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The Ideological Framing of the National Outlook Parties in Turkey

FERIHA PEREKLI*

ABSTRACT *This paper unpacks the ideological framing of the National Outlook (NO) parties in Turkey, focusing on the National Order Party and the National Salvation Party during the 1970s, and the Welfare Party between the years 1983 and 1991. Rejecting violence for the purpose of bringing about a regime in line with Islamic principles, the NO parties formulated a synthesis of conservative-rightist and tawhīdi Islamist thought. The first part of this paper examines the overlap between the political discourse of the NO parties and the ideological pillars of conservative-rightist thought. The second part examines the internalization of the tawhīdi framing and its utilization within the discourse of the NO parties. The paper argues that an in-depth analysis of these two elements is integral to understanding the NO parties' underlying political philosophies.*

Introduction

In a newspaper column dated September 1969, Sadun Tanju¹ quoted a businessman who made the following observation regarding the soon-to-be leader of the National Order Party (NOP), Necmettin Erbakan (1926-2011): '[He] just seems like a modern painting; everyone sees in him what they want, be it form, color, taste or imagination'.² This statement was made just one year before the first Islamist political party came into being and captures the ideological spectrum of the National Outlook (NO) parties by demonstrating that the NO parties created a heterogeneous Islamist example. They borrowed certain features of Turkish rightist-conservative thought and used them in conjunction with other aspects of tawhīdi Islamism.³

In order to demonstrate the heterogeneous character of parliamentary Islamism, three different NO parties are included in this study: the National Order Party (NOP, 1970-1971), the

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¹ Sadun Tanju (1924 - present) is a well-known, seasoned Turkish journalist.

² Sadun Tanju, 'A New Man in the Right-Wing Race', *Cumhuriyet* (25-30 September 1969), in *Prof. Dr. Necmettin Erbakan in the Press* (İzmir: İstiklal Matbaası, 1985), p.33 [Turkish].

³ Tawhīdi Islamism embraces a holistic understanding of Islam. Under this view, Islam represents a 'world order' and a 'worldview' instead of being relegated to worship alone. Tawhīdis aim to remove Islam from the remnants of tradition and local beliefs/rituals in order to attain an 'authentic' form of Islam. They accept the Qur'an and Sunnah as their only resources to realize the Prophetic model.

National Salvation Party (NSP) (1972-1980), and the Welfare Party (WP) (1983-1998).⁴ A short chronology of these parties is as follows: the NOP was established on January 26, 1970,⁵ and was closed down in May of 1971 by the Constitutional Court, along with the rest of the political parties (after the 1971 coup d'état).⁶ The Court alleged that the NOP had been exploiting religion for the sake of political ends and that its publications violated the principle of secularism in the constitution.⁷ Despite its short life, the NOP energized the religiously-conservative and largely rural masses to form an opposition bloc emanating from its use of religion in its ideological framing. The incorporation of Islamists into the formal political process, initiated by the NOP, continued with the establishment of the NSP in 1972. Islamist politicians found a political platform on which to prosper and gain acceptance in the secular political system. Acquiring a new political discourse, heavily blended with religious symbols, the NSP was able to offer its constituency a new Islamist identity, capable of criticizing the economic privileges of the urban bourgeoisie, and the foreignness of their Western *modus vivendi* and customs.⁸ Until the 1980 coup d'état,⁹ the NSP served in three coalition governments between 1974 and 1980, supporting the moralization of socio-cultural domain and promoting the economic interests of the small and medium-size business sector in Anatolia.

Following the 1980 coup d'état, the third NO party, the Welfare Party (WP), was established in 1983 and continued its political life until its closure by the Constitutional Court in 1998. After facing severe repression by the secular Turkish government in what became known as the 'February 28th process',¹⁰ the WP experienced an intra-party schism between its hard-liners (who abided by the Islamist premises) and soft-liners (who were prone to relinquish an Islamist political identity). The latter culminated in the establishment of the Justice and Development Party which currently holds power in Turkey (JDP, 2001 - present). The JDP (known as the AKP in Turkish) rejected its Islamist identity by calling itself a conservative

⁴ The NO is a generic name adopted by political parties whose agendas have a clear Islamist tilt. These parties are composed of the National Order Party (1970-1971), the National Salvation Party (1972-1980), the Welfare Party (1983-1998), and the Felicity Party (2001-present). Here, the adjective of 'national' is undoubtedly related to the concept of 'nation' (*milla* in Arabic) – a sectarian/religious community – which gives us a clue about the usage of the term with an Islamic connotation. This is in contrast to the usage of 'millet', meaning nation in modern Turkish, with a secular connotation. Sarıbay, Ali Yaşar, *Modernization, Religion and Party Politics in Turkey: A Case Study of the National Salvation Party* (Istanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1985), p.114 [Turkish].

⁵ Editorial, 'Establishing the NOP', *Milliyet* (26 January 1970), [Turkish].

⁶ The military high command presented a written memorandum to the Justice Party (JP) government on March 12, 1971. The government resigned, but the assembly remained. Tanel Demirel, 'Lessons of Military Regimes and Democracy: The Turkish Case in a Comparative Perspective', *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 31, No.2 (Winter 2005), 245-271, p.250.

⁷ Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, 'The National Order Party's Organization and Program Contents', in *Political Thought in Modern Turkey: Islamism* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2004), p.579 [Turkish].

⁸ Mehmet Metiner, *The Dream of Paradise: From an Ideological State to a Democratic State* (Istanbul: Günizi Yayıncılık, 2004), p. 202 [Turkish].

⁹ The military intervened in parliamentary politics on September 12, 1980, which led to the dissolution of all the political parties, including the NSP.

¹⁰ The National Security Council (NSC), which was dominated by the military, issued the WP and TPP (True Path Party) coalition government a list of measures designed to counter what they viewed as the Islamization of Turkey and to reinforce the secular system therein. Pressure exerted by the NSC, in combination with the civilian component of the secular establishment, resulted in collapse of the coalition government in 1997. Ümit Cizre and Menderes Çınar, 'Turkey 2002: Kemalism, Islamism and Politics in the Light of the February 28 Process,' *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102: 2/3, Spring, Summer 2003, 309-332, p.309.

democratic party. The hardliners retained the NO heritage under the Felicity Party (2001 - present), which only acquired 1.25% of total votes in the latest 2011 national elections.¹¹

Instead of analyzing the moderation phase of the WP, which accelerated in the early 1990s, this study focuses on the pre-moderation period. In doing so, the aim is to deepen the understanding of the ideological pillars of parliamentarian Turkish Islamism from the early 1970s to the beginning of their moderation in 1991. As such, this article provides an in-depth analysis of the ideological mapping of the NO parties and one facet of Turkish Islamism prior to the 1990s. The article begins with an analysis of the interplay between Turkish rightist-conservative thought and the NO parties, with a special emphasis on the concept of ‘Nationalist Islam’. It goes on to examine the main premises of tawhīdi Islamism, which contrasts with Nationalist Islam in many ways. The impact of tawhīdi Islamist discourse on the NO parties’ respective discourses through what social movement theorists refer to as the ‘framing process’ will then be analyzed in order to assess its influence on the NO parties’ ideological structure. The article demonstrates that in the NO parties’ interpretation of Islam as a worldview, tawhīdi framing occupies an immense role in their understanding of morality and in their foreign policy orientation between the 1970s and the early 1990s. Thus, a thorough understanding of the ideological structure of the NO parties necessitates an analysis of its tawhīdi elements along with its nationalist Islamist premises.

Throughout the paper, this analysis is performed through the reading of the *Milli Gazete* (*The National Newspaper*) (1970s-80s), which is the mouthpiece of the NO parties. Moreover, the WP’s election manifestos and publications, which include the declarations of numerous party members, and two interviews conducted with well-known Islamists who have extensive knowledge of the NO over its three-decade span, will be utilized. One interviewee, Hüseyin Besli, is a current JDP member of parliament, and the second interviewee, Hamza Türkmen, is a tawhīdi-Islamist writer. The interviews were conducted in July and May 2009 in Ankara and Istanbul, respectively. Numerous additional interviews with various NO party members that were published in the *Milli Gazete* throughout the 1980s will also be referenced. Finally, the article draws on memoirs of NO Islamists, which in turn lends greater clarity to their worldview.

‘Nationalist Islam’ in Anatolia

The NO parties adopted numerous concepts from rightist-conservative Turkish intellectuals who extensively questioned the policies of swift Westernization and Kemalist modernization. The ideas embraced by the NO parties centered mainly on the criticism of Turkey’s extensive Westernization. By paying homage to the Ottoman legacy, the NO parties were able to associate a love of Anatolia with Islam. Moreover, the NO parties adopted the intellectuals’ belief that the state is an indispensable entity for the maintenance of the political order. The non-revolutionary and state-friendly characteristics of the NO parties became an exception among many Islamist groupings in the Muslim world, which did not hesitate to attack the very being of the state in a revolutionary manner.

For Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1904-1983), the ideologue of the NO parties, ‘nation’ manifested within a territorially-defined entity that is Anatolia. He argued that ‘each and every

¹¹ 2011 Turkish General Election Results, Hürriyet, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/secim2011/default.html> [Turkish] (Last accessed 20 August 2011).

corner of [Anatolia] is replete with the vestiges of Islam'.¹² In his view this justified the inseparability of religion from Anatolian history. Through his writings, Kısakürek played a large role in advocating the pairing of conservatism and Islamism. While seeing salvation in Islam and devising an alternative Islamic socio-political model in relation to its secular counterpart, he diverged from the traditional conservative position which generally took religion to be merely a cultural form.¹³ Moreover, he saw no contradiction between supporting Turkish nationalism and Islam at the same time, and considered the conversion to Islam to be an enrichment of the spiritual and intellectual facets of Turkish identity.

Confining the interpretation of religion to a specific geographical region engenders a different type of religious knowledge, one molded by vernacular beliefs and practices. While this creates a more familiar version of Islam for the people, it also allows for a 'Nationalist Islam' that perceives the world through the lens of the nation-state. The emphasis on the state within the NO parties was inherited from the Ottoman past, during which the persistence of religion was dependent upon the continuation of the state/political order.¹⁴ This was made possible due to the convergence of pre-Islamic Turkish customs (*törü*),¹⁵ which consider the state to be transcendental (*devlet-i ebed müddet*), and the Sunni Islamic tradition, which requires Muslims to give allegiance to the state's elites in order to prevent anarchy.¹⁶ Within the purview of this political culture, the idea of religion complemented the idea of the state, where the absence of one would damage the existence of the other.¹⁷ Within this context, the NO parties formulated an understanding that held: 'The state is ours, but those in charge have been corrupted' and 'we must appoint religious and qualified people to positions of power'.¹⁸ In this vein, the founding chairman of the NSP, Süleyman Arif Emre, stated that it was necessary to 'bring the faithful and knowledgeable cadre into the fold in order to implement a comprehensive policy change'.¹⁹

One of the reasons for the NO parties' attraction to conservatism was their belief that radical Westernization had caused the degeneration of the Turkish-Muslim ethos. Western values, in this criticism, constituted a concrete threat to the traditional structure of Turkish society. This sentiment is exemplified in a statement by important Turkish conservative-rightist Sezai Karakoç (1933-present):

¹² Kısakürek, *Ideological Knitting: Toward the Great East*, p.453 [Turkish].

¹³ Yasin Aktay, 'Conservative Balance in Islamism', in *Political Thought in Modern Turkey: Conservatism*, Vol. 5 (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003), p.346-361, p.352 [Turkish].

¹⁴ İsmail Kara, 'Lessons in Turkish Thought', *İsmail Kara Lecture Series*, Tarık Zafer Tunaya Cultural Center, Istanbul (30 January 2009) [Turkish].

¹⁵ *Törü*: The law inherited from Central Asian Turkic states' system in which the state was directly ruled by the Khan. When transported to Turkey, this allowed for the eventual establishment of non-Islamic jurisprudence with regards to the administration of the military, the state's affairs, taxes and land regulations. Halil İnalçık, 'Islam in the Ottoman Empire', *Dergah Edebiyat ve Sanat Kültür Dergisi*, August 1992, 14-17, p.15 [Turkish]. See also Halil İnalçık, 'Shari'ah and Law, Religion and State', *İslamiyat I*, 4 (1998), p.135-142 [Turkish].

¹⁶ Tanıl Bora, *The Three States of the Turkish Right: Nationalism, Conservatism, Islamism* (Istanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 2007), p.126 [Turkish].

¹⁷ İsmail Kara, *Islam as an Issue in Republican Turkey* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2008), p.190 [Turkish].

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.191. This line of thought is exemplified by Süleyman Arif Emre, the state minister of the coalition between the NSP and the Republican People's Party (RPP) (January-November 1974). The RPP was established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (the founder of the Republic of Turkey) in 1923. Its single-party rule continued between 1923 and 1950, until the introduction of multi-party politics. It ultimately lasted until the 1980 coup d'état and was re-opened in 1992.

¹⁹ Süleyman Arif Emre, *35 Years in Politics*, Vol. 2 (Ankara: Keşif Yayınları, 2002), p.73 [Turkish].

Christian traditions have been passed off as being traditions of the modern era, and their acceptance has therefore been forced upon us. Chopping down pine trees for the New Year, carving turkeys, and streets full of strange garb and fake, bearded Santa Clauses – these are all indisputably accepted as the conditions for being Western. In actuality, these traditions are all contrary to religion, reason and aesthetics. We have no traces of Greco-Roman or Christian characteristics in our essence.²⁰

Much like the conservatives, members of the NO parties blamed the importation of the Western *modus vivendi*, including political and economic development models, for debasing Islamic morals and ruining the national economy.²¹ Bahri Zengin (1942- 2011), the vice-president of the WP, aimed to put an end to the ‘two-hundred year civilizational dependency’ on the West, deemed at odds with the socio-cultural and religious configuration of Turkish society.²² The need to revitalize the people who had been poisoned by the West was reflected in the NOP’s focus on morality, which formed the main component of its ideological framing. Similarly, the leader of the NSP, Necmettin Erbakan, considered Western culture to be the main challenge to his goal of nurturing generations of pious Muslims, and stated this point unambiguously:

The greatest affliction is that our great morality, present for over a millennium in our history, has been deteriorating on a daily basis and is being replaced by materialism. The men seem to emulate women by having long hair, and growing out their sideburns and facial hair like a monk; the women are cruising around in miniskirts and revealing clothing. Divorce is on the rise. Our movie theaters and playhouses are rife with obscenities, and the newspapers are publishing filth...²³

The conservatives’ reading of Turkish history via ‘continuity’, rather than radical ‘rupture’ with an Ottoman-rooted heritage, was another catalyst in the NO parties’ internalization of the ideas of conservatism.²⁴ In its founding manifesto, the NOP described its establishment as ‘the glowing of the national spirit which fought against the Crusaders, managed to reach Vienna, and clashed with the invaders on the Gallipoli front in both the First World War and the Turkish War of Independence’.²⁵ As an Ottomanist, anti-imperialist and anti-Western politician, a yearning for the epic past was evident in Erbakan’s speech of February 9, 1970, in which he included the most famous names of Seljuk and Ottoman sultans in the list of his party’s founders in order to emphasize their influence upon the party.

²⁰ Sezai Karakoç, *Differences*, p.17 and 22.

²¹ Abdullah Lelik(ed), *Prof. Dr. Erbakan: Education, Inner Peace, Prosperity for Everyone, the Key and the National Outlook* (Ankara: Güneş Matbaacılık, 1975) [Turkish]; The Welfare Party, *Statements Published by the Turkish Radio and Television Company Concerning the Welfare Party’s Parliamentary Elections on September 28, 1986*, n.d. (1986) [Turkish]; Selahattin Altun, ‘Turkey is Losing Blood Each and Every Day’, *Milli Gazete* (2 September 1986), an interview with vice president of the WP, Bahri Zengin; Eyüp Köktaş, ‘The Prosperity Movement’, *Milli Gazete* (12 November 1987). *Milli Gazete* is a Turkish newspaper, and subsequent citations should assume translation from Turkish. Regarding articles lacking page numbers: when certain articles were requested from the archives, occasionally the copy returned contained only the article in question, and not the page as a whole.

²² Selahattin Altun, *Milli Gazete* (2 September 1986), an editorial interview with Bahri Zengin; Aşkın Baran, ‘The National Outlook’s Call is Universal’, *Milli Gazete* (9 October 1986), an editorial interview with Ali Yüksel, the Secretary General of the European NO Organizations.

²³ Lelik, *Prof. Dr. Erbakan*, pp.126, 127.

²⁴ Bora, *The Three States of the Turkish Right*, p.137; Ahmet Kabaklı, ‘The First Religious Council’, *Türkiye Gazetesi* (30 October 30 1993) [Turkish]. For more information on the discussion of ‘continuity’ and ‘rupture’ in Ottoman and Republican era in Turkey, see Hasan Bülent Kahraman, *A Structural Analysis of Turkish Policy-I* (Istanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2008), p.91-118 [Turkish].

²⁵ Ruşen Çakır, *Sign and Slogan* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları,1990), p.230 [Turkish].

These efforts to revitalize the past are in line with Hobsbawm's definition of 'invented traditions' as a 'set of practices which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which implies continuity with the past'.²⁶ This was evident in Erbakan's constant references to the Ottoman Empire and Seljuk dynasty. Furthermore, he argued that Turkish society, and especially its youth, was being 'poisoned by Western morals'. This was the primary cause of psychological and social tumult in society, a crisis which the socio-political system was ill-equipped to handle during the 1970s.²⁷ In order to confront these troubles, the NSP proposed a spiritual awakening and salvation of those afflicted with Western intoxication in order to re-attain Turkey's splendor as it had existed throughout its one thousand year-old Turkish-Islamic past.²⁸ Erbakan re-appropriated the Ottomanist heroic spirit in order to legitimize and reinforce his political action throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In a 1973 interview conducted by *Milliyet*, Erbakan described the NO parties by alluding to the Ottoman past, saying, 'We are the passion of the Ottoman soldier in Gallipoli who, after losing an arm to shrapnel, refused to lay down his rifle and instead continued to load his weaponry with only one hand. This passion is the epitome of the NO.'²⁹

The NO parties' emphasis on the grandeur of the Ottoman character continued unabated with the rise of the Welfare Party in the late 1980s.³⁰ The WP participated in the commemoration of the '536th Anniversary of the Conquest of Istanbul' where the Ottoman tradition was appropriated with slogans including the following: 'We are reliving the conquest of Istanbul'; 'We have become the conquering army of Istanbul'; 'Spiritually, we stand before the sultan'; and 'Three conditions must exist for conquest: faith, a commander, and an army'.³¹ As can be discerned from these slogans, the WP had deemed itself ready for the re-conquest of a Western-afflicted Turkish society. This is because they had the necessary faith, a capable leader in Erbakan and an army of members all striving for this goal.

