university student from Konya

33 A worker from Istanbul

34 A public servant from Ankara

impossible for me to accept it. Whoever pushed that position should be ashamed. I mean, in the end, you know..."³⁵

The issue of "*the other among us*" is responsible for both establishing and protecting the above mentioned homogeneity of the nation-individual. The comments of a seventy year old master of a religious order from Istanbul who recalled the incidents of September 6-7* when talking about the present day demonstrate a "*mentality autopsy*":

"In 1955, Istanbul had a population of one million and thirty six thousand people. At the time, the minorities consisted of an important part of the city's population. For example, we used to go to Beyoğlu and no one would be speaking Turkish there. They used to push by us on the streets. Greek and Jewish bastards. We used to call them bastards. They always went around in gangs. They were in control of the area. Secondly, there wasn't a distinct Turkish society in Istanbul. Certain simpler professions that had their roots in history, such as the sales of textiles, were in the hands of Turks. The minorities had everything as a result of the capitulations. They were the elite. They acted as if they weren't the minority but the masters, making sure that everyone realized they were different. Thus, they were not very sympathetic. They got along well with their neighbors in Samatya, Yenikapi or Balat, but when you went to Beyoğlu, you felt their presence..."

This mentality structure of 'the other' is not limited to just the Armenian genocide or Jews, the following tendencies also continue to dominate the flexible ring of the Islamist segment:

- The magnitude of the perception of an external threat in comprehending the domestic problems of the country, in addition to one's own problem;
- The perception of political life in a framework that allows it to be defined in terms of tension between nations and cultures and the perception of politics as susceptible to national and international conspiracy theories;
- The doubts about the West, which are confessed or concealed in accordance with the field of discussion or thought.

35 A bureaucrat

- * The events of September 6-7, 1955 constitute the first serious pogrom of the Turkish Republican history. The events broke in the context of the Cyprus conflict and after Atatürk's childhood house in Thessaloniki, Greece was reportedly bombed by provocateurs on duty. Following media's incitement, anti-minority mobs organized by formations close to the government attacked minorities, mainly in Istanbul. At the end of the events more than five thousand businesses and residences belonging to minorities (sixty percent of those were Rum, or ethnic Greek) were destroyed and plundered. Pogrom, whose main aim was the Turkification of the capital constituted one of the milestones of liquidation of the minorities from the economic sphere.

The power and function of mentality

Almost all of these invariables appear as related basically to the weakness of a societal vision in the given memory and to the identification of the nation-individual.

The problem we face at this point are the obstacles of mentality that are blocking the relationship of transformation, mentality and democratization. We should underline again the point made above concerning this problem:

The specific perception of state-politics in the Islamist segment emerges generally around the changes, experiences, obligations and new interests within the scope of area heterogenarization and causes numerous meaningful shifts that could be permanent but do not have an influence on the *“mentality core”*.

On the contrary, the mentality core shows its effect also in a different way. In the face of conflicts of value and ruptures, the actors turn to the mentality core in order to compensate and repair these ruptures and strive to *“adapt the transformation to mentality and to establish a harmony between the transformation and the mentality.”*

The fragmented structure of the transformation exposes different and even opposite views and tendencies related to the themes in the same area, and the mentality structure serves as the main element that gathers this fragmented structure and enables consistency. This appears before us not only as an active function but also as the function of an *“utopia in the form and vision of an indirect world system that is postponed to an indefinite time in the future”*. This utopia function operates especially at a macro level and over the areas where direct experiences and interactions do not take place, and the imaginary subjects trigger the mechanism of regularly differentiating and ‘becoming others’. Thus, the search for *“power”* over differentiating still exists as the main factor, the belief of the uniform structure serves as a life buoy within this scope and as a result, it encompasses the areas of transformation.

The most significant pressure of this mentality core in this framework is that it does not easily allow for a separation or disintegration in the interests of the individual. In spite of the pressure concerning a transformation, enabling integrity through mentality appears in the form of a relatively distant position to the transformation.

The actors are forced to acquire a mobile approach according to the subject in terms of their political positions since they are constricted to utilitarianism and principles. This is the scope we describe as the function and power of mentality.

3. THE HETEROGENEOUS PERCEPTION OF “WHAT IS ISLAMIC”: THE RELATIONSHIP OF IDENTITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

The relationships actors establish with their faith and identity is the last issue that must be emphasized in regards to the flexible ring of the Islamist segment. The tendency to perceive the “Islamic” heterogeneity with religious motives, commentaries on the Koran and practices centered around religion without reverting to rationalization as well as a tendency toward the “humane”, constitutes one of the fundamental mechanisms of the “*states of the transformation*”.

The primary question that emerged during this study is “*the individual-identity relationship*”. This relationship appears to have a structure in which the identity-individual pair maintains its presence in the category of social references, but in which both shift their forms during their interaction.

This finding does not only indicate a situation beyond “*the opposition of the individual and the identity*”, a new unity, a dynamic continuity, and a different integration, but also offers evidence concerning the possible future status of “*the building blocks of the redefinition of the individual*”. The same situation is true with regard to the concept of identity. The findings include reliable evidence proposing that identity can have a “*dynamic structure with doors opening to the outside*” which harbors both the individual and also individualization. This bilateral relationship and the underlying new wave of individualization naturally puts forth findings and evidence pertaining to the retreat of religion from the political arena.

At this point, we must especially touch on a significant subject concerning problems findings and conceptualizations of the study.

In this study and especially in this specific part of the study, the concepts of “individual” and “individualization” were not used with the meanings that they had acquired in terms of the paradigm of modernity. The “individual” was used to mean the “person” and “individualization” was used to mean “personalization”. Personalization expresses the increase of personal interests, benefits, values and even principles. Thus, these interests do not constitute a structure that is harmoniously managed by the person as is the fact concerning the “modern individual”. They are based on conflicts that are left untouched and considered as natural as they are diverse. They point out to the diversification and the multiplication of the person himself or his condition and attitude. This is the “state” we name as “personalization”. Along this line, this study does not say that people explore different value systems because they lose their values or feel lost themselves, as it is often the claim in

modernist readings. On the contrary, it interprets such situations as the formation of a “*post-modern person*” who develops with an understanding of diversity. This is basically what we name as the new wave of individualization which describes new possibilities for the individual to be redefined.

There are five areas where the relationship of identity-individual (person) can be discussed: the meaning attributed to the head cover within the scope of the relationship of identity-individual (person); views on those that are different; the differentiation of interests; the interactions between religious knowledge and daily life; and the child as a vector of change.

A. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN “COVERING”, RELIGIOUS PEOPLE AND RELIGION

The issue of “covering” has been the main source for the experiences the actors gain and the ruptures they endure as they explore “*categories of tradition, individuality, oppression, and reaction*”.

The transformation of the head cover into a “*political problem*” in the public area and the related experiences have led to ruptures between “*faith-tradition-religious attitude*” and “*benefit-future-freedom*”. Systematic internal inquiries and contacts took place during these ruptures, and the actors developed internal compensation mechanisms.

One of the most important consequences of the above mentioned series of experiences through the ruptures the Islamist segment is subjected to is that the perception and definition of the head cover as well as the meaning attributed to it have systematically changed in comparison with the situation in the 1980s and 1990s. As research carried out in the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s indicate³⁶, the meaning attributed to the head cover was directly or indirectly related to the concepts of “*honor*” and “*the other*” as a result of shame, honor or veiled sexuality.

The “*link between covering and honor*” has in one way fostered the “*perception of a close and hierarchical relationship*” between faith, behavior and the role of the individual, and at the same time, it has become one of the symbols of an integral and enclosing structure in the “*discourse of identity-religion*” or at least in the religious sphere. From another aspect, the link between “*covering and honor*” assumed the existence of a link between “*being uncovered and dishonorable*” through establishing

³⁶ See Nilüfer Göle, *Modern Mahrem*, 1991 and Aynur İlyasoğlu, *Örtülü Kimlik*, 1994.

an inverse mental association. It must be mentioned that the defining and regulating function of the headscarf in the formation of identity indirectly fosters the mechanism of *“reestablishing an identity to differentiate from the other segment”*. In other words, although *“dishonor”* is not referred to, the *“uncovered-dishonorable”* link, which the Islamist actor addresses to himself and turns into a criterion for himself, has played an indirect but important role in viewing *“the other”*.

However, the most important issue is that the relationship established between the covering and honor is directed particularly towards *“the actors of the world of faith”* and the relationship among these actors. The headscarf has had the function of *“regulating-inspecting”* the Islamic political-social structure, which has acquired public visibility, in the public sphere.

On one hand, the emergence of women in the public sphere, their modern acquisitions, their role as the transforming vector in both the private and the public spheres as a result of these acquisitions, in short; their modernization, has been regulated and even protected mainly through the head cover.

On the other hand, during the times when the Islamist movement was on the rise, especially in the 1980s, the head cover had a similar, and even a dominant and regulating function within the scope of the structuring that had modern features in terms of organization and action in the public sphere. The said structuring had a character that put into action the shared fight of men and women even if in the form of parallel organizations and actions as well as political similarities, that took the woman out of her traditional shelter and that could accordingly be defined as *“Islamic modernization”*. The headscarf and the *“separation of women and men in public”* have both acted as an instrument for establishing an equality between women and men within this scope and have also distinctly separated the spheres of men and women in the public struggle and existence. The influence and oppression of this *“double modernization”* has been a significant factor in the intensification of the covered-uncovered sexuality relationship.

One of the most important findings of the research is the change in this system of perceptions and functions as stated above.

Today the headscarf is not associated with the concepts of manners, honor or sexuality by many of the actors, and similarly, this type of definition is rejected *actively*. On the other hand, the definition or the meaning attributed to the head cover is as *“the requirement of religion and especially God’s order”*; in other words, it is

confined into this frame. The fact that the head cover is not evaluated vis a vis other concepts such as sexuality and honor and that such an association is disclaimed can be regarded as the indicator of its description through an individual reference that means the *“association of a religious rule solely with a person”*. This situation indicates that the headscarf recedes from being a symbol *“defining an attitude per se”* in terms of identity, that it transforms into a solely religious and personal symbol, and that although it reflects a certain state of belonging, it is no longer the fundamental element of belonging. In this scope, it can be observed that the religion-individual (person) becomes as important as the religion-identity relationship.

This fact is the first in a series of findings indicating that an identity-individual (person) relationship, in other words, a tendency for autonomy within individualization (personalization), along with the identity-individual (person) is possible. The flexible viewpoint of the Islamist actors who do not compromise on covering as a religious rule to abide by, and especially of women, concerning covered or uncovered life styles refers to the *“heterogeneous perception of what is Islamic”*.

At this point, we can talk about three interlocking factors:

The actor viewing himself based on “identity” and from within the identity...

The perception of *“the different”* once again taking off from the meaning created as a result of this view...

The relationship he establishes again with “identity”...

It is possible to define this situation as the actors adopting and remaining distant to identity at the same time, and in a way also, as the actor's effort to reconstruct the situation. This distant approach can be considered as the interlocking of religious symbols and the social values they refer to, the relative depoliticizing and humanizing of morality and life styles with the current everyday life practices.

Naturally, the meanings attributed to the head cover are neither uniform nor unilateral. They come up against us with different emphases; however, these emphases have a common denominator in general.

The remarks of a student who is able to continue her education at Konya Selçuk University only by wearing a wig to cover her head instead of a headscarf demonstrates the common views that are clearly put forth:

“In my opinion, covering has nothing to do with honor or morality. I cover because it's God order. Covering can be a symbol of honor not for me but for

my father. For me, it's God's order. And this order has nothing to do with honor or decency. The logic is: if you believe in God, if you accept his existence, then you must obey His orders without questioning them... But the opposite of this is, of course, is not believing in God. Sometimes there are uncovered people who are much more decent and faithful than covered ones. I would never dare to think they don't believe. The head cover is a part of my clothing (...)

In the beginning, there were times when I thought that covered women were religious and the uncovered ones were faithless. But after I started going to university, I realized that one can only experience religion in its true sense after he or she really practices it. I suffered so much when I wore a wig for the first time. I felt I was committing a horrible sin. But after one and a half years, I no longer feel that way... A person can practice his or her faith in different ways (...)

I won't uncover or wear a wig again after I graduate from the university. I didn't uncover for my school, I didn't uncover for myself. So why should I uncover for others..."

Another university student from Ankara who had to have a religious marriage in order to be able to see her fiancée describes her relationship with her immediate environment in terms of her personal experience:

"The first thing covering brings to my mind is free will. If I ever have a daughter and if she, hopefully, decides to cover, I'd be quite happy. But I'd let her decide on her own. If you believe it's God's order, then you cover. And if my husband forces her to cover, saying it's because of honor, then I'd try to prevent him from doing that (...)

My best friends at the university are not covered like I am. They don't take part in any religious activities. But in general, they don't interfere with what I do, and I don't interfere in their ways. I do give some advice to my very close friends, but not too many of them. Nobody meddles in each other's business. We tolerate each other. There are only four or maybe five covered girls in the dorm anyway. And only one of them, who stays on the same floor with me, is a friend of mine. For me, whether a person is covered or not doesn't matter. In the room, everyone is equal. I wouldn't discriminate anyone. I don't care how a person looks. I probably thought differently in the beginning, but I changed even more after I came to this school. I realized that there are covered people who are actually unable to cover themselves... I mean they're not decent people... I came across people with whom I made friends because they're covered but who hurt me. And there were also uncovered people who were so kind to me (...)

And there are people who are uncovered, yet who perform the ritual prayer (...)

What if we did something like this: We forced everyone to cover or to uncover. I think both would be wrong. Because everyone has his own path. No one can be covered by force. It only happens through one's own conscience and will. We have seen people who were forced to cover. Covering is one of the symbols

of one's faith, and let someone cover if that's what she wants and if she believes it's God's order (...)

My head cover is really very important for me because it's my faith. That's why I'm not very hopeful about getting a job. But I might work for a private company... I could work at a private course. But I can't work for a government agency. I could work if I could be covered. But not uncovered. But if your husband dies and you need to work, and you have no other way, then OK, you can uncover... But if your husband is earning well or if your family is doing well financially, then I'd work if I can have a job were I can work as a covered woman, otherwise, I wouldn't uncover myself to be able to have a job..."

A student from Ankara who attends the Black Sea Technical University is another example of an individual who is not willing to compromise about covering or to stretch their relationship with their identity, but who strives to develop personal attitudes within that identity:

"Covering is about one's faith... In my opinion, it's also about morality, but all the same covering has nothing to do with honor. I want that a covered person sees herself like that, and that's something else... But I have no prejudice against people who don't cover. I have many religious friends who aren't covered... And I have no problems with them (...)

But I will never ever uncover myself. What else could be? This is who I am. And this is how it has to be (...)"

When the viewpoint of university students, who are affected by the headscarf ban, is taken into consideration, it can be observed that the shift in the perception is decked with encounters, experiences and especially ruptures.

At this point, a compulsory "*choice*" that has consequences and sanctions looms large, while at the same time, the support or the lack of support, the act of questioning and verification and the experiences during and after the process of making a choice directly or indirectly put into action the themes of "*will and freedom*" as elements of perception and identity.

At this point, it is best to revert to the samples and examine their comments. The experiences of the three students quoted above included very striking and similar points respectively.

The experience of a young woman who is a sociology major at Selçuk University demonstrates the questioning and decision process that occurs :

"The ban started after I entered the school. There were 25 covered women in our classroom. After the first warnings, we were ten people. After the second,

we were five, and eventually, it was only I who quit school after getting a punishment of six months of suspension (...)

Before I started going to school, all I thought was to finish school whether covered or uncovered. But after I came here and started, it didn't happen that way. I mean, I started to experience the whole thing in all conscience and through first-hand experience. I covered when I was twelve. And I was covered till I was eighteen. I had no problems. Moreover, people admired me because I covered. My mother was really proud that I fasted and performed the ritual prayer. My mother was covered. And then someone wants you to uncover. You ask yourself whether you cover because it's an order or a custom. I questioned myself and suffered for months. I felt so lonely. Going to school was what I had wanted the most all my life. I asked myself whether I would give up my biggest dream because of my head cover. I felt I was being tested. And I couldn't stand the idea of failing that test. Even if I was left all alone (...) When I informed my family about my decision, they tried to convince me to uncover. Until that day, my aunt had never called me. She phoned to say, 'Your mom has diabetes. Aren't you ashamed to upset her?' After that she didn't call me again. And my father said, 'You made us so happy when you passed the university entrance exam. Now you're taking back the joy you have given us.' (...)

My father is a headman in constructions. My mother is a housewife. Both have finished primary school. We are five siblings. I'm the second eldest, but since my elder sister is disabled, I'm like the oldest child of the family (...) I first covered after completing elementary school. I knew that after finishing elementary school, I would be going to a religious school and cover. I knew it well (...)

Then I suspended my registration. I returned home (...) My father started to humiliate me by saying, 'We let you study, and look what happened!' When I returned home, I wanted to go to an English language course, but my father said, 'Why do you need English? People who go to school and study need English,' but my mother convinced him (...)

I could have regretted my decision. Because my friends heard about it. Some of them went back to school. And I didn't have much time to question my situation. My mother passed away seven months later. And then I was in a different turmoil. I became like the lady of the house. Although I didn't even know how to cook soup before, I started cooking three meals a day (...) During that period, I felt overcome with anger. I thought: If you want to have something, you work for it, you struggle and you achieve it. It depends on how much you want it. But now, you have to be pleased with what is offered to you. I was even thrown out of the English language course. At such a point, you live where you are able to exist. Even your living spaces become limited (...)

When my mother died, we never thought our father could marry again (...) Actually, in those days people would come to ask for me for marriage. My father asked me, 'What's with that thing?' And I said, 'I guess it won't happen.' Then he said, 'All right then. If you won't be getting married, then I will.' It was April. I told him that my brother who'd be taking the university exam in two months

would be adversely affected. So the whole atmosphere got tense. My father's new marriage offered me two options. Either I would get married too, or I would go back to school. I could not live in that house anymore. So I went back to school (...)"

The same student tells how she went back to her school and what she experienced afterwards:

"Now I go to school wearing a wig (...) I was unable to look at myself in the mirror. For two months, I didn't look in the mirror at all. For two months, I had nightmares all the time. Some of my friends solved the problem in their own heads. They decided they had to return to school, and they did. But it was more impulsive with me.... Because I thought the days to follow at home would be even worse... This was a decision I had made as a result of my conscience. Again, I returned because of a conscientious decision I made. I accepted it as a sin. If I stayed at home, things could have got worse. My mental health could be marred..."

At the beginning, I had a few other things I kept thinking about. When people go to the university, they try to look their best. But I went there in my worst condition. This had its effect on my psychology. In other words, I was there during my ugliest stage. You feel people looking at you as if they're looking at something ugly. And it disturbed me. I used to be a person who cared about dressing well and beauty. But now feeling bad and ugly is relieving. I could have also uncovered myself in a way that I would have liked (...)"

