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Abstract:

This thesis analyses the relations between the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi/AKP) governments and the civil society organizations (CSOs) in Turkey. It critically examines this relationship from a relational perspective challenging the contemporary hegemonic view in Turkey, namely the centre-periphery paradigm. This mainstream view is based on a dichotomous theoretical approach that formulates an opposition between 'authoritarian state' and 'democratic civil society', which are represented by the 'secular elite' and the 'Islamic-conservative society' respectively. From this perspective, the rise of the Islamist AKP into power in 2002 was perceived as the rise of civil society and a step towards democratization. Therefore, this thesis focuses particularly on the Islamist CSOs and examines the extent of their democratic character and 'civility'. It argues that a dichotomous approach to state-civil society relations is an insufficient analytical tool to understand the actually existing societies. A useful concept needs to highlight the relation of civil society with the state within their specific historical context, not associate civil society with immanent characteristics and actors and so reveal the power relations intrinsic in it. Therefore, it employs Antonio Gramsci's analytical concept of 'integral state', which underlines the organic relationship between the state and civil society. Based on this, this thesis argues that rather than contributing to democratization, the Islamist CSOs attempt seizing cultural hegemony and hence, are central actors in the making of the AKP's 'New Turkey', a new civilization based on neoliberal, Islamic principles. Thereby, it demonstrates how the unquestionable and one-sided commitment of the followers of the centre-periphery view to civil society as a democratizing force against the state and their portrayal of a cultural struggle between the secular and religious actors have been politically instrumentalized by the Islamist actors.

Keywords: civil society, state, democracy, hegemony, civil society organizations, centre-periphery paradigm.

Diese Arbeit analysiert die Beziehungen zwischen den diversen AKP-Regierungen (Partei für Gerechtigkeit und Entwicklung/Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) und den zivilgesellschaftlichen Organisationen in der Türkei. Sie untersucht diese Beziehung aus einer kritischen relationalen Perspektive, die die gegenwärtige hegemoniale Sichtweise in der Türkei, nämlich das Zentrum-Peripherie-Paradigma, in Frage stellt. Diese Mainstream-Ansicht basiert auf einem dichotomen Theorieansatz, der einen Gegensatz zwischen „autoritärem Staat“ und „demokratischer Zivilgesellschaft“ formuliert, die jeweils durch die „säkulare Elite“ und die „islamisch-

konservative Gesellschaft“ repräsentiert werden. Aus dieser Perspektive wurde der Aufstieg der islamistischen AKP an die Macht im Jahr 2002 als Aufstieg der Zivilgesellschaft und als Schritt in Richtung Demokratisierung wahrgenommen. Daher konzentriert sich diese Arbeit insbesondere auf die islamistischen zivilgesellschaftlichen Organisationen und untersucht das Ausmaß ihres demokratischen Charakters und ihrer „Zivilität“. Es wird argumentiert, dass ein dichotomer Ansatz für die Beziehungen zwischen Staat und Zivilgesellschaft ein unzureichendes Analyseinstrument ist, um die tatsächlich existierenden Gesellschaften zu verstehen. Ein brauchbares Konzept muss die Beziehung der Zivilgesellschaft zum Staat in ihrem spezifischen historischen Kontext aufzeigen, nicht die Zivilgesellschaft mit immanenten Merkmalen und Akteuren assoziieren und so die ihr innewohnenden Machtverhältnisse offenlegen. Daher wird Antonio Gramscis analytisches Konzept des „integralen Staates“ verwendet, das die organische Beziehung zwischen Staat und Zivilgesellschaft unterstreicht. Auf dieser Grundlage argumentiert diese These, dass die islamistischen zivilgesellschaftlichen Organisationen, anstatt zur Demokratisierung beizutragen, versuchen, die kulturelle Hegemonie zu ergreifen, und daher zentrale Akteure bei der Schaffung der „Neuen Türkei“ der AKP sind, einer neuen Zivilisation, die auf neoliberalen, islamischen Prinzipien basiert. Dadurch wird demonstriert, wie das nicht hinterfragbare und einseitige Bekenntnis der Anhänger der Zentrum-Peripherie-Sichtweise zur Zivilgesellschaft als demokratisierende Kraft gegen den Staat und ihre Darstellung eines kulturellen Kampfes zwischen säkularen und religiösen Akteuren von den islamistischen Akteuren politisch instrumentalisiert wurde.

Schlüsselwörter: Zivilgesellschaft, Staat, Demokratie, Hegemonie, zivilgesellschaftliche Organisationen, Zentrum-Peripherie-Paradigma.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The concept of civil society has risen from the late 1970s on. It has been popularly employed in relation to the collapse of socialism in the Eastern Europe and fall of the dictatorships in Latin America to highlight its democratic function against authoritarian states¹. This conceptualization of civil society in opposition to the state and as immanently democratic has become in a short time the hegemonic way of seeing it. Following this glorification of civil society, the number of civil society organisations (CSOs) has multiplied filling in the terrain and they have been interpreted as the main agents of civil society². Because of the positivity attached to civil society against the state, the CSOs, as the main actors of it, are expected to lead to democratization. Even though this unconditional and intrinsic democratic character and function assigned to the CSOs has been questioned in the last decades as many of them have failed to contribute to democratization in actually existing societies, the theoretical perspective, on which its positivity is based, remains intact. This is important to underline, because this “overrated role” of the CSOs is a product of the “inadequate theoretical concepts of state and society”, which opposes them against each other and defines them with fixed characteristics³.

Similar theoretical tendencies in the formulation of state-society relations dominated the post-1980 era in Turkey. Started with a military coup and guaranteed with a new constitution, this era has been marked by transformation of state-society relations, which was most obvious in the deepening neoliberalism and diminishing democracy. The era observed, at the same time, the mushrooming of civil society conceptualizations that are reminiscent of contemporary mainstream concepts. Despite their differences, these concepts share certain assumptions and arguments which are based on a state-civil society dichotomy. This dichotomous approach, which is called ‘centre-periphery paradigm’, has become hegemonic⁴. According to this state-

¹ Neera Chandhoke, “Civil Society”, *Development in Practice* 17, No: 4 (August 2007).

² Ibid, 608-9.

³ Joachim Hirsch, “The State’s New Clothes: NGOs and the Internationalization of the States”, *Rethinking Marxism* 15, No: 2 (2003): 237.

⁴ Fethi Açıkel, “Entegratif Toplum ve Muarızları: ‘Merkez-Çevre’ Paradigması Üzerine Eleştirel Notlar”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, No: 105 (2006); Galip L. Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective: A

centred and culturalist approach, a strong, authoritarian and all-intrusive state that is occupied by the secular, West-oriented elites dominated the conservative-Islamic society, thereby preventing the emergence of strong civil society structures autonomous from the state like in the West⁵. In this sense, this approach is based on a cultural dichotomy between the secular and the conservative, which accompanies the state-society dichotomy. It further argues that the domination of the strong state at the centre over the conservative periphery was the main reason that prevented democratization⁶. Because etatism in economy is also associated with authoritarianism of the state, free market economy with minimal state is set as a precondition of democratization. In other words, democracy is understood as a form specific to capitalism. Therefore, according to the followers of this view, thanks to the neoliberal economic policies of the post-1980 and the accompanying superstructural transformation, this period was a rupture from the old-authoritarian structure and towards democratization of state-civil society relations⁷. Additionally, CSOs were assumed the main actors and assigned significant roles in this transformation. Not only the increasing number of CSOs was argued to be important for democratization, but also they played the central role in “introducing to Turkish society the language of rights and freedoms, the discourse of individualism and the idea of participatory democracy”⁸. In other words, the centre-periphery view conceives the CSOs to be the principle agents of democratization, realizing this function even only because of their multiple existence⁹. It should be underlined that democracy in this view is reduced to its liberal version that fits to the neoliberal restructuring of economy.

The second rupture from the authoritarian state and towards democratization, according to this view, was the rise of the neoliberal Islamist Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi/AKP) into power with an overwhelming percentage of the votes. The expectations for democratization was due to the association of the AKP with civil society, with a “conservative-democratic political/social movement”, which means the representation of the

Relativist Paradigm or A Panoply of Hegemonic Strategies?” in *The Politics of Permanent Crisis: Class, Ideology and State in Turkey*, ed. Neşecen Balkan and Sungur Savran, (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2002).

⁵ Şerif Mardin, “Centre-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?”, *Deadalus* 102, No: 1 (Winter 1973).

⁶ Ergun Özbudun, “The State, Civil Society and New Challenges to Consolidation” in *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation*, (London: Lynne Rienner, 2000).

⁷ Özbudun, “The State, Civil Society and New Challenges to Consolidation”; Fuat Keyman and Tuba Kancı, “Democratic Consolidation and Civil Society in Turkey”, in *Turkey’s Democratization Process*, ed. Carmen Rodriguez, Antonio Avalos, Hakan Yılmaz and Ana Planet. (London: Routledge, 2013); Nilüfer Göle, “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics: The Case of Turkey”, in *Civil Society in the Middle East*, Vol. 2, ed. Augustus Richard Norton (Leiden, New York: Brill, 1996).

⁸ Keyman and Kancı, “Democratic Consolidation and Civil Society in Turkey”, 144.

⁹ Keyman and Kancı, “Democratic Consolidation and Civil Society in Turkey”; Özbudun, “The State, Civil Society and New Challenges to Consolidation”.

Islamic-conservative society in the state replacing the secular, modernizing elites¹⁰. Due to the immanent cultural characteristics ascribed to state and civil society, this view has associated the Islamic-conservative political parties with civil society and democracy. The AKP with its orientation towards civilianization of politics, acceleration of the EU accession process, neoliberal economic policies, which seemingly decreased the role of the state in the economy and with its claim to have left the Islamist past behind was welcomed as the democratizing actor¹¹. Accordingly, the AKP period was perceived to be a certain rupture from the model, in which the authoritarian state dominates the society, towards the emergence of autonomous civil society. Some commentators argued that the AKP perceived civil society as “a third space formed of associations” with a capacity to influence policies and hence, the CSOs as “effective actors for democratization”¹².

This study analyses this supposedly ‘democratic’ relationship of the Islamist AKP with civil society organizations and particularly with the Islamist CSOs. The reason for selecting Islamist associations and foundations for analysis is that civil Islamism and Islamist/Islamic¹³ CSOs have been of particular interest for the followers of the dichotomous view in the democratization debate¹⁴. The rise of Islamic/Islamist civil society is understood as a challenge to the secular, authoritarian state and an indication of democratization. In order to elaborate on the extent of democratic character of the Islamist CSOs and their democratic relationship to the state, the central specific questions are: What are the political-economic functions of the Islamist foundations and associations under the neoliberal Islamist AKP governments? How are these functions shaped by the state? The focus is particularly on the question of the extent of their autonomy from the state and hence, their ‘civility’ as opposed to the ‘political’. This is important to understand the functions of the CSOs, because their democratic features are

¹⁰ Ahmet İnsel, “The AKP and the Normalizing Democracy in Turkey”, *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, No: 2-3 (Spring-Summer 2003): 293-4.

¹¹ Menderes Çınar, “Turkey’s Transformation Under the AKP Rule”, *The Muslim World* 96, No: 3 (July 2006); İnsel, “The AKP and the Normalizing Democracy in Turkey”.

¹² Keyman&Kancı, “Democratic Consolidation and Civil Society in Turkey”, 145, 149.

¹³ Islamist and Islamic are not used as synonyms without any difference. Islamism refers to “the forms of political theory and practice that have as their goal the establishment of an Islamic political order in the sense of a state whose governmental principles, institutions and legal systems derive directly from the shari’ah...religion is generally viewed as a holistic, totalizing system whose prescriptions permeate every aspect of daily life.” It does not represent whole Islam as a religion, rather, it is a political movement based on an interpretation of Sunni Islam. Islamic, on the other hand, is used in the sense of a religious ethos without a political project. In most cases, however, it is difficult to differentiate Islamic and Islamist organizations from one another. Peter Mandaville, *Islam and Politics*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 74.

¹⁴ Göle, “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics: The Case of Turkey”,; Ergun Özbudun, “Turkey-Plural Society and Monolithic State”, in *Democracy, Islam and Secularism in Turkey*, ed. Ahmet Kuru and Alfred Stepan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Keyman&Kancı, “Democratic Consolidation and Civil Society in Turkey”.

assigned to them based on the assumption that they are autonomous, civil organizations separate from the market and against the state, counterbalancing its all-intrusive power. From reverse, the emphasis is not on the social-cultural, but on the political-economic functions in order to question the extent of their autonomy from the state (political) and the market (economic) as the ‘third sphere’.

Because the hegemonic concepts of state and civil society define the CSOs with universal, fixed, immanent democratic functions, a break away with this approach is important to answer the question properly and to understand the CSOs within their specific historical context. In this study, civil society is not considered as an autonomous sphere separate from and in opposition to the state, but rather as a constitutive part of it that can be only understood in relation to the state. Drawing on Gramsci’s conceptualization of the relations between state and civil society, it is defined by a relational approach as part of an organic whole together with the state. From this perspective, civil society is not necessarily assigned democratic functions against the state, but rather has a significant role in maintaining and reproducing the state power and seizing the hegemony. Therefore, it has by its nature political functions. Based on this, the main hypothesis is that the Islamist CSOs play a central, indispensable role in the neoliberal hegemonic project of the AKP for building the new regime of the ‘New Turkey’, which is based on Islamic principles and values on the one hand, and a neoliberal system with a minimal state, on the other. In this sense, rather than being democratic, autonomous and civil organizations, they function as the agents of the state in civil society reproducing its power in the terrain. An analysis of the functions of the CSOs is assumed to reveal the complex and invisible ways they use power, although they are predominantly conceived to be voluntary organizations out of power relations. It should be underlined, however, that the Islamist CSOs are argued to contribute to the consolidation of the neoliberal, authoritarian Islamism of the AKP does not mean that all CSOs, particularly in countries with Muslim majorities, are by their nature in contradiction with democracy. This study does not ask, orientalist and cultural-essentialist questions if Islam is compatible with democracy or if there is civil society in Turkey, as it is much-discussed by Turkish and foreign scholars. Rather, it critically discusses this essentialist approach to the CSOs itself that portrays them as democratic organizations. A discussion of the dichotomous approach to state-civil society relations by analysing the concrete cases of CSOs would give a clearer picture of the actually existing civil society and would help to break away with mere assumptions at the theoretical level that do not fit in the actual reality. Questioning the hegemonic view and demonstrating the organic bonds between state, civil society and the

market is significant to open more space for alternative theoretical approaches and actual political organizations. This is because production of knowledge on the social reality is an organic part of the seizure of political power, that is, knowledge and power are intertwined. The dichotomous, culturalist approach to state-civil society relations, for example, has played a significant role in the AKP's seizure of power, as it prepared the ideological ground for it and provided the main elements of the AKP rhetoric to maintain its power.

This study focuses on four Islamist CSOs, namely ÖNDER İmam Hatipliler Association, Ensar Foundation, Turkey Youth and Education Service Foundation (Türkiye Gençlik ve Eğitime Hizmet Vakfı/TÜRGEV) and Turkey Youth Foundation (Türkiye Gençlik Vakfı/TÜGVA) and discusses the extent, to which they are actors of democratization under the AKP rule. They are selected as cases, because they are among the largest and most active CSOs, with manifold organic connections to both the state and the AKP. Moreover, they have been either founded or enlarged under the AKP governments. All four CSOs are active in the field of education and youth and focus particularly on Islamic education. The difference between Islamic and Islamist CSOs has been mentioned earlier. Yet, it should be underlined that it is difficult to differentiate between the Islamic and Islamist CSOs in actual, practical contexts and that Islamic CSOs may become part of a political project and function as Islamist under particular contexts. The selected CSOs are defined as Islamist, because, as will be demonstrated in the upcoming sections in detail, they play a significant role in the neoliberal, Islamist project of the AKP. In other words, they instrumentalize Islamic education and mobilize their resources for political purposes.

The research is based on documentary analysis of the monthly/quarterly bulletins, annual reports, catalogues, books, and reports of the selected CSOs collected from their websites in digital form. These documents provide rich and detailed information on the activities, organization, educational institutions and programs, target groups and cooperation with the state and the broader civil society. The websites provide access to thorough information. As a secondary source of data, a newspaper review was made; this was especially useful for understanding their relationship with the government and the private sector. For example, the documents of the CSOs give information on the number and conditions of the dormitories or report on their opening ceremonies, but they do not provide transparent and detailed information on financial or human resources, which were, then, collected by a newspaper review. The collected data was analysed through qualitative content analysis. A qualitative approach is

relevant and best suited for the objectives of this research, because it enables to understand the motivations, opinions, worldviews and the relationships of the analysed objects.

The thesis comprises of three main chapters. The first chapter provides the theoretical discussion of concepts of state and civil society and CSOs. The main question that structures this chapter is the extent civil society and, as actors of it, the CSOs can contribute to democratization. First, it discusses two different approaches to civil society. One of them understands civil society as an autonomous category separate and in opposition to the state and sometimes to the market and attaches it democratic functions. This hegemonic approach is adopted not only by the right-oriented traditions such as liberals, conservatives, communitarians, but also the left-oriented scholars. Despite their differences, what they have in common is the dichotomous structure of state-society relations. This part includes a critique of it that highlights the theoretical pitfalls of the concept of civil society as well as the difficulty of employing it in actual contexts. As an alternative the relational approach of Antonio Gramsci that defines civil society in its conceptual relation to the state is used. Gramsci's view of civil society presents an oppositional understanding to the view mentioned above in terms of its relationship to state, which he concretely defined with the concept 'integral state'. Finally, based on these two approaches, different understandings of civil society organisations will be discussed with a particular focus on their autonomy from the state and the market and their democratic functions.

The second chapter presents a discussion of civil society in Turkey, concerning both the theoretical debate and historical account. It has two parts. The first part presents the main arguments of the hegemonic view in Turkey, namely the centre-periphery paradigm. This view is built upon a conceptual state-society dichotomy, both of them defined particularly by cultural characteristics. The commentators of this view have associated the AKP with civil society and celebrated its coming to power as an indication of democratization. Most significantly, the AKP employed the main assumptions and arguments of the centre-periphery paradigm, as central elements of its hegemonic project. Therefore, understanding the centre-periphery paradigm is relevant for understanding the AKP's hegemonic project. This part ends with a discussion of its critique, highlighting its theoretical and empirical problems. The second part evaluates the development of actual civil society from a historical and relational perspective that challenges the centre-periphery paradigm. It demonstrates not only the extensive and powerful presence of the Islamist movement in civil society and its increasing power in the market but also its integration in the state apparatus that remains ignored by the centre-periphery paradigm.

Therefore, it will reveal the impossibility of associating the state with mere ‘secular, West-oriented elites’ and civil society with the ‘oppressed conservative and pious people’. On the contrary, it argues that Islamic/Islamist actors are systematically and deliberately strengthened by the state. Particularly, the neoliberalisation of the post-1980 opened the way for the rise of Islamism. From this perspective, the AKP governments do not represent a rupture from the previous periods, but are the product of this historical process and the efforts of the state; the AKP’s seizure of the state represents the peak point with a new version of neoliberal conservative hegemony.

Finally, the third chapter examines the selected Islamist CSOs. The aim is to understand how and to what extent these CSOs act as ‘popular civil’ mechanisms of the above mentioned neoliberal Islamist hegemonic project of the AKP. All four of them are active organizations in Islamic education, whose target groups are children and the younger people. These education organizations fit the purpose of the study particularly good, because from a Gramscian perspective, education is a fundamental function of civil society and the main instrument of the state to create a new civilization. In this sense, the Islamic education provided by the CSOs disseminates the values and worldviews of a new civilization based on Islam, different from the Kemalist, West-oriented values spread by the secular education. It has three main parts. First, findings are presented; each CSO is defined concerning its history, aims, specific target groups, activities, education programs and offers to students. It is followed by a two-step analysis of the findings. First step examines the autonomy of the CSOs from the state and the market in order to understand the extent of their ‘civility’. This part includes a discussion of the different aspects of the organic relations of the CSOs to the state and the broader civil society focusing on financial dependency, shared cadres and the role of administrative-legal apparatus. Second, the political-economic functions of the CSOs will be discussed, demonstrating that they go far beyond the ‘civil sphere’ that is assigned to them by the dichotomous view. The focus is, therefore, not on their ‘social’ functions, which falls under this ‘civil sphere’, but rather political functions, which are associated with the state and the economic functions that fall under the market, from which the civil society is argued to be autonomous. It reveals how power is part of the ‘voluntary activities’ of the CSOs, though not perceived as such.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Conceptualising Civil Society:

Civil society has become a central theme of both public and scholarly debates since the 1980s; it has been used by the academia, the media, local and global civil society organizations, political parties, state institutions in varying contexts with different purposes. Although it has become an ordinary part of public and political debates, as a concept it remains ambiguous and causes scepticism. This is, first of all, due to its employment by such different actors with varying ideological leanings and by distinct political traditions. Conceptualizations of civil society are, likewise, representative of this diversity and they are multiple, which, in turn, causes an imprecision in its meaning. This results in scepticism about its analytical power and validity for theoretical use¹⁵. Second, however the definitions of civil society and the roles assigned to it differ, there is a “widespread consensus” on the concept as an autonomous sphere in opposition to the state¹⁶. In other words, although the understandings of civil society vary, they share a certain fundamental characteristic. Precisely this consensus among such multiple and diverse interpretations, causes the questions and scepticism about the validity of the concept of civil society as an analytical tool.

On this ground and for the purpose of clarifying the concept, this chapter discusses the contested concept of civil society in its two different forms: as an autonomous sphere, distinct and in opposition to the state, and in its constitutive form, as part of the ‘integral state’. In the next part, the evolution of the concept of civil society will be briefly outlined. This is relevant for two reasons. First, it helps one to understand how the context in which it is conceptualized has an influence on the understanding of civil society, which is gradually transformed from being identical to the state to in opposition to it. This is evident in its changing meaning and “conceptual ‘opponents’”¹⁷ during its historical evolution. Second, it provides a basis for the discussion of the mainstream interpretations of the concept in the post-1980 era. Next, a

¹⁵ Robert Fine, “Civil Society Theory, Enlightenment and Critique”, *Democratization* 4, No: 1 (1997).

¹⁶ Neera Chandhoke, “The ‘Civil’ and the ‘Political’ in Civil Society”, *Democratization* 8, No: 2 (2001): 2; Chandhoke, “Civil Society”; Josef A. Buttigieg, “The Contemporary Discourse on Civil Society: A Gramscian Critique”, *Boundary 2* 32, No: 1 (2005).

¹⁷ Jürgen Kocka, “Civil Society from a Historical Perspective”, *European Review* 12, No: 1 (2004): 65.

theoretical discussion of the concept in its autonomous and integral form will be provided. First, the general characteristics of the concept in the mainstream understanding of its contemporary conceptualizations will be briefly outlined. In its autonomous form, the concept serves as a consensual intersection point of diverse and even otherwise oppositional political traditions. It is accepted that there are differences among conceptualizations within this tradition, but the aim is to demonstrate a tendency which emerged in the post-1980 era. It ends with a discussion of the main arguments of its critique. Second, Antonio Gramsci's formulation of civil society from a relational perspective as well as his related concepts, which are discussed in relation to civil society, will be presented. His concept of civil society provides an alternative perspective and a way of thinking of civil society, without defining it as a fix, constant category and tearing it from its constitutive pair, the state. Lastly, civil society organizations, which are conceived as the main agents of civil society, their autonomy and functions in contemporary societies will be discussed.

2.2. A Brief History of the Concept:

Civil society during its history is understood in two ways: as political society that prevailed until the end of 18th century and as an autonomous sphere separate from the state, which evolved into a sphere in opposition to the state in the 1980s¹⁸. The pre-modern understanding of civil society did not make a separation between state and society. In the antiquity, civil society, expressed as *koinonia politike* or *societas civilis*, meant political community¹⁹. Civil society and state were, then, not only not separated, but they were also not differentiated from one another. Here, the civil and the political were intertwined; the aim of politics was to create a just social order by providing harmony and balance among different groups in the society and by promoting the common good. In other words, political institutions were the instruments of achieving a moral and good social order, in which public interest is prioritized and privileged over the private. "Civility" of civil society, therefore, expressed "the requirements of citizenship"²⁰, because as members of the political community/civil society, the citizens had a duty in achieving this moral goal. In this understanding, the civil, moral order is both constituted and protected and maintained by the political order, the state.

¹⁸ Huricihan İslamoğlu, "Concept and History of Civil Society", *International Encyclopaedia of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, (Elsevier, 2001): 1891; Krishan Kumar, "Civil Society: An Inquiry into the Usefulness of an Historical Term", *The British Journal of Sociology* 44, No: 3 (September 1993): 376.

¹⁹ İslamoğlu, "Concept and History of Civil Society", 1891; Kumar, "Civil Society: An Inquiry into the Usefulness of an Historical Term", 376.

²⁰ John Ehrenberg, *Civil Society: The Critical History of an Idea* (New York: New York University Press, 2017): 4.

The equation of political community and civil society predominated until the late 18th century, though in a “transformed” form²¹. In this traditional version, civil society was the opposite of the uncivilized, the state of nature. Although with centralization and bureaucratization of power and the expansion of the market in the 17th and 18th centuries the meaning of civil society changed, it was not yet defined as a separate domain distinct from the political society. Either for providing security, peace, and order as in Hobbes or protecting the right to private property as in Locke, the state was part of these conceptualizations of civil society with regulative and administrative functions. Administration of justice and providing balance and harmony in the society prevailed as the “legitimizing objective” of political society²². However, the precursors of the conceptual dichotomy of state-civil society were being formulated in the conceptualizations of civil society of this period. On the one hand, civil society was formulated in the search for balancing the absolute authority of the political society. As a response to centralization and concentration of power, the politically excluded propertied classes sought to carve out a space for themselves to influence politics and restrain the unprecedented power of the ruler. On the other hand, from a conservative perspective, it was a response to the increasing political and economic differences, crystalizing with the expansion of the market, for protecting a balanced, harmonious order by preventing extreme social inequalities and keeping “an increasingly differentiated society integrated”²³. Wood argues that the tendency of separating state and civil society exists since the antiquity, because the development of the concept of civil society is closely related to “the development of private property as a distinct and autonomous locus of social power”²⁴. In these understandings however, common good was still the objective of civil society as a part of the political society.

In the process of modernization and industrialization, gradually the meaning of civil society evolved from securing common good towards protecting private economic interests and individual freedoms, while, at the same, it came to be understood as a separate domain. This separation was reflecting the objective of preventing political intervention of the state in the economic activity in civil society, based on the assumption that civil society is self-regulated, as expressed by Adam Smith as invisible hand. In other words, civil society as a concept differentiated from the state emerged only with the separation of economy as an “autonomous

²¹ İslamoğlu, “Concept and History of Civil Society”, 1892-3.

²² Ibid, 1892.

²³ Ibid, 1893.

²⁴ Ellen Meiksins Wood, “The Uses and Abuses of ‘Civil Society’”, *Socialist Register* 26, (1990): 60-1.

sphere” from the political during the advancement of capitalism²⁵. Even in this form, state and civil society were not detached completely and opposed to one another; the state was assigned the duty of “administering justice and providing security”²⁶, that is, of guaranteeing the necessary conditions for the market to function properly. Parallel to that, the meaning of civil society including citizens and representing the common good (Bürgergesellschaft) was narrowed down to mean bourgeois society (bürgerliche Gesellschaft), representing the particular interests of the propertied classes, as well as denoting its culture²⁷.

These understandings of the concept have two common characteristics. First, the Enlightenment idea separated but did not disconnect or oppose civil society and state²⁸. Hence, the presence of power in civil society was recognized. Second, civil society was not conceived as a coherent totality free from contradictions; on the contrary, social inequalities were part of it. In fact, the objective of politics was administering them. As the contradictions in civil society, that is the real, material inequality was getting more visible, Hegel and Marx, recognizing the separation between the economic and the political, reformulated civil society and state relationship. Both recognized civil society in its bourgeois form, in relation to economic activity. In fact, “autonomous economy” was the “essential condition” of their formulation²⁹. For Hegel, civil society and state belonged together, because only the state could transcend the particular interests in civil society and achieve the universal. In other words, the state is required for resolving the contradictions of civil society³⁰. Marx, on the other hand, saw the liberal bourgeois state, not where the particular interests are transcended but where they are universalized as general interests, which was made possible by the separation of the economic and the political. Civil society and state, for him, were intrinsically connected by class interest. Civil society, as the scene of class struggles, was not only the domain of exploitation, oppression, and social inequalities but of revolutionary transformation of the society as well. In these views, civil society and state are in a dialectical relationship completing, reproducing, and transforming one another. Gramsci built his theory of politics on this critique of separation of state and civil society.

²⁵ Ibid, 61.

²⁶ İslamoğlu, “Concept and History of Civil Society”, 1893.

²⁷ Kocka, “Civil Society”, 66-7, 72-3.

²⁸ Fine, “Civil Society Theory”; Ehrenberg, *Civil Society*, 165.

²⁹ Wood, “The Uses and Abuses”, 62.

³⁰ Ehrenberg, *Civil Society*, 148-51.

As the meaning of civil society narrowed down to bourgeois society, its generally positive connotations underlining common good and moral society disappeared³¹, because in this form it was revealing the inherent social inequalities. Alexis de Tocqueville, who inspired a stream of contemporary interpretations, however, attached to civil society positive meanings referring to its democratic function and posited it against the state. Understood as a sphere between the individual and the state filled with voluntary associations that became widespread at the time, he argued that civil society could bring about democracy through the mediation of voluntary organizations by restraining the state's intervention in social life. Contrasting the “‘strong society, weak state’ of America to the ‘strong state, weak society’ of Europe” he glorified the “absence of government” in social life³². The state's extreme intervention in civil society, he argued, through its “monopoly” over education, health and other social services could be balanced by voluntary associations that would provide such services³³. Civil society, in this understanding, both assumes the duties of the state to provide basic needs, that is, welfare of the society and restrains the state's pervasive “centralized” power, promotes community values and increases social integration by “locality”³⁴. He excludes economy from civil society and hence ignores the social inequalities and contradictions in it. Rather, it is a “school of democracy” in which groups have equal conditions for democratic participation in social life; this “self-government” has, in turn, positive influence on both the state and society³⁵. In other words, it promotes democracy at the expense of social equality by undermining the social state and highlighting instead the liberal understanding of equality before law.

After de Tocqueville, the concept of civil society vanished altogether from both scholarly and public fields - with the exception of Gramsci that will be discussed in the next sections- until it returned in the 1980s again with positive connotations. The general global conditions of the 1980s and the preceding 1970s were, indeed, favourable for formulation of a positively loaded autonomous civil society against the ‘notorious’ state. The deepening critique of the welfare state of the West from the 1970s on, in reaction to the rising costs of the welfare state³⁶, the electoral victory of conservative-neoliberals such as Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Ronald Reagan in the US in the early 1980s and the following collapse of state socialism in the Eastern

³¹ Kocka, “Civil Society”, 67.

³² Ehrenberg, *Civil Society*, 183.

³³ İslamoğlu, “Concept and History of Civil Society”, 1895.

³⁴ Ehrenberg, *Civil Society*, 191-2.

³⁵ John Keane and Wolfgang Merkel, “Civil Society” in *The Handbook of Political, Social and Economic Transformation*, ed. Wolfgang Merkel, Raj Kollmorgen and Hans-Jürgen Wagener (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 372-3.

³⁶ İslamoğlu, “Concept and History of Civil Society”, 1895.

Europe, the fall of authoritarian regimes in Latin America as well as the rise of the anti-statist, culturalist new social movements prepared the conditions for the conceptualization of a depoliticized autonomous civil society as a distinct sphere in opposition to the state. The initial “negative” anti-statist motivations under these conditions evolved into positive “commitment to civil society”³⁷. The liberals, conservatives, socialists, activists of new social movements, in short, both the left and the right, welcomed, on different grounds, not only the separation of civil society and the state but also the opposition of these fields to each other³⁸. From then on, the concept acquired a brand new meaning, which is central in the mainstream understanding and discussions.

2.3. The Hegemonic View: State-Civil Society Dichotomy and Civil Society as Autonomous Sphere:

The conceptualization of civil society as an autonomous sphere has become mainstream after its revival during the fall of authoritarian regimes of Latin America and the collapse of the state socialist regimes in Eastern Europe in the 1980s³⁹. This context is relevant and significant, because it gives civil society its ideological content and role in contemporary societies. It was in this context not only the concept of civil society but also the “conceptual dichotomy” of state and civil society was revived⁴⁰. In the socialist context of East Europe, civil society is understood as the self-organization of the society in voluntary associations out of and against the intrusive power and control of the state. It was a non-state sphere of social action. Because the state was denoting socialist strategy, it was defined as a sphere of non-socialist action. Both reform and revolution, change from above and below, were rejected and civil society was suggested as an alternative way of action, “a new political strategy”⁴¹. The rise of civil society was, therefore, a declaration of the end of socialist strategy of “seizure of the state”⁴². Yet, it is also conceptualized as a sphere out of the market, because its logic and aim was different from that of the market. Civil society was, then, thought as a “third road”, an alternative to socialist and capitalist logic⁴³, though as a result of their “fierce antistatism” the East Europeans ignored “the dangers of the market”⁴⁴ and the ‘third road’ was replaced by capitalist integration⁴⁵.

³⁷ Ehrenberg, *Civil Society*, 218-20.

³⁸ Chandhoke, “The ‘Civil’ and the ‘Political’”; Wood, “The Uses and Abuses”.

³⁹ Chandhoke, “Civil Society”, 607.

⁴⁰ Wood, “The Uses and Abuses”, 64.

⁴¹ Buttigieg, “The Contemporary Discourse on Civil Society”, 36.

⁴² Fine, “Civil Society Theory”, 10; Chandhoke, “Civil Society”, 611.

⁴³ Fine, “Civil Society Theory”, 9.

⁴⁴ Ehrenberg, *Civil Society*, 8.

⁴⁵ Fine, “Civil Society Theory”, 9; Ehrenberg, *Civil Society*, 8.

Two points are worth mentioning about this hegemonic and dichotomous understanding. First, civil society is not only separated from and opposed to state and the market, but is also privileged over them⁴⁶. This is because, it is regarded as providing the conditions for fundamental rights and liberties and for action to protect them. It is the sphere where individuals could exist with their differences and yet could connect in solidarity and organize independently from the state. In other words, civil society is understood as essentially positive. Hence and second, the state is associated with negative properties, because its so-called totalizing logic has a tendency to intrude all spheres of life. The detachment of civil society from the state aims at limiting state power with the sphere of the state and prevent the expansion of its logic to civil society, which is associated with anti-politics. Anti-politics denotes a sphere freed from the politics of the state, but not the lack of politics. It is the sphere of absence of state power and anti-statist, oppositional movements, and diverse grassroots voluntary associations. Anti-politics is understood as “the ethos of civil society”, which is formed as a “parallel polis from below” and politics was discredited as craving for power⁴⁷. Civil society is the sphere of the social in opposition to the power politics of the state, which counterweights it. The state is assigned the “traditional liberal responsibility” of establishing and maintaining rule of law to protect the organizations of civil society⁴⁸. In this specific context, the concept had an ideological function. It was the instrument of negating socialist politics associated with the authoritarian state and celebration of liberal democracy, rights and liberties identified civil society. As Chandhoke puts it, it was as if the “bourgeois revolution of the 17th century against the absolutist state” was being “re-enacted” in the East Europe against the socialist state⁴⁹. From then on, conceptualization of civil society as an autonomous and democratic sphere out of and in opposition to the state has become the mainstream.

According to Walzer, the East European efforts for rebuilding civil society was relevant for the West, because the connection among the individuals based on trust was weakening and cooperation and social solidarity was being eroded under advanced capitalism⁵⁰. Searching the best setting for achieving “good life”, Walzer concludes that neither the state nor the market can respond to the erosion of social life. This is because, the control of the citizens over the

⁴⁶ Fine, “Civil Society Theory”, 9; Chandhoke, “Civil Society”, 608.

⁴⁷ Fine, “Civil Society Theory”, 10-1.

⁴⁸ Ehrenberg, *Civil Society*, 214.

⁴⁹ “Civil Society”, 610.

⁵⁰ Michael Walzer, “The Concept of Civil Society”, in *Toward a Global Civil Society*, ed. Michael Walzer (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995): 8.

huge, centralized state, reduced merely to voting, is insignificant, while the market, with its orientation towards the individual, leaves out the social. Civil society is, on the other hand, where difference, plurality is recognized and where the solidarities among the likeminded are built, without giving privilege one over the other. It is “the setting of settings” where “all are included, none is preferred”⁵¹. In other words, civil society provides the equal conditions for individuals with different understandings of and ways to achieve good life connect. However, the aim of this “uncoerced association” is neither to accentuate the differences and plurality nor to accomplish a political project, but the association itself⁵². People come together, “form groups and communicate” not for achieving a certain cause, but “for the sake of sociability itself”, since “we are social beings” in the first place⁵³. Put differently, civil society, the social, prioritizes the state, the political and the market, the economic, that is, civil society is a field that exists before the state and the market. Good life is, then, possible by socializing in voluntary associations, which, in turn, positively influences the political and economic spheres. This is because associational life promotes “inclusiveness” and plurality, which is its “greatest virtue” against the “singlemindedness” and uniformity of the state and the market that perceive citizens or consumers⁵⁴. Yet, ideological singlemindedness exists also in civil society and poses a danger to its pluralism and inclusiveness. According to Walzer, “universalism of religions and exclusivity of the nations” belong to this group, however, such tendencies have little chance to survive in the plurality, openness, and inclusivity of civil society⁵⁵. Although Walzer gives primacy to civil society, he does not completely ignore state power in it, yet, he underlines this power cannot take over civil society because of its resistance. State, according to Walzer, is an “indispensable agent” for proper functioning of associational life; but “associational networks always resist the organizing impulses of state bureaucrats”⁵⁶. Put short, civil society, understood as voluntary associations, provide the institutional framework for solidarities to be built, differences to be expressed and diverse projects of good life to be carried out, by which democracy is learned and expanded to state and the market. The role of the state in this setting is to provide equal opportunities, rules and framework for the associations for realizing their projects.

⁵¹ Ibid, 16.

⁵² Ibid, 7.

⁵³ Ibid, 16

⁵⁴ Ibid, 25.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 21.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 24.

Putnam, like Walzer, underlines the declining socialization and solidarity in the American society and points out to the positive role of civic engagement in associations in building social connections, trust and solidarity, which produce “social capital”⁵⁷. Rise in social capital in turn, he argues, increases the overall quality of social life, political participation and creates more responsive and efficient social and political institutions. Both the quality of network and type of associations are factors that influence the production of social capital. First, within the denser associational networks, citizens more possibly engage and strengthen social connections and create reciprocity⁵⁸. Second, the type of associations he considers are the small scale, local and non-hierarchical ones where regular face-to-face meeting and communication is possible. He leaves out, on the other hand, “service providing” non-profit sector and larger, hierarchical associations oriented to political mobilization on public issues such as environmentalist or feminist organizations⁵⁹. Putnam, like Walzer, emphasises socialization itself as the ultimate aim of civic engagement, but he excludes politics totally from the terrain of civil society. For him, civic engagement such as “newspaper readership, membership in choral societies or football clubs” or bowling in leagues that do not have, he assumes, any political content and project increases “reciprocity and civic solidarity”, which he sees, as the “precondition” of democratic administration and economic thrival⁶⁰. The relationship between civil society, state and the market is in direct and positive correlation: the stronger civil society is in terms of civic engagement, the stronger and more efficient are the state and the market⁶¹. This strength is generated by and flows from civil society to other spheres of life. In other words, in Putnam’s understanding, civil society is explained with reference to itself, its own dynamics and the state is completely left out from this terrain. These dynamics of civil society that have democratizing power are likewise non-political, that is participative and democratic politics is made possible by non-political civil society. This, in turn, leaves out a significant part of engagements in civil society with political mobilization power. Putnam’s is a conflict-free civil society, where individuals with conflict potential in other contexts come together in a non-political environment, socialize, and solidarize. Lack of conflict and lack of state intervention go hand

⁵⁷ Robert D. Putnam, “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital”, *Journal of Democracy* 6, No: 1 (January 1995): 67.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 67, 72, 76; Michael W. Foley and Bob Edwards, “The Paradox of Civil Society”, *Journal of Democracy* 7, No: 3 (July 1996): 40.

⁵⁹ Putnam, “Bowling Alone”, 69-70.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 66.

⁶¹ Foley and Edwards, “The Paradox of Civil Society”, 40.

in hand, because administration of conflict in actually existing societies requires state intervention.

Diamond⁶², like Putnam and Walzer, assigns civil society manifold democratic functions, but different from them, his stress is not on community or solidarity. Diamond defines civil society as “voluntary, self-generating, self-supporting and autonomous realm organized around a set of shared rules or by legality” situated between “the private sphere and the state”⁶³. Its aim is neither profit-making nor seizure of the state, but to monitor and restrain state power for the public good. Therefore, he excludes from the realm of civil society the social movements and organizations that have a political project and aims at seizure of state power as well as those which ally with political parties. Additionally, violent, fundamentalist, radical or revolutionary groups do not belong to this realm because they, too, have a political project which disrespects “diversity and plurality”, the “irreducible condition” of civil society and have tendency towards “monopolization” of the realm⁶⁴. Civil society has democratic functions both for democratic and undemocratic regimes; for the latter it facilitates institutionalization of liberal representative democracy and the withdrawal of the state from the realm. In fact, free-market economy, neoliberalism, and integration with the capitalist economy is, for him, a requirement of democratization⁶⁵. Diamond, like Putnam, portrays civil society as a conflict-free and apolitical realm, contradictorily however, which assumes representative functions of political parties though not replacing them, recruiting, and educating political leaders and the duties of the state concerning welfare of the citizens that decreases the “expectations” from the state and “lower the stakes of politics”⁶⁶. His civil society is not only “a large free school” of democratic education⁶⁷, but also an instrument of rolling back of the state whose intervention remains as minimal as possible in the name of democracy.

Cohen and Arato’s civil society is characterized likewise by “democracy enhancing” aspects such as plurality, inclusiveness, openness, diversity, self-limitation, publicity and privacy⁶⁸. With these features, it resists the “homogenizing tendencies” of the state and the market and protects its autonomy against them within the frame of law set by the state guaranteeing the

⁶² Larry Diamond, “Rethinking Civil Society: Toward Democratic Consolidation”, *Journal of Democracy* 5, No: 3 (July 1994).

⁶³ Ibid, 5.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 5, 7.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 10-1, 14-6.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 11.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 12.

⁶⁸ Andrew Arato and Jean L. Cohen, “Civil Society, Populism and Religion”, *Constellations* 24, (2017): 283-4.

fundamental rights⁶⁹. They “reconstruct”⁷⁰ civil society against both Marxist and liberal politics; it is, in their view, prior to both the state and the market, whose existence necessitated differentiation between all three spheres, which is the precondition of democratization. Hence, self-limitation of civil society, which prevents “dedifferentiation” and protects the autonomy of all three spheres, is of utmost importance for democratization⁷¹. Their view on democracy is, like civil society, cultural-essentialist. It is a conflictual process, a cultural struggle between the established, traditional institutions of the state, characterized by power and privilege and the modern and democratic organizations in civil society, whose main feature is plurality, division, contestation, and indeterminacy. Collective actors of modern civil society, therefore, fight for the institutionalisation of rights to maintain its plurality and division against the traditional, expansive, and unifying logic of the state. For them, the plurality and diversity of organizations with multiple “groups, identities, networks, social movements” corresponds to the plurality of identities replacing the understanding of civil society as “a unified corporate organization of society”⁷². Moreover, the cultural struggles within the plurality of civil society, between those who “aim at democratization, equality and inclusion” and those who do not, is the motor of civil society⁷³. In other words, they portray a cultural struggle both between the state and civil society and within the civil society itself, which they see as a struggle for democratization.

Accordingly, Cohen and Arato consider certain actors as dangerous and distorting for a democratic civil society and exclude them from the terrain. For this, they use self-limitation of civil society, which keeps differentiation among the spheres, as a criteria; the plural actors of civil society, thanks to their self-limitation, do not aim power, but influence. Populist actors and associations and politicized religion, on the other hand, although emerge in civil society, by their “intrinsic logic” have a tendency towards “dedifferentiation” of state and civil society, because they act from “influence” towards “power”⁷⁴. They have a logic of uniformity and homogeneity, which, either in civil or political society, endangers the plurality and autonomy and hence democratic potential of civil society. In other words, the associations that have a tendency towards monopolization are not features of civil society, because they contradict with

⁶⁹ Ibid, 284.

⁷⁰ Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, “Politics and the Reconstruction of the Concept of Civil Society”, in ed. Axel Honneth, Thomas McCarthy, Claus Offe and Albrecht Wellmer, *Cultural-Political Interventions in the Unfinished Project of Enlightenment* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992).

⁷¹ Arato and Cohen, “Civil Society, Populism and Religion”, 285.

⁷² Cohen and Arato, “Reconstruction of Civil Society”, 133; Arato and Cohen, “Civil Society, Populism and Religion”, 284.

⁷³ Arato and Cohen, “Civil Society, Populism and Religion”, 283-4.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 285.

its main, defining characteristics endangering the separation between the spheres, which is an “indispensable counterpart of representative democracy”⁷⁵. Rather, this “paradoxical relationship” between civil society and politicized religion and populist actors is a “democratic dysfunction”, a “pathology of representative democracy and autonomous civil society”⁷⁶; they aim at the destruction of the main principles of civil society that are the precondition of their existence in the first place. Civil society, in their view, with its plurality and autonomy, has the potential and is the main stage to fight against inegalitarian, homogenizing, antidemocratic actors and associations.

The mainstream contemporary uses of the concept discussed above have a very fundamental common characteristics. They approach civil society as a distinct and autonomous sphere and situate it in opposition to the state. In other words, the concept is based on a state-civil society dichotomy. Both state and civil society are assumed to be coherent totalities with certain features and functions. Civil society, which is defined as the sphere of voluntary activity has positive connotations; it is the sphere of plurality and diversity, whose fundamental function is democratization. The positivity of civil society concerning its features and functions is attached to it in relation to state. The state is the other, the negative of civil society. Hence, the state-civil society dichotomy implies other dichotomies such as coercive /voluntary, monolithic/pluralist, authoritarian/democratic, power/ resistance-influence. Put differently, state and civil society are not only separated, but also opposed, “uncoupled” and the power is shifted from the former to the latter⁷⁷. The resurgence of civil society in the 1980s, therefore, was not simply a rediscovery of the concept in its old form, but its return with a renewed meaning and function in a new context.

2.4. The Critique of the Hegemonic View: Can Civil Society as an Autonomous Sphere be a Useful Concept?

Formulated by and representing considerably different political traditions, these conceptualizations of civil society have interestingly fundamental commonalities, which as mentioned earlier, create doubts about it as an analytical category⁷⁸. For the concept of civil society to have a clear meaning and to be useful for analysis, it needs to be connected to its uses in a definite “theoretical setting”⁷⁹ that “gives it a place and meaning”⁸⁰. It has been discussed

⁷⁵ Ibid, 289.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 283, 287, 289.

⁷⁷ Chandhoke, “Civil Society”, 609; Chandhoke, “The ‘Civil’ and the ‘Political’”, 3.

⁷⁸ Chandhoke, “The ‘Civil’ and the ‘Political’”.

⁷⁹ Fine, “Civil Society Theory”, 8.

⁸⁰ Kumar, “Civil Society: An Inquiry into the Usefulness of an Historical Term”, 390.

that the changing understandings of civil society were the expressions of the social relations of the time they were conceptualized and cannot be detached from this social setting. The contemporary scholars claim that the roots of their concept lie in the Enlightenment tradition of Europe⁸¹. Keane, for example, underlines that today's understanding of the concept can be traced back to Europe when the separation of state and civil society was being formulated between 1750-1850⁸². He compares the efforts in this period for carving out an autonomous sphere of self-organization out of the state to the contemporary definitions of civil society, which he argues to be similar. According to Fine, however, this connection with Enlightenment, what Keane expresses as “remembering the dead”, is rather weak and contemporary uses are “significantly different”⁸³. The critical core of both Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment thought, he argues, is absent in the contemporary uses of the concept. It is crucial, then, to distinguish the features of the contemporary uses from those of the Enlightenment, because they are the product of another context with significant differences of meaning and function. They express the social relations of this new context and gain their significance within it as well.

Contemporary uses separate life into spheres, which are distinct, autonomous, and hence, detached from one another and which have their own logic and rules of functioning. Consequently, civil society has different dynamics from the other spheres that make it work and which are rooted in itself. It is explained with reference to itself, completely uninfluenced and unaltered by any external powers. Civil society as one of these “plural and mutually exclusive” spheres, assumes the dichotomous understanding, does not include “conflict, mediation, compromise or competition” since they characterize the state and the market but not civil society⁸⁴. Civil society is not only defined as an autonomous sphere distinct from the state, but also in opposition to the state. State and civil society are constant, given categories, both of which have fixed characteristics and tendencies that are generated within their own boundaries, by their own intrinsic dynamics. The negatively loaded state is the sphere of coercion, power, privilege, homogeneity, uniformity, monolithic, and totalizing logic with a tendency to authoritarianism, while civil society is the voluntary, civic sphere of locality, difference, pluralism, diversity and democracy. Although they are strictly separated and civil society is not influenced by the state, the positive features generated in civil society flow to the state, limiting and democratizing its power. In other words, it is assumed that there is a struggle between the

⁸¹ Fine, “Civil Society Theory”, 8.

⁸² John Keane, “Civil Society, Definitions and Approaches” in *International Encyclopaedia of Civil Society*, ed. Helmut K. Anheier and Stefan Toepler (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 2009).

⁸³ Fine, “Civil Society Theory”, 8.

⁸⁴ Chandhoke, “The ‘Civil’ and the ‘Political’ in Civil Society”, 5-8.

state and civil society, which is the dynamic of democratization. Civil society is, therefore, not only opposed to the state, but also privileged and given primacy over the state⁸⁵. The privileged position and primacy of civil society and its “subordination of politics” in the contemporary uses was absent in and even “negated” by the Enlightenment conceptualizations⁸⁶. This is because neither were the state and the civil society completely detached and uncoupled, nor were the dark faces of civil society ignored by the Enlightenment understanding. Rather, civil society was recognized as the terrain of contradictions, which, precisely therefore, required the state.