Principles of Tawhīdi Islam

Similar to the borrowings from conservative-rightist thought, the NO parties also drew on the ideas of tawhīdi Islamists. The parties were influenced by tawhīdi Islamism insofar as they claimed to be the sole representatives of truth and in their interpretation of Islam as a 'way of life' and a 'worldview'. This stands in contrast to the conservative-rightists' interpretation of Islam as devoid of political and economic dimensions while being restricted to the role of ritual within social and individual domains.

As the 1970s marked the resurgence of Islamism throughout the Middle East, culminating in the Iranian revolution (1979), a new tawhīdi Islamist current came into being in Turkey.³² This was aided by the translation of tawhīdi Islamists' works from different parts of the Muslim

²⁶ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 6, 12.

²⁷ Abdi İpekçi, 'What are the Party Leaders Saying after the Election: Erbakan Explains Their Views', *Milliyet* (19 October 1973) [Turkish].

²⁸ Lelik (ed), *Prof. Dr. Erbakan*, p.126.

²⁹ Abdi İpekçi, *Milliyet* (19 October 1973) [Turkish].

³⁰ Ahmet Yıldız, 'Politico-Religious Discourse of Political Islam in Turkey: The Parties of NO', *Muslim World*, 93 (2003), 187-210.

³¹ Editorial. 'We are Reliving the Conquest of Istanbul', *Milli Gazete* (1 June 1989).

³² Gilles Kepel, *Jihad the Trail of Political Islam* (The Belknap Press of Harvard Uni. Press, 2002), p.61.

world.³³ Much as their name suggests, ‘tawhīdī’³⁴ Islamists’ focus on the idea of tawhīd (the absolute oneness of God), as well as the need for the Islamicization of all spheres of life.³⁵ Tawhīdī Islamists argue that the time of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions was the ‘purest’ period of Islam. Just like their counterparts in the Arab world, Turkish tawhīdī Islamists look to the era of the Prophet and his companions as the time of perfection of faith, and strive to attain the purity and authenticity of that age.³⁶ In an iconoclastic fashion, they aim to rid Islam of its traditional and secular elements. The ‘traditional elements’ refer to the impact of Sufi brotherhoods and of pre-Islamic forms of beliefs and practices.³⁷ The ‘secular’ refers to Western humanistic views, secularism and democracy.³⁸ A well-known Turkish tawhīdī Islamist writer, Hamza Türkmen, summarizes the tawhīdī stance as follows: ‘When a single drop of wine is placed into a glass of pure water, the purity is corrupted. Similarly, when secular values are mixed with Qur’anic principles, the resulting values are also corrupted.’³⁹

While taking a critical position with respect to traditional Islam, owing to its ‘un-Islamic’ components, the Turkish tawhīdī Islamists support a new form of ‘authentic Islam’. In their view, Islam is devoid of the remnants of local practices and beliefs and secular ideologies. The realization of this ‘authenticity’ comes through embracing both the Qur’an and the *Sunnah*⁴⁰. These are seen as the only benchmarks with which to measure the attainment of a ‘pure’ Islamic identity.⁴¹ However, striving for authenticity and the labeling of different interpretations of Islam as either *kufir* (heresy) or *shirk* (the association of God with other deities) demonstrates the exclusionary and essentialist character of tawhīdī thought. Differences in opinion and different claims of truth are not tolerated.⁴²

As Turkish tawhīdī Islamists aim to prevent Islamic identity from intermixing with national identity, regarded as one of the impositions of modernization, the tawhīdīs hold Islam to be self-sufficient and independent.⁴³ Ali Bulaç, a well-known tawhīdī Islamist writer and journalist, interprets the idea of allegiance to the state as overvaluing the national and tribal ties, restricting Muslims’ freedom to believe in the oneness of God.⁴⁴ Tawhīdīs regard the state as anathema to their beliefs and they deny the state’s legitimacy by refusing to participate in

³³ Interview with Hüseyin Besli, member of parliament for the JDP, 4 July 2009, Ankara; interview with Hamza Türkmen, Islamist writer and thinker, 15 May 2009, Istanbul.

³⁴ Although Turkish tawhīdī Islamists have not called themselves ‘Salafis’, they are representative of Salafi thought in that they refer only to the Qur’an and Sunnah, they refuse heterodox Islam/Sufism, and call for a return to the pure faith of the Prophet and his companions.

³⁵ Interview with Türkmen.

³⁶ Muhammed Ayoob, ‘Political Islam: Image and Reality’, *World Policy Journal* (Fall 2004), 1-12, p.1; Nilüfer Göle, ‘Snapshots of Islamic Modernities’, *Daedalus*, Vol. 129(1) (Winter 2000), 91-117, p.96-97.

³⁷ Alev Erkilet, *Modernization in the Middle East and Islamic Movements* (Istanbul: Yöneliş, 1999), p.186, [Turkish].

³⁸ Ibid. On the incompatibility between democracy and Islam within tawhīdī Islamist circles, see Ahmet Seçkin, ‘Bridging Islam and Democracy’, *Girişim*, February 1986, p.36-37.

³⁹ Hamza Türkmen, *The Roots of Islamism in Turkey* (Istanbul: Ekin Yayınları, 2008) p. 180, [Turkish].

⁴⁰ Sunnah: ‘Established custom, normative precedent, and cumulative tradition, typically based on Muhammad’s example.’ John Esposito, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.305.

⁴¹ Hamza Türkmen, *The Roots of Islamism in Turkey*, p.177.

⁴² Nilüfer Göle, ‘Contemporary Islamist Movements and New Sources for Religious Tolerance’, *Journal of Human Rights*, 1 (2003), 17-30, p.20.

⁴³ Interview with Hamza Türkmen, 2009; Atasoy Müftüoğlu, ‘Toward a Substantial Change’, *Girişim*, March 1986, p.34-3 [Turkish].

⁴⁴ Ali Bulaç, ‘Religion, Knowledge, Wisdom’, *Bilgi ve Hikmet*, 11 (1995), 7-13, p.11 [Turkish].

elections and by refusing to engage in the political apparatus of the secular state.⁴⁵ They consider the political parties to be instruments of *shirk* and view them with suspicion.⁴⁶ An example of this is tawhīdī Islamist Ercüment Özkan, who criticized Islamists who participate in parliamentary politics by questioning their ‘Muslimness’.⁴⁷ He described this contradiction by stating that ‘this whole situation is just like the man who works in a pub, but swears that he doesn’t notice the lingering odor of alcohol on his own clothes’. Furthermore, tawhīdī Islamists advocate an anti-imperialist and universalist version of Islam. In this context, they believe ‘the aim of life to be faith and jihad. Anything which overshadows these purposes, such as watching TV, wearing ties, listening to music, falling in love, and idolizing money and sex, are considered taboo.’⁴⁸ They believe that such actions and behavior ‘distance people from their *da‘wah*, turn them into “egoistical beings”’.⁴⁹

Tawhīdī Islamists condemn the association between Islamists and rightist-conservatives that was forged during the late 1940s, sarcastically labeling this mixed group ‘pious nationalists’.⁵⁰ They argue that these ‘pious nationalists’, widely represented in rightist circles, prioritized national and local aspirations over Islamic injunctions (*naṣṣ*) by allocating Islam a restricted role in society. In contrast, the tawhīdis’ aim is to alter Islam’s position from a mere cultural component of everyday life to a holistic entity encompassing all spheres of life.⁵¹ They argue that Islam should not be ‘confined to the mosque’ and to worship alone (*‘ibāda*).⁵² Instead, they believe that Islam should be accepted as a way of life and as a legitimate competitor to secular ideologies such as capitalism and socialism.⁵³ This interpretation of the place of Islam in life allowed the tawhīdis to develop alternative Islam-based models of the economy, politics, education, family, law, international relations and general social life.

The tawhīdī Islamists’ vision of comprehensively implementing Islam in Turkey spread throughout all spectrums of Islamist activism during the 1970s.⁵⁴ Its impact was widely felt among the youth in grassroots student movements with ties to the NO parties, such as the National Turkish Student Association (MTTB) and the Association of Raiders. Tawhīdī Islam’s impact was also widely felt through the public statements of NO politicians until the early 1990s.⁵⁵

⁴⁵ Alev Erkilet, *From Criticism to Compliance: The Adventure of Muslims’ Public Sphere* (Istanbul: Hece Yayınları, 2006), p.89 [Turkish].

⁴⁶ Cihan Aktaş, *A Life Criticism: Islamism* (Istanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2007), p.55 [Turkish].

⁴⁷ Alev Erkilet, *From Criticism to Compliance*, p.185.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p.56.

⁴⁹ *Da‘wah*: ‘A Call. God’s way of bringing believers to faith, and the means by which prophets call individuals and communities back to God.’ John Esposito, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, p.64.

⁵⁰ Türkmen, *The Roots of Islamism in Turkey*, p. 192. For the incompatibility of nationalism and Islam, see Cemal Doğan, ‘Islam and Understanding of Nationalism’, p.16-17.

