



Worldviews and Identity Discernment of Turkish Youth
and the Role of Religious Education: An investigation
of Imam-Hatip High Schools' senior students'
meaning-making of the world in the 21st century

By

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Declaration

I, **Mustafa Cabir Altintas**, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signature

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16 December 2019

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Abstract

The religious and cultural landscape in Turkey has been dramatically affected by modernization and secularization in the last 20 years. It is visible from the diverse forms of dress and the languages spoken on the street, secular Muslim subjectivities and modernist pious Muslim young people have shown around the cities. Alongside this increasing religious and cultural diversity is a growth in ‘secularism’, which creates challenges for social cohesion, policy and education in Turkey today. These new challenges force Turkish young people to find their place in a complex world and to seek satisfying ways of gaining a sense of meaning and belonging. Many young people search for individual meaning in dealing with the uncertainties of the world; they are relatively open to the spiritual dimension; questioning and exploring faith from a range of religious traditions and spiritual practices according to their own eclectic tastes and needs. In this respect, youth’s worldview becomes significant to understand their world and how they are making sense of the new world in the postmodern era. Thus, this study will explore the worldview of a particular group of Turkish youth, the religious dimension of their lived reality will be given serious consideration for it is a religiously-based value system, specifically Islam, that shapes their overall attitudes and identities.

The Worldview Theory has been popular in the West, but has not yet found a proper place in the Turkish context. Therefore, the Worldview Theory has been chosen as a framework for this study, in an attempt to fill the existing gap in the Turkish literature. As a qualitative research method, semi-structured and focus group interviews with Imam-Hatip High School’s students were conducted for our data, to explore how they negotiate and experience the changes in their lives between Western culture and Islamic culture; and the role of religious education while they negotiate the worldviews. Thus, the study presents young people’s worldviews and their outlook on life, with a special focus on their attitudes to religion and social changes in the context of Western secular and Muslim collective identity.

Impact Statement

Religion and religious education have attempted to respond to the challenges faced by many young people seeking to find a worldview that holds the promise of a meaningful life. It is why the religious worldview dimension of life is significant and is given special attention in this study. This study will explore the worldview of a particular group of Turkish youth, the religious dimension of their lived reality will be given serious consideration for it is a religiously-based value system, specifically Islam, that shapes their overall attitudes and identities.

The researcher believes that exploring the Muslim identities of young pupils will provide an insight for future youth and religious education studies in the field. The study places a special focus on the examination of key areas regarding Western culture and Islamic culture and the typology of worldviews. It will incorporate young people's worldview and construction of identities in the contemporary world; youths adopting a postmodern stance; attitudes and values towards Islam; making meaning of the new world; and the investigation of thoughts of young people at the Imam-Hatip High School. I believe that this will provide a source of affirmation to young Muslims' lived experiences as well as challenge the dominant, often polarising and damaging discourses about young Muslims in Turkey and other countries.

In this research I use a qualitative research framework that could enable religious educators to gain a new outlook for their teaching experiences and to ground the practice of Islamic education in the real-life experiences of Muslim young people. The importance of this study is enhanced by the fact that in Turkish society most of the challenges in the life of religious individuals have usually been confronted with formal religious considerations such as whether they conform to Islamic proclamations or not. Thus, the findings of the study may contribute to the development of new pedagogy and curriculum in religious education, particularly in Turkish secondary schools.

This research extends the growing body of literature around the role of Islam and Islamic education in the lives of young people, and the qualities and skills needed to facilitate effective religious education among young Turkish people. Thus it contributes to literature about religious education, typology of youths' worldviews, identity and culture, and advances knowledge that has the potential to create greater social cohesion in Turkey.

My findings obtained from the study have some pertinent implications for Islamic Education, RE teachers, and the education authority. The recommendations address to aim at improving the policy, pedagogy, and curriculum of RE as well as implementation of Islamic Education at all levels. The impact of the findings could be considerable if the views of the participants were used to illuminate the religious educators' thinking when devising strategies to improve the quality of teaching. The recommendations of the research might help teachers to become better at what they do to the benefit of all parties and especially the students.

Hence, the current study has sought to contribute to the small but growing understanding/knowledge base regarding how students experience, aspire and identify with Islam and West as part of their future pathways in the hope of the religious education beyond compulsory education. It is my hope that this research will inform researchers, teachers, educational authorities as well as policy makers and curriculum developers about the importance of students' worldviews and negotiation processes, and hence contribute to the development of better, more effective practices regarding educational inquiry.

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Chapter 1 Statement of the Study

Introduction

Young people today face a variety of unique challenges from accelerated social change, rapid globalization, and postmodern culture. Young people are searching for how their individual lives can become whole and complete (Schweitzer, 2004). Involved in this quest is the process of finding their place in a complex world, seeking satisfying ways of gaining a sense of meaning and belonging, whilst dealing with the many uncertainties of the world. In this context, gaining an understanding of a youth's worldview is significant to comprehending their world, and moreover, how they are making sense of it in the postmodern era.

Religion and religious education have attempted to respond to the challenges faced by many young people seeking to find a worldview that holds the promise of a meaningful life. It is why the religious worldview dimension of life is significant and is given special attention in this study. This study will explore the worldview of a particular group of Turkish youth, the religious dimension of their lived reality will be given serious consideration for it is a religiously-based value system, specifically Islam, that shapes their overall attitudes and identities. Islam provides many Turkish young people with a broad value system that guides their lives. This study will investigate the nature and general characteristics of Islamic guidance in the lives of a selected group of Imam-Hatip High School pupils by exploring their worldview and their personal ways of interpreting and making sense of Islam.

New phenomena of Western culture, such as postmodernity, individualization, and pluralisation, have come to the fore towards the end of the twentieth century. These phenomena remain difficult to characterize. Observers, such as Ulrich Beck, have interpreted these changes to mean that: "life has turned into an individual project and into a matter of personal choice" (as cited in Schweitzer, 2004: 10). Certainly, young people in Turkey are growing up in a world that is vastly different to the one that their parents knew. In the last few decades numerous radical changes have occurred at every level of society and competing theories have emerged to explain them and the subsequent impact on the formation of youth identity and culture (See, Berkes, 1998; Ok, 2002; Saktanber, 2002; Yavuz, 2003). This study will explore and investigate some of the changes that a specific group of young people are currently experiencing and how they are negotiating and making meaning of a number of social forces in their life-world.

This first chapter will outline the purpose, background and context of the research. Moreover, the personal motivations and background of the researcher will also be discussed. The chapter will examine the influence of Western culture and social changes in the twenty-first century on Turkish secondary school-age youth in the promotion of faith, cultural and religious understanding; personal and social capability; critical and creative thinking; and ethical behaviour, by using Worldview Theory as its theoretical framework. The investigation is set within a Turkish educational context, specifically Imam-Hatip High School pupils. The researcher believes that situating the worldview of these particular young people within their social and educational contexts will demonstrate how complex and hybrid their identities are. Ultimately, the research aims to highlight how the sense of identity that these Turkish young people possess has been shaped by immersion in a multi-cultural and plural world surrounded by Western culture and secularity.

The Turkish Context

Turkey is a country with a predominantly Muslim population, but at the same time it represents a unique version of a secular state (Onis, 1995). The Turkish revolution of the early twentieth century played a significant role in the formation of its life-world. Starting with the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the secularization and modernization process in Turkey has affected the form and content of the country's Islamic movements, and the dominant expression of mainstream Islamic religious tradition (Yavuz, 2003, p. 272). Ataturk, founder of the Republic of Turkey, stated, "If Turkish people are to be westernized we must go to the developments of the West" (Karal, 1981, p. 13). According to him, "modernization could not succeed by combining the old with the new", rather, genuine reform would have to "assume a radical character, to affect all aspects of Turkish society, and to sweep away most, if not all, of its traditional beliefs and institutions" (Okyar, 1984, p. 51). Therefore, the changes in Turkey during the twentieth century were designed to establish state control over religion with the introduction of secular legal systems, such as the abolition of the Caliphate, the abolition of religious hierarchy (Seyhul Islam), the closing the madrasas (Islamic educational institutions) and religious courts, and Sufi movements. In consequence, secularism and modernism opposed the primacy of religious elements in society and Turkish people, especially the youth, were influenced by the process of secularization and modernization.

In the twenty-first century, concepts such as postmodernism, globalization, pluralism and individualism came on to the agenda and began to be discussed more widely in the Turkish

context. These phenomena profoundly affect the social and religious life of Turkish Muslim youth. Moreover, Turkish Muslim young people have been affected by the social and cultural values of Western culture and the global and postmodern world. With the impact of the rapidly globalizing world, young people's likes and choices, beliefs and convictions, interests and concerns are under the control of the postmodern world. As a result, many Turkish Muslim youths face a conflict of identity occasioned by Turkey's "Islamic, Eastern, cosmopolitan, traditional Ottoman past and socially engineered Western, secular, positivist, and modern future" (Rahman, in Fitzpatrick et al., 2009, p. 63).