The contemporary mainstream uses do not recognize the oppression, coercion, inequality, and discrimination intrinsic in the organization of civil society, in the first place because, these contradictions are “conceptualized away” by the distinction between the market and the civil society⁸⁷. In other words, not only the social and the political is separated, but also the social and the economic. According to Wood, while separation of life into multiple spheres and autonomous civil society is intended as a measure exclusively against the state oppression and as it is argued, its totalizing logic, it ignores the totalizing logic of capitalism and reduces the capitalist system to the sphere of the market, making it invisible in other spheres, but also reducing it to an ordinary category within the “plurality of social relations”⁸⁸. In this sense, she argues, it disguises the real source of state oppression, which is “rooted” in the power relations in civil society and hence, opens the way to “the oppressions of civil society”⁸⁹.

Moreover, the limitation of all spheres with their own boundaries provides the theoretical legitimation for the shrinking state, its diminishing provision of social services and neoliberal policies. Because civil society is free of contradiction and the sphere of freedom, autonomy and civil liberties, welfare services of the state as well are perceived as interventions in the terrain of liberties. According to Ehrenberg, scholarly and political rise of civil society since 1980s is the ideological aspect in the “single process of conservative ascendancy”⁹⁰. In an era of constantly increasing economic inequality, diminishing social justice and the shrinking state, he argues, civil society, with its assumed democratic function against the state power, plays its role in legitimizing the transformation in the other two aspects, namely, economics and politics,

⁸⁵ Fine, “Civil Society Theory”, 9.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 15.

⁸⁷ Wood, “The Uses and Abuses”, 65.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 63, 65-6.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 63, 74.

⁹⁰ Ehrenberg, *Civil Society*, 1.

by changing “the way we think about equality and democracy”⁹¹. The fear from the potential dangers and oppression coming from the state surpasses those coming from civil society and makes the inequalities in it invisible. Equality has been detached from economics and the real social inequalities are concealed by the abstract equality before law as the sole precondition of democracy. Yet, the fact that all groups in civil society have the same legal conditions and possibilities to organize and have an influence on the state, does not mean that they actually can do that and even the abstract equality remains a possibility.

Accordingly, both the context that civil society exists and functions and the kind of democracy it is assumed to strengthen is free-market, liberal representative democracy. Democracy is not only connected to capitalism, but also it is the requirement of democracy. Civil society is conceptualized as “a social form specific to capitalism” and democracy, reduced to its “formal” version, is associated with liberal democracy⁹². This is important, because the concept in this form has revived when state socialism was collapsing, and neoliberal capitalism was rising. It gains its meaning and functions in relation to the context of its resurgence. In other words, it is argued that rather than “analytically”, civil society is used “ideologically” to argue against the welfare state⁹³ and celebrate “liberal democracy as the sole option of politics”, the end of history and ideology⁹⁴. Consequently, conceptualizations have become normative rather than descriptive, which do not correspond to actually existing societies and, in turn, diminish clarity, explanatory and analytic power of the concept in actual contexts⁹⁵. Put differently, civil society is idealized against the state, which created a gap between theory and actually existing civil societies.

The exclusion of the economic and the political from the sphere of civil society leaves behind an ethical sphere. In the contemporary uses, civil society is defined as the sphere of the social that is freed from the power relations of the political and the economic spheres. Consequently, civil society is the sphere where different “identities” exist together, defined not politically or economically, but in cultural terms⁹⁶. This plurality of identities, multiculturalism, difference, diversity, in these understandings, is a positive feature of civil society, which the uniformity and homogeneity of the state and the market lack. The diversity in civil society is celebrated

⁹¹ *Civil Society*, 1.

⁹² Wood, “The Uses and Abuses”, 66-74.

⁹³ Anne Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci and Contemporary Politics: Beyond Pessimism of the Intellect*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 66.

⁹⁴ Chandhoke, “Civil Society”, 611.

⁹⁵ Chandhoke, “The ‘Civil’ and the ‘Political’ in Civil Society”, 5-8; Wood, “The Uses and Abuses”, 66-7.

⁹⁶ Wood, “The Uses and Abuses”, 74-80.

and considered to be the irreducible, indispensable condition of it and a precondition of democracy. It is important to underline that diversity is defined in cultural and the equality of differences in legal terms, because the celebration of diversity as a good thing in itself is possible, only when economic differences, that is, social inequality is left out⁹⁷. Likewise, some actors are excluded from the civil society on the grounds that they contradict with and endanger the principles of civil society or do not serve its purposes. These are already listed in the previous section. This understanding legitimizes civil society as plural, inclusive and democratic by excluding any component distorting such understanding as “dysfunctions” or “disorders”⁹⁸. Its logic is that it is, for example, democratic, because the antidemocratic actors are excluded from it, since they are antidemocratic. In other words, civil society is attributed characteristics that are immanent to it and any actors, associations, movements that contradict with those immanent characteristics are excluded from it, which makes the argument circular and explains civil society with reference to itself. Instead of defining civil society based on the actually existing civil societies, contemporary uses follow a reversed logic.

Dichotomous conceptualizations of civil society that understand it as a distinct and autonomous sphere attract much critique particularly concerning its analytical power to explain actually existing civil societies. Chandhoke, for example, argues that this understanding “blurs our grasp of civil society”, because it denies its “conflictual character” as well as “the power relations” in it⁹⁹. Similarly, Wood points out that these concepts conceal that coercion and oppression “in the family, in gender relations, in the workplace” or in the form of “racism and homophobia” are not external to civil society, but “irreducibly constitutive” of it¹⁰⁰. Moreover, as Fine argues it poses a danger to the plurality, diversity, and difference, that is to the ‘indispensable condition’ of civil society itself that the contemporary uses celebrate and glorify. He highlights two interrelated dimensions, which he argues to be, at the same time, the points that demonstrate that the contemporary uses lack the “critical core” of the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment thought¹⁰¹. The first is about the definition of civil society as a social sphere, ethical life freed from any conflictual content. As such, civil society is a good functioning, harmonious sphere, as long as it is not intervened and distorted by the “Other or Alien”¹⁰². The Other in civil society in the contemporary uses is arbitrarily defined following a circular logic. Taken as an ethical

⁹⁷ Ibid, 76.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 72-4.

⁹⁹ Chandhoke, “The ‘Civil’ and the ‘Political’ in Civil Society”, 6-8.

¹⁰⁰ Wood, “The Uses and Abuses”, 74-80.

¹⁰¹ Fine, “Civil Society Theory”, 25-6.

¹⁰² Ibid, 25-6.

sphere, then, civil society can be filled with other content as the legitimate elements of it and accordingly, this framework of understanding it makes the way free and even legitimizes the “hunt for the Alien” responsible from its distortion¹⁰³. In other words, the understanding of civil society as a pure, uncontaminated, and positive sphere in itself, by its own dynamics makes it open to its political instrumentalization by different actors with various motivations to destruct its ‘impure’ components. Second involves the privileged position of civil society over the state. Fine argues that the glorification of civil society against, as argued, the totalitarian logic of the state can neither guarantee a democratic collective life, nor rule out totalitarianism¹⁰⁴. On the contrary, the “subsumption” of state by civil society in its extreme form following this logic, according to him, is the “hallmark of totalitarian regimes” in which “the strongest element in civil society” seizes the state to “terrorize the rest”¹⁰⁵. Contemporary uses’ emphasis on the particularities in civil society and restricted state intervention to protect this diversity, underestimates its potential in the form of ethical life to destroy the very conditions which makes civil society. This cannot be overcome simply by exiling certain actors out of the terrain, because the formulation of civil society as an autonomous, ethical sphere itself privileging and celebrating the subjectivities, individualities, particular identities, opens the way to the possibility of the victory of specific interests over the whole. In this sense, the concept is formulated exclusively for the liberal democratic context, which is assumed to provide the preconditions for it to exist and function properly, which, however, carries in itself the potentiality of self-destruction.

The critique of civil society as an autonomous sphere, as discussed above, focuses on its separation and detachment from and opposition to the other spheres of collective life. Its separation between the objective and the subjective; the economic, the political and the social as well as the primacy of the latter, it is argued, creates theoretical problems but also does not give a picture of the real life. Therefore, it is proposed that to understand the actually existing societies and have “a critical view of the world as it is and a map of the existing terrain”¹⁰⁶, an analytic concept without eliminating its normative power is necessary. This requires understanding how these separated spheres of life actually “constitute” one another, which does not focus only on the features of civil society itself, but also how the context, the economic and

¹⁰³ Ibid, 25-6.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 22-3.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 22.

¹⁰⁶ Wood, “The Uses and Abuses”, 75.

political conditions, shape and transform it¹⁰⁷. In the next section, such an understanding of civil society formulated by Antonio Gramsci will be discussed.

2.5. Gramsci on Civil Society: “Integral State”

Antonio Gramsci’s work and especially his concept of civil society has been often employed and has a place in the debates of the post-1980, specifically with reference to the collapse of the East European state socialism¹⁰⁸. The interest in Gramsci within the above discussed context and debate is based on a particular interpretation of his work. This is important to underline, because for many scholars the rediscovery of and rising interest in Gramsci in a context when the idea of socialism and with it associated Marxism was criticized and renounced, requires a discussion. For example, Fine argues that although “remembering the dead”, Keane’s expression for defining the contemporary concept of civil society, was also “forgetting” and “burying Marx”, because Marx was interpreted to be “the strongest voice against civil society”, Gramsci was an exception to this¹⁰⁹. Wood, likewise, points out that the Marxist analysis was criticized for being reductionist and economistic in explaining civil society, though Gramsci has become the “staple” of the contemporary interpretations of civil society on the left¹¹⁰. Buttigieg asserts that and argues that Gramsci was opposed to Marx by the contemporary scholars on the grounds that he understands “the dynamism of civil society” against Marx’s “hatred” of it¹¹¹. He adds, however, that the interest in Gramsci’s work went beyond the scholars in the Marxist tradition and was even popularized in public debates by renowned journalists, reputable media, think tanks, bureaucrats, and politicians¹¹². In other words, it is argued that Gramsci’s work has become an often employed reference, because a stream of readings of Gramsci argues that he surpasses the reductionist conceptualization of civil society in the Marxist tradition and gives civil society its place.

¹⁰⁷ Chandhoke, “The ‘Civil’ and the ‘Political’ in Civil Society”, 7-8; Ehrenberg, *Civil Society*, 269.

¹⁰⁸ Wood, “The Uses and Abuses”; Buttigieg, “The Contemporary Discourse on Civil Society”.

¹⁰⁹ “Civil Society Theory”, 23, 26.

¹¹⁰ “The Uses and Abuses”, 63-5.

¹¹¹ “The Contemporary Discourse on Civil Society”, 36. According to Buttigieg, this comparison between Marx and Gramsci is conflating their object of interest; while the focus of Marx’s analysis was bourgeois society (bürgerliche Gesellschaft), what Gramsci refers as civil society was “società civile”.

¹¹² Joseph A. Buttigieg, “Gramsci on Civil Society”, *Boundary 2* 22, No: 3 (Autumn 1995); “The Contemporary Discourse on Civil Society”.

In these readings of Gramsci, civil society is understood as the sphere of the social, autonomous from the state and the market and in opposition to the state¹¹³. It is the non-state and non-market sphere, in which consent is organized and hegemony is exercised. This autonomous area of consent and hegemony is opposed to the sphere of the state, which is the place of coercion and domination. Through separation of civil society from the state and the market, it is defined as the sphere of social interaction and communication of diverse and multiple actors. Moreover, because it is the place of hegemony, which is, it is assumed, the prior “political technique” of maintaining bourgeois rule, it is read as the sphere of “anti-politics”¹¹⁴. In other words, the diverse and plural actors of civil society are argued to be able to challenge the existing hegemony and democratize civil society, but also the state without its seizure. In this sense, it does not only prioritize and privilege civil society, but also diminishes the significance of the state as a secondary moment in the struggle for democratization. According to Buttigieg, such readings of Gramsci of the post-1980 era do not aim at understanding Gramsci’s concepts of civil society, state or hegemony as such, but are rather interested in conceptualizing civil society as an autonomous sphere and searching in his work for the theoretical foundations of this task¹¹⁵. Consequently, his civil society is understood as an autonomous, conflict-free, consensual terrain, in which diverse, plural identities exist, interact and communicate based on legal equality and struggle for democracy; an interpretation, which portrays the liberal view on civil society. In short, it is argued that Gramsci’s concept of civil society has been adapted to the conditions of the post-1980s through a misreading or selective reading and instrumentalized for formulating a conceptual dichotomy of state and civil society with an emphasis on the latter¹¹⁶.

Gramsci’s work is attractive for such purposes because he formulated conceptual pairs such as civil society-state, consent-coercion, persuasion-domination, hegemony-dictatorship, leading-ruling, war of position-war of manoeuvre, West-East. These binaries led those scholars to formulate an opposition between state and civil society and transfer economic relations altogether out of this system. Following these formulations, civil society is associated with the

¹¹³ For Buttigieg and for Wood, Cohen and Arato’s reading as well as that of Keane’s are among the best examples of these efforts. Thomas likewise attributes this reading of Gramsci to post-Marxists and in the first place to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, most influential during the 1980s and ‘90s with their theory of “radical democracy”. Buttigieg, “The Contemporary Discourse on Civil Society”; Peter D. Thomas, “Hegemony, Passive Revolution and the Modern Prince”, *Thesis Eleven* 117, No: 1 (2013); Wood, “The Uses and Abuses”.

¹¹⁴ Thomas, “Hegemony, Passive Revolution and the Modern Prince”, 21.

¹¹⁵ “The Contemporary Discourse on Civil Society”, 41-2, 44; “Gramsci on Civil Society”, 27.

¹¹⁶ Buttigieg, “Gramsci on Civil Society”; Thomas, “Hegemony, Passive Revolution and the Modern Prince”; Benedetto Fontana, “Gramsci on Politics and State”, *Journal of Classical Sociology* 2, No: 2 (2002).

consent, persuasion, leadership, and hegemony, achieved through war of position, a strategy characteristic of rather Western social formations. Then, civil society becomes the place of the ideological, cultural, ethical relationships. Bobbio, the pioneer of this reading, argues that Gramsci's civil society does not belong to the base, the economic level, but to the "superstructural moment", the cultural level, on which his whole "conceptual system is based"¹¹⁷. He, moreover, argues that Gramsci's civil society in this form, as the cultural-ideological, is the main dynamics of history and hence, the primary, subordinating, determining moment. Then, Gramsci, according to Bobbio, makes double inversion in the Marxist analysis; he inverts the relationship between the base and the superstructure by transferring civil society to the cultural superstructural level and the relationship between the state and civil society within the superstructure¹¹⁸. In other words, he argues, civil society as the cultural-ideological moment in Gramsci is prior to and privileged over the state and the economy. This is the reading how Gramsci, as it is argued, surpassed the reductionist, economistic civil society, but also the privileged position of the state in the Marxist tradition. A stream of contemporary understanding of Gramsci's civil society is based on this reading of his work¹¹⁹.

The contemporary critique of this reading, on the other hand, reminds the purpose of Gramsci's conceptual binaries. Gramsci underlines that the separation between state and civil society is made only for methodological, analytical purposes and that it does not correspond to the actually existing societies¹²⁰. In reality, civil society and the state are in an organic totality, they are one and the same, that is they are not in a relationship of "ontological exteriority"¹²¹. It is argued, therefore, Gramsci's understanding of civil society is not based on a conceptual dichotomy with the state, on the contrary, he conceptualizes state and civil society as constitutive of each other. His formulation of civil society is, in fact, part of his efforts for understanding "the complex nature of state power" in capitalist societies¹²². Hence, for Gramsci, civil society is not an autonomous sphere freed from the state power, but rather it is exclusively constituted and structured by power itself. It cannot be defined as a separate and distinct sphere from the state, it can only be understood in relation to the state.

¹¹⁷ Norberto Bobbio, "Gramsci and the Conception of Civil Society", in ed. Chantal Mouffe, *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, (London, Boston&Henley: Routledge-Keagen&Paul, 1979), 30.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 32-6.

¹¹⁹ Thomas, "Hegemony, Passive Revolution and the Modern Prince", 21, 34.

¹²⁰ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, (London: Lawrence&Wishart: 1971), 160; Buttigieg, "The Contemporary Discourse on Civil Society", 43; Fontana, "Gramsci on Politics and State", 160.

¹²¹ Adam David Morton, "The Limits of Sociological Marxism?", *Historical Materialism* 21, No: 1 (2013): 139.

¹²² Sassoon, *Gramsci and Contemporary Politic*, 70.

This way of reading is critical of the use of civil society and with it associated hegemony that is torn off from its conceptual pair, the state. It underlines, instead, the significance of the concept of “integral state” for understanding civil society, because it demonstrates the “internal and dialectical relationship, the unity” between state and civil society¹²³. Integral state formulates the organic relationship between the methodologically separated state and civil society. The concept of integral state, argues Thomas, means also the dialectical unity of the base and the superstructures, that is, a historical bloc, meaning that Gramsci’s civil society does not exclude economy as argued, but rather gains its meaning only with it¹²⁴. The historical bloc is the hegemony of the ruling class in alliance with other social forces. That means hegemony, which is argued to be achieved in civil society, takes its power from the economy and the hegemonic class is defined in the first place as an economic actor, which shows the intrinsic relations between different moments of social formation. Integral state demonstrates the internal, dialectical relationship between economy, politics, moral and intellectual moments. Gramsci uses civil society for referring to the “private organisms” such as the school system, media, church, trade unions, the party and other “voluntary” associations and political society or the state in its limited form to the government, administrative and legal institutions¹²⁵. The state in its integral form includes both civil and political societies: State = civil society + political society or state in its limited form, that is the government¹²⁶. In other words, Gramsci’s civil society is not devoid of power, but together with the government it is a component that forms modern state power. Then, in this form civil society in Gramsci is not an arena of oppositional politics freed from state power or of purely social relationships marked by their non-political, non-economic nature as conceived by contemporary mainstream understandings, rather, it is the terrain in which power struggles among social classes take place for winning hegemony, but also for seizing or maintaining state power¹²⁷. Therefore, it is not a constant, given category and hence, cannot be ascribed fix, intrinsic features such as freedom or democracy, but it is rather shaped by those struggles, by which state and civil society constantly and mutually penetrate, transform, and reproduce one another. Civil society as a dynamic category, then, can be understood in a relational way and in the specific context, in which it

¹²³ Morton, “The Limits of Sociological Marxism?”, 155; Peter Thomas, “Gramsci and the Intellectuals: Modern Prince Versus Passive Revolution”, in ed. David Bates, *Marxism, Intellectuals and Politics*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

¹²⁴ Thomas, “Hegemony, Passive Revolution and the Modern Prince”, 28; Thomas, “Gramsci and the Intellectuals: Modern Prince Versus Passive Revolution”.

¹²⁵ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 12.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 262-3.

¹²⁷ Thomas, “Hegemony, Passive Revolution and the Modern Prince”; Peter Mayo, “The Centrality of the State in Neoliberal Times”, *International Gramsci Journal*, No: 3 (March 2011).

exists. In other words, civil society with all its diverse, conflicting components “conditions” politics and is itself “conditioned” by politics, by “laws and public policy”¹²⁸ in a certain context, which may or may not be of democratic character depending on the power struggles.

This view on civil society is radically different from those discussed above, which neglect the power in it. In fact, the strength of Gramsci’s concept of civil society lies precisely in its ability to demonstrate the different forms that power can take in civil society as well as its mechanisms of operating in it¹²⁹. His civil society gains this strength to expose power relations, as he elaborates on the concept for understanding the ways and mechanisms through which the ruling classes maintain and consolidate their power. In this sense, the concept of civil society exclusively aims at understanding and analysing the power struggles. The components of integral state, according to him, have two different but intertwined mechanisms for seizing and maintaining power, namely “coercion/ domination/dictatorship” and “consent/persuasion/hegemony”, which makes the integral state “hegemony protected by the armour of coercion”¹³⁰. The readings of Gramsci through dichotomies associate coercion with the state, with the bureaucratic/administrative/legal apparatus, that is, the state is assigned only repressive, negative functions. Civil society, on the other hand, is the private sphere, which is based on persuasion and hence associated with positive functions. Once civil society is understood as an element of integral state constituted by power, argues the critique of this reading, Gramsci’s other conceptual pairs that are conceived as dichotomies and associated either with the state (coercion, domination, dictatorship, war of manoeuvre) or with the civil society (consent, persuasion, hegemony, war of position) would be also understood in relation to integral state¹³¹. In other words, it is argued that these mechanisms cannot be attached to a specific moment of integral state, since they are mutually penetrating terrains, which makes a limitation of their functions impossible. Gramsci points out to the positive functions of the state for organizing consent and the coercive and negative ones of civil society. He underlines the “educative and formative” functions of the State because the aim of the State is to “create and maintain a certain type of civilization, of citizen” and the corresponding “morality”, which requires the “elimination” of the other forms and “dissemination” of the new ones¹³². In this sense, he continues, every State is “ethical” and should be conceived as “educator”. “The school

¹²⁸ Sassoon, *Gramsci and Contemporary Politics*, 70.

¹²⁹ Buttigieg, “Gramsci on Civil Society”, 3.

¹³⁰ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 263.

¹³¹ Thomas, “Gramsci and the Intellectuals”; Fontana, “Gramsci on Politics and State”; Peter Mayo, “Gramsci and the Politics of Education”, *Capital&Class* 38, No: 2 (2014).

¹³² Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 242, 246-7, 258, 266.

as the positive educative function and the courts as the repressive and negative educative function, are the most important state activities”, he argues, that form along with “the multitude of other private actions and initiatives, the apparatus of the political and cultural hegemony of the state”¹³³. Moreover, he underlines the difficulty of separating those functions with clear borders; for example, although law is “the repressive and negative aspect of the entire positive, civilising activity undertaken by the State”, it belongs in certain cases, which involve in “moral implications”, in the terrain of civil society, because civil society although “operates without ‘sanctions’ or compulsory ‘obligations’ exerts a collective pressure and obtains objective results in the form of evolution of customs, ways of thinking and acting, morality”¹³⁴. Then, law, which is the primary repressive apparatus of the state not only punishes, but also persuades and educates to produce a certain, acceptable way of thinking and acting. “Private organisms and organizations”, on the other hand, “have coercive sanctions at their disposal”¹³⁵. Then, civil society is not simply the place of consent and hegemony, but rather “a network of cultural and ideological institutions” that are constitutive of the state and that can produce “ideological influence” as well as “repression”¹³⁶. Mayo shows how the school system, which is the primary positive function of civil society, uses repression and not only by its control or punishment mechanisms, such as expulsions of the students from school, but also at the symbolic level, when addressing them and shaping their identities¹³⁷. In this sense, the educative and repressive functions of the state and civil society are intertwined and therefore, in reality the separation of those two moments as well as attaching them intrinsic features and functions is impossible. The state and civil society, in this reading, are not conceived as separate spheres, which are then tied together through exposing their relationship; but they are understood as one and the same, in their integral form, which penetrate each other, also in terms of their functions, and hence, inseparable with strict lines. Hence, the State = dictatorship + hegemony¹³⁸.

This equation also means that the dominant classes cannot maintain and consolidate their power simply by coercion and force, nor by pure hegemony. Rather, “the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as ‘domination’ and as ‘intellectual and moral leadership’”. A social group dominates antagonistic groups, which it tends to ‘liquidate’, or to subjugate perhaps even

¹³³ Ibid, 258.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 242, 247.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 266.

¹³⁶ Mayo, “The Centrality of the State in Neoliberal Times”, 63.

¹³⁷ Mayo, “Gramsci and the Politics of Education”, 388.

¹³⁸ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 239.

by armed force; it leads kindred and allied groups”¹³⁹. As Morton points out, this is not a fixed formula and the equilibrium of domination and leadership changes in different contexts and in historical periods and lies between integral/expansive hegemony, in which consent and coercion are balanced and minimal/limited/restricted hegemony, in which use of coercion considerably exceeds persuasion¹⁴⁰. Yet, in any case, ‘leadership’ is not only the inevitable component of any rule, but also the precondition of domination, because only by leading the allied social groups, the government can be seized and the antagonistic groups can be dominated¹⁴¹. Gramsci, therefore, highlights the significance of leadership in the hegemonic struggles: “There can and must be a ‘political hegemony’ even before attainment of governmental power, and one should not count solely on the power and material force which such a position gives in order to exercise political leadership or hegemony.”¹⁴² In other words, the ruling groups must produce and organize consent before assuming the government power and must continue to take the consent and lead afterwards.

Consent, however, although seems voluntary, is not a matter of “free choice” that emerges “spontaneously”, but is produced and organized in the organisations of state and civil society¹⁴³. The power of consent in maintaining the ongoing order or in the struggle for power is that it is, different from coercion, based on persuasion which gives the illusion that it is freely given disguising its political character. In reality, it is the product of the hegemonic struggles. Gramsci distinguishes two tactics in these struggles, namely ‘war of manoeuvre’ and ‘war of position’, which he formulated with reference to military tactics. War of manoeuvre refers to direct, frontal attack, while war of position is the longer lasting struggle for ideological and cultural leadership, which is necessary to build or to penetrate into “the powerful system of fortresses and earthworks” that constitute the “sturdy structures” that protect the integral state¹⁴⁴. Thomas warns against the dichotomous understanding of these concepts, which associates “war of position” solely with civil society and “war of manoeuvre” with an assault on and seizure of the state structures¹⁴⁵. On the contrary, “the massive structures of modern democracies, both as state organizations and as complexes of associations in civil society, constitute for the art of politics as it were the ‘trenches’ and the permanent fortifications of the front in the war of

¹³⁹ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 57.

¹⁴⁰ Morton, “The Limits of Sociological Marxism?”, 149-50.

¹⁴¹ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 57-9; Morton, “The Limits of Sociological Marxism?”, 149-50.

¹⁴² *Prison Notebooks*, 57.

¹⁴³ Buttigieg, “Gramsci on Civil Society”, 7.

¹⁴⁴ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 238.

¹⁴⁵ Thomas, “Gramsci and the Intellectuals”.

position”¹⁴⁶. The intellectuals, who assume the role of leadership, are the key actors in hegemonic struggles and especially in the war of position. Intellectuals assume this role by their functions in state and civil society and not by their professions. In this sense, Gramsci defines intellectuals likewise in a broader sense than its liberal version highlighting their political function¹⁴⁷. Intellectuals’ function stem from their relations with the people in different contexts of social, political and cultural life. They educate people and constantly persuade them through their routine, everyday activities, which is central to a hegemonic relationship. Their significance stems from their task of producing a certain image, a way of seeing and interpreting the world, a ‘*Weltanschauung*’ that legitimates the rule of the dominant classes. The intellectuals’ work is, then, political in that it is their task to organize consent and hence, the society by working those images and interpretation of the world into the social and cultural life, that is, to build the ‘sturdy structures’ of the integral state. This political work is though not always visible and perceived as such, because it is disguised and naturalized as voluntary, individual preferences, practices, and ideas. In short, war of position undertaken by the intellectuals of the integral state is a crucial tactic in hegemonic struggles and a precondition for a hegemonic relationship to be established. These concepts and understanding of power relations demonstrate how power in different forms and through different mechanisms is intrusive of social and cultural life.

The concept of integral state lies at the heart of Gramsci’s whole conceptual framework. The conceptual binaries formulated by Gramsci, as he underlines only for analytical purposes, lose their uses as instruments for separating and opposing state and civil society, once they are grasped as inseparable components of integral state. This view on civil society is radically different from both liberal understandings and readings of Gramsci that assign civil society an autonomous and privileged life. As against this view, Gramsci’s integral state emphasises the dialectical and dynamic relationship between civil society and state, without giving the former primacy over the latter, yet also without ignoring the opportunities provided by the seizure of governmental power. Thomas argues that integral state is the “terrain upon which social classes compete for social and political leadership or hegemony over other social classes; a hegemony guaranteed “in the last instance”, by capture of legal monopoly of violence embodied in the institutions of political society”¹⁴⁸. In other words, struggle for hegemony takes place in civil and political society, but it is consolidated by the seizure of state, that is, governmental power.

¹⁴⁶ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 243.

¹⁴⁷ Thomas, “Gramsci and the Intellectuals”; Sassoon, *Gramsci and Contemporary Politics*.

¹⁴⁸ Thomas, “Gramsci and the Intellectuals”, 73.

The organisations of civil society, however, do not form a totality in unity, but they are rather diverse and multiple, which cannot be represented by any single institution, including the state; that is, civil society cannot be “absorbed” by the state¹⁴⁹. In other words, integral state does not mean fusing state and civil society together into a homogenous totality in unity with a totalitarian understanding. On the contrary, Gramsci, writing under authoritarian and fascist rules, underlines the dangers of authoritarian states with excessive use of repressive apparatus, which not only restricts liberties and freedoms, but also weakens cultural and political institutions diminishing the intellectual and moral abilities of the society¹⁵⁰. Weakened institutions of civil society and restricted participation of people in politics has disastrous consequences as exemplified in the fascist seizure of power in Italy and the experience of collapse of state socialism in Eastern Europe, as well¹⁵¹. In the case of fascist Italy, as discussed before, “the strongest element in civil society” seized the state power in the absence of a responsive government¹⁵². Gramsci’s integral state does not call for a totalitarian state but rather, emphasises the positive correlation between the strengths of state and civil society, different from the dichotomous understanding, in that he argues that strong civil societies are only possible with strong and responsive governments and a developed “system of fortresses and earthworks”, in return, does not weaken the governments but rather protects them from “frontal attacks”¹⁵³. In any case, he argues a freely, spontaneously developed, vibrant civil society under a responsive government is a precondition of democratic politics and social transformation without attaching civil society necessarily democratic, positive functions. In this sense, the protection of liberal democracies against authoritarian and totalitarian tendencies is important, as it provides more opportunity for a democratic social transformation that would challenge authoritarian and totalitarian regimes as well as liberal representative, formal democracies.

2.6. Civil Society Organizations in Contemporary Societies:

The different theoretical approaches to civil society discussed above provide an insight for understanding the concept of civil society, the debate around it and civil societies in actual reality. Gramsci’s approach to civil society as a terrain internally related to the state, which can

¹⁴⁹ Sassoon, *Gramsci and Contemporary Politics*, 71.

¹⁵⁰ Buttigieg, “Gramsci on Civil Society”, 15-7.

¹⁵¹ Buttigieg, “Gramsci on Civil Society”, Chandhoke, “The ‘Civil’ and ‘Political’ in Civil Society”.

¹⁵² See page 27-8.

¹⁵³ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 238.

be defined and understood not with its own features, but in a relational way in the specific context it exists, provides a universal framework, a way of conceiving civil society that is applicable in different contexts and in different historical periods. Based on Gramsci's "method", however, Sassoon argues that in contemporary societies one needs to move beyond, because civil society organizations as a "contemporary phenomenon" with "civic or mobilising functions" have a considerable place in civil society and play a central role in the current debate¹⁵⁴. Chandhoke similarly underlines the role of those "voluntary agencies" in the form of philanthropies, charities, non-governmental organizations in contemporary societies and in civil society debates and argues that they have become so central that they replaced even the civil society itself, that is, civil society is reduced to civil society organizations¹⁵⁵. The central agents in the mainstream contemporary concepts of civil society, whose emphasis is on the associational life, is civil society organizations, which have expanded considerably in number, scope and influence in the last decades. Civil society organizations take many organizational forms with various differing roles, aims and resources from trade unions, professional associations and chambers to foundations, charities, think tanks, civil and human rights organizations and grassroots organizations operating at the local, national or international level. In that sense, it covers a very broad set of organizations diversified in their organizational forms, scope, scale, purposes, social compositions, access to resources and operation areas. Various different names highlighting different features and functions of them are used to define them such as civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), third sector/sphere, voluntary sector, non-profit sector, civic associations, community-based organizations (CBO), grassroots organizations. Considering this diversity of organizations, as well as the multiplicity in their definitions with emphasis on their social (civic), political (non-governmental) and economic (non-profit) dimensions, it can be argued that the ambiguity concerning the concept of civil society pertains to the civil society organizations. Though definitional unclarity and multiple differences among them, they have one fundamental common feature: their non-stateness. Hence, NGO, stressing their non-government character and being organized outside of the state and different from its logic, has become a "catch-all term" eventually and has been popularly employed to refer to civil society organizations¹⁵⁶.

¹⁵⁴ Sassoon, *Gramsci and Contemporary Politics*, 66, 68.

¹⁵⁵ Chandhoke, "Civil Society", 608.

¹⁵⁶ Jenny Pearce, "NGOs and Social Change: Agent or Facilitators?", *Development in Practice* 3, No: 3 (1993).

The ascendancy of civil society organizations, both in terms of their growth in number and of the public and academic interest they enjoy, corresponds to the post-1980 era, paralleling the rise in the interest in civil society. According to Hirsch, this interest is due to the dominant neoliberal paradigm in this period; although they are not a new phenomenon, the change in their “forms and functions” on the one hand, reflect the changing relations between state and society, in the first place “de-statification/privatization” of politics, and on the other hand, they themselves play a role in the process as actors of this change¹⁵⁷. In this sense, as non-state, private agents in civil society, their expansion in number is an effect of the seemingly changing balance between state and civil society, expressing its empowerment as against the state. Hirsch argues, the motivations for the “overrated” role attached to them, especially in the 1990s, is to be found in the expectations that they could be actors of social change, replacing the “failed new social movements” of the previous decade¹⁵⁸. In other words, civil society organizations, like civil society itself, are attached positive features to play their positive roles for the society and state to bring democratic social change.

2.6.1. Agents of Liberal Democracy or of Authoritarian States?:

Mercer’s study on the literature of the 1990s demonstrates this tendency clearly, which she argues to be rising from “ideological persuasion and assumptions” rather than a critical assessment of the roles of civil society organizations for state and society or an engagement with broader debates on the state-society relations¹⁵⁹. Her study reveals the general characteristics of the mainstream understanding, which conceives civil society organizations as plural and diverse grassroots agents in civil society, “separate and autonomous from the state, yet, act as bulwark of it” and hence, “microcosms of the democratic process”¹⁶⁰. As autonomous, non-state actors, they are considered to be the principle agents of a democratic civil society and are attributed the function both of democratization in authoritarian contexts and of consolidation of democracy through enhancement and enrichment of democratic life. More specifically, their roles are understood as building and strengthening civil society, strengthening a “bottom-up” participatory democracy by inclusion of “the poor and marginalized” groups that they represent and restrict intrusive state power as well as pressuring

¹⁵⁷ Hirsch, “The State’s New Clothes: NGOs and the Internationalization of the States”, 237-8, 243-4, 252.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 237.

¹⁵⁹ Claire Mercer, “NGOS, Civil Society and Democratization: A Critical Review of the Literature”, *Progress in Development Studies* 2, No:1 (2002): 6.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 9.

it for policy change¹⁶¹. Mercer underlines the extent of the positive load of civil society organizations by highlighting how they are conceived to be essentially good, in that only “by virtue of their autonomous existence”, it is argued, that they have a positive impact on society and democratizing influence as against the state¹⁶². In short, civil society organizations are conceived to be the agents in civil society, autonomous and in opposition to the state and inseparably linked to democracy and democratization. In this sense, the dominant view on civil society organizations is based on the assumptions of the mainstream contemporary conceptualizations of civil society.

The critique of this view is that the ambiguity of these organizations stems principally from the roles that they play in civil society and from their relations with the state, which is argued to be significantly different from the mainstream view portrayed above¹⁶³. Indeed, many empirical studies prove the direct association of civil society organizations with democracy to be not applicable in many contexts and demonstrate how they can lead to enhancement of state power instead and even operate as agents of building and consolidating authoritarianism or totalitarianism. Berman shows how the vibrant associational life in the Weimar Republic under an “unresponsive” government and “weak political institutions” was mobilized and instrumentalized as organisational base and source for political and bureaucratic cadres by the Nazi movement ending in one of the most catastrophic regimes of the 20th century¹⁶⁴. Zubaida and Wiktorowicz underline how in Egypt and Jordan respectively civil society organizations themselves have become the instruments of the state for social control¹⁶⁵. They both highlight the centrality of “law” in the regulation and organization of civil society, extensive legal and administrative powers of the state and its arbitrary use to privilege some actors and repress others. Richter & Hatch analysing Russia and China argue that civil society organizations are instrumentalized by the state in the service of its retreat from welfare provision, of gaining legitimacy as well as of integration with the global free-market economy, of which “free” civil society is the precondition¹⁶⁶. Their analysis also reveals the differences in perceptions; in

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 8-9.

¹⁶² Ibid, 8.

¹⁶³ Alex Demirovic, “NGOS, the State and Civil Society: The Transformation of Hegemony”, *Rethinking Marxism* 15, No: 2 (2003); Pearce, “NGOs and Social Change: Agent or Facilitators; Mercer, “NGOS, Civil Society and Democratization”; Hirsch, “The State’s New Clothes”.

¹⁶⁴ Sheri Berman, “Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic”, *World Politics*, No: 49 (April 1997).

¹⁶⁵ Sami Zubaida, “Islam, the State and Democracy: Contrasting Conceptions of Society in Egypt”, *Middle East Report*, No: 179 (Nov-Dec 1992); Quintan Wiktorowicz, “Civil Society as Social Control: State Power in Jordan”, *Comparative Politics* 33, No: 1 (Oct. 2000).

¹⁶⁶ James Richter and Walter F. Hatch, “Organizing Civil Society in Russia and China: A Comparative Approach”, *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 26, (2013).

Russia, civil society is understood as distinct from the state, which leads to its “monopolization”, while in China the separation between the two is relatively weak and based on a hierarchical relationship with the state at the top. In both cases, however, civil society is understood as a “unified entity, served by, and in the service of, the state”, which is strictly controlled through the legal powers the state holds¹⁶⁷. These studies, rather than linking them directly to democratic functions, show that civil society organizations exist and operate in a specific context in a certain geography and historical period, which influence the roles they assume. Hence, the critique argues that their functions cannot be assumed essentially to be democratic, abstracting them from the conditions in which they exist, but they are embedded in these conditions, which empower them for or against democracy.

The initial radical view that positively correlates civil society organizations and democratic practice has become more moderate in the last decades, as “the contradictions in their praxis” have become apparent¹⁶⁸. The need to moderation rose from the fact that the vibrant civil societies with multiple, dynamic civil society organizations in authoritarian contexts did not necessarily lead to building stable democracies or to democratization at all as prophesized, neither in the South America and the East Europe nor in the North Africa, Central Asia and the Middle East. Moreover, as shown in the above examples, civil society organizations themselves have become the instruments of authoritarian governments to consolidate their rule. In other words, the gap between the theoretical expectations and the actual reality led scholars to review the necessarily positive correlation between democracy and civil society organizations, taking into consideration the contexts, in which they operate. Yet, without changing the core assumptions of the mainstream view, the gaze of the scholars focused on the authoritarian contexts of the ‘developing world’, which lacked the Western liberal democracies, searching the reasons of the failure of the civil society organizations in the specific characteristics of those societies, conceived to be intrinsic to them. The dominant tendency is to argue that the failure of instituting liberal democracy is due to the “incivilities” produced in civil society such as “ethnic, religious, regional tension and undemocratic practice” that cause them to be “unorganized, fragmented and weak”, which are generated by the cultures, social structures, traditions and histories of those societies¹⁶⁹. Western civil society and liberal democracy are taken as an ideal model, as a universal assessment criteria, with which the analysed societies

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 343.

¹⁶⁸ Demirovic, “NGOS, the State and Civil Society”, 213; Hirsch, “The State’s New Clothes”, 237.

¹⁶⁹ Mercer, “NGOS, Civil Society and Democratization”, 11.

are compatible or not. In other words, civil society is conceived as a specific social form of Western liberal democracies, constituted by their specific experiences, necessarily leading to democratization under the ‘right’ conditions.

For example, Ziegler, analysing Central Asia, argues that the culture of those societies, which are shaped and dominated by “authoritarian political traditions”, are “more receptive to autocratic governance than to the pluralism of liberal democracy”, which makes both civil society organizations and the governments “resist to democracy promotion efforts” of the West¹⁷⁰. Giersdorf and Croissant’s study of Malaysian society underlines that the fragmentation of civil society along ethnic lines as well as religious and cultural tensions in it, which is the heritage from the country’s colonial past, diminishes the power of civic organizations to challenge the authoritarian regime¹⁷¹. Rather, they argue, the government makes use of the “heterogeneity of the interests” of the actors in civil society, which is the result of its fragmented character. Two points are important in these views: First, these civil societies are perceived to be ‘weak’ and to tend to authoritarianism, because of either ethnic fragmentation or political culture, which are the product of the specific historical experiences and development lines of Malaysian and Central Asian societies, which are different from the Western examples and which are used to explain the failure of civil society organizations to promote democratization. In other words, it is implied that the failure is inevitable and the reasons lie deep in their historical experiences, that is, immanent to them, because they did not follow the Western historical path. Second, civil society organizations are assumed to be a homogenous totality naturally oriented to democracy in opposition to the state, rather than a terrain of struggle and conflict and therefore, both examples above are perceived as deviations, whose actors ‘even’ support the autocratic regime, when their interests necessitate. The ‘civility’, ‘non-conflict’ of the West is replaced in authoritarian societies by ‘incivility’ and ‘conflict’. Interestingly, ethnic, religious or regional groups in civil society are not perceived as ‘diversity’ as it is in the context of liberal democracies, but are rather blamed to produce incivilities and conflict. This point is also made by Jamal; making a differentiation between the “good” and “bad” civil society organizations, he argues that a vibrant civil society does not necessarily lead to democratization if its actors belong to this latter category¹⁷². Analysing Israel, he defines “bad” civil society

¹⁷⁰ Charles E. Ziegler, “Great Powers, Civil Society and Authoritarian Diffusion in Central Asia”, *Central Asian Survey* 35, No: 4 (2016).

¹⁷¹ Stephan Giersdorf and Aurel Croissant, “Civil Society and Competitive Authoritarianism in Malaysia”, *Journal of Civil Society* 7, No: 1 (2011).

¹⁷² Amal Jamal, “The Rise of ‘Bad Civil Society’ in Israel: Nationalist Civil Society Organizations and the Politics of Delegitimation”, *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) Comment*, No: 2 (2018).

organizations as those that “advance chauvinistic nationalist and religious ideals”, which are backed by the government, and undermine the “legitimate existence of liberal opponents”, that is, those actors that are excluded from the terrain of civil society by the mainstream conceptualizations. This view does not conceive civil society as a terrain of heterogeneous, competing interests and ideological struggles in which the state involves, but rather as a homogenous sphere in which only the “good” organizations find a place to move towards the ideal liberal model of civil society, which is perceived as a democratic whole unified against the state¹⁷³.

Lewis turns to state rather than civil society to understand the “paradoxical coexistence” of multiple civil society organizations and authoritarian states¹⁷⁴. Employing Gramsci’s concepts, he argues that authoritarian states let civil society organizations in the form of self-organization to exist and cooperate with them for legitimating themselves but use coercion against them if they become the “voice” of the marginalized, because it endangers its legitimacy and challenges its hegemony. The problem with authoritarian states is, therefore, that they are “unable to maintain power simply through the maintenance of a closed, monolithic, homogenous state order, with clear domain boundaries from both the market and civil society”¹⁷⁵. The most striking point in his discussion is his specification of the concept of hegemony to the authoritarian contexts. While the authoritarian states are authoritarian because they use coercive and hegemonic apparatuses to intervene in civil society, blurring the borders between the spheres, because liberal democratic states can draw clear boundaries between state and civil society, they are conceived as ideologically neutral, non-coercive and non-hegemonic. Whether based on Tocquevillean or on Gramscian concepts of civil society, the fundamental assumptions do not change in the analyses above, blurring the borders between different political traditions.

In all these views, the autonomous liberal democratic civil society is set as the ultimate aim and criteria of ‘success’ of the authoritarian contexts. Civil society organizations in these contexts are argued to generally be open to state’s intervention or become the instruments of consolidation of its power. Analysis of such contexts gave birth to concepts such as government-organized/party-organized/state-organized/quasi non-governmental organizations (GONGO, PONGO, SONGO, QUONGO), which are argued to generally undermine

¹⁷³ Mercer, “NGOS, Civil Society and Democratization”, 10.

¹⁷⁴ David Lewis, “Civil Society and the Authoritarian States: Cooperation, Contestation and Discourse”, *Journal of Civil Society* 9, No: 3 (2013).

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 330.

democratic potential of civil society to resist the state as well as the liberal democratic values¹⁷⁶. These concepts are used to differentiate between ‘autonomous’ organizations from the directly government or party organized and sponsored or co-opted ones. They imply that if civil society organizations have failed in challenging authoritarian governments and being agents of democratization, it is not because they lack the democratic potential, but because they are corrupted by the authoritarian state. Again, in case of an apparent mismatch between the theoretical assumptions and the actual reality of the societies, the tendency is not to question the theory, but search for the responsible structures, traditions, histories, and cultural elements in authoritarian societies that are different from the liberal democracies. Yet, Hasmath, Hildebrandt & Hsu demonstrate such organizations do not exist only in authoritarian contexts, but also in liberal democratic societies, such as the party-affiliated organizations in Germany or the G/SONGOs in the USA, which are conceived to contribute to the democratic culture¹⁷⁷. Similarly, Foley & Edwards point out to the party-affiliation of the majority of civil society organizations from “sports clubs to choral societies, cooperatives and cultural associations” in Italy, on which, paradoxically, Putnam grounded his work on the relationship between non-political civic associations and the democratic performance of the government¹⁷⁸. Then, such concepts again raise the question of arbitrarily defined ‘good’ and ‘bad’ civil society organizations, that is, those devoted to liberal democratic values and those undermine them, on the one hand, and the extent of their autonomy from the state, on the other.

2.6.2. The Question of Autonomy in Neoliberal Context:

The critique of the mainstream view above focuses both on the definition and functions of civil society organizations, but in the first place on the extent of their autonomy, on which the assumed function of democratization is grounded. Hirsch argues that for formulating concepts like GONGO, it should be assumed that as a rule “NGOs” are autonomous from the state, from which the GONGO deviates¹⁷⁹. He criticizes the perception of direct or mediated funding/sponsorship of the state to be an exception, through which a civil society organization operates as the “long arm of the state”, that is as GONGO, and argues that the abundant state-funding is, in fact, the main reason of massive expansion of those organizations in the first

¹⁷⁶ Reza Hasmath, Timothy Hildebrandt and Jennifer Y. J. Hsu, “Conceptualizing Government-Organized Non-Government Organizations”, *Journal of Civil Society* 15, No: 3 (2019).

¹⁷⁷ Hasmath, Hildebrandt and Hsu, “Conceptualizing Government-Organized Non-Government Organizations”.

¹⁷⁸ Foley and Edwards, “The Paradox of Civil Society”, 42.

¹⁷⁹ Hirsch, “The State’s New Clothes”, 238-9.

place¹⁸⁰. Civil society organizations, to be able to operate properly, need more than the irregular and unreliable individual donations from their public and depend on the grants, funding, and sponsorship of the state, and sometimes resources in other forms such as personnel, but also of private economic institutions, international organizations such as World Bank, governmental institutions such as the EU and other private institutions like media for purposes such as public visibility and fundraising. This raises the question of their autonomy from the interests of the funding institutions. They are also dependent on the state because the state “enables/disables” civil society organizations by defining the “legal and political settings” that frames the limits of them making them dependent on the “legislative and executive powers of the state”¹⁸¹. The legal framework influences the status of the organizations, their legitimacy and access to resources and privileges such as tax exemption, but it also sets the limits for their efforts to have a political and social impact. For example, for a civil society organization that fights against violence against women to have results, the state needs to consolidate its work by taking intimidating/encouraging measures for it to achieve its aims; it should make the legal framework that recognizes it as a crime and punishes the perpetrator; provide the bureaucratic personnel that are sensitized about the problem; train the police for protection; provide financial support for prevention, promote relevant values, that is, put its coercive and hegemonic apparatus at work to create the culture in the society against violence against women. Moreover, the recognition of civil society organizations by the state as legitimate actors brings about “respect and public support”, which directly influences the donations they collect and funding they receive¹⁸². Shortly, the state’s legal and administrative powers, as well as its monopoly over allocation of public resources allow it to have a control over the organization and composition of civil society. This means that the state’s understanding of “public good”, its perception of “politically, culturally and socially permissible” plays a central role in its shaping civil society with the powers it holds¹⁸³. In this sense, although the state gradually retreats giving space to private organizations under neoliberal conditions of contemporary societies, it still plays a central, but a better disguised role in civil society, in its “repressive, ideological and commercial forms”¹⁸⁴. As Chandhoke puts it, then, the autonomy of civil society organizations from the state is rather an “optical illusion”¹⁸⁵.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 238-9.

¹⁸¹ Hirsch, “The State’s New Clothes”, 251; Chandhoke, “The ‘Civil’ and the ‘Political’ in Civil Society”, 8-11.

¹⁸² Demirovic, “NGOS, the State and Civil Society”, 214.

¹⁸³ Chandhoke, “The ‘Civil’ and the ‘Political in Civil Society”, 8-10.

¹⁸⁴ Mayo, “The Centrality of State”, 67.

¹⁸⁵ Chandhoke, “The ‘Civil’ and the ‘Political in Civil Society”, 8.