A university student who got married through an unofficial religious ceremony describes her experience with the following words:

"In elementary school, our father sent us to the Koran school. We went there for about 2-3 years. You know, the love for God. So I covered in the 6th grade in a way that our religion required us. When I started having covering-related problems, my parents told me that I should abide by the school rules and regulations. They said, 'All right, we know and accept that you're covered, but in the end, you have to finish school.' My family has done a lot for me. I deprived my siblings of their rights. This cost me a lot, of course. You know.. They told me to wear a wig so that I wouldn't have any problems. so I'm wearing a wig. I'm not very comfortable with it but it's what I can do to ease my conscience. There's no other reason. I don't see a difference between being uncovered and wearing a wig. I feel as if the atmosphere here at the university spoiled something in me... I pushed down all my feelings about covering deep inside of me (...)"

I began reading the holy Koran when I was in primary school. You feel more enthusiastic when the teachers encourage you. However, you feel a little sour when you don't have any such encouragement at the university...

The security guards especially are very hard on us. They shout and yell... Once they even took away my ID... I didn't even have a class that day. I had gone to

school only to take a look at the posted lists. They took away my ID just because a part of my head scarf was visible under my wig. They scolded me... And you feel really humiliated (...)

But I don't feel anger. Problems exist, but I see them as tests. I need to pass those tests. I mean, I really don't approve of making a demonstration to protest..."

Below a senior university student at the Black Sea Technical University's Department of Business Administration discusses her personal interpretations of a traditional religious lifestyle:

"My father advised me that I uncover. I uncover when I go to school. I don't wear a wig. I just take off my headscarf. I'm covered when I leave home in the morning. I uncover when I arrive at school. Then I go to my classroom with that state of mind... I naturally feel a little oppressed. You inevitably don't feel excited about your physical appearance. But what disturbed me more was the dominant thinking at school. All right... you know you have to uncover but if you knew that the others around you were of the same opinion you could manage to feel less oppressed. But no! It's not what happens. You feel that they keep oppressing you even more. Both the teachers and some students. For example the prayer hours also become a problem. They coincide with the class hours and your friends don't understand you... These are heavy things to digest... I still suffer. At the beginning, I wasn't aware of everything, but now, I suffer more. I mean, I take it personal. I mean that people can see my hair there. This hurts me emotionally. This makes me feel depressed (...)

Uncovering my head at that door every morning, uncovering myself every single day tells my brain that I should reevaluate certain things and to question the reasons of my actions. In other words, if my approach wasn't inconsistent, I could tell myself that all right, everybody uncovers, so I can uncover too... But then I wouldn't be truly conscious about my behavior. But now, I uncover every single morning, and I tell myself that I uncover because I want to... I don't blame anyone for it. I'm not angry at anyone. I haven't developed split personalities. But the situation may have caused me to act as if I have. I even feel pleased when someone asks me if in fact I'm covered. They can see it even when I'm not wearing my head scarf. Even this shows that I don't lead two contradicting lives. I mean I don't become totally unrecognizable when I uncover. Perhaps if I stayed home, you'd perceive that certain point of view in me too, but the fact that I go to university and that I enter from that door makes things different..."

A young individual from Istanbul who graduated from Kocaeli University and who now works for the private sector describes a different experience. This young woman, whose father is one of the prominent members of the Islamic movement had the following experience:

"I wanted to uncover once I was in high school. My mother said that I should give it a try for a month but that my father shouldn't know anything about it. She told me that if I decided I wanted to be uncovered, we could find the right

way to let my father know about it too. I uncovered but I wasn't comfortable. After a month, I covered again. When I passed the university entrance exam, I really wanted to study. My father was strongly against me uncovering my head at school. He said, 'I spent my whole life fighting about this! How can my daughter ever uncover?!' But in the end, he had to accept my decision because I was really determined. I was uncovered all through my university education. But it was a transitory period. I'll never uncover again. Now I work for a private company. And it's only like this that I can keep covered and work..."

As it can be observed, the ruptures between *"faith-tradition-religious attitude"* and *"benefit-future-freedom"* at the level of university studies trigger a transformation mechanism that is centered around a mentality of pluralism in approaches, attitudes, beliefs and expectations.

The relationships with the identity both intensify and also transform. The *"religious distress"* the actors define as an emotional wreckage, the *"psychological distress"* they mention in relation to the moments when they wear a wig or have to remain uncovered and the *"social distress"* they suffer because of feeling excluded cause identity traumas that sometimes harm their personalities.

The actors overcome these ruptures and traumas through carrying two different value systems at the same time within themselves. In other words, their attempt to bring together *"the religious"* and *"the secular"* not only in the public sphere but also in their own inner world, emerge from a sense that they move away from the sharp and distinctive factors and discourses of their identities. The fact that the *"mechanism of association"* that has been put in action as a result of the ruptures does not give way to a radical change or that it does not create a new and uniform background within is one of the evidences indicating the state of *"pluralizing"* in terms of perception and in the process of individualization (personalization).

Two mechanisms are noteworthy at this point:

1. As it was mentioned before, the fact that students are forced to make a *"choice"* in between the relationship of covering and their identity evokes the ideas of will, freedom and the individual person. Some of the students resist the wishes of their families, who want to protect them, to *"uncover"*; some react against their families' demand to *"remain covered"*, and others make their final decisions after they first question their inner selves and have families supporting that decision. In this scope, the decisions are made through *"free will"* and based on *"the behavior of the person (individual) or the act of personalization"*.
2. The encounters and the experiences related to university education have a very significant role in the establishment of the identity-individual (person) relationship

for girls. On the other hand, the “*oppression*” from the outside is better handled in this scope. Furthermore, having a goal for the future and going through short term hardships alleviates the “*anger that could enhance polarization*”. The denial of anger essentially means the denial of a rupture; in other words, it is an expression of the actor who consciously directs himself toward another place through both mental, religious and social mechanisms, and within this scope, it appears as an “*attitude of the individual (person)*”. It is the collective pool where young girls are able to interact with other and different young people in the university that makes this largely possible. This pool is the place where different beliefs and attitudes meet and which triggers a transformation as a result of the interaction. The experience of covering expresses a new situation within the multiplicity of values this area of encounter includes. First of all, it reinforces the identity of young covered people, then it introduces the approach to equalize against the other identity with the need to be accepted, and finally, it affects the view of the actor concerning himself and his own identity. In other words, these experiences do not remain solely as “*the story of integration or harmony*” but also stimulate the mechanism of personal reaction and attitude within the identity.

The meaning attributed to the head cover and the transformation triggered by the interactions with what is different is not limited to the students who primarily suffer from these problems. It also encompasses other women and men in the flexible ring within the scope of the social and political experiences.

A middle class housewife from the Black Sea Region who grew up in an urban setting, and who actively protects and advocates her Islamic identity says the following words about the same subject:

“I’m also someone who suffered because of the head cover issue. In the 80s, I used to study at Ankara Merkez Imam Hatip High School. I left school because I rejected uncovering. In those days, I used to feel infuriated. Today, I feel upset, naturally. I wish I had studied. I try to instill in my children the appreciation for education (...)

For me, covering is both God’s order and also my most natural right. It has no other meaning. This is what I think... I have many friends who don’t cover. I mean, I’m not prejudiced against them because they don’t cover. I make friends with someone when I feel close to her (...)

Honor is something totally different for me. The only clothes that I find immoral are the one that display the body’s contour. Even if the person wearing them is covered (...)

A book store owner from Konya explains his personal journey from the past up to the present by giving a striking example that reflects his approach:

"You don't know about the Doğan family. They used be Alevi. They have always been excluded from society. Just a few months ago, I told someone that I was married to someone from the Doğan family. He said, 'Please don't say such a thing!' My wife's relatives own a wedding hall. Once... Sevtap Parman went there. I went to my sister-in-law's home to pick up my wife from there. At the door, she said, 'Ms. Sevtap is here. I'm talking to her.' And I told her, 'Didn't I tell you not to talk to those uncovered women, those whores?!' But today, when I think about it, I realize that my approach back then was totally contradicting Islam (...)

Today I consider the head cover as something Islam orders. An order women must obey. But I must stress that I don't see it as something that must be forced upon someone. Furthermore, Muhammed Husein Fadulallah, the leader of Hizbullah in Lebanon, says that a Muslim woman doesn't wear the head cover as the sign of chastity but does so only because it's God's order... This is for sure (...)

Some time ago, a girl and a boy from the university came and asked for a book about head covering. I asked them why they wanted it. 'Are you two going out?' They said, 'We're engaged.' I told the boy, 'Don't you commit a murder!' And then I told the girl, 'My dear, do you read the Koran?' she said, 'I don't.' Then I asked, 'Do you perform the ritual prayer?' She said, 'Every now and then.' So I said, 'Then read the Koran. When you read the verses about covering, you can choose to cover yourself if you really want to.' She shouldn't read the Arabic version without comprehending anything. She should read the Turkish explanation. She should first understand Islam, and then she can cover. I've told you about my wife. She's from a family who come from the whirling dervishes. In the beginning, she wasn't covered. I really gave her a hard time to force her to cover.... It's so difficult for an uncovered woman to start covering... And people seem to focus only on the head cover and forget about other aspects of religion..."

The following comments by male actors including a tradesman, a university student, a lower ranked public servant, and a university professor respectively reveal that the *"tendency to individualize (a person)"* is the dominant tendency in the flexible ring in terms of the identity-individual (person) relationship.

"I'm unable to fulfill all of the requirements mentioned in the Koran. But there are certain things I show a special concern for. For example, refraining from lying. And I stay away from alcohol. It's a sin. Although it's interpreted in different ways, not covering is also similar... A person has free will. If she doesn't cover, it doesn't mean that she's not a believer. There are also many religious people who don't cover..."³⁷ The head cover is an order of our religion. But there are also religious people who don't cover..."³⁸ "The head cover is an order of God for believers. But there are many uncovered people who perform the ritual prayer five times a day..."³⁹ "The head cover has something to do with

37 A 40 year-old tradesman from Istanbul

38 A 22 year-old university student from Van who belongs to the Islamist segment

39 A 45 year-old person who works in the private service sector and who used to have radical views

good manners, but it's definitely not about honor. And it's not related to sexuality either..."⁴⁰

As it can be observed, the meaning religious people attribute to covering overlaps with the meaning the same people attribute to themselves. Furthermore, this overlapping is one of the most important footings of the heterogeneous perception concerning *"the Islamic"*.

B. DAILY LIFE/RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND PERCEPTIONS

Another indication of individualization (personalization) with regard to the heterogeneous perception of Islam arises in the relations between religious knowledge and daily life, or the perception of the religion and the interpretation of the religious order.

The main trend within the Islamic flexible sphere is the individualization of religious practice. In other words, religious interpretation and perception on subjects that concern social, political, cultural and legal areas develops a *"person- and time-oriented"* attribute. This development, albeit not openly stated, is founded by actors on the *"historical perception"* that may be defined as the interpretation of religious provisions according to times and circumstances.

The important new function that arises at this point is as follows: Person- and time-oriented perceptions reinforce that *"as the actor tries to claim his or her identity he or she distances him or herself from the identity within the identity and thereby reconstructs her identity"*. This perception also paves the way for intertwining secularized lifestyle with Islamic symbols and identity.

The following words of a young covered student, who has made a faithful lifestyle part of her future aims, are important when attempting to grasp the orientation of the relations between religious information and daily life:

"If we all interpreted Islam the same way, and had the same sensitivities, then let's live in an Islamic state. But our society is not like this. Therefore, religious orders should not be the orders of the state. But I think the current situation has problems. I mean, if I want to cover my head, I should; and if you want to drink alcohol, you should (...)

Whatever the situation, even if there is an Islamic order, one should be realistic. Here's how I look at Islam: The practice of a provision is dependent on the time

⁴⁰ An academic from Ankara who is a member of the Islamist segment

of the event. For example, some provisions in inheritance law, such as witnessing: I don't think they can be applicable anymore (...)"

It is possible to show other examples. The following quotation from a housewife in Trabzon, who has made religion the center of her lifestyle and who is sensitive to the pressures undergone by the Islamic segment, is important:

"My faith does not prevent me from treating men and women as equals. That is not how I interpret religion. For example, my husband is a member of the SP. He didn't ask me to join, because I didn't want to. Then I said, 'You cannot share a responsibility brought by your participation in a political structure with me. Don't expect help or support from me.' That is my most natural right (...) In the summer, I move from one pasture to another. I let him know when I'm going. One time I asked for permission. Years ago. When we were newly-wed. Then I was uncomfortable with it. We are both adults. We know where we should and shouldn't go. That's why I thought that letting him know was enough. That's how it's been for years now."

Another housewife from the same city says the following:

"You ask me what I would do if a close relative converted to another faith? I'd go 'Oh!' at first, for sure. But, if he's an adult and he's made his own choice... If he's a person I like, my relations wouldn't deteriorate, and I wouldn't cast him out, why should I? That's a matter of the past. Why should I cast him out? I wouldn't have to hide from him either."

The following excerpt from a small business owner in Ankara, who is of a fundamentalist background, is noteworthy for the definition it has of his lifestyle and inclinations:

"We learn this: Islam is personal. When no Islamic law exists, Islam is practiced personally. RP exploited this a lot. This was wrong. We have now come to terms with Fethullah Hoca, whom we had criticized extensively. Associating Islam with the head cover is not nearly as correct as pursuing the canonical law."

Another mechanism that appears as both a cause and a result of heterogenization in the religious perception is the separation and diversification of personal interests, especially among youth and in metropolitan areas:

This situation indicates the deterioration of a behavioral code that is identity-oriented based on an understanding of "*utility*", where all interests gather under a single, hierarchical roof, and results in the coexistence of apolitical and political paradigms. This coexistence, from the moment it spurs the separation and diversification of interests, refers to the "*personalization trend*". The driving force of separation is the

fragmented perception of politics. The more or less conscious “*fragmented perception*” is a significant attribute of actors who have brought together apolitical-popular paradigms with traditional paradigms, or who stay away from excessive politicization due to their political, social or intellectual experiences.

A typical example comes from a young woman, who has limited knowledge of or interest in political matters, and who becomes politicized due to her main concern of covering, saying she will cast her vote in accordance with this problem.

“What is the most important problem for me in social life? What concerns my life the most? Covering, of course. It hampers my movement. I’m not very interested in politics, actually. I only voted once. In the elections of November 3rd. I voted for the AK Party. I thought that they were best positioned to solve my problem, even if not immediately, and since they were already strong, I voted for them to make them stronger. Many of my friends did likewise.”

The separation and diversification of interests occur in many actors indirectly. This is more evident in actors who are not part of a community; for example, who have been educated in neighbourhood Koran schools or have passed through the “*double modernity filter*” discussed previously.

C. THE CHILD AS A VECTOR OF CHANGE

Certain elements and developments within the private sphere support the flexing of community-building instruments via dynamics coming from within the Islamic segment, or the appearance of individual inclinations within the identity.

One of the such elements is the child.

The child serves both as a cause of rupture and as an actor who sparks change in urban nuclear families of middle and higher cultural level. This is fundamentally caused by the pressure of paradigm duality the child encounters at home and in school. The friction between the principles the child learns at school and the principles he observes in the family, such as “*injustice*”, and learns through experience plays an important role on the behavior at home.

Families try to overcome this duality pressure by “*neutralizing*” their attitudes and behavior. As such, they try to limit political discussions that may influence the child, isolate the private sphere from the child, and heed the learned values of the child.

At this stage, concerns for the child and his or her future, the quest for an adaptive, flexible socialization uninfluenced by the polarization discourse, are determining

factors. The evolution of the child into a vector of change may be defined as a circumstance that has arisen within the “*popularized polarization climate*” that started in 1994 and ensued until 2002.

The problem and experience of a public servant from Ankara is as follows:

“My wife had to leave her job as a public servant due to the headscarf law. The children were affected severely, even more so than their mother. We made mistakes there too. We discussed this situation in detail in front of them. The dichotomy in our mentality versus those who weren’t like us became evident to the children. This disturbed me a lot. (...) For example, he associated the Atatürk figure with the ordeal of his mother. One of the children goes to our local state school. The other one, the one with problems, goes to a private school with the decision of his advisor. He told us to take the child from the old school at once and enroll him to a school that gives religious education, which we did. We enrolled him to a community school. He is more comfortable and happy there. But this disturbs me a lot. Now we pay attention not to confuse the children with our discussions. We worry that the children may develop an inadaptable, conflict-seeking identity.”

The picture above is reinforced by the experiences of a low-income newspaper distributor, who is of a radical background, and who is distanced from Kemalism and secularism:

“We talk of political issues at home. We try not to influence the kids to the best of our abilities. But I saw the other day that my son had scratched over the faces of a Turkish person who will remain unnamed, and Bush. I was sorry. Perhaps, a part of me was happy, but still I was disappointed. We are from the Black Sea, we are a passionate people and so sometimes we show emotion, we can’t constrain ourselves and we speak about these things in their presence. He gets influenced... He asks about Atatürk, for instance. I tell him to revere him, since he founded Turkey. Learn whatever they teach you at school, I say. We want them to grow up decently.”

The “*modernization*” or “*secularization*” of the household is an important development as a means to protect the child. It should also take into account the degree of pressure and change experienced by these families who are actors of the Islamic segment. As seen above, a similar situation arises as a significant inclination within the families of female university students. Contrary to popular belief, many conservative families try to influence their children to uncover or to put on a wig with concerns about their future.

It should be noted that in both instances, the conflict and rupture of paradigms extend from the child to the parents, influence their attitudes and practices, as the child or the teenager becomes a “*vector of change*”.

II. THE ISLAMIC RIGID SPHERE

Within the Islamic segment there exists a rigid sphere, members of which can be found in almost all circles, and grow more fundamentalist in nature in Central Anatolia. This sphere corresponds to a segment that *“has a strong Islamic disposition, does not compromise, and is significantly resistant to change in terms of their identity, and the notion of change in general”*.

However, this sphere is also not immune to the climate of change surrounding the Islamic identity in many areas. The wave of change has relatively affected the behavior, political perception and political practice of the members of this sphere.

Resistance against change in the Islamic rigid sphere appears as a problem of adopting and internalizing new styles and structures. In general, the problem is experienced inwardly, and is a function of the perception and mentality of what constitutes the Islamic identity, and behavior within the identity. Naturally, this will be the primary factor in the analysis of this sphere.

The most significant shift caused by the climate of change within this sphere may be defined as a *“change of place”* in the *“political function of religion”*.

This segment has stretched the attitude that prescribes the regulation of the public sphere by religion with regard to the relations between religion and politics, and has prevented it from being active.

The hesitation to define Islam as the *“host of demands towards the public sphere and an instrument of struggle”* can be interpreted as a *“return from political radicalism to tradition, and from the political to the social”*.

On the other hand, the power of the religious disposition to define the private sphere, the surroundings, the human, and the codes of behavior and relations still survives, and is moreover reinforced within the scope of resistance to the climate of change. As such, a powerful and communitarian sense of ownership is expressed with a structure and concept of the *“extended private”*. The perception and experience of Islam occurs on a trajectory that determines not only the narrow private sphere, but the close perimeter of the private sphere, in other words, social and cultural relations.