Many young people in Turkey are trying to develop their national and religious identity, with its all ambiguities and conflicts, in a globally interconnected world. They challenge the foundations of a monolithic, absolute, official Republican Turkish identity, and in the process prompt debate on religious identity. Regarding Islamic religious identity, Muslim youth can constitute a very important aspect of the orientation of the social and cultural changes taking place. Turkish Muslim young people put great effort into "the reconciliation of Islam with popular culture through which they can find different ways to express themselves and their subjectivities in all walks of life in a secular, highly fragmented postmodern context" (Saktanber, 2007, p. 425). Therefore, cultural dilemmas and paradoxes – social changes such as secularism, modernism, and postmodernism – that Muslim youth have experienced play a significant role in their worldview and religious life. This study will attempt to explore how Turkish young people – Imam-Hatip High School students – negotiate and experience the changes between Western culture and Islamic culture in their lives. It will present young people's worldview and their outlook on life, with a special focus on their attitudes to religion and social changes in the context of Western secular and Muslim collective identity.

The case of youth in Turkey needs a critical analysis that should focus on the complex relationship between "the modalities of youth, the changing interpretations of both religion and secularism, and the rapidly globalizing Turkish social context" (Saktanber, 2007, p. 418). Being labelled as a traditional Muslim youth presents unique challenges in Turkey because of "the ways in which both secularism and modernity have been understood by large sections of polity and society" (ibid.: 419). Nevertheless, one of the purposes of this study is to investigate the Muslim identity of Turkish youth from different perspectives, and to consider whether this identity has its roots solely in religion or whether it also emanates from the interplay of a variety of social forces, such as, secularism, modernism and postmodernity.

The researcher believes that exploring the Muslim identities of Imam-Hatip pupils in the city of Bursa, Turkey will provide an insight for future youth and religious education studies in the field. The study places a special focus on the examination of key areas regarding Western culture and Islamic culture and the typology of worldviews. It will incorporate young people's worldview and construction of identities in the contemporary world; youths adopting a postmodern stance; attitudes and values towards Islam; making meaning of the new world; and the investigation of thoughts of young people at the Imam-Hatip High School. Essentially, a young person's worldview is characterized by negotiation at different levels and within different social contexts. Therefore, the concept of negotiation will be used to underline the dynamic linkages between tradition and individuality; modernity and postmodernity; secularism and globalization in the open-ended process of constructing identities and life-world.

Why this study is being undertaken: A Brief Personal Motivation

As the researcher, my interest in investigating the worldviews of Turkish Muslim youth – particularly their understanding of Islam and the West – stemmed from my experience of teaching as a Muslim educator for over 10 years in Turkey. It has always been fascinating to me to discover religious lives and norms, as well as how religion affects society, and is in turn influenced by Western culture and the social changes of the twenty-first century. I have been curious to not only understand the origins of religious movements and the attitudes of young people in Turkey toward Islam and modernity, but also to explore the fundamental questions of what it means to be a young Muslim in Turkey in the highly complex cultural reality of the postmodern world. My interest in this area developed into a career.

Many of the issues addressed in this study are closely tied to my own experiences as a Muslim educator. According to my observations and experiences whilst teaching in Turkey, contemporary Turkish Muslim identity is greatly impacted by social and cultural changes, such as secularism, modernity, postmodernity, individualization, and cultural plurality. Young Turkish Muslims often seek a hybrid identity for themselves. It is an issue that revolves around the following dilemma: “How is it possible to be both modern and Muslim or secular/liberal and Muslim?” So, an objective of mine as the researcher is to comprehend how young Turkish Muslims are negotiating these complex issues.

The question of how to construct an identity and worldview in a rapidly changing world is a

challenge facing many young Turkish Muslims and needs to be seriously explored. As a Turkish Muslim educator, I frequently reflect on Islam in light of the radical secularisation and modernisation that has affected society and the Muslim community in Turkey. Many Muslim youths are looking to either become completely secularised or adopt a rigid Islamic faith structure. This paradox is engendered by tensions between the secular liberal and traditional views of life. Turkish Muslim youth construct their sense of identity and worldviews through an inevitable interaction with both traditional Islamic culture and the wider secular/liberal and Western society. Consequently, I contextualise my research around understanding how a group of young people attending Imam-Hatip High School navigate multifarious social forces in their life in the construction of their worldviews and identities in this new century.

Religious education could perhaps allow more room for the complexity and ambiguity surrounding matters of religion and the worldviews of young people. We have to see differently if we are to live more harmoniously. In this context, classical Islamic education seems to fail to understand other cultures and worldviews on their own terms. On this point, I have realised that even 'particular faith-nurture in diverse religious tradition in a multi-cultural society should have a dimension of criticality in its educational strategy' (Sahin, 2002, p. 32). According to Sahin (2002), critical educational thinking and openness existed in the self-understanding of Islam and it needs to be revived to inform the theory and practice of Islamic Education.

In this research I use a qualitative research framework that could enable religious educators to gain a new outlook for their teaching experiences and to ground the practice of Islamic education in the real-life experiences of Muslim young people. Current religious education approaches, which are teacher-text centred, have failed to make Islam relevant to the changing lives of many Muslim young people. It is increasingly becoming apparent that there is a lack of a "human dimension" and interest in genuinely understanding how Islam shapes, and is being shaped by, the life-world of its adherents within Turkish society today. The central preoccupation of the Qur'anic call for humanity is educational; it aims at revitalising the capacity for learning within people in the hope of transforming their all-too human characteristics of fragility, weakness, vulnerability and despair (Sahin, 2002, p. 32).

The profound contextual change facing Turkish society and developments in youth identity made me consciously engage with the project of creating an educational and social

understanding of Islam and its worldview. Working with young Muslims, sharing their concerns, and the difficulties associated with being young and Muslim in a secular modern society, made me re-examine and re-evaluate how they are making sense of the new world, which is largely secular and Western. The study is a product of this on-going process of re-examination and re-evaluation.

Research Aims

The aims of this study are as follows:

- to explore Imam-Hatip High School's senior students' worldviews and how they make sense of the world and themselves in answering worldview's basic questions, such as: Who am I? Where am I? What is the problem? And what is the solution?
- to examine Imam-Hatip High School's senior pupils' understanding of Islam; how they interpret their experiences of Islam and what position Islam holds from their point of view.
- to examine Imam-Hatip High School's senior pupils' understanding of Western culture; how they interpret their experience of Western culture and what position Western culture holds from their point of view.
- to investigate how Imam-Hatip High School's senior students are negotiating between Western and Islamic culture and constructing their worldviews.
- to explore Imam-Hatip High School's senior students' perceptions of the role of Religious Education on the process of negotiating between bricolage worldviews.

Research Questions

Through exploring the research aims, young people's worldview status is characterized by negotiation at different levels and within different social contexts. The concept of negotiation is used to underline the dynamic linkages between tradition and reformism/liberalism; modernity and postmodernity; secularism and globalization in the open-ended process of constructing identities and life-world. Moreover, the study illustrates how these particular young people's worldviews and identities are created, contested, recreated and given meaning through their everyday life and culture in which they grow, and finally, their contact with Western culture and social changes. The study recognises that identities are not fixed or immutable, but rather that they are fluid, temporal and constantly evolving.

The focal issues and concerns mentioned above will be explored by addressing a set of interrelated questions:

1. What is the worldview of Imam-Hatip School's senior students and how do they identify themselves and make meaning of the world?
2. How do Imam-Hatip School's senior students conceptualize and make sense of Islam and its religious practices in their worldview?
3. How do Imam-Hatip School's students conceptualize and make sense of Western culture and its secular/liberal practices in their worldview?
4. How do Imam-Hatip School's senior students negotiate between Western culture and Islamic culture and construct their worldviews?
5. How do Imam-Hatip School's senior students perceive the role of Religious Education on this process of negotiating the worldviews?

Significance of the study

Religions and worldviews are changing faster than twenty century (Beare, 1993) in this century. Modernization, which means the application of the results of science and technology in society, is an important driving force. Various modernizing processes are at work simultaneously, generating complex and diffuse worldviews (Droogers & Harskamp, 2014). The trend towards individualization presents many people with the freedom and the impetus to devise their own worldviews, including secular ones (Ibid). Hence, many new forms of individualism and social forms are emerging.

Turkey is an interesting laboratory for religious and worldview research. It has been governed by a secular system for almost a century, and this secular system interfaces with Islamic culture. It is an interesting experiment in multiculturalism, since it has many inhabitants who come from a variety of continents and cultures, and who possess a variety of worldviews. The combination of secular liberal Western culture and Islamic cultural heritage is significant to understanding the social context of the lives of Turkish young people. Their life-worlds are marked by a modern plurality in which the borders are permeable and changeable in social arenas. In sociological research terminology this process is termed as 'cultural hybridity, nomadism and bricolage' (Baumann, 1999). The dichotomy, which is presented commonly in the literature between an individualized modern Western culture and collective traditional culture, is one of the challenges faced by young people. In regard to the

concept of worldview, this study identifies and evaluates the young people's worldviews as a hybrid worldview and identity, owing to the observation that they frequently described their experiences as that of 'cultural navigators', representing a mixture or a bricolage; for instance secular Muslims, modern or liberal Muslims.