Indeed, according to Hirsch, their naming itself reveals their close relationship with the state, especially in terms of their function. The negative prefix “non”, he argues, refers to “a dialectic” demonstrating “how private organizations take on a characteristic of the state or how organs of the state are privatized”¹⁸⁶. In other words, if they are defined exclusively by a differentiation from the government organizations, then they act and operate like government and in its area, which requires stressing their non-governmentness. This is especially relevant in terms of the delegation of state duties to private organizations in the context of neoliberalism, which, rather than situating the state and civil society organizations against each other, means a collaboration and cooperation that leads to privatization of public services and interests. In this context, the state’s responsibilities in providing the welfare of the society have diminished; its role has changed into a “facilitator, regulator and financier” of the activities of the “third sector”¹⁸⁷. This is because civil society organizations with their expertise on particular issues or regions that the state not always possesses can implement “projects” and complete public works more “efficiently compared to state bureaucracies and cheaper than the state”, which make them attractive contractors for the state and put them in a competition to take on the tasks of the state¹⁸⁸. That these organizations rely principally on these “official donations and the goodwill of donors” to undertake projects constrains most of them to become “the carriers of the concepts, values and practices of neoliberal agenda” and the state, that is, they have become the actors of “new public management”¹⁸⁹. In fact, civil society organizations as ‘service providers’ themselves have become the instruments of the rolling-back of the state from providing welfare of the society, while at the same time legitimizing its retreat as restraining state power and intervention in civil society in the name of democratization. As Lavelette & Ferguson define, they are the “soft face of privatization of public services”; “the comforting and democratic language of civil society, is being utilized to mask the ongoing project of privatization”¹⁹⁰. In this form, civil society, argues Buttigieg, is not a terrain of freedoms in opposition to the state as argued, but rather of “free-market system”, which sets free-market as the precondition and terrain of democracy¹⁹¹. This demonstrates how state and civil society organizations cooperate and act together in the process of deepening neoliberalisation, legitimized by and disguised as protecting freedoms and liberties, restraining state power, and strengthening democracy. Civil

¹⁸⁶ Hirsch, “The State’s New Clothes”, 238-9.

¹⁸⁷ Sassoon, *Gramsci and Contemporary Politics*, 74.

¹⁸⁸ Demirovic, “NGOS, the State and Civil Society”, 216.

¹⁸⁹ Tina Wallace, “NGO Dilemmas: Trojan Horses for Global Neoliberalism?”, *Socialist Register* 40, (2004): 203.

¹⁹⁰ Michael Lavalette and Iain Ferguson, “Democratic Language and Neoliberal Practice: The Problem With Civil Society”, *International Social Work* 50, No: 4 (2007): 448, 456.

¹⁹¹ Buttigieg, “Gramsci on Civil Society”, 5.

society organizations, from this perspective, are understood as structures of the “integral state” and their relationship with the state within the framework of neoliberal hegemony¹⁹². This complex interaction between the state and civil society organizations within the neoliberal context has significant repercussions for their democratic functions and advocacy roles.

Before discussing the contradictions in their democratic functions, it is important to underline that civil society organizations cannot be neutralized or subsumed by the state, and they may function as independent platforms that provide the opportunity to formulate and communicate democratic politics. Neither civil society as a terrain nor its organizations are homogenous that can altogether and simply be discredited for implementing the neoliberal agenda and legitimizing state power and policies. On the contrary, that “NGO” has become a “catch-all term” for the non-state organizations is criticized for blurring the borders between various organizations, but also for causing a change “in the perception of their role from facilitators to agents of social change”¹⁹³. Pearce makes a differentiation between popular, grassroots organizations that have representative role for certain social groups mostly, but not necessarily, based on identity that emerged out of the need of the represented groups themselves and the intermediary organizations that work for humanitarian and developmental causes with a focus on democratization and the welfare of the societies, occupied by “middle-class” professionals, which claim to represent the “poor and marginal groups”¹⁹⁴. Mercer, likewise, distinguishes the grassroots organizations, which are “smaller, membership-based, dependent upon donations, mostly issue-based and hence ephemeral” from “the officially established, larger and well-resourced” ones “with paid, good-educated, urban professional staff”¹⁹⁵. Demirovic points out that the number of organizations that are principally based on voluntary work with activists from the former social movements are relatively few, rather, being a professional at a civil society organization has become a “good paid job”.¹⁹⁶ According to Pearce, this is mainly due to “disempowerment” of the social movements of the 1980s and their institutionalization in civil society organizations, most of which chose to adapt to their new conditions and to cooperate with the governments, while those that remained critical, remained also “small, under-resourced, fragmented and politically marginalized”¹⁹⁷. This professionalization, in turn,

¹⁹² Demirovic, “NGOS, the State and Civil Society”, 232; Hirsch, “The State’s New Clothes”, 238-9, 251, 259.

¹⁹³ Pearce, “NGOs and Social Change”, 222.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 222-3.

¹⁹⁵ “NGOS, Civil Society and Democratization”, 6.

¹⁹⁶ Demirovic, “NGOS, the State and Civil Society”, 214, 216.

¹⁹⁷ “NGOs and Social Change”, 224-5.

resulted that majority of the organizations to lose their connections to their social bases, which has an important impact on their overall operation and brings about doubts about their democratic, representative functions.

2.6.3. Contradictions in Democratic Functions:

It has been mentioned that civil society organizations are expected to replace and represent social movements and continue the democratic opposition to the state by formulating the demands of the groups they represent and this way restraining state power and counterbalancing it. Yet, civil society organizations and social movements should not be conflated with one another. Social movements are marked by their “spontaneity, fragility, temporariness and eruptive character rather than organisational” and can be neither represented by nor reduced to civil society organisations¹⁹⁸. Indeed, the role played by civil society organizations in the social movements of the 1980s against the authoritarian states was relatively weak; on the contrary, as Pearce and Chandhoke show in Latin America and Eastern Europe respectively, it was the lack of political or civil channels of citizen participation, that is, weak civil society and political institutions that caused sudden reactions from the society¹⁹⁹. As Gramsci argues, the existence of vibrant, freely developed civil society under responsive political institutions, rather than restraining state power, protects the state from sudden counter attacks, which may lead to overthrow of governments. In this sense, different from social movements, civil society organizations protect the state from sudden explosions and maintain its power, by formulating and communicating the demands of the represented groups, and at the same time, by disseminating and legitimizing state policies.

According to Buttigieg, such conflation is deliberate and stems from the misconception of civil society itself. Social movements, due to broad participation from different sectors of the society, are identified with “the majority, the people”, which is conceived to be “tantamount to civil society” and which is by an “oversimplification” opposed to the government²⁰⁰. The social movements in Eastern Europe and Latin America which led to the collapse of the socialist and authoritarian governments respectively, were celebrated as the victory of civil society over the state. Civil society organizations, which are argued to build civil society, are, likewise, assumed

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 224-5.

¹⁹⁹ Pearce, “NGOs and Social Change”, 224-5; Chandhoke, “The ‘Civil’ and the ‘Political’ in Civil Society”, 5.

²⁰⁰ Pearce, “NGOs and Social Change”, 224-5; Buttigieg, “The Contemporary Discourse on Civil Society”, 34-7.

to constitute a bulwark against the state by their representation of “the poor, the marginal, the voiceless”, conceived reminiscent of “the people”²⁰¹. It is clear that the claim of the organizations to act on behalf of and in the service of these groups to protect them against the excesses of the state have become a legitimation to their existence and operation as well as the core element of their public campaigns²⁰². Moreover, since from this perspective “the people” is the source of the power of the state, the claim of its representation highlights the democratic functions of civil society organizations, especially that of restraining and checking the state power in the name of the people. However, such conflation among the concepts, which reduces civil society to “the people” represented by civil society organizations against the government, ignores the “complex dynamics of power relations within state and society and between them”²⁰³. This view assumes a broad consensus in the society organized in civil society organizations and mobilized by them against the state. In other words, civil society organizations representing the differences and the particular interests of various social groups are assumed to be united in their opposition to the state. According to Demirovic, this is a fundamental function of civil society organizations, which, on the one hand, legitimizes them as democratic by virtue of their representative functions and on the other hand, reproduces the state-civil society opposition²⁰⁴. He argues that civil society organizations transform “social contradictions into differences in interest, into a unity with diversity”, which they represent within the framework of rule of law against the state, disguising the struggles within state and civil society and reproducing the illusion of a struggle between them conceived as homogenous unities and hence, maintain the separation between state and civil society²⁰⁵. Hence, the claim that civil society organizations form together a bulwark constituted by diverse and specific interests and demands of multiple groups as against the state has an ideological function rather than being a democratic formulation.

The claim of civil society organizations to representation of the ‘poor and the marginal’, who are the victims of authoritarian state policies and social inequalities, to achieve ‘bottom-up democracy’ is to be understood within the neoliberal context, in which democracy, privatization, free-market, freedoms are conflated with one another. This is because their activities and projects, which substitute or supplement the tasks of the state, transform the right

²⁰¹ Mercer, “NGOS, Civil Society and Democratization”, 8-10.

²⁰² Ibid, 14.

²⁰³ Buttigieg, “The Contemporary Discourse on Civil Society”, 35.

²⁰⁴ “NGOS, the State and Civil Society”, 227, 232.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 227, 232.

of the citizens to have equal access to the resources for meeting their fundamental needs into an act of goodness and charity coming from private organizations. The contradiction here is that while they claim to compensate for the absence of the state, which left their target groups in poverty, they refrain from mobilizing the people, whom they claim to represent, for their hijacked fundamental rights. Pearce points out to their undemocratic character, because their accountability is to their funders and donors and not to the “beneficiaries” whom they claim to represent; therefore, they do not empower them for struggling for their citizenship rights, but rather, undertake their work according to the needs and aims of their donors and communicate their values²⁰⁶. This leads to their political instrumentalization by the funding organizations, mainly the state. The problem of democratic representation is, however, more fundamental than that. Hirsch argues that, if democracy is understood as citizen participation and not as merely a system of “checks and balances”, then the representative capacities as well as the “democratic legitimacy” of civil society organizations, whether grassroots or otherwise, are questionable, because “they lack the appropriate institutional mechanisms” for such a purpose²⁰⁷. This is because they are “not elected and mandated by the people” and the “‘sovereign people’ often do not know that they are being represented”, which expresses, in fact, the fundamental contradiction of the representative democracy that “the appointed representatives define whom they represent”²⁰⁸. Moreover, as Demirovic argues, even active citizen participation in civil society organizations “is not democracy, but access to power structures”, if democracy is understood not only as “participation in decision-making”, which remains limited anyway, “but also deciding how the decisions are made”²⁰⁹. The claim of practicing ‘bottom-up participatory democracy’ by including the ‘poor and marginal’ and being the ‘voice of the voiceless’ becomes groundless, since they are unaccountable, self-appointed representatives of a social group, who is often unaware of the existence of its representatives.

Moreover, reducing civil society to civil society organizations, which ‘build’ it combined with the claim to represent ‘the poor and the marginal’ implies monopolization of the terrain of civil society and the right to speak for the people. More importantly, speaking and deciding on behalf of the represented group is rather undemocratic than being a bottom-up participation, because apart from being made by the professionals that often do not have any connection to the people

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 223, 226.

²⁰⁷ “The State’s New Clothes”, 256.

²⁰⁸ “NGOS, the State and Civil Society”, 215.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 215.

they claim to represent, the contemptuous claim to know and decide ‘the best’ for the people on behalf of them itself causes doubts about the democratic processes of those organizations. As Buttigieg argues, neither the argument that “resisting and limiting the power of the state necessarily benefits the victims of the inequalities”, nor that these groups “tend to oppose the oppressive and repressive actions of the state” can be taken for granted²¹⁰. It is assumed that restraining the state and strengthening civil society as against it is what the represented groups demand. This kind of perspective ignores how the state produces consent for its actions in the institutions of state and civil society. Demirovic argues that civil society organizations “do not only represent particular interests and demands, but they contribute to their formation, train people in their political role and create a relationship between the state and the society”²¹¹. From this perspective, civil society organizations contribute to the formulation and definition of the represented groups, what their needs and demands are, what they are for and against under the guise of representation. They do not necessarily produce and communicate democratic values, but they can disseminate excluding and polarising nationalist, sexist, inequalities or religious worldviews, claiming them to be for the best for the groups they represent or to be representing the interest and demands of those groups. In other words, if they are assumed to be able to resist authoritarianism and strengthen democracy, then, following the same logic, they can strengthen authoritarianism and resist to democratization and still, can formulate this as democracy thanks to their representative functions. Therefore, the efforts of the mainstream views to legitimize and empower civil society organizations as democratic by their nature are as useful for the authoritarian tendencies to legitimize and naturalize themselves in civil society organizations. In other words, the mainstream arguments for civil society become efficient weapons as well in the hands of that, to which, it is claimed, civil society organizations oppose.

As Chandhoke argues, while the lack of civil society hinders democratic politics, the existence of it does not guarantee democracy²¹². It is clear that in authoritarian contexts with vibrant civil societies, the artificial ways it is developed or hindered by the state through intensive intervention injure its democratic potential, because the “quality” of the terrain of civil society “determines the quality of a country’s democracy”²¹³. Yet, neither in liberal democratic contexts, can civil society organizations be assumed to form a unity devoted to consolidating

²¹⁰ “The Contemporary Discourse on Civil Society”, 37.

²¹¹ “NGOS, the State and Civil Society”, 232.

²¹² Chandhoke, “The ‘Civil’ and the ‘Political’ in Civil Society”, 20.

²¹³ Sassoon, *Gramsci and the Contemporary Politics*, 73.

democracy. Apart from being not free from state intervention, this is because, on the one hand, the unified, democratic civil society is constructed by a restricted definition of it, leaving out the arbitrarily defined 'bad' organizations and hence, a considerable portion of the society and excluding any possibility of conflict. On the other hand, democracy that it is argued to promote is defined in a restricted way, by its liberal representative, formal form. It is not uncommon that alternative democratic politics is delegitimized as undermining liberal values labelling them extremes and putting them in the same category with the inegalitarian, exclusive and authoritarian tendencies. Yet, the most important is that they fail to fulfil the basic necessities of liberal representative democracy they claim to promote. This does not mean that civil society organizations cannot contribute to formulation of democratic demands and politics at all. On the contrary, they may, to some extent, challenge state policies and disenchant the dominant conceptions of world disseminated. Indeed, they need to have a certain degree of economic and political independency to have a legitimate existence. However, as Hirsch argues, as part of the integral state, they cannot be expected to necessarily bring social transformation challenging the state, but rather, to engage in democratic politics "within and against the state"²¹⁴. This is possible because, whatever the context is, civil society is not only the terrain, in which hegemonic politics is exercised and its conceptions of world circulate, but also the counterhegemonic politics is formulated and disseminated; it is the terrain of struggle, also for democracy.

2.7. Concluding Remarks:

This chapter discussed the contested concept of civil society that has been popularly employed in the academic, public and political discourse in the post-1980. Following its historical line of development, the concept has been discussed in its two forms: as an autonomous sphere, which is the hegemonic understanding of it, and from a relational perspective, as constitutive of the state. In the post-1980, a context of increasing critique of the welfare state, neo-liberalisation and the reactions to authoritarian states in the form of social movements, it has been predominantly conceptualized by scholars from political traditions as diverse as liberalism, communitarianism, post-Marxism, as an autonomous sphere with democratic functions in opposition to the state. Likewise, in the public discourse, it has become a consensual concept that is inseparably connected to democracy and understood as a remedy against all the evil coming from the state. The concept is conceived as a fix, stable, constant category with its own,

²¹⁴ "The State's New Clothes", 257-8.

immanent features and functions abstracted from its context and torn off from any relations. Conceived as the place of social and ethical relations, it has become the central axis of the analysis of social and political life, assumed to be the ‘determining’ force and to have a transformative power as against the state. Shortly, freed from politics, power, economic relations, it is conceived as the primary moment in the complex relations between the economy, state and civil society. This widespread consensus motivated by “political passions and normative concerns” has had significant repercussions that “distorts our understanding of civil society”²¹⁵ and hence, of state, democracy, forms of domination and social change. The critique of this view discussed in this chapter, therefore, asks: As an ‘ideological’ category ‘rediscovered’ in an era of neoliberalisation, privatisation of politics and acclamation of the end of ideology, can the concept of civil society be useful for understanding actual civil societies? The critique of the mainstream view does not reject the concept of civil society altogether, but argues that only as an analytical category, situated in its specific historical and socio-political context and from a relational perspective it can be employed as a useful, meaningful instrument for analysis. Antonio Gramsci’s concept of integral state provides such an analytical category. He elaborates on civil society in its relation to the state, does neither attribute it fix features or functions nor does he portray an ideal civil society. Rather, he constructs the concept to understand how the dominant classes maintain their power, but also how this power can be challenged and social transformation made possible. From this perspective, civil society becomes the terrain of struggle, of hegemony and counterhegemony. Such an analytical concept of civil society provides a realistic understanding of actual civil societies, its actors in conflict and the ways the struggles are fought.

From a Gramscian perspective, the contested understandings of the concept of civil society themselves become instruments of such power struggles, of an intellectual struggle for hegemony in the academia expanding to the public sphere. Production and dissemination of knowledge is neither non-ideological nor ‘innocent’, rather, it is part of the struggle fought in the institutions of state and civil society, which have significant political consequences as discussed in this chapter and will be discussed in the specific context of Turkey below.

²¹⁵ Chandhoke, “The ‘Civil’ and the ‘Political’ in Civil Society”, 5, 22.

CHAPTER 3

CIVIL SOCIETY IN TURKEY

This chapter aims at discussing state-civil society relations in Turkey as well as the different readings of it. The aim is to understand the background and the context shaping the relations between state and civil society under the AKP rule and the place and role of civil society organizations within this network of relations. The discussion will be made in the light of the conceptualizations discussed in the previous chapter. Yet, it is not argued that there is a one-to-one correspondence between these conceptualizations and the understandings of civil society in Turkey. Neither is it the aim of this study to compare and reveal the similarities and/or differences between them. Rather, it aims at understanding both the debate on and the transformation of civil society in Turkey using the conceptual tools discussed in the previous chapter. Particularly important in this sense is to shed light on the connection and parallels between the theoretical debate and the transformation of the relations between state and civil society. After all, the struggle over knowledge is inextricably intertwined with the struggle over power. In other words, the debate on civil society itself plays a significant role in restructuring state-civil society relations. For this purpose, first of all, the central assumptions and arguments of the hegemonic view on civil society will be discussed. This is of utmost importance, not only because it has become hegemonic accompanying the neoliberal-conservative transformation Turkey has experienced in the post-1980 era, but also because these assumptions and arguments structure the rhetoric of the AKP. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a critical reading of the construction of the state-civil society dichotomy and its reproduction in other conceptual dichotomies such as authoritarian-democratic or secular-Islamic. As emphasised, this is important and relevant to the extent that it gives insights about the political project of the AKP and therefore, it is not a complete and detailed analysis of the hegemonic view. Following a brief critique of the hegemonic view, the transformation of civil society will be discussed from

a historical perspective. Two points are important to underline concerning this historical discussion of civil society: First, civil society is not understood as a distinct and autonomous sphere; but rather, it is discussed in relation to the state and within its social and historical context. Accordingly, state-civil society relations are discussed in four historical periods. Second, the AKP period is not taken as a radical rupture in the Republican history concerning state-civil society relations, but rather as an outcome of a historical transformation, which was accelerated in the post-1980. Therefore, this discussion will also highlight the inherent inconsistencies and contradictions in the hegemonic view on civil society and the obvious mismatch between the actual civil society and the knowledge produced on it. This is an important aspect of the discussion to understand the political project of the AKP, because knowledge production and the discourse based on it is a central component and instrument of the AKP's hegemonic struggle.

Definitions of Islamic and Islamist are conceptually differentiated. Islamist refers to those religious movements/associations/actors with a political project aiming at the seizure of state power, while Islamic refers to the religious ethos and is not directly connected to a political project. However, practically they are usually intertwined and difficult to differentiate. Moreover, what is conceived to be Islamic in one context may have Islamist goals in another one.

3.1. The Hegemonic View: Centre-Periphery Paradigm:

The centre-periphery paradigm is an approach that is predominantly employed by the scholars to analyse Ottoman-Turkish modernisation. This particular reading of Turkish history is based on a conceptual dichotomy of state and society, expressed in the centre-periphery dichotomy. Constructed originally by Şerif Mardin²¹⁶, this perspective portrays a strong, authoritarian state occupied by secular, West-oriented, modernizing elites in opposition to an oppressed Islamic-conservative society. According to this view, the elite that is culturally alienated from its people has had enforced top-down reforms on the society to modernize it and keep it under control. This prevented the emergence of a civil society autonomous from the state like in the West. This absence, in turn, has had negative consequences on the consolidation of democracy in Turkey, as the democratic participation of the Muslim majority remained limited. This

²¹⁶ Mardin, "Centre-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?"; Şerif Mardin, "Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 11, No: 3 (June 1969).

paradigm, then, can be understood as the translation of the state-civil society dichotomy into a language that is shaped by the specific context of Turkey, which defines it in cultural-political terms. In other words, it portrays Ottoman-Turkish modernization to be shaped by a political-cultural contradiction, reducing the whole history to an ideological conflict between the secular and Islamic orientations²¹⁷. A similar perspective is conceptualized by Metin Heper as “strong state tradition” with an emphasis on the institutional dimension rather than on the cultural²¹⁸. The foundations formulated by Mardin and Heper, this paradigm enjoys a widespread acceptance as an analytical instrument among the scholars as diverse as left-oriented, liberals, conservatives, Kemalists and Islamists²¹⁹. Despite the differences concerning political orientation, motivation, or object of analysis, in this diversity, the centre-periphery dichotomy, which sets the main shared assumptions and arguments, can be captured as a “tendency”²²⁰ that put its stamp on the Turkish social sciences. It is not possible and is not the objective to go through all the arguments of centre-periphery view, but rather to portray a picture of the formation of the state-civil society dichotomy and the association of these components with certain actors and features.

4.1.1. State-Centrism:

The centre-periphery paradigm is a state-centred view, which conceives the strong, centralized state as the source of the economic, political, and social problems that Turkey has been dealing with since the 19th century modernization. The strong, dominating centre is argued to be

²¹⁷ Açikel, “Entegratif Toplum ve Muarızları: ‘Merkez-Çevre’ Paradigması Üzerine Eleştirel Notlar”, 33-4.

²¹⁸ Metin Heper, “The Strong State as a Problem for the Consolidation of Democracy: Turkey and Germany Compared”, *Comparative Political Studies* 25, No: 2 (July, 1992); Metin Heper, “Centre and Periphery in the Ottoman Empire: With Special Reference to the Nineteenth Century”, *International Political Science Review* 1, No: 1 (1980).

²¹⁹ Among many others, the representations of this view can be found in Özbudun, “The State, Civil Society and New Challenges to Consolidation”; Özbudun, “Turkey-Plural Society and Monolithic State”; Çağlar Keyder, “Whither the Project of Modernity? Turkey in the 1990s”, in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, ed. Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, (London: University of Washington Press, 1997); Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, “State and Civil Society in Turkey: Democracy, Development and Protest” in *Civil Society in the Muslim World: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Aryn B. Sajoo, (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002); Binnaz Toprak, “Civil Society in Turkey”, in *Civil Society in the Middle East*, Vol. 2, ed. Augustus Richard Norton. (Leiden, New York: Brill, 1996); Nilüfer Göle, “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics: The Case of Turkey”; Nilüfer Göle, “Secularism and Islamism in Turkey: The Making of Elites and Counter-Elites”, *Middle East Journal* 51, No: 1 (Winter, 1997); Ömer Çaha, “Osmanlı’da Sivil Toplum”, *Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi* 49, No: 3 (1994); Keyman and Kancı, “Democratic Consolidation and Civil Society in Turkey”; M. Hakan, “Political Islam and the Welfare (Refah) Parti in Turkey”, *Comparative Politics* 30, No: 1 (Oct 1997); Ahmet İnsel, “Otoritaryanizmin Sürekliliği”, *Birikim*, No: 125-126 (Sep.-Oct. 1999); <https://birikimdergisi.com/dergiler/birikim/1/sayi-125-126-eylul-ekim-1999/2319/otoritarizmin-surekliligi/4745>.

²²⁰ Demet Dinler, “Türkiye’de Güçlü Devlet Geleneği Tezinin Eleştirisi”, *Praksis*, No: 9 (2003): 18.

inherited from the Ottoman Empire, persisting in the Turkish Republic. The problems and contradictions that have been the staple of the Ottoman social formation have been only multiplied and deepened with modernization. In this sense, transformation from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic represents a continuity rather than a break. Because of this relationship of inheritance, it first gives an analysis of the Ottoman state tradition and the social formation to demonstrate the sources of the problems rooted in the “extremely centralized”²²¹ state structure of the Ottoman Empire. Based on the Weberian ideal-types, the Ottoman state is defined as ‘patrimonial’, the personal rule of the Sultan. According to Mardin, patrimonialism does not only categorize the Ottoman state, but it is “the most characteristic aspect” of it²²². Therefore, the patrimonial state, exclusively characterizing the Ottoman social formation, occupies the central position in the analysis. This patrimonial state is then contrasted to feudalism, characterizing the social formation of Europe. In other words, this reading of the Ottoman-Turkish modernization history is made in comparison to that of the West. It is also differentiated from the Eastern states that lacked a strong, institutionalized centre and is argued to be an “outstanding exception”²²³. The Ottoman-Turkish state, then, is not only attached a “uniqueness” that distinguishes it from both the West and the East, but also this “uniqueness” is employed to explain the peculiarities of the Turkish modernization history²²⁴.

4.1.1. State-Society Dichotomy and Portrayal of a Struggle between Them:

As an ‘exceptional case’, Ottoman-Turkish patrimonialism is characterized by and explained principally with reference to the military and civil bureaucrats, who are the “loyal servants of the state”²²⁵. This is because, the Sultan ruled by delegating administrative powers to the bureaucrats that represented the “institutional power” of the state against the “symbolic power” of the Sultan²²⁶. The Sultan, who identified the state, was the source of power, privileges, and positions of the bureaucrats and the legitimate ground for their administration²²⁷. This was, on the one hand, due to the *kul* status (the Sultan’s slave) of the bureaucrats that required their loyalty and devotion to the Sultan and his interests. On the other hand, the bureaucrats

²²¹ Insel, “Otoritaryanizmin Sürekliliği”.

²²² Mardin, “Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire”, 259.

²²³ Mardin, “Centre-Periphery Relations”, 169; Heper, “The Strong State”, 171-2.

²²⁴ Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective: A Relativist Paradigm or A Panoply of Hegemonic Strategies?”, 24-6.

²²⁵ Çaha, “Osmanlı’da Sivil Toplum”, 83; Heper, “Center and Periphery”, 85.

²²⁶ Insel, “Otoritaryanizmin Sürekliliği”.

²²⁷ Mardin, “Power, Civil Society and Culture”, 259, 272.

themselves “lacked social legitimacy” as they were not recruited from among the major Muslim groups in the society²²⁸, but from the non-Muslim minorities. In other words, the source of their legitimacy was political and not social. Therefore, loyalty to the Sultan was the sole precondition of their privileged positions in the state. However, the Sultan was gradually replaced by a state that is defined by a body of law, as the power was isolated from individuals and “depersonalized”²²⁹. According to Heper, this process of replacement of the will of the Sultan with the rational laws and rules and their institutionalization represented the “secularisation of authority” and the emergence of a “state-oriented tradition”²³⁰. Accordingly, the loyalty and devotion of the bureaucrats was not anymore to the person of the Sultan, but to this secular, central authority, meaning that they gained autonomy through secularization of power. Hence, with the “institutionalization of the state”, the power gradually shifted away from the Sultan and to the bureaucrats, constructing a state tradition characterized by a “bureaucratic centre”²³¹. This bureaucratic tradition, which requires absolute loyalty and devotion to the authority, is, in this view, one of the most important characteristics of the Ottoman-Turkish state, which explains the autonomy of the centre from the periphery. This view, then, conceives, “the institutions of the state” as the “source of power” that replaced the Sultan and identified the state itself, meaning that the state is defined by an “essence”²³². In other words, it is abstracted from any social relations and attributed a transcendental character that produces power and legitimacy itself.

The bureaucrats, once attributed their titles and positions, personally by the Sultan, belonged to the ruling group (*askeri*/military) as against the ruled (*reaya*), which separated and differentiated them from society. They are then trained and “socialized into an official class” through which they internalised the norms of the secular authority, which resulted in their identification with the state and further differentiation from the society²³³. Consequently, it is argued, that bureaucrats assumed the mission of “protecting state interest as guardians of the state”²³⁴. Heper, therefore, argues that they did not represent any class or group interest and

²²⁸ Insel, “Otoritaryanizmin Sürekliliği”.

²²⁹ Mardin, “Centre-Periphery Relations”, 171; Heper, “Center and Periphery”, 83-6; Heper, “The Strong State”, 174; Insel, “Otoritaryanizmin Sürekliliği”; Çaha, “Osmanlı’da Sivil Toplum”, 84.

²³⁰ Heper, “The Strong State”, 174.

²³¹ Çaha, “Osmanlı’da Sivil Toplum”, 84.

²³² Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 24.

²³³ Mardin, “Centre-Periphery Relations”, 169; Heper, “The Strong State”, 174.

²³⁴ Özbudun, “The State, Civil Society and New Challenges to Consolidation”, 128.

were only “devoted to the secular interests of the state”²³⁵. For example, the military coups in the Turkish history are argued to be made by the military bureaucrats to protect the state interest²³⁶. Likewise, modernization and the formation of the secular nation state, as it is argued, for “saving the state” is conceived to be a project of the bureaucrats, who not only defined the state interest, but also identified it with that of the nation, hence shaping society from above parallel to the state interests²³⁷. Then, the institutions of the state that identified the state itself are themselves identified by “self-conscious and self-determining” bureaucrats²³⁸. Therefore, the “centre” of the centre-periphery paradigm is represented principally by the bureaucrats, who are the major actors of the ‘centralized and strong state’. In other words, this paradigm identifies the centre, the state and the bureaucrats. The distinguishing characteristics of this view is its essentialism that attributes the state almost a personality of its own, above and beyond any social relations, with characteristics immanent to it. It is conceptualized as a “rational, autonomous structure with its own logic and interests” with bureaucrats being its “foundation” that forms itself by differentiating itself, through its institutions, from the society²³⁹. Therefore, the state that is portrayed as “prior to and transcending the society and economy” is argued to control and shape society according to its own logic and interests, instead of responding to those of society²⁴⁰.

As against this extremely bureaucratic and centralized state structure, occupied by the privileged, tax-exempted bureaucrats is the *reaya*, the tax-paying, non-privileged, ruled group. *Reaya* defined the rest of the society and is composed of the Muslim and non-Muslim subjects of the Sultan with major social groups being the peasants, craftsmen, and artisans (*esnaf*). Contrary to the homogenous, official culture of the centre, into which the bureaucrats were educated from their early ages, the periphery is marked by its heterogeneity; a point of contradiction between the centre and the periphery. For example, Özbudun argues that the Ottoman society was “a textbook example of plural segmented societies divided along religious, sectarian, ethnic and linguistic cleavages”²⁴¹. This pluralism was represented in the diverse

²³⁵ “The Strong State”, 175, 179.

²³⁶ Heper, “The Strong State”, 175-6; Özbudun, “The State, Civil Society and New Challenges to Consolidation”, 128-9.

²³⁷ Keyman and Kancı, “Democratic Consolidation and Civil Society in Turkey”, 140-1; Keyder, “Whither the Project of Modernity”, 39; Heper, “The Strong State”, 176; Mardin, “Centre-Periphery Relations”, 179-80; Göle, “Secularism and Islamism in Turkey”, 50.

²³⁸ Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 24.

²³⁹ Ibid, 24-5.

²⁴⁰ Dinler, “Türkiye’de Güçlü Devlet Geleneği Tezinin Eleştirisi”, 30-3.

²⁴¹ Özbudun, “Turkey-Plural Society and Monolithic State”, 64.

structures such as “craft guilds, the clergy, religious brotherhoods, endowments, mutual aid groups, non-Muslim religious organizations, nationalities, sects, tribes, clans, extended families”²⁴². Despite this emphasis on plurality, however, this view conceives society in cultural terms and defines it by the religion of the majority, as Muslim. In this sense, in the Republican era, the secular nation state and the bureaucrats with their secular education were different from the rest of society. According to Mardin, during modernization as a reaction, Islam has gained an “ideological character” and was “integrated into the peripheral code” as such, resulting in a deep cultural fraction²⁴³. This cultural contradiction between the rulers and the ruled, the seculars and the Muslims, lies at the heart of this paradigm as it is portrayed to be the primary, fundamental contradiction in the society. In this sense, the centre-periphery dichotomy expresses also the cultural dichotomy of secular-Islamic.

According to this view, as a religious community, the periphery was represented by the *ulema*, the religious bureaucrats of the centre in the provinces with religious and educational functions; *ayan/eşraf*²⁴⁴ (local notables) were the political representatives. Both of these intermediary groups are argued to have taken a clear position against modernisation on side of the periphery. After transition to multiparty system, this supposed opposition is portrayed as a political conflict between the “elected” governments and the bureaucrats, associated with conservative political parties and the Republican People’s Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi/CHP) respectively²⁴⁵. Both military coups and laws are, therefore, conceived as a reaction of the bureaucrats to block the penetration of the political elites representing the Muslim society in the state and to protect the autonomy of the state from society²⁴⁶. In this sense, the bureaucrats are attributed an authoritarian character that prevents representative democracy to function properly. Göle defines this as the “inbred tension between secularism and democracy” that “cross-cuts the power relations between the ‘progressive’ bureaucratic elites and ‘democratic’ civil society”²⁴⁷.

²⁴² Özbudun, “The State, Civil Society and New Challenges to Consolidation”, 127.

²⁴³ “Centre-Periphery Relations”, 178-9.

²⁴⁴ The local notables were economically and politically powerful and influential families in the provinces, who had connections to the local populations. *Ayan* is the title they gained from the centre as political intermediaries between the centre and the periphery elected by and representing the local populations. They are portrayed as the fundamental “peripheral force” that had unmediated contact to the local populations, connecting the centre to the “lower classes”, particularly to the peasantry”. Mardin, “Centre-Periphery Relations”, 173-5; Heper, “Center and Periphery”, 87-8; Çaha, “Osmanlı’da Sivil Toplum”, 93.

²⁴⁵ Keyman and Kancı, “Democratic Consolidation and Civil Society in Turkey”, 133; İnel, “Otoritaryanizmin Sürekliliği”.

²⁴⁶ Heper, “The Strong State”, 175-181.

²⁴⁷ “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics: The Case of Turkey”, 19-20. She further argues that the interruption of democracy on the ground of secular concerns decreases the devotion of Islamic actors to democracy, that is, the state is held responsible from the deficits of democracy in Islamic politics.

According to Keyder, this secular cause is instrumentalized to legitimize the authoritarianism of the centre²⁴⁸. The authoritarian-democratic opposition characterizing the centre-periphery is formulated on this ground. This picture of the Ottoman social formation that portrays a dichotomous structure is based on the assumption that the mere division in society is political, separating strictly the rulers and the ruled, which corresponds to the centre and the periphery. In other words, Ottoman-Turkish society is conceived as “a sole political entity constituted by status groups organized around the political elites”²⁴⁹.

The organization of society along political lines is argued to fundamentally differentiate the Ottoman Empire from its Western counterparts, where various peripheral, in the first place economic, forces played a central role in the formation of social and political structures. While the modern Western nation state is shaped by those multiple struggles in feudal Europe, Ottoman society is argued to be dominated by a single major confrontation between the centre and the periphery. It is the central argument of this paradigm that it is this “unidimensional” political relationship between the centre and the periphery, which is marked by “an ever-present tension” that shaped Ottoman-Turkish political culture²⁵⁰. This argument is based on the assumption that both centre and periphery, even when the actors of the both have differences and conflicts, are unified in themselves against each other. For example, Mardin argues that despite its heterogeneity and “fragmentary character”, the actors of the periphery were united in their “negative view of officialdom”²⁵¹. He further points out to the unifying role of Islam in the periphery, bringing both upper and lower classes together against the secular, central authority²⁵². Likewise, the bureaucrats are united in their opposition to particularistic interests and hence, “segmentation”, “heterogeneity” and “pluralism” in society, which is argued later to lead the bureaucrats to attempt to homogenize and unite society around a certain set of values through “top-down” reforms²⁵³. This portrayed division and opposition is argued to be due to the strong state that prevented the emergence of autonomous intermediary structures that could integrate the centre and the periphery²⁵⁴. Therefore, the relationship was shaped by the

²⁴⁸ “Whither the Project of Modernity”, 45.

²⁴⁹ Dinler, “Türkiye’de Güçlü Devlet Geleneği Tezinin Eleştirisi”, 20.

²⁵⁰ Heper, “Center and Periphery”, 98; Mardin, “Centre-Periphery Relations”, 170.

²⁵¹ “Centre-Periphery Relations”, 174.

²⁵² Ibid, 179.

²⁵³ Özbudun, “Turkey-Plural Society and Monolithic State”, 82.

²⁵⁴ Despite the existence of vibrant civil societal structures such as *ulema*, *ayan*, guilds, etc., here the autonomy is problematized that could counterbalance the state. It should be noted here that although these or other “peripheral” groups had been in conflict with the centre and at times could be able to challenge it, these are understood as “deviations” or exceptions, the rule being the absolute domination of the state over the periphery. Dinler,

dominance of politics over the other spheres of collective life. In other words, this relationship is marked exclusively by state “domination” over society instead of a “social contract” shaped by multiple struggles like in the West²⁵⁵.

The economic domination of the state is expressed by state ownership of land and in the Republican era by the etatist policies, which is argued to have prevented the emergence of both aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, the “fundamental forces of civil society in the West”²⁵⁶. Because both, the local notables and the bourgeoisie were dependent on the state, it was political power that was also the source of economic power, the “reverse” of developments in Western Europe²⁵⁷. This, it is argued, demonstrates that the ruling group was not defined by production like in the West, but “by its right to consumption over production”²⁵⁸. Although the ‘landless notables’ or the ‘state-created bourgeoisie’ are classes that do not produce themselves but appropriate the production of the dominated classes precisely like their Western counterparts, the relationship between the economic and the political was formulated in terms of the extent of state intervention in the economy and not of relationship of appropriation. In other words, this view “shifts the principal social contradiction from being between producing and appropriating classes to one of distribution among the appropriating groups”²⁵⁹. Moreover, the control of the political over economic is conceived to result in a “symbiotic relationship”, which corrupted both the bureaucrats and the bourgeoisie²⁶⁰. This comparison is based on a distorted reading of Western history, which assumes an ‘uncorrupted’ autonomy relation between the

“Türkiye’de Güçlü Devlet Geleneği Tezinin Eleştirisi”, 22. For example, Çaha, in order to point out to the growing power of the *ayan*, tells how they, together with the *ulema* and the Janissaries, a branch of the military, intervened in the state policies, which led to taking down the Sultan and replacing him with their own candidates. *Ayan* had reached such a power, they were even called “the little Sultan” (*küçük padişah*, *sikkersiz Sultan*). Yet, this does not change the character of the relationship between the centre and the periphery as the central authority “always wins against the periphery”. “Osmanlı’da Sivil Toplum”, 93, 95. Toprak, taking a different stance, emphasises also the “dynamics that worked in the other direction” especially in the last century of the Ottoman Empire challenging the central authority with certain gainings concerning rights and freedoms. “Civil Society in Turkey”, 89-90.

²⁵⁵ Çaha, “Osmanlı’da Sivil Toplum”, 83.

²⁵⁶ Ibid, 84-5. According to Yalman, this view conceives etatism as an instrument of the bureaucrats to maintain “state domination over economy” so as to “protect their status and interests”. “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 27. See for example, Keyder, “Whither the Project of Modernity”; İnsel, “Otoritaryanizmin Sürekliliği”; Keyman and Kancı, “Democratic Consolidation and Civil Society in Turkey”.

²⁵⁷ Özbudun, “The State, Civil Society and New Challenges to Consolidation”, 126. The argument goes as: The power, privileges and the titles of the local notables depended on the centre, as they were tax-collectors on the Sultan’s land. The bourgeoisie created by the etatist policies was likewise weak and state-dependent. Toprak, “Civil Society in Turkey”, 100-1; Keyder, “Whither the Project of Modernity”, 39-40.

²⁵⁸ Çaha, “Osmanlı’da Sivil Toplum”, 84.

²⁵⁹ Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 27. This should be considered in relation to the definition of society as Muslim as a central feature of it, through which the dichotomy is constructed in cultural terms, rather than as peasant, which represents a greater majority than Muslims, that would have formed the fronts differently putting the notables/bourgeoisie and the bureaucrats on the same side against the peasants.

²⁶⁰ Mardin, “Centre-Periphery Relations”, 178; Heper, “Center and Periphery”, 97.

state and the dominant classes, from which the Ottoman-Turkish state-society relations deviates. Therefore, the ‘symbiotic relationship’ is not conceived as a struggle of different groups for economic privileges, but as the ‘corruption’ of dominant classes by the patrimonial character of the state. This “inverse relation” is argued to be the fundamental reason of the lack of autonomous economic actors that could demand “economic liberalism and civil and political rights” to replace “status-oriented values” with a “market-oriented” culture²⁶¹. Therefore, the centre-periphery dichotomy expresses also the public oriented, etatist economy, which is associated with the authoritarian state versus individualist, liberal, free-market economy as the precondition of a democratic civil society.

The bureaucrats based on their political power and with their own interests are conceived to have replaced the bourgeoisie and are defined as a “class” that enforced modernization on a “voiceless” and “passive” society²⁶². In this sense, modernization was not “a self-generating societal process”, but a “total project” of the bureaucrats including institutional and cultural transformation²⁶³. Therefore, the role of education is particularly stressed, as this is central to cultural transformation. For example, Mardin notes that Western style educational institutions, opened to train military and civil bureaucrats to adopt a positivist view of science, nationalist ideologies and the Western norms and manners, were “the earliest nodal point of reform”, while the periphery resisted to modern, secular education and insisted on *medrese*, the traditional, religious schools²⁶⁴. According to Göle, as the bureaucrats lacked “material” bases as a “non-commercial class”, they used education to legitimize and “empower” themselves²⁶⁵. From this perspective, modernization was the “Westernization of the bureaucrats”, that distinguished themselves from the society²⁶⁶. Accordingly, it was this cultural aspect, it is argued, which deliberately “constructed the Western civilization in a selective way” to define Islamic culture

²⁶¹ Özbudun, “The State, Civil Society and New Challenges to Consolidation”, 126, 128; Çaha, “Osmanlı’da Sivil Toplum”, 83-5; Keyder, “Whither the Project of Modernity”, 39-40. For example, Kalaycıoğlu conceives the cooperation of the Turkish Businessmen and Industrialists Association (Türkiye Sanayiciler ve İşadamları Derneği/TÜSİAD), the prominent organization of the big bourgeoisie, and Turkish Union of Chambers and Stock Exchanges (Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği/TOBB), the representative of a wider range including small and middle business, with the state as “a mutually rewarding relationship of symbiosis” that decreases the capacity of civil society organizations to influence the state policies by mutual cooperation. Instead of seeing the state as an adversary, he argues, these organizations rival with one another seeking the alliance of the state. “State and Civil Society in Turkey”, 257-8.

²⁶² Keyder, “Whither the Project of Modernity”; Mardin, “Centre-Periphery Relations” and “Power, Civil Society and Culture”; İnel, “Otoritaryanizmin Sürekliliği”; Göle, “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics”, 20-5.

²⁶³ Keyder, “Whither the Project of Modernity”, 37, 39; Göle, “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics”.

²⁶⁴ Mardin, “Centre-Periphery Relations”, 178-9; Keyder, “Whither the Project of Modernity”, 39.

²⁶⁵ “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics”, 23-4.

²⁶⁶ Mardin, “Centre-Periphery Relations”, 179-87; Çaha, “Osmanlı’da Sivil Toplum”, 94-9; Göle, “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics”, 20-5; Kalaycıoğlu, “State and Civil Society in Turkey”, 250.

as “underdeveloped, barbaric, backward” and attach legitimacy to the West-oriented, secular bureaucratic elite, which “patronised, humiliated and despised the Muslim masses for being ignorant, reactionary and uncivilized”²⁶⁷. Therefore, modernization did not only deepen the cultural cleavage, but also the hierarchy, resulting in the ‘elitism’ of the bureaucrats. This cultural opposition, which Kalaycıoğlu defines as *Kulturkampf* between secular and conservative understandings of “good society”²⁶⁸, is, in this view, the fundamental, irreconcilable contradiction, which was cultural, “horizontal” based on status and not economic, “vertical” based on class²⁶⁹.

4.1.1. Conservative-Islamic Politics and the Rise of the AKP:

The centre-periphery view reads the whole Ottoman-Turkish history through a dichotomy, as a struggle between the centre and the periphery, which are strictly separated and whose features defined above are assumed to have remained stable for centuries, challenging and outwitting one another alternately. This struggle has a political-cultural character. Therefore, starting with the Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti/DP) in the first elections of the multiparty system, the electoral victories of conservative-Islamic-right-wing parties are conceived to be the democratic reaction of the Muslim society to the authoritarian secularisation of the centre. Göle, for example, points out that electoral democracy is accompanied by “the revival of Islamic values and practices”²⁷⁰, implying the ‘spontaneous’ reaction of the Muslim religious society particularly to authoritarian secularisation and modernization. Islam, then, is assumed to be the principle that determines not only the cultural, everyday practices but also the political preferences of society, constructing a natural bond between Islam as a religion and conservative political parties. According to Keyder, the top-down character of modernization “necessarily politicized its object” and the reaction and the resistance of the masses, therefore, emphasised the authentic, traditional culture against modern, Western one²⁷¹. Likewise, Yavuz points out to the “subordination of Islam” by the secular state as the cause of “politicization of Islam”, resulting in identification of “Kemalist, secularists” with the centre and the oppositional

²⁶⁷ Kalaycıoğlu, “State and Civil Society in Turkey”, 250; Göle, “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics”, 19-25; Göle, “Secularism and Islamism in Turkey”, 50; Çaha, “Osmanlı’da Sivil Toplum”, 98.

²⁶⁸ Kalaycıoğlu, “State and Civil Society in Turkey”, 248.

²⁶⁹ Göle, “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics”, 23-4.

²⁷⁰ “Secular Authoritarianism and Islamist Politics”, 19.

²⁷¹ Keyder, “Whither the Project of Modernity”, 45-6.

“Ottoman-Islam tradition” with the periphery²⁷². In this sense, Islam (and its ‘authentic’ and ‘traditional’ culture) is considered not merely as a religion but is attached a political character through which dissent is organized and expressed. Therefore, the Islamic movement is attached a particular importance in challenging authoritarianism of the state.

The post-1980 era, in this sense, represents a first rupture, expressed not only in economic liberalization, but also in the “autonomization of civil society”, particularly the Islamic and Kurdish movements that challenged both the secular national identity and the “organic view of society” of the “Kemalist hegemony”²⁷³. For example, Özbudun defines the rise of the Islamic movement as the emergence of a “segmented society” in which “strictly secular state institutions and civil society organizations” and Islamic culture exist together side by side, while according to Göle the rise of the Islamic movement in the 1990s was “a counter-attack against the principles of the Kemalist project of modernization”, challenging the “interests of the Westernized elites”²⁷⁴. The significance attributed to the Islamic movement and identity lies in its identification with civil society and hence, the assumption that it has the potential to end the centre-periphery dichotomy, by integrating the periphery into the social-political structure. It is on this ground that the rise of the ‘renewalist’ Islamist AKP into power in 2002 forming a majority government was conceived to be the victory of the periphery over the centre. It was attached positive meaning as it would transform the state-society relations, liberalize Turkey and eventually lead to democratic consolidation²⁷⁵.

²⁷² Yavuz, “Political Islam and the Welfare (Refah) Parti in Turkey”, 65, 72. Secular/secularism is the translation of *laik* (laic) and *laiklik* (laicite) from French as they are used in Turkish context. Secularist (*laikçi*) as critical undertones and is often employed in a pejorative sense, not only, but especially by the Islamists.

²⁷³ Toprak, “Civil Society in Turkey”, 104; Göle, “Secular Authoritarianism and Islamist Politics”, 20, 36-7; Keyder, “Whither the Project of Modernity”; Keyman and Kancı, “Democratic Consolidation and Civil Society in Turkey”. As the bureaucrats are defined as a class replacing the revolutionary bourgeoisie of the West, the “modernization project” is portrayed as the hegemony of the bureaucrats and hence, it is defined as “Kemalist”, implying its cultural-ideological character. Yalman points out to the contradiction between the arguments that the state is authoritarian “imposing Kemalist ideology from above” and that the state is hegemonic. Galip Yalman, “Crises as Driving Force of Neoliberal ‘Transformismo’: The Contours of the Turkish Political Economy since the 2000s” in *Palgrave Handbook of Critical International Political Economy*, ed. Alan Cafruny, Leila Simona Talani and Gonzalo Poza Martin, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

²⁷⁴ Özbudun, “Monolithic State and Plural Society”, 70; “Secularism and Islamism in Turkey”, 57.

²⁷⁵ For analyses of the AKP from the centre-periphery perspective among many others: Çınar, “Turkey’s Transformation Under the AKP Rule”; İnşel, “The AKP and the Normalizing Democracy in Turkey”; Ümit Cizre, “A New Politics of Engagement: The Turkish Military, Society and the AKP”, in *Democracy, Islam and Secularism in Turkey*, ed. Ahmet Kuru and Alfred Stepan, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Ziya Öniş, “Monopolising the Centre: The AKP and the Uncertain Path of Turkish Democracy”, *The International Spectator* 50, No: 2 (2015); Ergun Özbudun, “AKP at the Crossroads: Erdoğan’s Majoritarian Drift”, *South European Society and Politics* 19, No: 2 (2014).

The AKP's rule was conceived to be a further rupture from the 'state-centred Kemalist authoritarianism' and towards a society-oriented pluralist democracy. The first reason of that is that as the AKP, whose founders have backgrounds in the closed Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi/FP), the successor of the Islamist Welfare Party (Refah Partisi/RP) and the National Outlook Movement (Milli Görüş/MG), declared the party as 'conservative democratic'. As it claimed to have left the Islamist past behind, the new party was conceived as the transformation and moderation of Islamism. The AKP was conceived as a conservative/Muslim/right-wing and democratic party, because of: 1) of its "moderate, conciliatory and reformist messages"; 2) further neoliberalization of the economy and accompanying minimalization of the state, which enlarged the political sphere; 3) progress in the EU accession negotiations and 4) eliminating the role of the military in politics, 'the guardian of the Republic', as it is called,²⁷⁶. The AKP was argued to represent not political Islamism, but a "synthesis between free enterprise and conservative values", that is, "the cultural values of the sweeping majority" basing its power particularly on the "culturally conservative, economically liberal new middle classes"²⁷⁷. The Islamic component, on the other, was limited with civil society and was outside of the state, where Islamic lifestyle and moral emerge "spontaneously" without an imposition from above²⁷⁸. It is in this sense that the AKP was argued to be democratic as it allowed 'civil Islamism' to rise spontaneously in society and not political Islamist as it did not aim at Islamizing state power. Therefore and second, under AKP rule, politics and democracy is argued to be "normalized"; it challenged the strong state tradition, ended the separation between the state institutions and the government, opened space for politics, and allowed the "political movements that represent the large sections of the society" to become "the centre of politics" replacing the civil-military bureaucracy²⁷⁹. In other words, it was the replacement of the Western, secular and etatist values representing the 'elitist minority' with the Islamic, traditional/conservative and liberal values that represent 'the oppressed, victimized majority'

²⁷⁶ Çınar, "Turkey's Transformation Under the AKP Rule", 473-4.