⁵¹ Aktaş, *A Life Criticism: Islamism*, p.57; Erkilet, *From Criticism to Compliance*, p.169; Yaşar Akgül, ‘A Muslim Way of Thinking’, p.28.

⁵² Alev Erkilet, *Modernization in the Middle East*, p.157.

⁵³ *Service Given to the Awakening of Turkish Tawhīdī Thought*, *Journal of Thought*, http://www.haksozhaber.net/okul_v2/article_detail.php?id=2619 (Last Accessed 7 February 2012) [Turkish].

⁵⁴ Interview with Türkmen.

⁵⁵ Alev Erkilet, *From Criticism to Compliance*, p.94.

Tawhīdi Framing in the NO Parties

Scholars of social movements who theorize mobilization and counter-mobilization for collective action often employ the concept of ‘framing’. Erving Goffman defines frames as the ‘schemata of interpretation that enable individuals to locate, perceive, identify and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large’.⁵⁶ Frames unite the *diagnosis* of a given social condition which needs to be treated, and a *prognosis* regarding how to achieve such a remedy.⁵⁷ Frames are created at a point where movement supporters agree that they suffer from an unjust situation which needs to be remedied.⁵⁸ The movement leaders identify/diagnose the problem (what is or what went wrong) and make attributions regarding who or what is to blame. William A. Gamson's notion of ‘injustice frames’ refers to a process that enables the movements’ proponents to identify the enemy by unpacking the problem plaguing the activists. The injustice frames therefore allow movement actors to ‘construct their grievances through a sense of moral indignation’.⁵⁹ By shaping the nature of grievances, injustice frames, as a specific form of collective action frames, define the ‘us’ and ‘them’ within a social movement.⁶⁰ Frames are effective in depicting the identities of the contenders.⁶¹ Here, ‘us’ denotes the ones who can act as agents of change, while ‘they’ refers to those who are responsible for the perceived injustices and these injustices’ perpetrators.⁶²

Despite functioning under the political party framework, the NO parties assumed a rectifying role for the ‘immoral and unjust’ identity formations within society. The NO parties were more reminiscent of a religious social movement than a vote-seeking political party before the 1990s. Representing the Islamist criticism of the secular political system and its embrace of the Western mode of socio-cultural life, the NO worked as a network of diverse individuals and organizations with close links to the *Naqshibandi* religious order.⁶³

The NO parties framed their need for collective action with both the fear of marginalization and annihilation due to ever-continuing Westernization and the perceived injustices to which Islam and Islamists have been subjected. Erbakan sought to remedy the injustices which the traditional-religious section of Turkish society had experienced since the beginning of the *tanẓīmāt*.⁶⁴ In order to achieve these goals, various members of the NO parties

⁵⁶ Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of the Experience* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1974), p.21, cited in Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, ‘Framing Processes and Social Movements’, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26 (2000), 611-639, p.614.

⁵⁷ Italics used by Benford and Snow. Robert Benford and David Snow, ‘Ideology, frame resonance, and participant mobilization’, *International Social Movement Research*, 1:197-218, cited in Francesca Poletta and M. Kai Ho, ‘Frames and their consequences’, in Robert Goodvin and Charles Tilly(eds), *Contextual Political Analysis* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 187-205, p.190.

⁵⁸ William A. Gamson, *Talking Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.31.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p.7.

⁶⁰ Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.21.

⁶¹ Francesca Poletta and M. Kai Ho, ‘Frames and their consequences’, p.190.

⁶² William A. Gamson, ‘Hiroshima, the Holocaust, and the Politics of Exclusion: 1994 Presidential Address’, *American Sociological Review*, 60(1), 1995, 1-20, p.13.

⁶³ See the impact of the Naqshibandi order upon the WP: Birol Yeşilada(ed), *Comparative Political Parties and Party Elites* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), p.136-137. See also the combination of Islamist radicals in the WP echelons: Oral Çalışlar and Tolga Çelik, *Three Arms of Islamism* (Istanbul: Güncel Yayıncılık, 2006), p.57-58 [Turkish].

⁶⁴ *Prof. Dr. Necmettin Erbakan in the Press* (İzmir: İstiklal Matbaası, 1985) [Turkish], p.13 and 28. *Tanẓīmāt* literally means reforms or regulation. In the Ottoman context, it refers to a period marked by social, political, educational and judicial reforms, imported from Western Europe. For more information, see Niyazi Berkes, *The*

selectively embraced tawhīdi Islamists' dichotomous frames, such as 'justice vs. oppression', 'Islam vs. disbelief', 'truth vs. falsehood', an 'Islamic system' vs. a 'jāhili system',⁶⁵ and Islam as a 'worldview and order'. The usage of these binary oppositions pits the 'self' against the 'other', and helps formulate one's self identity. The 'other' in this context was the 'West', its civilization which was rooted in Christianity, and/or its secular values which harkened back to the Enlightenment. The NO parties' utilization of 'injustice frames' and 'anti-Westernization frames', by highlighting examples from different time periods, will be demonstrated below.

The embrace of tawhīdi exclusionary framings began in the 1970s with party youth organizations, MTTB and the Association of Raiders, and continued in the 1980s through NO politicians such as Necmettin Erbakan, Bahri Zengin, Ahmet Tekdal, Tayyip Erdoğan, and the NO parties' mouthpiece *Milli Gazete*. The alienation of the religious masses is encapsulated in Kısakürek's famous poem, *The Ballad of Sakarya*. 'You are a stranger in your own land', he writes, 'a pariah in your own home'.⁶⁶ This sense of alienation was to be addressed by calling for traditional-religious voters to support the NO parties. This can be seen in an article published in the *Milli Gazete*, which openly summoned people to vote for the WP in the 1987 election. The article entitled 'Letters to the Voters' addresses the alienation of the religious masses on an emotional level by arguing,

[The secular elite] did not bring believers like you into the fold. They deem believers like you worthy only of being their servants. They distanced you from state positions. They do not know your true value. The people who are not performing their holy duties, unlike you, cannot possibly know you. What you need to do is cast your vote for the WP in the early elections, and not cast any votes in favor of those parties who represent fallaciousness and ideas imported from the West.⁶⁷

Throughout the 1970s, anti-Western tawhīdi framing was apparent in the declarations of the NSP grassroots student organization, the MTTB.⁶⁸ Before calling for collective action, the MTTB diagnosed the reason for the ruin of Turkish society as being the ongoing process of Westernization. The MTTB asserted:

From the very day we linked our fate to Western civilization, our faces were fixed in a grimace. We lost the health of our nation. We took all of the wrong paths. If only we had turned toward the Qur'an instead. Peace and tranquility will only come if we enter the land of divine inspiration. Everything is tied to this condition.⁶⁹

Similarly, in 1976, the head of the MTTB, Rüştü Ecevit, openly assailed the Westernization process by critiquing the secular education system:

Turkish youth, since the establishment of the Turkish Republic, have been brought up devoid of both spirituality and culture. Due to the Westernization process within Turkish society, we now see

Development of Secularism in Turkey (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2005), Section: Tanzimat, p.213-244 [Turkish].

⁶⁵ *Jāhili* is used to refer to the pre-Islamic period/epoch.

⁶⁶ 'Üstad Necip Fazıl Kısakürek', Ötüken, <http://ustad.necipfazil.org/modules.php?name=News&file=article &sid=6> (Last accessed 20 August 2011) [Turkish].

⁶⁷ Fazlı K. Yahyalılı, 'Letters to the Electorate: Selling Snails in a Muslim Neighborhood?', *Milli Gazete* (16 October 1987). Recep Tayyip Erdoğan echoed the sentiments by saying, 'The people who belittle your faith are the same ones who now call upon you for your votes.' The Welfare Party, *Statements Published via Radio Concerning the Welfare Party's Midterm Parliamentary Elections of 1986* (29 July 1986), n.d.

⁶⁸ The MTTB labeled itself the 'Headquarters of the Islamist Youth'. MTTB, *MTTB Activities Report*, 3 August 1976 (Istanbul: Zafer Matbaası, 1976), p.210 [Turkish].