In the face of some of the challenges posed by modern secular life, a suppressed crisis in Muslim culture has surfaced (Tibi, 2005). Nevertheless, by its insistence on religiously ordering the social life of its adherents, Islam has at the same time posed an important challenge to the taken-for-granted secularism of Western liberal culture. A necessary comparison between these value systems and religious tradition may constitute a challenge for young people's worldview, bringing them to a sense of the contradiction between these values and hampering their spiritual or faith development. In these conditions, the study is concerned to be one of the few attempts to discuss a need for professional care in dealing with development of youth's worldview and identity. The importance of this study is enhanced by the fact that in Turkish society most of the challenges in the life of religious individuals have usually been confronted with formal religious considerations such as whether they conform to Islamic proclamations or not. Thus, the findings of the study may contribute to the development of new pedagogy and curriculum in religious education, particularly in Turkish secondary schools.

The concept of worldview has not been as prevalent in the Turkish context as in the West, such as USA and Europe. Many Christian schools give priority to their pupils' worldview, which is increasingly various, and educators search for measurable results to assess the effectiveness of their educational effort and attempts (Schultz & Swezey, 2013, p. 227). While the concept of worldview continues to exist largely in the West, the word can be misused as a tool in political discussions and fundraising, rather than being a sincere commitment (ibid, p. 228). Nevertheless, Christian education systems maintain a focus on academic excellence and a Biblical worldview in their students; and these schools support developing a Biblical worldview in their pupils' lifestyles, which is stated in the schools' mission (ACSI, 2011). On the contrary, the Turkish education system does not give priority to students' worldviews in education policies and curricula; therefore, it creates challenges for social cohesion, policy and education in Turkey today. Currently there is a pressing need for new worldview research and innovative practices. This research aims to remedy the lack of the concept of worldview in a Turkish context in the current literature.

In addition to the above, a careful look at the existing research performed in Turkey reveals that they lack a humanitarian perspective in accordance with daily religious life and a religious worldview. There are some studies that use a scientific perspective that “restricts itself to classifying all colours of daily religious life and attitudes in a uniform class, seeking universal behaviour models with quantitative results and focused on the closeness or distance from a Western scale” (Hokelekli, 2012, p. 241). This study will explore Turkish young people within their religious and cultural settings, and it also examines their subjects and problems to bring a critical approach and a new understanding. This research extends the growing body of literature around the role of Islam and Islamic education in the lives of young people, and the qualities and skills needed to facilitate effective religious education among young Turkish people. Thus it contributes to literature about religious education, typology of youths’ worldviews, identity and culture, and advances knowledge that has the potential to create greater social cohesion in Turkey.

Research Design

This section briefly discusses the research methodologies used in the study, specifically in relation to the research design and the data collection process. It will also provide justification for the selection of particular research methods. It will clarify the process of research design and the administration of data collection.

1. Methodology and Research Methods

This is a qualitative study that seeks to investigate: first, Imam-Hatip High Schools’ senior students’ worldviews and attitudes toward Islamic culture and Western culture; second, to explore their identity construction and negotiation process based on the influence of social changes; third, to consider the role of religious education in daily life in the twenty-first century. The study will take an interpretive approach in presenting an educational worldview that is rooted in the Muslim faith.

This is also an empirical study, which collects data from two Imam-Hatip High Schools’ pupils using interviews. The interview is one of the main data collection tools to access youth's perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations and constructions of reality. Therefore, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted with pupils of two secondary schools in Bursa. The researcher chose three research methods: literature survey,

interviews and focus group interviews. Using different methods can produce mutually supporting ways of collecting data, and this will thus be likely to enhance and improve the quality and reliability of the research.

2. Research Sample

In order to investigate Turkish youth's worldview and religious identity, Imam-Hatip High School students have been chosen for this study. The school population constitutes students from different social, economic, and geographical backgrounds. These young students are one of the most dynamic and interactive populations in Turkey (the age group between 14–24 constitutes 31% of the whole population, and 45% of them are in the 15–19 age group) (Turkey's Statistical Year Book, 2014, p. 37). These young people will form part of the future generation and will be involved in different fields and positions in the country. Their attitudes, values, and identity will be informed by and affect future religious worldviews prevailing in the country.

The research sample included a range of different level of participants (Grade 11 and 12) from two high schools, aged 17–19:

- 15 semi-structured face-to-face interviews (7 male, 8 female students) and one focus group interview (6 students) in Inegol Anatolian Imam-Hatip High School
- 15 semi-structured face-to-face interviews (8 male, 7 female students) and one focus group interview (6 students) in Bursa Ipekcilik Anatolian Imam-Hatip High School
- Total: 30 semi-structured Interviews (15 male and 15 female) and two focus group interviews (6 male and 6 female)

Based on the critical realist approach, data for this study were collected through semi-structured individual and focus group interviews with the sample of 30 Imam-Hatip High Schools' senior students. The data covered the worldview of those pupils and the role of religious education in the negotiation process. The data also include participants' accounts of their process of making meaning of the world, their evolving understanding, perceptions, experiences and identity situations.

3. Data collection and data analysis

The data was collected by using the research method of interviewing, specifically semi-structured interviewing. Interviewing in qualitative research is an effective tool in cases where the focus is on getting insight into people's perception, experiences, and how they make sense of social processes (Taylor and Bodgan, 1984; Holstein and Gubrium, 2004). The central concern of this study is to explore the negotiation process in which young people construct their worldviews and how they negotiate between the competing religious and secular influences that have some bearing on their lives. The drafted interview questions were further fine-tuned, checked for clarity and fitness-for-purpose by piloting them with volunteer respondents (please see Appendix for an example of the list of questions that I used as an interview guide).

Grounded Theory and Thematic analysis methods have been used for this study. This includes the processes of organizing, reducing and describing the data, as well as drawing conclusions or interpretations. It employs a variety of analytic strategies that involve sorting, organizing and reducing the data, as well as assembling the data to interpret them. As for the interviews, the tapes were transcribed and field-notes were compiled for analysis. Transcripts were read and coded by highlighting key words. Emerging themes were determined based on the highlighted terms.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher acknowledges the need for clear definitions and articulations of his theoretical framework as many of the terms used in qualitative research bear different meanings depending on the scholar using them (Schwandt, 2007, p. 37). I conducted my research through using three theories: Worldview Theory as a main framework; critical realism as a philosophical framework; and grounded theory for data.

Grounded theory

Grounded theory is a practical method for conducting research through a creative, interpretive process. It aims to develop new theory by carefully contrasting "the daily realities (what is actually going on) of substantive areas" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967: 239) with the interpretations of those realities made by those who participate in them (Suddaby, 2006:

634). The central focus of grounded theory is the development of theory through constant comparative analysis of data gained through theoretical sampling (Holton and Glaser, 2012: 3). The researcher views grounded theory as a set of principles, flexible guidelines and practices to generate theories that are constructions of reality, rather than exact pictures of it. So grounded theory was chosen because it provided systematic guidelines, a practical way of collecting and analysing the data (from the interviews and focus groups), followed by a method to interpret them that not only stayed close to the data itself (grounded), but encouraged the creative generation of theories (issuing from the data) that can directly address the research aim and questions.

Worldview Study Approach (Worldview Theory)

What is a worldview? Hijmans and Smaling (1997, pp. 15-20) considers worldview to be a specific type of cognitive and affective system for attaching order and meaning to the surrounding world; one may distinguish between collective, cultural meaning systems and individual meaning systems. A meaning system is basically an expression of collective or individual reflexivity. In a meaning system one may find answers to questions such as ‘what is truth? And what is good or bad?’, in short: “what is a good way of life? According to Hijmans and Smaling, this can include religious topics since answers to these fundamental questions can be given by reference to a sacred, otherworldly reality. My research lies in the heart of the worldview studies. Consequently, I am opting for the use of ‘worldview studies’ instead of ‘the study of religion’.

Worldviews consist of a number of different elements or components. A worldview is shaped or influenced by a person’s characteristics, abilities, culture, social context, economic circumstance, educational level and more. They can incorporate a variety of religious or non-religious beliefs, values and teaching. They can ask ultimate questions such as those concerning right and wrong, the existence of a higher power and whether there is life after death. They can be individual, but also communal in scope and incorporate various narratives, stories, sacred texts, symbols and rituals. They can be concerned with ontological questions: how we understand the nature of being. Moreover, they can also be concerned with epistemological issues: how do we know what we know and what are our sources of knowledge. They can examine the beliefs and values that people may hold in common yet express in a wide variety of ways (Valk et al, 2017, pp. 14).

Why I chose worldview study as a framework of this study

It investigates both religious and secular worldviews as drivers of human thought and action. It includes both religious and secular beliefs, values and principles and their impacts, which becomes all the more important in a secular age (Taylor, 2007). It stresses that ultimate or complete knowledge and certainty is beyond the scope of the human, and hence all people (religious and secular) necessarily take a “leap of faith” of some kind to ground their vision of life and way of life. All humans – theist, atheist and agnostic alike – have beliefs of some kind, which play out, in their thoughts and actions (Valk, 2009). Hence, all students become involved in the learning, for all have a worldview.