²⁷⁷ Insel, "The AKP and the Normalizing Democracy in Turkey", 298, 301.

²⁷⁸ Cizre, "A New Politics of Engagement: The Turkish Military, Society and the AKP", 136-7. According to Cizre, contrary to Islamism that remains within the borders of civil society, secularism and Kemalism is "the intersection point of the state and civil society", with "secularist civil society organizations" fighting against the "anti-secular enemies" on the side of the army that identifies the state. Conceiving civil society to be autonomous from the state, which ideally promotes "ideals of civil society" against nationalism and resists the state, he argues that Turkish case fails to fit in, because of the control of the military over civil society, that is, the strong state tradition prevents autonomous civil society to emerge. This, again, reproduces the dichotomy, emphasising the immanent authoritarianism of the secular, Kemalist state and the democratic, Islamic civil society. 140-3.

²⁷⁹ Insel, "The AKP and the Normalizing Democracy in Turkey", 300.

as the centre of the society that was argued to be the ‘normalization of democracy’. In short, the AKP was conceived to be the party that integrated the state and civil society.

As the initial periods of the AKP governments were conceived to be democratic, the increasing visibility and extent of its authoritarianism is conceptualized as “authoritarian turn” or “majoritarian drift” towards “competitive authoritarianism”, “electoral authoritarianism”, “illiberal democracy” or “delegative democracy” with a “markedly Islamic character”, implying a shift or a break from its ‘reformist path’, the liberalizing and democratizing politics²⁸⁰. This view does not only ignore the Islamic and anti-democratic component in the policies of the AKP in the early periods, which strategically undermined the democratic institutions, but also distinguishes this new authoritarianism from the “old, secular, Kemalist, top-down” one, in that the power was consolidated by the “civilian majority from below” through elections²⁸¹. The liberal intelligentsia that interpreted the AKP governments as discussed above supported the party until its so-called ‘authoritarian turn’. Their expectations from the party for consolidation of democracy and a pluralistic civil society are based on their reading of modernization history discussed in this section. Yet, based on the conceptual distinction between state and civil society, the separation of civil and political Islamism as well as ‘from below’ and ‘top-down’ strategies underestimates the power of Islamization ‘from below’ and authoritarianization and it ignores altogether the organic relations between the civil and the political, and ‘the political’ in ‘the civil’. Therefore, this perspective fails to understand and explain the relationship between civil society and the state and the role civil society plays in Islamization and authoritarianization under AKP rule. Before going to the discussion of transformation of civil society from a historical perspective, the main points of critique to this paradigm will be briefly touched upon, which will be further discussed in the next section.

3.2. Conceptual Pitfalls and Political Repercussions of the Centre-Periphery Perspective:

A review of the literature on civil society in Turkey demonstrates the extent of the domination of the centre-periphery view in social sciences. As noted above, although the differences among the analyses cannot be neutralised, the conceptual dichotomy of state and civil society is the

²⁸⁰ Özbudun, “AKP at the Crossroads: Erdoğan’s Majoritarian Drift”; 156; Öniş, “Monopolising the Centre”, 25.

²⁸¹ Öniş, “Monopolising the Centre”, 25.

underlying principle in their reading of social transformation in Turkey, sharing, in this sense, a similar ‘tendency’ with the mainstream contemporary conceptualizations of civil society discussed in the previous chapter. Indeed, although formulated in the early 1970s, parallel to the global context, the centre-periphery dichotomy has become “hegemonic” only in the 1980s, representing the “ideological transformation” that accompanied the “neoliberal assault” on the state that aimed at its “economic and political restructuring”²⁸². In other words, it represents the ideological moment of neoliberal hegemony, based on state-society dichotomy or as Yalman puts it, it has “functioned as hegemonic apparatus” particularly within the context of neoliberal transformation rather than as an analytical category explaining state-society relations²⁸³. Its hegemonic position is demonstrated in that from 1980s on, it has been employed as “almost an unavoidable paradigm without an alternative”²⁸⁴. Açıkel warns against the dangers of hegemonic views becoming paradigms, arguing that they produce “epistemological conservatism” among the scholars occluding alternative perspectives to the extent that they are accepted to produce “normalized forms of knowledge”²⁸⁵. Precisely this normalization expresses the ideological transformation in society as it becomes hegemonic to the extent that it penetrates in the daily life, naturalizing and justifying the distinction and opposition between state and the market and civil society²⁸⁶. In other words, the centre-periphery paradigm does not only “(mis)conceptualize” and “(mis)represent” the social reality, but also actually “makes” the social reality itself²⁸⁷.

This view conceptualizes both the state and civil society as given categories with certain features and represented by certain actors. It does not only assume a relationship of opposition between the two, but also fixes it in an essentialist way to explain the whole Ottoman-Turkish modernization with these unchanging categories. Moreover, its culturalist-reductionist understanding of modernization portrays a cultural struggle between the “secular, authoritarian, Kemalist state” and “Islamic, democratic civil society” as the fundamental contradiction in the society. Therefore, it does not only fail to explain the complex and intertwined relations between state-civil society and secular-Islamic, but it also ignores how they are transformed in their changing context. According to Açıkel, this view “turns into a revanchist instrument in

²⁸² Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 22-3.

²⁸³ Yalman, “Crises as Driving Force of Neoliberal ‘Transformismo’”, 245-6.

²⁸⁴ Açıkel, “Entegratif Toplum ve Muarızları”, 31.

²⁸⁵ Ibid, 32-3.

²⁸⁶ Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 23.

²⁸⁷ Açıkel, “Entegratif Toplum ve Muarızları”, 34; Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 23-5.

the hands of the conservative-pious ‘periphery’”, as it produces the assumption that the displacement of the periphery from the centre caused a distortion in the original, normal order of things, which can be restored only by bringing Islam to its original position, the “centre”²⁸⁸. Indeed, this view has been instrumentalized by the Islamist political parties combined with a narrative of ‘victimhood of Muslims’ under the secular, authoritarian state, as shown by Navaro-Yashin²⁸⁹, by the RP or as a central element in the hegemonic struggles under the AKP rule, as will be discussed below, that “deliberately” employed it to “replace class-based politics with identity-based one”²⁹⁰. This, again, demonstrates the ideological character of this dichotomous view, which served this political objective.

This function of it is particularly due to its essentialist conceptualization of state and civil society as fix and cultural categories. While the state is freed from any social relations, by its definition as a source of power and legitimacy itself, which is represented by the secular bureaucrats with their own interests, civil society is ‘purged’ from class and dominated by identity-based groups. In the peculiar conditions of Turkey after transition to civil rule following the military coup in 1980, there has been a rise of debates on civil society and multiplication in the formulations of recipes for a democratic political life, with plural, multicultural civil societies at the centre. Erdoğan&Üstüner define these as “post-political”, as their understanding of politics and democracy is limited with plurality in civil society and search for consensus, excluding “antagonistic” views that aim at seizure of state power, labelling them “ideological” and “illegitimate”²⁹¹. In this sense, they argue, they produce “authoritarianism in reverse”, with their “repressive tolerance” for “maintaining the integrity of society”, the central objective of the state²⁹². This point shows how the dichotomous view serves to the objectives of the state in

²⁸⁸ Açıkel, “Entegratif Toplum ve Muarızları”, 33-4.

²⁸⁹ Yael Navaro-Yashin “Uses and Abuses of ‘State and Civil Society’ in Contemporary Turkey”, *New Perspectives on Turkey*, No: 18 (1998). Her analysis of the relations of the RP with civil society contrasts with the account discussed above. She emphasises the “discursive construction” of the RP, presenting itself as “representative of civil society” promoting “direct democracy”, which she, however, by her field study during which she attended at a “people’s parliaments” of the RP, demonstrates to be wrong, in that the participants neither include women or opposition, but only the male followers of the party, who have almost no chance to speak their minds, as the sessions are dominated by the RP officers in chic suits, coming to the events with limousines and taking their places in “seats of honour”. Their civil society is, therefore, not only far from representing the actual society, but also does not have the conditions to shape the politics of the RP ‘from below’.

²⁹⁰ Yalman, “Crises as Driving Force of Neoliberal ‘Transformismo’”, 247.

²⁹¹ Necmi Erdoğan and Fahriye Üstüner, “Quest for Hegemony: Discourses on Democracy” in in *The Politics of Permanent Crisis: Class, Ideology and State in Turkey*, ed. Neşecan Balkan and Sungur Savran, (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2002):196.

²⁹² Ibid, 207-8. This concept of “repressive tolerance” can be used to define the concepts of civil society discussed in the previous chapter that arbitrarily, but deliberately exclude any elements from their diverse and plural civil society that distorts it.

that it conceptualizes and produces society in line with the state's demands, which, however, claims to be against the state. Therefore, it is not surprising that its followers construct democratic civil society in a selective way. For example, Navaro-Yashin points out that "the violent presence" of, not only, but particularly, state officials in civil society was ignored by them in the exact same period when they were glorifying democratisation and "autonomization" of civil society from the state²⁹³. Hence, the definition of civil society from this perspective is arbitrary and circular. This became, as will be discussed below, the central instrument of the AKP in reorganizing civil society by repressing dissent, while claiming to democratise it at the same time.

Apart from its ideological functions, this view ignores the actual integration of Islamism in the state and civil society through taking part in governments, seizing municipalities, representation by political parties, by Islamic bourgeoisie and politically influential civil society organizations at least since the transition to multiparty system in 1946²⁹⁴. Therefore, it fails to explain the rise of the AKP into power, as it cannot contextualize this development by its assumption of strict separation and opposition of state and civil society. From this perspective both the rise of the AKP into power and its 'authoritarian turn' are sudden developments without a context. Most significantly, the separation of civil Islamism from political Islamism, based on the state-civil society dichotomy, fails to recognize the role of civil society as a site of hegemonic struggles in seizing state power. It also ignores the 'evils' of civil society and exalts it as immanently democratic, opening the way to oppressions in and from civil society. The critique of the centre-periphery paradigm, therefore, employs a concept of civil society that is not separated from and opposed to the state and is not associated with immanent features such as democratic, Muslim, oppressed²⁹⁵. The concept is defined in relation to the state and within its historical-social context. As will be discussed in detail in the next section, the Gramscian concept and perspective provides an analytical alternative to the dichotomous understanding of centre-periphery paradigm.

²⁹³ "Uses and Abuses of 'State and Civil Society'", 3-4.

²⁹⁴ Mustafa Şen, "Transformation of Turkish Islamism and the Rise of Justice and Development Party", *Turkish Studies* 11, No: 1 (2010); Açıkel, "Entegratif Toplum ve Muarızları".

²⁹⁵ See, for example, Açıkel, "Entegratif Toplum ve Muarızları"; Yalman, "The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective"; Şen, "Transformation of Turkish Islamism and the Rise of Justice and Development Party".

3.3. Civil Society from a Historical Perspective: Struggle for Hegemony and the Rise of Neoliberal Authoritarian Islamism:

Against this background of theoretical debate on civil society in Turkey, this section will present a historical account of civil society in relation to state to contextualize the political role of the civil society organizations under the AKP rule and the AKP's politics of civil society in general. Disagreeing with the centre-periphery account above, the aim is to discuss the internal relations between civil and political society and the transformation of civil society as a process by locating it in its historical context. On this ground, civil and political Islamism are considered as parts of a whole that reproduce one another. In this sense, the discussion contrasts the dichotomous view's differentiation of civil from the political Islamism, which is based on the essentialist conceptualization of civil society. This separation is clearly demonstrated by the arguments of Göle. According to her, thanks to the "self-limitation" of civil society, "civil Islamism" would integrate the Islamist movement in the social and political structure, while "counterbalancing" utopian totalitarian Islamism²⁹⁶. The main actors of "civil Islamism", according to her, are Islamist intellectuals with their "rational" education and "critical thinking" and "*tarikât*", which she defines as civil society organization that played an important role in the empowerment of "civil Islamism" as they have been crucial "for centuries in the maintenance and perpetuation of Islamic faith and life-world"²⁹⁷. Therefore, in a pluralistic, vibrant civil society, she argues, the Islamist movement is likely to "play 'within' the rules of the game", rather than to "fight 'over' the rules of the game"²⁹⁸. Contrary to this argument, the discussion will shed light particularly on the role of intellectuals, religious networks and civil society organizations in the rise of political Islamism. This relationship is thoroughly discussed by Tuğal, formulating concepts of state and civil society, derivative of Gramscian concepts. He argues that the AKP as the hegemonic actor (political society) "linked" the Islamist movement (civil society) by "absorbing its radicalism", to the state²⁹⁹. He calls this process "establishment

²⁹⁶ "Secular Authoritarianism and Islamist Politics", 27-8, 36-9. When she discusses this point, she emphasises again that Islam is politicized, because it was repressed by the secular state and excluded from the system and therefore, when Islamists are provided participation and "freedom of expression" in a "debate culture" and by platforms such as periodicals, panels, round-tables, talk shows, conferences, utopian, revolutionary Islamism would be kept under control. The role of such platforms in the rise of political Islamism will be discussed in the next chapter. Behold that Islamism is, only by virtue of its being a part of civil society, freed from any totalitarian tendencies, which it assumes by its seizure of state.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Cihan Tuğal, "Conceptualizing Islamic Mobilization in Turkey", in *Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2009). Secularisation thesis is reminiscent of the AKP's self-definition as 'conservative democrat' and the dichotomous view's conception of it as 'moderation of

of hegemony” through “secularization”³⁰⁰. The discussion below, likewise, focuses on the relationship between civil society and the state, however, they are not conceived as separate spheres that are ‘linked’ together by political society, though the importance of the party is recognized. Rather, it will discuss the ‘organic relations’ between these different moments, that is, the relationship between political parties, religious networks, education, intellectuals, civil society organizations, the state (government) and the bourgeoisie. Most importantly, the AKP’s seizure of hegemony is argued to be a process of Islamization rather than secularisation.

3.3.1. Early Republican Era: Secularisation of State-Controlled Civil Society:

The single-party period of nation state formation, which entailed an organic view of society to create a national identity defined as Sunni Muslim and Turk, did not allow political expression of ethnic and religious identities. The pluralistic and lively associational life, with various political parties, social, cultural, and economic associations of the previous period disappeared under the single-party rule³⁰¹. Political parties, oppositional newspapers and magazines, associations and foundations, class-based organizations were closed; alternative political projects, particularly the socialist movements, were not tolerated. Ethnic and religious groups that diverged from the conception of official national identity were either politically contained or repressed. In short, this period is characterized by a strong state, organizing civil society through its administrative-legal apparatus. According to Açıkel, it was particularly this period, after which the authoritarian state-democratic civil society dichotomy, is modelled and fixed as an explanation for the whole Turkish history³⁰².

Islamism’. Tuğal’s account has some other parallels with centre-periphery view. For example, he portrays a struggle between ‘secularists’ and ‘Islamists’ and reads the rise of the AKP as a ‘counter-hegemonic’ movement. This is due to his conceptualization of state and civil society (he adds an additional ‘political society’ to Gramsci’s conceptual pair) as superstructural levels, which, therefore, excludes economy completely. Hence, he conceives a cultural struggle between the secular (state) and the Islamic (civil society), which the AKP through secularisation integrated together. He defines civil society as “informal networks, movements and associations that regulate everyday life, the use of space and people’s relation to the economy”, which “mediate between “economy and political society”. p. 29. Further, civil society and political society mediate between economy and the state. pp. 32-3. For a critique of his ‘misreading’ of Gramsci, see Morton, “Limits of Sociological Marxism”.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Toprak, “Civil Society in Turkey”, 90; Özbudun, “Monolithic State, Plural Society”, 83.

³⁰² Açıkel, “Entegratif Toplum ve Muarızları”, 33-4.

With the state assuming the mission of “instituting modern capitalist relations”, the nation-state formation of this period was also a late-coming process of “class-formation”³⁰³. Therefore, state intervention and etatist policies aimed at the accumulation of wealth for the emerging national bourgeoisie and making of a capitalist nation state. On this ground, Yalman defines etatism in this period as an instrument, which stressed collectivity as an “organic society”, of a “hegemonic project” that aimed at “creating an ‘integral state’”³⁰⁴. In other words, etatism to empower the bourgeoisie was embedded in the conception of organic society, so that the class formation aspect of the nation state formation could be conceived not as such, but as a necessity for the good of the whole society. Therefore, the bureaucrats were representing, rather than their own interests, the in-formation Turkish-Muslim bourgeoisie and a new social and economic order. Hence, they were in a struggle with the *ulema* that represented the “*ancien regime*”, its pre-capitalist relations and classes, *eşraf* and *ayan*, who, by then, collected a significant amount of private property in the form of land, though later they became part of the ruling coalition to protect their positions³⁰⁵. Accordingly, the new nation state required the reformation of the superstructures; it is in this context that modernization and secularisation ‘from above’ took place. From this perspective the argument of a state autonomous from the society and in continuity with the Ottoman Empire becomes futile. On the contrary, the formation of the nation state represents a “radical break” from the Ottoman Empire, economically, politically, and culturally³⁰⁶.

The superstructural reforms in the legal, cultural, and political levels, including the formation of nation state, are to be considered as an inseparable part of this capitalist transformation. Because Islam was not merely a religion, but the official ideology of the Ottoman state that represented the pre-capitalist relations, which was the legitimate ground and source of the political power of the Sultan-Caliph, as such it was to be abandoned. Moreover, as noted before, the *ulema* had direct connections to the society by its control not only over religious institutions, but also legal and educational structure and had a certain level of political power as representative of the official ideology. Therefore, the reformation of the cultural sphere was of utmost importance both for defeating Islam as an ideology and culture organizing social and

³⁰³ Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 26-32; Ahmet Öncü, “Dictatorship Plus Hegemony: A Gramscian Analysis of the Turkish State”, *Science&Society* 67, No: 3 (Fall 2003): 314; Sungur Savran, “The Legacy of the Twentieth Century”, in in *The Politics of Permanent Crisis: Class, Ideology and State in Turkey*, ed. Neşecan Balkan and Sungur Savran, (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2002), 4-10.

³⁰⁴ Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 26-32.

³⁰⁵ Öncü, “Dictatorship Plus Hegemony”, 311-6; Savran, “The Legacy of the Twentieth Century”, 4-5.

³⁰⁶ Öncü, “Dictatorship Plus Hegemony”, 313; Savran, “The Legacy of the Twentieth Century”, 8-9.

political life and for disseminating the new culture of the secular nation state, by putting repressive and hegemonic apparatuses of the state at work. In other words, the state became “the instrument of ‘rationalization’”³⁰⁷, creation of modern citizen and secularization of social life and hence, to be conceived as ‘educator’ by both its legal/repressive and educational/hegemonic apparatuses. The abolition of the Caliphate, Islamic law (*şeriat*) and courts, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations, the closing down of the religious schools (*medrese*) and the prohibition of religious orders (*tarikât*) are part of the reformation of superstructures, which represent, at the same time, a rupture with the Ottoman state. The unification and secularization of education, the adoption of laicism and the foundation of Village Institutes (Köy Enstitüleri) were, on the other hand, the instruments to disseminate secular, national culture and values. Civil society organizations in the form of associations (*dernek*), as foundations represented the Ottoman/Islamic culture, such as the People’s Houses (*Halkevleri*) played also an important role in the making of the new national, secular identity.

Yet, religion was not totally excluded from the social and cultural transformation, but rather contained and strictly controlled by the state. The religious foundations were collected under the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı), founded to replace the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations (which itself replaced the highest bureaucratic religious authority in the Ottoman Empire, *Şeyhülislam*), worked under the Prime Ministry; İmam Hatip schools that raised religious personnel for the Diyanet were opened instead of *medrese*; theology faculties were opened, likewise, as part of public universities. These public religious institutions, which are part of the state structure, raise the question of the extent of secular character of the state, which the centre-periphery view emphasises. It can be argued that these institutions were also instruments for disseminating the new state-defined Sunni Muslim identity, by raising a new *ulema* that would spread this particular interpretation of religion as against the ‘ideological’ Islam of the previous period. This, in turn, can be interpreted as an attempt for eliminating any possible Islamist opposition that yearn for the *ancien regime* to the new nation state and its ruling coalition. This radical cultural break from Ottoman society of this period and this particular cultural aspect of nation-state formation, which is experienced most intense in the everyday life, forms the basis, on which the centre-periphery view built its argument that the fundamental contradiction is a cultural one between the secular and Islamic.

³⁰⁷ Öncü, “Dictatorship Plus Hegemony”, 316.

Yet, in fact, these institutions became themselves the instruments of spreading a particular interpretation of Sunni Islam, thereby “homogenizing the religious beliefs and practices”, which was “in conformity with Turkish Islamism” and hence, through which, the Islamists integrated in the state apparatus³⁰⁸. In this sense, as will be discussed below, they played later a central role in the rise of Islamism both by promoting a homogenous religious identity and raising the intellectuals of Islamism.

3.3.2. Multiparty System: Rise of Class-Based Movements and Reorganization of Islamism:

After the transition to multi-party system in 1946, the DP that splitted from the CHP came into power in 1950 and ruled throughout the decade. Some scholars argue that this was the outcome of the strengthening of the commercial and agricultural bourgeoisie under the conditions of war; as a result it eliminated the bureaucracy as well as the industrial bourgeoisie from the hegemonic bloc of the single-party period; this ended by the military intervention in 1960 as a result of this “intra-class conflict” between the fractions of the bourgeoisie³⁰⁹. As noted above, the electoral success of the DP is conceived by the defenders of the centre-periphery view as a first victory of periphery over the centre, in the sense of both liberalisation of economy and the representation of the will of the ‘rural masses’. Yalman disagrees with both views and argues that authoritarianism of the state was maintained as this “victory” did not change the “balance of power” neither within the ruling coalition nor between it and the masses; rather, the DP, represented the development of a new “hegemonic project”, instrumentalizing a seemingly “anti-statist and anti-elitist” rhetoric³¹⁰, which can be argued to be similar to the arguments of the centre-periphery view. According to him, it was the military intervention that changed this balance, as it, for the first time in the Republican history, allowed and prepared the conditions for the “dominated classes to organize”³¹¹. The Constitution after the coup was the (relatively) most democratic one that was made in the Republican history, institutionalizing democratic rights and freedoms such as freedom of thought, expression, demonstration, forming political parties and organizations and most importantly democratic rights of the working classes such

³⁰⁸ Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 66.

³⁰⁹ Savran, “The Legacy of the Twentieth Century”, 10; Öncü, “Dictatorship Plus Hegemony”, 316-7.

³¹⁰ “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 32-4.

³¹¹ Ibid, 34.

as the right to strike. In other words, it prepared the legal conditions for a democratic civil society to emerge, as a result of which many socialist parties, labor unions and professional associations were established; universities and media have become active and important actors of civil society; student, peasant and working class movements were organized and through strikes and collective bargaining rights, the workers have turned into an organized collectivity. The Confederation of Revolutionary Labor Unions (Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu/DİSK) that was founded in this relative democratic environment came to represent this organized movement. The next two decades, which was interrupted by the military intervention in 1971 and ended with the military intervention on September 12, 1980, was dominated by a class-based politics. If it is true that the democratic constitution was a strategy in the attempt of the ruling classes to seize hegemony by creating a state-civil society dichotomy, then, its failure is ironic for the argument that the state prevented the emergence of a civil society based on liberal values and principles. This is because the conditions for a democratic civil society was established by the state after a military intervention, which was ended by another one because this democratic civil society mobilized the dominated classes instead of leading to a hegemony of the ruling classes. In that sense, democratic civil society is neither a necessary outcome of bourgeois rule, as it is argued, nor it is necessary condition of its rule; rather, democracy accompanies its rule to the extent that it achieves organizing popular consent that could legitimize its position and not mobilize the dominant classes.

Although this period is dominated by class-conflict, along with the rise of class-based movements, it observed the rise of Islamic and Turkish nationalist movements and organizations, which have close ideological connections and form together the “Turkish-Islamic synthesis”. According to Çetinsaya, while the ideological roots of “Turkish-Islamic synthesis” go way back to the 19th century, this period observed the gradual “politicization” of the synthesis, first under the DP rule against the “growing power of Soviet communism” and later against the “growing power of the left” in Turkey³¹². The Hearth of Intellectuals (Aydınlar Ocağı), which was founded by Islamist and Turkish nationalist leading intellectuals in 1970, played an important role in this politicization as they “systemized and defined” the synthesis, forming Islam and Turkishness together into national identity as complementary and inseparable parts of it³¹³. In this sense, it can be argued that, the synthesis functioned as an

³¹² Gökhan Çetinsaya, “Rethinking Nationalism and Islam: Some Preliminary Notes on the Roots of “Turkish-Islamic Synthesis” in Modern Turkish Political Thought”, *Muslim World* 89, No: 3-4 (July-Oct., 1999): 368-70.

³¹³ Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 61-4; Çetinsaya, “Rethinking Nationalism and Islam”, 373-4.

antitode to the left and class-based politics generally. Yet, this means neither that capitalism and the synthesis are conflictual or not compatible, nor that the synthesis is against capitalist relations, as it is usually assumed. On the contrary, as Açıkel argues, the consolidation of capitalism in Turkey is accompanied by “Turkish-Islamization of the society and the ruling classes”, because the right-wing parties, through the synthesis that they adopted as their “hegemonic ideology”, have attempted at an “articulation of capitalist modernization with the pre-capitalist social relations and values”, so as to justify the growing inequalities and authoritarianisation³¹⁴. In this sense, he argues, the synthesis represents “the second phase of capitalist modernization” after the secular one³¹⁵. Therefore, rather than being against capitalism, it was against a class-based politics, which, therefore, redefined the contradictions in cultural terms; for example, its ‘victimhood narrative’ produces the Muslims as the victims of secular modernization of the West-oriented elite. Then, it can be argued that the synthesis represents the ideological dimension of capitalist consolidation and hence, occupy a central place in the hegemonic struggles and is significant for the rule of dominant classes.

The actors of civil society, especially intellectuals, civil society organizations and İmam Hatip schools played the central role in the re-formulation and dissemination of the ideals of the synthesis. Similar to the secular modernization, education occupied a particularly significant position in this quest; hence, along with Quran courses and theology faculties, İmam Hatip schools have become the prominent education institution that raised conservatives, Islamists and nationalists that would nurture the synthesis³¹⁶. Yet, for the Islamists İmam Hatips were particularly important because they were not only the institutions that raised the “new Islamic *ulema*”, but also “pious generations”, a central objective of Islamism that it shares with the synthesis³¹⁷. In this sense, in this period gradually, the function of İmam Hatip schools in the single-party period that was raising the religious staff for Diyanet has expanded and transformed and they have become central in raising and formation of the cadres of Islamist political parties and leaders of civil society, that is, the intellectuals of the Islamist movement.

In order to understand the importance of İmam Hatip schools for the Islamist movement and the dynamics of their transformation into Islamist education institutions, one should grasp their

³¹⁴ Fethi Açıkel, “‘Kutsal Mazlumluğun’ Psikopatolojisi”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, No: 70 (Güz 1996); 153-6.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Çetinsaya, “Rethinking Nationalism and Islam”, 370; Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 66.

³¹⁷ Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 62, 66.

relations to the Islamic foundations. The foundation (*vakıf*), the Islamic social and cultural organizations that were under the religious authority in the Ottoman State, through which it could penetrate in the society, were secularized in the early Republican era; yet until a law passed in 1967 that abolished much of the legal difficulties in establishing new foundations, their number remained insignificant. The foundations provided social and economic services to those in need in form of charity as well as religious education and hence, attempted to fill in the absence of the state services. Because of their functions in the Ottoman society, the foundations, with their “honourable history” were providing the proper structure for the Islamists to organize³¹⁸. In this sense, their relations with the state contrasts to that of associations’ at the time. This understanding corresponds likewise to an organic view of society, in which the foundations assume a social function that justifies the absence of the state. During the 1970s, many of the prohibited religious orders and brotherhoods, were organized in foundations, which enabled them to maintain their relationships with their social base legally, but also to enlarge this base. In other words, Islamic foundations had the function of an Islamic network that could be socially and politically mobilized. Most of these foundations were active in education and cultural production and had a considerable influence on the Islamization of İmam Hatip schools. They provided scholarships, opened dormitories, founded reading or debate clubs, organized events, and published material for the students, which attracted not only the children of conservative and pious families, but also those from the poorer ones. In this sense, İmam Hatip schools have also become instruments to enlarge the social base of the religious orders and communities.

It is important to underline the close and collaborative relationship between the government and the Islamic foundations, so that to show their influence on the state. For example, Zubaida shows that parallel to the multiplication of Islamic foundations during the 1970s, the number

³¹⁸ Foundations, different from associations (*dernek*), do not have members, may have profit, are “associations of property” rather than people that is used for social services and hence, may have the status of tax exemption, yet, similar to the associations, those that “support an ideology, political party or religious community” may be legally closed down. Moreover, according to White, associations symbolise the left-oriented, “anti-government” movements of the 1960s and 1970s, while foundations have their roots in the Ottoman history and are symbol of it. One can, then, argue, that for the Islamists the foundations are differentiated by their assistance to government, by substituting the lacking state in society for provision of welfare, rather than being against it. Striking is that, while the foundations were facilitated legally in 1967, the associations were brought under strict control with bans on various activities and relations with political parties with the law after the military intervention in 1971. This coincides, as noted above, the politicization of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis “against the left”, which was facilitated by the legal apparatus of the state. Sami Zubaida, “Turkish Islam and National Identity”, *Middle East Report* 199, (1996); accessed on <https://merip.org/1999/06/turkish-islam-and-national-identity/> ; Jenny B. White, “Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics”, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2002), 199-209.

of İmam Hatip schools, which are state-run educational institutions, rose from 72 in 1970 to 374 in 1980³¹⁹. This rise in the number was particularly steep in the second half of the 1970s, after the formation of consequent Nationalist Front coalition governments (Milliyetçi Cephe/MC) between the ultranationalist Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi/MHP), Islamist National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi/MSP) and the centre-right Justice Party (Adalet Partisi/AP); the number of İmam Hatip students rose from 48.475 in 1971 to 77.638 in 1976 and 148.690 in 1979³²⁰. The political mobilization power of civil society as well as the influence of its intellectuals was so decisive that the Hearth of Intellectuals played a significant role, by directly intervening effectively, in the formation of MC governments “against the left”³²¹. Therefore, the relationship between civil society organizations, political parties, education and the government is organically related. They reproduce and strengthen one another. In short, with the transition to multiparty system, the Islamist movement had the proper conditions to organize and politicize, which prepared the base for the rise of Islamism in the subsequent period, after the military intervention in 1980.

3.3.3. The Post-1980 Period: Neoliberalization, Identity Politics and the Rise of Islamism:

3.3.3.1. Neoliberalization and Authoritarianization:

The post-1980 period observed the introduction and consolidation of neoliberalism by the hand of the state through another military coup followed by a 3 year military dictatorship. This authoritarian period set the conditions for the new economic policies, formulated and introduced before the coup, on January 24, 1980, to be implemented smoothly. These policies concerned a new articulation of Turkish economy to the global capitalist system through the establishment of a free-market economy, with a new strategy of capital accumulation and opened the way for and facilitated privatizations, minimalization of the state and hence of its social welfare function. Ironically, these policies that aimed at minimal state, were implemented by the hand of the state. In this sense, the state played a central role both in the establishment and consolidation of neoliberalism, which raises the question about the non-intervening, minimal character of the state. Then, it can be argued that the intervention, rather than being

³¹⁹ Zubaida, “Turkish Islam and National Identity”.

³²⁰ Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 67.

³²¹ Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 61-4; Çetinsaya, “Rethinking Nationalism and Islam”, 373-4.

minimal, did not aim at the welfare of the society anymore and hence, took different forms to guarantee the functioning of free-market and implementation of neoliberal policies. Therefore, it should be underlined that the state during neither the military nor the civilian rule was neither ‘autonomous’, nor ‘minimal’ as argued, but rather represented the interests of the bourgeoisie and intervened in economy for the good of it³²². Minimal state of the neoliberal era, then, is only a “myth” that tells the story of replacement of the state-intervention with self-regulating free-market³²³, concealing the role of the state in seizing and maintaining neoliberal hegemony. This narrative is promoted in the rising civil society debate of the same period by, what Yalman calls, “the organic intellectuals of ‘dissident but hegemonic discourse’”³²⁴.

The transformation in this period changed “the form of the state”, that is, “the relations between the state and civil society” as an “integral part of a new hegemonic strategy”; its central component was “putting an end to class-based politics” and constructing a new “vision” for the society³²⁵. In other words, the state-civil society dichotomy with a plural and ‘democratic’ civil society, a distinct sphere of economy and a minimal, non-intervening state that emerged in this period was a central component of the new hegemonic project, so as to replace class-based politics with identity politics. Therefore, to suppress and dissolve the organized and active working class movement was central to this project, which was achieved smoothly under the authoritarian rule of the military junta. After the coup, DİSK and all labour unions were closed down, the leaders of the unions and socialist political parties as well as those active in the movement were imprisoned, tortured and many were murdered by the military regime. With the coup Constitution made in 1982, the workers lost many rights that they acquired with the 1961 Constitution; working conditions worsened, while resistance, for example, in the form of strikes, was prohibited³²⁶. These measurements included all political parties and civil society

³²² In order to underline the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the state, Yalman points out to the collaboration of the military regime with TÜSİAD, at a time when civil society was completely suppressed, and Savran notes the following examples representing the “attitude” of the bourgeoisie to this transformation: the letter to the junta written by Vehbi Koç, the prominent member of the first generation national bourgeoisie, asking for “crushing DİSK and other ‘subversive elements’” or the speech of the President of the Confederation of Employers’ Union of Turkey (Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu/TİSK) referring to a law restricting the workers’ rights, which goes as “Up until today it was the workers who rejoiced. Now it is our turn”. Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 39; Savran, “The Legacy of the Twentieth Century”, 16.

³²³ Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 21-2.

³²⁴ “Crises as Driving Force of Neoliberal ‘Transformismo’”, 247.

³²⁵ Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 38-41.

³²⁶ Savran, “The Legacy of the Twentieth Century”, 15-6. The numbers given by Akça show the brutality of the military regime: 650.000 people were detained, 300 died in prisons, 171 from torture, 50 of the 570 death penalties were executed, 210.000 political trials were held and 1.680.000 people were investigated. Moreover, 14.000 people were dismissed from citizenship, 30.000 civil servants lost their jobs and 23.677 associations were closed down.

organizations; as a result, the military regime created an extremely depoliticized civil society contrasting to that of the previous period. With the transition to the civilian rule in 1983, civil rights and liberties were restored, though with significant restrictions to maintain the obedience to the state that was secured under the military rule. Particularly important are the restrictions which prohibited civil society organizations to follow political goals, to involve in political activities and to enter political alliances. These measures separated the civil from the political realm. It maintained a depoliticized and obedient civil society that would resist, criticize, oppose the state as long as it remains within the borders allowed by the state and as long as it promoted the idea of state-civil society dichotomy³²⁷. When civil society was restored after the coup, it was dominated by woman, environmentalist, LGBTI+, Alevi, Kurdish, Islamic organizations each with their own agenda and specific goals concerning that particular identity. In short, different from, what the intellectuals of the dichotomous view call, the “ideologically-oriented” and “overpoliticized” civil society, a plural “issue-oriented” one emerged³²⁸. Then, it can be argued that the so-called ‘democratic’ civil society that was the objective of 1961 Constitution was realized only in this period as an inevitable precondition of bourgeois hegemony.

According to Yalman, this was the symbol of the success of bourgeois hegemony for the first time in the Republican history; yet, he argues, it was not “authentically hegemonic”, but rather “repressive”³²⁹. This is because it was achieved under an authoritarian state, in both military and civilian period, which did not “recognize the social and democratic rights of the working classes”³³⁰. Authoritarianism, however, is not specific to this particular period of transformation, but has rather, accompanied neoliberalisation from then on. This is because of the transformation of the role of the state, which requires the state to intervene in the economy, but also organise social life so as to keep antagonistic classes under control. In other words,

İsmet Akça, “Hegemonic Projects in Post-1980 Turkey and the Changing Forms of Authoritarianism”, in *Turkey Reframed: Constituting Neoliberal Hegemony*, ed. İsmet Akça, Ahmet Bekmen and Barış Alp Özden, (London, New York: Pluto Books, 2014).

³²⁷ This idea of civil society is similar to the concepts discussed in the previous chapter, which exclude any organization or movement with links to political parties from civil society. Such an idea of civil society aims at preventing the seizure of state power by political parties with a social movement behind them. This, in turn, shows parallel with what Erdoğan&Üstüner call the “repressive tolerance” of civil society. In other words, democracy is conceived as apolitical diversity and plurality in civil society with no claims to state power and civil society has no place for alternative democratic projects.

³²⁸ Toprak, “Civil Society in Turkey”, 104; Göle, “Secular Authoritarianism and Islamist Politics”, 36-7. Yalman underlines how in the post-1980 period, Turgut Özal, the economy minister of the military government and the Prime Minister of civilian rule, made great effort to portray the previous period as the evil, with “outdated economic policies”, social chaos, insecurity and disorder. Behold the parallels between his efforts and the portrayal of civil society by Göle and Toprak. “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 41-3.

³²⁹ “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 45-6.

³³⁰ Ibid.

“the state is the key agent” not only of economic, but also “of social transformation” in this neoliberal era³³¹. It intervenes to “restore” or “reproduce” hegemony, particularly, in times of recurring “crises in neoliberalism”³³². Therefore, the rise and deepening of neoliberalism is necessarily accompanied by the authoritarianization of the state. The rise in the views promoting state-civil society dichotomy, with their democratization rhetoric in a time of increasing authoritarianism, is, therefore, far from being a coincidence, but rather, is the ideological dimension of this transformation. As discussed in the previous chapter, democracy, in these views, are reduced to its “formal”, liberal version removing the “substance from the democratic idea”³³³ and hence, neither the social inequalities are recognized as hindrance to democracy, nor are the restrictions of the rights of the dominated classes problematized, but rather concealed under the guise of diversity and plurality.

The discussion above makes it clear that neoliberalism is a total project, which cannot be reduced merely to its economic dimension. It is a “social project” with a “vision” for the society, which is based on (rhetorical) separation of state from the economy and civil society and “restructure the society as a market”³³⁴. Therefore, while the collectivity of the previous period was negated and dissolved, including the functions of the state for the collectivity, new neoliberal market values that glorify individualism were disseminated effectively. Neoliberalism and authoritarianisation of the state, in this sense, are accompanied by an authoritarianisation in the society. This is demonstrated in, what Yalman calls “authoritarian individualism”, as it destroys collectivity by removing repressively any “democratic or corporatist” intermediary organizations, as well as in the “repressive tolerance” of civil society debate, which welcomes diversity and excludes “antagonistic” movements³³⁵. In short, class movement was brutally repressed, while identity-based authoritarian policies were promoted. The state played in this transformation the central role through its repressive and consent organizing apparatuses.

³³¹ Yalman, “Crises as Driving Force of Neoliberal ‘Transformismo’”, 255-60.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Wood, “Uses and Abuses”, 72-3.

³³⁴ Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 69-70.

³³⁵ Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 41-6; Erdoğan and Üstüner, “Quest for Hegemony: Discourses on Democracy”, 207-8.

3.3.3.2. Islamization:

Following Açıkel's argument that the deepening of capitalism goes hand in hand with Turkish-Islamization and his definition of the synthesis as a "political project" with an "authoritarian apparatus and neurotic will to power"³³⁶, both the rise of Islamism and Islamization of the society in this period are complementary to this picture of the neoliberal project. Moreover, Şen points out to the synthesis's tendency to conceive "all problems as cultural", thereby serving to the "depoliticization" efforts of the military regime and to "production of its authoritarian language"³³⁷. This function was also assumed by centre-periphery view. In other words, the rise of neoliberalism and authoritarianism is accompanied by the rise of Islamism and the Islamization of society as components of a single hegemonic project. Islamism played its main role in the repression of class-based politics, which is the central objective and precondition of neoliberal hegemony. This is most clearly observed in the ways that Islamization transformed the labor-capital relations, by redefining it in cultural terms marked by harmony rather than antagonism³³⁸. The voluntary organization of the Islamic bourgeoisie, the Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen' Association (Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği/MÜSİAD) has had close relations with the Islamic-oriented Confederation of Turkish Real Trade Unions (Hak İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu/Hak-İş). Hak-İş is organized around Islamic principles and morality and has become one of the major labor unions in the post-1980. The members of MÜSİAD share a worldview based on a particular interpretation of Sunni Islam, by which they also define their economic activity³³⁹. In this relationship Islam has a double function: 1) it provides MÜSİAD members to organize for protecting their class-interests against the "labour militancy"; 2) it maintains the obedience of the working classes through religious commands such as working hard or protecting the property and interest of their employers³⁴⁰. This, in turn, creates a harmonious relationship between the employers and the workers instead of antagonism. In this sense, MÜSİAD provided the Islamic bourgeoisie to transcend its "economic-corporate interests" and formulate "an alternative societal project"

³³⁶ Açıkel, "'Kutsal Mazlumluğun' Psikopatolojisi", 155-69. It should be underlined that this means neither that the synthesis or Islamism are immanently related to capitalism, nor that it is against it, but rather it is a reaction to the increasing inequalities caused by deepening capitalism and functions as an instrument of mobilizing the "dispossessed masses in an aggressive and authoritarian way". Therefore, deepening inequalities deepens Turkish-Islamization, but also authoritarianisation and, one can deduce from this, its power of mobilisation.

³³⁷ Şen, "Transformation of Turkish Islamism", 65.

³³⁸ Evren Hoşgör, "Islamic Capital" in *The Neoliberal Landscape and the Rise of Islamist Capital in Turkey*, ed. Neşecan Balkan, Erol Balkan and Ahmet Öncü, (New York, Oxford: Berghan Books, 2015); 149-53.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Ibid, 149-53; Şen, "Transformation of Turkish Islamism", 71-2.

with Islamic references, negating and undermining the role of labour unions and highlighting, instead, an identity-based relationship³⁴¹. This example clearly shows the relationship between Islamism, authoritarianisation and neoliberalisation and how they serve as instruments of a single hegemonic project.

From what has been discussed until now, it becomes clear that Islamization was not a ‘spontaneous’ process ‘from below’, but rather, was deliberately facilitated and encouraged by the state as a ‘political project’. The role of religious brotherhoods in this Islamization is not insignificant, when one looks into the ways they penetrated in both the state and civil society. Their shared cadres with political parties is important in the service of this objective and Turgut Özal, the prime minister and later the President, was, in this sense, a symbol of these dynamics. Özal was in the 1970s a candidate of the Islamist MSP, which was founded by Necmettin Erbakan, who later founded the RP and was rooted initially in Naqshbandi order; accordingly, the two organizations shared their members and functionaries³⁴². Moreover, he was deeply rooted in civil society and in religious networks and is known to have been a member of the Naqshbandi brotherhood himself, and one of the founders of the influential Islamist Foundation for Dissemination of Science (İlim Yayma Vakfı/İYV) which also had relations with the Hearth of Intellectuals³⁴³. According to Zubaida, the Naqshbandi and Nur branches of Islam, represented respectively by the İskenderpaşa brotherhood (Hakyol Foundation) and Fethullah Gülen’s community (Hizmet Foundation), were the most important ones in the expansion of Islamism in the social and cultural field³⁴⁴. Additionally, the former also, through Özal, was able to influence the government policies effectively³⁴⁵. Özal, therefore, as a symbol of the period, did not only represent Islamism in his person and his centre-right Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi/ANAP), but also in the policies of his period. Religious brotherhoods were enmeshed not only with Islamist, but also centre-right parties. While the centre-right parties had always Islamist members, functionaries, and deputies in parliament since the DP, what was new in the post-1980 was that the prohibited religious brotherhoods were gradually legitimized

³⁴¹ Hoşgör, “Islamic Capital”, 149-51. “Economic-corporate interests” refer to the short- and long-term material interests of the bourgeoisie, which have to be transcended in order to become hegemonic, that is, not only to rule but also to lead, and which requires short-term concessions for guaranteeing the long-term interests. Going beyond this historical phase requires the work of organic intellectuals so that to seize intellectual and cultural leadership by organizing the consent of the dominated classes.

³⁴² Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 69; Zubaida, “Turkish Islam and National Identity”.

³⁴³ Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 69.

³⁴⁴ “Turkish Islam and National Identity”.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

in the public. This provided the conditions for their integration into the state apparatus more intensely and obviously, a process that started before 1980.

One of the most important changes in the state apparatus in this period was that the Turkish-Islamic synthesis was “institutionalized” and has become a semi-official ideology as a weapon against the political movements and challenges that would disturb the order³⁴⁶. According to Şen, this was a significant development that facilitated the rise of Islamism, because Islamism, as the “dominant element” of the synthesis, influenced it considerably and accordingly, shares its central arguments with it³⁴⁷. This does not mean that Islamism and the synthesis are one and the same, but rather, the synthesis, Islamism and nationalism are intertwined and have very close connections. An obvious example is the Islamist National Outlook (Milli Görüş/MG) view, on which the Islamist political parties from National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi/MNP) and MSP to RP, Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi/FP) and AKP are based. It articulates Islamism and nationalism as demonstrated in objectives such as an Islamic *umma* led by Turkey, yearning to the Ottoman Empire. In this sense, it is not only the political and civil cadres that are shared, but there is a deep ideological connection among Islamism, nationalism and the centre-right. From this perspective, Islamism was not actually excluded from the political or social scene, but it has rather been a central element of political life since at least the transition to the multi-party system and particularly after the 1980 coup. Concerning the shared cadres of the Islamist and centre-right parties, conservative-Islamist civil society organizations and religious brotherhoods, as well as their adoption of the synthesis, Şen highlights a continuity between the MC, ANAP and later the AKP governments³⁴⁸. Moreover, the synthesis did not contradict, as mostly argued, with the ‘Kemalist state’. On the contrary, as Turam shows that particularly the nationalist element in Turkish Islamism has paved the way for cooperation between the Islamist movement and the state³⁴⁹. Her study, analysing the

³⁴⁶ Çetinsaya, “Rethinking Nationalism and Islam”, 374.

³⁴⁷ Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 61-6.

³⁴⁸ Ibid, 64-5. It should be remembered that Açık defines the synthesis, as the “hegemonic ideology of the Turkish Right”. This point is important to consider, because instead of seeing the AKP as representing a rupture from the previous right-wing parties that normalizes and democratizes politics, it underlines the continuity precisely with those parties with which it is argued to represent a break.

³⁴⁹ Berna Turam, “The Politics of Engagement between Islam and Secular State: Ambivalences of ‘Civil Society’”, *The British Journal of Sociology* 55, No: 2 (2004). Interesting is that although Nur movement, from which the Gülen community was separated, was labelled as fundamentalist and a threat, Gülen that was conceived to have promoted a liberal, enlightened version of Islam, was conceived as “a civil society organization”. Turam points out to the contradiction between the education policies in private and public spheres and argues that although the schools give secular, scientific education and promote liberal values, in the dormitories and student houses (Işık Evleri) the students learn a strictly religious lifestyle devoted to the Community.

expansive network of educational institutions of the Gülen community, shows how religious communities and the state cooperated closely at the national and international level based on common nationalist goals and national interest³⁵⁰.

Along with its integration into the state apparatus, Islamism has become considerably influential in civil society. Especially important in this sense is the relationship between education, Islamic foundations and the rising Islamic bourgeoisie. It has been already discussed in the previous section that the Islamic foundations played a significant role in the multiplication of İmam Hatip schools as well as in the change in their function. Yet, what is important to mention about this period is that Sunni Islam has penetrated in the national formal education system. With the introduction of compulsory religion classes, all students, regardless of their religious orientation, were taught the doctrine of the Sunni Islam. Thanks to the state-adopted synthesis' orientation to raising 'pious generations' that would obey their state, religion was used as an instrument to tame the society. Another important legal change was the abolition of barriers for İmam Hatip graduates to study in a field other than theology. This was significant for the Islamist objective of raising the Islamic *ulema*, as it opens the way for extending this *ulema* out of the religious field. In other words, İmam Hatip schools have been transformed into institutions not only educate party cadres and religious leaders, but also well-educated public officials, professionals, particularly in the cultural field such as journalists, university professors and leaders of Islamic movement in civil society. Açıkel argues that thanks to this dual socialization (Islamic-secular), "a new generation of Islamic intellectuals" emerged in the post-1980 and they have played a central role in the formulation and propagation of Islam "as a political utopia", that is, in the rise of political Islamism³⁵¹. The İmam Hatip graduates, many of whom have continued a secular university education, have held positions in public service, thanks to the connections of their Islamic network in the public institutions³⁵². For example, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Interior were penetrated and controlled by the Islamists in the 1990s, which brought considerable changes in policies³⁵³. Likewise, the municipalities

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Açıkel, "'Merkez-Çevre' Paradigması Üzerine Eleştirel Notlar", 52-4. This is an important point, because it demonstrates that the Islamist intellectuals are made by secular education as well and in this sense, they are the products of secular modernization. Ironically however, they undermined those conditions that made them in the first place.

³⁵² Zubaida, "Turkish Islam and National Identity".