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p.90-91.

a group of youth embracing the West's deviant and materialistic ideologies. The Turkish education system, which is spirituality lacking, only served to aggravate this situation.⁷⁰

Resorting to a clear repudiative discourse vis-à-vis the secular Republic, the MTTB aimed 'to unite all Islamist students under its organizational body, fight against disbelief, and initiate and promote Islamic preaching with respect to the victims of the materialist education'.⁷¹ Having no trust in the West, and depicting it as a 'materialist civilization', the MTTB called for the Turkish youth to be wary of Western promises. Coming together during multiple rallies, the young Islamists devised various collective action framings by chanting, 'Islam is the only path, the mujahedeen are on their way, we are believers and we are strong, salvation lies within Islam!'⁷²

Mehmet Metiner, a young member in the NSP-affiliated Association of Raiders during the 1970s, identified the problem of the Turkish political system being an 'establishment of man-made rules in the place of/instead of Islamic law'. Reflecting on his time in the organization, he stated:

In light of God's perfect order, we believed that man-made systems are disbelieving and polytheistic. Our goal was to make Islam unconditionally prevalent throughout all spheres of life. Moreover, our ambition was to change all rules and regulations contrary to Islam. We were raiders; we were supposed to strive to establish the sovereignty of Islam everywhere.⁷³

The meetings of the Raiders were replete with slogans such as 'the faithless state will surely collapse, the secular state will certainly crumble – the Islamic state is destined to be founded!'; 'Toward a limitless and classless Islamic state'; 'Shari'ah is Islam, and the constitution is the Qur'an'; and 'Yesterday, Iran and Pakistan - it's your turn now, Muslim!'⁷⁴ In contrast to the young members' enthusiastic embrace of a number of tawhīdi ideas, Metiner has argued that the NSP's upper echelon took a more cautious stance. The leaders in the upper echelon, Metiner asserts, had adopted a more watchful stance with respect to their reading of tawhīdi Islamist journals, like *Tevhid*, *Hicret* and *Şura*. He recalls his time as a student member, saying,

The directors of our party's general headquarters have occasionally prohibited the reading of such publications. They say that the people who publish these journals are not associated with the party, and that the journals are distributing detrimental ideas. This is because the journals do not adopt Turkish-centered Islamic understanding. Instead, they had a more activist and revolutionary spirit. Above all, they are not under the party's control.⁷⁵

Although there were differences between the party youth and the higher party echelons, the utilization of the tawhīdi framing was present in all organizations sympathetic to the NO parties. It extended to the official public statements of party members throughout the 1980s. Just like the anti-Western framing of the youth organizations, Bahri Zengin, vice-president of the WP, similarly diagnosed society's problem as the spread of Westernization in Turkish society. He blamed the Westernized cadre for its materialization.⁷⁶ Furthermore, he declared:

⁷⁰ Ibid, p.246. For further critical views on incorrect and incomplete religious knowledge in the Turkish education system, see: Sadık Albayrak, 'How Did They Teach Religion and History', *Milli Gazete* (2 May 1985) and Ali Çitli, 'Education in the Turkish Republic', *Milli Gazete* (11 October 1990).

⁷¹ MTTB Activities Report, p.69.

⁷² Ibid, p.204 and 207.

⁷³ Mehmet Metiner, *Verdant Shariah, Snow White Democracy* (Istanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık, 2004), p.47 [Turkish].

⁷⁴ Ibid, p.45. Mehmet Metiner, *The Dream of Paradise: From an Ideological State to a Democratic State*, (Istanbul: Günizi Yayıncılık, 2004), p.210 [Turkish].

⁷⁵ Mehmet Metiner, *Verdant Shariah, Snow White Democracy*, p.25.

⁷⁶ Bahri Zengin, 'We Became the Sacrifice of the West', *Milli Gazete* (29 June 1985).

As is commonly known, Turkey has opened its doors to the West since the reforms of the 19th century. We observe that Western thought has persisted to this day in the spheres of the economy, education, and political life. In the West today, unrest, unhappiness, alcoholism, and drug abuse are all on the rise. The WP believes that people will not attain happiness, rest and salvation by adhering to the values of the West.⁷⁷

Like Metiner's rejectionist position regarding man-made rules, Zengin asserted that the goal of his party was the 'salvation of the populace from being doomed to idolize man-made thought and man's servitude to man'.⁷⁸ These statements are reminiscent of the thoughts of Egyptian Islamist Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), who believed Islam's purpose is to free humanity from 'servitude to other human beings' and delivering it from 'the clutches of human lordship and man-made laws'.⁷⁹

Utilizing a Qutbian framing allowed the NO party leaders to generate ideological and spiritual solidarity within the group and to attract more recruits. Regarding the reading of Qutb's books, Abdüllatif Şener, a WP Member of Parliament and a co-founder of the JDP asserts that 'during my high school years throughout the 1960s, Qutb's books were readily available. Those who call themselves Islamist intellectuals have crossed paths with Qutb's works. When I look back upon those days now, I recognize Sayyid Qutb as a classic'.⁸⁰ Similarly Metiner stated, 'the sources of our religious and intellectual maturation were comprised of the works of the writers and thinkers within the Muslim Brotherhood and the books of the Pakistani Islamist intellectual Mawdudi'.⁸¹

Anti-Western framing helped the members of the NO parties demarcate the lines between themselves and their opponents. After the demarcation, the NO politicians began to stigmatize their opponents while they continued to lavish praise upon themselves. Thus, the usage of the binary-opposition frames enabled the movement to demonize their adversaries, garner support and reinforce the solidarity and collective identity within the group. NO politicians exclusively appropriated righteousness as explained in *Milli Gazete* columnist Kasım Ceylan's article, 'The National Outlook: The Conflict between Truth and Falsehood'.⁸² Ceylan identifies the NO's responsibilities as being 'sensitive to God's orders and prohibitions, struggling against the *jāhili* system and its ideologies which force society to surrender itself, and supporting the rest of the Muslim brothers in this struggle'. In this context, the *Milli Gazete* published an analysis in which *shirk* was presented as molding the Western mind, and portrayed as materialist and divisive. Tawhīd (the absolute oneness of God) on the other hand, was associated with Islam, in which the universe, humanity, worship and everyday life are intertwined.⁸³

In the spirit of the *Milli Gazete*'s Qur'an-derived motto, 'Righteousness came, fallaciousness vanished', NO politicians appropriated 'righteousness' in their political discourse.

⁷⁷ Ibid. See also Cevat Ayhan, 'The Muslim World Gained Nothing through Westernization', *Milli Gazete* (2 January 1987).

⁷⁸ The Welfare Party, *Statements Published via Radio Concerning the Welfare Party's Midterm Parliamentary Elections of 1986* (29 July 1986), n.d.

⁷⁹ Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (Damascus: Dar al-'Ilm, n.d.), p.45.

⁸⁰ Çiğdem Toker (ed), *Abdüllatif Şener: My Name Grew Up Beside Me*; (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2008), p.44-45 [Turkish].

⁸¹ Metiner, *Verdant Shariah*, p.48. Sayyid Abu al-A'ala Mawdudi (1903- 1979) was an Indo-Pakistani Muslim revivalist thinker and theologian and the founder of Jamaat-i Islami, Islamist party in the Indian sub-continent.

⁸² Kasım Ceylan, 'The National Outlook: The Conflict between Truth and Falsehood', *Milli Gazete* (23 January 1990).

⁸³ M. Beşir Eryarsoy, 'The West, Islam, and the Year of the Youth', *Milli Gazete* (23 January 1985).

Thus, the appropriation of truth led to the creation of a political discourse in which pluralism and recognition of others' desires, projects and truth claims were discarded.⁸⁴ In the righteousness vs. fallaciousness motto, the notion of consciousness occupies a very important role, and has been defined by Zengin as the 'capability to discern right from wrong'.⁸⁵ By placing the promotion of a 'national consciousness' in their priority list,⁸⁶ Zengin warned:

Today, the destiny of the people is being prepared by certain nations. The wheel of exploitation has been turning out of view. In this complicated and complex situation, it becomes even more difficult to differentiate right from wrong, and righteous from fallacious. We define 'national consciousness' as the surrender to truth and righteousness, and the sharing of this sentiment between all people in our nation.⁸⁷

Similarly, Tayyip Erdoğan, the current Turkish Prime Minister, who was the municipal head of the WP in Istanbul (from 1985 until 1994, at which point he was elected as the Mayor of Istanbul), stated that the WP's aim is to 'represent veracity, despite impediments in the socio-political context'.⁸⁸ Erdoğan defined the WP's mission as 'lighting the way like a lighthouse in the sea'.⁸⁹ Asım Aykan, a high ranking member of the Trabzon branch of the WP (head of the WP-Trabzon from 1987 until 1994, at which point he was elected mayor of Trabzon), defined the WP as 'carrying the flag of righteousness and the representation of truth, and being willing to change fundamentally the wrong path which has existed for centuries'.⁹⁰ By believing that there is only one righteous standpoint that is represented by the NO, Erbakan equated the rest of the secular political parties as 'fallacious [...] forgers'⁹¹ and 'advocates of the West'.⁹² While comparing the WP to other non-WP parties with regards to its understanding of righteousness, he stated that 'in the others' views, righteousness is born from power and authority. In the NO however, [we believe that] righteousness is innate, and it is born from justice'.⁹³

As the party members deemed the WP to be a 'faith movement' more than a vote-seeking political party, they were more able to successfully appropriate what they saw as 'the truth'. During Erdoğan's parliamentary candidacy for the WP in Istanbul 1986, he summarized the party's campaign efforts for the midterm elections by stating that 'we are carrying out our propaganda (*tebliğ*) duties. We are a party of ideals. Those who vote for us are not just voting for us "to try us out" – they support us because they believe in the "national consciousness"'.⁹⁴ In the same way, Abdurrahman Dilipak, an Istanbul nominee for the WP in the 1987 general

⁸⁴ Nilüfer Göle, 'Contemporary Islamist Movements and New Sources for Religious Tolerance', p.20.

⁸⁵ Interview with Bahri Zengin, *Milli Gazete* (2 September 1986).

⁸⁶ The Welfare Party, *The Welfare Party's First Congress, President Ahmet Tekdal's Opening Remarks* (Ankara: Elif Matbaası, 30 June 1985), n.d [Turkish].

⁸⁷ Selahattin Altun, 'Turkey is Losing Blood Each and Every Day', *Milli Gazete* (2 September 1986), an interview with vice-president of the WP, Bahri Zengin.