Worldview study is interdisciplinary in its approach. Questions pertaining to a vision of/for life and a way of life are not to be confined to one particular disciplinary area of study. These questions span the scope of what it means to be human which are then played out in all areas of life, including our social, communal, political and economic activities. To neglect linking those larger questions to these activities is to uncritically accept or assume one vision or way of life. Ultimately, worldview questions are as much the domain of politics and economics as they are of Religious Studies (Hurd, 2008; Nelson, 2001; Schumacher, 1989).

Lastly, worldview study examines the beliefs, values and principles of others as an important aspect of the educational journey. Moreover, it affirms that an intense examination of the beliefs, values and principles that motivate the self is equally important in the learning process. Identifying and describing one’s own worldview and reflecting on how it plays itself out in one’s own thoughts and actions becomes as important as identifying and describing the worldviews of others and how these influence their thoughts and actions. The study of worldviews becomes not just the study of the other; it also becomes a study of the self. The challenge of the teacher is to engage students in such a manner that they become knowledgeable about the other as they grow to a deeper knowledge and understanding of the self; and knowledge of the self cannot be gained apart from knowledge of the other.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the objectives, significance and background of the study, while emphasizing the conceptual framework, which is worldview theory. Mainly due to the secular character of such a research framework, the religious worldviews and identity of

Turkish Muslim communities has not been properly recognised and explored. In this respect, young Turkish Muslims overwhelmingly prefer to identify themselves as both liberal/modern and Muslim. Such an insistence on retaining one's religious heritage, but also internalising the culture of wider society has been depicted as marking the emergence of 'new worldviews or hybrid identities' among Turkish Muslim youth.

This study claims that Turkish Muslim young people are either caught between two or more worldviews or possess a special competence to cope with different worldviews. However, the role and significance of religion in young Muslims' interpretation of their religious worldview within this cultural transition does not seem to have been investigated properly. Most of the research reviewed indicates that Muslim young people still regard Islam as an important part of their life-world. The literature review also indicates that the younger generation of Muslims are either becoming secularised, or are adopting other forms of Islamic identity that keep them apart from meaningfully relating to wider society and to their religious tradition.

Despite this growing recognition of religion in the life-world of Muslim young people, it appears that there is a lack of empirical study into how Turkish Muslim young people interpret their Islamic identity through the ambiguities associated with being situated in a plural cultural context. The present study will argue that Islam and its cultural tradition is an important structural factor determining a young Muslims' life-world and that secular liberal cultural elements can equally have a substantial affect on their worldview. The exploration of worldviews in respect of both Islamic and Western culture gains importance in the emergence of Islamic education that will positively contribute to the overall sociological, psychosocial and educational development of Muslim young people in Turkey.

Chapter 2 Worldview Study Framework

Introduction

What can be termed a worldview? What is a ‘Worldview Study Framework’? This section will explore the wider conceptual framework of worldview including notions such as culture, religion, secularization, and identity. In addition, it discusses other characteristics of the field, especially in relation to recent developments. The first concept discussed is worldview and its dynamics; then it reflects how religious and secular worldviews interact with these dynamics. The rest of the chapter is dedicated to what students of worldviews should be aware of when seeking out an appropriate research strategy. For this reason, processes of identity formation, meaning-making practices and negotiating process will also be discussed.

This chapter will examine literature related to the concept of worldview. This conceptual analysis seeks to articulate a clear definition for the term worldview that will address the most comprehensive understanding of the term. After addressing the definition of worldview, it presents the evolution of the concept, its essential characteristics, worldviews frameworks, Muslim worldviews in Turkey, and the identity formation of young Muslims. The chapter concludes with a summary of worldview thinking and its implications for the current research.

Definitions of the concept of “Worldview”

Definitions of worldview in the literature are many and vague tending to reflect each researcher’s ideological perspective (Baker, 1998). Worldview as a concept has a rich and elaborate history (Sire, 2004); and finding clear, coherent and detailed definitions of this concept is difficult due to it being a widely contested term. Griffieon (1989) writes that “the word is used in a great many areas, ranging from the natural science to philosophy to theology, authors who use it often do so without concern for proper definition, and even when definitions are given they tend to be far from precise”(p.83). According to Wilson (1999):

The use of popular words like “worldview” is always dangerous. As words enter into common currency, they can soon cease to be helpful as they become “buzzwords”— words that evoke a certain response but still remain nebulous and undefined.

Worldview is in danger of becoming just such a word; it is certainly used frequently, but we must really have a clear idea of what we mean by it (p. 130).

Thus, texts which provide definitions of this term will be reviewed in order to develop a foundation for understanding the concept of worldview.

Immanuel Kant originally coined the term worldview in 1790 in German as *Weltschauung*, to mean “an intuition of the world” (Naugle, 2009, p. 6). Although Kant himself did not develop the actual concept, 19th century European philosophers adopted the term and elaborated their own interpretations of it (Dickens, 2013). The English word is borrowed directly from the German *Weltschauung*, a technical philosophical and psychological term that translates literally as “a way of looking at the world” (Oxford Dictionary). Sandsmark (2000) have been using the notion ‘worldview’ as assumptions such as “the latter being view of reality, view of human nature, purpose of life” (p. 5) by inspiring the roots of word from Norwegian (livssyn) and German 'Lebensanschauung'.

Worldview is a relatively new concept brought into usage due to the secularization of Western society, it encompasses both religious and non-religious answers to questions posed about the meaning of life (Sandsmark, 2000). Worldview can also be described as a vague concept; it is about the way we ‘see’ the world, an attempt ‘to explain the whole range of human experience by reference to what is most ultimately real’ (Holmes, 1983, p. 52). A worldview can include beliefs about the nature of reality, the existence of a god, the nature of man, life after death, and ethics (Aadnanes 1992, p. 13-14). It is a framework of beliefs which cannot be scientifically proved, and it is to a large extent determined by a person’s culture, which is formed by religion, philosophy, politics, and more (Sandsmark, 2000, p. 5).

One aspect that appears to be agreed upon by theorists is that each person has a worldview from which they operate. Sire (1997) distinguishes a worldview from philosophy explaining that many people are unable to articulate their philosophical viewpoint on life, but “everyone has a worldview”, with each person “operating within such a framework”. What this means is that everyone has a worldview that they operate from - a set of assumptions about the world - that remain to a large extent hidden in the unconscious recesses of their mind (Sire, 2004). Baker emphasises this point when stating:

All people possess worldviews. These are germane to what they think and do. Such views are acquired through a variety of influences including the family, media, interpersonal relationships and ways our institutions are structured and the way they function (2002, p. 95).

Walsh and Middleton (1984, p.10) writes that if “people probe any society for what it is that primarily forms that society, they discover it is the world view of those who compose that society. This shapes their existence”. A person’s worldview is “their way of thinking about life and the world coupled with the values they set for themselves in the context of that way of thinking” (1984, p.10). Notably, Sandsmark (2000) says that many people hold a view in accordance with a certain tradition (Christian, Islam, Humanism, Marxism, etc.), others may hold a more watered-down version or eclectic view. Each of these views gives a meaning of the term using the notion ‘way of life or world’. Crittenden (1988) uses the notion 'way of life', referring to three overlapping categories of belief and practice:

a) Shared moral, religious, philosophical and other basic beliefs that interpret human life and provide Ideals and rules for how people should act as individuals and as members of society; (b) important customs and other practices related to occupation, social class, religion, ethnic background and so on (e.g. language, child-rearing practices, manners, male and female roles, ...); (c) matters of personal taste and style, usually In such areas as clothing, food, sport, the arts (Crittenden 1988, 108-109).