³⁵³ Ibid. These changes, according to Zubaida, concern in case of education, change in textbooks and selection of personnel at schools as well as studying materials that propagates *sharia*, while in the case of Interior, the increased police brutality against class-based movements and organizations and a supporting attitude to Islamist demonstrations.

controlled by the RP in the same period not only provided jobs for the social bases of the religious sects, but also provided the conditions to train and socialize “a new generation of technocrat-bureaucrat-intellectual” with close relations to the new Islamic bourgeoisie³⁵⁴. In this sense, this ‘war of position’ to disseminate the Islamist ideals and raise the Islamic *ulema* was central to the ‘war of manoeuvre’ to occupy state institutions and seizure of state power. This is because a frontal attack on the state requires a certain level of hegemony and the intellectuals to serve this aim. In short, education became central for the Islamization of society and the expansion and strengthening of the Islamist movement. The state’s policy that systematically and deliberately Islamized education can be observed in statistics: The number of students in the Quran courses of the Diyanet rose from 59.806 in 1980 to 150.816 in 1991, which rose further in the subsequent period³⁵⁵. Likewise, the number of İmam Hatip schools rose to 389 in 1992 and the number of students rose steeply from 178.013 in 1980 to 309.553 in 1991³⁵⁶. These numbers decreased after the military intervention on February 28 1997, especially because the secondary part of the İmam Hatip schools was closed down after the basic education was increased to 8 years. Yet, the growth, both in the size and activities, of these public institutions is especially remarkable because they were facilitated at a time when the state was shrinking. It demonstrates, in this sense, that education was a strategic instrument in the struggle for hegemony and Islamization of the society.

While Islamic foundations and associations continued their charity activities in education, the obvious Islamization by the hand of the state and the liberalization of economy provided them with proper conditions and instruments to diversify their field of activities. Most of the religious brotherhoods and communities, organized in form of foundations, have established profit-oriented organizations connected to their charities such as publishing companies with TV channels, newspapers, magazines, education institutions, such as schools and dormitories, health institutions, etc³⁵⁷. These establishments provided them with resources to finance their charities to expand their social base and increase the number of their followers. In other words, the religious brotherhoods and communities and their foundations were transformed, in this period, into “faith-solidarity-politics-business complexes”, which contributed to the emergence of new intellectuals with an expansive Islamic network as well as power and experience of in

³⁵⁴ Açıkel, “‘Merkez-Çevre’ Paradigması Üzerine Eleştirel Notlar”, 54.

³⁵⁵ Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 68.

³⁵⁶ Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 68; Zubaida, “Turkish Islam and National Identity”.

³⁵⁷ Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 75-6.

mobilization³⁵⁸. This expansion in the activities of the foundations demonstrates, what Şen calls, “the holy articulation between neoliberalism and Islamism”³⁵⁹. According to him, this did not happen abruptly in this period, but was a process, which was made possible by their core social base; the *esnaf*. *Esnaf* stands for self-employed members of the middle-classes with small property. This group comprises the founders, members, supporters, also financially, and cadres of the religious brotherhoods and communities, Islamic foundations and conservative and Islamist political parties. Many of these mostly small and middle-sized enterprises, thanks to the neoliberal policies, have been transformed into large Islamic businesses, which are represented in MÜSİAD. In other words, the religious brotherhoods and communities have been organically related in the economy. Hoşgör points out to these organic links as an important factor in their economic success³⁶⁰. For example, thanks to the religious authority and connections of these brotherhoods, they were able to contribute to capital accumulation as well as the marketing of the products with Islamic references such as fatwas or halal-haram, which turned their followers into investors, shareholders and “religiously sensitive” consumers³⁶¹. Moreover, she argues that the charitable and entrepreneurial education they involve through their private schools, dormitories, universities or extra-curricular education institutes (e.g. *dershane*) supplied the working force that the firms required³⁶².

It is important to note once more that this articulation was not contradictory as it is usually argued; neither profit-oriented economic activity, nor wealth and prosperity is religiously forbidden or negated. On the contrary, it is often mentioned that the Prophet Muhammed himself was a tradesman to highlight the legitimacy of economic activity in Islam³⁶³. Nonetheless, both the economic activity and the wealth earned from it was justified by a series of arguments with Islamic references. One of them is sharing wealth with the community, especially the needy. Therefore, the charities they involve with religious motivations particularly through the Islamic foundations, play an important role in legitimizing their flourishing wealth and prosperity. In fact, the relations between the Islamic foundations and the businesses is likewise organic. For example, White shows that the foundations were not only

³⁵⁸ Açikel, “‘Merkez-Çevre’ Paradigması Üzerine Eleştirel Notlar”, 56

³⁵⁹ Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 68-76.

³⁶⁰ Hoşgör, “Islamic Capital”, 147-9. The reasons in their rise are definitely not limited to this community relationships, but are multiple. For example, she points that many were particularly active in the rising sectors of the post-1980 such as textile, construction, transportation, service, etc.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Ibid, 153.

financed by “Muslim businessmen” and their “large companies”, but they are also “run by businessmen”, who share their wealth with the poor and work voluntarily for the community³⁶⁴. Affirming that is Şen’s definition of this group as “not only oriented to wealth and economic success, but also the betterment of community in order to earn God’s merit”³⁶⁵. In other words, their economic activity was not defined as an end in itself, but is attached social and political meanings. This legitimizes their excessive wealth, shrinking of the state and increasing inequalities resulting from deepening neoliberalism. A crucial point that should be underlined is that with the rise of the Islamic big bourgeoisie and the new intellectuals, class differences among the community has been deepened, which is accompanied by production of an Islamic high culture and its differentiation from the movement’s social base. Considering this economic and cultural differentiation and gap between the two worlds, Açıkel argues that the sole communication channel of the Islamic bourgeoisie with the working classes is these “populist-charitable” acts and ideology³⁶⁶. Islam does not produce one homogenous, monolithic cultural unity, but it articulates differently with different social classes and produce diverse interpretations. Religion in general, and the religious interpretation of charitable giving in this case, is instrumentalized to connect these two cultures, legitimizing and naturalizing class differences³⁶⁷. It is also important to underline that, consistent with the centre-periphery view, Islamic bourgeoisie associating itself with “entrepreneurial spirit and Islamic moral values” is against the etatism of Kemalism, which is argued to disseminate secular alien values through public institutions³⁶⁸. This argument gives their eagerness for privatization of public services a political meaning and defines this neoliberal orientation with reference to social goals. At the same time, they present themselves as a liberal force against the authoritarian state, as etatism is interpreted as authoritarianism. The role of the Islamic foundations in education are to be also considered in this framework, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

These complex and intertwined relations between the Islamic civil and political actors and organizations show that a separation between civil society and the state or civil and political

³⁶⁴ White, “Civil Society: In Whose Service?”, 181, 194.

³⁶⁵ “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 74. Hoşgör shows that this seemingly societal orientation of capital aimed at delegitimizing labour unions and class-based politics, accompanied by the argument that class society is an invention of the West. “Islamic Capital”, 152-3.

³⁶⁶ Açıkel, “‘Merkez-Çevre’ Paradigması Üzerine Eleştirel Notlar”, 54-6.

³⁶⁷ Indeed, in Islam charitable giving is encouraged; *zekat*, one of the main pillars of Islam which commands the rich to give a portion of their wealth to the poor, functions as a substitute of welfare state that lessens the social inequalities created by deepening capitalism. The role of the Islamic foundations and the financial contributions of the followers of the religious brotherhoods and communities should be considered within this framework.

³⁶⁸ Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 74.

Islamism is not possible. It should be noted, however, that the relations of the foundations with the party (the RP) was organic but unofficial due to the legal barriers forbidding a formal relationship. White discusses the relationship between the Islamic foundations and associations, the RP, municipalities under its rule and the Islamic businesses³⁶⁹. What is revealing in her study is that although the activities, cadres, target groups and even buildings of foundation-party-municipality are the same, the connection is denied. However, the obvious relation between them is framed as being parts of a single movement, of which the political party was not the most important part. Although the party was obviously important in the sense that through its control of the municipality, it provided access to public resources, networks and local population, what is implied is that it was instrumental in the hegemonic struggle rooted deeply in the movement as a whole. Considering these organic links, the rise of the RP into power, both represented in the parliament and in a coalition government and by many municipalities with the 1994 local elections, was the outcome of the Islamist movement as a whole and systematic, deliberate and authoritarian Islamization from above and from below. The war of position that was fought in the municipalities, labor unions, foundations and education all played an important role. It was this highly organized structure and organic connections which made possible, in the first place, the foundation of first the FP and then, the AKP in a very short time, after the RP was closed down in 1998 following its deseating by a military intervention on February 28, 1997. The importance of the party as an instrument of seizure of state power and authoritarian restoration of neoliberal hegemony will be revealed under the AKP rule.

3.3.4. Authoritarian Rebuilding of Civil Society under the Islamist AKP: Seizing Hegemony

The AKP, founded in 2001 by the so-called ‘renewalist’ wing of the Islamists, seized the majority in the parliament in 2002 elections and formed a single-party government. This electoral success of the AKP after a decade of coalitions was, according to some scholars, provided by the “organic crisis”, when the economic crisis of 2001 was coupled with the chaotic

³⁶⁹ White, “Civil Society: In Whose Service?”, 178-211. Her field study in Ümraniye, a district of İstanbul, under the RP municipality shows these relationship clearly. One example is that the RP member president of the Islamic foundation that provides mainly economic support to the needy in the neighbourhood is a businessman, who works voluntarily for the foundation and who denies any connection to the party or the municipality, yet, took many contract based works from the municipality.

and instable political environment³⁷⁰. This “broke the representational ties” between the dominant classes and their political representatives and between the masses and the latter³⁷¹. Others reject to see this representational crisis as an organic crisis in Gramscian sense, as it would mean a “crisis of neoliberalism” that threatens the ground for bourgeois hegemony shaking its foundations, which was not the case in the absence of an alternative political project, a counter hegemonic one to neoliberalism³⁷². In any case, however, this crisis of representation in this period created the conditions for the AKP to come into power with a majority in the parliament and formulate a new project that reproduced the neoliberal hegemony. Even though numerical data does not tell about the character of hegemony, considering the AKP’s constant electoral success that rose from 34.3% in 2002 to 46.6% in 2007, which reached almost 50% consequently in 2011 and 2015 elections, one can say at least that the party has been able to form a wide and stable coalition and maintain its rule by a strong support of the society. This stable high electoral support is important not only because it has not been the case in the Republican history before, but also because it has been achieved for the first time by an Islamist political party, though and precisely because not recognized as such.

Before going further with the discussion, it should be noted that the main pillars of the AKP’s hegemonic project and the centre-periphery view’s assumptions and arguments correspond in a striking way. The centre-periphery view interprets the AKP as a ‘conservative democratic’ party, representative of ‘democratic civil society’ and a liberalizing and democratizing force that ‘normalized’ politics. These are expressions of economic, political and cultural aspects (liberalization of economy, democratization of politics and moderation of Islamism respectively) of the AKP’s political project. In this sense, with their dichotomous understanding and culturalist language, the intellectuals of the dichotomous view functioned as the organic intellectuals of this project and have played a significant role in concealing and legitimating

³⁷⁰ Evren Hoşgör, “The Question of AKP Hegemony: Consent Without Consensus”, in *The Neoliberal Landscape and the Rise of Islamist Capital in Turkey*, ed. Neşecan Balkan, Erol Balkan and Ahmet Öncü, (New York, Oxford: Berghan Books, 2015); Akça, “Hegemonic Projects in Post-1980 Turkey and the Changing Forms of Authoritarianism”.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² “Crises as Driving Force of Neoliberal ‘Transformismo’”, 255-60. According to Yalman, this was rather a “crisis *in* neoliberalism” than “*of* neoliberalism”, which required restoration/reproduction. The Gramscian concept of organic crisis refers to a crisis of hegemony, that is, when the dominant classes fail to maintain or reproduce hegemony. According to Gramsci, such a crisis may occur either as a result of the failure of the ruling classes or political activation of the dominated classes, who formulate “demands that add up to revolution”. Organic crisis is identified by the loss of representational ties between the ruling classes and their political representatives, the parties, which, then, impacts the State as a whole, threatening the conditions of hegemony. Gramsci, “Prison Notebooks”, 210.

neoliberal Islamist authoritarianism. In fact, that the AKP built its political project particularly on these arguments of this view, demonstrates that centre-periphery view was able to successfully “have made the social reality”³⁷³ in the image of its essentialist understanding in the last few decades. In this sense, the AKP’s hegemonic project was facilitated by this proper environment that has been prepared by the ideological work of the liberal intellectuals.

Its democratic language, combined with its neoliberal orientation and the claim to have left Islamism behind, the AKP was welcomed by different sectors of the society to fill in the absence of the centre-right and restore the “liberal-conservative political project”³⁷⁴, the hallmark of the post-1980 environment. Liberalization and democratization have become central components of hegemony under the AKP, through which it could articulate the interests and demands of different social classes, from big business, represented both in TÜSİAD and MÜSİAD and middle-size enterprises, to different sections of middle classes and urban and rural poor as well as identity-based groups such as Kurds, pious Muslims or the liberal intelligentsia. Moreover, considering the conditions of representational and economic crisis, during which the AKP came to power, “stability rhetoric” and a strong, single party-government were likewise welcomed³⁷⁵. They have become central hegemonic elements that could persuade the majority that the coalition governments were responsible from the economic and political instability³⁷⁶. Stability and a strong government have become key components of the AKP’s political project. It aimed at strengthening the executive and undermining the democratic institutions, particularly the parliament and the judiciary, most obviously in the introduction of the presidential system. These components were also instrumental in legitimizing the brutal repression of the organized and democratic responses from the society. What is important to emphasise is the internal and constitutive relationship of the economic, political and cultural aspects of hegemony that will be discussed below, which together form a whole. As will be shown below, these moments are organically related and maintain and reproduce one another. What is as important is the fundamental strategy of “putting an end to class-based politics”³⁷⁷, which is central to neoliberal hegemony and an underlying principle connecting different moments below.

³⁷³ Açıkkel, “Entegratif Toplum ve Muarızları”, 34; Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 23-5.

³⁷⁴ Hoşgör, “The Question of AKP Hegemony”, 201; Akça, “Hegemonic Projects in Post-1980 Turkey”, 30.

³⁷⁵ Hoşgör, “The Question of AKP Hegemony”, 204-5.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 38-41.

3.3.4.1. Economic Aspect: Shrinking State and the Increasing Role of Islamic Foundations:

The economic aspect of the restoration of the neoliberal project concerned the implementation of neoliberal economic policies under the guidance of international institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank and the EU. As these policies provided an increase in the foreign investments, decreased inflation and provided economic growth³⁷⁸, they were conceived as an improvement in the conditions of an economic crisis. In fact, however, these policies further undermined the interests of the working classes. They involve decreasing wages, enforced shift to informal sectors, transformation of the small-propertyed farmers to wagedworkers, worsening working conditions such as long working hours, delayed payments of wages, introduction of a more flexible labor market, expansion of insecure work, such as sub-contracting and short-term and temporary employment and dissolved organized labor³⁷⁹. Despite the differences in the interests of the components of the ruling bloc, impoverished conditions of the working classes corresponds to the interests of all its components and hence, is an element that articulates them around this project. Shortly, what is presented to be the liberalization of economy with economic growth and stability was, in fact, the steps that the AKP took to facilitate neoliberalism, which increased privatizations, further undermined the social state, deepened social inequalities and increased poverty. According to Yalman, despite this character of neoliberal policies, the high electoral support for the AKP shows that the neoliberal project started in the post-1980 has been successful, as “the belief in the virtues of a market-based social order” was maintained³⁸⁰.

In addition to this belief in the market, however, the AKP has provided material benefits to broad sections of the society. It focused on seemingly welfare and social justice policies, though mostly small, short-term, unsustainable and irregular or at all rhetorical and was able to organize the consent of different sections of the society to its rule. These are various. For example, infrastructural investments such as hospitals, roads, bridges, airports, universities, though many did not correspond to real needs, but were symbolic, were conceived as modernization and economic development and contributed to creation of the image of ‘Great Turkey’. Among these were also the abolishment of university fees and student loans and introduction of

³⁷⁸ Akça, “Hegemonic Projects in Post-1980 Turkey”, 31; Hoşgör, “The Question of AKP Hegemony”, 205.

³⁷⁹ Akça, “Hegemonic Projects in Post-1980 Turkey”, 31.

³⁸⁰ “Crises as Driving Force of Neoliberal ‘Transformismo’”, 257.

increased scholarships instead of building house complexes or health centres for the lower and lower middle classes³⁸¹. Although the public spending on social welfare was decreasing and the burden on the society was increasing, the reformation in economic and social fields were conceived as improvement, modernization and the rise of a ‘strong Turkey’. It was thanks to these small grants, the belief in the market society and the neoliberal rhetoric of the AKP such as efficiency, growth that glorified free-market. These were important in organizing the consent of the particularly urban and rural poor³⁸². What is striking is that these groups (one can add to it the increasing numbers of educated unemployed, thanks to the ‘a university for every city’ policy) was expanding because of the AKP policies, it was able to organize them precisely because of their poverty with small grants that lessen it.

As a result, the welfare functions of the state have been transformed altogether and radically. For example, Şen points out to the reorganization of the Ministry of Health, whose responsibility has been changed from providing public health service to “organizer, coordinator and purchaser of the services”³⁸³. Accordingly, welfare of the society has been gradually transformed from being a duty of the social state to provide social equality into a charity-like system, which aimed at managing poverty rather than diminishing it³⁸⁴. The decreasing role of the state is compensated by charity-like mechanisms. A significant development of this period is the increased role of Islamic foundations and associations and municipalities in this poverty management, which took different forms of social aid and assistance such as cash, coal, food packages, school books, as well as education and student housing scholarships, free health services, and so on³⁸⁵. These charity-like mechanisms provide irregular and temporary assistance and work in a selective way when choosing the beneficiaries. They function through

³⁸¹ Hoşgör, “The Question of AKP Hegemony”, 213.

³⁸² Akça, “Hegemonic Projects in Post-1980 Turkey”, 31.

³⁸³ Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 75. For example, as Şen shows, the state’s purchase of private health services increased from 14% in 2002 to 24% in 2007. Moreover, one can add to this the AKP’s invention of “City Hospitals” (Şehir Hastaneleri), which are marketed by the government as having the comfort of a “5 star hotel”. These hospitals are built by private companies, chosen by tendering process, on public estate, which are then rented to the Ministry of Health and replaced the public hospitals, as each bed in these hospitals reduces one from the public ones; this is called “public-private partnership” and expanded significantly under the AKP rule. Therefore, the construction companies, who built and operate the hospitals, are among those benefited the most from this invention of the AKP. Rönesans Holding, YDA Construction, Akfen Holding, GAMA are pioneering in City Hospitals. Türk Tabibler Birliği, Şehir Hastaneleri İzleme Grubu, accessed on https://www.ttb.org.tr/kollar/_sehirhastaneleri/makale_goster.php?Guid=d4c29f9a-ea46-11e7-ad3f-8fdeacc2c79e. In fact, construction sector has benefited from the AKP policies the most, considering the huge infrastructural investments mentioned above.

³⁸⁴ Akça, “Hegemonic Projects in Post-1980 Turkey”, 31.

³⁸⁵ This strategy is obviously inherited from the Islamic movement discussed in the previous section. For an analysis of it in the 1990s under the RP, see White, “Civil Society: In Whose Service?”.

direct and personal contact with the individuals and families not based on democratic social rights, but as an exchange relationship based on goodwill and religious references with expectations from the beneficiaries in return. One can argue that these mechanisms, which are operated especially by the Islamic foundations with organic links with the AKP and the party-controlled municipalities, played a significant role in the increase in the electoral support of the AKP. Therefore, the rise of Islamic foundations does not only signal diminishing social functions of the state and transformation of the social welfare system; but also, replacing the state, they take on a political function. On the one hand, they organize the consent of the poor for the AKP. Since the duty of the state for all was undermined and absent and the citizens lost many of their social rights, the AKP-affiliated charity mechanisms that filled in this space were conceived as the services of the party. In other words, while the social functions of the state systematically diminished by the policies followed, at the same time, the AKP enabled its own organizations in civil society to fight a war of position in these open spaces. On the other hand, they keep their beneficiaries politically under control to prevent any threat to the implementation of neoliberal policies. In this sense, they have the function of dissolving/preventing organized movements; they individualize social welfare and turn it into mere personal satisfaction, which replaces collective demands for social rights and regular and institutionalized welfare system. This relationship between neoliberalisation and shrinking role of the state in welfare and the increasing role of Islamic charity organizations demonstrates clearly, on the one hand, the symbiotic relation between neoliberalism and Islamism and on the other hand, opens the way to further Islamization. In other words, as Hoşgör puts it, the replacement of “social state” with “charity capitalism”, which “combines neoliberalism and religious conservatism”, is an expression of “structural transformation”³⁸⁶. As a result “social reforms symbolize not only ‘decommodification’ but also Islamization”, which is “a response to the expansion of the market- an indispensably important mechanism for the protection of the society”³⁸⁷. This is a reformulation of Açıkel’s abovementioned argument that deepening capitalism is accompanied by Turkish-Islamization as a response to increasing inequalities. In this sense, neoliberalisation and Islamisation go hand in hand under the AKP rule.

The activation of the Islamic foundations as a poverty management mechanism is particularly important, because they play a central role in transforming the democratic social rights of the citizens into religiously motivated acts of charity. In this sense, they play an important role in

³⁸⁶ Hoşgör, “The Question of AKP Hegemony”, 217.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

changing the democratic, social state based on equal rights of the citizens into an authoritarian neoliberal state with a religious community, of whose certain, selected members deserve prosperity, while others do not. This point will be further discussed in the next chapter in relation to education and include not only the poor but also middle-class groups. What is important to underline here is the constitutive character of economic, social and cultural aspects of the hegemonic project, which function to reproduce one another and constitute a whole together. Political aspect should be added to this whole. It is worth mentioning that the legal basis for increasing the role of municipalities, which enabled them to cooperate with private sector as well as civil society organizations, implying further privatization and transfer of public services, was introduced by the AKP early in its first period. Two points are important concerning this local government law: First, it enabled the penetration of the Islamic foundations into the local communities more intensely, but also provided them with access to public resources as they function as service providers and sub-contractors³⁸⁸. Accordingly, one can expect a rise in their donations, because of the legitimacy they gained thanks to their ‘social functions’. Second, what is presented and glorified as “decentralization-democratization reform”, provided, in fact, the conditions for further privatization and Islamization under the guise of democratisation³⁸⁹. This does not only symbolize the transfer of social responsibilities of the state to the private agents, but these civil society organizations function as “the long arm of the state”³⁹⁰, through which the state penetrates in the society and reproduces hegemony. In short, economic liberalization policies, which were welcomed by large sectors of the society and propagated enthusiastically by the liberal, left-oriented and right-wing intellectuals alike were nothing more than deepening capitalism, social inequality, authoritarianisation and Islamization. Because of their obsession with a free-market liberal economy as the precondition of a formal democracy and a vibrant civil society, they not only ignored these aspects, but glorified the AKP as the bringer of democracy.

3.3.4.2. Political Aspect: ‘Conquering the State’ under the Guise of Democratization:

Democratization and ‘normalization of politics’ that is argued to provide social and political transformation ‘from below’ are the central components of the political hegemony. This has

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Ibid, 206, 217.

³⁹⁰ Hirsch, “The State’s New Clothes”, 238-9

two interrelated aspects. First concerns the progress in the EU accession process. It was seen by various social groups as the remedy to the problems of Turkey, particularly concerning democratization and economic and political stability, which therefore, functioned as a “hegemonic apparatus” to take consent of different groups³⁹¹. Unsurprisingly, the intellectuals of the centre-periphery view, accordingly the mainstream media and the big business have turned into enthusiastic supporters of the AKP’s EU policy. The EU-orientation of the AKP, on the one hand, was conceived to have demonstrated that the party’s dissociation from the Islamist National Outlook and its declaration to be “conservative democratic” was real³⁹². The EU-candidacy is attached such importance that it was claimed that it achieved to “transform an Islamist movement into a party that embraces the norms of liberal democracy”³⁹³. In other words, its EU policy contributed to the making of the image of the AKP both as conservative/moderate and as democratic. On the other hand, the reforms concerning democratization on individual rights and freedoms within the framework of legal adjustment to comply with the EU law, undermined the power of the military and strengthened the civilian component in the political system³⁹⁴, which was conceived to lead further democratization. Yet, these reforms and the elimination of the military only prepared the conditions for its next move to strengthen executive further by eliminating or weakening any institution that was seen as an obstacle, while at the same time persuading the general public of its democratic intentions. Put differently, the AKP instrumentalized the demands for and attraction of democratization in the society in order to prepare the conditions for authoritarianisation. Most importantly, the EU candidacy enabled the implementation of the neoliberal economic and social policies prescribed by the international institutions discussed above³⁹⁵. In other words, under the guise of

³⁹¹ Akça, “Hegemonic Projects in Post-1980 Turkey”, 33-4; Hoşgör, “The Question of AKP Hegemony”, 207-8, 211.

³⁹² Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 76.

³⁹³ “Crises as Driving Force of Neoliberal ‘Transformismo’”, 248. This “democratic orientation” of an Islamist party was praised, as it was the live proof that a Muslim society can be democratic. As Yalman points out, the intellectuals contributed to this view, as can be observed in the ambiguous formulations in the media and the academia such as the “compatibility of Islam and democracy”. Turkey, therefore, was conceived to be a role model for the other authoritarian Muslim countries. This Orientalist and essentialist view is also represented by the centre-periphery paradigm. It attaches the society immanent characteristics originating from Islam, politicizes Islam assuming that, only because the majority is Muslim, religion is the principle criteria that shapes the relations within and between the state and society, politics in general in Muslim countries and closes the path to analyse the state-society relations using other instruments. In other words, it defines the society in cultural terms and in an essentialist way and reduces democracy to a question of diversity.

³⁹⁴ Şen, “Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, 76; Akça, “Hegemonic Projects in Post-1980 Turkey”, 34. Akça underlines that most of the reforms concerning the EU candidacy “had no real impact on democratizing state-society relations”, while many of them were “reversed” afterwards.

³⁹⁵ Hoşgör, “The Question of AKP Hegemony”, 208.

democratization and with reference to the democratic will of the people, it enabled “the ruling classes to undermine the whole process of class conflict”³⁹⁶.

The second aspect of political hegemony concerns the reformation of state institutions to ‘purge’ them from the ‘Kemalist, secular, elite bureaucracy’. This was presented as the liberation of the ‘oppressed Sunni-Muslim majority’ and the end of the ‘tutelary regime’ (vesayet rejimi). This aspect of the hegemony likewise instrumentalized the arguments of the centre-periphery paradigm. It involved in reforming particularly “the military, presidency, judiciary and the Higher Education Council (Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu/YÖK)”, as they were claimed to be the main mechanisms of the state’s secular authoritarianism³⁹⁷. They were also conceived to be the worst enemy of a democratic political life and a pluralistic civil society. In this sense, reorganization of the state institutions, which opened the way for authoritarianization and Islamization, were made with liberal democratic references such as enabling a diverse, plural civil society based on liberal rights and freedoms. One most debated example is the abolition of the headscarf ban at the universities, which was later expanded to the public institutions and initially annulled by the Constitutional Court for being against the Constitution. Similar to the protests against the ban on headscarf in the 1990s, the AKP’s abolition of the ban adopted a liberal democratic language. Yet, this did not lead to democratization. Reproducing the authoritarian state vs. democratic civil society dichotomy, these reforms persuaded in the first place identity-based groups such as the Kurds, religious minorities and pious groups along with the liberal intellectuals³⁹⁸. This is in the first place due to the AKP’s understanding and presentation of democratization as ‘a struggle against the tutelary regime and the bureaucratic elite’ and replacing this Kemalist elite minority with ‘the will of the people’ through democratic mechanism. Democratization that was interpreted to be the end of the rule

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Akça, “Hegemonic Projects in Post-1980 Turkey”, 32-3.

³⁹⁸ These groups are particularly attracted by this rhetoric and reforms as each has been, to different extent, in conflict with the state and the military, particularly because of their identity that contradicts with the official one. Yet, the reformation of military was not the only concession they had. For example, Kurds gained recognition to a certain degree with their culture, e.g. official channel or courses/departments at the university in Kurdish language, though these small benefits did not lead to real democratization concerning equal rights, which resulted in Kurdish boycott of the referendum on Constitutional amendments in 2010. Non-Muslim religious minorities gained also certain rewards from democratization, while the Alevis, despite unofficial recognition of their religious identity and positive rhetoric from the AKP, are kept out of Diyanet, *cemevi* is not recognized officially as a worship place and compulsory religion classes do not include Alevitism (neither are they exempted from compulsory Sunni religion classes). In other words, these groups did not receive an official and complete recognition as an identity group, but rather given limited rights as well as rhetorical integration. Pious Sunni groups and Islamists, on the other hand, which constitute the main constituency of the AKP, benefited the most from the AKP rule, both materially and symbolically.

of authoritarian bureaucracy over the society, was “obviously motivated by the objective of strengthening the position of the executive over the judiciary in particular”³⁹⁹, rather than by democracy, multiculturalism, diversity. As Akça argues the Islamist “past” of the AKP, which created a suspicion in the “secular establishment”, but also the relatively “narrow electoral base” at the time required it to follow a reformist path⁴⁰⁰. Put differently, it followed a war of position through the legal apparatus of the state as well as the public opinion so that to seize political hegemony, until reaching a wider social base and eliminating the obstacles, which was, then, accompanied by a war of manoeuvre, a frontal attack leading to penetrating into and seizure of the state institutions. Its tactics were various. It weakened certain state apparatuses like in the case of judiciary or the military⁴⁰¹. It undermined initially *de facto* (later institutionalized) the legislation power of the parliament and increased, instead, the Ministerial decrees. It deseated the critical, oppositional or not AKP-affiliated bureaucrats and staffed state apparatuses with its own cadres, hence changing the balance of power within the state between different state apparatuses⁴⁰². The role of the Gülen Community in this ‘conquest of the state’ is of utmost importance, particularly concerning the staffing of the state institutions, as it provided the educated and experienced cadres thanks to its extensive network of educational institutions and the long penetration in the state. It was particularly powerful in the Ministry of Education, of Justice and of Internal Affairs, the latter of which functioned as an “illegal intelligence service” to control, blackmail and unseat bureaucrats and politicians, but also journalists and business people⁴⁰³. This was another tactic of seizing the control of state apparatus as well as reorganizing civil society. As a result, a “parallel power network” in the form of “alternative bureaucracies” was created, which is why, according to Hoşgör, the contradictions in the ruling bloc (between the dominant and dominated fraction) was conceived

³⁹⁹ “Crises as Driving Force of Neoliberal ‘Transformismo’”, 249.

⁴⁰⁰ Akça, “Hegemonic Projects in Post-1980 Turkey”, 34-5.

⁴⁰¹ The highest level military bureaucrats, due to an alleged coup attempt against the government, were deseated, investigated and imprisoned. After the Ergenekon and Balyoz trials also civilians such as journalists, academics and leaders of civil society organizations were investigated and/or imprisoned for being members of terror organization and involving in the planning of the coup.

⁴⁰² Hoşgör, “The Question of AKP Hegemony”, 221-2.

⁴⁰³ M. Hakan Yavuz, “A Framework for Understanding the Intra-Islamist Conflict between the AKP and the Gülen Movement”, *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 19, No: 1 (2018): 20. According to Yavuz, the alliance between the AKP and the Gülen Movement was a symbiotic relationship with benefits for the both sides. Gülen Movement installed its cadres in the bureaucracy that the unexperienced AKP lacked and also in the municipalities. The municipalities, according to an ex-minister from the AKP, was the source of its real power and over them the movement had hegemony. Thanks to its control over municipalities, it was able to finance its “foundations, associations, schools”, which, in turn, reproduce its hegemony and raise future cadres of state and civil society. Moreover, the Gülen Movement provided its extensive media network in the service of the coalition, was controlling embassies, the local branches of the AKP and the bidding procedures in the ministries, which were given to Gülen-owned or affiliated companies. In short, Gülen movement provided the AKP’s consolidation of power, while exploiting the public resources at the same time.

to be a struggle between different institutions of the state or between the bureaucrats and the elected political representatives⁴⁰⁴.

In short, the supposed democratization steps of the AKP, particularly civilianisation of politics by ending the role of the military in politics, did not lead to democratization. This is, in the first place, because the democratic deficit caused by the authoritarianism of the military was maintained, but replaced by a civilian authoritarianism. It was that of the executive, particularly the President reinforced by “the police” and “the judiciary”, both of which functioned for “criminalization of opposition” and “social control”⁴⁰⁵. In other words, not only the Presidency, the police and the judiciary of the ‘New Turkey’ replaced the military of the ‘Old Turkey’, but also they built a mechanism of constant observation, control and brutal repression. It is this transformation, whose conditions were prepared during the so-called normalization/democratization period, which is conceived to be the ‘authoritarian turn’. In fact, the roots of this transformation are hidden in the central arguments of centre-periphery paradigm and the normalization rhetoric, which is reformulated in the revanchist politics of the AKP. It argued to replace the bureaucracy with ‘the will of the people’, however, rather than normalizing or democratizing politics, this led to institutionalization of an authoritarian regime, which reduced democracy merely to elections and equated the electoral majority with the ‘will of the people’. This, in turn, resulted in the seizure of the state in the name of and to represent the will of the Sunni majority, while any opposition is excluded from the people and the dissidents were repressed brutally. The repression of the oppositional forces, usually considered to form a bloc, is legitimized as democratic, as they are portrayed to be against the government that represents the ‘will of the people’ and are compared often to the military that oppressed that will by interventions in politics. In this sense, democratic politics is criminalized and delegitimized in the name of democracy; it also legitimized the increasing authoritarianism of the state. This strategy shows that the AKP achieved only “restricted hegemony” and not “expansive hegemony”, that is, its hegemony is based on “exclusion of dissent voices”⁴⁰⁶. This means while it organizes the consent of ‘the people/nation’ by providing them with material and/or ideological gains, it increasingly uses the repressive apparatus of the state on those that do not belong to ‘the people/nation’, instead of articulating them in the hegemonic project.

⁴⁰⁴ Hoşgör, “The Question of AKP Hegemony”, 220-3.

⁴⁰⁵ Akça, “Hegemonic Projects in Post-1980 Turkey”, 38-9.

⁴⁰⁶ Hoşgör, “The Question of AKP Hegemony”, 215.

3.3.4.3. Cultural Aspect: ‘Conquering the Hearts and the Minds’

The cultural aspect of the hegemony depends precisely on this restricted character of it, which is reproduced through the relation of exclusion-inclusion. In this sense, the dichotomous understanding of state-society relations and essentialist-culturalist definition of society, which assumes a political-cultural cleavage in the society is fundamental to AKP hegemony. The excluded part of the society is included in the political project by their exclusion, as it makes the definition of ‘the oppressed and democratic Sunni Muslim majority’ possible. Hence, the revanchist understanding of politics, deriving from secular-Islamic dichotomy is central to the cultural aspect of its project, which aims at bringing the ‘values of the periphery’ back at the ‘centre’ with a transformation ‘from below’. This is based on a tactic of ‘conquering the hearts and the minds’ (*gönülleri ve zihinleri fethetmek*), reminiscent of Gramscian cultural hegemony⁴⁰⁷. As discussed in the previous sections, the Islamic foundations, business organizations (MÜSİAD), labor unions (Hak-İş), media and other cultural production organizations, particularly mushroomed in the 1990s and mostly connected to the religious brotherhoods, have been disseminating Islamic values and lifestyle through a war of position to achieve a moral and intellectual leadership. In fact, this is central to the Islamic strategy of seizure of power, in which political hegemony is preceded by cultural hegemony⁴⁰⁸, that is, before and in order to be able to seize the state a certain level of hegemony is required. Considering this, it can be argued that the AKP, when it came to power, thanks to its pious, conservative supporters, has had already access to a large network of Islamic organizations in civil society from newspapers, magazines, TV channels, health institutions to educational institutions, companies, business and labor organizations, cultural institutions and civil society organizations, which it further strengthened and expanded. The exclusion-repression and inclusion-consent taking strategy pertains also to the cultural struggle. This is because this network of organizations, while promoting Islamic principles and values, deny the oppositional ones to eliminate them. Put differently, the cultural struggle to create an Islamic civilization has been fought with “symbolic rewards and punishments”; for example, the municipalities controlled by the AKP reject to sell alcohol in their restaurants and cafes, to protect “family values” and they re-arranged the working hours so as to enable the employees to fulfil their religious duties (worship, fasting)⁴⁰⁹. The examples are multiple: restrictions on alcohol

⁴⁰⁷ Hoşgör, “The Question of AKP Hegemony”.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid, 211.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid, 213.

advertisement and its public consumption; anti-smoking campaigns with religious references; rise in the alcohol and tobacco prices due to additional taxes; redefining gender roles and relations; family planning; enabling/disabling cultural institutions and production. Shortly, the State directly intervenes in daily life and social relations so as to reorganize them, by negating and even criminalizing a certain way of life, while glorifying and encouraging organization of social life according to Islamic principles.

Education has been, like in the previous periods, the central instrument to systematically provide the cultural transformation and build a new civilization and lies at the heart of the cultural project. The AKP's declared objective of 'raising pious and revengeful generation' (*dindar ve kindar nesil yetiştirmek*) is a symbol of it. Although this is not a new objective specific to the AKP era and as discussed before, education was increasingly Islamized and privatized, this transformation has been accelerated significantly under the AKP rule. Accordingly, education policies have been marked by neoliberalisation and archaic and religious principles to replace public, scientific, secular and democratic education. The education policies of the AKP in its first period lacked the legal ground and "contradicted" the existing legal framework, which were, therefore, rather enforced⁴¹⁰. The neoliberal transformation in education concerns, on the one hand, the implementation of the "EU dictated" education programs and curricula to raise "enterpreneural students" that are in compliance with and would serve to the needs of the neoliberal system⁴¹¹. On the other hand, it involves in undermining a public and democratic education; for example, the number of private schools rose from 1.235 in 2002-3 to 13.501 in 2020-1, private universities from 21 to 77 and extra-curricular educational institutions (*dershane*) from 2.568 to 3.579 in 2013-4, which were later closed down, with the opportunity of transforming into private schools with public incitements such as tax exemption, provision of public estate or scholarships to their students⁴¹². The public incitements for privatization were integrated in the education policies and strategy of the Ministry of National Education (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı/MEB. This is because private

⁴¹⁰ Bağımsız Sosyal Bilimciler, "AKP İktidarında Eğitim ve Bilim", in *AKP'li Yıllarda Emegın Durumu*, (İstanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2015), 216. BSB points out that some of these policies were annulled by the judiciary initially. Therefore, it should be again underlined that what was conceived to be the democratic transformation, e.g. reformation of the judiciary, was employed to undermine secular, scientific, equal and democratic education. In this sense, the economic, political and cultural aspects are in unity, forming a whole together.

⁴¹¹ BSB, "AKP İktidarında Eğitim ve Bilim", 216-8.

⁴¹² "2020-2021 Örgün Eğitim İstatistikleri", MEB, accessed March 3, 2022, https://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2021_09/10141326_meb_istatistikleri_orgun_egitim_2020_2021.pdf; "Vakıf Yükseköğretim Kurumları 2020 Raporu", YÖK, accessed March 3, 2022, <https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Yayınlar/Yayınlarımız/2020/vakif-yuksekogretim-kurumlari-2020-raporu.pdf>.

educational institutions are considered to be a criteria of development, which, therefore, increasing the number of private schools and their students is a declared objective; MEB transferred around 6 billion TL to private educational institutions in 2021, a significant part of which was spared for scholarships to students in private schools⁴¹³. Moreover, the clause guaranteeing free primary education was omitted from the public education law⁴¹⁴. In short, education policies aimed at systematically undermining public, social, equal and democratic education.

Privatizations facilitated Islamization of public education, which has reached unprecedented levels under the AKP rule. The restructuring of education through legislations transformed the system radically. Along with Islamization of general public education⁴¹⁵, the transformation of İmam Hatip schools have been striking. After reopening of the secondary parts of İmam Hatip schools in 2013-14, their number rose from 1.361 with 240.015 students to 3.427 with 714.297 students in 2020-21; the number of İmam Hatip high schools rose from 450 with 64.534 students in 2002-3 to 1.673 with 666.963 students in 2020-21. With huge investments and projects, İmam Hatip schools have been diversified with specializations on language, culture and arts, science or religion, to attract more students and increase the quality of education, as it is argued⁴¹⁶. While this transformation of İmam Hatip can be considered as a reward to AKP's core social base, these schools are imposed on the children of especially poor families by closing down many alternative vocational schools, transforming high schools into İmam Hatips or registration of students automatically to İmam Hatips⁴¹⁷. It can be argued that İmam Hatips

⁴¹³ “Stratejik Plan, 2010-14”, MEB, 111; accessed on March 3, 2022, http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/str_yon_planlama_v2/mebstratejikplan.pdf; “2021 Yılı İdare Faaliyet Raporu”, MEB; accessed March 3, 2022, https://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2022_03/01003833_MEB_2021_YYIY_Ydare_Faaliyet_Raporu.pdf.

⁴¹⁴ BSB, “AKP İktidarında Eğitim ve Bilim”, 222.

⁴¹⁵ It is not possible to list all the changes here but few of them would show the extent of Islamization: “Quran” and “The Life of Prophet Mohammed” were introduced as elective courses; while headscarf was allowed, tight-fitting clothes, shorts, miniskirts, sleeveless shirts were banned; children, if married, were allowed to continue home schooling, that is, child marriage is encouraged by the state; a performance evaluation of teachers according to their adoption of “national, moral, religious and universal values” was introduced; the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed (*Kutlu Doğum Haftası*) was celebrated at schools; evolution was removed from the curricula, etc. BSB, “AKP İktidarında Eğitim ve Bilim”. In addition to these, the extra-curricular education in workshops, clubs, etc. given by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (GSB) and the penetration of the Diyanet in the education system contributed to Islamization. For example, in 2021 in the Youth Centres of GSB more than 20.000 religious activities were organized with the participation of around 45.000 students. “Gençlik Bakanlığı Diyanet Gibi Çalıştı”, BirGün, 12.03.2022; accessed May 18 2022; <https://www.birgun.net/haber/genclik-bakanligi-diyamet-gibi-calisti-380246>

⁴¹⁶ “İmam Hatip Okulları Tanıtım ve Rehberlik”, Din Öğretimi Portalı, accessed on March 3, 2022; <http://dinogretimi.meb.gov.tr/Okullar.aspx>.

⁴¹⁷ BSB, “AKP İktidarında Eğitim ve Bilim”, 222, 226. These are all complementary with one another and most of the implementations lack legal ground, are arbitrary and enforced: Many primary-lower secondary and high

were redesigned and multiplied in number so as to replace secular schools as central education institutions of general public education. This restructuring and Islamization of education is instrumentalized politically, as it is argued to have restoring the rights of the ‘oppressed majority’ and the lost and ‘genuine’ identity of the society. The abolition of the ban on headscarf in higher education and of the restriction on İmam Hatip graduates’ university education have become symbols of this restoration, as they have been long politicized topics⁴¹⁸. Nevertheless, the number of theology and Islamic Sciences students increased significantly; the number of the faculties rose from 20 with 9.181 students in 2002-3 to 104 with 151.428 in 2020-21⁴¹⁹. In short, privatizations, undermining the public education, has prepared the ground for Islamization; yet, this was rather than being a transformation ‘from below’ has been enforced ‘from above’, which shows that education, the central apparatus of organizing consent, is repressive as well.

As discussed until here, the balance between repression and hegemony under the AKP rule has shifted increasingly towards the former. This transformation is accelerated especially following two events: the Gezi Uprising of 2013 and the coup attempt in 2016 allegedly by the Gülen Community. Both are challenges to the AKP governments, one from civil society and the other from within the state, and both were instrumentalized in the service of further

schools were, from one semester to the other, after reopening of the lower secondary parts of İmam Hatips in 2013-14, transformed into İmam Hatip schools without informing the students and the families and the students were automatically registered in these schools. These transformations are made, according to the Minister, to respond the “increasing demand”. “İmam Hatip’e Kayıt Zorunlu”, Cumhuriyet, 22.08.2013, accessed March 4, 2022; <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/imam-hatipe-kayit-zorunlu-441358>. Religious minorities such as Alevi students and Jews were likewise automatically registered to İmam Hatip schools. “Hahambaşı’nın Torunu İmam Hatipe”, Cumhuriyet, 31.08.2014, accessed March 4, 2022; <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/hahambasinin-torunu-imam-hatipe-112909>; “Aleviler’den Zorunlu İmam Hatip’e Tepki”, Cumhuriyet, 26.08.2014; accessed March 4, 2022; <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/alevilerden-zorunlu-imam-hatipe-tepki-110615>. Increasing the number of İmam Hatip schools are central to the strategy of the AKP, because with the introduction of a new system of central examination after the lower secondary school, the students, who fail the exam, are not given the right to choose their high schools, but were automatically registered to the closest high school to their homes. If they cannot find free places in the high schools of their choice, then they have to continue to those they are registered by the system. Therefore, opening an İmam Hatip in each neighbourhood was a strategy to enforce the students to go to these schools. These policies do not only impose Islamic education on students, but also by reducing the alternatives, enforce the poorer students to go to İmam Hatips in their neighbourhoods, as many families cannot afford the expensive travel costs. According to the Alevi Bektashi Federation, 40.000 students were enforced to continue their education in a high school that they did not choose. “Puani Yetmeyen Öğrenciler Ya Meslek Lisesine ya da İmam Hatip’e Gidecek”, T24, 05.08.2014, accessed March 4, 2022; <https://t24.com.tr/haber/puani-yetmeyen-ogrenciler-ya-meslek-lisesine-ya-da-imam-hatibe-gidecek,266578>.

⁴¹⁸ This restriction was reintroduced with the military intervention on February 28, 1997.

⁴¹⁹ The numbers are formed using the “Student Statistics” and “Unit Statistics” on <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/>. A striking development undermining secular, democratic university education was the opening new departments on Islamic economy, finance and law; there are 10 research centers on Islamic economy and 1 on Islamic law. The numbers are formed using the “Unit Statistics” on <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/>.

authoritarianisation and reorganization of state and civil society. Gezi Uprising started with a group of environmentalists resisting against the destruction of a park, one of the few green areas in İstanbul. Thanks to the brutal police attack on the peaceful protestors, it turned in a short time into a mass movement and expanded all over Turkey. The Uprising brought together working classes, both blue- and white-collar, and labor unions, high school and university students, civil society organizations from women and LGBTI+ to environmentalist groups, professional associations, football fan clubs, organized identity-based groups such as ultranationalists, Kemalists, Kurds, Alevis, Anti-Capitalist Muslims, cultural organizations and artists, oppositional political parties as well as unorganized people. As a response, the government, on the one hand, brutally repressed the uprising by judicial and police coercion. On the other hand, it mobilized its social base against the protestors portraying them as the enemies of ‘the people’, ‘agents of the West’, ‘plunderers’, ‘dark powers’, ‘terrorists’, who were challenging democracy, ‘the will of the people’, that is, the victorious position of ‘the periphery’. The resistance was a challenge to the AKP governments from the society, which the party claims to represent, and hence was a challenge to the very dichotomous understanding of Islamic-secular that it bases its hegemony on. It instrumentalized it, particularly referring to the secular cultural hegemony, to portray the Uprising as authoritarian, enforcing ‘alien values’ on the people. In this sense, Gezi both legitimized oppressing dissident voices and signalled increasing use of coercion in the following period on the excluded parts of the society. This criminalization and delegitimization restricted expression of dissent in democratic ways, other than elections. Moreover, it enabled the AKP to enlarge and consolidate its constituency by counter mobilizing it by an “ideological assault”, which, after Gezi, relied increasingly on “Turkish-Islamist elements”⁴²⁰. Accordingly, the role of the Islamic/Islamist organizations in civil society has increased in the reproduction of hegemony considerably. As the Uprising was predominantly interpreted and represented in the media and the academia as a university educated, middle-class, dominantly female youth movement, this was also a challenge to the objective of ‘raising a pious generation’, to the heart of its cultural project. ‘Gezi Youth’ was used with negative connotations as against the ‘pious generation’, which legitimized this project against the danger of ‘corrupted and degenerated’ generations. This resistance, in this sense, demonstrated that the AKP’s cultural project was a counterhegemonic one to the secular one and facilitated its project. Therefore, Gezi has triggered a more intensive Islamization as well, most visibly in education and culture in general.

⁴²⁰ Zafer Yılmaz, “The AKP and the Spirit of the ‘New’ Turkey: Imagined Victim, Reactionary Mood, and Resentful Sovereign”, *Turkish Studies* 18, No: 3 (2017): 493.