Consequences of the climate of change at the rigid core are being instrumentalized with utility-centered usage of public amenities, the inputs of change are controlled by dominating the public sphere or retreating to the public sphere, and the effects of change are attempted to be limited.

1. POLITICS AND MENTALITY

There are not many differences in the “*utopia*” of religious society and politics or in the ideal of an Islamicized society in the Islamic rigid sphere.

However, when the “*Islamic society utopia*” is considered alongside the effects of change inputs, the following result arises: The main instruments of this utopia are no longer absolute and pure Islamic instruments as they were in the 1980s and the early 1990s. These instruments are now based not only on religion but on economy, national elements, the state, and even secular concepts like law and democracy in order to reinforce the Islamic identity. The most important result of this diversification that appears as a sort of field defence and domination mechanism under the new circumstances created by the wave of change is an influence of the trajectory of “*the perception of power*”, an important component of the Islamic mentality. As such, the definition of and quest for power is not “open conflict” as a culture, action and disposition even in the most conservative circles, but is intertwined with “*harmony mechanisms*” and steps such as “*competition, obtaining a share, and moving into and residing within the system*”.

The two iterations of this utopia, the former by a wealthy businessman from Central Anatolia and the latter by a small business owner from Konya, are very defining:

“The quality and not the quantity determines the weight in societies. We know that the roots of the Islamic segment’s ideas and theories run deeper than other segments. I believe that even if it cannot come up with very prominent thought leaders for the time being, it has a very significant cultural and intellectual background and heritage, and can and will gain superiority over other segments of the society when it uses this. (...)”

I don’t think the secularism tension in Turkey will ever end. It will not end even if the head-covering ban is lifted. When people are given the choice to cover, then other things will come up. Demands will extend as far as wanting a religious government.”

“I’m still a radical and revolutionary. I still preserve this. When the revolution starts, I will be out on the streets. I’m still attached to the Islamic Revolution of Iran. (...)”

Love of the army? As long as they don’t oppose the principles of the Koran, we will accept the army. The police? As long as they are Muslims, we approve them. This is where we separate from the leftists. I’m a radical, but it has its limits.”

On the other hand, when faced with the instrumentalization of change with regard to their identities, the same participants say the following:

"I don't support Turkey's accession to the EU. But there will be some gains; economical, political and legal. The rule of law, higher human right standards, all that. Especially the Muslims have a pressing need for those."

"Let's start negotiations with the EU. This will initiate reforms. But let's not become a member. I don't think they will take us in the end anyway. Let's get the reforms out of the way. Otherwise the pressure won't end and the problems can-not be solved."

The two-faceted change in the rigid sphere also initiates a two-faceted movement that is based on compensating for each other: On the one hand, actors are sometimes in approval of a controlled change due to needs such as higher standards and mentality motives like being an internationally recognized power. On the other hand, an allergy of the West, the Western threat, identity and integrity concerns rouse suspicions towards the EU and the same change.

The fragmented perception of current policies toward change or change inputs is also the result of a deeply utilitarian expectation. When themes and policies of change are considered, questions and suspicions towards especially the EU are reinforced within this context, and lead to the quest to find reasons behind the pro-EU and pro-West policies of the AK Party, for example. Naturally, these reasons are not in line with the substance of democratization steps, do not make sense of the change, and do not define change with respect to itself. Conversely, they spring from the "*communitarian language*". Typical indications of the utilitarian expectations of the EU project are the elimination of the armed forces from politics, and the quest to Islamicise Europe. In this context, the level of association in the Islamic rigid core with the administration is very limited and the "*political attitude change*" stemming from party policies works to the opposite.

A high-income contractor from Central Anatolia depicts this picture with the following words:

"I thought about why the AK Party was so intent on Turkey's accession to the EU. Well, there is a huge obstacle before that demand. This obstacle is the army. Now, for centuries, the army has been... Let me not use a subjective word to define that, but... An authority which the Turkish society had to receive approval from. It claimed the heads of sultans, it sent prime ministers to the gallows; it was a continuation of the Janissaries. It was the obstruction against any type of political or social development in Turkey, especially against Islamicization. The power of the army cannot be controlled from the inside. Its power cannot be reduced with internal checks. EU criteria will, first and foremost, prevent the army from being so active in social life. In my opinion, this is why the current administration is so supportive of the EU business."

A former member of the Islamist movement from Kayseri makes sense of the AK Party administration with the following words:

“Those wishing for an Islamic government no longer knew what they meant with this. The AK Party administration created mass confusion. Right now, the Turkish people, I mean, the ones who support the AK Party, cannot explain this. There is a saying in Kayseri: The rich have no faults to hide. The defects of successful people are visible only after their success wanes. There are lots to say against the AK Party, but right now they are on a mare, galloping towards the EU. Meanwhile, the public stares gaping at two men who course every country from France to Denmark. (...)

Now the AK Party says something strange. They say that an Islamic administration will not exist. This is like a fractured bone that will hurt later. Disturbance in the masses that brought AK Party to the power is rising. It will blow sometime or other.”

A businessman from Konya makes an interesting, utilitarian interpretation of change and EU policies:

“Arabs, Palestinians are being spent like so many coins. The same in Sudan. What do Western orientalists do? They research the past, present and culture of Islamic peoples. Why? They want to know where they can put a needle. I read a war strategy book the other day. An Englishman has written a foreword. I looked him up; he investigates Chinese culture for a living. Many Americans, Westerners work in this field. Why are they employed? To know, instigate and use pawn peoples of the world more easily. In the chess game of world policy, some people are pawns, and some are knights or queens. There’s another thing: I think the West is afraid of Islam, because they couldn’t convert the workers there for 40 years. They have national feelings. Our national feelings are equivalent to religion. They cannot pry these loose. However, there are many people there whom we converted to Islam. The EU can serve this purpose.”

As seen above, the main trajectory of the two-faceted movements and resistance is determined by the mentality. The pressure caused by the climate of change appears as a retreat or “*reverse change*” over mentality. As such, when the Islamic rigid sphere is considered on a basis of change and mentality relations, it creates a field where patriarchal political values are reproduced on a basis of utilitarianism and reverse-change. Consequently, it can be said that the limited change occurs within a framework of “*updating patriarchal, traditional values*”, and that “*these values trigger the reproduction mechanism*”.

It is possible to examine this mechanism of reproduction as follows:

The “*reverse change*” mechanism is essentially surrounded by a type of conservativeness that place “*mechanisms of harmony*” on “*nationality and elements of*

national power". This surrounding expresses a significant "shift" in the Islamic rigid core; especially the circles that have close relations with the modern Islamic movement. The historicity apparent in the flexible sphere is also of importance here. Beyond the fragmented nationalistic reactions to thematic problems like Cyprus, the Kurdish issue or the PKK, a local, systematized nationalist perception arises. For the Islamic segment, emphasis on the religious in defining the political sphere and power becomes indirect, while the "*nationalistic reflex*" becomes determining. The transition from a globalist perception to a historicist perception does not result in an "*individualization pressure*" as seen in the flexible core, but expresses a strong return to themes existing prior to the modernization of the Islamic movement, and ancient dualities and problematics such as "*culture-civilization*" and "*temporal culture-spiritual culture*".

The tendency in the rigid core is incorporated with an imaginary hierarchy and an imaginary, non-experience-based relation with the "*other*" within mentality elements that sublimate localness with its consequences. The "*comparative superiority*" that arises out of this relation, and the sublimation and preservation of local values produces an introverted active approach that refuses palpable interactivity with the "other".

Reinforced with the imaginary relations established with the "*other*", the "*power-conquest-prestige*" sequence appears as the main structural relation that protects identity. The pillars of this mechanism are aspiring to economic development, technical and economic competitiveness with of the West, opening up to the West, and establishing a target of personal or indirect success in relation to the West.

A typical example comes from a businessman in Konya as he establishes his identity and targets:

"People discussing secularity look at how ridiculous Turkey is before the world, and put the blame on religion. And we have to defend our religion. We, above all, are responsible for living the religion of Mohammad, and communicating this religion to the entire humanity. (...)

If my company could earn a contract in a very developed country like Germany, I would feel as if I have reached the place I wanted. But Germany, and not Russia. Because there, you have to determine how many bricks you are supposed to use in a structure beforehand. So many bolts, so many pipes, etc. I would believe in my success if I could reach this technical quality. I have established this as a goal."

This situation indicates a shift that is significant with regard to the framework of the Islamic movement and attitudes.

As mentioned in the flexible segment analysis, the notion of a globalist Islam, arising in connection with the Iranian Revolution, has had the effect of *“political socialization”* on the Islamic movement in Turkey. Interpreting Islam and defining Islamic movement and action on a level of symbols relevant to lifestyle, this approach has considered questioning the traditions and local cultures religion was born into and purging Islam of these as important as the struggle against the Western modernity, and has activated a discourse that aspires to re-Islamicize the society from its culture to knowledge. However, the Islamic movement, especially with the inputs of this approach and the economic and social changes of the 1980s, has not refrained from producing its own wave of modernity. The gains of the interactivity initiated between Islamic actors and the modern sphere have been passed on to the depths of the Islamic segment, especially by women, where they have affected a range of elements, from gender relations to the traditional division of roles. However, the same change paved the way for an assertive politicization; a dominant, confident, questioning and demanding movement that fed on the above mentioned globalist wave. In this context, the Islamic movement was politicised through the tension between lifestyle and habitat, and was defined by the *“identity”* or the *“identity-oriented inclination”* with which it reconstructed and reformed its social attributes.

The tradition which this globalist approach to Islam strives to purge may be defined as an *“individual disposition and politicization in the context of achieving complete faithfulness”*. In this sense, the *“tradition”* that refers to an individualist approach to Islam also prescribes a statist approach, and comprises groups that are subject to a hierarchy that produces an elitist structure. In other words, tradition surrounds an approach that forms relations between religion and politics over the state and via the elites, represents a struggle for power over the state, and becomes systematised to the extent that it manages to infiltrate the system.

It promotes a notion of individualism that defines the person not with their *“identity”* but with their *“substance”* and *“transcendent”* aspect, that is standardised and *“atomistic”* with its needs and actions, and that finds its social properties in solidarity with its likes.

Ultimately, this approach is the source of the *“developmentalist-individualist-statist”* disposition that prescribes being, power and activity through the state on behalf of the people.

This is the dominant inclination of the rigid sphere today. The relative separation from the *“identity-based approach”* is the rediscovery and adoption of certain fundamental elements of the traditionalist approach. It is, in a sense, the rebirth of tradition.

This development may be regarded as the compensation for or elimination of the pressure of change by mentality instruments. The mentality core serves a function of gathering, which converts the “*fragmentation*” into a new “blocking” that rejoins separated fragments together in a certain hierarchy.

The “*developmentalism – statism – individualism*” model begins to apply to even those actors of the rigid sphere who have kept their distance from tradition at a certain point in their lives, and forms the substructure of a trend that may be defined as “*rebecoming rightist*”. This trend bans change from the private and societal spheres, while the external world, business and national issues are defined as “dynamic” in the light of increasing technical and technological quality, and the reproduction of the given memory is thus effected.

Reminiscent of the temporal-spiritual culture duality, this situation finds striking expression in the “*analysis of Turkey and the world*” by a businessman from Central Anatolia:

“Turkey has been changing its skin for years. It happens all at once. The left, the right, all segments shed their skin altogether. My concerns and the thoughts of a secularist are not very different. We want to be able to integrate to the outside world without true identity. We are powerless as a nation. Some say the reason for this is Islam. Some say it is because we strayed from Islam. Actually, both sides wish to see a powerful Turkey sit at the negotiation table for world integration. The Islamic segment says that if we adhere to the principles of Islam strictly, we will be more powerful in technology and economy, and achieve inner peace. Our lives will be set straight. The other guy says, we must side with the victors and not the defeated. Islam pushes us to the side of the Arabs. The whole discussion is about how we will appear on the world stage. We want to be treated with respect and dignity.”

A distinguishing attribute of the tendency to become rightist is closely related with the view of “*the other within*”. Extremely externalising, this disposition may be in full congruence with the given memory of the Islamic segment as dealt with previously. However, it is worth noting that in the new wave, the other within is more prominent than the external other. Any conversation on the religious and ethnic “*other within*” may come up with a result similar to the one below

“It is right that the army does not have any members of Armenian descent. Now what is the mission of the army today? It is the protector of the Turkish people. If this is to be correct, the army must have criteria with which it chooses its members. These criteria are well known. Now, as far as I know, why is Yıldırım Beyazıt defeated before Timur? Because he drafts peoples of previously conquered lands. Take the Germiyanoglu principality for instance. The peoples of such are soldiers in Beyazıt’s army. But when Timur converts the princes to

his side at the last moment, their people say, oh our ruler is on the other side, and change sides as well (...).

What is the difference between conquering Istanbul and driving the Armenians out of Kayseri? We take pride in the conquest of Istanbul. What is the difference? Okay, women and children were driven out and killed in the Armenian incident.”⁴¹

“Well, a Kurdish issue exists in Turkey. There is also the Armenian issue. And the Circassian issue. When I say I am a Turk, there will be others who will say I am a Kurd, I am Circassian (...)

Now I have Turkish friends, I have Kurdish friends. I have other friends. What I’ve seen is that a Kurd acts differently than a Turk on the same matter. Just as our look and colour are different, so is our thought. When the method of thought is different, there will be problems because there will be different approaches to the same matter. The Kurdish issue will continue for long...”⁴²

“There are Alevi whose life and discourse I highly disapprove of. The Alevi of today are adapted to the leftist view. I am disturbed by how an atheist speaks of Alevism. I cannot understand how an Alevi associates himself with an atheist. Speaking of Hazrat Ali and siding with the atheists is insincere. You explain Alevism with reference to the history of Islam, and then become attached to an atheist ideology. The result is, forgive me but, a bastard opinion.”⁴³

The clientist approach

We have mentioned that there are shifts in the definition of power, a regression of the idea of conflict, and a prominence of harmony mechanisms in the rigid sphere. It should be noted that these harmony mechanisms change shape according to the distance between the actor and the system, and politics and the state. As such, for the actor of the rigid sphere who is located at “*the center of clientist and corporatist systems*” or their surroundings, these appear as mechanisms of “*utilitarian adaptation*” and “*two-faceted harmony*”.

Underscoring “*change management and use*”, this situation points at how actors can make widespread, unquestioned and utilitarian use of the wave of change and its instruments once they become legitimate in terms of the identity they belong to.

⁴¹ A businessman from Kayseri

⁴² A tradesman from Istanbul

⁴³ A small business owner from Konya

Wearing a wig is a typical example. Some actors or their wives and children of the rigid sphere both adapt to the requirements of the legal system, and remain within the legitimacy of the religious circle or the policy they call Islamic. As the discourse of the political circle or the political party is stretched, the purpose of maintaining existence within the system makes new instruments both natural and permanent. In this context, relations with the identity continue to be “*central*” without being subject to an important and significant change. Moreover, the new legitimacy perimeter, especially with regard to head covering, compensates for the losses in the public sphere caused by religious visibility.

A typical example comes from a participant who is located at the center of the clientist and corporatist mechanism, has strong and deep relations with the MSP – RP – FP – AK Party and who maintains his active relations with the political sphere through his wife (a member of a municipal assembly and the AK Party organization) and because he is a public servant at a ministry in Ankara.

“My wife attends municipal assemblies with a wig. Her father is a member of a certain order. Given that he was extremely religious, he did not let her continue education after the secondary section of the religious school. She later finished high school. She was discharged from the Open University during her junior year because she did not submit photographs where her head was uncovered. Now if they adopt a pardon, she will put on a wig and submit those photographs. We couldn’t think of this at that time. We couldn’t have done it anyway.”

Contrary to the young females of the flexible sphere, the legitimacy the wig earned from the actor herself and her surroundings is not viewed as a temporary requirement, thus not causing an open rupture. In other words, the “*act of resistance*” against the ban on head covering is replaced with an “*adaptation*” which involves pragmatic intents and purposes. The following words from the same participant are therefore important:

“I don’t care about the secularism issue. We don’t talk about this anymore, and we frown upon those who do. You wanted secular, here we are. (...) Lifting the ban on head covering is not important. It was in the past, but not anymore. My wife solved this problem with the wig. Since she wears it on top of the covering, her own hair is even less visible now. And I’m happy with that. If people cannot live with this, well, it’s their problem, and none of mine. Let them squirm now. Here’s the wig. Do your best.”

As seen above, these adaptation mechanisms serve a reverse function, reproducing the detachedness or duality between the private and public spheres. In other words, it serves a purpose that prevents the contacts made with the modern sphere in daily life from turning into “*interactivity mechanisms that produce questions, new meanings and attitudes*”.

From this perspective, the public sphere in which a woman exists with her full citizenship rights with the aid of the wig represents the utility, and the private sphere represents the principle.

In comparison to the 1980s when there was an effort to establish a link between the private and public sphere the situation is now reversed. The new inclination brings the separation of these spheres again and with force. Just as the 1980s have symbolized the infiltration or manifestation of the private sphere in or on the public sphere, the 2000s symbolize a return to the arbitrated private sphere which symbolizes *“being integral”*.

An axis of *“becoming rightist again”* appears at this stage. Although the return to tradition may seem to reduce the believer’s disposition for the political aspect, it in fact reduces the *“modernist pressure”* on the Islamic sphere as brought upon by the structure of the Islamic movement in the ‘80s and ‘90s, and reinforces the patriarchal structure.

2. THE INTIMATE, THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE SURROUNDINGS

The power and authority of religious rules and tradition in the Islamic rigid core is absolute. The family, the individual and the surroundings are defined as closed areas and are banned from change uncompromisingly.

Coexistence with the laic segment in a secular order rarely extends to the macro scale apart from requirements like education and civic issues, and a specific effort is made to prevent this. The distinction between laic-believer and Muslim-non Muslim in social relations is not only adopted as a criteria for *“closeness-distantness”* and *“from within-from out-side”*, but also works as a regulating element that serves a purpose of *“expanding the intimate sphere”*.

A businessman from Istanbul defines the parameters of not only religious rule, but a variety of social relations when commenting about a woman’s expulsion from a sports hall by Muslim women for wearing a cross:

“According to the Islamic canon, a Christian woman is forbidden to a Muslim woman. And not only for that woman; the Muslim woman is forbidden to any male other than her father, husband and brother. Which means that she must not reveal certain parts. This goes for all people of different religions and those Muslims that are not close relatives.”

These parameters are wider according to a small business owner from Ankara and a member of clergy from Eastern Anatolia:

"The religion that I believe in, I mean Islam, brings a sort of confidentiality to my private life. There is also a measure in the relations of my family members with people of different faiths. Not just against Christians. If a person says he's laic and Islam doesn't mean much for him, I'll keep my distance anyway. However, my attitude on a human relations level won't change."

"I may talk with unbelievers, but I won't befriend them. (...) If someone in my family tried to convert, I wouldn't be able to accept it. I'd go sleepless, and lose my appetite."

At this stage, it is possible to assert that the actors of the rigid core maintain their integral structure against the wave of change by purposely expanding and preserving the "*inner, intimate, social*" sphere. This in a sense is an escape or purge from rupture. Typical examples are viewing any change in the Islamic identity as corruption, and, for instance, reactions against the new perception of head covering that sometimes go as far as regarding it as treachery.