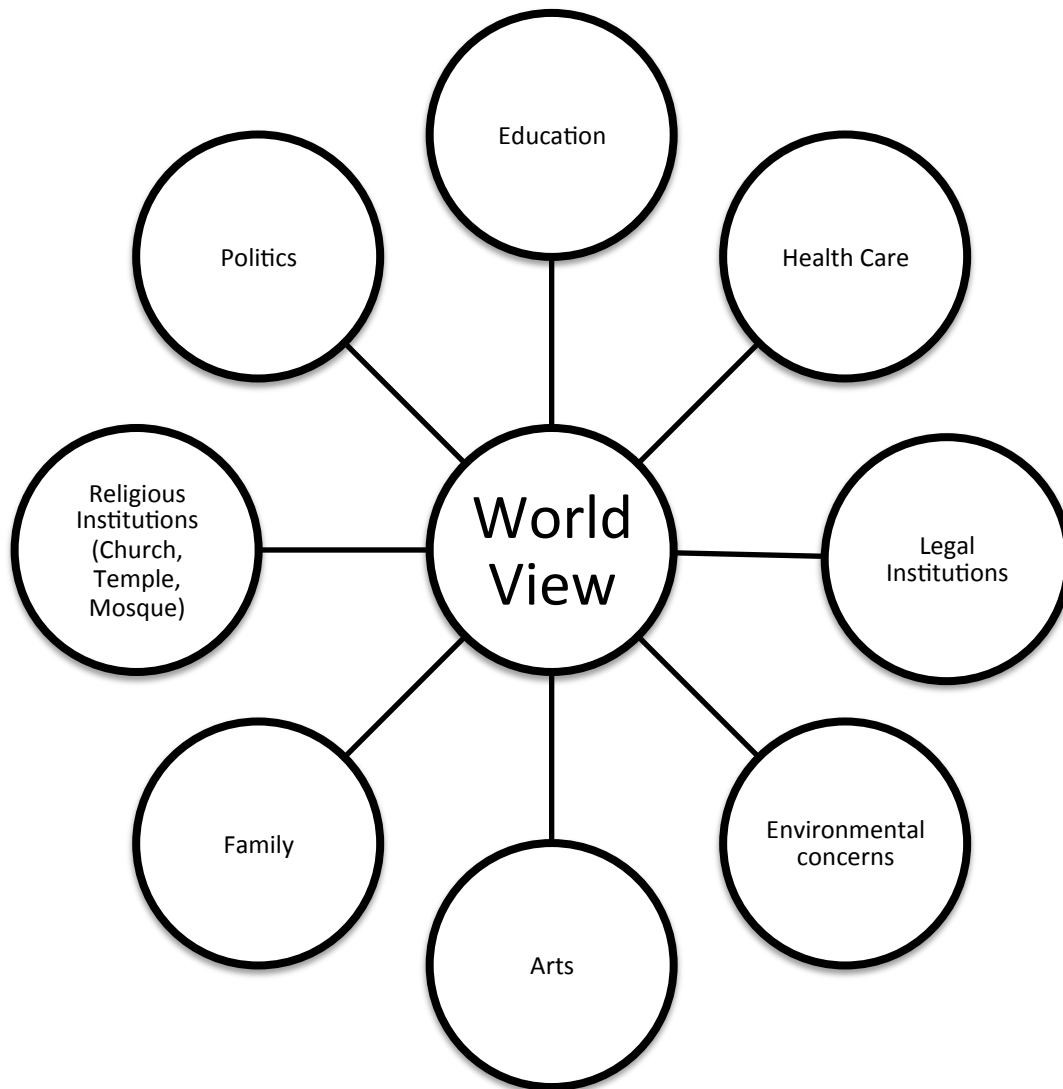
Worldview will be more or less equivalent to the first of these categories. Most definitions of worldview that are used by researchers follow the socio-cultural trend, defining worldview in terms of basic presuppositions about the world, self and others, that are corporately held and culturally formed. Here are some examples:

Worldview.. the ideas and beliefs which a group of people holds about its world and the people and things in it (Christie, 1984, p.3).

The basic assumptions of a people that determine much of their behaviours and decision-making (Kearney, 1984, p.1).

Worldviews are culturally validated presuppositions about the natural world (Aikenhead, 1995, p. 5).

Thus, worldviews tend to develop central, unifying themes about everything observed or experienced by individuals and communities. Worldviews could be exclusively collective and cultural (Baker, 1998, 96) or individual and personal private (Aadnanes, 1997, p. 66).



Interrelationship of Worldview and Culture

Characteristics of worldviews

Despite the definition of the concept of worldview and the nuanced difference in meaning according to varied contexts, a synthesis of the multi-faceted concept of worldview can be

made. Some have suggested, however, that other terms may be more helpful. This section will discuss the general characteristics of worldview.

The term worldview, with varying meanings and other similar concepts, have been used in the 20th century in the fields of philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and the philosophy of science. Examples include: Heidegger in philosophy; Jung in psychology; Berger in sociology of knowledge with “plausibility structures”; Kearney in anthropology with his insight that worldview theory is itself worldview dependent; and Kuhn and Polanyi in philosophy of science (Griffieon, 1989; Naugle, 2002; Sire, 2004). Despite the conflicting assumptions contained in the above uses of worldview, religious traditions (Christianity, Islam) have continued to appropriate the term and affirm many of the insights from the various fields. Educationalists, particularly of the reformed tradition, have used a worldview approach to bring theological truth to bear on the field of education and on the disciplines of knowledge.

The characteristics of worldviews deal in five broad contexts, they are religious, cultural, theoretical, subjective/ objective or personal/ collective, and multi-dimensional. These shall be discussed in more detail below.

a) Religious

Worldviews are religious in nature in that they address ultimate meaning (Goldsworthy, 2000; Klapwijk, 1989). They are a “religious phenomenon and intensively spiritual” (Walsh and Middleton, 1984, p. 34). Worldviews are story linked and symbolic (Naugle, 2009; Fernhout, 1997; Wright, 1992) and they concern a vision of, and for life “a view of how the world is and how it should be” (Klapwijk, 1989, p. 42). According to Naugle (2009), worldviews are fundamentally a vision of the heart—we live “kardiopically” (p. 16) and it should transform our praxis (Walsh, 2000).

Worldviews are connected with faith and they are founded on ultimate faith commitments. Faith is an essential part of human life and where people place their faith determines the worldview that they will adopt (DeGraaff, 1979 in Walsh and Middleton, 1984). According to Walsh and Middleton, people’s ultimate faith commitments ‘sets the contours of their worldview which shapes their vision for a way of life’ (1984, p. 35). However, this raises the question ‘What is a faith commitment?’ Walsh and Middleton answer this as follows:

Who am I? Or, what is the nature, task and purpose of human being? 2) *Where am I?* or, what is the nature of the world and universe I live in? 3) *What's wrong?* Or, what is the basic problem or obstacle that keeps me from attaining fulfillment? In other words, how do I understand evil? And 4) *What is the remedy?* In other words, how do I find salvation? (1984, p. 35).

Middleton and Walsh believe that when people have answered these questions and they settle their faith, they then begin to see and experience their reality in a pattern that makes sense to them. A worldview without faith commitments and proper answers cannot endure human life (1984). However, such answers are rarely held consciously, although they can be brought to consciousness and made cognitively explicit these questions and answers are not theoretical in nature (ibid, p. 35).

In addition to the connection between faith and worldview, Olthuis asserted, worldview is the integrator between life experience and a faith or, put another way, the integrator between faith and the way of life (1989, p. 38). Olthuis also argues “when world viewing is accented as fundamentally an activity of faith (in which faith perceptions are patterned into coherent and cohesive frames for viewing life), worldview is still a serviceable concept” (2009, p. 89). Paul Marshall (1989) writes that “worldview lies behind philosophy but ahead of faith” (p. 185). Worldviews have a religious or faith-based direction (Pierson, 2009; Seerveld, 2009; Wolters, 1985, 1989). Herman Dooyeweerd expressed a similar notion with his concept of *ground motives* (cited in Wolterstorff, 1989, p. 67). Even a particular religious teaching (Biblical, Qur’anic, Scriptural) as supporting the notion that the way we view the world is dependent on our faith position.

Cole (2007) defines an existential conception of worldview using the belief aspect: “a term that covers a set of answers to questions about who we are, where we have come from, why we go wrong and what we may hope for as far as change for the better is concerned” (p. 2). It is a propositional conception that is limited to a specified and narrow range of ideas that ‘centers on real questions about [a person’s] actual existence’ (Cole, 2007, p. 3).

Holmes acknowledges ‘worldview theology’ that addresses theology to a worldview and to particular topics within that worldview (1983, p. 35). It asks, for instance, what the doctrine of creation says about meaning in life or about an objective basis for moral values. It asks what a theological understanding of human nature says to aesthetics, to theories of literary

criticism, or to personality theory. It concerns itself with a theology of work and the marketplace, a theology of play and leisure, a theology of art and of the sense, a theology of nature and of technology, a theology of social change and social institutions, a theology of sex and of friendship, a theology of politics, of education, and so on. Theology can contribute worldview theology to the various areas of thought and life that a worldview must encompass (Holmes, 1983).

In short, regarding to these characteristics of worldviews addressed up, although there are non-religious secular objections and worldviews; they are mostly religious because they answer fundamental questions as mentioned above: *Where am I? Who am I? What's gone wrong? How can it be fixed?* (Walsh & Middleton, 1984, p.35); *Where am I going? Is there a god? How can I live and die happily?* (Olthuis, 1989, p.31); *Why is it possible to know anything at all? How do we know what is right and wrong? What is the meaning of history?* (Sire, 2004, p.20); or *What is reality? Who is well off or blessed? Who is a truly good person? How does one become a truly good person? How do we know which answers to the previous questions are right?* (Willard, 2009, pp.45-50) These questions have been shown as the characteristics of worldview with religious understanding.

b) Cultural

Worldviews are culturally produced and individually internalized networks of culturally constructed significations of the world in which we live our lives. They are basically descriptive and normative symbolic representative significations of our world. Worldviews may be considered to be images of and ideals and norms for the world. These images, ideals and norms are simultaneously the culturally shaped, mental apparatuses for our being in the world (Droogers, 2014, p. 180).