The coup attempt provided conditions for further authoritarianisation, as it was defined as ‘the blessing of God’ by Erdoğan. The coup was claimed to have been made by the Gülen Community, the ally of the AKP both during the seizure and consolidation of its power. In that sense, different from the Gezi Uprising, it was a challenge from the ruling bloc. The aim here is not to elaborate on the reasons or the course of the conflict between the AKP and the Gülen Community, but its impact on the relations between state and civil society. Because this alliance involved both in state and civil society, the conflict has had likewise significant outcomes for the institutions of state and civil society. It was followed by consequent declarations of state of exception and paved the way to the Presidential system, which strengthened the executive over both the legislation and the judiciary and fused the state, the party and the leader together. In this sense, it did not only triggered further authoritarianisation undermining democratic decision-making and checks and balances, but also institutionalized it; it enabled the President directly, without any intermediating institutions, to have complete control over the state and civil society. The Gülen Community was blamed to build a ‘parallel state structure’ (*Paralel Devlet Yapılanması*/PYD), a state within state, referring to its occupation of the bureaucratic cadres and was declared to be a terror organization. This legitimized the ‘purging’ of the state institutions, civil and military bureaucracy, this time, from the ally Islamists. The dismissed public officials and closed down organizations in civil society demonstrate clearly how deeply the religious communities have penetrated in the state and civil society, but in the first place in the education. Of more than 120.000 public officials that were dismissed, a great majority of which banned for a lifetime, from public service, 33.735 are from the Ministry of Education with the highest number of dismissals⁴²¹. This shows the influence of Gülen Community on public education, in which it penetrated at least from the 1990s on. This was confirmed by a former Minister of Education, who claimed that the Gülen Movement controlled and dominated the Ministry and the entire education system⁴²². However, it would be misleading to limit the dismissals and the repression to the Gülen Movement; rather, it was used as an opportunity, ‘a blessing of God’ to reorganize civil society, ‘cleansing’ it from any oppositional forces. Similar to the attitude the AKP took during the Gezi Uprising, the dissidents of the government were conceived to make up a bloc; the Gülen Movement, Gezi protestors, Kurdish movement, organized labor and other oppositional groups were altogether portrayed as terrorists who were

⁴²¹ İHOP, Updated Situation Report. 21 Jul 2016-20 March 2018 State of Emergency in Turkey, 2018. http://www.ihop.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SoE_17042018.pdf

⁴²² Yavuz, “A Framework for Understanding the Intra-Islamist Conflict”, 23.

in alliance with one another and with the ‘enemies of Turkey’ to bring the government down. For example, 11.000 teachers, who were suspended, were members of oppositional and left-oriented Education and Science Workers’ Union (Eğitim ve Bilim Emekçileri Sendikası/Eğitim-Sen)⁴²³ that was critical of the education policies of the AKP. By 2018, 1.419 associations, 145 foundations, 29 labour unions, 737 dormitories, 1.060 schools, 15 universities and 174 media institutions were closed⁴²⁴, among which were not only those belonged to or affiliated with the Gülen Movement, but also left-oriented and particularly the Kurdish organizations. One of the most important outcome of this ‘cleansing’ operations for the AKP was that it lost its source of educated human resources to staff the bureaucracy as well as educational institutions and foundations in civil society. In other words, it lacked the intellectuals and organizations necessary to organize consent for its intellectual and moral leadership. The state confiscated many companies, universities, schools, hospitals, dormitories that belonged to the Gülen Community and integrated and employed them in the service of its policies. For example, Maarif Foundation was established to take over the schools of Gülen Community, including those abroad; many other organizations were appointed representatives by the government. In short, as mentioned before, neoliberalisation is accompanied by authoritarianisation of the state, as it intervenes to reorganize social life so as to restore or reproduce hegemony, when necessary. Both Gezi Uprising and the failed coup attempt were instrumentalized by the AKP government as opportunities, on the one hand, to repress oppositional groups by dismissals, imprisonments, bans, closing down organizations and dissolving organized movements. On the other hand, the AKP continued to build further its own Islamic counter-hegemonic organizations in civil society to organize consent and to protect and strengthen the state. In the next chapter, one component of this network, the role of civil society organizations in the reproduction of hegemony will be discussed in detail.

⁴²³ Human Rights Watch, “World Report”, 2017; accessed March 7, 2022; https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/world_report_download/wr2017-web.pdf.

⁴²⁴ İHOP, Updated Situation Report.

CHAPTER 4

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS OF THE ‘NEW TURKEY’

4.1. Islamist Civil Society Organizations under the AKP Rule:

Civil society organizations (CSO) have been central in the organization of Islamist movement and Islamist mobilization in Turkey. According to Toprak, the Islamist movement is one of the most organized one in civil society⁴²⁵. The Islamists are organized both in associations and foundations, which vary from business and labour organizations to human rights, women and youth organizations and charities. As has been already discussed in the previous chapter, many of them are founded by the forbidden religious orders and communities so as to function legally and build and maintain their social networks on legitimate grounds as civil society organizations. Under the AKP rule, their influence both in the state and civil society has increased significantly. These religious networks are important actors shaping civil society not only by their various foundations, but also by their businesses, through which they have a control over media, health, education, and so on. On the other hand, they have been penetrating in the state through the bureaucratic cadres they provide, particularly following the failed coup attempt in 2016. For example, it has been reported that the bureaucratic cadres in the Ministry of Health has been manned by the Menzil community, a branch of Naqshbendi brotherhood⁴²⁶. Moreover, the ex-Minister of Health himself is reported to be a member of the Menzil, as well as the ex-Minister of Energy⁴²⁷. Similarly, there have been reports claiming that many religious brotherhoods/communities have been controlling various ministries and state institutions in addition to their powerful organizations in civil society. For example, İskenderpaşa community/Hak-Yol group - the Ministry of Justice, İsmailağa Community- the Diyanet, Işık Community - the media and the Ministry of Education, Süleymanağa Community- the Quran

⁴²⁵ Toprak, Civil Society in Turkey“, 110.

⁴²⁶ Hüseyin Şimşek, “Tarikat İddialarına ‘Koca’ Sessizlik”, *BirGün*, 02.12.2020; <https://www.birgun.net/haber/tarikat-iddialarina-koca-sessizlik-325074>.

⁴²⁷ “Sağlığımız Bunlara Emanet”, *BirGün*, 06.10.2020; <https://www.birgun.net/haber/sagligimiz-bunlara-emanet-318107>.

courses⁴²⁸. Therefore, the religious brotherhoods and communities that are organically related to the AKP, have an expansive control over both civil society and the state, sharing the power and privileges of different state institutions. This is of utmost importance, because their control over the state provide them with power over the allocation of public resources, which in turn, privileges and strengthens both their businesses and foundations. The state, religious networks and the private sector are in a complex relationship. An example of this is the İskenderpaşa community. Medipol Group, private hospitals with many branches in İstanbul, whose owner, a member of the Community, has been appointed as Minister of Health⁴²⁹. This shows, on the one hand, that the religious brotherhoods are in the state administration. This makes the AKP governments a coalition of religious brotherhoods and communities sharing state power, which replaced the Gülen Community. On the other hand, the relationship between the AKP and the religious networks is a matter of sharing of public resources and privileges and of material interests, in addition to common political-religious goals⁴³⁰. In short, as a result of this influential positions of the religious networks, their foundations and associations have flourished.

However, the cooperative relationship between the state and the religious networks is not always the case. There have been also power struggles among the religious networks and between them and the AKP. An obvious example is the struggle with the Gülen Community. Another one is that with the Furkan Foundation, whose leader and members were attacked brutally by the police and allegedly tortured, because of its oppositional position⁴³¹. These struggles, however, do not demonstrate significant ideological differences concerning their interpretation of Islamism. They are rather to be considered as power struggles firmly anchored in the economic and political privileges provided by the state power. Although the religious brotherhoods and communities dominate the scene, Islamist civil society does not form a

⁴²⁸ “İsmail Saymaz: Bakanlık Bürokrasisi Menzilcilerle Dolduruldu, İhaleler Menzilcilere Verildi”, *BirGün*, 10.10.2020; <https://www.birgun.net/haber/ismail-saymaz-bakanlik-burokrasisi-menzil-cilerle-dolduruldu-ihaleler-menzil-ci-sirketlere-verildi-318649> ; “Yargıtay Üyesi: Yargı İki Tarikatın Kontrolünde, Haremlik Selamlık Toplantılar Yapılıyor”, *Gazete Duvar*, 19.10.2021; <https://www.birgun.net/haber/ismail-saymaz-bakanlik-burokrasisi-menzil-cilerle-dolduruldu-ihaleler-menzil-ci-sirketlere-verildi-318649>.

⁴²⁹ “Özel Sektörden Kabineye Atanan Beş Bakan”, *Bianet*, 10.07.2018; <https://m.bianet.org/bianet/print/199041-ozel-sektorden-kabineye-atanan-bes-bakan>; “Yeni Bakanın Tarikat Bağlantısı”, *Cumhuriyet*, 11.07.2018; <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/yeni-bakanin-tarikat-baglantis-i-1023074>.

⁴³⁰ For example, İsmail Arı, “Sağlık Bakanı Ranta Doymuyor: Kendi Hastanesine Özel Genelge Yayımlamış”, *BirGün*, 05.08.2019; accessed May 18, 2022; <https://www.birgun.net/haber/saglik-bakani-ranta-doymuyor-kendi-hastanesine-ozel-genelge-yayimlamis-263998>

⁴³¹ Berkay Dünder, “Kasten İşlenen İşkence Suçu”, *BirGün*, 22.03.2022; <https://www.birgun.net/haber/kasten-islenen-iskence-sucu-381319>.

homogenous and unified totality. There are also organizations that are out of the privilege network of the state and in opposition to the AKP such as the Anti-Capitalist Muslims (founded in 2012 as Association for Struggle Against Capitalism) that participated in the Gezi Uprising to protest the government or Labour and Justice Platform (*Emek ve Adalet Platformu*). Both of these organizations ideologically oppose the dominant form of political Islamism with their capitalism critique and fight for an egalitarian society with religious references. Moreover, the relationship between the state and civil society organizations are dynamic and not necessarily determined based on the shared religio-political goals and ideals. For example, a comparative study of two Islamist women CSOs, AKDER (Women's Rights Organization Against Discrimination/*Ayrımcılığa Karşı Kadın Hakları Derneği*) and BKP (Capital City Women's Platform Association/*Başkent Kadın Platformu*), shows that AKDER shifted from a conflictual to a consensual relationship with the state from 2012 to 2018, while BKP changed its position in relation to the state in the opposite direction within the same time period⁴³².

The period of the AKP governments observed a clear rise in the social and political relevance of Islamist associations and foundations. The AKP governments tolerate and privilege the Islamist CSOs. For example, Minister of Internal Affairs has assured that the "Islamic work" of the CSOs would not be restrained with the law passed that restricts the working of the CSOs significantly⁴³³. This law opened the way for the closure or complete control of oppositional CSOs by the state. Under the AKP rule, on the one hand CSOs that have a consensual relationship with the AKP have flourished significantly thanks to the opportunities provided by the state. On the other hand, new and powerful ones with organic relations to the AKP and access to public resources have been founded. Among the most powerful ones are T3 Foundation (*Türkiye Teknoloji Takımı Vakfı*/The Turkish Technology Team Foundation) that was founded in 2016 by President Erdoğan's son-in-law and his family, who is in technology business with his company Baykar Makina⁴³⁴ or KADEM (*Kadın ve Demokrasi Derneği*/The Women and Democracy Association) that was founded in 2013 by the AKP deputies and President Erdoğan's daughter, who is the Deputy Chairwoman of the association⁴³⁵. It is not possible to capture the number of Islamic/Islamist associations and foundations from the

⁴³² Asuman Özgür Keysan and Zelal Özdemir, "Civil Society and State Relations in Turkey: Opposing Trajectories of Two Islamist Women's Civil Society Organizations", *Asian Journal of Women Studies* 26, No:3 (2020).

⁴³³ "Derneklere Kayyım Yasası: Kaplan "Çok Tehlikeli Felaket Olur" Dedi, Soylu 'İslami Çalışmalar' İçin Garanti Verdi", *Cumhuriyet*, 27.12.2020; accessed May 18, 2022; <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/derneklere-kayyim-yasasi-kaplan-cok-tehlikeli-felaket-olur-dedi-soylu-islami-calismalar-icin-garanti-verdi-1801761>.

⁴³⁴ "Frequently Asked Questions", T3, <https://t3vakfi.org/en/sss/>, accessed April 4, 2022.

⁴³⁵ "Executive Board", KADEM, <https://kadem.org.tr/en/about-us/executive-board-2/>, accessed April 22, 2022.

statistics, since the categories differentiate only those that are active in religious field providing religious services such as building mosques or opening Quran courses. Of 122.140 associations, more than half are active as professional, solidarity or sports associations; 18.110 are active in the religious field and 6.205 are in the education⁴³⁶. The total number of foundations is 5.906, with 15% working for the women, 15% for the poor and 25% for the children and youth⁴³⁷. Accordingly, among the foundations that own private enterprises, those that run private education institutions and student housing is the highest number: 45 of them own private universities, 152 religious/Quran courses, 136 educational institutions and 198 student housing⁴³⁸. Considering that the Islamist movement is mainly organized in foundations, due to both the privileges it provides and its symbolic meaning, and that education is the central focus of their foundations, one can conclude that the Islamist foundations constitute an important portion of that 25%. The foundations and associations that will be examined in this chapter, namely, ÖNDER, Ensar, TUGVA and TURGEV, are likewise among the largest ones that are active in the education field with the main target groups being children and the youth and the focus Islamic education.

4.1.1. ÖNDER İmam Hatipliler Association:

ÖNDER İmam Hatipliler Association was founded in 1958 as a local organization in İstanbul by the first graduates of İstanbul İmam Hatip School, after their reopening under the DP government in 1951⁴³⁹. Because formal religious education was restricted and controlled by the state, ÖNDER was founded to organize, represent and network İmam Hatip students and graduates, protect their educational rights and assist them during their secondary and higher education⁴⁴⁰. Organizing the İmam Hatip students and graduates is attached utmost importance. It is argued that the founders of ÖNDER were “aware of the importance of organizing to fight a struggle for a cause (*dawa*)”⁴⁴¹. The expansion of İmam Hatip schools and Islamic education was set as a central objective of the association. The President of the Diyanet at an event of

⁴³⁶ “Derneklerin Faaliyet Alanlarına Göre Dağılımı”, Sivil Toplum İlişkiler Genel Müdürlüğü, <https://www.siviltoplum.gov.tr/derneklerin-faaliyet-alanlarina-gore-dagilimi>; accessed on April 22, 2022.

⁴³⁷ “Vakıfların Dağılımı”, Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü, accessed on April 22, 2022. https://cdn.vgm.gov.tr/genelicerik/genelicerik_945_290519/01vakiflarin-turlerine-gore-dagilimi-13082021.pdf; https://cdn.vgm.gov.tr/genelicerik/genelicerik_945_290519/09hedef-kitlesine-gore-yeni-vakiflarin-dagilimi-13.pdf.

⁴³⁸ https://cdn.vgm.gov.tr/genelicerik/genelicerik_945_290519/10kar-amaci-olmayan-tesis-muessese-sahibi-vakiflar.pdf

⁴³⁹ “Tarihçe: İmam Hatipler: Yüz Yıllık Gelenk”, ÖNDER; <https://onder.org.tr/tr/Kurumsal/sayfa/tarihce>, accessed April 22, 2022.

⁴⁴⁰ “Tüzük”, ÖNDER, <https://onder.org.tr/tr/sayfa/Tuzuk>, accessed 31.05.2022.

⁴⁴¹ Genç Önder Katalog, 3.

ÖNDER expressed the aim as increasing the number of İmam Hatip students to 25% of overall student population, so that the students “learn Quran, Arabic, hadith, fiqh before going to university”⁴⁴². According to the Chairman, the expansion of İmam Hatip schools is crucial to raise “pious generations”, because it is them that will fight for the “Islamic cause” (dawa) and “revive the Islamic civilization”⁴⁴³. Hayrettin Karaman, an Islamist theologian, therefore, defines the İmam Hatip schools as crucial for the Islamist political struggle and social transformation against Kemalist modernization⁴⁴⁴:

Our religion is there, at the centre [of İmam-Hatip]. Our culture and civilization arose with an inspiration from this religion. Our civilization had a language, a script, arts. It had all the elements that make a culture and civilization. ... we were a body as a culture and civilization and its spirit was religion, Islam. Then, the microbes...separated us. Contradictions emerged between our body and spirit. We have a religion but they enforced another culture and civilization on us. We had a language, a script, morals, etiquette, arts. They wanted to change all of them. ..with these thoughts, I say that İmam-Hatip schools are the schools of our civilization.

After the 1980 coup, ÖNDER started to open new branches in different cities and became active at the national level. This is due to the increasing number of İmam Hatip schools and the increased legitimacy of Islamic education in the post-1980. The history of ÖNDER, therefore, is closely related to the history of İmam Hatip schools. Under the AKP governments parallel to the steep increase in the number of İmam Hatip schools, ÖNDER has flourished significantly in a short time. Currently, with its 470 branch offices in all 81 cities, it is one of the largest civil society organizations⁴⁴⁵. ÖNDER gained the status of “association that works for public interest” (kamu yararına çalışan dernek) in 2012 by a decision of Council of Ministers⁴⁴⁶.

The ultimate focus of ÖNDER is İmam Hatip schools and their students; the Chairman defines its mission to fight for “our İmam Hatip cause” (*İmam Hatip davamız*)⁴⁴⁷. ÖNDER assisted the İmam Hatip community after the February 28 coup in 1997, after which İmam Hatip schools were restricted as well as the rights of the students and graduates. For example, it organized the protest meeting “Don’t Touch My İmam Hatip” (*İmam Hatibime Dokunma*) with allegedly 1

⁴⁴² ÖNDER, No: 21, 29-30.

⁴⁴³ ÖNDER, No: 19, 14-7, 21-3.

⁴⁴⁴ ÖNDER, No: 17, 22.

⁴⁴⁵ “İmam Hatipler İçin Güç Birliği”, ÖNDER, <https://onder.org.tr/tr/teskilat/Haber/imam-hatipler-icin-guc-birligi-hbfe1bf>, accessed May 31, 2022.

⁴⁴⁶ “Kamu Yararına Çalışan Dernekler”, Sivil Toplumla İlişkiler Genel Müdürlüğü, <https://www.siviltoplum.gov.tr/kamu-yararina-calisan-dernekler>, accessed June 2, 2022.

⁴⁴⁷ ÖNDER, No: 19, 17, 19, 27.

million participants against the closure of the secondary part of İmam Hatip schools after the introduction of 8 year compulsory primary education⁴⁴⁸. Likewise, it started a campaign to provide scholarships to İmam Hatip graduates to study at private universities, as there were barriers for their education at public universities. Its branch office WONDER was founded in Austria to represent and assist the veiled students abroad, after headscarf was forbidden at schools and universities in Turkey with February 28 coup.

ÖNDER closely works with the İmam Hatip schools and has extensive access to their student population. Opposite to the number of İmam Hatip schools, the number of their students is in a decreasing trend in the last years⁴⁴⁹. In response, ÖNDER together with Ensar Foundation, Foundation for Dissemination of Science (İlim Yayma Vakfı/İYV), Society of Dissemination of Science (İlim Yayma Cemiyeti/İYC) and Movement of Human and Civilization (İnsan ve Medeniyet Hareketi) have mobilized their local offices for further expanding İmam-Hatip schools by advertising and encouraging students to opt for them. For example, they started a scholarship program for high school students, who opt for İmam-Hatip⁴⁵⁰. ÖNDER also engages in research on religious education; it prepares reports, books, curricula and give feedbacks to the MEB. For example, it has prepared “Reconsidering Education in the Light of July 15” (*15 Temmuz Işığında Eğitimi Yeniden Düşünmek*) and “On Mixed Education and Single-Sex (Democratic) Education” (*Karma Eğitim ve Tek Cinsiyetli (Demokratik) Eğitim Üzerine*)⁴⁵¹. In these reports, it criticizes secular, public and mixed-sex education for being the enforcement of Kemalist ideology. For example, it spreads the discriminating argument that biological differences of male and female brains result in different learning inclinations and performance and that mixed-sex education, therefore, is not grounded scientifically or pedagogically, but ideologically enforced⁴⁵². Through these, it has a strong voice in the making of the education policies. For example, its workshop report on formal education curriculum demanded a “paradigm change” that would replace “the materialist and evolutionary language”

⁴⁴⁸ Genç Önder Katalog, 3.

⁴⁴⁹ “Örgün Eğitim İstatistikleri 2020-21”, MEB, https://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2021_09/10141326_meb_istatistikleri_organ_egitim_2020_2021.pdf; “Örgün Eğitim İstatistikleri 2019-20”, MEB, https://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2020_09/04144812_meb_istatistikleri_organ_egitim_2019_2020.pdf; accessed April 22, 2022.

⁴⁵⁰ “İmam Hatip Öğrenilerine Burs Desteği”, Ensar, <https://ensar.org/haber/2018/07/05/imam-hatip-ogrencilerine-burs-destegi>; “Burs Sonuçları Açıklandı”, ÖNDER, <https://onder.org.tr/tr/Haber/burs-sonuclari-aciklandi-hb5ace1>; accessed June 1, 2022.

⁴⁵¹ “Kitap”, ÖNDER, <https://onder.org.tr/tr/Yayinlar/Kitap/listele>; “Rapor”, ÖNDER, <https://onder.org.tr/tr/Yayinlar/Raporlar/listele>; accessed June 1, 2022.

⁴⁵² Abdülhak Halim Ulaş and Ahmet Kırkkılıç, *ÖNDER Karma Eğitim Raporu: Karma Eğitim ve Tek Cinsiyetli (Demokratik) Eğitim Üzerine*. ÖNDER Raporlar Serisi No: 6 (İstanbul: Eksen, 2012).

in natural sciences with “faith in creation”, advising to employ the “revitalizing climate of revelation (Wahy)” to prevent the “increasing tendencies towards atheism, agnosticism and deism”⁴⁵³. Evolution is actually omitted from the curriculum of formal education.

A central objective of the association is the further and extracurricular education of the İmam Hatip students, because it is argued that they have been the victims of Westernization. It is argued that they have been often despised for being philistine and ignorant; the education quality was deemed insufficient and merely religious. They were “otherised as a group who are not familiar with arts and music”⁴⁵⁴. ÖNDER commits a major part of its resources to transform the negative public image of İmam-Hatip schools. It aims to “eliminate the prejudices that İmam-Hatip graduates are employed as imam or preacher” and raise “good Quran, Hadith and Fıqh students that would be also good engineers, doctors, economists”⁴⁵⁵. For that purpose, it offers courses on arts, sports, social sciences, foreign languages and technology that would prepare students for specialization in higher education and raise well-equipped, “leader individuals that would shape the future of Turkey”⁴⁵⁶.

Currently it organizes extra-curricular courses, seminars, trips, competitions, camps, conferences, panels, workshops for İmam Hatip students and graduates at the higher education. It offers education programs for İmam Hatip teachers. For higher education students, it has 19 dormitories in 14 cities for both men and women⁴⁵⁷. It offers many activities for its dormitory students. Among them, learning the life of the Prophet Mohammed and basic religious behavioural education are compulsory⁴⁵⁸. ÖNDER has a complex institutional structure with 13 commissions. One of the largest and most active of them, Genç ÖNDER, the youth branch, was founded in 2015. It has currently organizations in 11 universities, most of which in İstanbul⁴⁵⁹. It aims at “organizing the İmam Hatip youth to spread the Muslim consciousness to the whole society and build the future”⁴⁶⁰. Genç Önder organizes book readings, family education seminars, meetings, trips, visits, sport events, art workshops, concerts, language courses, psychological assistance, etc. Most of the sports courses and events are organized by

⁴⁵³ “Müfredat Çalıştay Değerlendirme”, ÖNDER, accessed January 26, 2021, <https://onder.org.tr/tr/egitim/Haber/Onder-Mufredat-Calistayi-Degerlendirme-4-2-2017>

⁴⁵⁴ ÖNDER, No: 19, 85.

⁴⁵⁵ ÖNDER, No: 19, 8.

⁴⁵⁶ “Türkiye’nin Önderleri Projesi” Flyer, ÖNDER, <https://ondergenc.org/turkiyenin-onderleri/>, accessed May 31, 2022.

⁴⁵⁷ “Yurtlarımız”, ÖNDER, <https://yurt.onder.org.tr/yurtlar>, accessed May 31, 2022.

⁴⁵⁸ ÖNDER, No: 19, 25

⁴⁵⁹ “Üniversite Teşkilatı”, Genç ÖNDER, <https://ondergenc.org/universite-teskilati/>, accessed June 1, 2022.

⁴⁶⁰ Genç Önder Tanıtım Kataloğu, 5

Öncü Spor, its sports commission. Öncü Spor through sport trainings and games aims at “raising ‘leader generations’ who has national and moral values and devoted to its country and nation, keeping the youth away from addictions, make them virtuous individuals as well as teaching them cultural values⁴⁶¹. Therefore, along with basketball, table tennis, judo, handball, taekwondo, traditional sports and games such as archery, riding, mangala, ashyk are prioritized as cultural heritage. Among many others, some projects of ÖNDER are: “Kardeşim Dedim Youth Camps”; the workshops “Fikir Yumağı”, “-isms workshop” and “Readings on Islamic Geography” (İslam Coğrafyası Okumaları), all of which aims at providing extra-curricular academic assistance to break the negative image of İmam Hatips; “Leaders of Turkey” (Türkiye’nin Önderleri), a two-year program in 23 cities to raise the “leader generation” (Öncü Nesil); “Aynı Sırayı Paylaşanlar” that brings İmam Hatip students together with the graduates like politicians, journalists, academics to help them plan their careers; “Baba-Oğul Sabah Namazı Buluşmaları” (Father-Son Morning Prayer Meetings); “Finans Genç” (Finance Youth) that aims at raising Islamic financiers and bankers; “Hikmetin İzinde” (In the Path of Wisdom), an education program for teachers; “Peygamberim Önderim 40 Hadis-i Şerif” (My Prophet, My Leader-40 Hadith), a competition by which the students learn hadiths by heart, aiming at teaching the students hadiths and interpreting daily life accordingly⁴⁶². ÖNDER signed a protocol with İstanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education (İstanbul İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü/MEM), by which can organize “activities in education, culture, arts, social responsibility and trips”⁴⁶³. Thanks to the protocol, it has complete official access to İmam Hatip students at their schools.

⁴⁶¹ ÖNDER, Bulletin No: 16, (Jan-Feb-March 2018), 42; No: 19, 21; No: 18, 17-8; “Biz Kimiz”, Öncü Spor, <https://oncugenlikspor.com/biz-kimiz/>, accessed June 1, 2022.

⁴⁶² ÖNDER, No: 20, 18; “Bu Proje İslami Finansçı Yetiştirecek”, Genç ÖNDER, <https://ondergenc.org/bu-proje-islami-finansci-yetistirecek/>; Genç ÖNDER Tanıtım Kataloğu; “Türkiye’nin Önderleri 3. Yılında”, ÖNDER, <https://onder.org.tr/tr/Haber/turkiye%e2%80%99nin-onderleri-3-yilinda-hb43549>, accessed June 1, 2022.

⁴⁶³ “ÖNDER ile İstanbul MEM Protokol İmzalandı”, ÖNDER, <https://onder.org.tr/tr/Haber/ONDER-ILE-ISTANBUL-MEM-PROTOKOL-IMZALADI-8-12-2016>; accessed June 7, 2022. It has protocols also with General Directorate of Religious Education, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Yeşilay, Ministry of Family and Social Policies, various provincial governorships, müfti’s offices, municipalities among many others. <https://www.aile.gov.tr/media/14150/7-cocuk-hizmetleri-genel-mudurlugu-ile-onder-imam-hatip-mezunlari-ve-mensuplari-dernegi-arasinda-isbirligi-protokolu-13-03-2014.pdf>; “İmam Hatipliler Hatıra Ormanı Kuruluyor”, ÖNDER, <https://onder.org.tr/tr/Haber/imam-hatipliler-hatira-ormani-kuruluyor-hbc3970>; “ÖNDER ile Milli Eğitim Arasına Protokol”, ÖNDER, <https://onder.org.tr/tr/Haber/onder-ile-milli-egitim-arasinda-protokol-11-7-2013>; “ÖNDER ve Yeşilay Bağımlılıkla Birlikte Mücadele Edecek”, ÖNDER, <https://onder.org.tr/tr/Haber/onder-ve-yesilay-bagimlilikle-birlikte-mucadele-edecek-hb42967>; “Gençlerle El Ele Geleceğe”, ÖNDER, <https://onder.org.tr/tr/Haber/Genclerle-El-Ele-Gelecege-17-3-2016>; accessed June 7, 2022.

4.1.1. Ensar Foundation:

Ensar Foundation was founded shortly before the 1980 coup in 1979. Among the founders are Kadir Topbaş, ex-Mayor of İstanbul from the AKP; Ömer Dinçer, ex-Education Minister from the AKP; Aziz Torun, the owner of Torunlar Group that owns Başkent Gaz, one of the biggest gas distribution companies, and a friend of President Erdoğan and Feyzullah Kızılkılıç, the AKP deputy in the parliament⁴⁶⁴. The website of Ensar does not provide any information about the founders, the official founding document or the board of management. The list of board of trustees was likewise absent on the website at the beginning of this research. The activities and costs of the foundation are not transparent, as it does not publish annual reports. President Erdoğan's son Bilal Erdoğan sits at the general board of the foundation and participate at its events very often as speaker⁴⁶⁵. It is a very large civil society organization with 166 branch offices in 79 cities and 87 town centres⁴⁶⁶. Moreover, its youth organization Genç Ensar, which is active at the universities and high schools, has 104 branch offices and the women organization “Hanımlar Komisyonu” (Ladies Commission) has 99 branch offices⁴⁶⁷. Ensar received “Tax Exemption” status in 2012 by a decision of Council of Ministers⁴⁶⁸.

Ensar aims at “enriching the moral and intellectual capabilities” and raising Islamic consciousness of the society and focuses on “values education” and “religious and moral education”⁴⁶⁹. The foundation conceives religious education not “simply as a matter of education”, but as a “strategic matter” that would “shape the future of our country”⁴⁷⁰. Its Centre for Values Education (Değerler Eğitimi Merkezi/DEM) that was founded in 2003 in İstanbul is a central institution for implementing religious and values education. It organizes courses, workshops, seminars, conferences, readings and talks; run research projects, prepares teaching material for religious and moral education, train teachers in three different programs and publishes books, reports and a peer-reviewed scholarly journal on the subject⁴⁷¹. DEM and Ensar signed a protocol with İstanbul MEM to organize in cooperation the competition “Turkish

⁴⁶⁴ “Ensar-AKP İlişkilerine 2. Sansür”, *BirGün*, 10.05.2016, <https://www.birgun.net/haber/ensar-akp-iliskileri-haritasina-2-sansur-112547>; “AKP, Ensar’ı Böyle Büyüttü”, *Cumhuriyet*, 02.02.2020, <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/akp-ensari-boyle-buyuttu-1717870>; accessed June 1, 2022.

⁴⁶⁵ Ensar, No: 51, 16.

⁴⁶⁶ Ensar, No: 50, 47.

⁴⁶⁷ “Genç Ensar Hakkında”, Ensar, <https://ensar.org/genc-ensar>; “Hanımlar Komisyonu”, Ensar, <https://ensar.org/hanimlar-komisyonu>, accessed June 2, 2022.

⁴⁶⁸ “Vergi Muafiyeti Tanınan Vakıfların Listesi”, Gelir İdaresi Başkanlığı, <https://www.gib.gov.tr/yardim-ve-kaynaklar/yararli-bilgiler/vergi-muafiyeti-taninan-vakiflarin-listesi>, accessed June 1, 2022.

⁴⁶⁹ Ensar Katalog.

⁴⁷⁰ Ensar, No: 47, 5.

⁴⁷¹ Değerler Eğitimi Merkezi, <https://dem.org.tr/>, accessed June 1, 2022.

Values Awards” (Türkiye Değer Ödülleri). Thanks to the protocol, it is implemented in all private and public secondary and high schools first in İstanbul and later all over Turkey⁴⁷². It has more protocols, through which it offers extra-curricular courses at the schools of national education system. Some of them are: the protocol with Ataşehir District Governorship and Ataşehir MEM for “İkra” competition; the protocol with the General Directorate of Religious Education and the Platform of Prayer Volunteers of Ensar for the project “Revival with Prayer”, which organized 853 seminars for students and 13 for families in 53 cities; the protocol with Manisa MEM for academic assistance courses; the protocol with Marmaris MEM for learning the “national poets” such as Necip Fazıl and Mehmet Akif as part of “Values Education”; the protocol with Yalova MEM and Yalova Governorship for building a complex of İmam Hatip school; the protocol with Aksaray municipality with which Ensar was allocated a building to be used as a dormitory and received financial support for the rent of its central building; the protocol with TUGVA and Çekmeköy Municipality for organizing cultural and sports events for the youth⁴⁷³. It provides also scholarships to higher education students, who work on the research projects on Islamic topics⁴⁷⁴. It also has a communication network; Ensar Publication Group has more than 1.000 publications on religious and values education and Ensar TV broadcasts videos on Arabic, fiqh, hadith, life of prophet, tafsir as well as the seminars, conferences, talks and symposiums organized⁴⁷⁵.

It does not limit its activities with religious education and offers workshops and seminars in different art branches from architecture, photography, graphic design to film, illustration, industrial design as well as traditional arts such as calligraphy, Islamic motives, ornamenting at its İstanbul Design Centre (İstanbul Tasarım Merkezi)⁴⁷⁶. Its art and music workshops offer Islamic arts such as calligraphy, geometric motives, paper marbling, illuminated manuscript;

⁴⁷² “Hakkında”, Türkiye Değer Ödülleri, <https://turkiyedegerodulleri.com/hakkinda>, accessed June 1, 2022.

⁴⁷³ Ensar, No: 51, 46; No: 50, 18; No:47, 53; “Marmaris’te Değerler Eğitiminde Şairler Anılacak”, Milliyet, 22.01.2015, <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/yerel-haberler/mugla/marmaris-te-degerler-egitiminde-sairler-anilacak-10585175>; “Yalova AİHL Yapım Protokolü Ensar Vakfı Genel Merkezi, Yalova İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü ve Yalova Valiliği Arasında İmzalandı”, Ensar, <https://ensar.org/haber/2015/01/26/yalova-aihl-kulliyesi-yapim-protokolu-ensar-vakfi-genel-merkeziyalova-il-milli-egitim-mudurlugu-ve-yalova-valiligi-arasinda-imzalandi>; “Belediyemiz ile Eğitim ve Gençlik Hizmeti Protokolü İmzalandı”, Ensar, <https://ensar.org/haber/2016/02/17/belediyemiz-ile-egitim-ve-genclik-hizmetleri-protokolu-imzalandi>; “Ensar Vakfı Çekmeköy Şubesi, Çekmeköy Belediyesi ile Protokol İmzaladı”, Ensar, <https://ensar.org/haber/2017/11/10/ensar-vakfi-cekmekoy-subesi-cekmekoy-belediyesi-ile-protokol-imzaladi>; accessed June 1, 2022.

⁴⁷⁴ “Araştırma Proje Bursları (Lisansüstü)”, Değerler Eğitimi Merkezi, <https://dem.org.tr/burs/arastirma-proje-burslari-lisansustu>, accessed June 1, 2022; Ensar, No: 47, 20-1.

⁴⁷⁵ “Ensar Yayın Grubu”, Ensar, <https://ensar.org/kurumlar/ensar-yayin-grubu>; accessed June 2, 2022; Ensar, No: 47, 41.

⁴⁷⁶ Ensar Katalog

students learn to play traditional musical instruments, chant hymns, anthems and marches. These activities aim at teaching the students cultural elements, values and practices that are “forgotten under modernisation” and reintroducing them as an essential part of the Turkic-Islamic culture⁴⁷⁷. Design Centre organizes an international education program financed by Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (Yutdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı/YTB) and government-funded Türkiye Scholarships and founded the “Media Centre” financed by Ministry of Culture and Tourism⁴⁷⁸. Moreover, it has sport centres, book cafes, culture and art centres and youth centres in different cities, where it organizes talks, sports courses, art and craft workshops, seminars on different themes.

Ensar addresses students from pre-school to post-graduate level, but the main target group is İmam Hatip students and graduates. It gives scholarship to 7.000 İmam Hatip students and provided free lunch daily 25.000 students in 110 İmam Hatip schools; currently it gives free lunch daily for 600 university students⁴⁷⁹. Moreover, Ensar supports the Platform for İmam Hatip Schools that aims at “maintaining İmam Hatip spirit and raising a generation devoted to national, moral, and cultural values”⁴⁸⁰. Its mission is similar to that of ÖNDER’s, expanding İmam Hatip schools all over Turkey, so as to make them accessible to more students⁴⁸¹. Ensar has 62 dormitories in 33 cities, of which 37 are for women and 25 for men with a capacity of 6.712⁴⁸². It “endeavours for making dormitories more than mere accommodation” and offers seminars, conferences, workshops, festivals, poetry nights, trips, psychological consultancy to its students⁴⁸³. Some of them are: a five weeks seminar program “Turkey’s Experience of Military Coups” (Türkiye’nin Darbelerle İmtihanı); rhetoric seminars; the conference “Contemporary Faith Problems” (Günümüzün İnanç Problemleri); debate (münazara) competitions on themes such as secularisation and women, marriage and academy; talk series “Oppressed Regions” (Mazlum Coğrafyalar) that focus on countries with Muslim majority; regular Quran courses and morning prayer meetings; breakfast with ex-Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım, a contest on knowledge of Quran (Nebe-Nas)⁴⁸⁴. Praying is attached utmost

⁴⁷⁷ Ensar Katalog

⁴⁷⁸ “Uluslararası Öğrenci akademisi Sanat İhtisas Atölyeleri”, İstanbul Tasarım Merkezi, https://istanbultasarimmerkezi.org/uluslararasi-ogrenci-akademisi-sanat-ih-tisas-atolyeleri_U147.html; “İstanbul Medya Merkezi Medya Eğitimi”, İstanbul Tasarım Merkezi, https://istanbultasarimmerkezi.org/istanbul-medya-merkezi-medya-egitimi_M181.html; accessed June 2, 2022.

⁴⁷⁹ “Yemek Hizmetleri”, Ensar, <https://ensar.org/faaliyetler/yemek-hizmetleri>; “Burs”, Ensar, <https://ensar.org/faaliyetler/burs>; accessed June 1, 2022.

⁴⁸⁰ Ensar, No: 50, 11.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² “Yurt Hizmetleri”, Ensar, <https://ensar.org/faaliyetler/yurt-hizmetleri>; accessed June 1, 2022.

⁴⁸³ Ensar, No: 51, 8; TÜRGEV, “Öğrenci Konfor, Aile Güvenlik İstiyor”

⁴⁸⁴ Ensar, No: 47, 64-71; No: 50, 66-70; No: 51, 76-87.

importance and regularly praying meetings are held, as it makes possible “the reawakening of the ummah as the subject of history”⁴⁸⁵.

Ensar owns private schools, which include pre-school, primary, lower secondary and high schools. They are founded to “raise a good educated generation with moral values; a precondition of a highly developed Turkey”⁴⁸⁶. The schools have values education courses in their curricula as well as English and Arabic as foreign languages and Ottoman language classes. Ensar, together with TÜRGEV, founded in 2014 TURKEN Foundation in England with a branch office in the USA. It aims at assisting the students from Turkey and other countries with “culturally-appropriate” dormitories and scholarships and help them maintain “their own culture and values”⁴⁸⁷. In the USA, it has in 5 cities 9 dormitories and guesthouses with a total capacity of more than 250 students⁴⁸⁸. Under its project “Youth Bridges”, TURKEN organizes a visit of “young Muslims from North America” to Turkey with the aim of “contributing to the flourishing of our shared Islamic culture” and “to the unification of the ummah”⁴⁸⁹.

4.1.2. TÜRGEV- Turkey Youth and Education Service Foundation:

Turkey Youth and Education Service Foundation (Türkiye Gençlik ve Eğitime Hizmet Vakfı/TÜRGEV) was founded in 1996 as a local organization in İstanbul with the initiation of the then-Mayor of İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. It was founded to provide ‘safe’ housing for female İmam Hatip students. While until 2012, it had only one student dormitory in İstanbul, afterwards the growth of TÜRGEV has significantly accelerated. In 2013, it became active nationwide and opened new dormitories one after another. Currently, it operates 21 dormitories in 9 cities, 3 of which are for secondary school students⁴⁹⁰. TÜRGEV received “Tax Exemption” status by a decision of the Council of Ministers in 2011; yet, in 25 years, it published only one annual report in 2018-2019⁴⁹¹. President Erdoğan’s daughter Esra

⁴⁸⁵ Ensar, No: 51, 37.

⁴⁸⁶ Ensar Katalog.

⁴⁸⁷ “TURKEN”, TÜRGEV, <https://www.turgev.org/tr/s/turken-foundation>, accessed June 2, 2022; Ensar, No, 51, 15; Youth Bridges Catalogue, TURKEN Foundation USA.

⁴⁸⁸ “TURKEN”, TÜRGEV, <https://www.turgev.org/tr/s/turken-foundation>.

⁴⁸⁹ Youth Bridges Catalogue, TURKEN Foundation USA.

⁴⁹⁰ “Yurtlar”, TÜRGEV, <https://www.turgev.org/tr/yurtlar-liste>, accessed June 2, 2022.

⁴⁹¹ “Vergi Muafiyeti”, TÜRGEV, <https://www.turgev.org/tr/frontend/storage/documents/lmabv8dQpROyZMohHGCy7Lh3G2OZ9qwGWOc7fMX.pdf>, accessed June 2, 2022.

Albayrak sits both at the board of management and in the foundation's parliament and his son Bilal Erdoğan is a member of its parliament⁴⁹².

The Foundation declares its mission as “contributing to the moral, cultural, artistic, social, technic and sportive education of the youth and raising consciousness about the importance of its future responsibilities” with a vision of “raising a youth that questions, searches, produces, is self-confident, knows its values, its nation and its past to build the new leader Turkey of the future”⁴⁹³. For that purpose, it organizes extra-curricular seminars, courses, workshops, panels, conferences, contests, debates, tournaments, trips and it gives scholarships. The number of its scholars was 3.951 in the education year 2018-19, while the total number is 13.167⁴⁹⁴. TÜRGEV does not have branch offices and like the other CSOs, it uses the dormitories as rooms for education. It offers in its dormitories among others “Experience Talks”, by which role models, such as female Diyanet preachers, are invited to share their experiences; film screenings; readings and workshops on music, language, sports, hand crafts, Quran or etiquette⁴⁹⁵. In addition to Quran workshops, it offers a three-step Hafız education with learning camps to provide that “each TÜRGEV student can read Quran correctly until they graduate” and become “guardians of Quran” to protect and spread its “miracle”⁴⁹⁶. In 2018-19, there were 297 hafız students. It has a very strict dormitory policy. All students have to participate weekly seminars. To increase the participation, it organizes an exam on dormitory seminars at the end of the year, by which students can win prizes including a discount in the high dormitory rent⁴⁹⁷. Some general seminar topics are: “Waqf Consciousness”, “Islamic Geography and Colonialism”, “Capitalist System and Islamic System”, “Democratization History of Turkey”, “Civilization and Modernism”, “Islamist Movement in Turkey”, “The Role of Woman and the Muslim Woman in the Modern World”, “Halal Food”, “Prayer”, “Veil and Fashion according to Fiqh”⁴⁹⁸.

TÜRGEV's target group is female students from secondary education to post-graduate. It educates women to become good Muslims so as to create the identity of the new woman of

⁴⁹² “Vakıf Meclisi”, TÜRGEV, <https://www.turgev.org/tr/kurullar/vakif-meclisi>; “Yönetim kurulu”, TÜRGEV, <https://www.turgev.org/tr/kurullar/yonetim-kurulu>, accessed June 2, 2022.

⁴⁹³ “Vizyon&Misyön”, TÜRGEV, <https://www.turgev.org/tr/s/vizyon-ve-misyon>, accessed June 2, 2022.

⁴⁹⁴ TÜRGEV, 2018-2019 Faaliyet Raporu; “Burslar”, TÜRGEV, <https://www.turgev.org/tr/burslar>, accessed June 2, 2022.

⁴⁹⁵ TÜRGEV, 2018-2019 Faaliyet Raporu .

⁴⁹⁶ TÜRGEV, 2018-2019 Faaliyet Raporu; TÜRGEV, “Hafızlık Taç Giyme Merasimi Yapıldı”.

⁴⁹⁷ TÜRGEV, 2018-2019 Faaliyet Raporu

⁴⁹⁸ “TÜRGEV Çalışmaları Devam Ediyor”, TÜRGEV, <https://www.turgev.org/tr/haber/turgev-calismalari-devam-ediyor>, accessed May 6, 2021.

‘New Turkey’. This education assigns women the main responsibility in the private sphere and define them with their roles in the family as mothers and wives. Hence, their education aims at preparing them to accomplish their familial roles successfully. For example, TÜRGEV offers girls and women workshops on making bread, chocolate, coffee and toy, sewing, embroidery and hygiene that develop their skills which they will need “to look after their families”⁴⁹⁹. Seminars on taqva, tasawwuf, Islamic manners, morals and grace, tazkiah, social responsibility, family life of Muhammed and choice of partner according to Sunnah aim at achieving a personal, familial and social life guided by Islam to fulfil their religiously defined familial roles, which is reproduction of family⁵⁰⁰. They are educated as ‘conscious Muslim wives’ and are assigned the responsibility of raising good Muslims.

TÜRGEV’s particular focus is on higher education students. It is specialized in social and Islamic sciences and offers various education programs accordingly. ‘Producing discourse’ is an underlying aim of many of them. For example, it founded Safveti Paşa research and education centre for “producing discourse in social sciences and humanities” and “for academic studies that would enrich the thoughts and values of the youth of our country”⁵⁰¹. “Platform Studies” likewise aims at assisting the students for “increasing their capacity of producing discourse for the public sphere”; each dormitory student is “automatically member of a platform” on their area of specialization⁵⁰². Moreover, TÜRGEV offers long-lasting and structured education similar to study programs at universities. One of them is “TÜRGEV Akademi”, which is a 7 semester program financed by Ministry of Youth and Sports⁵⁰³. It, like, its Centre for Excellence in Education (Eğitime Destek Programları Merkezi/EDEP) “retains Islamic tradition of knowledge production” by combining it with the modern for “compensating for the deficiency of this method in higher education”⁵⁰⁴. EDEP was founded in 2014 and it is “a project for reviving our civilization” or as the Chairman of EDEP defines it, “a civilization movement”; it offers a four year program for graduate and a three-year one for post-graduate students to raise “competent and well-equipped scholars”⁵⁰⁵. Its programs include language courses (Arabic, Persian, English, Ottoman), Islamic sciences (siyer, fih, hadith, tafsir,

⁴⁹⁹ TÜRGEV Faaliyet Raporu

⁵⁰⁰ TÜRGEV Faaliyet Raporu; EDEP, Öğrenci El Kitabı.

⁵⁰¹ “GİF Safveti Paşa”, TÜRGEV, <https://www.turgev.org/tr/faaliyet/gif-safveti-pasa>, accessed June 2, 2022.

⁵⁰² “Eğitim İmkanları”, TÜRGEV, <https://www.turgev.org/tr/s/egitim-imkanlari>, accessed June 2, 2022; TÜRGEV, 2018-2019 Faaliyet Raporu.

⁵⁰³ TÜRGEV, 2018-2019 Faaliyet Raporu.

⁵⁰⁴ EDEP, Öğrenci El Kitabı, 6; “Hakkımızda”, EDEP, accessed January 15, 2021, <https://edep.org.tr/hakkimizda/>

⁵⁰⁵ EDEP, Öğrenci El Kitabı, 2; “EDEP Yeni Eğitim Öğretim Yılı Açılış Dersi ve Mezuniyet Töreni Yapıldı”, EDEP, <https://edep.org.tr/edep-yeni-egitim-ogretim-yili-acilis-dersi-ve-mezuniyet-toreni-yapildi/>, accessed February 25, 2021.

aqidah), social sciences (sociology, economy, history, politics, philosophy) and manners-taqwa (ethics, the life of sahabe (companions of the prophet Muhammed), tasawwuf, tazkiya)⁵⁰⁶. EDEP offers seminars for high school students (EDEP LİSAR), hafız education, trips, camps, workshops, “revival talks”, book readings and organizes “Advanced Islamic Studies Summer School” both for male and female students⁵⁰⁷. TÜRGEV opened İbn-i Haldun University (İHU) in 2015 in İstanbul; it is an international social sciences university with teaching languages Turkish, Arabic and English. Social sciences is attached utmost importance as it is defined as “an instrument of spreading Western ideology” and defined as “the most important front of intellectual [in]dependence”⁵⁰⁸. Therefore, İHU combines East and West; “both Freud and al-Ghazali, Marx, Adam Smith and Ibn Khaldun are introduced and compared” as a precondition for “intellectual independency”⁵⁰⁹. The huge building complex and the campus of the İHU was inaugurated by the President Erdoğan himself, who defined İHU as “a step towards realizing our dream of seizing intellectual power”⁵¹⁰. The university aims at “the cultural and intellectual independency of our country and all nations that have been the cultural colony of the West”⁵¹¹. Bilal Erdoğan sits at the Board of Trustees of İHU⁵¹².

Though its particular attention on higher education, TÜRGEV has access to a considerable number of students at the primary and lower secondary level. It opened in 2011 a private Montessori pre-school, which grew to a private school complex in 5 different campuses in İstanbul with a day nursery, pre-schools, primary schools, a lower secondary school and a music school. It is operated currently by the New Turkey Education Foundation (Yeni Türkiye Eğitim Vakfı/YETEV)⁵¹³. Most significantly, it has access to overall student population at the national formal education system with the protocols with the MEB signed first in 2015 and renewed later⁵¹⁴. Thanks to it, it organizes cultural, sportive, social and technic courses for the students at formal education all over Turkey.

⁵⁰⁶ EDEP, Öğrenci El Kitabı, 12.

⁵⁰⁷ TÜRGEV Faaliyet Raporu; EDEP, Öğrenci El Kitabı.

⁵⁰⁸ “Intellectual Independence”, İHU, accessed January 15, 2021.

⁵⁰⁹ “Intellectual Independence”, İHU, accessed January 15, 2021, <https://www.ihu.edu.tr/en/intellectual-independence/>; “Comparative Education”, İHU, accessed March 25, 2021, <https://www.ihu.edu.tr/en/comparative-education/>

⁵¹⁰ “İbn-i Haldun Külliyesi, Cumhurbaşkanımız Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’ın Teşrifleriyle Açıldı”, TÜRGEV, <https://www.turgev.org/tr/haber/ibn-haldun-universitesi-kulliyesi-cumhurbaskanimiz-recep-tayyip-erdogan-in-tesrifleriyle-acildi>; accessed June 2, 2022.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

⁵¹² “Mütevelli Heyeti”, İbn Haldun Üniversitesi, <https://www.ihu.edu.tr/tr/mutevelli-heyeti>, accessed June 2, 2022.

⁵¹³ “Kuruluş Hikayemiz”, Palet Okulları, <https://paletokullari.com/hakkimizda/kurulus-hikayemiz>.