⁸⁸ Selahattin Altun, 'The WP's Mobilization Has Started', *Milli Gazete* (20 July 1986); Tayyip Erdoğan, 'The Welfare Party is the Representative of Truth', *Milli Gazete* (30 January 1986); Interview with Tayyip Erdoğan, 'The National Outlook Should be the Ruling Power', *Milli Gazete* (23 November 1987).

⁸⁹ Nurşen Mazıcı, 'A Comparative Study on Political Parties', *Milli Gazete* (27 April 1985), an interview with Tayyip Erdoğan.

⁹⁰ Editorial, 'The WP is The Alternative,' *Milli Gazete* (9 February 1986).

⁹¹ Lelik (ed), *Prof. Erbakan*, p.132.

⁹² Editorial, 'Three Parties Proved to be the Slave Order's Supporting Cast,' *Milli Gazete* (20 April 1989); Editorial, *The Welfare Party's Third Congress*, *Milli Gazete* (12 October 1990).

⁹³ Editorial, *The Welfare Party's Third Congress*, *Milli Gazete* (12 October 1990).

⁹⁴ Editorial, 'Erdoğan Gives Thanks,' *Milli Gazete* (1 October 1986); For further information about activities of *tebliğ*, see Hüsnü Aktaş, 'The Politics of Preaching', *Milli Gazete* (24 October 1987).

elections, stated ‘the WP really wants to carry out the struggle of civilization. The WP is the name given to the pursuit of establishing a world where justice, brotherhood and freedoms are ensured. In this context, the WP is a faith movement.’⁹⁵

The utilization of tawhīdi framing with anti-western, self-righteous and exclusionary tones was widely witnessed throughout the 1970s in both the declarations of youth organizations and in the NSP’s official discourse. Moreover, the appropriation of ‘veracity’ by labeling the secular parties as being ‘fallacious’ refined the WP’s exclusionary discourse throughout the 1980s. Furthermore, the impact of tawhīdi framing became much more apparent in the NO parties’ interpretation of Islam as a worldview, the development of an understanding of Islamist morality, and the development of an ummah-oriented foreign policy, each of which will be discussed in a section below.

Islam as a ‘World View’

Turkish tawhīdi Islamist Hamza Türkmen has stated that ‘Islam is both a world order and a worldview’.⁹⁶ This view is also expressed in the tawhīdi Islamist mantra, ‘Islam shall now and forever be a living religion in all spheres of life’.⁹⁷ The founding chairman of the NSP, Süleyman Arif Emre, has argued that Islam is more than a cultural tradition. He saw it as a fundamental resource in the hands of religiously observant politicians that allows for the creation of an alternative civilization which rivals both socialism and capitalism.⁹⁸ Put differently, Islam is not considered to be just worship (*ibāda*) but also dealings (*mu‘āmalāt*).⁹⁹ Another party official who backed the comprehensive role of Islam is Ahmet Tekdal, the first leader of the WP. ‘Because we have the belief in *al-amr bi’l-ma‘rūf wa’l-nahy ‘an al-munkar*,¹⁰⁰ in order to implement our mission’, he argued, ‘we established a political party. Unless we give sufficient support to politics and implement our values and faith in our life, the troubles we have been experiencing will not vanish.’¹⁰¹ In the same way, Erdoğan stated that ‘one should not just engage in thought for thought’s sake, they must take action as well. The context and sociopolitical situation might be impediments to transferring our thoughts into actions.’¹⁰² In addition to these statements by WP politicians, the WP’s position on this issue can be seen in articles written by various Islamist columnists in the NO’s newspaper throughout the 1980s. For example, the Islamist columnist Kasım Ceylan stated that Islam is not just a religious practice but a worldview as well:

⁹⁵ Abdulkadir Özkan, ‘A Talk with Dilipak Concerning the WP’, *Milli Gazete* (6 October 1987).

⁹⁶ Interview with Türkmen, 15 May 2009, Istanbul.

⁹⁷ Alev Erkilet, *Modernization in the Middle East*, p.158.

⁹⁸ Süleyman Arif Emre, *35 Years in Politics*, p.171. For similar views, see: Ahmed Cemal (trans. Cevher Şulul), ‘Islam Possesses a Religious, Political and Economic Structure’, *Milli Gazete* (22 April 1989); Bülent Bengisu, ‘An Upheaval’, *Milli Gazete* (23 October 1987); Ahmet Akgül, ‘Aspects of Islamic Theocracy and Secularism’, *Milli Gazete* (26 March 1990).

⁹⁹ Süleyman Arif Emre, *35 Years in Politics*, p.171. *Mu‘āmalāt*: ‘Islamic laws on social relations, regulations and obligations.’ John Esposito, *The Oxford History of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.685.

¹⁰⁰ This phrase means informing people about religious commandments, spreading the truth of the Qur’an and Islam, and prohibiting people from doing wicked acts. See, *An Encyclopedia of the Principles of Islam*, Vol I (Istanbul: İttihad Yayınları, 2006), p.428-429 [Turkish].

¹⁰¹ Editorial, ‘The Only Alternative is the WP’, *Milli Gazete* (25 March 1985).

¹⁰² Selahattin Altun, ‘The WP’s Mobilization Has Started’, *Milli Gazete* (20 July 1986).

The Holy Qur'an is not a book which is just picked up and read on certain days and occasions, and then placed back onto a shelf. The Qur'an is not just a prayer book. On the contrary, it is also a book of ideas, devotion, knowledge, and it calls people to Islam. A clique of ignorant people behaved surreptitiously in order to abolish its functions of *mu'amalat*, and they wanted to depict it as being nothing more than a prayer book.¹⁰³

In an article entitled 'Who Said Islam Doesn't Have a Political Side?', Veyis Ersöz, another Islamist columnist, put forth a view similar to Ceylan's, stating:

We need to consider the entirety of Islam as an all-encompassing entity. The last monotheistic religion has its political, economic, judicial, and commercial dimensions; these spheres are not divided from one another, and are wholly inseparable. In order to know the politics of Islam, one needs to thoroughly read the history of Islam. The righteousness of our religion, as it relates to the political, judicial and commercial spheres, is being marginalized by the importation of laws from the West.¹⁰⁴

These statements overlap with the Qutbian emphasis on seeing Islam as a practical religion concerned with life's practical affairs rather than circumscribed by theoretical discussions and the speculation of theology.¹⁰⁵ As Qutb argues, 'Islam loves to appear personified in human beings, in a living organization and in a practical movement'.¹⁰⁶ In addition to Qutb, Egyptian Islamist and founder of the Muslim Brotherhood Hasan al-Banna also emphasized the all-encompassing nature of Islam when he stated that 'as for Islam, it is worship and leadership, religion and state. It is both practical and spiritual. It is both prayer and administration. All of these aspects are one, and cannot be separated from one another'.¹⁰⁷

Thus, tawhîdi Islam's emphasis on interpreting Islam as a holistic worldview was adopted by the NO parties throughout the 1970s and 1980s. This holistic vision of Islam whereby tawhîdi ideals overlap directly with the NO parties' discourses thus sought to reorient Turkey from a Western-dominated worldview towards an Islamic-centered outlook. Rather than taking the Muslim identity 'for granted', the NO parties aimed to redefine, recompose and reconstruct it.¹⁰⁸ This new identity envisioned a new Islamist way of life, replete with a different dress code, a new understanding of arts, morality, literature, education, economics and international relations.

The NO Parties' Understanding of Morality

After NO party leaders diagnosed the relegation of Islam to the personal sphere as an injustice, the next step was to find a remedy by asking the question 'what is to be done?' The task of finding a remedy is defined by David Snow as 'prognostic framing',¹⁰⁹ bringing about solutions, plans and strategies to end an unjust situation.¹¹⁰ In this respect, the NO parties strived to

¹⁰³ Kasım Ceylan, 'The National Outlook: The Conflict between Truth and Falsehood', *Milli Gazete* (23 January 1990).

¹⁰⁴ Veyis Ersöz, 'Who Said Islam Had No Politics?', *Milli Gazete* (18 April 1990).

¹⁰⁵ Qutb, *Milestones*, p.33 and 37.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p.39.

¹⁰⁷ Hasan al-Banna, *My Recollections: Muslim Brothers* (Istanbul: Beka Yayınları, 2007), p.266 [Turkish].

¹⁰⁸ Nilüfer Göle, 'Contemporary Islamist Movements', p.18.

¹⁰⁹ Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, 'Framing Processes and Social Movements', p.616.

¹¹⁰ David A. Snow and Scott J. Byrd, 'Ideology, Framing Processes and Islamist Terrorist Movements', p.126, 127. This article is referenced purely for its theory section, which includes prognostic framing. The remaining content of the article, terrorism, has no relevance to the NO parties, which have never resorted to violence in any situation.

establish their socio-cultural preferences along Islamic lines by putting ‘spiritualization’ policy at the forefront.¹¹¹ This policy called for the establishment of a public space which would represent an alternative to that of the secular modern state. In other words, it was an attempt to ‘win back pieces of their territory’¹¹² which had been lost to the state since the start of the modernization process in the early nineteenth century.