Humans possess culture and cultures. They are able to develop and assimilate knowledge and thereby attribute meaning to their natural and social worlds. Each human does this in his or her own way. People display this cultural capacity not only as individuals, but also as members of the group they are born into, or become part of (Droogers, 2014). Humans are cultural beings in all of the contexts to which they belong, both in the course of a day, and throughout their lives. Anything can be subjected to this act of attributing meaning, and the interpretations that result may differ widely, between societies and also between individuals. People seek and find their way around, conferring and recognizing labels. Through this act of

meaning-making existence is made familiar and reality becomes accessible (Droogers, 2014, p. 18). Droogers states that reality comes into being and takes forms through people's meaning-making (2014, p.18). Essentially, worldview is the workshop in which humans labour over their image of reality.

The universal human capacity to link persons, social relations, objects, events, time, space (and any other perceived phenomena), with meaning and words could be called culture in the singular, implying an exclusive and uniquely human potential to establish a relationship with reality (Droogers, 2014, p. 20). Culture then becomes the human capacity for meaning-making in terms of ideas, beliefs, artefacts, customs, actions, social patterns, and so on, it is thereby more or less synonymous 'with way of life' (*ibid*). Thus, worldviews are constructed by the culture that people live in.

In addition, language is one of the cultural elements of worldviews. Meaning is central to language and it is also central to the notion of worldview as noted by Mathiot (1979):

Worldview is the general way of thinking about the world that underlies all cultural behaviour. Linguistic behaviour, then, is one type of cultural behaviours that manifests worldview (p.163).

According to Valk et al (2017), there are six cultural dimensions of worldviews which were largely pioneered by work of Ninian Smart (1983). These cultural dimensions are comprised of: 1. Texts, scriptures, narratives, stories; 2. Teachings, doctrines; 3. Ethical principles; 4. Rituals, symbols; 5. Community /social gathering of the devotees (cathedrals-sporting facilities, shopping malls, financial institutions); 6. Ekstasis (experiences which strengthen this worldview: sporting events, rock concerts, Eucharist..) Therefore, today, in our modern and global societies, worldviews (also beliefs and values) are still shaped by cultural circumstances, but they are also impacted by a variety of thought patterns much more heterogeneous in nature.

c) Individual/ collective or Subjective/Objective

“Worldview is the dynamic belief system of the individual, formed and shared through life-long interaction with one's culture, society, and environment, which disposes individuals and communities toward acceptance or rejection of actions and ideas” (Baker, 1998, p. 99). Baker

notes that worldview is a belief system that is dynamic; its dynamism resides in the fact that as a members of communities, the beliefs of individuals are both challenged and affirmed regularly, and as rational, thinking creatures, individuals re-form their beliefs according to a complex web of interacting perceptions and allegiances (1998, p. 99).

Wolters (in Marshall et al, 1989) asserts that a worldview is particular to the individual, being one's own perspective of the 'world', causing a worldview to be both personal and socially constructed (p.19). However, Baker (2002, p. 99) concedes that while one's worldview is personal, it usually reflects the "negotiated mores and perspectives resulting from involvement with a cultural group". Thus he (2002, p. 125) espouses:

An individual's worldview will vary, if only slightly, from the worldview of others. Compatible worldviews, on the other hand, will often be found among individuals who share a cultural heritage or who know similar life experiences.

According to Middleton and Walsh (1984) worldviews never belong to just one individual, they are always shared, or communal. Indeed, true community is possible only when people are bound together by a common way of life rooted in a shared vision of life. When a whole society is dominated by a particular worldview, a cultural pattern emerges. Arnold DeGraaf comments, "political activities, legal, economic activities, marriage, family, and child rearing practice are all expressions of a shared way of life. Thus, each culture presents a coherent and meaningful pattern that finds its unity in the dominant vision of life (1979, p.101).

On the other hand, Aadnanes talks about a worldview's 'inside' and 'outside' aspects, arguing that it is important to include both. The 'inside' is the personal, subjective side, with emphasis on individualistic features, emotions and experiences. The 'outside' is "the collective, socio-cultural, historic, and thus 'objective' aspects" (Aadnanes, 1997, p. 66). To this 'outside' belongs, what he refers to as the worldview framework, including the social, cultural and cognitive aspects of society that we are more, or less, aware of, as well as specific religious, philosophical and political traditions (ibid, p. 74-76). Hence, whilst a person's worldviews are both influenced by, and dependent upon the traditional worldviews and the society he or she is a part of, there is also room for personal variations and decisions.

Worldviews impact all areas of life, guiding, determining and shaping what is considered meaningful, what is worth doing, and what may require sacrifice. Individuals and groups of

individuals often determine what is important and why in their economic, communal, political and educational decision-making according to metanarratives or outlooks (Putnam and Campbell 2010; Nelson 2001). Aadnanes discusses that the notion of a personal worldview is an expression of individualism. In collectivist cultures and epochs the frameworks and traditions would to a large extent determine people's views, but our secular, pluralist, and individualistic time leads to a focus on personal, subjective worldviews (1997, pp. 78-80).

d) Theoretical

The last characteristic of worldviews is that they reside in the “theoretical dimension” (Mannheim cited in Naugle, 2002, p. 250). Griffieon (1989) claimed that, “all theorising is to an important degree, regulated by visions stemming from the pre-theoretical realm” (p. 106). However, the point of a worldview approach is to make the implicit explicit and to check for belief consistency. Thus those engaging in worldview discourse inevitably move from the pre-theoretical to the more theoretical. Although there is a strong connection to philosophy, with those in the Kuyperean tradition favoring a worldview which yields to a philosophical typology (Wolters 1989, p. 24). Worldview can become more theoretical without the technical nature of philosophy (Griffieon cited in Seerveld, 2009, p. 68).

Griffieon (1989) noted that, “the influence of faith on theoretical knowledge goes through the medium of a worldview” (p. 82). In addition, he also acknowledged that the influence can go the other way. Arthur Holmes commented on this two-way influence when he asserted that although science impacts worldview, worldview influences science paradigmatically and personally (cited in Naugle, 2002).

Every worldview is an intuition. Redfield calls “everyman's worldview includes space and time, birth and death. Also it includes meaning, morality, identity and contradiction (in Sire, 2004, p. 242). In this sense, theoretically, a worldview is never merely a vision of life; it is always a vision for life (Walsh and Middleton, 1984, p.17). The relationship between ‘of life and for life’ is two way symbiotic. How we view life affects the life we live; it governs both the unconscious actions we engage in and the actions we ponder before acting, meaning that our individual worldview is often somewhat fluid. Sometimes, due to a crisis or a sudden insight or realization, our worldview shifts so much that conversion is the best term to

describe the change. In non-crisis ordinary interaction with the world outside the self, our worldview varies only slightly (Walsh and Middleton, 1984, p. 99).

e) Multi-dimensional

In a multidimensional conception of worldview, Sire (2004), in his definition, added behaviour, heart-orientation, and narrative expression, he writes:

A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being. (p. 122)

Sire's main point is that worldview is not strictly about information, beliefs, or knowledge, but equally can encompass "heart-orientation" and behaviour. Furthermore, Ryken (2006) adds another feature when writing that 'a worldview is a set of presuppositions, but also "the orientation of our soul"' (p. 7). Similarly, Brown (2004) defined the term worldview in a way that incorporates this multidimensional conception of it when he suggested that: "A worldview is first of all an explanation and interpretation of the world and then an application of this view to life" (p. 6). It can be argued that Brown's definition includes the orientation of the heart when he says that "your worldview is not just a mind-set; it is a will set" (p. 7). Behavioural aspects were important to Brown, he states that "You may not live what you profess, but you will live what you believe ... We are great at professing things, but the way we live really demonstrates what's at the root of what we believe" (p. 7). Henceforth, Brown incorporated all three dimensions, namely propositional truth, behaviour, and heart-orientation into his conception of worldview.

Additional insight into the heart-orientation dimension may be derived from the literature on spiritual development. According to Thayer (2004):

Through concrete experience, spiritual knowledge is grasped by the personal experience of relating to God; through abstract conceptualization, it is grasped by abstract symbols of language in reading and hearing both the Scriptures and testimonies of others' experiences. Through reflective observation, spiritual

knowledge is transformed into learning by critical reflection; through active experimentation, it is transformed into learning (p. 196).

Worldview Study Frameworks

There are three different worldview frameworks which are also utilised in this study's framework. They are: ultimate/existential questions framework; ontological and epistemological framework, and worldview dimensions framework. Here, I present these frameworks and how religious and secular worldviews approach and answer them in relation to the Islamic and Western context.