⁵¹⁴ “Talimat Eski Müsteşar ile Bakan Yardımcısı’ndan: MEB Vakıfları Kıramadı, Protokolü Uzattı”, BirGün, 02.09.2019; <https://www.birgun.net/haber/talimat-eski-mustesar-ile-bakan-yardimcisi-ndan-meb-vakiflari-kiramadi-protokolu-uzatti-266910>, accessed June 7, 2022. Information on the protocols do not exist at the website

4.1.3. TUGVA:

Turkey Youth Foundation (Türkiye Gençlik Vakfı/TÜGVA) was founded in 2013 with the motto “New Generation Youth Foundation” and is the youngest of all four CSOs. Among the founders of TÜGVA are Ahmet Enis Dinçer, the son of Ömer Dinçer, the ex-Minister of Education from the AKP; Sami Çebi, the son-in-law of Recep Akdağ, the ex-Minister of Health from the AKP; Mehmet Burak Savaşer, the son of an ex-AKP deputy; İsmail Karaosmanoğlu, ex-Chairman of AKP Youth branches and the son of ex-Mayor of Kocaeli; İsmail Emanet, a friend of Bilal Erdoğan and allegedly the cousin of President Erdoğan’s son-in-law Berat Albayrak⁵¹⁵. Bilal Erdoğan is a member of High Advisory Board. Although founded recently, TÜGVA has expanded in a very short time; with its 460 branch offices in 81 cities and 309.499 members, it is one of the largest CSOs⁵¹⁶. Currently, it has 37 dormitories for male students in 30 cities⁵¹⁷. Additionally, it has a widespread network of libraries, education centres, reading and coffee houses, which provide the infrastructure for its education programs at the local level. It gained “Tax Exemption” status by a decision of Council of Ministers in 2016⁵¹⁸.

TÜGVA aims at raising “an innovative, hard-working, good mannered youth that is devoted to our moral and national values, with a consciousness of our civilization to serve to the ideal of great and powerful Turkey” and “to revive and rebuild our civilization”⁵¹⁹. It organises extra-curricular courses, seminars, workshops, trips, summer-winter schools, camps to accomplish its aim. It gives also scholarships to higher education students; in 2019, it had more than 3.200 scholars⁵²⁰. The target groups of TÜGVA are students from primary to higher education. Most of its activities for primary and lower secondary school students are organized by its Civilization and Values Clubs (Medeniyet ve Değerler Kulübü). The club aims at “passing on to the next generations, the moral values in our 14 centuries old history that our ancestors trusted us”⁵²¹. Thanks to the protocols signed between TÜGVA and the MEB, the club has

or any documents of TÜRGEV. A copy can be found on https://sevmadanadolulisesi.meb.k12.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/26/10/317070/dosyalar/2020_11/24144757_turgev_pro_tokol.pdf; accessed June 7, 2022.

⁵¹⁵ “Vakıf Senedi”, TÜGVA, <http://tugva.org/vakif-senedi/>; “Barış Pehlivan Yazdı: TÜGVA Albayrak Kurbanı”, Cumhuriyet, 16.12.2021; <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/turkiye/baris-pehlivan-yazdi-tugvada-albayrak-kurbani-1893150>; accessed June 7, 2022.

⁵¹⁶ “TÜGVA 2021 Faaliyet Raporu”, TÜGVA, 10.

⁵¹⁷ “Yurtlar”, TÜGVA, <http://tugva.org/yurtlarimiz/page/7/>; accessed June 7, 2022.

⁵¹⁸ “Vergi Muafiyeti”, TÜGVA, <http://tugva.org/vergi-muafiyeti/>; accessed June 7, 2022.

⁵¹⁹ “Vakıf Senedi”, TÜGVA, <http://tugva.org/vakif-senedi/>; “Hakkımızda”, TÜGVA, <http://tugva.org/hakkimizda/>; June 7, 2022.

⁵²⁰ “TÜGVA 2019 Faaliyet Raporu”, TÜGVA, 24.

⁵²¹ TÜGVA, Medeniyet ve Değerler Kulübü Eğitimci Sunumu.

representations in around 5.000 secondary and more than 4.000 high schools⁵²². The club organises seminars, summer-winter camps, debate contests, book readings and analysis, sports and arts workshops among many others⁵²³. It aims at teaching the students Islamic values and practices. The students are taught martyrdom, love for the country, respect for ancestors and historical heritage, haram and halal, thankfulness, duties for the society, modesty and being moral; “40 Hadiths in Drawings” contest (Çizimlerle 40 Hadis) teaches the students the meanings of Hadiths or “Prayer Tree” regular praying on daily basis⁵²⁴. A considerable part of the camps and summer/winter schools are spared for religious education and praying together. Meetings at the mosque for morning prayer take place on regular basis. Projects such as “To the Mosque After School” or “Reawakening with Prayer” aim at instilling students “love of mosque”, “consciousness and habit of praying” and teaching them the “unifying role of the mosque”⁵²⁵. Mosques do not only serve religious purposes, it is aimed to revive their role as “madrasa” and “centre of reform”; therefore, talks and seminars are held in mosques⁵²⁶. It also offers for this group “coding, industrial design and robotics” in its İcathane in order to “promote students from users to producers of technology” under the sponsorship of state-owned Ziraat Katılım Bank to contribute to the target of “leader Turkey”⁵²⁷.

While the largest target group of TUGVA is the students in the primary, lower secondary and high schools thanks to the protocols with the MEB, a majority of its programs are devoted to the higher education students. As President Erdoğan, who regularly attends “TUGVA Youth Meeting” to give a speech, expressed, TUGVA does not only provide housing to the students, but also aims at becoming “a second university”⁵²⁸. It focuses on social sciences combined with Islamic sciences and offers structured study programs. Most programs of TUGVA offers university students extra-curricular courses on their specializations. For example, its “Media Communication School” offers a 9 months program under the sponsorship of Halkbank, Türk Telekom, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Transportation and Communication and

⁵²² TUGVA, 2019 Faaliyet Raporu, 43-5; “Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı ile Türkiye Gençlik Vakfı Arasındaki Yeni Protokolden Seferberlik Çıktı”, Cumhuriyet, 03.07.2021; <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/milli-egitim-bakanligi-ile-turkiye-genclik-vakfi-arasindaki-yeni-protokolden-seferberlik-cikti-1849352>; “MEB’in TUGVA Telaşı”, BirGün, 31.08.2020; <https://www.birgun.net/haber/meb-in-tugva-telasi-313861>; accessed June 7, 2022.

⁵²³ “Ortaokul için TUGVA”, TUGVA, <http://tugva.org/ortaokul-icin-tugva/>; accessed June 7, 2022.

⁵²⁴ Medeniyet ve Değerler Kulübü 2020-2021 Eğitim Öğretim Yılı 5 ve 6 Sınıf Öğrencileri Eğitim Rehberi Yıllık Planı, TUGVA, <http://tugva.org/medeniyet-ve-degerler-kulubu-mufredati/>, accessed June 13, 2022; “Medeniyet ve Değerler Kulübü”, TUGVA, <http://tugva.org/medeniyet-ve-degerler-kulubu/>; “Çizimlerle 40 Hadis”, TUGVA, <http://tugva.org/cizimlerle-40-hadis/>, accessed June 7, 2022.

⁵²⁵ TUGVA, Bulletin No: 1, (Oct. 2016), 50; No: 2, 18.

⁵²⁶ TUGVA, No: 1, 50.

⁵²⁷ “İcathane”, TUGVA, <http://tugva.org/icathane/>, accessed June 13, 2022.

⁵²⁸ “TUGVA 4. Gençlik Buluşması Büyük Bir Coşkuyla Gerçekleşti”, TUGVA, <http://tugva.org/en/tugva-4-genclik-bulusmasi-buyuk-bir-coskuyla-gerceklesti/>, accessed June 14, 2022.

many private media organizations⁵²⁹. Mücahit Küçükyılmaz, the ex-Director of Communications of the Presidency, participate in the program as educator⁵³⁰. Its ‘Expertise Academy’ aims at raising the “required specialized human resources” and offers 15 month programs in 10 different areas such as politics and diplomacy, Islamic economy and finance, law, energy, city planning and design⁵³¹. TÜGVA organizes additionally: “Cinema School” with a seven months program sponsored by Ministry of Culture and Tourism; “Executive School” with an eight weeks program sponsored by among others Borsa İstanbul, Turkcell, THY, Zorlu and which ministers, bureaucrats and CEOs participate as speakers; “Acting Academy” with a two years program, which offers courses such as “Culture, Roots and Memory”, “Arts, Religion and Wisdom”, “Theatre as Ideology” and Arabic and Ottoman language courses as well as an Arabic language school in Jordan and English language school in Malaysia⁵³². The particular focus of TÜGVA lies in international relations, diplomacy and bureaucracy; it offers in these areas specialization by a workshop “Young Diplomat Academy” and a “Program for Raising Regional Experts” (Bölge Uzmanı Yetiştirme Programı/BYP). BYP is a four-year program for specialization on the Middle East, India, China and Russia and aims at raising the diplomatic and academic staff that adopts the motto “leader country, Turkey”⁵³³. The students according to their specialization area learn Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Indian, Persian, Urdu or Hebrew languages. TÜGVA offers some of the mentioned programs also for the students abroad. For example, in North Macedonia it organizes “Young Diplomat Academy” and “Young Executive Academy”; for the young people in Germany and France, it offers “Diplomacy 2X”, both of them for raising human resources⁵³⁴. It offers “Media Literacy for Young People in Europe in the Digital Age” for young Turkish citizens to “raise awareness about disinformation and fake news” particularly “against Turkey in the international media”⁵³⁵. The seminars are given by Fahrettin Altun, the Director of Communication of Presidency,

⁵²⁹ “Partnerlerimiz”, TÜGVA Mio, <http://tugvamio.com/>, accessed June 13, 2022.

⁵³⁰ “Partnerlerimiz”, TÜGVA Mio, <http://tugvamio.com/>, accessed June 13, 2022.

⁵³¹ “Hakkımızda”, TÜGVA İhtisas Akademisi, <https://ihtisasakademi.tugva.org/hakkimizda>, accessed June 14, 2022.

⁵³² “Gençlik Sinema Okulu”, TÜGVA, <http://tugva.org/genclik-sinema-okulu/>; “Genç Yönetici Okulu”, TÜGVA, <http://tugva.org/genc-yonetici-okulu/>; “Oyunculuk Akademisi”, TÜGVA, <http://tugva.org/toa/>; “TÜGVA’dan Genç Yönetici Okulu 2020 Zirvesi”, TÜGVA, <http://tugva.org/en/tugva-dan-genc-yonetici-okulu-2020-zirvesi/>; “Arapça Akademisi Ürdün”, TÜGVA, <http://tugva.org/arapca-akademisi-urdun/>; “Malezya’da Dil Okulu”, TÜGVA; <http://tugva.org/malezya-da-ingilizce-dil-okulu/>; “Osmanlıca Kursu”, TÜGVA, <http://tugva.org/osmanlica-kursu/>; accessed June 14, 2022.

⁵³³ TÜGVA, Bölge Uzmanı Katalog

⁵³⁴ “Young Diplomat Academy-North Macedonia”, TÜGVA, <http://tugva.org/young-diplomat-academy/>; “Young Executive School-North Macedonia”, TÜGVA, <http://tugva.org/north-macedonia-young-executive-school/>.

⁵³⁵ “Dijital Çağda Avrupa’daki Gençler için Medya Okuryazarlığı”, TÜGVA, <http://tugva.org/media-literacy-for-young-people-in-europe-in-the-digital-age/>; accessed June 14, 2022.

Serdar Karagöz, the Vice Director of TRT, Lütfullah Gökteş, Ambassador, İsmail Çağlar Director at government-affiliated Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı/SETA) and Abdullah Eren, the Director of YTB⁵³⁶.

Moreover, it offers workshops and seminars for ‘raising consciousness’. For example, “Beytülmağdis Youth” offers seminars “for raising consciousness on Jerusalem” such as “the history of the Zionist state”, “the Importance of Jerusalem in Islam”, “the Duties of Ummah for the Palestinians” and aims at raising the youth that will fight the “jihad” for “keeping the ummah alive and strong”⁵³⁷. “The Golden Age Centres of Civilization” aims at “restoring the bond of Turkish people with the geographies that hosted Islamic civilization” and “raising consciousness about its golden age”⁵³⁸. “Thought Academy” (Fikir Akademisi) aims at “raising men of dawa, who would voluntarily work for foundations, by reviving our religious, moral and cultural values that has been destroyed in the last centuries”⁵³⁹. TÜGVA publishes Fikirname, “the thought and dawa journal”⁵⁴⁰.

4.2. The Relations Between the State, Civil Society and Civil Society Organizations: Building the CSOs by a “War of Manoeuvre”:

The CSOs are not considered as organisations that are autonomous from both the state and the market, but rather as part of the ‘integral state’. They are deeply anchored in the state and the party, which are themselves entwined. Therefore, the role of the state in building and strengthening the CSOs is not minimal, but rather is central to their proper functioning. The AKP, after consolidating its power in the state, paid special attention to civil society. Although Islamist movement has long been good organized in civil society, as President Erdoğan expressed at an event of TÜGVA, the objective of this attention was “transforming our thousand years old waqf tradition into a comprehensive professional civil society body with a new understanding”⁵⁴¹. In this sense, the seizure of state power is important for the consolidation of

⁵³⁶ “Dijital Çağda Avrupa’daki Gençler için Medya Okuryazarlığı”, TÜGVA, <http://tugva.org/media-literacy-for-young-people-in-europe-in-the-digital-age/>; accessed June 14, 2022.

⁵³⁷ “Beytülmağdis Gençliği”, TÜGVA, <http://tugva.org/beytulmakdisgencligi/>; accessed June 15, 2022; “TÜGVA 2021 Faaliyet Raporu”, 62.

⁵³⁸ “Altın Çağ Medeniyetler Merkezi”, TÜGVA, <http://tugva.org/altin-cag-medeniyet-merkezleri/>; accessed June 15, 2022.

⁵³⁹ “Fikir Akademisi”, TÜGVA, accessed November 13, 2020, <http://tugva.org/fikirakademisi/#programin-hedefi>

⁵⁴⁰ Fikirname, <https://fikirnamedergi.com/hakkimizda/>; accessed July 12, 2022.

⁵⁴¹ “Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan TÜGVA Teşkilat Buluşmasında Mesuliyetlerimiz Hatırlattı”, TÜGVA, March 10, 2021, <http://tugva.org/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-tugva-teskilat-bulusmasinda-vakif-olarak-mesuliyetimizi-hatirlatti/>

hegemony. The AKP governments' efforts for reshaping civil society by closing down, weakening, controlling oppositional CSOs, in Gramscian terms, weakening the enemy's 'trenches', and strengthening its own can be considered as moves in the 'war of manoeuvre'. A war of manoeuvre "opens a breach in the enemy's defences-a breach sufficient for one's own troops to rush in and obtain a definitive (strategic) victory"⁵⁴². The state's administrative-legal apparatus is one of its central instruments in creating a 'new civilization', that is, shaping the society according to its own conception of public good. The AKP governments have already been able to make changes in the administrative and legal system, through which it reorganized the state by using the legal apparatus. These steps were presented as steps towards democratization and hence, supported by certain sectors of the society. This changed the relationship and hierarchy between the state organisations. It has significantly empowered the executive against both the legislative and the judiciary not only, but particularly thanks to the Presidential system. Consequently, the decisions and actions of the executive such as Presidential decisions, decree laws or circulars of the ministries play a central role in the reshaping of civil society. The war of manoeuvre for strengthening the CSOs do not only include undemocratic but seemingly legal decisions of the executive, but also violation of laws and the Constitution, intransparent operations, ignoring court decisions and sidelining other democratic control mechanisms, *de facto* implementations, intransparent and arbitrary allocation of public resources or undemocratic and illegal distribution of posts to seize the key positions in state and civil society.

4.2.1. The Organic Network of the CSOs: The Intellectuals of State and Civil Society- Building the Cadres of the CSOs

While the Islamist movement has attached particular importance to voluntary work and has been very good organized in civil society thanks to the volunteers, the analysed CSOs are large organisations, whose personnel has professionalized parallel to their institutionalization and expansion. Due to the multiplicity of the offered education programs and thanks to their cooperation with universities, research institutes, the media, businesses and the state, they employ professionals such as teachers, academics, researchers, artists, journalists, business people and experts in various fields as educators, speakers and mentors. Moreover, bureaucrats,

⁵⁴² Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 233.

the AKP deputies, mayors, ministers and the President Erdoğan himself participate in the events of the CSOs very often as speakers and personally inaugurate new branches, centres or dormitories. As Gramsci argues, the intellectuals play a central role in the seizure and the maintenance of hegemony; they are the “functionaries of superstructures” and “the dominant group’s deputies exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government”⁵⁴³. It is not the intellectual activity or the expertise that make them important actors in the hegemonic struggles, but rather their function, which is their ‘organizational’ activity. Intellectual, in Gramscian sense, therefore, is broadly defined and includes also teachers, business people, journalists, academicians, bureaucrats, managers and politicians. The intellectuals fulfil their functions only “to the extent to which they are ‘organically’ fused with the political aspirations of a class”⁵⁴⁴. In this sense, they all have a function in “directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong to”⁵⁴⁵. Considering this, the intellectual in Gramscian sense, organically connects the state and civil society. In addition to their common functions for the dominant classes, to which they organically belong to, the cadres that the CSOs share particularly with the government demonstrate clearly their organic relationship to the state and also their political character. The intellectuals of the state and civil society are connected by a complex and organic web of relations. It constitutes a network among the government, bureaucracy, the parliament, the CSOs, universities, research institutes, private sector, the media and public corporations connected by family, friendship and business relationship and common political goals.

This relationship crystallizes in the party, because a significant number of the actors involved have been socialized and actively participating in politics in the AKP. Many of those who are the members of board of management, of trustees or advisory boards are either founders of the AKP or its local branches, started their carriers in the youth branches or assumed duties in the party, are mayors or representatives in the parliament or municipal councils. In short, those who hold critical and powerful positions in the CSOs, served/have been serving in the AKP⁵⁴⁶. The

⁵⁴³ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 12.

⁵⁴⁴ Thomas, “Gramsci and the Intellectuals: Modern Prince vs. Passive Revolution”. What is relevant here is not necessarily the real class belongings of the intellectuals, but the class to which they serve and hence develop an “organic” relationship.

⁵⁴⁵ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 3.

⁵⁴⁶ For example, among the members of Board of Trustee of Ensar are Feyzullah Kıyıklık, an AKP deputy in parliament; Recep Çalık, president of the Kocaeli branch of the party and Mehmet Zeki Korkmaz, representative in the municipal council in Marmaris. Osman Nuri Kabaktepe, the Chairman of AKP İstanbul, Tefik Göksu, AKP Esenler Mayor, Mustafa Şen, Secretary General of the AKP and AKP deputies sit at the Advisory Board of TÜGVA. Mevlüt Uysal, the ex-mayor of İstanbul from the AKP, Tülay Kalav, member of Board of Management of AKP İstanbul are members of TÜRGEV’s Board of Management. <https://ensar.org/hakkimizda/mutevelli-heyeti>; <https://www.turgev.org/tr/kurullar/yonetim-kurulu>; <http://tugva.org/ekibimiz/>, accessed June 14, 2022.

role of the party is, on the one hand, socialization and political education of the cadres of the state and civil society. On the other hand, it is an instrument to ‘award’ those that work ‘hard’ for the party and its political goals. Awarding may take various forms; distribution of posts is one of them. For example, the President of Öncü Spor, the sport branch of ÖNDER holds a position in the parliament as representative of the AKP in return “for his services” in civil society⁵⁴⁷. Similarly, Ömer Dinçer and Kadir Topbaş, who were among the founders of Ensar, later held posts as Minister of Education and Mayor of İstanbul respectively, both from the AKP⁵⁴⁸. Both the party and the CSOs are organizations where solidarity and loyalty is learned, demonstrated, tested and awarded. In other words, the AKP educates the cadres and assigns them positions in the state and civil society. It is the “basic function” of political parties to turn its members into “qualified intellectuals, leaders and organisers of all activities and functions of an integral society” and to weld intellectuals together⁵⁴⁹. The cadres, here, play an important role, because war of position requires devoted and educated cadres that would seize intellectual and moral leadership, which are provided by the party members. In short, the CSOs are deeply anchored in the AKP, sharing a significant portion of their cadres. Therefore, it is not possible to separate civil society strictly from the political parties and exclude CSOs with a political project from civil society as the mainstream view argues. Rather, from a Gramscian perspective, this demonstrates that both the party and the CSOs are organizations of the Islamist movement with intellectuals in the service of dominant classes and hence, that they are parts of a whole, namely the ‘integral state’. Put shortly, as Gramsci underlines “classes produce parties, and parties form the personnel of State and government, leaders of state and civil society”⁵⁵⁰. Consequently, both of them have their functions in the seizure and maintenance of state power.

The organic relationship between the party and the CSOs is expanded to the broader sphere of state and civil society thanks to the party control of the government, which provides it with a power over distribution of posts. This enables the transition of the cadres between state and civil society, control the public education institutions and policies efficiently and facilitate the cooperation among the CSOs and public bodies. For example, the ex-Chairman of ÖNDER holds a position in the Board of Education at the MEB or the Religious Education Director

⁵⁴⁷ ÖNDER, Bulletin No: 18, (July-Aug-Sep 2018), 17.

⁵⁴⁸ “Ensar Vakfı, AKP ve Devlet Ağının Şifreleri: Ensar Rejimi”, BirGün, 21.04.2016. <https://www.birgun.net/haber/ensar-vakfi-akp-ve-devlet-aginin-sifreleri-ensar-rejimi-109632>. Information concerning the history, founders and board of management are not given at the website of Ensar. The list of Board of Trustees is likewise only recently publicized and was not open at the beginning of this research.

⁵⁴⁹ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 15-6.

⁵⁵⁰ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 227.

worked for both Ensar and ÖNDER before assuming a position at the MEB⁵⁵¹. Likewise, the Deputy Minister of Industry and Technology sits at the Advisory Board of TÜGVA and the Deputy Minister of Family and Social Policies is a member of TÜRGEV Board of Management⁵⁵². The leading and decision-making cadres of the CSOs and their academic institutes and universities illustrate a much broader network of organizations that is not limited with bureaucracy. They include ex or present personnel of state institutions such as the Presidency and various ministries; public corporations (Turkish Airlines, Ziraat Bank); the media (Yeni Şafak, Star, Anadolu Agency, TRT); CSOs (such as MÜSİAD, Turkish National Student Union, Birlik Foundation), think-tanks (SETA), municipalities (Esenler Municipality) and the business, particularly from the construction sector⁵⁵³. Many of those organizations also sponsor and provide financial resources to the CSOs and closely cooperate with one another, which will be discussed below.

The CSOs are neither originally non-political organizations, nor their entwinement with the state can be simply perceived as their corruption by the government as the mainstream view argues. Rather, they are an organic part of the State (integral state) that the cadres of the Islamist movement occupy along with the government, private sector and other organisations of civil society. In the previous chapter, it has been discussed how the Islamist RP, the ministries, the municipalities it controlled, the business and Islamist foundations and associations shared their cadres. Under the AKP rule, the penetration of the Islamist cadres in the state reached unprecedented levels thanks to the party control of the state. In this sense, seizure of state power is an important aspect in the hegemonic struggles and consolidation of hegemonic power. This

⁵⁵¹ ÖNDER Eğitim Bülteni, 8; “Genel Müdür”, MEB Din Öğretimi Genel Müdürlüğü, http://dogm.meb.gov.tr/www/nazif-yilmaz/idari_personel/1; accessed February 19, 2021.

⁵⁵² “TÜGVA Yönetimi Bürokrat Yuvası”, BirGün, 16.10.2021, <https://www.birgun.net/haber/tugva-yonetimi-burokrat-yuvasi-362295>; <https://www.turgev.org/tr/kisiler/kubra-guran-yigitbasi>; <http://tugva.org/ekibimiz/>; <https://www.sanayi.gov.tr/kurumsal/bakan-yardimcileri#mehmet-fatih-kacir>; accessed July 15, 2022.

⁵⁵³ It is not possible to list all of them, but a few examples. Murat Şeker, who is a member of TÜRGEV’s Board of Management and İHU’s Board of Trustees worked at different enterprises of Ziraat Bank and THY. <https://www.turgev.org/tr/kisiler/murat-seker>. Many business people, most of them among the richest of Turkey (Mehmet Büyükeksi, Nurettin Eroğlu, Ömer Faruk Kalyoncu, Erman Ilıcak), sit at the Board of Trustees of TÜRGEV’s İHU. <https://www.ihu.edu.tr/en/mutevelli-heyeti>. Kemal Bilal Aydın, Deputy Chairman of ÖNDER, is owner of an advertisement agency that works with various ministries, universities, THY and CSOs. “AKP ve Ajanslarla İş Yapan Ajans Çalışanlarının Lüks Hayatı”, Cumhuriyet, 29.11.2019. <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/galeri/akp-ve-vakiflarla-is-yapan-ajans-calisanlarinin-luks-hayati-1705155>; Esenler Mayor, ex-vice director of TRT İstanbul, coordinators and researches from SETA among many other sit at the boards of TÜGVA. For the network of TÜGVA, see “TÜGVA Yönetimi Bürokrat Yuvası”, BirGün. For the network of Ensar in state and civil society, see “Ensar Vakfı, AKP ve Devlet Ağının Şifreleri: Ensar Rejimi”, BirGün, 21.04.2016. <https://www.birgun.net/haber/ensar-vakfi-akp-ve-devlet-aginin-sifreleri-ensar-rejimi-109632>. This report of BirGün demonstrating the intertwined relationship of Ensar with business, bureaucracy, the AKP, public corporations is not accessible any more, because it was censored by a court decision. BirGün’ün “Ensar Vakfı İlişkileri Haritası”na Sansür”, Bianet, 27.04.2016; <https://m.bianet.org/bianet/medya/174248-birgun-un-ensar-vakfi-iliskileri-haritasi-na-sansur>, accessed July 2, 2022.

is because it allows to build a network connecting the government, bureaucracy, business, media, the party and the CSOs. This network is of utmost importance in the hegemonic struggles, because war of position is waged particularly through the work of the organic intellectuals of state and civil society. With the devoted, educated and experienced cadres of the Gülen Community that reproduced the hegemony were lost, the allocation of economic and political privileges that the ownership of state power provides play a significant role in the making of new cadres. Consequently, it is often the case that many positions are gathered often in the hands of one reliable person proved to be loyal to the party. This is also important considering the huge public and private resources provided to the CSOs that will be discussed below. For example, the Chairwoman of TÜRGEV started her career in the AKP, worked for the AKP mayor of İstanbul, holds membership in the board of Turkish Airlines and KADEM, teaches at the Marmara University and is married to the communications director of the President Erdoğan⁵⁵⁴. On the other hand, the struggle between the AKP and the Gülen Community showed that the struggle within the ruling bloc has its repercussions concerning civil society and may be a threat to the political authority. Therefore, this network is strictly controlled politically. For example, the ‘reliable’ family members of the President Erdoğan hold critical and powerful positions in the CSOs. His daughter, son in law and his family occupy leading positions in TÜRGEV, EDEP, İbn Haldun University⁵⁵⁵. The most striking example is his son Bilal Erdoğan, who holds leading positions in three foundations except ÖNDER along with many other education, youth and sports CSOs, universities and research institutes⁵⁵⁶. He also very often participates in the events of all four CSOs as speaker. Bilal Erdoğan acts as the unofficial minister of education, youth and sports controlling civil society. This enables an unmediated political control of the CSOs by the state that came to be represented in the person of the President Erdoğan himself. His position, therefore, represents the authoritarianism in civil society organizations paralleling the authoritarianism of the state. The centrality of

⁵⁵⁴ “Yönetim Kurulu”, TÜRGEV, <https://turgev.org/tr/yonetim-kurulu-uyeleri>, accessed February 19, 2021.

⁵⁵⁵ “Yönetim Kurulu”, TÜRGEV, <https://www.turgev.org/tr/kurullar/yonetim-kurulu>; “Vakıf Meclisi”, TÜRGEV, <https://www.turgev.org/tr/kurullar/vakif-meclisi>; “Mütevelli Heyeti”, İbn Haldun Üniversitesi, <https://www.ihu.edu.tr/tr/mutevelli-heyeti>; accessed April 14, 2022. Esra Albayrak, President Erdoğan’s daughter sits at the Board of Management and foundation parliament of TÜRGEV; Şule Albayrak and Serhat Albayrak, her sister- and brother-in law respectively are members of the Foundation parliament of TÜRGEV; the former also is a member of Board of Trustees of İbn Haldun University and EDEP.

⁵⁵⁶ “Ekibimiz”, TÜGVA, accessed May 5, 2022, <http://tugva.org/ekibimiz/>; “Vakıf Meclisi”, TÜRGEV; <https://twitter.com/ensarvakfi/status/1068921402269605894>; He is also the chairman of Foundation for Dissemination of Science (İYV) and the World Ethnospors Confederation; member of Board of Trustees at the Okçular Foundation, Foundation for Research on History of Islamic Sciences (İBTAV), İbn Haldun University; <https://www.iyv.org.tr/tr/mutevelli-heyeti-0.html>; <https://www.okcularvakfi.org/Home/MutevelliHeyeti>; <https://www.ibtav.org/sayfa/18/mutevelli-heyeti>; <https://www.ihu.edu.tr/en/mutevelli-heyeti>;

personal and political relations, distribution of posts based on favouritism reveal the uninstitutionalized, undemocratic and political character of the CSOs. This can be defined as a war of manoeuvre to staff the institutions of state and civil society by the Islamist cadres. This shows the direct and arbitrary control of the state and the party over the CSOs, raising the question about the extent of their ‘autonomy’ and ‘civility’.

4.2.2. The Centrality of the State in Building the CSOs:

The relationship between the state and the Islamist CSOs is consensual, rather than being oppositional. The state that puts its coercive apparatus at work for repressing and dissolving the oppositional CSOs, uses its powers to enable the Islamist CSOs. It plays a central role in building their large organizational networks with multiple branches, education institutions, dormitories, clubs, camps in a short time as well as in their access to a large student population. The state’s role in their expansion is manifold; particularly important are its administrative-legal apparatus and its power over allocation of public resources. These powers allow it to shape civil society by awarding/enabling certain CSOs and punishing/disabling the others. In other words, the ruling bloc dominates the antagonistic groups and their CSOs, while uses state powers to reconstruct the allied Islamist CSOs for its ‘intellectual and moral leadership’. The AKP governments employed both of these state powers efficiently to reconstruct civil society and change its composition.

First, the legal framework in which the CSOs operate is set by the state. Considering the majority the AKP holds in parliament, the legislative power itself provides the government with an efficient instrument to enable/disable the CSOs. Yet, the AKP has strengthened the executive systematically, which provided it with the power to shape civil society undemocratically from above. For example, the status of ‘public benefit’ and ‘tax exemption’ that the CSOs enjoy was assigned them under the AKP rule⁵⁵⁷. While the power of assigning public benefit status that was implemented by a ministerial decree without any parliamentary process was itself undemocratic, it was given to the President in 2018 by a decree-law under the AKP rule. The status of public benefit does not only provide tax exemption, but also other privileges. For example, the foundations with that status have the right to collect aid without any permission

⁵⁵⁷ Of 301 foundations with tax exemption, 116 were assigned under the AKP rule. <https://www.gib.gov.tr/yarim-ve-kaynaklar/yararli-bilgiler/vergi-muafiyeti-taninan-vakiflarin-listesi>; “Kamu Yararına Çalışan Dernekler”, İçişleri Bakanlığı Sivil Toplumla İlişkiler Genel Müdürlüğü, <https://www.siviltoplum.gov.tr/kamu-yararina-calisan-dernekler>, accessed July 2, 2022.

from the Ministry of Interior, if the President assigns them this right⁵⁵⁸. President Erdoğan assigned TÜRGEV, TÜGVA and Ensar the right to collect aid⁵⁵⁹. Additionally, they can benefit from the public estates, which provided them with unprecedented privileges that will be discussed below further⁵⁶⁰. In short, the state's understanding of 'public good' plays a significant role in the shaping of civil society.

The most striking example of the privileges provided by the state's administrative power is the 'cooperation protocols' that were signed between the CSOs and the MEB along with many other public institutions. These protocols provide the CSOs unprecedented access in the formal education system. With these, the CSOs are authorized to implement projects, organize courses, competitions, trips, workshops and open clubs in public and private schools. The local directorates of MEB are responsible from implementation, providing infrastructure and personnel and paying the assigned personnel of the CSOs⁵⁶¹. Ensar has gained additional authority to propose new education programs and materials for the students and the teachers⁵⁶². Therefore, the protocols do not only provide access to the complete student population but also a share from the public resources and the authority. In other words, the CSOs penetrate in the formal education system through the protocols sharing the authority, resources and responsibilities of the ministry. They also have cooperation protocols with the universities, which provide them further privileges and access to higher education students. For example, the protocol signed between TÜGVA and Sebahattin Zaim University, founded by İYV, provides TÜGVA members a discount in the high fees for encouraging its students for TÜGVA membership⁵⁶³. The protocols with the ministries, municipalities and other public institutions are the result of administrative decisions based on "public benefit"⁵⁶⁴. The administrative

⁵⁵⁸ "İzin Almadan Yardım Toplama", İçişleri Bakanlığı Sivil Toplumla İlişkiler Genel Müdürlüğü, <https://www.siviltoplum.gov.tr/izin-almadan-yardim-toplama>, accessed July 2, 2022.

⁵⁵⁹ "İzin Almadan Yardım Toplama Hakkına Sahip Kuruluşlar", İçişleri Bakanlığı Sivil Toplumla İlişkiler Genel Müdürlüğü, <https://www.siviltoplum.gov.tr/izin-almadan-yardim-toplama-hakkina-sahip-kuruluslar>, accessed July 2, 2022.

⁵⁶⁰ Mustafa Mert Bildircin, "Yandaş Derneklere de Kamu Arazisi Tahsisi", *BirGün*, 12.09.2018; <https://www.birgun.net/haber/yandas-derneklere-de-kamu-arazisi-tahsisi-230145>; accessed July 2, 2022.

⁵⁶¹ Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı ile Ensar Vakfı Arasında Çeşitli Eğitim, Seminer ve Sosyal Etkinlikler Düzenlenmesine Dair İşbirliği Protokolü, July 2017; <http://www.egitimis.org.tr/files/upload/files/ensar%20protokol.pdf>; Sinan Tartanoğlu, "TÜRGEV'e Ballı Protokol", *Cumhuriyet*, December 16 2015; <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turgeve-balli-protokol-448857>, accessed June 11, 2022.

⁵⁶² Mustafa Mert Bildircin, "FETÖ'den Boşalan Yerler Yeni Tarikatlarla Dolduruldu", *BirGün*, August 11, 2017, <https://www.birgun.net/haber/feto-den-bosalan-yerler-yeni-tarikatlarla-dolduruldu-174268>, accessed June 11, 2022.

⁵⁶³ "İstanbul Sebahattin Zaim Üniversitesi ile Protokol", TÜGVA, accessed January 15, 2021, <http://tugva.org/istanbul-sabahattin-zaim-universitesi-ile-protokol/>

⁵⁶⁴ Mustafa Mert Bildircin, "Eğitim Bakanı Ziya Selçuk Protokol Sayısını Açıklamıyor: Kamu Yararı Varmış", *BirGün*, 2.12.2016, <https://www.birgun.net/haber/egitim-bakani-ziya-selcuk-protokol-sayisini-aciklamiyor-kamu-yarari-varmis-278418>

powers of the state are so sweeping and naturalized that the demands for accountability, transparency, parliamentary control and compliance with the judicial decisions are not answered. The exact number and content of protocols with the MEB are not transparent; the parliamentary inquiries to the Minister were left unanswered. Moreover, although after being prosecuted by Education and Science Workers' Union (Eğitim-Sen) for being against the Constitution, the Council of State annulled the protocols, they are further implemented by "the order of the Minister"⁵⁶⁵. Later, the protocols were renewed. While the legal powers attached to the executive are employed to organize civil society according to the state's own conception of public benefit and good society, administrative decisions and *de facto* implementations surpassed its legal powers and violate law and sideline democratic control mechanisms.

The privileges that the state provides to the CSOs and their intervention in formal education system goes far beyond their courses or projects at schools. It includes also intervention in the policy-making. While under liberal democratic conditions, the Ministry of Education would be expected to engage civil society in the policy-making, under the AKP rule, Islamist CSOs are the main decision and policy makers that engage the Ministry in the process. For example, regular meetings of the Platform for Support for Education (Eğitime Destek Platformu/EDP) on education policies are often attended by the local bureaucrats of the MEB⁵⁶⁶. EDP was founded by TUGVA, TURGEV, ÖNDER, Ensar, İYC and Turkey Diyanet Foundation (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı), replacing the Platform for İmam-Hatip Schools (İHOP) to expand its activities to whole public education. In other words, it aims at Islamization of public education and is supported by the state in its endeavour. Moreover, the Minister, high level and local bureaucrats participate in the board meetings of the CSOs⁵⁶⁷. Their role in public education is such central that the Chairman of TUGVA, together with the Director of İstanbul MEM, handed out the school certificates to the students at a public school⁵⁶⁸. The CSOs are perceived by the state as the main actors in public education and are transferred, therefore, public resources, authority and responsibilities. In that sense, the function of the CSOs in formal education is

⁵⁶⁵“TUGVA eğitim sisteminin parçası olmaya çalışıyor”, *Bianet*, 16.10.2020, <https://m.bianet.org/bianet/print/232838-tugva-egitim-sisteminin-parcasi-olmaya-calisiyor>

⁵⁶⁶ Ensar, No: 51, 43; “Eğitimi sorun haline getirenler çözümü konuştu: Ensar binasında eğitim konuşuldu”, *BirGün*, 13.06.2019, <https://www.birgun.net/haber/egitimi-sorun-haline-getirenler-cozumunu-konustu-ensar-binasinda-egitim-konusuldu-255684>, accessed June 5, 2022.

⁵⁶⁷ Ensar, No:51, 43; ÖNDER, Bulletin No: 19, (2019), 81-2; “MEB “değerlerini” Ensar’dan alsın talebi”, *BirGün*, July 8, 2016, <https://www.birgun.net/haber/meb-degerlerini-ensar-dan-alsin-talebi-119216>; “MEB’in TUGVA çalışmaları eğitimdeki tabloyu gösteriyor”, *BirGün*, 7.10.2019, <https://www.birgun.net/haber/meb-in-tugva-calismalari-egitimdeki-tabloyu-gosteriyor-271542>; İsmail Arı, “Eğitim müdürü TUGVA Kampında”, *BirGün*, 20.11. 2019, <https://www.birgun.net/haber/egitim-muduru-tugva-kampinda-277009>; accessed February 15, 2021.

⁵⁶⁸ TUGVA, No: 15, (Feb-March-April 2020).

similar to that of the Gülen Community, who was controlling the MEB and formal education through its cadres and the foundations before the coup attempt.

Second, the state holds the power of allocating public resources. The amount of transfer from the budget of central administration to the CSOs increased in years more than 80 times thanks to a law passed in 2006⁵⁶⁹. This law allows the public institutions to transfer aid from their budgets directly to the associations and foundations. In this sense, the state's legal powers allow it to control also the allocation of resources. Although the names of the CSOs that receive public resources were not made transparent by the Ministries, it is clear that the share of the Islamist CSOs has increased. For example, GSB funded 23 book cafes of Ensar⁵⁷⁰ and sponsors every year since 2016 TÜRGEV Akademi, a three year education program⁵⁷¹. The amount that is transferred from the budget of the MEB to the CSOs has been also steeply increased. The resources provided are relatively big amounts; in 2020, the amount transferred to the foundations and associations is 1.1 billion liras, of which around half from the budget of MEB, while between 2002 and 2020, the total amount transferred is 10 billion liras⁵⁷². Moreover, they received thousands of euros from the EU funds allocated by the National Agency⁵⁷³. Accordingly, they founded centres for project coordination by which they give trainings on designing and writing project proposals for further professionalization and increasing public financing likewise with the funding of the ministries. For example, ÖNDER offers a training on project management for its personnel funded by the Ministry of Interior named "Transformation of Civil Society in New Turkey"⁵⁷⁴. These trainings aim at increasing public-CSO and private sector cooperation. In fact, all four of them are extremely dependent on the resources from the state and private sector. One striking example is TUGVA; among the sponsors and partners are ministries and public institutions such as MEB, GSB, Ministry of Transport, Maritime and Communication, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities; public companies such as Turkish Airlines, Ziraat Katılım, Halkbank, TRT, Anadolu Agency and private sector such as Türk Telekom, Zorlu

⁵⁶⁹ "Yardımda rekor protokolcülerde", *BirGün*, 10.05.2019, <https://www.birgun.net/haber/yardimda-rekor-protokolculerde-255411>, accessed February 15, 2021.

⁵⁷⁰ Ensar, No: 51, 110.

⁵⁷¹ TÜRGEV, Faaliyet Raporu, 30; "TÜRGEV Akademi Aşamalı Ders Programı Projesi", Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı, Gençlik Projeleri Destek Programı, <https://gdpblog.gsb.gov.tr/post/gdp-turgev-akademi-asamali-ders-programi-projesi>.

⁵⁷² "Vakıf Kuşatması", *BirGün*, 26.05.2022, <https://www.birgun.net/haber/vakif-kusatmasi-389308>, accessed July 12, 2022.

⁵⁷³ Mustafa Bildircin, "Vakıfların Yeni Adresi Batı Oldu", *BirGün*, 20.04.2022, accessed July 12, 2022.

⁵⁷⁴ ÖNDER, No: 19, 5.

Holding, Turkcell and Borsa İstanbul including newspapers and TV channels such as Sabah, Star, Yeni Şafak, Haber Türk, as well as many municipalities, CSOs, universities and research institutes⁵⁷⁵.

The intensive involvement of business in the form of donations and sponsorships to the CSOs is mediated by the state. One striking example among many is the huge complex of dormitories, culture and sports facilities including an İmam-Hatip school that was built and donated to TÜRGEV by Nihat Özdemir. He designed such a facility, after President Erdoğan told him “We should change to fifth gear now. You know what I mean”⁵⁷⁶. He is the Chairman of Limak Holding, a construction company that has involved as contractor in many public construction works distributed through tendering process including the airport and bridge in İstanbul. Thanks to the strengthened administrative powers of the government, the AKP used state powers for enabling certain sectors of the business systematically. For example, the ‘Public Procurement Law’, whose more than 198 clause have been changed 68 times since 2003 has been an instrument of distributing public resources to certain companies⁵⁷⁷. In this relationship between the state, the CSOs and the private sector all parties have an interest. For example, Başkent Gaz, one of the biggest gas distribution companies, after donating 8 million dollars to Ensar through Kızılay to be transferred to TURKEN, which was argued to have “public benefit”, did not pay tax for that year⁵⁷⁸. This is because, the donations to the foundations with tax exemption status can be omitted from taxes the donor pays to the state. In other words, the donation was indirectly made from the budget of the central government. Ensar accepted the donation as an instrument to fight the Gülen Community, which accords the interest of the government⁵⁷⁹.

⁵⁷⁵ “Partnerlerimiz”, TÜGVA, accessed April 14, 2022, <http://tugva.org/partnerlerimiz/>; “Partnerlerimiz”, TÜGVA Mio, accessed December 7, 2020, <http://tugvamio.com/>; “İcathane”, TÜGVA, under Sponsorlar, accessed December 7, 2020, <http://tugva.org/icathane/>; “Proje Paydaşları”, Gençlik, accessed December 7, 2020, <http://genclig.net/>; TÜGVA, Bölge Uzmanı Yetiştirme Programı Katalog, 2017.

⁵⁷⁶ “‘Siirt Külliyesi’ İşaret Fişegi Olacak”, TÜRGEV, accessed November 21, 2020, <https://www.turgev.org/tr/basinda-biz-detay/siirt-kulliyesi-isaret-fisegi-olacak/>

⁵⁷⁷ “5 Şirket Ne Zaman Büyük Bir İhaleye Girecek Olsa İhale Kanunu Değişiyor”, Evrensel, 28.01.2021, <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/424704/5-sirket-ne-zaman-buyuk-bir-ihaleye-girecek-olsa-ihale-kanunu-degisiyor>, accessed June 20, 2022.

⁵⁷⁸ Tuncay Mollaveisoğlu, “Kızılay üzerinden 2017’de TÜRKEN’e para aktaran Başkentgaz o yıl hiç vergi ödemiş”, *Cumhuriyet*, 8.02.2020, <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/kizilay-uzerinden-2017de-turkene-para-aktaran-baskentgaz-o-yil-hic-vergi-odememis-1719318>. Başkent Gaz belongs to the Torunlar Energy, a company founded by Aziz Torunlar, founder of Ensar and a friend of President Erdoğan.

⁵⁷⁹ “Ensar Vakfı: Bağış FETÖ’yle mücadele için ABD’de yurt yapılması amacıyla TÜRKEN Vakfı’na bağışlandı”, *T24*, 31.01.2020, <https://t24.com.tr/haber/ensar-vakfi-bagis-feto-yle-mucadele-amaciyla-abd-de-yurt-yapilmasi-icin-turken-vakfi-na-bagislandi.858578>, accessed July 12, 2022.

Along with the central administration, municipalities play a central role in the expansion of the CSOs. A report of İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality that was released only after the AKP lost it in the local elections in 2019 shows the high amounts transferred from its budget to the Islamist CSOs⁵⁸⁰. They are heavily dependent on municipalities particularly for opening new dormitories; many dormitory buildings were provided by municipalities, in most cases through intransparent ways. TÜRGEV is a good example showing their role. Having 1 dormitory for around 20 years, from 2012 on it multiplied the number of its dormitories reaching in 2018 its peak point with 60 dormitories in 32 cities, with 49 for higher education and 11 for secondary education students⁵⁸¹. In 2019, after the local elections when the AKP lost many municipalities, gradually it closed down around 40 dormitories⁵⁸². TUGVA followed a similar development path. In 4 years, in 2017, it reached to 52 dormitories in 38 cities; in 2018, the number peaked up to 58 in 40 cities, 21 of which were closed after the local elections in 2019⁵⁸³. Consequently, the weight of the central administration in providing resources has increased. This can be followed from the steep increase of the share of the CSOs in the central administration budget of 2020⁵⁸⁴. Moreover, some dormitories and schools of the Gülen Community that were confiscated by the state were transferred to ÖNDER, TÜRGEV, TUGVA and Ensar, likewise through an intransparent process, thanks to the extraordinary powers of the executive assigned by the State of Emergency after July 15⁵⁸⁵. Using the resources and power of the municipalities for strengthening the organizational network resembles to the strategy of the Gülen Community discussed in the previous section.

To sum up, particularly after the Gezi Uprising and the failed coup attempt, the AKP intensified the frontal attack on the state and civil society. It seized the state power and attempted to completely control it by changing the relations between different state apparatuses and

⁵⁸⁰ Çiğdem Toker, “İBB’den Vakıflara “Hizmet” Raporu”, *Sözcü*, 28.01.2019, <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2019/yazarlar/cigdem-toker/ibbden-vakiflara-hizmet-raporu-3288303/>, accessed November 21, 2020.

⁵⁸¹ TÜRGEV, Faaliyet Raporu 2018-19.

⁵⁸² TÜRGEV, 2018-2019 Faaliyet Raporu; “TÜRGEV 2018-2019 Yılı Faaliyetleri”, TÜRGEV, <https://turgev.org.tr/haber/rakamlarla-turgev/>, accessed November 26, 2020.

⁵⁸³ “TUGVA 2018 Faaliyet Raporu”, TUGVA, 14; “TUGVA 2019 Faaliyet Raporu”, 20; “TUGVA 2021 Faaliyet Raporu, 11”; “Yurtlar”, TUGVA, <http://tugva.org/yurtlarimiz/page/7/>; accessed June 7, 2022.

⁵⁸⁴ Çiğdem Toker, “Yolsuzlukla Mücadele Ajansı Kurmalısınız”, *Sözcü*, 18.01.2021, <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2021/yazarlar/cigdem-toker/yolsuzlukla-mucadele-ajansi-kurmalisiniz-6215653/>, accessed February 12, 2021.

⁵⁸⁵ Aykut Küçükkaya, “FETÖ’den aldıkları yurdu TÜRGEV’e verdiler”, *Cumhuriyet*, 26.11.2016, <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/fetoden-aldiklari-yurdu-turgeve-verdiler-636497/>; Aykut Küçükkaya, “TUGVA bilgileri saklandı”, *Cumhuriyet*, 15.09.2018, <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/tugva-bilgileri-saklandi-1084046/>; Hande Zeyrek, “FETÖ’nün el konulan yurtları Ensar Vakfı’na tahsis edildi”, *Sözcü*, 5.11.2016, <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2016/gundem/fetonun-el-konulan-yurtlari-ensar-vakfina-tahsis-edildi-1489887/>.

installing its own cadres in state institutions displacing or removing the secular or oppositional cadres. This provided it with a control over key positions in the state. Moreover, after the coup attempt the executive is significantly and arbitrarily strengthened. These, in turn, enabled a direct control over civil society and accelerated the process of reshaping it. In other words, it was the war of manoeuvre of the AKP governments that made the swift ascendancy of the Islamist CSOs possible.

4.3. The Political-Economic Functions of the CSOs:

As discussed in the previous chapter, the hegemonic view assumes that the Islamist movement and its associations and foundations are democratic, grassroots organisations representing the values of the majority against the secular state elite. However, the analysed CSOs of the Islamist movement exemplify larger, officially founded organizations with good-paid, professional staff and big resources from the state and the businesses, rather than smaller, grassroots organizations with representative functions and funded by donations. Considering these characteristics of them, they can be considered as part of the integral state. Consequently, their functions differ from democratic, representative functions of the grassroots organisations.

4.3.1. Privatizing Education, Reviving ‘Waqf’ Tradition: Neoliberal Islamization of Formal Education

A fundamental function of the CSOs under the AKP rule is privatization of public education and their gradual replacement of the state within the neoliberal context. As discussed before, the AKP decreased social spending significantly and deliberately compensated the empty spaces that the state left with the CSOs. For example, the total number of dormitories of the four CSOs is 156, which is almost one fourth of the total number of public dormitories⁵⁸⁶. They provide accommodation for around 25.000 students, most of whom are in higher education. Dormitories play the central role in the overall operation of the CSOs, because they are the main instruments to engage the students. The wide network of dormitories spread all over the country provide the CSOs with certain privileges. While in recent years the number of higher education

⁵⁸⁶ TÜGVA 2019 Faaliyet Raporu; “Yurt Hizmetleri”, Ensar, <https://ensar.org/>; “Yurtlarımız”, ÖNDER, <https://yurt.onder.org.tr/yurtlar>; TÜRGEV 2018-2019 Faaliyet Raporu; “2019-2020 Örgün Eğitim İstatistikleri”, MEB, http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2020_09/04144812_meb_istatistikleri_orgun_egitim_2019_2020.pdf, accessed February 2, 2021.

institutions multiplied, housing possibilities provided by the state have not increased accordingly. The CSOs benefited from the consequently arising capacity problem in the public dormitories and are using around 90% of their accommodation capacity. President Erdoğan defends this policy, because according to him, “TÜRGEV and other CSOs” are similar to “national institutions” and have as much responsibility for providing accommodation as the public Student Loan and Housing Board (Kredi ve Yurtlar Kurumu/KYK)⁵⁸⁷.