As such, a middle-aged businessman from Konya defines covering of women in a manner that represents his own world, makes a judgement about the present day, and compares it to the past:

"Not the turban but a head covering... Better still, the hijab, that is to say the covering of a woman. I believe this is an important religious requirement like prayer or fasting. Yet, I fail to understand why many girls cover themselves in the first place these days. Here's why: In Turkey, you say that you have so and so beliefs. And this belief commands me to do this and that. One command is that I, as a lady, must put my life in order. In my relations with the opposite sex, I should hide my body to refrain from provoking and being provoked. Okay, you may be covering for this, but you are reckless in other matters. The way you put the covering on... For instance, yesterday in Ankara I saw this young girl, covered, probably going to school. She has this male friend beside her, and when entering the building, she shook his hand and kissed him on the cheek. The other girl, not covered, shook his hand too. If you're comfortable with that, why hide your hair? That's what it means according to my faith. This is incongruous. It wasn't like this in the 80s and 90s. It was a symbol. At first, it was a way of covering. Now it's a way of expression. In those years, the aspects of the lives of covered people were congruous with each other. But now, in 2004, a covered lady I see somewhere doesn't mean anything to me."

A young public servant from Ankara uses a striking expression for the same issue:

"When someone speaks of head covering, I think of treachery. Why do people cover themselves? To show that they live their faith in full. But people who don't live their faith in full wear the covering these days. If you wear a covering but behave in unacceptable ways, it's treachery."

Another public servant exemplifies his attitude over his daughter, who is a high school senior:

"I want my daughter to continue education. I'll make her wear a wig over her covering. Mind you, not over her hair. Over her head covering. That's how it can be. If she wants to do it the other way around, she'd better not, in my opinion. Of course, it's just my opinion. It would be against me and my beliefs. It wouldn't change even if her mother supported it."

This attitude underscores not only the meaning associated with the covering or the believer, but the attitude towards the uncovered. This attitude is mainly centered on morality and lifestyle, and refers to the separation and regulation functions of the covering. Furthermore, it depicts the unchanging structure of the relation between individual and identity in the mentality of the rigid core.

The inclination to refuse change is also active in interpretations and readings of the actors of the outside world. Actors who can be utilitarian and flexible in business have a tendency to refuse to understand and to judge against flexibility and change outside themselves.

A businessman from Central Anatolia says the following about Mehmet Metiner; an Islamist intellectual who has received much public attention lately:

"Take Mehmet Metiner for instance. He's someone I knew during my university years. I had been with him at the Girişim magazine a few times. The last time I saw him, Hüsnü Aktaş had written an article in the Vahdet magazine. Take one sentence, remove the preceding and succeeding ones, and you are led to believe that Hüsnü Aktaş had changed his mind. That sentence says, 'we can act within the democratic struggle'. What he actually means is that, 'If such and such conditions are achieved in Turkey, then we can act within the democratic struggle'. Which also means, 'since these conditions are not achieved yet, we must stay away from democracy'. Someone in the office that day said, 'Hüsnü Aktaş also says we can struggle within democracy'. Metiner, without even glancing at the article itself, waxed eloquent about Hüsnü Aktaş. It was 1989, or perhaps '88. See what he says now. I was very disturbed. He should have just kept silent. How can one change so much? He says they have realized that an Islamic administration is not possible."

A small business owner from Konya, who is a sympathizer of Iran, says the following about Ahmet Hakan, the former anchorman of Kanal 7 television, and a columnist in the Sabah newspaper at the time of the interview:

"I turned away from Kanal 7 because of this Ahmet Hakan. What kind of a change is that? His style in his column in Sabah was repulsive. What was repulsive was how he always put himself in the middle of things: I did this, I went there, I read that, just me, me, me all the way."

Notwithstanding the above, the divergence between inner and outer life sometimes takes on the appearance of a rupture. The management of this distance becomes a problem in the daily flow of life, and the links that form themselves between the intimate sphere and the outside world or with the modern sphere incorporate certain elements of change. One of the main links between the two spheres in middle-class metropolitan families is the child. The link established by the child does not owe solely to educational institutions. What is important is the manifestation of the parent's protection and expectations of the future. This motive stands for a stretch of tradition in the intimate sphere or the relations between child and parent.

Although critical of girls uncovering for education, an upper-class businessman from Central Anatolia, nevertheless expresses the following wishes:

"I'd love it if one of my kids became an artist. One of them could be at the intersection of art and technology; architecture, for instance. My eldest daughter wants to be an architect. If she views architecture not just as a job but an intersection of art and technology, I would be very happy. I'd also be happy if they choose to marry the person they love, and get on well with their in-laws. In short, they should make their own, correct choices."

Even for an illegitimate *imam* in a village of Mardin, the child serves as the gateway to change, one way or another:

"In order to be happy, girls should marry a person who they love, and should even choose whom to marry. Children don't have to stick with and adopt every tradition. Traditions have many elements incongruous with the religion or the present day. For example, the father's brother must also consent to the girl's marriage. That's a wrong tradition."

Another noteworthy development is the adaptation of tradition to the time in terms of both utility and value, and the imminent collapse of certain rigid patriarchal structures in relations within the private sphere of the rigid core.

THE AXIS OF SECULARISM: BETWEEN FRAGMENTATION AND FORMATION OF BLOCS

The difficulty in defining the secular segment makes its analysis problematic in comparison to the Islamic segment. The sociological validity of the expression, “*secular segment*”, is limited. The “*secular segment*” adopted and created in line with the requirements of the study does not have a “*sociological pattern*” that is distinctive in definition or that emphasises common points. Contrary to the Islamic segment and identity, there is no sociological organization of its constituent elements and criteria, and secularity does not become the fulcrum that directs or leverages the economic, social, political, cultural habitats, or even the relations between these habitats. In other words, contrary to “*Islam*”, secularity is not an adhesive between or qualifier of groups. Secularity, or the relation between secularity and the social/political identity, refers to only one element among the many modern institutional, structural and civil products that define the social center.

As such, secularism is more a determiner of “*political and cultural attitude*”, and the primary attribute that defines the secular segment (with the exception of certain groups that adopt secularism as a fundamental element of their forms political identity) cannot surpass a “*common attitude*” at given times and under given circumstances. Even so, it must be noted that the secular attitude means more a conjectural politicization and a reactive structure than a predilection for order. In this study, the secular segment, in terms of its existence and its emergence as a key actor does not follow a natural progression, but an attitude and organization that reinforces itself over the “*other*” or “*non-secular*”.

With regard to the limitations above, the analysis of the secular segment or attitude will be made over the “*constituent elements and instruments of the other*” such as the believer, the Islamist, Islamic policy, and attitude towards religion. The changes occurring in the segment that defines itself as “*rigid secular*” have been observed within this framework, and the mentality issues concerning the relation between secular disposition and change have been investigated. Especially mentality has been investigated both in relation to secularity and identity, and in relation to perceptions of religion and modernity standpoints.

The initial finding about the secular segment is that, similar to the Islamic segment, there are two strong currents, one that “*changes*” and one that “*resists*”. Since the electoral victory of the Refah Partisi (*Welfare Party*) in 1994, the “secular segment” has been undergoing an evolution and differentiation, and has been exposed to the

consequences of the political experience process over the decade. This process of change has nurtured the *“democratic and tolerant attitude”* as well as the *“the inclination to ossify and radicalize beliefs”*.

Similar to the Islamic segment, the inclination towards change is dominant here.

Flexible sphere

Change in the flexible sphere is taking place over a sequence of different experiences, in a chaotic manner, with intense ruptures and conflicts. Democratization policies towards the EU are accelerating paradoxes. As such, the various problems of the same political whole are dealt with by variable, arbitrary and conjectural explanations, and criss-crossing between the *“desire to change”*; the *“pressure of identity”*, *“accepting the different”* and *“worrying about the different”*. The criss-crossing shows that this sphere is in a process of change that affects its attitude towards the believer as well as towards itself.

Rigid sphere

The rigid sphere responds to developments, the political experience and the climate of change by *“hardening”*. The rupture and conflict in the face of change in this sphere accelerate the production of an integrated, protective and nationalistic political project that exceeds the limits of secular attitude. In this context, with regard to political mentality, associating the protection of secularism with the preservation of the nation-state and the centralist tradition becomes the most important element that feeds the wave of authoritarianism

I. THE RIGID SPHERE: FORMING OF BLOCS OR HOMOGENIZATION

The secular rigid sphere does not view secularism as merely principles and problems relating to secularism, or the Islamic identity as only a tangible threat or a *“heretic politicization”* that must be fought. Although central to the attitude and reactions of the secular segment, the principle of secularism and the perception of threat only serve as a symbolic leverage. In other words, this sphere locks social and political perception in the secular reflex, and all elements of public life are morphed into instruments of a secularism-centered integral political identity and political project.

As such, the secular attitude expresses a series of political actions geared towards both *“preserving”* and *“reestablishing”* the ideal republican social order. These actions are based on the view that *“every new input on the social, political and economic scale is an element that may put a dent in the ideal order, and especially the secular structure”*. The political action takes the form of systematic suspicion towards waves of change, and a *“continuous mobilization”*. Consequently, this sphere does not remain an apparatus of defence or attack or a *“politicised instrument of regulation”* against the Islamic identity and the Islamic segment. It also takes on a *“political identity-forming function”*. This political identity becomes effective through the removal of the natural separators between political, social and cultural spheres, and the *“homogenization of the political and social spheres, perceptions and actions”*.

This may be defined as a *“forming of blocs”*.

“Forming of blocs” may further be explained the reaccumulation of various and scattered elements belonging to the social or public life, or even differentiated individual or group interests around a specific political goal, and the envisioning of these as elements that define and explain each other under a hierarchical roof.

“Forming of blocs” naturally has two stages:

At the first stage, the motive of *“preserving the order”* and *“reconstructing the corrupted”*, stemming from the *“secularity concern”*, expresses total and continuous mobilization against inputs that may deepen this concern, the principle of secularism feeds on such things as *“anti-imperialism”*, *“nationalism”*, *“reactions against foreign intervention”*, *“opposing the EU”*, *“reactions against demilitarization”*, and *“distance to democratization”*, becomes intertwined in them, and evolves into an integral political project as explained above.

At the second stage, the *“ideal secular actor”* is defined as someone partaking in a continuous mobilization, and adhering to common perception and behavior codes ranging from areas of culture to consumption. The definition also evokes an image of

a person who is symbolically congruous with the political project and turned into a “*social model*”. This framework creates a whole with elements like “*ideal woman, ideal body, ideal lifestyle, ideal regime*”.

This sharp political belonging reinforces the totalitarian ideological system in which the outside world is perceived, and creates one of the important sources of neo-nationalism. From this perspective, the totalitarian perception is adorned with phobias of domestic and foreign intervention to the concept of independence, while Kemalism is defined as a semi-sacred reference both constituent and protecting, and a political project.

This totalitarian system will not only keep the present day under control with utilitarian instruments for an ideal future, but also extend utilitarianism towards history with a new attitude. The interpretation of history is reproduced with a “*stagnant and utilitarian history notion*” that is based on the ideas of corruption and threat. In this context, interpretations of Republican history grow tense and authoritarian.

Fortified mentality-wise with nationalism, the secular disposition locks in the social within the state sphere. Legitimacy of politics is conditional of state control. It views true democracy as an imaginary situation and regards conflict as the will of the people and as something natural and unavoidable on the road to the imaginary.

1. THE STRUCTURE OF MENTALITY

The mentality regarding the perception of religion and modernity in the rigid secular segment is founded on three intertwined and complementary pillars.

The first is the symbolic perception of modernity or symbolic disorder. The second is the “*religion-dogma*” equation that activates distrust and suspicion of religion and the religious, and the third is the lack or deficiency of social conception.

A. SYMBOLIC DISORDER

The secular attitude conceives modernity in a purely symbolic manner, reminiscent of a reflex, and constructs modernity on a symbolic relation within and among identities. It will not be wrong to assert that the standardization techniques of modernity are regarded more highly than the content of modernity among the hardcore secular segment.

Actors use the cultural signs and styles of their world as instruments for understanding, perceiving, controlling, and creating proponents or others, evolving

into a symbolic reflex coder and an integral role model. Few elements of content can remain outside this symbolic control in the political or cultural sphere, and the symbolic becomes the required and adequate qualification of belonging, honesty and justice.

The following needs to be noted about the perception of modernity and the relation of religion and modernity in the rigid sphere:

The dominant role played by techniques and procedures refers to a pre-modern sense of belonging, and refer to a monofocal concentration in the political and cultural perceptions. Political behaviors arise within the framework of this monofocal concentration, and the determining quality of the symbolic produces a structure that affirms itself within polarization. As such, political and class-based attitudes are mostly shaped by symbolic elements or class affinities founded on symbolism. In truth, the meaning conferred to the symbol by the rigid sphere is of a quality and intensity that competes with the Islamic segment.

It is possible to make the following evaluation:

The direct proportion established by the secular mentality between Islam and the symbol is closely related to its own identity structure. The perception of the “*other*” or the Islamic segment occurs via the transfer of the actor’s own structure to the “*other*” or the Islamic segment.

This is a symbolic disorder and it is based on a concrete foundation. The dominance of techniques and procedures meets a political need, and creates a cultural, and even economic monopoly over secularity. Entry and exit is subject to “*symbolic appropriateness criteria*”, and the Islamic identity is kept outside the political and public life through this symbolic control. The creation of a cultural monopoly through secularity is both a show of power and defiance, and an encompassing political situation that extends to defining the religion and the religious.

The following examples of symbolic disorder discovered in the field are interesting:

“I think Tayyip Erdoğan is a liar. Okay, change is a good thing. If I could believe that this change was genuine, I would congratulate him personally. I need something more to believe this. For example I would believe Mr Erdoğan if he said, ‘I was very wrong, I don’t know religion very well; religion and politics actually don’t mix. I will show this by uncovering my wife’s head; see, her religion is not dependent on her attire. See, she is dressed like a modern Turkish woman.’ If he would say, ‘I support my words and this is not the way to enter government protocol,’ then maybe I could believe in some things he says. But

only if his wife's head is uncovered. Even if he did, do so I would wonder, what is in it for him?"⁴⁴

"I am proud of May 19th, I am excited to hang a flag on national days. Of course, it has to do with my love for Atatürk. The way he dedicated April 23rd to children and May 19th to the youth, the way he started the independence movement on May 19th... I may describe my excitement, but I cannot explain it. I was always moved by the activities on May 19th. This year I wasn't. Did you see any eagerness in the children? I watched the ceremony in Ankara, the one in Istanbul. I watched the movements of the children. In the military, our commander would say, 'You're walking like Indian soldiers'. Just the same with these children. No liveliness. Nothing like the old days. I think they were more active during the three-party coalition. When I was at the Haydarpaşa High School, no such thing could have happened on May 19th. We were full of enthusiasm. They have numbed the kids." ⁴⁵

B. RELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGION AND DOGMA

Another distinguishing attribute of the rigid secular reflex is the implicit or explicit direct proportion between religion and dogma. The relation between religion and dogma claims that religion symbolizes a patriarchal structure, and is at the opposite pole of progress. This attitude surrounds not only the religious actor, but also religion itself.

The perception of religion rests on three pillars.

On the one hand, the perception of religion is based on a practice of *"temporalization-materialization"*. It is regarded more as a relation between the society and politics than a relation between the individual and faith. Religion is perceived as an unequal and hierarchical structure in legal provisions and definitions, especially concerning genders. For example, the head covering is generally explained as a garment donned with force, with the pressure of tradition and under orders of the man.

On the other hand, religion is accepted with its distant function, as the constituent and *"tamed"* element of national unity and integrity. In other words, religion is not only accepted but cherished by the rigid secular mentality insofar as it serves a transcendent purpose with regard to politics and the state, emphasises social difference against the outside world, and reinforces integrity. The secular segment regards the religion issue as *"religion becoming too religious"* and as the conversion of religion to *"a cultural*

⁴⁴ An upper-middle class woman from Istanbul, employed in the private sector

⁴⁵ A retired teacher from Istanbul

and individual behavior code". As part of the monopolistic political situation indicated above, political treatment of religion and the determination of religious codes by a central and progressive structure come into force.

The third pillar is closely related to the problem of *"religion becoming too religious"*. Religiosity and becoming religious are strewn with tight references for the secular segment, and is discussed not only with religious symbols, but also with cultural and social symbols. For the rigid secular segment, religious symbols represent backwardness and reactionary elements, as well as ignorance, the periphery, and being undeveloped. Religion, periphery, peasantry and ignorance are intertwined and the religious movement is regarded as a threat to the center posed by periphery and peasantry with a patriarchal essence. As such, the covered or bearded believers, or even those who have managed to infiltrate the modern sphere with their appearance and means, are defined with terms like 'clog-wearers' and 'white-socks', and are regarded as members of the lower class who have not modernized. The extreme rationalization of religious symbols like beards and head coverings into issues of *"hygiene"* is a typical example of this attitude. It points out the perception that society is a sterile operating theatre, and modernization is a social and cultural sterilization of symbols.

"First of all, the turban is an ugly thing. They shouldn't be allowed in universities with the turban. They shouldn't become judges or doctors with that either. I don't want to see a covered judge in court. Moreover, how is a doctor expected to treat patients with all those bacteria spawning in the turban? The beard, for instance, is filthy."

The above words of the wife of a retired general is a typical example of the commonly expressed and shared hygienic approach.

The relation between religion and dogma can be said to be expressed with the following opinions in the rigid secular segment:

"Religion is a superstructural institution. It's a culture. I visited the Soviet Union out of curiosity. I was wondering what type of a regime it was that we would even die for. I was very satisfied. It of course depends on how you look at it. Religion in backward societies is a guise, if you don't educate people. Take the guest workers in Germany. They went to Germany without seeing Ankara in their lives. They fell right in the middle of religious orders there. All because religion is not modern. It regresses in a modern system." ⁴⁶

46 A contractor from Ankara

“Religion has lost its function. If Mohammad lived, he wouldn’t approve of these. Can religion be a criterion in these times? What do ethics have to do with religion? Many people not affiliated with any religion are perfectly ethical people. I know a lot of people like this. It would be much better if people made investments instead of building mosques. When I was working in the East, I saw that there were 12 mosques in a tiny and poor town.”⁴⁷

C. LACK OF A VISION OF SOCIETY

One of the common denominators of the rigid secular segment is the “*stagnant history and society*” perception. This perception takes the year 1923 as the starting point, sublimates the period between 1923 and 1950 implicitly or explicitly, and regards the post-1950 era as a time of corruption or counterrevolution. Based on an idea of cultural separation from the Ottoman state with particular emphasis on the period between 1923 and 1950, this historical reading arises to create a political identity and to code identities and behavior. This function refers to a mentality sphere that establishes its expectations of the future on the near ideological past over the contrast between “*ideal times and times of corruption*”.