1. Ultimate or Existential Questions Framework

One worldview framework is the “ultimate or existential questions” framework (Naugle, 2002; Olthuis, 1985; Sire, 2004). The big questions of life, habitually the domain of philosophers and theologians, also preoccupy ordinary individuals, albeit in a less philosophical way. This “ultimate or existential questions” framework focuses on those larger-than-life queries such as meaning and purpose, responsibilities and obligations, discerning right from wrong, the existence of a higher power/being/force transcending humans, and life after this life (Valk, 2010, p. 111). Such questions are common to all worldviews yet render responses that map out the basic parameters of a worldview and indicate that views pertaining to these questions can be considerably different. Theistic and atheistic worldviews differ radically, for example, regarding the existence of God and even life after death. Positions taken for one side or another do not necessarily reflect muddled thinking, as some may argue, but more so radically different views that are extremely difficult, if not impossible to reconcile (ibid). Further, reflective individuals and communities of individuals by their very nature continually refine their thinking to give greater depth to the beliefs and values they embrace in light of challenges that come their way, the harsh realities of life, or in response to those who embrace radically different perspectives (Valk, 2008).

How do Secular worldviews and Islam answer these existential four worldview questions?

Where are we? (Meaning and Purpose of Cosmic Life)

In secular worldviews (particularly naturalism), prime reality is matter, which exists eternally and is all there is; God does not exist (Sire, 2009). Therefore, something always was; but that something is not a transcendent Creator, but the matter of the cosmos itself. So, the cosmos is ultimately one thing, without any relation to a Being beyond; there is no ‘god’, no ‘creator’ (Sire, 2009). Natural history (cosmology) begins with the origin of the universe; something happened an incredibly long time ago- a ‘big bang’ or sudden emergence- that ultimately resulted in the formation of the universe we now inhabit and are conscious of (Sire, 2009). It exists as a uniformity of cause and effect in a closed system. It is not open to reordering from outside by a transcendent Being. Therefore, there is no God who gives meaning or purpose to the universe; the only meaning or purpose is what humans add which can be whatever they choose (Watson, 2014). Thus, we are in a world of natural resources that can be known objectively by means of the scientific method and controlled by technological power. According to modern worldviews we know what reality is, and we know how to investigate, understand and control it. Such a view is expressed by those who embrace a worldview identified by Charles Taylor (2007) as Exclusive Humanism and includes Naturalism, Scientism, Atheism, Secularism, Humanism, and more.

On the other hand, in Islam, the fundamental reality is God (Allah) who is described as monotheistic, infinite, personal, transcendent, immanent, omniscient, sovereign and good. These attributes emphasize His oneness, transcendence and sovereignty. In Islamic worldviews, Allah created the universe ‘ex nihilo, and all creatures are responsible to him’ (Sire, 2009, p. 246). However, the world is a closed system insofar as nothing happens in the world outside of His divine decrees. The purpose and meaning of earthly life is for humans to live fruitful and responsible lives in harmony with others and the natural environment. Allah’s method of creation is simply to speak a thing into existence. This understanding is illustrated in the Qur’an concerning the creation of Adam, “He created him from dust, then said to him: ‘Be’. And he was” (3:59). Basically, Allah is the creator and owner of the universe, and nothing happens within it that would be outside of His plan. The universe is orderly, and Allah provides human beings with clarity. The nature of universe and God’s character are thus closely related; there is orderliness and regularity to both. Allah has the

power to know and to govern the universe. The cosmologies of Muslims are not based on evolutionary, materialistic, and separatist models, but on the cosmology of spiritually, sanctification, unification, and creation and other interrelated factors.

Who are we? (Nature and Purpose of the Human and Human life)

In Western culture, naturalism claims that human beings are complex “machines”; personality is an interrelation of chemical and physical properties we do not yet fully understand (Sire, 2009, p. 71). Human beings are a part of the cosmos and there is one substance called matter that humans are comprised of. The laws applying to matter apply to humans. They do not transcend the universe in any way. When the matter that goes to make up an individual disintegrates at death, then the person is no more (ibid, p. 72-74).

Humans are a result of a long evolutionary process that has no larger or general purpose or meaning (Nihilism-Darwinism). Human life is simply here due to processes that, while not completely random, are certainly automatic and unguided by nature: a “Blind Watchmaker” (Dawkins, 2006). The theory of evolution was given a ‘mechanism’ by Charles Darwin (Griffiths et al, 1999). The theory supposes that the origin of life and species lies in the concept of "adaptation to the environment". According to Darwin, living species were not individually created by God, but came from a common ancestor and differentiated from each other as a result of natural selection (Storer (eds.) 1977:2 14). The Darwinian idea “is about as secure as any in science”; that “human beings are products of evolution” is held to be an undisputable fact (Dennett, 1995, pp. 19, 481). Naturalists insist that with the dawn of humanity evolution suddenly took on a new dimension, for human beings are self-conscious, and are believed to be the only self-conscious beings in the universe (Sire, 2009).

Walsh & Middleton gives an example answer for a person who lives in North America:

I am me, an individual, the free and independent master of my own destiny. I stand in a world full of natural potential, and my task is to utilize that potential to economic good. While I am hindered in this task by ignorance of nature and lack of tools for controlling it, nevertheless my hope rests in the good life of progress wherein nature yields its bounty for human benefit. Only then will all find happiness in a life of material affluence, with no needs and no dependence (1984, p. 36).

In the Islamic worldview, human beings are ‘the pinnacle of God’s creation’ (Sire, 2009, p. 257). They have been given abilities that other creatures, such as angels and jinn, do not possess. However, these abilities carry with them a concomitant responsibility to live up to God’s standards (Sire, 2009). According to Islam, the human being is an independent, separate species and is not biologically evolved. The human is comprised of a dual nature, inner and outer. The internal nature of human beings refers to *ruh* (soul) and *'aql* (intellect), and his/her external nature is composed of the physical body. Thus, human beings are made up of spirit and body, they are not merely material beings, subsequently they should be viewed as having an integrated personality.

Islam emphasises that human beings are creatures distinguished from others because they have been endowed with intellect (*'aql*) and free-will (*iradah*). *'Aql* is a unique element in human beings that elevates them above the rest of creation (Qur’an, 95:4). Ashraf (1979: pp. 77-78) argues that Islam views a human's mind to be the product of three different forces: the spirit, the intellect and the passionate soul attached to the body. The spiritual nature of human beings is evident from the breathing of Allah's spirit into them (Qur’an 15:4). The body represents the animal dimension. As an integrative creation, human beings have biological needs for food, activity, and sex; social needs for affection, belonging, and status within a social group; and spiritual needs relating to something larger and beyond one's self, that is, the need to reach for God (Rosnani 2002, <http://islamonline.net>). Moreover, a human being is dignified as being the vicegerent (caliph) of Allah on earth (Qur’an 2:30-34). To uphold this important position as caliph, human beings were equipped with potentialities to enable them to fulfil this substantial responsibility.

Accordingly, a Muslim may assert:

I am the pinnacle of God’s creation, who believes Him and obeys what He orders and dependent on His wise and loving rule. I am God’s representative on earth, higher than any other living creatures. My entire life is in submission to Him. This is intrinsic to our creature hood. I am not autonomous. God has placed me in a position of authority over the earth to cultivate and develop it. Servant hood is central to my humanness.

What is the problem/ wrong? And what is the solution/ right? (Discerning Right from Wrong)

In the secular Western worldview, ethics is related only to human beings (Sire, 2009). For a naturalist, values are constructed by human beings. According to a naturalistic position, “if there was no consciousness prior to the existence of humans, then there was no prior sense of right and wrong. And if there were no ability to do other than what one does, any sense of right and wrong would have no practical value” (Ibid p. 77). Thus, there must be consciousness and self-determination for ethics. Sire (2004) states that no natural law is inscribed in the cosmos. Secular worldview says that ethics, like knowledge, is a linguistic construct and social good is whatever society takes it to be. As maintained by the postmodernist, “the truth about the reality itself is forever hidden from us; all we can do is tell stories” (Sire, 2009, p. 222). According to secular worldviews, right and wrong is individually and collectively determined, and often culturally specific; there is no universal or objective truth criteria by which to measure right and wrong (Valk et al, 2017, p. 83).

In secular worldviews, a few different interpretations come into the agenda, such as Marxism, secular humanism, Nihilism. Marx claimed that ‘since human beings are material, their lives must be understood in terms of the needs to work to satisfy their material needs’ (Marx, 1867). His solution rests on controlling the economic order for the satisfaction of humans. Marxists call “the new socialist individual” those people who are less individualistic and competitive and who as a result find fulfilment in working for the good of the group or collective (Sire, 2009, p. 90). Subsequently, the alienation of all previous societies will be overcome, and a new, higher form of human life will emerge.

Another solution arising from a secular worldview is secular humanism. It is a form of humanism that is framed within a naturalistic worldview. Humanism itself is the system of thought centred on the belief that ‘human beings are of special value; their aspirations, their thoughts, their yearnings are significant’ (Humanist Manifesto II, 1973) cited from Sire, 2009, p. 85). It contains an emphasis on the value of the individual person. In this sense, existentialism supports secular humanism in its recognition of and against the absurdity of the objective world, as well as its claim that the authentic person must revolt and create values. ‘The person who lives an authentic existence is the one who keeps ever aware of the absurdity of the cosmos but who rebels against that absurdity and creates meaning’ (Copson, 2015; cited from Sire, 2009, p. 123).