Nazih Ayubi, a political scientist specializing in political Islam, asserts that in Islam, ethics and morality are not understood as being primarily individualistic, but as social and collective.¹¹³ This is very much related to his reading of Islam as a ‘social religion’, which seeks to ‘organize the practices of social life, [and] all details of family life.’¹¹⁴ The groups which acquire their legitimacy from Islam generally carry the goal of ‘collective enforcement of public morals’ by employing a Qur’anic rubric, ‘commanding good and forbidding evil’.¹¹⁵ In its founding manifesto, the NOP explicitly stated that this rubric was one of its goals.¹¹⁶ Religious groups and parties therefore consider themselves to be responsible authorities and representatives of righteousness that seek to rectify society’s moral deviance via the Islamicization of the public space.¹¹⁷ Groups which portray themselves as the epitome and carriers of morality deem themselves authorized to ‘rescue’ the souls believed lost to the West. These ideas, in turn, materialize through an intolerant and exclusionary agenda with respect to anyone professing contrary views. These views, as violations of moral standards, should be confronted directly, and those who hold such views should be invited to the ‘right path’ in order to restore a proper ethical code within society.

While not rejecting entertainment per se, but instead reinterpreting it in light of Islamist concerns, Erbakan depicted an alternative Islamist version of arts that are in competition with their secular adversary. The NSP’s Islamicization of the arts continued with its declarations in support of film and print media censorship, targeting any work that contains ‘moral obscenities’. The NSP also attempted to regulate the sexuality of women by instructing women not to wear revealing clothing.

When asked whether this sort of intervention contradicted the idea of safeguarding freedoms, Erbakan replied that ‘we intervene in how you dress and what films you watch. We intervene for moral reasons alone. We have the duty to protect our people. Our censorship will be to protect our people’s morality and spirituality.’¹¹⁸ Hence, the NSP opted to interpret personal freedoms through the filter of Islamic ordinances and to introduce religious moral standards for executing ‘social control’¹¹⁹ of the public sphere. Determined to re-arrange society within Islamic moral parameters, the party was flexible with regards to how to carry out this goal. The party’s leader explicitly declared that ‘[the party is] not repressive and will not

¹¹¹ Süleyman Arif Emre, *35 Years in Politics*, p.177. See also, The Welfare Party, *One Solution: The Welfare Party*, 1987; Veyis Ersöz, ‘The National Outlook and the Welfare Mentality’, *Milli Gazete* (18 October 1987); Ahmet Yıldız, ‘The WP-FP’s Religious Discourse: A Critical Approach’, *İslamiyat IV*, 4 (2001), 173-192, p.178 [Turkish].

¹¹² Christian Smith, *Disruptive Religion*, p.22.

¹¹³ Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (New York: Routledge, 1993), cited in Salwa Ismail, *Rethinking Islamist Politics* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), p.77.

¹¹⁴ Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*, p.35.

¹¹⁵ Salwa Ismail, *Rethinking Islamist Politics* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), p.77.

¹¹⁶ Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, ‘The NOP’s Organisation and Program Contents’, p.577.

¹¹⁷ Salwa Ismail, *Rethinking Islamist Politics*, p.77.

¹¹⁸ Abdi İpekçi, *Milliyet* (19 October 1973).

¹¹⁹ Social control refers to a dispute centered around who will make the rules, who has the right to grant property rights and resources within society, and whose system of meaning people will embrace. Joel Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p.49.

forcefully compel people to dress in a certain way, but it will instill in our people a sense of proper dress codes, so that they will themselves choose not to wear revealing clothes'. However, when asked of the possibility of the failure of this instruction, he responded by saying, 'I do not think that this instruction will not take hold. The only reason our youths are behaving improperly is due to the presence of contrary instructions.'¹²⁰

The calling for the moralization of the public space, including the banning of alcohol consumption, gambling, and all immoral publications, persisted unabated throughout the 1980s in the *Milli Gazete*.¹²¹ During these years, even the internationally renowned South American dance, the *Lambada*, was not spared the WP's wrath.¹²² Efforts to govern morality within Islamic parameters intensified with the election of Halil Ürün as the WP mayor of Konya, in March 1989. After being elected, Ürün created a college-level, women-only bus service and an all-female OB/GYN (Obstetrics and Gynecology) center. While the center accepted the participation of male doctors in cases of emergency, the majority of doctors working at the center were to be female.¹²³ He also initiated the prohibition of alcohol for wedding hosting facilities in his municipality.¹²⁴ He shut down student-frequented cafes during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan for 'unhygienic' purposes. Because these cafes were not serving alcohol, it is more likely that Ürün sought to prevent anyone from eating or drinking anything in public during the hours of fasting. These changes created serious repercussions in the political arena and secular media, and were seen as being the first signs of stealth Islamization.¹²⁵

Thus, the impact of tawhīdi Islam on the Islamicization of the public sphere along with other spheres of life reflected in the discourse and the policies of NO politicians. In place of Western morals, NO parties aimed to introduce Islamist alternatives. This attempt 'manifested' in the attempted regulation of women's sexuality, the Islamicization of the arts and socio-cultural life and the introduction of Islamic morals into the public sphere.

Foreign Policy Orientation of the NO

The other important domain in which the influence of tawhīdi Islam's *ummah*-first approach can be seen is the NO parties' foreign policy orientations, where the anti-imperialist and anti-Western tone is tremendously strong. Disturbed by Turkey's tilt toward the Western world through its participation or negotiations with international organizations, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Economic Community/European Union (EEC/EU), members of the NO parties developed a harsh, anti-imperialists rhetoric in order to confront Western economic and cultural influences on Turkish society. Since the early 1970s, the NO parties envisioned an alternative foreign policy orientation in which bonds with the West were to be severed and replaced with a reorientation

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ The Welfare Party, *The Only Solution*, 1987, p.9-13. Just a few examples in 1986: Editorial, 'The Growing Interest in Gambling', *Milli Gazete* (9 January 1986); Editorial, 'The Moral Collapse', *Milli Gazete* (31 January 1987); Editorial, 'Stoked by Inebriation', *Milli Gazete* (7 March 1987); Editorial, 'Being Muslim: A Cure for Suicide', *Milli Gazete* (7 March 1987); Editorial, 'The Spiritual Collapse', *Milli Gazete* (7 June 1989).

¹²² Hasan Aksay, 'Lambada', *Milli Gazete* (1 March 1990).

¹²³ Editorial, 'What is Being Said about Us is Lies', *Milli Gazete* (13 April 1989); Editorial, 'The Last Bus to the Harem', *Milliyet* (14 April 1989) [Turkish].

¹²⁴ Editorial, 'The Step Backwards in the Girls' Bus', *Milliyet* (13 April 1989) [Turkish].

¹²⁵ Editorial, 'The WP President was thoroughly Astonished', *Milliyet* (15 April 1989); Editorial, 'Impressions of Konya: Fundamentalism is Lost', *Nokta* (30 April 30 1989).

towards the Muslim world. Thus, the answer to the question, ‘What is to be done?’, as argued above in relation to NATO, the IMF and the EU, lay in establishing alternative international forums and cooperation channels with the Muslim world. Turkey’s roots were in the greater Muslim world, the NO politicians argued, owing to its cultural and religious affinities.¹²⁶

Adopting a more cautious discourse in its first Congress (June 1985), the head of the WP, Ahmet Tekdal, agreed to conditionally support cooperation with the EEC, as long as it remained a vehicle for economic cooperation and did not exert political control over Turkey in any way.¹²⁷ However, the WP’s anti-imperialist rhetoric became evident in party members’ public statements throughout the 1980s. Zengin, for example, equated Turkey’s entrance into the EEC as sullyng the party.¹²⁸ With regards to the shared inclination towards an anti-imperialist foreign policy, Cevat Ayhan, the General Secretary of the WP, expressed the same sentiments as Zengin:

Our national goal should be independent foreign policy. For years, we looked at our own region through the eyes of the West. In general, we have cut off our spiritual ties to our region, and in doing so, we have rejected our own cultural heritage. We became strangers in our own region. We remained silent when people in Asia and in Africa faced human rights abuses. Our state policy failed in supporting the Algerians in their fight for independence. For years, we have turned a blind eye to the fact that Israel has been the headquarters for Western powers’ crusading armies.¹²⁹

Similar to Ayhan’s claim regarding the collaboration between Israel and the West, the NO parties’ adversary was a ‘Christian-cum-Jewish cabal’ who, they believed, plotted and conspired against Muslims throughout the world.¹³⁰ This is in line with Gamson who argues that the crystallization of the collective action’s target requires the adversary to be sufficiently concrete.¹³¹ The biggest impediment to the establishment of a ‘great Turkey’, both today and in the past, was deemed to be the presence of Western imperialism and Zionism, believed to be working in tandem.¹³² Speaking in openly anti-Semitic tones, throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, NO politicians lumped the world-wide Jewish communities into a homogenous category, claiming that Jews were ‘striving to acquire financial capital and political control by manipulating domestic and international policy in a sinister and conspiratorial manner’.¹³³ These claims reached an extreme when the *Milli Gazete* warned its readers not to cut their children’s

¹²⁶ Editorial, ‘What does the Welfare Party say’, *Milli Gazete* (22 May 1985); Editorial, ‘Sincere Cooperation with the Muslim countries’, *Milli Gazete* (28 May 1985); Editorial, ‘The WP’s First Congress Slogans were announced’, *Milli Gazete* (23 June 1985); The Welfare Party, *Statements Published via Radio Concerning the Welfare Party’s Midterm Parliamentary Elections of 1986*; Bahri Zengin, ‘Neither IMF nor EEC’, *Milli Gazete* (31 August 1986); Editorial, ‘Say No to the EEC’, *Milli Gazete* (20 November 1986); Editorial, ‘EEC: Zionist Cooperation’, *Milli Gazete* (22 November 1986).