The perception of a stagnant history and society are congruous with the previously referred concept of “*historylessness*” by Şükrü Hanioglu. The following determinations of Hanioglu are significant:

“ (...) With a long experience of historylessness, Turkey is one of the societies where this thesis is defended most ardently. Interestingly, this thesis, asserted with subconscious reflexes today, is actually in full harmony with the approach of the Turkish people to history since nation-building times. (...) Adorned with science and objective truth and blessed with the lack of alternatives, this history, in order to prevent it from raising problem today, has been restructured from the standpoint of the current reality, details that do not conform to this structure have been purged, and it has been made perfect. This approach (...) makes it a part of the current ideology, but in truth, has condemned our society to historylessness. Before understanding this, it is extremely difficult to analyse some ideas in society. For instance, the fact that many intellectuals in Turkey liken themselves to Turkish National Resistance soldiers, and, believe the Independence War still ensues, does not stem from social hysteria, but the idea of historylessness. This makes history a part of the present, and, when necessary, the present a part of history, leading to the evaluation of an economic privatization effort with the circumstances of the year 1919. The internalization of this mentality and the adoption of it almost as a reflex exacerbate the problem and make it difficult to overcome.”⁴⁸

⁴⁷ The wife of a retired general

⁴⁸ Hanioglu, Şükrü, “Is Historylessness a Solution?” *Zaman* Newspaper. Commentaries Section. June 21, 2005

This “*subjectivity*” in the vision of history is completed and made meaningful with a “*disorder*” of the vision of society. As such, the notion of a society comprised of diverse demands, identities and actors is actively refused by this segment. What replaces this is the notion of a singular society that is the sum of a modernist-progressive system based on “*homogeneous man*” and “*isolated individual*”, and identical individuals.

The perception of differences arises within this frame. Parts of society such as the individual, group, segment and class are defined insofar as allowed by the “*rational and homogeneous man*” model, and with elements that recreate this model. For example, different cultural elements and strata of the society are regarded as patriarchal remnants that must be purged, while social diversification is handled with cumulative data like education, income and gender; accepted as constituent and reinforcing elements of the “*homogeneous man and ideal society model*”.

The main reason this issue points at a lack and a disorder of a vision of society is the fact that the rigid secular segment is in a “*state of confusion*” between the “*desired social structure*” and the “*existing social structure*”. The vision of an ideal society serves a functional purpose, and the existing society is compared to this vision, or at least is expected to act within this vision. Situations to the contrary are regarded as “*irrational developments*” or the “*uprising of patriarchal remnants*”. Clashing with the social structure, certain social demands and inputs of change thought to instigate the undesirable, becomes ordinary. These claims that the society has not fully matured or that the circumstances do not allow for change become instruments and enter circulation within this framework.

What is important here is the fact that these circumstances make politics exclusive. Politics encompasses the social and the cultural, and is placed at the top of the values hierarchy. The rigid secular segment confers an essential founding, purging and controlling function to politics. In other words, it is perceived as a “*combat management model*” that has a task of purging society from “*patriarchal structures and remnants*”, and is regarded as a security enforcer. In terms of practice, politics is a host of utilitarian instruments and procedures that will ensure the production and supervision of the “*correct*”, and the creation of a “*correct authority*”. In this context, the perceptions of “*stagnant history and stagnant society*” refer to the idea of authority, and the legitimacy of the vertical links between the authority and the subjects. Meanwhile, politics evolves into an action of supervising of the state with all kinds of utilitarian instruments affirmed by progressive principles, it substitutes the society, and becomes associated with the state.

2. ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHANGE AND MENTALITY MANIFESTATIONS

The increasing aggressiveness of the rigid secular segment's political attitude is closely related to the change Turkey has been undergoing recently. The process of change and a constant allergy of the Islamic movement has not only accelerated the "*authoritarian and communitarian trend*" of this segment, but has also increased its dose of politicization.

A. VIEW OF THE AK PARTY

The rigid secular segment has an absolute distrust of the AK Party. Any step taken by this party is regarded as insincere and assumed to have an "*alterior motive*". Electoral success and the political programme reinforces the belief that this party derives its strength from and is directed by external factors. Democratization policies are regarded in the same manner, claiming that this party does things that they would never do by themselves because Europe forces them to, and the true mission of the party remains hidden. Democratization steps are perceived by placing a distance between the reform and the reformist, which deepens the suspicion of reforms.

An elitist attitude towards the Islamic segment and the AK Party is a common denominator in this segment. Expressing the main link between the secular political identity and the secular actor, this denominator makes symbolic belonging transparent, converts it into a political attitude, and puts it in circulation.

A typical example is the way in which Tayyip Erdoğan is belittled and disparaged and how these criticisms are then translated to the AK Party, as a whole. The insincerity of Erdoğan's body language, thought to represent the periphery, is placed at the center of political statements that point at a threat. Becoming a serious political practice and a widespread discourse, conversion into a subject and disparagement also refer to the symbolic structure and religion-dogma relations within the minds of the rigid secular segment.

The following four excerpts summarize the general attitude towards the AK Party and Tayyip Erdoğan:

"Who is Tayyip Erdoğan? Before saying this, one must ask other things first. Who brought Tayyip Erdoğan to power; why was he brought? These are systematic things. Such scenarios are written at the Pentagon, years ahead. Well not the part about moderate Islam. There is no such thing. They are not moderate. It's clear they have alterior motives. Who is this Tayyip Erdoğan to become a prime minister? A mayor... Of course, it happens everywhere around the world, in

France and all. But I don't think Tayyip Erdoğan is a man of that capacity. He doesn't deserve the office. Abdullah Gül is the same thing (...)

This democratization is another imposition by Europe. They do things they would never do on their own, just because the EU wants them. AK Party makes reforms, but in the way it prefers. They pass laws, Europe rejects, they correct. There was the adultery law in the meanwhile. Turning women into commodities again. We know these people. The extents they would go to, if they could! Those laws will pass because Europe wants them to. I believe the greatest obstacle to democracy in Turkey is the elections law and political parties law. If they are so democratic, let's see them put these right.”⁴⁹

“I have been following Tayyip Erdoğan in the press since his office as a mayor. I wish the prime minister of this country was a more cultured person. I would like him to be an intellectual. This country has raised very valuable people too (...)

I see that the AK Party is trying to bring the caliphate. In its time, Refah was more open about this. Now they are more secretive than ever.

“See these reforms, their purpose is clear. They want the obstacles removed. They want to limit the influence of the army. If we lose the essential values of the republic on the road to democracy, we will lose democracy too. Can a caliphate coexist with democracy?”⁵⁰

“He says he has changed but I'll have none of it. I see a photograph of him at a concert. His body language clearly shows that he's there just because he has to be there. It's clear he gets nothing from that concert. When he's talking, he strives painfully to hide his true self. Especially at that NATO meeting; he was acting fervently all along. I find his body language very insincere. You realize that when you look at his face. I am a teacher. I know how to read the expression on the student's face.”⁵¹

“I see Tayyip Erdoğan as an imam that preaches well. (...) Ignorance and inner-city population is rampant in our country. If you tell them to elect a prime minister, they will go elect Tayyip. AK Party is a threat, but there was the Refah coalition, the time of Şevki Yılmaz. But they would say it out loud; these don't. They wind it up and then pull it back; that's very dangerous. They try to do as they please with the EU as a guise.”⁵²

49 A businessman from Ankara

50 A retired teacher from Ankara

51 A retired female teacher from the *Talim Terbiye* in Ankara

52 A contractor from Istanbul

B. ATTITUDES TOWARDS COVERING AND THE ISLAMIC SEGMENT

Suspicion of the Islamic identity and religion is in an upwards trend in the rigid secular segment. The increase is closely related to political developments and the wave of change. As paradoxical as it may seem, distrust of the Islamic segment rises as the social visibility of this segment increases. As the Islamic segment becomes more integrated into the system, the threat of Islamic rule is reinforced. This not only worsens the lack of a social vision, it also increases the dose of politics in the rigid secular segment's view of itself.

Some actors in this segment view the Islamic threat as a movement coming from within the society, and the headscarf as the natural symbol of this movement. However, this is less a vision of society, and more a situation that contradicts the notion of ideal society and must be eliminated; thus reinforcing the lack of social vision. The majority of actors completely refuse the notion of a movement from within the society. For example, the relation between religion and threat is explained by purely political elements such as political direction and political abuse. Reinforced with the notion of a given and progressive system, the lack of a social vision is thus made absolute. It is typically expressed with the opinion that all female university students who are covered are forced to cover themselves, are deceived, and keep themselves prone to deception.

This common conviction is expressed by a bureaucrat teacher, who has worked at the Ministry of Education in Ankara for a long time, and retired when he had problems with the AK Party administration:

"I don't think the turban has a place in society; it's a symbol. I don't find the reasons people give for covering their heads credible. No one can intervene between God and his subjects. I don't believe those children really want to enter university with their heads covered, either. They are being used. I met many people. They openly say that they are not covered of their own accord. They came to me, met me, spoke of their situation. I want this pressure on girls to end. I am very sorry for them. They fool themselves, thinking that they want to be this way. I know about the Gazi University. Could anything be more unnatural? You enter a classroom, the teacher is covered. When she sees you, she removes it immediately. What kind of a faith is this? If you are a true believer, you shouldn't show even a strand of your hair. I know girls who lost their hair because of the stress their fathers, brothers burdened them with."

A computer operator from Istanbul, who is a retiree of the municipal transportation authority, approaches this "deception" from a different point of view, clarifying the mentality of the rigid secular segment:

"I offer my hand; they pull away theirs. This happened with the daughter of my stepmother's sister. Then I always hated it. Just because you wear a head covering, what is shaking my hand going to do? What can I be thinking when I want to shake your hand? Am I going to rape you in a couple of seconds? I feel an allergy when I see a covered woman. They are all deceived. People give out things, aid them. Let me tell you something: There's this Perpa market across the street. There was a cashier girl, who was open and modern in the beginning. Then she covered her head when she got engaged. And when she got married, she was wearing the full turban. I just saw her a few days ago, no ring, no turban."

The rigid secular sphere actively opposes the visibility of head coverings not only in universities and in the public sphere, but also in the social sphere giving reasons like deception and ignorance as emphasised above. At this point, it is possible to say that the secularism-centered political perception and the religious perception of the rigid secular segment constitute a whole, and the "Islamic movement" is seen as the symbol and actor of the reactionary and patriarchal system.

The following harsh attitude and allergic view of a 40-year-old woman from Istanbul, employed in the private sector, can be generalized across this segment:

"I am completely opposed to the use of the turban anywhere, anyhow. I know they are not sincere. That's why I'm against it. They seized control of universities. They took over YÖK, the state... Let me ask you then: Should a lawyer enter the courtroom covered? It's not going to end there. Then they will want to wear the chador. There is no end to this. Now, if Islamists were to openly rise to power, we would have a civil war."

The reactions of a businessman from Ankara, who is also a member of a central-left party, represents a harsh and tense group:

"How can they enter the Middle East Technical University (Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, ODTÜ) or Istanbul Technical University (İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi, İTÜ) with a turban? What are they doing there? You are ashamed. You reflect back on yourself. How did these arise, you ask. A friend of mine told this. They were sitting in a café in Hamburg. A Koran school was out. Over 200 covered monstrosities. Everyone looks at them and laughs. Now this is not modern at all. Not modern, not anything. (...) Take a look at the turban ban. When did it come up? With religious schools. Who supported the religious schools? Erbakan in the past, AK Party today. Why? They want to raise their future generations."

The belief that young women are covering themselves by force causes the ban on covering to be perceived not only as a requirement, but a virtue. Behind this perception lies the tendency to *"make the political exclusive"* and to see politics

within the country as merely a struggle for power. This over-politicization leads to claims that the prohibitions recommended and defended to protect the society from Islamic and patriarchal reactionary movements are not simply a series of rules, but also “*emancipating*” instruments.

For example, the provisions on dress codes in universities are viewed as a “*modern instrument*” that serves purposes of “*protection, emancipation, transformation*”. Within this frame arises the perception that bans are mechanisms to compensate for ignorance and deception, for bringing people closer to the notion of an ideal society, for standardization and modernization. In summary, prohibition is a democratic instrument of discipline for both the individual and the Islamic approach. To this extent, the use of wigs in the public sphere is viewed as a resistance action that overcomes prohibition, and also an opportunity for “deceived youth” to question themselves.

A middle-aged teacher emphasises the functions as follows:

“Every step of the Islamist is tactical and premeditated. They may appear democratic sometimes; but one should not be fooled because they are ‘Islamists at heart’. Because of the ban, they now wear wigs to classes. See, that’s another act of subversion. But maybe those who wear wigs may start to question this, realize how meaningless it is, and uncover their heads. Prohibitions and rules may sometimes work this way.”

The following words of a participant, who is a retired teacher and currently employed in the private sector, and who has made the defence of secularity the center of her political and social life, also point at a common opinion:

“Additional measures are required for preserving secularity. People shouldn’t waltz through the middle of Istanbul wearing kneesocks. I’m from Mersin, but I didn’t bring my baggy trousers when I moved here. If you don’t put up bans, these will slowly attract followers, and then, when one day when you do put up a ban, no one will listen. If they want to attend school so much, they could just uncover their heads. Now if any of them are truly sincere, I think they should wear wigs. That will solve their problems. And discipline them. They may see that they were wrong, and uncover their heads, become free.”

Seen as a crucial instrument of Islamic policy, the concept of subversion also serves an introverted purpose in the rigid secular sphere, comprising a building block of the political attitude.

From this perspective, it can be said that the concept of subversion has two functions; one sociological and one political. “*The sociological function*” is to ensure the

existence of an enemy, removing the enemy's camouflage and facing it head-on, and refusing the idea that the Islamic segment may undergo changes within itself. As such, it evolves into a political adhesive of the secular segment; in other words, it feeds less on the behavior of the *"other"*, and more on the notion of change and threat to this segment.

As such, the concept of subversion also protects the reasons for politicization over secularism with its *"political function"*. There is a direct link between this politicization and the ongoing pursuit of the Islamic segment. The process of change in the Islamic segment, defined as subversion, is perceived as an *"instrument"* that weakens the active secular attitude and neutralizes instruments for struggle. For example, the use of wigs, the fact that covered young girls can have boyfriends, wear jeans, shake hands, indulge in politics with a contemporary appearance and language are met with reaction, and are interpreted as efforts to stifle the regulatory and supervisory means of secularism.

A businesswoman from Istanbul expresses clear and common opinions:

"I'm bothered by those that wear purple scarves, tight trousers and glossy lipstick. They are insincere. They hide themselves, they put on a makeshift moderate appearance. Just like the makeshift secularism of AK Party. I hate women wearing the black chador. I am a secular, Kemalist person. But they should wear the black chador so I can counteract accordingly. They are now trying their hand at subversion. That is why the army is sensitive. How can you steal from the working hours of public offices for prayer? But the truth behind the prayer is different; it's subversion too. We think we're living in a secular, democratic country. But they organize very well."

Despite this *"homogeneous political attitude"*, the issue of religion and the devout causes a rupture of political values in the leftist sphere of the rigid secular segment. This rupture occurs at the confrontation of human rights with identities. The driving force of which is the contrast between the Kurdish identity and the Islamic identity.

A 50-year-old, self employed person, who has started off with the radical left and settled to social democracy, and who pursues active politics explains the rupture:

"We can't treat covering of women like we treat the Kurdish issue. Kurds claim they struggle for freedom. Do they or don't they? That's something else. But the Islamist is entirely different. One is within fundamental human rights. There are some who treat covering as a fundamental human right too. But not for me. It's a political stance. You may call it a double standard; well, it is, because it suits me. The Kurdish issue will not take us back. It will bring us closer to modern civilization. But the other one is stuck in the darkness of the Middle Ages. I

oppose it outright. What has this got to do with democracy and freedom? We must turn towards the West, to modernism, science. Which of these can be found in the headscarf?"

As seen above, the Islamic visibility creates a *"reverse change pressure"* for the rigid secular sphere, moving the pillars of the mentality to an inflexible level that is more superficial than it seems.

C. COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND SUBSTITUTION AUTHORITARIANISM

Secularity in the rigid secular segment not only composes the fulcrum of the political perception, but also becomes the fundamental political instrument of social organization. Getting organized and seeking power with an impetus to unite against threat deepens the mentality towards the relation of politics, the state and the society at two points:

1. The goal of organizing against the Islamic threat demands that non-aligned social elements move together like a society or a totalized structure. The inherent distance between the non-aligned elements and the quest for a totalized structure results in an *"authoritarianism that deepens with both its properties and intents"*. The political inevitability of the expectation to unite and organize is the carrier of the community-building process of the rigid secular segment. In this context, the political and social spheres are not only regarded as areas where individuals must exist in sociological homogeneity, but also as an arena of mobilization where they must be politically monolithic. The individual and individual differences are considered within the private sphere and the relationship between the individual, freedom and plurality is indirectly squeezed into this point.

This development is the excessively emphasised and politicised version of the dichotomy inherited by *"Turkish modernity"* from the patriarchal identity system, or the inner and outer sphere duality. From this perspective, a follower or adversary is defined as *"being sincere and from within"*, and within *"a fundamental framework geared towards understanding intents and belonging"*. The steps of individuals are assessed in terms of *"benefit to the belonged"*, and spur negative and positive sanction mechanisms. The individual is expected to personally initiate a mechanism of rationalization that targets the individual over the *"judgement of the other"*.

The act of congregating is exemplified in the words of a retired teacher and a labour union representative:

"The republic is endangered right now. Many people should think like this. That's why we say that leftists, progressionists, democrats should come together.

Now, if Islamists were to openly rise to power, we would have a civil war. Or not, and we'd become another Iran. If we rise to power, if the socialists are elected to the office, are they going to let everything pass? We cannot (...).

Organising is very important. One should raise himself accordingly, obtain information accordingly. For example, some people I believed to be honest in the past have become sycophants. Take Savaş Ay, Fatih Altaylı... I no longer read these. We used to buy Milliyet but not anymore. Hasan Cemal was one whom I liked to read, but I've left him. Because of the Cyprus issue. Derviş has something in mind about letting covered people into universities. I'm against that."

Another point where the mentality regarding the relation of politics and the state deepens and becomes manifest can be defined as "*substitution authoritarianism*".

Substitution authoritarianism is the legitimization of non-democratic mechanisms in order to protect the given lifestyle and the imaginary society. This brings legitimacy to the actions of institutions like the Turkish Armed Forces, which have evolved as substitutes to all forms of social organization.

This situation is explained with its rationale by a contractor from Ankara:

"The correct thing to do is to undertake ideological struggle against those people. But you can't. You don't have the power, and risk losing what power you have. Certain things were not easy to obtain in this country. People like us bore the cost of the struggle for democracy. But now you can't go to the public; cannot organize: you have no money, nothing. But a certain segment has been organising very well for 20 years. And now they are in power. If you let them, they will do very different things. This is not their intent. They are taking small steps towards a direction. Very insidiously. They are changing everything slowly. I think even the republic is in danger. Of course there is the other approach; let everything come to the worst, take up action later. I'm against that; it will cost us again, it will cost the people. The army will intervene on our behalf. What else can we do? The army is the guard of the Atatürk revolution."