Voluntary associations are considered a “heritage of our civilization”, whose origins lie in the Islamic tradition and specifically in the “waqf” organization in the Ottoman society⁵⁸⁸. Waqf is, in this view, the organizational form of Islamic voluntary activity. They are considered different from the Western civil society organizations, which are “external to the state and aim at influencing and shaping the political power and the society”⁵⁸⁹. Waqf is regarded a partner of the state assisting it in carrying out its duties and hence, “quasi-public institutions providing public services”; this feature is underlined pointing out to the Ottoman state that “provided its social services through the organization of waqf”⁵⁹⁰. President Erdoğan considers the CSOs as “complementary of the state” for achieving its objectives arguing that “our ancestors, to solve the problems and meet the needs of the society assumed responsibility through waqf, instead of expecting solutions for everything from the state”⁵⁹¹. The CSOs, it is argued, provide public service “taking the burden of the state”⁵⁹².

This perspective on the waqf as a ‘quasi public institution’ is the ground, on which the CSOs are enabled by the state as instruments of its gradual withdrawal to fill in the spaces left by its shrinking presence in education. However, the work of the CSOs is heavily financed by the state. The state, instead of investing in free, public education, transfers public resources, required educated and professional personnel, its responsibilities and public authority to the CSOs and becomes itself merely an organiser of formal education. The role of the state, therefore, has not diminished, but rather changed from providing free public education to

⁵⁸⁷“TÜRGEV Onlar İçin Bir Tehditti”, *Anadolu Ajansı*, 25.02.2015, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/turgev-onlar-icin-bir-tehditti/71990>; “İnancına Tarihine Bağlı Nesiller Yetiştireceğiz”, TÜRGEV, <https://www.turgev.org.tr/basinda-biz-detay/inancina-tarihine-bagli-nesiller-yetistirecegiz/>, accessed February 4, 2021.

⁵⁸⁸ TÜGVA, Bulletin No: 2 (Jan. 2017), 21; Ensar, Bulletin No: 50, (July-Dec 2017), 3.

⁵⁸⁹ TÜGVA, Bulletin No: 9, (Oct. 2018), 41.

⁵⁹⁰ Ensar, Bulletin No: 47, (Jan-Jun 2017), 15.

⁵⁹¹ “Cumhurbaşkanımız, TÜRKEN’in Gala Yemeğine Katıldı”, TÜRGEV, <https://turgev.org.tr/haber/cumhurbaskanimiz-turken-vakfi-gala-yemegine-katildi/>, accessed November 19, 2020.

⁵⁹² Ensar, Bulletin No: 50, (July-Dec 2017), 17.

financing a privatized education. This state policy results in increasing privatisation in education, especially in accommodation, inequality among the students and restricted access to education. For example, though big financial resources, the CSOs demand significantly higher prices for their private dormitories. The luxury dormitories of TÜRGEV are even advertised as 5 star hotels⁵⁹³. Moreover, GSB pays the CSOs a monthly contribution for each student in their dormitories that covers almost the complete rent. According to the Chairwoman of TÜRGEV, this is a necessity to provide equality with the students in public dormitories⁵⁹⁴. However, equality between the students has been destroyed by the very existence of the private education institutions themselves. The state's systematic transfer of public resources to private educational institutions, housing possibilities and their students in the form of scholarships deepen this inequality further. Moreover, not the students but the CSOs benefit from this state contribution; dormitories have become the main sources of financial gain for the CSOs rather than instruments of charity as they claim. The state policies strategically contribute to the privatization in education, which is conceived to be a 'burden on the state' and use the argument of 'reviving waqf tradition' as instrument for this aim.

Reviving waqf tradition and transferring education to private institutions along with the shrinking presence of the state is defended by 'democratization' arguments. The CSOs demand minimal state intervention in education, because according to them, the authoritarian state policies on religious education have restricted democratic rights to education of the conservative and pious people. This topic is elaborated in detail in the book published by ÖNDER, which collects articles from academics, bureaucrats and politicians including the ex-Deputy Minister of National Education, ex-Chief Adviser to the Prime Minister, ex-Chief Adviser to the President and ex-Minister of Family and Social Policies⁵⁹⁵. The book criticizes free, public, secular, compulsory education and offers a new system. It argues that the modern nation state penetrates through compulsory education into individual sphere to create the ideal citizen and Westernize and control the society by enforcing secular values of Kemalist ideology. Therefore, the argument goes, the impartiality of the state can be guaranteed only by the

⁵⁹³ "TÜRGEV'den 5 Yıldızlı Yurt", TÜRGEV, <https://www.turgev.org/tr/basinda-biz-detay/turgevden-5-yildizli-yurt/>, accessed January 10, 2021.

⁵⁹⁴ "KYK Bütçesinden: Devlet Dini Vakıflara Yemek Yardımı da Yapacak", *T24*, 9.11.2017, <https://t24.com.tr/haber/kyk-butcesinden-devlet-dini-vakiflara-yemek-yardimi-da-yapacak.485748>; "Altun: Öğrenci Konfor, Aile Güvenlik İstiyor", TÜRGEV, <https://turgev.org/tr/haber/altun-ogrenci-konfor-aile-guvenlik-istiyor/>, accessed January 11, 2021.

⁵⁹⁵ Faruk Tanrikulu, ed, *15 Temmuz Işığında Eğitimi Yeniden Düşünmek*. İstanbul: Ravza, 2017.

abolishment of compulsory education⁵⁹⁶. The state, in this system, does not provide education itself and does not intervene in the education given by private institutions and the CSOs. Accordingly, the increase of the number of private institutions and decrease in state financing in the field is central to the democratization of education⁵⁹⁷. Instead of centralized control of education by the state, revival of waqf tradition is advocated. This is because waqf is regarded as the network in Ottoman society where the youngsters are educated in everyday life and passed on the ‘values of the society’. Together with the family and the school, it is a central institution of Islamic education, which is based on “family-madrasa-neighbourhood” model⁵⁹⁸. In this model, ideally the state inspects the private schools opened by religious orders or secular organizations. It is argued to guarantee plurality in the society because the families freely choose the education they wish for their children without the enforcement of the state. Hence, a minimal but strong state and an expansive network of waqf in civil society is argued to strengthen democracy. In other words, this supposed democracy in education is achieved only at the expense of social justice. Hence, neoliberalism and Islamism do not contradict, on the contrary, they are in harmony in their view on the relationship between state, society and economy. As Buttigieg argues, the mainstream view’s association of the state merely with the government apparatus results in a conception of state as authoritarian that controls the society through its public services threatening individual freedoms and of a civil society that is the “terrain of freedoms” as against the state⁵⁹⁹. This view advocates privatization for more freedom and democracy, thereby associating democracy and civil society with free-market or as Wood put it, conceptualizing civil society “as a social form specific to capitalism”⁶⁰⁰ and reducing democracy to an abstract equality before law. This ignores how social injustice and inequalities destroy the conditions of democracy.

This view does not only ignore the evils of free-market, but also those coming from civil society. Privatization is accompanied by Islamization of education and reintroduction of archaic structures such as waqf or madrasa, both of which provided religious education in the Ottoman society. It is because the Islamist discourse on public education was formulated against the secular education policies of the state, yet the CSOs use public education, likewise, for achieving their own goals. Thanks to the privileges of the CSOs, which assign them a strong

⁵⁹⁶ Tanrıkulu, *15 Temmuz Işığında Eğitimi Yeniden Düşünmek*, 73-75.

⁵⁹⁷ Tanrıkulu, *15 Temmuz Işığında Eğitimi Yeniden Düşünmek*, 115-8.

⁵⁹⁸ ÖNDER, No: 20, 40-1; Ensar, No: 51, 30; TUGVA, No: 1, 50.

⁵⁹⁹ Gramsci on Civil Society, 5.

⁶⁰⁰ The Uses and Abuses, 67.

voice in the making of policies, public authority and duties, they have become central actors in public education. They fill in the vacancy in the Ministry of Education left by the Gülen Community. They provide on the one hand the educated, professional and experienced bureaucratic cadres for controlling and shaping the public education system and policies. On the other hand, they control a network of foundations and associations, private schools and dormitories that are directly in contact with the students and penetrated in the formal education through protocols. In short, compulsory formal education is employed to enforce Islamic values and culture, which are usually referred to as ‘values of the society’, and shape the society accordingly. This is similar to the strategy of the supposedly ‘authoritarian, Kemalist state’ they criticize. Again, neoliberalisation goes hand in hand with Islamization under the AKP rule.

The argument of democratization plays an important role in the Islamist attempt at hegemony. The CSOs present themselves as intermediary, grassroots organisations that represent the people. Therefore, development of civil society is perceived as the precondition of democratization⁶⁰¹. The CSOs such as LGBT+, feminist organizations, the Gülen Community or those that are believed to have organized Gezi Uprising, however, are associated with the “Western style CSOs” that is “external to and against the state” and referred to as alien to their own society in opposition to the Islamist CSOs that represent the “national will”⁶⁰². This claim to represent the ‘will of the nation’ and ‘the values of the society’ enabled them to present themselves as democratizing forces. Consequently, the Islamic education they offer is argued to be a demand of the society. What is called democratization is in fact the destruction of democracy further by confiscating the democratic rights of the students to free, public and secular education. This is because they themselves have become instruments of privatization and consolidation of neoliberalism. They bring, by no means, social justice as they argue. On the contrary, they demonstrate and increase the lapses in social justice. In this model, education is not a right guaranteed and provided by the state, but it is a charity, an act of goodness that one benefits under certain conditions set by the philanthropist. This power, in turn, provide the CSOs a control over the students. They decide who benefits from the scholarships, dormitories or education and on what conditions. For example, TÜRGEV lists hafiz education as an evaluation criteria in the distribution of its dormitories and scholarships⁶⁰³. They exploit lacking financial

⁶⁰¹ TUGVA, Bulletin No: 2, (Jan. 2017), 52; Ensar, No: 47, 12.

⁶⁰² Ensar, Bulletin No: 51, (Jan-June 2019), 20; ÖNDER, Bulletin No: 21, (April-May-June, 2020), 4-5; TUGVA, Bulletin No: 9, (Oct. 2018), 41.

⁶⁰³ TÜRGEV Faaliyet Raporu, 64

opportunities of students and stipulate the right to education to certain conditions. Compulsory Quran courses in the dormitories and ‘voluntary work’ in return for education and scholarships are examples of this. Undermining free public and secular education and replacing the state with the CSOs in this terrain, therefore, destroys equality and democracy and accelerates Islamization.

4.3.2. Seizing Cultural Hegemony: “Conquering the Hearts and the Minds” by a War of Position:

Islamist movement has fought a war of position for ‘conquering the hearts and the minds’. It adopted it as a tactic for the last few decades, since it organized in civil society and seized the government apparatus. It aimed at winning the ‘intellectual and moral leadership’. This is important for the AKP governments, because this war for ‘leadership’ provided the conditions for it to seize the state power. As Gramsci underlines “a social group can, and indeed must, already exercise ‘leadership’ before winning governmental power (this indeed is one of the principal conditions for the winning of such power)”⁶⁰⁴. In other words, before seizure of political hegemony, cultural hegemony is required. Yet, the seizure of state does not guarantee the hold of power and does not mean the end of ‘leading’. Gramsci continues; “it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to ‘lead’”⁶⁰⁵. President Erdoğan’s speech at the inauguration ceremony of TÜRGEV’s İHU is reminiscent of Gramsci’s formulation of the relationship between ‘leading’ and ‘ruling’⁶⁰⁶:

We know the difference between ruling (hükümet olmak) and leading (iktidar olmak). We know very well that the real power is the intellectual leadership. The path to intellectual leadership, which starts from single individuals and expands to the whole society, is difficult and troublesome. In 18 years, we could not achieve the progress that we wish in education, culture, although we have achieved historic works and services in every field.

That Erdoğan gave this speech at the opening ceremony of a university is not a coincidence, because the seizure of intellectual and moral leadership depends not only on the state apparatus,

⁶⁰⁴ Prison Notebooks, 57.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid, 57-8.

⁶⁰⁶ TÜRGEV, “İbn-i Haldun Külliyesi, Cumhurbaşkanımız Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’ın Teşrifleriyle Açıldı”.

but also on an organisational network in the structures of civil society. According to Gramsci, along with the state organisations, “the superstructures of civil society are like the trench-systems of modern warfare”⁶⁰⁷. Following his conceptualization, civil society organisations can be considered as ‘trenches’ in the ‘war of position’, which fortify and protect the state against any frontal attack. In this sense, they are important organisations in the power struggles and maintaining state power. For example, the Gezi Uprising is argued to be organised by “Western style CSOs” that are against their state and Islamist CSOs, as a counter move, were deemed necessary to “fight with them with projects for women and youth on themes such as animal rights, environment”⁶⁰⁸. The CSOs, therefore, function as ‘permanent fortifications’ for the state fighting a long-term war of position aiming at intellectual and moral leadership.

Education has been historically and strategically employed as an instrument for achieving such a leadership by the Islamist movement. Indeed, according to Gramsci, “every relationship of ‘hegemony’ is necessarily educational”⁶⁰⁹. Education has been central to the social transformation that will create a new Islamic civilization. The declared objective of the AKP to raise a ‘pious generation’ is, similar to the ‘Golden Generation’ (*Altın Nesil*) of the Gülen Movement, lies at the heart of its project of social and cultural transformation⁶¹⁰. Therefore, education is a central terrain of hegemonic struggles for creating a new generation and a civilization. The Islamist movement has always employed voluntary organizations for educating the new generation like in the Ottoman Empire, where education was provided not by the state, but by the institutions founded and financed by ‘waqf’. Likewise, President Erdoğan at a speech at Ensar assigned the mission of raising “pious generations” in the first place to the associations and foundations that “work for passing on the values of our ancient civilization to the next generations”⁶¹¹. Hence, the CSOs are assigned political functions in the making of the AKP’s ‘New Turkey’, which is based on Islamic principles.

⁶⁰⁷ Prison Notebooks, 235.

⁶⁰⁸ TÜGVA, No: 9, 41.

⁶⁰⁹ Prison Notebooks, 350.

⁶¹⁰ “Başbakan Açıkladı: Dindar Gençlik Yetiştirmek İstiyoruz”, Bianet, 01.02.2012, <https://bianet.org/bianet/din/135875-dindar-genclik-yetistirmek-istiyoruz>; “Erdoğan “Dindar Nesil” Hayalini Yineledi, Toplumsal Sorunların Çözümünü Dine Bağladı”, Evrensel, 06.11.2019, <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/390428/erdogan-dindar-nesil-hayalini-yineledi-toplumsal-sorunlarin-cozumunu-dine-bagladi>, accessed July 2, 2022.

⁶¹¹ “Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: Vakit Ensar Olma Vakti”, Ensar, 28 February 2016, <https://ensar.org/haber/2016/02/28/cumhurbaskani-recep-tayyip-erdogan-vakit-ensar-olma-vakti>, accessed on April 22, 2022. In this event of Ensar, along with President Erdoğan, Minister of Education, Minister of Justice, Governor of İstanbul and Mayor of İstanbul participated.

As discussed earlier, the Kemalist cadres used education likewise for achieving social transformation. It was an instrument in the modernisation and secularisation of the social and cultural life. A central objective of the CSOs is to dismantle secular education, as it is conceived a symbol and an instrument of the Western hegemony. Therefore, the-then Minister of Culture declared at an event at Ensar that by education the state “hand in hand with civil society organizations struggle for national cultural independence”⁶¹². This is a reference to the Independence War, implying that it is fought further in the cultural terrain, as cultural modernization and Westernization policies resulted in dependency on the West. This struggle the state and the CSOs fight is a war of position to delegitimise secular education and destroy the conception of the world and the civilization that it created. In other words, they attempt at a counterhegemony that would replace secular, public education with privatized Islamic one to create a society based on neoliberal, Islamic principles and values. Democracy is again a fundamental component of their rhetoric. According to this, secularisation and restrictions on Islamic education was realized against the ‘will of the people’ by military interventions and enforced ‘alien’ values on the society. These “together with the savage relations of production produced nonempathic, pragmatist, egoist, hedonist people, which breeds the imperialist systems”⁶¹³. President Erdoğan associated this image with the “Gezi youth” at a speech at Ensar and opposed it to the “youth of July 15”, which he defined as the “ideal youth” that “represents the nation”⁶¹⁴. Secular education is, therefore, not only conceived as the source of Western hegemony, preventing the democratic seizure of Islamic intellectual leadership, but also as the main reason for social uprisings and military interventions. Public schools, in this view, “produce putschists”⁶¹⁵. According to the Chairman of ÖNDER⁶¹⁶,

..the educational dimension of the coup attempt on July 15 is the most important aspect of it. Because we have seen that night what a person that was raised by the flawed education system can do. On July 15, we have experienced the results of this defect system, which is the product of the education policies of the last 150-200 years... We have paid on July 15 the price for closing down İmam Hatip schools after February 28. We have seen on July 15 the results of the strict Kemalist ideology for the sake of ‘Westernisation and modernisation’.

⁶¹² Ensar, No: 50, 10.

⁶¹³ Önder, Bulletin No: 17, (April-May-June 2018), 6-7; Ensar, No: 47, 15; “TÜRGEV Hafızlık Taç Giyme Merasimi Yapıldı”, TÜRGEV, <https://turgev.org/tr/haber/turgev-hafizlik-tac-giyme-merasimi-yapildi/>, accessed November 25, 2020.

⁶¹⁴ Ensar, “Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan”.

⁶¹⁵ Tanrıkulu, *15 Temmuz Işığında Eğitimi Yeniden Düşünmek*, 108.

⁶¹⁶ Tanrıkulu, *15 Temmuz Işığında Eğitimi Yeniden Düşünmek*, 14

The intervention on 28 February 1997 as well as July 15 are prominently discussed, memorialized and taught to the students to highlight the authoritarianism of the state and democratic character of the society. The rhetoric of the CSOs on secular education draws on the main assumptions of the hegemonic view on state-society relations in Turkey. Although the education system has been restructured systematically according to the Islamic-conservative principles in the last decades, ‘democratic conservative society’ is portrayed as the victim of the ‘authoritarian secular education policies’ of the state, thanks to the hegemonic position of the centre-periphery view. The war of position to seize cultural hegemony is based on this culturalist-reductionist view of society, which as a ‘normalized form of knowledge’, not only ‘mis-represents’, but ‘makes’ the social reality⁶¹⁷. The society is defined in terms of religious identity as Muslim and hence, Islamic education is naturalized as democratic. İmam Hatip schools are argued to symbolize “natural sociological course of education policies”, while secular education is labelled ideological⁶¹⁸. This pattern of ideological/natural duality is used to denote the CSOs, the state, education, politics, etc. Ideological is that what is ‘alien’ to the people. Consequently, Islamist CSOs, social groups, education or politics are naturalized, while the rest is excluded for being alien. This is reminiscent of Fine’s critique that the glorification of civil society over state may lead to totalitarianism by the seizure of state power by the ‘strongest element’ in civil society, which, then, ‘hunt for the alien’ elements that distort ‘democratic’ character of civil society⁶¹⁹.

Islamist war of position particularly draws on raising consciousness. Education programs, thus, teach being good Muslims, strengthening “brotherhood” bonds between the students and develop a “consciousness of the ummah”⁶²⁰. Raising consciousness is expressed with ‘davet’ (announcement/invitation) in Islam and is similar to the concept of hegemony, in that it aims at persuading people to adopt Islam and live accordingly and disseminate Islamic principles and values. This is often referred to as ‘conquering the hearts and the minds’⁶²¹. Therefore, the students themselves along with the teachers, mentors, speakers assume the function of ‘intellectual’ that organizes consent. For example, it is argued that the İmam-Hatip students as the ‘leading generation’ have the responsibility of living as devoted Muslims and being role-

⁶¹⁷ Açıkel, “Entegratif Toplum ve Muarızları”, 34; Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 23-5.

⁶¹⁸ Tanrikulu, *15 Temmuz Işığında*, 15

⁶¹⁹ See pages 25-6.

⁶²⁰ For example, TÜGVA, Yaz Kampı, <http://tugva.org/lise-yaz-kampi/>; Önder Gençlik Tanıtım, 30, accessed July 1, 2022.

⁶²¹ TÜGVA, No: 10, 43, 62-3.

models for the rest of the society. They are considered “missionaries of Islam”, who disseminate the culture of Islamic civilization that they learn at schools, thereby, carrying out their mission of “leading the ummah”⁶²². Therefore, developing a consciousness for ‘İmam-Hatip identity’ among the students and an awareness of their mission as well as increasing the number of İmam-Hatip students is of utmost importance for the ‘dawa’. This function of consent organizing by the students is systematized by the CSOs. They have a mentoring system based on volunteering, by which university students become responsible from teaching, informing, helping and guiding a group of younger students. Mentors play a crucial role in education. They involve in direct, personal contact, be role-models, involve in ‘sohbet’ (conversation) with the students, give advices, talk about their problems and establish a personal, emotional bond⁶²³. Their role is so central, the mentors are required to have certain characteristics. They should “know Quran good, memorize hadith, surah and prayers, have a successful career, be patient and humble”⁶²⁴. The guides themselves first participate in leadership camps where they are trained for this position.

Mentoring and volunteering is deemed an important part of Islamic education. This is because it teaches values of Islam such as sacrifice, goodness, altruism, social responsibility and many other “moral pleasures that cannot be compared to the material benefits”⁶²⁵. It is part of futuwwa, the practical character education, whereby the students practice Islamic principles to be good Muslims⁶²⁶. It is attached such importance that TÜGVA offers even a program for raising professional personnel to work for voluntary organizations⁶²⁷. This is because the volunteers play the central role in this war of position for disseminating Islamic values and seizing cultural hegemony. However, voluntary work of the CSOs is coercive in many cases for the students. In return for scholarships, accommodation and education possibilities, the students are expected and in most cases, required to work voluntarily for the CSOs. In other words, voluntary work is enforced on the students, who lack the financial opportunities for their education and turn to the CSOs, thanks to the state’s gradual rolling back from the field of education. BYP students, for example, sign a contract requiring an up to 8 years ‘compulsory

⁶²² Önder, No: 17, 22.

⁶²³ For example, ÖNDER has the Project Kardeş Okul, bringing university students with İmam Hatip students. ÖNDER, “Kardeş Okul”, <https://ondergenc.org/kardes-okul/>, accessed July 1, 2022;

⁶²⁴ TÜGVA, No: 1, 34-5.

⁶²⁵ TÜGVA, No: 2, 46.

⁶²⁶ ÖNDER, No: 20, 28.

⁶²⁷ TÜGVA, “Fikir Akademisi”, <http://tugva.org/fikirakademisi/#programin-hedefi>, accessed November 13, 2020.

voluntary work' for TÜGVA⁶²⁸. The precondition for TÜRGEV scholarships is helping out the youngsters and guiding them⁶²⁹. In short, the students are educated to become 'educator' themselves to raise the next generation of intellectuals and to seize cultural hegemony.

4.3.3. Raising the Intellectuals of the "New Turkey":

In the seizure of cultural hegemony, the intellectuals play the central role. The CSOs are aware of that and they pay special attention to higher education students, because "the ideal of civilization is nourished by the scholars and artists" and not by the "politicians, sultans, or the kings"⁶³⁰. It is argued that these positions are occupied by West-oriented elites. The students are educated to replace "the caste system of the West-dependent elites in academy, journalism, foreign affairs, culture and the arts" and challenge the hegemony of the Western thought and ideal⁶³¹. President Erdoğan in a speech at Ensar assigned the CSOs the duty of raising the intellectuals with required qualifications⁶³².

We have been holding the political power for 14 years but we still have problems in establishing our social and cultural leadership....we have inadequacies in raising the generations that our country needs, our nation demands and we dream of...I know that in many fields from media to cinema, from science and technology to law the most powerful positions are held by the individuals, groups and factions that have a mentality alien to their country and nation...today, we have the necessary conditions, what we need is the devoted cadres that will turn them into service.

Erdoğan was calling the intellectuals to raise the future intellectuals of state and civil society that will have a function in achieving the Islamic political project. This is because war of position is a long struggle, which requires huge resources and devoted and educated cadres. The specialized education programs in various fields of expertise is a part of this duty of creating the 'leading cadres'. They are argued to be different from their 'West-oriented, secular' counterparts, who are 'alien to their society'. For example, ideal scholar is defined by the Chairman of EDEP as living according to the principles of Islam, following Prophet Muhammed, decent, modest and pious, using Fiqh as method, speaking English, Arabic, Persian

⁶²⁸ "Türkiye'nin Geleceğine Yön Verecek bir Proje", TÜGVA Bölge Uzmanı, <http://bolgeuzmani.com/basinda-biz/>, accessed December 10, 2020.

⁶²⁹ EDEP, Öğrenci El Kitabı

⁶³⁰ İHU, "Open Civilization".

⁶³¹ "28 Şubat Darbesiyle Nasıl Hesaplaşılmalı?", TÜRGEV, <https://turgev.org/tr/haber/28-subat-darbesiyle-nasil-hesaplasilmali/>, accessed November 15, 2020.

⁶³² "Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Ensar Vakfı'nın 38. Genel Kurulunda", Ensar, https://ensar.org/cumhurbaskani-recep-tayyip-erdogan-ensar-vakfinin-38-genel-kurulunda_H1231.html, accessed November 16, 2020.

and Ottoman and understands modern social sciences better than its followers⁶³³. He suggests the students to take Ahmet Cevdet Pasha and Namık Kemal as role-models, because they exemplify the “ideal scholar” who achieved their function of guiding the society by renewing Islam in a period when “the Western civilization was trying to destroy Islamic civilization from outside and inside”⁶³⁴.

The belief that Turkey has been under attack is a central element of the Islamist rhetoric. In this view, since the late Ottoman period, the West-oriented modernisation movement aimed at achieving Western hegemony over Turkey. Gezi Uprising and the failed coup attempt of July 15 are interpreted in this framework and are believed to aim at preventing emergence of ‘great and powerful Turkey’. These two events are compared to the chaotic periods in the Seljuk and Ottoman States and solutions are sought in their education system and intellectual traditions⁶³⁵;

Malik Shah and Nizam al-Mulk, when handling the disorder caused by the Assassins, did not only focus on security but also ideological dimension. When they were establishing a new state and society order, they opened powerful scientific institutions (Nezamiyeh Madrasa) in critical centres. The aim was, on the one hand, raising virtuous bureaucrats that will govern on the basis of right and justice, on the other hand, by reviving Islamic knowledge, passing on to the new generations the moderate Islam that the society needed. Philosophers like Ghazali were raised in this environment and founded a new ethics and political philosophy that guided the society. The ideal of world domination behind the motto of the Seljuk and Ottoman States “Let live the people so that the state will prolong” grew on these values and created a political/social pact (Pax Ottomana) that achieved peace and order in this geography for a long time.

The Program for Raising Regional Experts (Bölge Uzmanı Yetiştirme Programı/BYP) of TÜGVA is considered such a school opened by the Seljuk/Ottoman sultans to raise bureaucrats⁶³⁶. It is believed that the balance of global power was shifting towards East with Turkey assuming a leading, central role. Yet, the West-oriented diplomats are “Turkish orientalist who despise both the East of their country, Anatolia and the Eastern countries”⁶³⁷. Therefore, the program claims to raise idealist “national diplomats” with a “dawa spirit” against the West-oriented “mon cher diplomats”⁶³⁸. The program provides a scholarship covering the

⁶³³ EDEP, “EDEP Yeni Öğretim Yılı”.

⁶³⁴ EDEP, “EDEP Yeni Öğretim Yılı”.

⁶³⁵ Tanrıkulu, *15 Temmuz Işığında*, 45-6.

⁶³⁶ “Türkiye’nin Geleceğine Yön Verecek Bir Proje”, TÜGVA Bölge Uzmanı; “Milli Diplomatlar Monşerlere Karşı”, TÜGVA Bölge Uzmanı, <http://bolgeuzmani.com/basinda-biz/>, accessed December 10, 2020.

⁶³⁷ “Öğüt: Dava Ruhu Olan Bölge Uzmanı Yetiştiriyoruz”, TÜGVA Bölge Uzmanı, <http://bolgeuzmani.com/basinda-biz/>, accessed December 10, 2020.

⁶³⁸ TÜGVA Bölge Uzmanı, “Öğüt: Dava Ruhu Olan”. “Mon cher” is often used by President Erdoğan to criticize and discredit the diplomats and bureaucrats, which he perceives as West-oriented, elitist snobs with alien values.

complete education period, language classes and post-graduate education abroad, an internship in one of the diplomatic missions of Turkey and “guarantees employment” in “think-tanks such as SETA, public and private universities, or ministries”⁶³⁹. The internship or employment guarantee is included in many programs. For example, 75% of TÜGVA’s Media and Communication School students hold internship or fix positions in the sponsors and partners of the program⁶⁴⁰. The students are educated as intellectuals of the ‘New Turkey’, on the one hand, to fill in the vacant positions in the state institutions and civil society left by the cadres of Gülen Community. On the other hand, their mission is to challenge and replace the intellectuals that struggle for Kemalist hegemony particularly in civil society. A war of manoeuvre is adopted as a tactic not only to form cadres, but also to assign the raised intellectuals of the new civilization in the state institutions and civil society thanks to the cooperation of universities, media and the government.

4.3.4. Public Opinion Making and Organizing the Political Will:

A central function of the CSOs in the making of ‘New Turkey’ is public opinion making and propagating for the government policies to form political will. They are not only ‘cultural organizations’ but have a political function and play significant role in the seizure of political hegemony. Their function shows that ‘the political’ and ‘the civil’ cannot be separated from one another clearly. Gramsci writes⁶⁴¹;

What is called “public opinion” is tightly connected to political hegemony; in other words, it is the point of contact between “civil society” and “political society”, between consent and force. When the State wants to embark on an action that is not popular, it starts to create in advance public opinion that is required; in other words, it organizes and centralizes certain elements of civil society...Public opinion is the political content of public’s political will which can be dissentient; therefore, there is a struggle for the monopoly of the organs of public opinion-newspapers, political parties, parliament- so that only one force would public opinion and hence, the political will of the nation, while reducing the dissenters into individual and disconnected specks of dust.

The CSOs have been involving in politics actively as ‘organs of public opinion making’. They made various press releases and organized protests against July 15, LGBT+, feminist movement, many of them as members of National Will Platform (Milli İrade Platformu/MİP),

⁶³⁹ TÜGVA, Bölge Uzmanı katalog

⁶⁴⁰ “Mio’da Yeni Dönem İçin Başvurular Başladı”, TÜGVA Mio, <http://tugvamio.com/mioda-yeni-donem-icin-basvurular-basladi/>, accessed December 8, 2020.

⁶⁴¹ Quoted in Buttigieg, *The Contemporary Discourse on Civil Society*, 45-6.

which includes around 300 CSOs that stand by “our state and nation”⁶⁴². They organized many events, meetings and street actions to make the public opinion for the Referendum on the Amendment on Constitution that brings the Presidential system. In all public campaigns, they clearly support the government policies; MİP even released a statement calling for support for the AKP and Erdoğan in an election⁶⁴³.

The students actively involve in the public opinion making as part of their education. They participated in the so called ‘democracy watches’ in the aftermath of July 15, released press statements against it in 46 universities, worked voluntarily for electoral support for the AKP before the Referendum, declared their support for cross-border military operations of the government against the Kurds or for the war in Nagorno-Karabakh against Armenia⁶⁴⁴. The CSOs organize for the students seminars, debates or competitions on politically controversial themes such as July 15 failed coup attempt (“July 15 and Martyrdom”, “The Spirit of July 15”), Hagia Sophia (“Hagia Sophia Mosque - From Conquest to Reawakening”), cross-border military operations and war in Nagorno-Karabakh (“Nagorno-Karabakh Victory”)⁶⁴⁵. TUGVA completed a petition with one million signature for supporting the transformation of Hagia Sophia into a mosque⁶⁴⁶.

All this ‘volunteering’ have clear connotations and tell one how to perceive these events. This is deemed important, because “whoever gives meaning and name to an event, s/he defines it...it is a struggle for making sense of it”⁶⁴⁷. In other words, it is a struggle for seizing the power to create the hegemonic *Weltanschauung*, that is, for the leadership. For example, they released many press statements against the LGBT+ labelling it “perverse”, endangering the institution of family and “imported from the West”⁶⁴⁸. Homosexuality is perceived not as a natural sexual orientation, but as a political and ideological position enforced by the West. LGBT+ is blamed

⁶⁴² “Hakkımızda”, MİP, <https://milliiradeplatformu.com/hakkimizda>, accessed December 23, 2020.

⁶⁴³ “Bildiriler”, Milli İrade Platformu, <https://milliiradeplatformu.com/bildiriler>; accessed July 7, 2022; “Milli İrade Platformundan Erdoğan’a Destek”, Anadolu Ajansı, 15.07.2014, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/politika/milli-irade-platformundan-erdogana-destek/141415>; accessed July 12, 2022; “Milli İrade Platformu’ndan Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan’a Destek”, TRT Haber, 22.06.2018, <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/turkiye/milli-irade-platformundan-cumhurbaskani-erdogana-destek-371393.html>, accessed July 12, 2022.

⁶⁴⁴ TUGVA, No: 1, 36-49; ÖNDER, No: 19, 48; No: 18, 30, 34.

⁶⁴⁵ “Karabağ Zaferi Resim Yarışması”, TUGVA, <http://tugva.org/tugva-karabag-zaferini-resim-yarismasiyla-kutlayacak/>; “15 Temmuz Ruhu Tuvalet Yansıdı”, TUGVA, <http://tugva.org/15-temmuz-ruhu-tuval-e-yansidi/>; “‘Fetih’ten Diriliş Ayasofya Camii’ Resim Yarışması Şartnamesi”, TUGVA Sakarya, https://yenikentanadoluihl.meb.k12.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/54/01/748539/dosyalar/2020_11/20120919_AYASOFYA_YARIYMASI_YARTNAME.pdf, accessed January 18, 2021.

⁶⁴⁶ TUGVA, No: 16

⁶⁴⁷ TUGVA, No: 3, 25

⁶⁴⁸ “İnsanlık İçin Sesini Yükselt!”, TÜRGEV, <https://www.turgev.org/tr/haber/insanlik-icin-sesini-yukselt/>, accessed February 12, 2020; ÖNDER, No: 21, 4.

to attack on religious values of the people and impose alien values and ideologies on society. For example, feminist night walk was criticized both because of its demands and because it was claimed to protest azan⁶⁴⁹. These are not perceived as resistance against patriarchal power of state and in society, but as insult and humiliation against the religious people. The portrayal of these CSOs as victimizing the people is an attempt to create a hegemonic way of perception of them as attacks on Islamic values and the society. This, in turn, aims at legitimizing their closing down by the government or arrest of their leaders. This discriminating and authoritarian attitude is disseminated by the CSOs in the form of public opinion. As Gramsci argues consent and coercion and civil society and the state are intertwined. He writes⁶⁵⁰;

The “normal” exercise of hegemony on the now classical terrain of the parliamentary regime is characterised by the combination of force and consent, which balance one another reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent. Indeed, the attempt is always made to ensure that force will appear to be based on the consent of the majority, expressed by the so-called organs of public opinion newspapers and associations which, therefore, in certain situations are multiplied.

It can be argued that the role of the CSOs is making the force appear as consent and present it as the ‘will of the people’. Hence, the CSOs are significant in organising the political will, presenting it as the will of the majority and seizing the political hegemony for the AKP.

⁶⁴⁹ “TÜGVA’dan 8 Mart Protestosu: “Ezan Yarım Kalan Hesabımız Olan Viyana’nın Fethine Niyet Tazelemektir”, *T24*, 15.03.2019, <https://t24.com.tr/haber/tugva-uyeleri-8-mart-ta-taksim-de-duzenlenen-feminist-gece-yuruyusune-tepki-gosterdi,812348>

⁶⁵⁰ *Prison Notebooks*, 80.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Parallel to the global trend in the early 1980s, in Turkey, too, the definition and functions of civil society has become a central theme of the public and scholarly debates. Yet, it has not been consumed or lost its importance and remains to be relevant in contemporary societies. This thesis discusses the functions of the Islamist civil society organizations under the AKP governments from a critical perspective based on a relational approach to state-civil society relations. Thereby, it challenges the theoretical approach of the cultural essentialist hegemonic view, which does not only associate Islamic/Islamist actors particularly with civil society, but also attaches civil society immanently democratic functions. This thesis does not propose or formulate a new conception of civil society, but rather it employs Gramsci's approach, which demonstrates the organic relations between state and civil society, in order to analyse the Turkish case. Disagreeing with the orientalist-essentialist understanding of many analysts of civil society as well as some commentators of Gramsci's work, it does not conceive civil society as a social form specific to Western social formations. Therefore, it does not ask if there is a civil society in Turkey or if Islam is compatible with democracy or civil society. Rather, it takes civil society as a universal category, yet accepts that it takes different forms in different geographical regions and historical periods. This is important to underline, because these differences, particularly to the Western civil societies, which are predominantly conceived to be the ideal form, are interpreted to be the proof of the incompatibility of the non-Western contexts with supposedly Western social forms. Therefore, instead of dismissing Turkish case as incompatible with civil society or democracy by its nature, this thesis uses Gramsci's relational approach as it enables analysing civil society in the East as well as in the West.

Indeed, Gramscian approach to state-civil society relations is particularly relevant for analysing Turkish Islamism, because its understanding of civil society and strategy for social change is reminiscent of that of Gramsci's. Turkish Islamism has employed strategies for 'conquering the hearts and the minds' of the people in the last half century that likens to Gramsci's 'war of position'. The underlying idea was to prioritize cultural hegemony as a precondition for political

hegemony. In other words, for seizing state power and before it, it needed to establish a certain level of cultural hegemony first. Therefore, it built various grass-roots organizations in civil society through which the Islamists have been in close contact with the people in their everyday lives. The Islamist organizations such as labour unions, student dormitories, Quran courses, kitchens for the poor (*aşevi*), health institutes, media, schools and charities went hand in hand with the Islamist RP's seizure of various municipalities at the local level and participation in the coalition government in the 1990s. The rise of civil Islamist organizations and the RP's use of them to connect with the people at the grassroots level created the image of Islamists deeply rooted in civil society and excluded from the state, despite their participation in coalition government. Centre-periphery paradigm plays the central role in the creation of this image. Therefore, the followers of this paradigm were enthusiastic supporters of the Islamist AKP governments declaring it the democratic force coming from civil society that brought political liberalization. This did not only set the ground for the rise of the AKP, but also the party itself employed the main arguments of the centre-periphery paradigm as elements of its hegemonic project and presented itself as a new actor representing the majority with the capacity to bring stability, democratization and economic welfare.

The major aim of this thesis is to evaluate this assumed fix democratic character of Islamist civil society from a critical perspective. It should be mentioned that both the contemporary concepts of civil society that rule out the democratic civil society in Islamic /non-Western societies and the centre-periphery view that assigns the Islamic/Islamist civil actors fixed democratic functions are essentialist approaches that view civil society as a stable, fixed category. Both of these approaches depart from a fixed concept, which they apply in different contexts. They deny civil society or its democratic potentiality in cases of misfit between the theory and actual societies, instead of reviewing the concepts according to the findings. In this thesis, civil society is conceived as a dynamic category, which cannot be fixed with certain contents or actors, but rather take different forms in different contexts. Moreover, it assumes that the historical conditions and changing contexts define the different forms that civil society takes. For example, the AKP's seizure of state power and its maintenance for over two decades in its hands provide a different context for analysing civil society than the RP period. This is because, as discussed under the Gramsci section, although state or civil society are not prioritized over one another and both of them are alike the terrains of hegemonic struggles, the seizure of state power is important for the consolidation of hegemony. In other words, cultural

hegemony is a requirement for the political hegemony and the seizure of the state and the state power, once seized, enables consolidating this hegemony.

Disagreeing with the centre-periphery paradigm, the AKP is not portrayed as a rupture from the previous Islamist parties or as the precursor of a new democratic period that integrates the 'majority' in the state. It is because, this view ignores the systematic neoliberal Islamization of the post-1980s, which was a project run by the state and which gave rise to the AKP in the first place. Therefore, it does not consider the AKP as a spontaneously risen force representing the civil society that was repressed by the state as argued by the hegemonic view, but rather as a party exclusively enabled by the state policies of the last decades. This view also ignores the repressive and undemocratic policies and savage neoliberalisation in the early periods of the AKP, which is glorified as democratic before its so-called 'authoritarian turn'. In this study, it is understood rather as the conveyer of a new neoliberal hegemonic project with strong Islamist cultural elements from the beginning. It is in relation to this hegemonic project that the Islamist CSOs matter. They matter, because they have certain significant functions for the seizure and maintenance of neoliberal Islamist hegemony. The examination of the Islamist CSOs, particularly in terms of their relation to the state and their political and economic functions within this specific context, have manifold outcomes.

First, volunteering and organization in civil society plays a significant role in the organization of Islamist movement and the Islamist mobilization under the AKP rule like in the previous periods. Grassroots politics can be argued to contribute to the stability of the election results, in which the AKP has had the majority, maintaining its hold of state power. It is in this sense the CSOs are important organizations for the AKP rule. Yet, it is different from the previous eras in that this consolidation of the state power enabled the AKP to penetrate in civil society in an unprecedented way. This brings us to the second point, which is the question of autonomy and civility of the CSOs. As discussed in the theoretical part, the approach that conceptualizes a dichotomous structure of state and civil society formulates 'autonomy' and 'civility', as opposed to political, as fundamental characteristics of the CSOs. Centre-periphery paradigm, likewise, underlines the exclusion and repression of civil society by the state as the main reason of lack of democracy, arguing that the emergence of autonomous civil society from the state is the remedy against authoritarianism. Yet, the examination of the selected CSOs revealed that the state, civil society and the CSOs are very closely intertwined with one another ruling out the autonomy of the CSOs. However, this does not mean that the state has extended over the borders of its 'sphere' to colonialize the CSOs. Civil society is not associated immanently with

positive features as opposed to the state, which can be corrupted by it in authoritarian contexts. In other words, the state is not held responsible from this close relationship between state and the CSOs. The links between the state and the civil society are rather organic. This has different aspects. First of all, the cadres of the CSOs, the bureaucracy and the government are shared to a great extent. These cadres have their roots in the Islamist movement. Therefore not only the functionaries of the state and the CSOs share their cadres, but also that of the AKP as an Islamist party. It can be argued that this overlapping distribution of positions and functions is due to the educated personnel that the AKP lacks. This is because human resources were lost following the struggle with the Gülen Community. Second, as mentioned before, the hold of state power enables to consolidate hegemony. In this case, the AKP government enables the Islamist CSOs by using its administrative and legal powers and its monopoly over public resources, while it uses its repressive apparatus over the oppositional CSOs. This finding does not only demonstrate the consensual relationship between the AKP government and the CSOs, but also challenges the liberal view that the role of the state in neoliberal context decreases. This argument is employed for promoting neoliberalisation under the guise of democratization, as the retrieval of the state is conceived to be extension of the civil sphere of the liberties. However, the state plays the central role in the expansion of the CSOs by providing them with public resources that could be otherwise invested in public education. Therefore, not only the minimal state, but also the autonomy of the CSOs from the state is a ‘myth’ of the neoliberal era, which is the ideological aspect of the neoliberal hegemony. This entwinement of the CSOs with the state, in turn, has significant repercussions on their supposedly democratic functions, because the extreme dependency of the CSOs on the state and the party in various ways make them susceptible to their political instrumentalization. In fact, the CSOs are directly and openly working to make public opinion for the political authority. In this sense, their non-political, that is, civil character comes into question. As it has been argued in this thesis, the functions of the Islamist CSOs are, in fact, exclusively political rather than civil as will be presented below.

While the question of autonomy of the CSOs is central to the definition of civil society of the mainstream approaches, the CSOs’ understanding of the state-civil society relations present a different picture. This brings us to the third point and a significant hegemonic function of the CSOs. It has been found that the Islamists conceive state and civil society not as separate, autonomous from one another or oppositional, but rather, with reference to the ‘waqf tradition’ in the Ottoman society, as complementary of each other and in harmony. The repercussions of this has two aspects. First, this definition enables excluding oppositional CSOs such as the

LGBT+, Gezi protestors, feminist associations from the terrain of civil society and criminalizing them labelling them as ‘against the state’. Indeed, various press releases or public campaigns against these organizations indicate that political propaganda is a central function of the Islamist CSOs. This demonstrates that civil society has also repressive functions. However, it is presented as democratic since it is conceived to be the attack of the oppositional CSOs that represent the ‘elite’ to the government, the representative of the ‘majority’. Second, the privatization of public education by the hand of the state by transferring public resources, duties and authority to the CSOs is based on this understanding of civil society. The claim that social welfare is the duty of the CSOs similar to the Ottoman waqf, accelerated privatizations and transformed the state into the financier of privatizing education. This is portrayed as democratic as it enlarges the sphere of civil liberties against the ‘coercion’ of the state. In other words, the CSOs themselves has become the instruments of the state’s rolling back from the welfare provision under the guise of democratization. Important to underline is that both of these are political-economic functions, which is assigned to the sphere of the market/state by the mainstream view. The hegemonic aspect of these functions lies in their presentation as democratic thanks to the arguments of the centre-periphery view, while in reality they contribute to the making of the neoliberal-Islamist society based on a totalitarian view of state-society relations.

Fourth, in relation to the point made above, it has been revealed that the struggle for secular education is in fact a class struggle for the right and access to education. The transfer of public education responsibilities to the Islamist CSOs has not only privatized education, but also resulted in an unprecedented Islamization of formal education. This means that the right to free, public education, not only but particularly, of the children of poorer families is confiscated. At the same time, thanks to the penetration of the CSOs in the system, Islamic education is enforced on the complete student population in the public formal education system, who do not have the conditions and opportunities to choose other options. This demonstrates, on the one hand, that neoliberalism and Islamization goes hand in hand under the AKP rule not different from the previous periods. This is important to underline, because the articulation of Turkish Islamism with neoliberalism has set the context of post-1980 Turkey or as Açıkel comments deepening capitalism results in the “Turkish-Islamization of the society”⁶⁵¹. On the other hand, privatization accompanied by Islamization in education shows clearly that struggle for

⁶⁵¹ Açıkel, “‘Kutsal Mazlumluğun’ Psikopatolojisi”, 153-6.

secularism has a class character. Fifth, a fundamental function of the CSOs is to conceal this class character and repress and replace class struggle with identity politics. Their rhetoric portrays dichotomies such as state-civil society, secular-Islamic, elite-people, alien-native, authoritarian-democratic and presents these cultural dichotomies as the fundamental contradiction in the society, thereby, replacing the class antagonism. Diminishing the role of state in education and its privatization is advocated, because public, secular education is conceived to be the Kemalist instrument of enforcing Western values on the society. This argument portrays the fundamental conflict to be between the Kemalist, secular and authoritarian state and the Islamic-conservative, democratic civil society concealing the social inequalities privatization causes and hence, the class component in it.

Sixth, it has been found out that the examined CSOs do not belong to the religious brotherhoods and communities, although they have direct and close connections to them. This is an important characteristics, because considering the struggle between the AKP governments and the Gülen Community, foundations and associations that are not linked to a leader reduces the potential threat to the government and the political authority coming from them. Indeed, many recently founded CSOs such as T3, KADEM, TÜGVA and TÜRGEV makes up a network in civil society that is not connected to the religious brotherhoods and communities, but to the government and particularly to the President Erdoğan, as they are founded and manned by primarily his family members and close, reliable friends. In this sense, the Islamist CSOs form an alternative network in civil society to the lost organizations of the Gülen Community filling in the positions left by them. It can be argued that the Gülen cadres that were influential in the Ministry of Education starting from the 1990s are replaced by the cadres of these CSOs shaping the education system. Seventh, that particularly the CSOs in the field of education have strengthened and expanded under the strict control of the government indicate their importance for the hold of power. They raise the cadres of the state and civil society, a function that was assumed by the CSOs of the Gülen Community before the failed coup attempt. Turkish Islamism is aware of the centrality of ‘conquering the hearts and the minds’ in order to seize and maintain the state power, for which the educated and devoted cadres are a precondition. In other words, they raise the ‘intellectuals’ of the ‘New Turkey’. Eighth, it has been revealed that although the Islamist movement has always been devoted followers of ‘war of position’, that is, ‘conquering the hearts and the minds’, ‘war of manoeuvre’ is an often employed strategy under the AKP rule both for strengthening the CSOs and positioning the cadres they raise in the institutions of state and civil society.

Finally, this thesis has come to the conclusion that the Islamist CSOs are invaluable organizations with their significant political and economic functions in the making of the new regime of the ‘New Turkey’. The CSOs aim at raising ‘pious generations’ that will found a new civilization based on Islamic principles and values. They present their efforts, therefore, as an attempt at counterhegemony to the Kemalist ideology, although it is clear that the education system has long been shaped by Islamism. Yet, this does not go beyond the portrayal of a cultural conflict between the secular and conservative actors to be the fundamental contradiction in the mainstream literature. In fact, it has been revealed that the existence and activities of the CSOs undermine secular, public, free education with equal access to all by replacing the state in this field and hence revealing the neoliberal character of this hegemonic project. Their central function is to seize the Islamist cultural hegemony that would complement the neoliberal bourgeois hegemony, a role assigned them by the President Erdoğan himself, after pointing out to the lack of social and cultural hegemony. These findings indicate that the hegemonic theoretical approach to civil society needs to be reviewed to explain the actual societies and the power relations in it, rather than insisting on the “misconception”, which “makes the social reality” rather than explaining it⁶⁵², which provides the ground to the leadership of the AKP.

⁶⁵² Açikel, “Entegratif Toplum ve Muarızları”, 34; Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective”, 23-5.

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