¹²⁷ The Welfare Party, *The Welfare Party’s First Congress, The Keynote Speech by Chairman Ahmet Tekdal* (30 June 1985).

¹²⁸ The Welfare Party, *Statements Published via Radio Concerning the Welfare Party’s Midterm Parliamentary Elections of 1986* (25 September 1986), n.d.

¹²⁹ The Welfare Party, *Statements Published by the Turkish Radio and Television Company Concerning the Welfare Party’s Parliamentary Elections on September 28, 1986*, p.23.

¹³⁰ Editorial, ‘Imperialism Goes Hand-in-Hand with Zionism’, *Milli Gazete* (5 January 1986); Erbakan’s Speech at the Third General Convention, *Milli Gazete* (12 October 1990).

¹³¹ Gamson, *Talking Politics*, p.7.

¹³² Erbakan’s Speech at the Third General Convention, *Milli Gazete* (12 October 1990).

¹³³ Süleyman Arif Emre, *35 Years in Politics*, Vol I, p.206, 207; Erbakan’s Speech at the Third General Convention, *Milli Gazete* (12 October 1990); Editorial, ‘The Jews Cannot be Trusted’, *Milli Gazete* (10 January 1986); Editorial, ‘The Jews are Itching for Trouble: The Zionist Serpent Pours Its Poison into the Islamic World’, *Milli Gazete* (14 February 1986); Editorial, ‘Beware the Serpent Which Waits in Ambush’, *Milli Gazete* (2 March 1986).

hair in a 'Jewish style'. The author described this style as the hair being shaved close to the scalp in the back and kept long in the front.¹³⁴

Regarding the EEC as an instrument of Western imperialism, Erbakan agreed with Zengin's labeling of Turkey's potential accession to the EEC as 'treachery'.¹³⁵ Zengin believed that the WP should prevent Turkey from entering the organization as a matter of national duty. Thus, instead of aspiring for Turkey's membership of a European organization, the party leaders sought to establish an Islamic Common Market under the leadership of Turkey.¹³⁶ Throughout the late-1980s and early-1990s, Erbakan renewed his call for Muslim nations to unite in a defense pact to establish a bulwark against imperialism and Zionism, which he labeled 'fallacy and oppression'. This pact was to include the establishment of a common currency and a unified cultural collaboration, which he deemed to be prioritizing 'veracity instead of power'.¹³⁷ Hence, the NO parties' exclusionary framing is plausible in light of Abdurrahman Dilipak's comments,¹³⁸ who asserted

The WP's goal is to engage in struggle for civilization. In the NO's eyes, the sides of this conflict were crystal clear. The fallacious was represented by the West, due to its cultural roots in Rome, ancient Greece and ancient Egypt, whereas Islam represented veracity and righteousness.¹³⁹

Thus, throughout the 1980s, tawhīdi Islam's anti-Western and anti-imperialist foreign policy understanding was embraced by the WP politicians.

The WP party interpreted the extensive relations between various Turkish and Western international organizations as an impediment to achieving an independent foreign policy. The WP politicians initiated a series of meetings with representatives from the Muslim world in order to create alternative Islamic international organizations. The WP's exclusionary perspective of shifting Turkish foreign policy from the West to the East was toned down throughout the 1990s. In the WP's 4th Congress in 1993, for example, Erbakan openly declared that, if elected, the WP would not necessarily sever all relations with the Western world, by which he was mainly referring to foreign aid and credit.¹⁴⁰ When the WP participated in a coalition government in 1995, its hawkish, anti-Western foreign policy orientation had lost its fervor.¹⁴¹ As the WP became one of the main players in the political game, working under secular constraints, it began to soften its anti-Western foreign policy stance.¹⁴² The WP continued working under pre-established, pro-Western diplomatic practices and was willing to continue the more moderate foreign policy practices which the party acquired in its coalition experience. As a result, the WP

¹³⁴ Ayşegül Aktürk, 'Beware of Jewish-Looking Haircuts', *Milli Gazete* (11 March 1986); 11 March 1986. See also the auto-critique of an Islamist regarding his previous anti-Semitic declarations, Mehmet Metiner, *Verdant Shariah*, p.297-299.

¹³⁵ Editorial, 'Entering the EEC is Tantamount to Treachery', *Milli Gazete* (18 January 1987).

¹³⁶ Editorial, 'The First Step for the Islamic Common Market', *Milli Gazete* (11 October 1986); additional document to the *Milli Gazete*, 'Islamic Common Market', (27 October 1986); Necmettin Erbakan's press conference on 11-12 October 1986, 'Islamic Common Market will be established', *Milli Gazete* (5 November 1986).

¹³⁷ Erbakan's Speech at the WP's Third General Convention, *Milli Gazete* (12 October 1990).

¹³⁸ A well-known Islamist journalist and a WP nominee in the 1987 elections.

¹³⁹ Abdurrahman Dilipak, 'The WP is a Faith Movement', *Milli Gazete* (6 October 6 1987). For a similar interpretation see, Eyüp Köktaş, 'The Welfare Movement', *Milli Gazete* (12 November 1987).

¹⁴⁰ Şevket Kazan, *The Truth of Welfare* (Ankara: Keşif Yayınları, 2001), p.156.

¹⁴¹ Interview with Tayyip Erdoğan, *Yeni Şafak* (6 October 1996) [Turkish].

¹⁴² See two criticisms of the WP for not being able to get out of the status-quo politics when it formed a coalition government with the True Path Party (TPP) in 1995. Ömer Çelik, 'The Welfare Party's Problem', *Yeni Şafak* (9 October 1996) [Turkish]; Interview with Ahmet Taşgetiren, *Yeni Yüzyıl* (18 November 1996) [Turkish].

shifted its foreign policy rhetoric by becoming less anti-Western. This culminated in the pro-EU policies of the JDP (2002-present).

Conclusion

Starting from their inception in the 1970s and lasting until the early 1990s, the NO parties adopted a dual political discourse, which was an amalgamation of Turkish conservative-rightist and tawhīdi Islamist thought. NO politicians embraced the conservatives' statist approach, their association of the love of Anatolia with Islam, and their criticism of radical Westernization. This non-revolutionary approach, and their affinity for 'Nationalist Islamic' characteristics of conservative-rightist thought, enabled the NO parties to be legalized by the secular regime and to coexist and cooperate with the secular parties under the same parliament. In other words, the NO parties' conservative-rightist characteristics allowed them to easily integrate into and become a legal component within the political arena.

Although the NO parties coexisted with the secular political parties in parliament, they differed from them with regards to the regulation of socio-political life. As the NOP, NSP, and the WP (in its early period at least) acted more as faith movements than as vote-seeking political parties, their political discourse incorporated a great deal of tawhīdi Islamist ideals. They borrowed selectively from the tawhīdi Islamists' appropriation of truth, embraced comprehensive Islam as a way of life, aimed to Islamicize the socio-political order, and adopted an anti-Western foreign policy orientation. In this way, they continued to present an Islamist alternative to the socio-political status quo in Turkey.

The tawhīdi Islamist framings, which were intensive throughout the 1980s, faded as the WP opted to address itself not only to mosque-goers but also to society at large since the early 1990s. The WP's step-by-step integration into the political center occurred through admittance into parliament in 1991, acquiring numerous municipalities around the country in 1992 and 1994, and finally culminated its becoming a partner in a coalition government in 1996.

Instead of being an opposition party and offering an alternative to the existing secular parties, the WP came face-to-face with political realities after its electoral ascendancy during the early 1990s. As the party leaders tilted further towards the 'center' of the political spectrum, the WP gradually ceased to be solely a 'fringe party'. This meant that the WP would engage in deal-making and reconciliation with its non-Islamist counterparts. These new strategies contributed to the lessening of Islamic idealism in favor of the pragmatism of party politics. As the WP was further integrated into the formal political system, they needed to acknowledge the sacrosanctity of the secular institutions, which was a precondition to function comfortably in the political system. Despite retaining an accommodating approach, the WP was not able to solve its 'legitimacy problem' in the eyes of the established order. In order to terminate the alleged 'Islamist threat' to the secular Republic, the army high echelons issued 18 successive demands to the Erbakan-led coalition government in the National Security Council's meeting on 28 February 1997. This historic event, which was later labeled the 'February 28 process', resulted in the banning of the WP and its successor the Virtue Party (VP), and struck a great blow to Islamist activism throughout the country. Hence, the continuous state repression constricted the course of Islamist action and accelerated the factionalism within the VP, leading to the establishment of the JDP (the Justice and Development Party) by the reformist branch and the Felicity Party by the Erbakan-led traditionalists. The JDP founders adopted a 'new' political identity, namely 'conservative-democratic', in order to solve their legitimacy problem. While the packaging of

this identity was ‘new’, in actuality it was nothing but the revitalization of conservative-rightist thought, which had been embedded in the political tradition of Turkish Islamism. The muzzling of political Islam at the hands of secular institutions and the WP’s devising of a more inclusionary political strategy, mainly thanks to its administrative experiences, contributed to the prevalence of conservative-rightist identity over the tawḥīdi Islamist identity.