Another statement comes from a retired public servant who is a member of a Kemalist political party:

"Now the army's job is not to run the state or interfere with politics. But Turkey is different; it has special conditions. Take February 28th. If there was a democratic system, we could have acted against that mentality. But the covering of women is a very special issue. One of the recommendations the army made through the National Security Council, one that must be enforced. I know one thing: prohibition does not cease things from existing. They threw us in jail, too. But they couldn't take away our minds. We should have talked to those people, enlightened them. We couldn't do this. This is where we are short. We lost, in all honesty. What is to be done? If there was a referendum and the wearing of the turban was allowed, I would of course not want the result to be implemented, I would support the army."

The authoritarianism is not immune to rupture.

In the rigid secular segment, especially among social democrats, there is a general disposition against the intervention of armed forces in politics, a remembrance of the September 12th coup. However, the same segment supports and even demands the intervention of the army in the political movement when there is a threat. The distance between adopting the army as a substitute force and opposing the intervention of the army in principle results in a dual defeat psychology: defeat against the Islamic movement, and defeat against one's own principles. Affirmation of authoritarianism is nothing more than the effort to compensate for the rupture caused by this dual defeat.

Another important issue in substitution authoritarianism is the activation of a new politicization and standardization towards the past in terms of the role and significance of the military authority. With the exception of the September 12th intervention, which is assumed to have damaged secularity, the supervisory function of the army is viewed in a positive light, placed at the center of assessing not only the present day but also the past and the future, and encourages authoritarianism over utilitarianism. In this context, military interventions are classified as “adding to secularity” and “*taking from secularity*”. Given the absolute faith in the Turkish Armed Forces, almost all interventions are regarded as rightful. The actual and symbolic place of “February 28th” in the “*active secular attitude*” and the expansion of the classifying tendency is quite determining.

A labour union representative from Ankara expresses the manifest and accepted closeness between military authority and the rigid secular segment as follows:

“If the citizens and NGOs of Turkey do what they are supposed to do, the army will not become the symbol of secularity. While the army may claim this, it may have its own shortcomings. If the citizens had shown the appropriate reaction on February 28th, the army wouldn't have stood out so much. February 28th wasn't a coup like the others. They didn't change the constitution or institutions. They just prevented rolling backwards from the attained level. The army did the right thing. Refah had 20% of the votes at that time. Democracy doesn't mean that 20% can do whatever they want. Institutions are needed for the healthy function of democracy. Just because a party has gotten the majority of votes doesn't mean it can interfere with the democratic function of the state. Menderes had said, ‘You can bring the caliphate if you want to.’ Now should they be able to bring the caliphate just because they got many votes?”

An example of a classifying approach comes from a woman of upper cultural level:

“Some coups are made for the right reasons. May 27th was also a coup, but it brought the most libertarian constitution to the country. But then, March 12th and September 12th both terminated freedom and fuelled the religious movement.

The people involved with May 27th were the most sensitive about secularity. And they provided a libertarian environment.”

A common explanation comes with the following words from a TV serviceman in Istanbul:

“I opposed March 12th, I supported February 28th. Just like that. You know how the tanks marched across Sincan on February 28th... I liked that. We were involved in March 12th, we were hit hard. I was against the coup in '80 too. The reason I supported February 28th was because it was against a movement that opposed secularity. That's why I supported it and was not at all disturbed because the military intervened. The coup in '80 did away with the left anyway. It was the same army on February 28th, but I liked the fact that they were hit too. Considering present conditions, I am not disturbed by the army's role in politics. It is important they have a part in politics so that secularity doesn't slip out of hand. This may not be a leftist opinion. I do oppose frequent intervention by the military, but when the time comes... The other day, Yalman and the Chief of General Staff spoke about the YÖK and the religious schools... They were proper interventions. I do support these interventions. The Islamist crowd says that the intervention of the military is intervention in the electoral box. It's not for nothing that Atatürk said the rulers of the nation may sometimes be in negligence or perversion. It's for proper intervention under such circumstances. I think the mentality of the army has changed. In terms of secularity, modernity... This did not exist 20-30 years ago.”

The conclusion may be summarized as follows: The authoritarianism tendency results in the reduction of “*individuality*” of actors in both ways, and point at a tendency of individuals to gather and singularise their “*interests and benefits*” under one roof.

D. CHANGE-EU-DEMOCRATIZATION

The secularity-centered political perception has become intertwined with the drive of preserving the ideal social system. This nurtures the association between nation-state and secularity in political attitudes, causes the notion of state to triumph over politics, and gains meaning within an introverted, nationalistic general structure.

In this context, the notion of a “*republican progressive society*” is reequipped with elements like secularity, anti-imperialism, independence, fear of outside intervention, and active opposition of the EU. The importance attached to the notion of “*protective democracy*” by secularity, the assumption that Turkey is under special circumstances, and that it is not ready for democracy or change, result in a detachment of elections and political will within the neo-nationalistic movement. This forms the driving force to substitute political mechanisms with non-political elements.

The following two excerpts, one from a politician and one from a formerly leftist public servant give an idea about the underlying mentality:

“The state is something different. The state must continue to work properly, whoever is in power. But in Turkey, people run it as they wish. The administration runs the state. It should, but it should also leave its ideology at the gate. This is what we mean by democratic institutionalization. It will take a long time in Turkey. There are imams at The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (*Türkiye Bilimsel ve Teknolojik Araştırma Kurumu*, TÜBİTAK). What's the connection? The state should be something else.”

“I was a student between '68 and '72 - just at the time of Deniz Gezmiş. I was a leftist, but I also was Kemalist at all times. I was a member of the Memur-Sen back then. They slit the tires of buses. Our own buses; I was working at the municipal bus service. I criticised all my friends; I said, you cannot slit the tires of the state; they are bought with our taxes. They came to my office. We're not working today, Hüseyin, they said. No, I worked that day. (...)

When Atatürk was forming his revolution, it has been said, many people were killed, there was violence, but all this was done to achieve certain gains; it had to be done. What does Kemalism mean? First off; independence; prevent imperialism from overrunning the country. That's what Atatürk says, he says independence is my character. We're not independent today; we're dependent all around. Atatürk had foreseen the Greater Middle East in the 1920s, said a lot of things. It is being implemented today.”

Another interesting finding of the study was the fact that the rigid secular segment is the most reactive against missionary activities despite their distance to religion and the religious. This has to do with the totalitarian political project perception and the distant function of religion in the secular mentality. Missionary activities are regarded as an instrument of combined outside intervention and a threat to the unity of the country, and it is at this point that the idea of unity becomes intertwined with religion, which is regarded as a tame and protective part of the social structure.

The meaning of missionary activities for this segment is concisely given in the following words of a retired teacher from Mersin:

“I think missionary activities are a serious threat. They come from Germany and all. Missionaries and all, they are everywhere. Why aren't they banned? What business can a missionary have in a small village in the Southeast? It's not for nothing they go there. They want to stir up the country further. For example, they can't go to Gülnar in Mersin. Why? Because Gülnar is pure Turk. Like me. I mean, nomadic Turcoman. What I'm trying to say is... They go to the East or the Black Sea. To areas where they can stir things up. They don't go places where Turks live. I've read the books of Hablemitoğlu and all...”

The same mistrust is displayed on questions of democratization and the view of the EU. The rigid secular segment claims that the Turkish economy is not ready for the EU, the country will become a colony under these circumstances, and ultimately lose its independence.

The following three excerpts illustrate the range and common denominator of these ideas:

“First of all, Turkey is much behind the EU in terms of economy. Now, as if it was a precondition, the social state, already too weak, is being eliminated altogether. But it’s just the opposite in EU countries. When there is such a large difference, we’ll be crushed. Fair competition conditions do not exist. If we enter the union without reaching a certain economic level, we’ll become their colony. That’s why I oppose the EU. On the other hand, I do want the EU standards in law and politics to be implemented here.”⁵³

“I’m against the EU. I oppose it, because liberty and independence are important to me. It’s one big deception that the EU will bring liberty. Atatürk has said it; there are many ways to liberty. We will be free if we take those. I just read yesterday; EU, liberty and all that; it’s for undermining secularity. It’s the alliance of the EU, USA and enemies within. Just like I thought.”⁵⁴

“No, I don’t want to. I see the EU as a Christian union. A better social structure, welfare, all that, it counts for them. Not for us. I am offended at being scorned so much. All these negotiations, and Chirac still says, ‘If that doesn’t work out, we could work on a special status’. Those deceived by this are still not aware.”⁵⁵

The fear of colonization and separation contradicts some values of the rigid secular mentality. In this context, the rupture between the desire to become Westernized and the concern based on the worry that the “*West will not treat us equally*” becomes manifest. The attempt to compensate for this rupture results in an ideological aggressiveness with emphasis on independence.

53 A bureaucrat from Ankara

54 A retiree of the municipal transportation authority

55 A housewife from Istanbul

II. THE FLEXIBLE SPHERE OF THE SECULAR SEGMENT: CHANGE THROUGH COMPARTMENTALIZATION

Political and social developments from the early 1990s and onwards (waves of change, the democratization process, phases of the Islamic political control from the Erbakan era to the Erdoğan era, and the direct and indirect experiences and interactions existing within an environment of conflict) have left traces on the secular segment. In addition to inherent ups and downs, these traces manifest themselves through a series of actual and structural ruptures that may be defined as *“compartmentalization in social and political perceptions”*.

Compartmentalization means the production of attitudes and affirmations, which may be variable and even contradictory at times, for political, social and cultural spheres for perceiving them in fragments both among and between such spheres.

The series of ruptures or compartmentalizations, although not obscuring the *“secular attitude”*, have led to important changes in perception and assessment. With certain inputs like the idea of *“freedom for culture and freedom as a part of culture”*, these changes have affected some building blocks of the dominant political mentality of the secular segment. The perception that does not regard inner dynamics of the view of politics and society as natural has been considerably shaken during this process.

At the root of the recent rupture lie the following developments: the resilience of the Islamic segment against political pressure, its visibility in the public sphere as it becomes a part of the social experience and ordinary in the short-term memory, the electoral victory of the AK Party, its political actions following the election, and its democratization movement.

These developments have confronted the *“profound distrust of the Islamic segment and actors”*, which disrupted the integrity of the established schemes of explanation that directed political-social perceptions and attitudes, and diminished the “consistency” of reflexes.

What defines *“compartmentalization in social and political perception”* is the loss of consistency.

Compartmentalization has two axes:

One points at a *“state of differentiation”*. The flexible sphere of the secular segment encounters a differentiation of perception, which manifests itself as the disruption of

“political interpretation consistency”, taking attitudes toward discrete focal problems, and openly accepting contradictions that may arise within this frame. The most important aspect and instrument of the change is the *“realization of the different”* by the secular segment.

Meanwhile, the compartmentalization tendency not only produces *“constituent contradictions”* in the worlds of the actors, but also resides on a process of *“multiplication”*. The differentiation of perception in the secular segment results in the separation of humane, social, cultural and political categories among themselves as they correspond to the Islamic segment, and the discrete assessment of all compartments. With regard to the Islamic segment, this produces a structure of the secular segment that is democratic *“in terms of humanity”*, close to accepting the other *“in terms of sociality”*, in direct or indirect contact with the other *“in terms of culture”*, and worrisome or frightened *“in terms of politics”*. This is the situation that points at the separation and multiplication of the secular segment’s own values.

Assuming that the Islamic segment does not want Islamic rule or conflict, but believing that the relation between religion and dogma has an inherent danger...

Feeling a sense of minority on the one hand, and viewing oneself as the natural majority that must make the rules...

Believing that modernity is a libertarian notion that encompasses all lifestyles, including the Islamic, but preserving the modern with prohibitions...

Being enthusiastic about democratization movements, but having deep suspicions of its activists...

Opposing military intervention in principle, but hoping for help from the military...

All these are typical examples of chaotic multiplications as observed in the field.

The existence and activity of Islamic actors in the public sphere, from universities to the workplace, from use of common areas to individual or indirect encounters, from open expression of problems to the visibility of demands, have paved the way to a succession of experiences and interactions. The accumulation of such experiences provokes the chaotic change that follows compartmentalization and rupture.

Feeding on the factor of time and experiences, the rupture incidents are based on the zigzagging of the actor between accepting the *“other”*, which has proved its political power and social roots insofar as it resisted being eliminated, and preserving its own

values. The zigzagging has triggered a withdrawal from the idea and psychology of conflict, and has promoted a desire to reach “*consensus*”. This tendency on its own suffices to illustrate the regression of exclusion and uncompromising attitude in the view of the problem and the other.

1. PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

The movement of the periphery towards the center of the society, and its gaining a place at the center produces sparks, tensions and polarization. However, this also means that periphery and center actors cohabitate. As the dose of cohabitation increases, so does the intensity of conflicts. On the other hand, cohabitation intensifies contact and interactivity. From this perspective, the last decade has witnessed the direct or indirect encounters and experiences of the secular segment with the Islamic segment or its actors.

Direct and individual experiences have been lived over natural and unavoidable political, professional, educational and commercial encounters with the Islamic segment as the mobility of the segment increased. It will not be wrong to say that such experiences constitute an important part of the social memory, or that the social experience feeds on such individual encounters.

It should be noted that what is significant for the study is not the quantitative structure and influence of, and the “*organized structure*” created by, these experiences. The methodology of the study examines the possibility of these experiences to affect the actors qualitatively. As such, the findings of the study are noteworthy in the sense that they reveal the power of these experiences.

The following experience, or more correctly trauma, as described by a female lawyer is one of the most striking accounts of the study. The lawyer who comes from an educated family of public servants, is the first female lawyer to establish an office in Trabzon, and contrary to the traditions of the province, lives alone.

“It began at the end of 2002. We have a 76-year-old colleague here. He filed a complaint against me to the prosecutor because I wore a short skirt. It was based on Article 576. Sexual exhibitionism. The worst thing is, I wasn’t wearing a mini skirt. I was just careless when sitting. I appeared before the prosecutor. (...)”

It happened like this: The prosecutor called me. When he told me there was a complaint, I thought it was some professional thing. I was appalled when I read the letter. I was deeply ashamed. Lewd things were on that paper. I can’t even bring myself to tell them. It was more a problem of morality than attire. I would never allow such an intervention in my personal life, because I’m almost conservatively careful in some matters. I live alone here. You have to abide by

some rules in Trabzon. My self-control was geared towards that. That's why I was deeply offended. After 16 years (...)

This thing lasted 10 months or so. It escalated when the man wrote a declaration and posted it on a wall at the bar. It was filled with awful expressions. Unbelievable insults to women who don't dress according to religious attire. And the Governor of Trabzon forwarded this to all public institutions. Asking if there was anyone who dressed like this. From Rural Services to the State Supplies Office... They filed a complaint about the former president of the bar for gross negligence. It was taken seriously. We testified (...)

After all that I had done, this offended me deeply. I took psychological help for the first time in my life, and this comes from someone who had a lousy childhood. I was given to the foster care of my psychotic aunt. I lived away from my family. I returned when I was 18. I forgot all about that. I forgot about the first 14 years of my life. I was still in peace with myself despite all this. It was very difficult. Perhaps it was an accumulation. I could not bring myself to accept that intervention. It was horrific. I developed panic attacks. I had a colon spasm. It's the rage. Sometimes you feel helpless. There is nothing you can do. Many male colleagues of mine appeared as witnesses. The prosecutor summoned all of them. He asked about the length of my skirt. It still goes to my head. I didn't want to leave home. I didn't go to work for a month and a half (...)

But I was never alone. People who saw me as an older or younger sister, my colleagues supported me more than people who shared my opinions and ideas. There was a huge commotion. I raised hell about this. Sixty colleagues filed a complaint with the Department of Justice (...)

I'm frightened of extremely radical thoughts and religious dogmas about covering of women and religious symbols. I worked at the Association for Supporting Modern Life for a long time. But I'm hurt that they left me alone in this. The support in Trabzon didn't come from the association. Türkan Saylan didn't want to be involved with this. Yet, I had not asked for help about a personal problem. I asked for help against the declaration by the man. I said, we should stand against this as an association. They said they had to obtain approval from headquarters. For some reason, they couldn't. I'm still a member, but I don't attend any activities anymore. (...)

However, I received great support from someplace unexpected: an Islamist lawyer, for instance, and his conservative friends. Maybe they were criticised by their own people. But we became a team. Then, for example, a covered colleague of ours was reported. For a personal issue. We supported her too. We sat in the same room and talked. We realized that we could sit at the same table and think differently. (...)

We have a covered friend, Ayşe. There was an issue with her in the bar, too. She has not been attending hearings herself for years; she sends an uncovered friend. I was deeply moved when Ayşe called me and said, 'Don't worry; we know who you are; we are with you.' To tell you the truth, I think that attending hearings with a head cover is illegal and I don't support that. I don't know whether I would

help her out if she ran into trouble first. But I was moved when she called me up immediately. (...)

I'm ashamed to confess this but I began to put myself in their shoes more after I lived through this. I lived to understand what it means to have someone intervene in your personal life (...)"

Mandatory or unavoidable encounters have also resulted in personal experiences gaining depth and social meaning. As the actors of the periphery move to the center, the network of contacts starts to play an important role, which can be seen in the following experience of a "*Kemalist*" young female public servant working in Kayseri:

"There is a guest worker family in the building I live. Major reactionaries! Their daughter is the head of the National Vision in Germany and all that. I was disturbed when they first moved in. I wished someone else had moved in instead of them. We have adjoining terraces. When they moved in in the summer, I was out in the terrace, wearing tight shorts and all. I wasn't sure about how I should act. The Hajji called over to me one day. He said, we've never met, come on over for a cup of tea. The next day, they said, you may not have time for cooking, and invited me to dinner. That's how our relations developed. Right now, I can trust the keys to my house to a covered nurse. I realized that human relations were more important to me."

The experiences of a female lawyer from Istanbul and a psychologist, who owns a kindergarten in Istanbul and has a markedly secular attitude, fall within the same framework:

"You start to get a feel for what people are as time passes. I see my friends who have voted for the AK Party. For example, the district director of the AK Party is a colleague and a friend of mine. I had attended a Chemists' Ball after the election. I had a very revealing outfit. He was in the lobby with bearded types around him. He got up, came to me. We embraced and kissed. That was a turning point for me. I said to myself, see, he left those shady-looking types and kissed a colleague on the cheek. That's when I said, this man may be an AK Party member, but he's not a bigot. I realized that they were not trying to form camps and look upon us as adversaries. That's when I was a bit more comfortable. Who knows, I may be even more comfortable in a couple of years."

"I'm also a psychodrama trainer. We form training groups. We have some covered friends there too. We have been practicing together for years. Their jobs are interesting too: Most of them have received mentorship training, and they work at municipal health clinics or resting homes. They also receive this training. Psychodrama brings people very close to each other. It's an entirely different thing. I found something out then: these girls were faster than the hippest girls we may have. They live their youth to the full. They live well and fast. I was shocked. When the girl is like this, the father trusts them all the way to the end. Is there anything safer than Islam? The girl hides even her hair from the forbidden; then she must know everything and could go anywhere. The woman

was free because she was covered. That's very important. That's how they lived their youth. Your attitude does change when you see this."

Personal experiences have reined in "*political rage*" and the "*polarization sentiment*". Putting oneself in the shoes of the opposite side, and rediscovering the meaning of interference with personal life are determining factors in these encounters. The totalitarian judgement of identity regarding the "*other*" becomes fragmented and activates a new channel of humane perception. In other words, the subjectivity and deepness of personal experiences have nurtured a pluralist perception of a different social segment. On the one hand, it has caused two different paradigms to confront and contradict each other, creating a heterogenization pressure for the secular identity, and on the other, has caused a conception of the Islamic segment as a heterogenic entity.

2. SOCIAL EXPERIENCES

Social experiences include direct contact as well as indirect contact. Indirect contact consists of rapid and prioritised information flow from various media, the television and newspapers among others, and the opportunity to reevaluate this information with new information that may arrive from time to time.

A. ISLAMIC VISIBILITY

Social experiences have first of all nurtured a change of attitude towards the visibility of the Islamic segment. The visibility of the Islamic identity in all fields except the area of the state is being accepted as a basic right and freedom, and a natural requirement.

A businessman from Istanbul and a female lawyer from Anatolia, of leftist origin, say the following about this tendency:

"As time goes on, one becomes more consensus-oriented. As your experiences increase, you begin to take other experiences more seriously. Just like you don't want interference in your life, you start disapproving of interference in the lives of others. Many of my friends live through this, and there is even a group that has started to say, 'Let them try their best; we'll see what happens.' Those maintaining the February 28th spirit are low in number."

"To express my thoughts honestly, I'm still very strict about coverings and religious symbols. But there's another thing. Just like the Kurdish identity had been denied some time ago, these people exist too. It might be the moderate Islam model of imperialism that brought these, but whatever the case, they are here. Now when I get up in the morning and turn on the TV, I see some Iraqi shot to death, and then I think that I'm very lucky; there's heating in my house, there is a job I can go to. And I no longer want conflict or chaos in my country."

That's why I think we must make peace at one point. This should not remain in theory and we should be doing something in practice. And then comes a moment when I say, 'No, I have values, I must defend these.' Which means I'm in a conflict. But we have to reach consensus."

It should be noted that social experience, which contains a series of indirect elements with respect to the area of personal experience, is more surrounded by elements of political perception and attitude. Therefore, the changes or shifts in this area are more fragmented and fragile, and are placed upon regular ruptures.

The acceptance of the "*other*" by the flexible sphere is not immune to certain concerns and predispositions. The desired consensus is that the Islamic sector will not be visible in the public sphere in general, and the administration, legislation, justice and execution in particular, and that the Islamic segment will accept these limitations..

The tendency to "*view the Islamic identity as natural and equal*" while at the same time "*lock Islamic actors into their traditional spheres*" is a frequently occurring compartmentalization, and arises out of the tension created by the clashing of two paradigms. To the extent that the tendency to change arises out of experiences, the source of the concern arises out of mentality structures and the dominant convictions against the natural politicization inclination of the Islamic segment.

A small business owner from Hatay, who has graduated from *Lycee de Galatasaray*, expresses the common belief in this area:

"I don't trust the AK Party, I don't like the Islamic movement, and I worry about these. But, if we're talking about democracy, that's another thing. I now know that there are sincere people among the ones that cover themselves. We lived and saw this. I want them to represent themselves as they are, and cover their head like that and go to school like that. Let them look like who they are, and not hide themselves. If a party is an Islamic fundamentalist, it should do whatever it takes to be Islamic fundamentalist and those people should be represented in the parliament as they are. But if I am a secular country, there are limits to this. They should not go asking for both this and that. They should live however they want in civilian areas, but if we are a secular country, and we are and I think we should be, one can't enter the parliament or the state covered. If they do accept this, everyone will let out a sigh of relief. I don't have anything against this or that, or the covering of the young girl. And she will not be disturbed by the lifestyle of my children; she will prove that."

It can be said that the idea of "*a pluralistic society comprising different tendencies and groups*" arises out of and in connection with the Islamic segment. The secular segment's acceptance that the Islamic segment is also a part of society's identity and

that it has demands is an important development. However it must be noted that, after a certain point and especially when the function of society is in concern, *“the vision of society”* emphasised above is again reflexively refused over the Islamic identity. Social experiences have created a confinement and zigzagging between socially accepting or refusing the Islamic segment. The point at which the flexible sphere of the secular segment stands represents a fragmented disposition.

A housewife from Trabzon with a college degree openly expresses this fragmentation with the following words:

“If you want to know whether there is a change in the city... The city is covering up. The number of covered women increases. But the number of girls wearing revealing outfits and boys wearing earrings also increases. In the past, boys with ponytails would be in for a nice beating. Their numbers increase too. I don't know. There is a social confusion. Trabzon used to revere traditions. But now, men come to my hairdresser for manicures. I even find it strange. Build a separate door for them, I say. There's that too. I actually like it. We used to wear Che berets at the university. Some would wear the Kurdish scarf. And some would wear head covers. We seem to be headed in the same direction. I think this is a type of diversity (...)

But I know that religion is a dogma and I'm still very concerned that it may interfere with my life. (...)

Faith has also become strange. I believe that something either exists or it doesn't. My line extends straight. My notions of politics and ethics still continue. I don't veer off of these. If you are a believer, the Muslim faith is not tolerant of covering your head and then stepping out onto the street with the tightest leggings. (...)

They cover their heads partly so they can belong to someplace. Will they ever remove it? It has some gains for them. Some of them can get permission to leave the house, some of them find jobs when they cover their heads (...)

B. THE COVERING OF WOMEN

The breaking point in the political paradigm and the secular segment's view of the Islamic identity manifest themselves in the perception of *“covering”*; accepted to be the strongest symbol of the identity.

It is understood that social experiences spawn a separation particularly oriented towards the view of covering. Participants who used to regard any person and any kind of covering in the public sphere as a political symbol are now inclined towards separating it into sincere and insincere.

Not only the meaning given to covering by the actors, but also their political perception systems that provide a reference for them to produce meaning is going through tremor. A great majority of the participants in this segment have some extent of knowledge of a democratic notion that emphasises “*tolerance of differences*”. This new notion and the “*protective democracy notion*” regarded equivalent to a universal lifestyle and republicanism exist side by side.

A 45-year-old female participant from Istanbul, who is the owner of a kindergarten, speaks of this tendency as follows:

“If we were to believe in their sincerity, if we believe that they do this to practice their faith, then there is no problem. Because that’s a democratic right. There are ones like this. I meet them on the street and in other places, and I’m not too disturbed. But still, there is a political movement in front of us. This is what I’m trying to say: They should wear it wherever they can within the democratic function. When it comes to universities; their professional limits must be observed carefully. If she doesn’t want to examine a cadaver or doesn’t want to remove her head-scarf for a passport, then you tell her to choose another job.”

The words of a businessman from Antakya, who is a member of the CHP are telling:

“First of all, religion should be completely separate from state administration. Head coverings are not a problem for me; they can wear whatever they want as long as they don’t disturb their surroundings. It is a freedom for sincere believers, and they should enjoy this right. What I don’t want to see is the chador. My hair stands on its end whenever I see the black chador. The baggy trousers, turbans, robes... Thank God, not much of this can be seen in Antakya, but there are lots of them in Laleli, Istanbul. It disgusts me. What sort of humanity is this?”

The desire to believe in the sincerity of covering both represents the actors’ quest for intellectual wholeness, and indicates the “*legitimacy pressure*” by a natural social situation. These two elements form a relation of causality, resulting in situational shifts in attitudes, for instance determinations of sincerity and insincerity, as a consequence of the rupture between two perceptions of democracy. The establishment of an indirect relation between faith and head covering, and the liberation of the covering from its requirement to be a political symbol are the changes caused by such a rupture.

A housewife from Istanbul, a contractor from Ankara, and a young female public servant express themselves as follows:

“If I’m a democrat, people should be able to enter the university covered. And my son should be able to persuade them. But such conditions don’t exist. What you wish for is something else. There are things that you don’t desire. But we

should not forget that the prohibited is the most desired thing. If you can't show the wrongness of something by prohibiting it, if you don't offer them an option, you cannot persuade those people."

"I don't support this ban in universities. If covered students put pressure on the uncovered ones, this should be stopped of course. However, if the covered person is planning to get a degree and working for it, then I don't think we should interfere. I care more about the essence than the form. I know many covered girls who use French perfumes. If a woman is covering her head, it should be forbidden for her to hold hands with a man, right? Go over to Altınpark, you will see girls not in head covering but in full black chador being intimate with boys. This formalism is what puts me off; I don't mind covering or anything. What I mean is this: I don't want the religious ritual to have economic and political aspects. Religion is a very pure thing. It means believing in God, and being an honest person with good morals."

"The wife of the person who brought you here was his classmate. She is a lawyer. But she doesn't work because her head is covered. Now I admire this. She was sincere. She's paying the cost of her belief. Some will go to every extent."

Secularists cannot deepen their relations with the Islamic segment because of their perceptions and fears towards a symbolic meaning of lifestyles, their notion of protective democracy that continues to influence the mentality, and the relations between religion, dogma, fundamentalism and ignorance

As such, the tendency to compartmentalize brings a mental escapism and political superficiality with it. Examples of this situation are the practical and pragmatic attributes of mechanisms geared towards compensation for ruptures.

Some recommendations from a TV serviceman from Istanbul and a businesswoman of upper cultural level appear on this line:

"Those wearing it as a political symbol should not be allowed, and the others should. Just like the state runs background checks on military school applicants, it should do it for university candidates. Fundamentalist boys and girls should not be accepted. This way, those covering themselves for their sincere faith will also be relieved. The state can do this if it wants to. It's been profiling all those people. They know who everyone is."

"We can say that if prohibitions are removed, problems may decrease, girls may remove their headscarves, the freedom will prevent them from being abused by politics, but we should keep in control. Covered people cannot enter all universities. I think this will work out if implemented well and its boundaries are defined clearly. There is an example in the Lausanne Treaty. There are foreign schools which cannot raise their quotas by one or open branches anywhere else.

It's been like this for years. It's great. Take the Üsküdar American Academy, Saint Joseph... They should establish a university just for the covered."

This effort to compensate for a rupture generally includes an understanding to accept the cultural existence of the different by symbolically "*ghettofying*" it. On the one hand, this is based on the demand that the threat should be openly visible at all times, and on the other, it allows actors of the secular segment to establish a relation with the notion of freedom. The fact that this drive and demand is defined as a "*controlled liberal style*" by the actors themselves does bear an important meaning within the frame of conjectural change, but it also shows that authoritarian definitions have not been entirely abandoned in mentalities.

It should still be noted that, despite its limitations, the current situation or the attained position is the fruit of the actors' efforts to "*discipline*" themselves in terms of democratic-modern consistency with respect to their experiences.

3. POLITICAL EXPERIENCES

Political experiences had a significant influence on the breakpoints of the flexible ring of the secular segment. The approach from a "*mentality of conflict*" to the idea of "*consensus*" is closely related with the experience gathered during the AK Party government. These experiences consists of two stages: the first one is AK Party's existence and its success in the elections. The second one is related to the AK Party government's administration and its activities as well its democratization program.

A. AK PARTY GOVERNMENT

It has been observed that AK Party's electoral success has reinforced a sense of "*defeat*" and "*belonging to the minority*" for this ring. This sense of defeat has been naturalized and normalized within a "*thought exercise*" although there is a fear that it could be permanent.

It must be said that this effort, which exhibits the development of a reflexive defense language by the actors, has paved the way for the suppression of an inordinate polarization also through the influence of the wave of legitimization caused by the elections.

The fact that most of the secular political parties did not receive enough votes to be included in the parliament and thus were eliminated; that AK Party reached a number of parliamentarians close to what is required for constitutional majority; the way the post-election situation was met by the local media, all preempted political approaches

that did not present any means of compensation, causing this “*act of normalization and naturalization*” to be put into effect solely through social expedients.

A middle-aged man from Southeastern Turkey who has been against the Islamic movement for many years explains the situation in the following manner:

“There’s the idea that this is a threat, and a middle way has to be found without a conflict or like saying that this threat got much more serious because of the AK Party government, like these people have be kept under control. I feel closer to the former statement because I think that life is short. We don’t know what will happen to us tomorrow. I don’t want any fighting or trouble anymore. All that fighting hurts both sides. Even if you win an argument or a battle, you cannot be calm or peaceful. So I had to change. Honestly, because we ended up as being the minority. This is the truth...”

A person with a higher socio-economic status, who deems his lifestyle as very important and who works for the private sector has made the following comment:

“Since AK Party came to power, I tend to dwell more on the notion of consensus. A part of me is certainly uneasy. But we must consider the election results as something natural. This has no end... This is how society is, maybe the society will bring the politicians to a balance. I mean, life is going on. We know nothing about life or afterlife. That issue is all too obscure. Since I’m not a strong believer, I’m unable to console myself. But I really don’t want any fights anymore...”

Within this scope, AK Party’s success, power and the surrounding political developments are not seen as the expression of a certain political congestion or the breakthrough of a small minority, which are, in both cases, different from the previous period. On the contrary, they are explained as a general social condition or even as the natural consequence of a social inclination. It can be said that the political experiences that followed individual and social experiences have acted as the last stage of a transformation.

The viewpoint of a female lawyer from Trabzon clearly displays this tendency:

“In that period, I used to think that the “February 28” process was just. I mean... I thought so because of a single rationale. I thought that political Islam is not something that spurted from within Turkey. I also believed that American imperialism had been imposed on Turkey within the scope of the moderate Islam project. I guess I’m sounding a little like Doğu Perinçek, but I don’t observe a very strict conservative religious attitude in the people of Anatolia... In other words, they are in control of the parliament as a result of the 33% of the votes they received but neither some of their voters nor the remaining 65% think like them. So as time goes by, you realize this in a clearer way. that was how I used to think. I mean on February 28th, I perceived it as an imminent threat. But now I trust the disposition of Anatolian people...”

This situation , which can be defined as a shift from the “*political*” to the “*social*” has some noteworthy results.

Although interpreted in accordance with verification mechanisms, the first significant result of this shift is that the idea of a threat in relation with the political situation becomes relative. The second significant result is that the social perception channels, which were severely blocked during the Islamist-secular polarization, have been reopened. At this point, an indirect interaction mechanism starts operating through the support of social and individual experiences and similar to the effect of social experiences, political experiences also make a “*social vision*” almost imperative for the actors. The view of the Islamist segment expands out from being a solely political view, and begins to also acquire a social character, thus, advancing on the path to accepting the natural existence of ‘the other’. As a result, the conflicting nature of the attitude concerning secularism starts to subside. Consequently, the actors do not try to make up for the existing ruptures through politics, a fractious attitude or a tendency for authoritarianism but strive to resolve them through acknowledging the existence of a different social sector although they remain in doubt.

In other words, during the previous periods, for instance during Erbakan’s government, the viewpoint that considered the “*problem*” only as a political clash of secularism-Islamism, denied its social aspect, producing a hardening of views and authoritarianism. Eventually, however, solely political reactions were complemented by a social evaluation of the situation. The new tendency meant that AK Party started to be viewed as similar not to RP but to center right parties. In this way, the AK Party was considered to be less dangerous than RP.

A self-employed person from Ankara states his position by stressing the difference between periods and parties:

“During the time of Erbakan, we used to feel horrified when we saw people going around with sticks in their hands and turbans on their heads. Erbakan and his team openly chose to provoke. None of this was necessary. But unfortunately, those people did not care about Turkey, they just cared about themselves. All they thought about was their seats. But they saw that it was not possible. All the same they kept provoking people. Did we have such things 30 years ago? Covering women, headscarf? Were we not Muslim back then? No one fussed with the head cover of another. But the atmosphere became tense when some people tried to turn the head cover into a symbol. People protested. And a very unnecessary polarization was created, but of course, the state will set certain mechanisms to protect itself. This stage is now over. Those days are long gone. But Republican People’s Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP) is still making policies for the sake of opposing. One of these is secularism. I’m really

sincere now. I don't see any threat against the regime. It's not possible to make rivers flow in the opposite direction..."

A public servant from Ankara who is a social democrat defines his moderate view about AK Party with the following words:

"For me, the AK Party government is not different from the Democratic Party of the past, Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*, ANAP) or Ecevit's last party at all. But it is different from Erbakan's party and this must be acknowledged. This is how I explain it: I believe in terms of character, Erbakan is even less reliable than Tayyip. And I also believe that the people in Erbakan's party are more radical than those in AK Party. In other words, they, I mean the RP people are stronger believers. I mean, there are more believers who believe in radical Islam. Take a look at them... AK Party, True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi*, DYP)... None of them is different from the other. Except for CHP... I mean, you cannot make me say that AK Party is a radical Islamist party..."

A self-employed person from Üsküdar explains why he thinks AK Party casts a relative threat in terms of bans and the operating style of this party:

"Take the Cultural Center here, for example... It was first established by the mayor from Social Democratic Populist Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti*, SHP) with the aim of offering cultural services to the local public. And at that time the public had a certain civilized appearance. In terms of the way they dressed. But then, things changed in Turkey. Refah Party got most of the votes in Üsküdar. They appointed someone here. The woman didn't cover her hair when she first came here. And she had a really normal way of dressing. But when their party came to power and had all the ropes to play with, this same woman began to cover herself. And then AK Party and so forth... When Tayyip got on stage later and started to shake hands with women too, the lady uncovered herself again. so that's how she earns her money. She's got a good position. The people at the top tell her: "Well, your... you know, you should be in accord with our policies," and she covers her head. And then they tell her, "We are receiving too many protests. You know the head cover. If you want, maybe... let us not have any trouble..." Now look at that. Bans should be lifted. So that no votes are given because of the bans. Remember this well. If it happens, suddenly the number of covering women will decrease..."

On the other hand, we cannot say that no undulations are taking place in the secular segment concerning social and political statements about AK Party. This situation especially reveals that the AK Party government stresses its presence through the work it carries out and the program of transformation it follows.

B. AK PARTY'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS: EU AND DEMOCRATIZATION

Although the effort to suppress the social, cultural and even political existence of the Islamist segment designates a certain transformation taking place in the secular segment, this transformation process has many breaking points. Thus, the *“practice to dismiss the threat and fear”* and the *“shift in the observation of the Islamist segment”* look like the two intersecting parts of a whole that support each other and cause ruptures as a result of their innate conflict.

Naturally, the area where this rupture is the strongest in the political one, namely, in the field of political power. For example, the tendency to consider the Islamist segment in terms of a social vision is not totally sufficient in eliminating the distrust and discomposure against *“politics”* and *“political actors”*. In other words, the shift from the *“political”* to the *“social”* does not deter the secular segment from experiencing a rupture between the *“observation of politics”* and the *“observation of society”* in terms of its perception, evaluation and approach.

This rupture has three aspects:

On the one hand, traditional doubts and worries concerning politics and politicians continue. There still exists a fear that AK Party has a hidden agenda and that it is not immune from Islamic influences. People cannot help asking themselves whether AK Party aims to make Islam more visible in the state, a step that many see as unacceptable. Such questions often yield the answer that AK Party is *“insincere”*. As a matter of fact, the *“concept of ulterior motive”* constricts the frame of transformations in relation with this ring.

The following excerpts reflect the views of a tradesman from Istanbul and a retired public servant from Ankara concerning this matter:

“The political aspect of this matter is in fact the most dangerous one. They are the ones who politicize religion and who influence the society. They are dogmatic. I’m really scared of religious dogma. I think religion is really overbearing. Interfering in the lives of others is in the nature of religion. If you don’t dress in such and such way, you’ll burn in hell. Something like that. And it’s mostly women who suffer such things. Nothing happens to men. I’m scared that they will meddle with my life or the lives of others...”

“I don’t think AK Party policies are sincere... I think these people are even more hypocritical. At least, Erdogan openly said what he thought, but the words and the lifestyles of these people are contradictory. They are leading lives beyond their cultural identities. How can I express it better... For example, the woman visits the Acropolis and wears high heeled shoes. The man comes and shakes

hands, and then says nothing that the Prime Minister would object to happened. If you're so keen on your faith, then don't go there but stay at home. Yes, I'm really scared that they're involved in an ulterior motive. I'm really not sure that they have changed. We'll wait and see. Or maybe I'm too confused... maybe I can't think clearly..."

The other aspect of the rupture rests on a "*symbolic problem*".

When the actors of the flexible secular segment observe or have to observe the Islamist segment through a social perspective, they do not find it inconvenient to establish a connection between the social character and the political representation of this segment because acknowledging the social existence of the Islamist segment or explaining AK Party's electoral success through social factors does not abate the distance between themselves and the Islamist segment. In other words, it is not possible for the flexible secular segment to digest the presence of a different segment unless it is related to the Islamic identity. According to the secular mentality, mutual acceptance means a political compromise that requires both parties to cling on to their own areas and worlds.

The owner of a preschool from Istanbul and a young lawyer also from Istanbul accept the existence of the Islamist segment; yet they define the required conditions and borders as below:

"I have met many people from those circles. I really liked them and they liked me, too. I met most of them because they were parents with children in my school. I mean, when you get to know a person closely, it doesn't matter whether they have a headscarf or a beard. For instance, my political views don't prevent me from chatting with them or sharing things, but this does have a limit. We never have and never can have a conversation about politics or moral issues... I don't have that kind of a relationship with those people.

What disturbs me the most about such people is that they accept covering some parts of their body so that men don't see and just because a man orders them to do so, and that they set this example for their sons. You see, these people give this message to their sons: you can be aroused when you see a woman's hair. You can perceive a woman's hair as a sexual stimulant, or when you see her leg.. This is what disturbs me the most..."

"I don't mind that they exist, and if their sincerity is understood and believed, then they will also have the right for education. And they should. But certain things could disturb me if they are around me and in my life. I naturally come across such people every now and then. But I'd never have a profound contact or relationship concerning certain matters. I mean, I'd never prefer to be with them..."

However, politics and political representation has a function that diminishes distance.

AK Party's policies for transformation and westernization are parallel to the political ideals of secular actors, including for example EU membership, civilization of the political system, and the expansion of fundamental rights and liberties. However, this parallelism produces an unexpected reaction, severely initiating an effort to disintegrate that indicated symbols as well as a symbolic proximity and distance. Within this scope, the political steps taken are not only interpreted in terms of content but also seen as the identity and intention of the political decision maker. Symbolical disintegration devices such as attitude, expression, approach, and body language play a determinative role in this rupture point through an elitist perspective and exclusion. This situation reflects the same structural features with the distant approach of the Islamist flexible segment actors who have adopted a secular way of life or with the "*symbolic disorder*" they are subjected to.

In this way, sometimes a distance is placed between transformation and AK Party, sometimes the transformation is viewed with scepticism due to AK Party, sometimes AK Party is secretly admired because of the transformation, and at other times, the transformation is normalized. "*Democracy facilitates AK Party's work, and this is not desirable; and democracy renders both the individual and the process of modernization more intense, and this is desirable*" is an often repeated expression. When democracy is the subject of discussion during the shift between these two notions, AK Party is not mentioned, and when AK Party is the subject, democracy is not mentioned. The point of view that the transformation, as in the tougher core, is not enabled by AK Party but that it is enforced by the EU is common. When considered in terms of political approaches, this situation indicates that AK Party is still deemed as "*the other*".

The comments of a businessmen from Ankara and a young woman from Istanbul, employed in the private sector put forth some interesting hints:

"I evaluate their democratization policy like this. They're successfully using it to reach their goals. This has been a process that made their work easier. But what's done in the name of democracy is not that bad... You see, my feelings and my reason are saying two different things. As a person who believes in democracy, I believe people should be free to lead their life in the way they choose. However, as a Turkish woman, who has always lived in Turkey and who has witnessed how Islam was used as a tool, I say, 'they should be prevented. So what if we have a little less democracy.' This is what my feelings say. I mean, maybe it's the grudge I feel. But when I think as a simple human being... Maybe you'll find it strange, but I also sometimes question why someone who's wearing a turban is not allowed in the university..."

“Why do you think they want the EU? If we go in there, then they will accept the communists and Islamists as well. In fact, the laws AK Party enacted, from honor crimes to human rights, are not things to discuss. I hope AK Party is not inserting other stuff in these laws. And there’s another thing to consider. Did AK Party enact these laws? AK Party said ‘I want to get into the EU too’. They are just adapting the EU laws. AK Party or another party would not have been different. This process would be carried out anyway. But what was that thing that happened in the meantime? Was it an incredible political maneuver? I mean the adultery issue... How did it suddenly appear on the agenda... I mean they are not able to reconcile what they do and what they feel inside...”

The third aspect of the existing rupture originates from the inevitable convergence of the secular segment with the policies for democratization. The motivation to safeguard changes has been causing attitudes essential to politics by taking start from certain political steps of AK Party in spite of the presence of the said symbolical problem. Although it is deemed as insincere, the notion that a civilian power promoting transformation should be protected against interventions looms large, and as a result, an indirect and problematic process of getting acquainted with AK Party is experienced. In other words, the mechanism operates backwards, indirectly mitigating the opinion about AK Party. As a matter of fact, the tendency of the flexible secular segment to maintain a distant approach toward AK Party does not result in the exclusion of the idea of transformation of AK Party as was the case concerning the tougher secular segment.

The following comments offer a few ideas pertaining to this tendency:

“We have always had a nationalistic side. Should everyone in Turkey have dollars in his pocket? Now, I’m not against the EU. I guess it’s a positive process. I mean, it’s positive whether we enter the EU or not... I’m glad the EU exists and that so many laws were revised. I wish we could really implement them. With us, revising the law is not enough... I mean, this country and this society deserve so many things. And they should be given those things through this or that way. With or without EU membership... AK Party should do the work if they are determined. Why come out against them...”⁵⁶

“I never voted for AK Party. I wouldn’t even consider doing it... But I must tell you that it’s not that easy to be so courageous and wise concerning the issue of Cyprus. Telling Annan to bring his plan and that we’ll have it voted is not very easy in a country of status quo such as Turkey. Take, for example, the fact that the 1st of March note was rejected. I really felt proud of my country... It is difficult to admit that AK Party has contributed to this a lot, but it is the case (...)

56 A middle aged tradesman from Istanbul who adopts a leftist political view

It seems that this party might improve the Turkish economy and also advance concerning the EU membership... and so far, they have done that. I mean, just think that the social democrats have called them as amateurs... I can just laugh..."⁵⁷

"I'm a member of CHP. Just look what things we're going through. All concepts and notions are confused. Somebody is accomplishing the things that we should have, in fact, done. And what we do is just oppose... It's about time that we redefine 'the left'. Take a look at AK Party... We are starting to resemble them, and they are starting to resemble us. (...) My Kemalist attitude went through a change in the course of time. I'm against Kemalism to be used to suppress people. I'm not too well-informed but as far as I can see, it is being used as a weapon against people. This is really irritating. I admire Atatürk. I'm totally aware of Kemalism's virtues and advantages. However, today is today, and not yesterday..."⁵⁸

As a result, the intersection of policies with a party the secular segment opposes despite the existing ruptures, and the positive expectations of the secular segment on the AK Party indicate that the anxiety is gradually taking on a relative character, thus, accelerating the transformation of this segment.

As we have stated above, another important point is the transformation of views regarding military interventions and the role of the military in politics. The actors think differently especially about "February 28", and they even criticize their own attitude in the past. The fact that the attitude assumed on "February 28" is now considered as wrong and that this is openly expressed is an indication of an ongoing transformation, and it shows that experiences have repaired a tough rupture.

The interesting comments below were made by a public servant from Kayseri and a self-employed person from Istanbul:

"The military's job is to manage the state, not intervene in politics. Unfortunately, they did again on February 28th. We all favored it because Erbakan was in power, but it was wrong. It wasn't democratic..."

"I never supported military interventions. On September 12, my spouse and I wept. And now I'm proud of myself because I cried about it. We even tried our best in telling people not to say 'yes' to the September 12 Constitution... We strove to tell the people around us that the May 27 Constitution was better than that. Nobody perceived February 28 as a military intervention. We just thought

57 A young public servant from Ankara

58 A public servant from Kayseri

“Finally we’re rid of that guy!” But today, I’m not sure whether this attitude was right. However, something like this exists between the civilians and the military, and between the Kemalist viewpoint and the Islamist viewpoint. I do wish it didn’t happen. I wish it was not the military who had to do it...”⁵⁹

As can be observed, the political perception of the tougher fraction of the secular segment is changing into a web of compartments independent from each other, forming contradictory structures in accordance with the situation, experience and the perceiving party. This chaotic condition is a clear sign of transformation. Furthermore, the critical point of transformation pertains to the fact that this segment has embarked a journey of recreating its identity.

59 A social democrat businessman from Hatay

INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

The transformation of a society resembles the accumulation of tension along fault lines. The energy accumulates, and is then suddenly released. Transformation occurs more during the time of energy accumulates than at the moment of discharge. Even so the moment of discharge is when we perceive the transformation that has taken place. The shifting of the major determinative axes of conflict, in other words, the exchange of places in the hierarchy of axes of conflict, and in short, the transformation of the society, is much faster and more integral than the qualitative transformation individuals or social segments experience separately.

Therefore, the conflict axes of the '80s and the '90s had different characters although the major social and political problems were substantially the same. When we consider the '80s in terms of the major dynamics that harbored conflicts and politicization, we recognize the umbrella of individualism; when we take a look at the '90s, we then perceive the umbrella of identities that redefine the individual in terms of his rights and liberties.

The emergence of new axes of conflict in a society and the disappearance of the former axes as well as the underlying problems do not mean that they are no longer important. However, it underlines both the transformation and the evolution of the social elements that come into prominence in the politicization of this or other issues. Moreover, it tops certain styles of the previous period even if they are still rightful and legitimate.

When viewed from this perspective, the study includes findings that support the idea that a new social notion appeared with the onset of the year 2000. Substantially, this is a notion of "*personalism*" which is much different from the notion of "*individualism*" that sealed the '90s. This new climate suggests a structure in which identities, individuals and individualism coexist, concur, and also influence each other without eliminating one another.

Naturally, this structure reveals the existence of a truly significant wave of change, indicating that both the Islamic and the secular segments are going through a deep-rooted examination and even transformation process.

Here, four points are significant:

The last 10 years of conflict was a period of crisis caused by the diminishing distance between center and periphery, which is one of the inevitable stages of modernity.

Currently, this crisis is no longer a major issue and the integration related to the said stage has begun. However, this integration is not based on a mechanism of affinity. It is fragmented and fluctuating, and most importantly, it is realized over a configuration where both the individuals and the segments *“pluralize”* in terms of gains, attitudes, expectations, and actions, and the integration itself partly responsible for creating this very structure.

Although it may seem paradoxical, the conflicts and the related period has fostered this transformation period. The social, cultural and political clashes that took place during the conflicts have resulted in experiences that have allowed for interaction among the different segments. Each experience has become a channel for transformation because it has resulted in a change in their self-perception which has in turn led to a change in the way these actors perceive *“the other.”* Thus, this is a transformation concerned more with social interaction and the resulting consensus than with a political consensus.

The third important point is that the transformation process has basically originated and been led by the middle class. On the other hand, the transformation process also works backwards and includes elements that reshape the middle class in relation with political attitudes and expectations. As a matter of fact, most people within the secular and the Islamic segments share similar views on issues such as democracy, freedom and human rights. The extreme poles in both segments resist the transformation or experience a *“transformation in reverse”*, however they seem to gradually be thinking more similarly.

The last important point is about mentality. The relationship of mentality and transformation has a rather complex structure. This pair sometimes influences, and at other times, obstructs one another. However, the core of mentality continues to remain tough. The transformation decreases the number of *“others”* within the society; yet it fails to subdue the perception of *“others”*. Similarly, the tendency for individualism is incapable of eliminating communal political reflexes or expectations.

It can be clearly seen that the journey to the mentality’s core requires new experiences and new pages.

APPENDIX: FIELD AND SAMPLING PROFILE

The study began in Spring 2004 and was completed at the end of the same year. Within the scope of the research, 40 people were interviewed in 10 cities in different regions of Turkey (Istanbul, Ankara, Bursa, Trabzon, Kayseri, Konya, Antakya, Diyarbakır, Mardin, and Batman) through the application of the in-depth interview methods. 3 of the interviews were not finished. In addition, short, thematic interviews with almost 50 people were carried out in order to test the research findings.

The field was geographically divided into three categories of “*metropolis*”, “*outskirts*” and “*countryside*”. Within the “*metropolis group*”, 15 people who live in downtown Istanbul and Ankara and who lead a social and cultural urban life were interviewed. A total of 6 interviews were held with people living in the outskirts of Istanbul and Ankara. The remaining 16 interviews were held with interviewees in the selected cities in the Black Sea, Central Anatolia, Southeastern Anatolia, Mediterranean, and Marmara regions.

The interviewees from the Islamist segment were selected by taking into consideration different religious sects and political tendencies. The sample group consisted of people belonging to Islamic groups that were under the effect of the Iranian revolution as well as individuals from relatively moderate religious groups such as the Fethullah and *Nurcu* groups.

The secular segment sample group consisted of cases with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds such as Alevi and Kurdish as well as people with varying political views.

In the moderate secular and moderate religious segments, care was taken to interview people of different professions and income groups.

Each interview lasted approximately 2 hours, but some interviews lasted longer than 3 hours.

There was no significant difficulty in establishing trust between the interviewers and the interviewees. During two interviews, the interviewees did not want the interview to be recorded on tape, therefore notes were kept on paper.

In order to enable the interviewees to feel at ease, almost all of the interviews were carried out in their homes or offices. For the same reason, the interviewer did not know any of the selected interviewees beforehand.

The interviews were taped and then transcribed. In addition, detailed notes about the course of each interview were also taken.

Except for the fixed questions, the course of each interview was different based on the interaction of the interviewer with the interviewee as well as the social, cultural and personal status and characteristics of the related interviewee. For example, during an interview with a covered student, the subject of covering was discussed more, while an interview with a woman from the secular segment focused more on the themes of *“the threat of reactionary Islam”* and *“alterior motives”*. The women from the Islamist segment in Anatolia inevitably brought along their girlfriends to the interviews, and in such cases, the interviews acquired a focus group character.

Since the location of the interview was either the interviewee’s home or office, the impressions of the interviewer about the place were also taken into consideration during the evaluation of the interview. The interviewers had the chance to meet or have lunch/dinner with almost one-third of the interviewees after the interview process was over, and these experiences and observations of the interviewer were also utilized within the scope of the research. The interviewers occasionally had the opportunity to meet the interviewees’ family or relatives before or after the interview, and their related observations were taken into consideration during the overall assessment. However, great care was shown to remain alone with the interviewee during the actual interview session.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Ali Bayramoğlu was born in Gelibolu in 1956. In 1973, and graduated from Iskenderun High School. In 1979, he received his B.A. degree from the Grenoble School of Political Sciences in France. He completed his graduate education at Istanbul University School of Economics and received his PhD degree from the School of Social Sciences at the same university. From 1981 to 1999, he was a lecturer in the School of Public Administration Faculty of Marmara University. Bayramoğlu has published three books, “*February 28th Diary*,” “*The Sociology of the Islamic Movement in Turkey*” and “*The Military in Turkey*”, which he edited with Ahmet İnsel. Bayramoğlu has written columns for various newspapers such as *Yeni Yüzyıl*, *Star*, *Yeni Binyıl*, and *Sabah*. He is a columnist in the daily *Yeni Şafak* newspaper and a lecturer in Istanbul Kültür University.

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Born in Istanbul in 1967, Ferda Balancar graduated in 1992 from the Public Administration Department of Marmara University, which maintains education in French. After having worked as a journalist in various press organizations from 1992 to 2002, Balancar worked as a researcher for TESEV from 2003 to 2006. Between 2006 and 2007, Balancar was the Assistant Editor for the weekly *Nokta* magazine. He taught at Istanbul Bilgi University. He is currently an editor of daily *Taraf* newspaper.

Perceptions and Mentality Structures

“Modernity Does Not Tolerate Superstition”

The Religious and Seculars in the Democratization Process

We have an inevitable question before us: how can it be that, despite all the effort towards modernization and the dynamics of change, we fail to solve some of our problems and continue to live with them? Although one is justified in criticizing the state for its failure to solve these problems, can only the state be held accountable? Or does the society, either consciously or implicitly, support the state's resistance to problem-solving?

These questions led TESEV to conduct a series of studies, which focus on issues such as secularism, religiosity, nationalism, family, the state, and rights. Through these studies TESEV attempted to unveil the mentality and the way in which Turkish people perceive themselves and their surroundings, as well as their references and the value systems implied by these references. We tried to grasp how the mentality change works, what kinds of breakpoints it creates, and how the conflicts created by these breakpoints are rationalized.

As the series attempts to gain an understanding of Turkish society beyond well-known and simplified stereotypes, Ali Bayramoğlu examines the axis of “religiosity and secularism”. Bayramoğlu masterfully argues that, because of the Republican administration's attempts to silently resolve this axis through a “separation of state affairs and religion”, it nevertheless has become the fulcrum of both varying and conflicting, and even polarised, political and social positions. As such, this axis also refracts the “real” social situations and demands like a broken mirror, thereby eliminating alternative categorizations. Bayramoğlu also tries to gain an insider's view of the intellectual atmosphere in Turkey. The author argues that this atmosphere is being impoverished by the religiosity-secularism tension, and shows how positions thought to be different and conflicting can, in fact, intersect at common grounds of authoritarianism and patriarchy. Those settling in religious and secular “poles” actually position themselves not against these well-known and comfortable positions, but against the reactions to dynamics of change. Bayramoğlu asserts that both religious and secular positions consist of “change-resistant” and “changing” spheres, and that the way to a democratic transformation can be paved not by reverting to the “favorable” positions of the religious-secular polarization, but by understanding the relations and differentiation dynamics between these circles, and seeking ways of empathy and dialogue.

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