Alternatively, in Islamic worldviews right and wrong are based on the teachings of the Qur'an, as amplified by the Hadith and interpreted by the schools of law, the sharia (Sire, 2009). Islam holds that human beings, endowed with the ability to choose between right and wrong, need guidance, which God has provided through the Qur'an and the Sunnah, or tradition of the Prophet. Both Sunni and Shi'a Muslims follow the Qur'an and the Prophet's traditions, but differ in their worldviews regarding the religious implications of Muslim leadership (Aswad, 2012). People have turned away from Allah and have become self-centred, they need ultimate purpose, a point of orientation for their lives. Either they serve to Allah and obey what He says in the Qur'an, or they practice whatever they want in disobedience.

Arguably, in all of their activities, humans constantly face the above duality. Dualism is a split-version worldview. It separates reality into two fundamentally distinct categories: holy and profane, sacred and secular (Middleton & Walsh, 1984). So the problem is basically questioning of obedience or disobedience.

In accordance with the Muslim worldview humans are preparing for eternal life. Allah Almighty calls humans to the everlasting land and shows them the ways to attain everlasting happiness. In accordance with the purpose of creation, a human's duty is firstly to have true faith and afterwards to perform the worshipful duties, which are the requirements of faith, to ornament their hearts with good thoughts, and to be successful in the examination of servitude by acting in accordance with moral standards. Quran and tradition states that Allah has imposed the duty, and made His will known through explicit statements: "Let there be one community (ummah) of you, calling to good, and commanding right and forbidding wrong; those are the prospers" (3: 104).

In Islam, Allah is the beginning of everything; He is also the end. At the end of time, there will be a day of judgement with Allah as the judge. He creates heaven and hell, where justice reigns and all evil will have disappeared. To believe in Judgment Day helps a person achieve a feeling of responsibility; a person who carries the feeling of responsibility pays attention to their actions. Real solution is to be bound close to Allah, the Creator, and to live according to His will. Every person is responsible to God for the way they lead their life in relation to nature, other people, and to God. In addition, the Prophet Muhammad said that for true Muslims: "*whoever sees a wrong, and is able to put it right with his hand, let him do so; if he can't, then with his tongue; if he can't, then in his heart, and that is the bare minimum of*

faith". Prophets emphasise three levels to righting a wrong. The true Muslim asserts that God is all-caring, all-forgiving and all-merciful, but he may not draw the conclusion that God will assure him/her access to paradise. Rather, humans must do their best to follow all of God's commandments.

2. *Ontological and Epistemological Worldview Framework*

A second framework to deepen people's understanding of worldviews is the "ontological and epistemological" framework (Daniels, Franz, & Wong, 2000; McKenzie, 1991; Baker, 2002). Though again largely philosophical in nature, this framework assists in exploring how people understand the nature of being (ontology) and also the nature of their knowing (epistemology). Such questions can be of great assistance to inquisitive minds seeking greater understanding into the nature of the reality they experience. Ontological questions become foundational questions and depict a distinct worldview type (Valk, 2010, p. 111). Naturalism, Marxism and Darwinism, for example, regard the ultimate nature of being as physical (material) and hence reject any concept of a transcendent God. Native Spirituality, Hinduism and Eco-spiritualities on the other hand, view reality as a combination of the physical and spiritual, yet distinguish themselves from Judaism, Christianity and Islam which affirm that the nature of reality consists of the integration of the physical and the spiritual owing to the creative acts of a transcendent God (*ibid*).

Epistemological questions compel people to think deeply about the foundation of their belief systems. Questions concerning what we know and how we know what we know challenge all to reflect on the sources of one's certainty. Discovering the sources of their knowledge and concepts of truth and the nature of the authority of these sources challenge students to reflect on what they accept with certainty and the reasons for doing so. In particular, people come to the realisation that no one stands at a pinnacle or mountaintop able to discern with ultimate knowledge or certainty the nature of reality, rather we all take "leap[s] of faith" (Valk, 2010, p. 112).

i. Ontology (the Nature of Being)

A worldview relates to the world or reality. Simply, it is "a way of looking at reality" or is a "vision of life" (Kearney, 1984; Newport, 1998, p. 41). According to Philosophical Naturalism, we can know nothing about the existence of anything beyond, or distinct from

physical matter or the physical universe. All that constitutes human and universal life originated at, and from the Big Bang. Consequently, there is no greater Being, spiritual dimension or realm distinct and separate from the material or physical universe (Valk et al, 2017, p.102). Modernity is characterized by the belief that the world can be known objectively by means of the scientific method. Hence, reality is given, everybody lives in the same world, and beliefs are private additions (Middleton & Walsh 1995, p. 43).

An adequate conceptualization of the world and people's place in it is founded on an "adequate inquiry of people's ontological views" (Heil, 2003, p. 3). The construct of the world implies the idea of the 'structure of religious consciousness', which states nothing of things as they really are, but only how individuals perceive them to be (Cox, 1996, p. 147). Within this perspective, Muslims understand the world not as a machine or scientific paradigm, but as a living reality or lively cosmos (Al-Aswad, 2012, p. 25).

Any Muslim view of reality will begin and end with Allah who created everything from nothing. Ontologically, all entities and creatures, unseen and seen, including humans, angels, and jinn as well as the visible world of nature with its heavens, sun, moon, stars, and earth are created, maintained and balanced by Allah. His continued creation upholds the world, which has no life in itself. Except for humans who have the choice to be or not to be Muslim, the entire physical world or universe surrenders to and praises God, a feature rendering it from a Muslims' perspectives an Islamic entity. In addition, Muslims view the Ka'ba in Mecca as an emblem that symbolically, ritually, and substantially renders the entire cosmos Muslim, because of its physical, spiritual, and human dimensions. The Ka'ba is an inseparable component of a Muslim's ontological and existential worldview and a symbol of the genuine unity of all Muslim communities. It is considered the focal point for Muslims dispersed around the world. The Ka'ba is known as the House of God or sanctuary towards which Muslims turn in prayer five times a day and around which they circumambulate during their pilgrimage to Mecca (Al-Aswad, 2012).

ii. Epistemology (the Nature of Knowing)

Experience and learning have taught that humans see and perceive the world differently from each other. Immediate context shapes and influences how we understand and interpret the world, so individual knowing and perception of reality is unique (Valk et al, 2017, p. 113). As such, knowledge is subjective. Subjective knowing asserts that the source of truth or

knowledge is the self: it is the individual that determines what is right and true, especially when it concerns moral issues. The truth of moral statements, for example, depends on the particular beliefs, values or feelings of an individual or group of individuals. We often hear this expressed in the statement “it is true for me” (*Ibid*, p.115). A world or a reality is said to exist regardless of human perceptions or interpretations of it. It is mind-independent; it exists independent of how human minds perceive it. In a similar manner, truth and knowledge do not depend upon the beliefs or feelings of any individual, or group of individuals. As such, moral judgements or statements can be considered true regardless of individual beliefs, opinions or predilections (*ibid*, p. 117).

In Islamic worldviews, the most important source of knowledge for Muslims remains the Qur’an, the tradition of Muhammad and human experience. For basic faith issues or rules regarding Islam, the Qur’an remains the primary source. Allah’s knowledge is infinite and reliable, and as such, the Qur’an, which flows from Allah’s knowledge, must have an exclusive role in the Muslim tradition. Without a doubt, this perspective is grounded in a central epistemological starting point; it is the main approach in traditional Islamic epistemology. In the complicated pace of daily life and in many daily encounters, however, the Qur’an need not be regarded as the only preferred source, Muslims also give primacy to human experiences. Issues of a social, educational, scientific, political or economic nature often require other non-Qur’anic sources for depth of understanding. Muslims are called to involve themselves in the customs and cultures of their day. This encompassed the culture, lifestyle, and experiences of the communities in which they reside, these too serve as sources. For Muslims in general, however, individuals must determine for themselves what informational sources are best suited to shed light on the issues before them. From this perspective, Muslims are quite open to change (Valk et al, 2017, pp. 122-3).

3. Worldview Dimensions Framework

A third framework to enhance people understanding of worldviews is the “worldview dimensions” framework, modelled after that first used by Ninian Smart (Smart, 1983, Valk, Albayrak, & Selcuk, 2017). A worldviews dimension framework explores beliefs, values and principles as conveyed through narratives or stories, teachings, rituals, social engagements and experiential opportunities. The content of these structures is often given a particular shape by the culture in which the worldviews are embedded. Subsequently, much insight can be gained by examining how beliefs and behaviours are shaped by the contexts in which they

emerge. Smart termed his approach a cultural dimensions approach. This framework gives students an opportunity to see how a vision of life and a way of life are transmitted or reinforced in religious or secular communities or institutions. Each of these dimensions plays out in different ways with different worldviews and in different contexts. Teachings from the Bible, the Qur'an or Mao's Red Book instil particular beliefs in their adherents. Rituals such as July 4th Parades, Baptisms, Boxing Day sales, Sun Dances or Summer Solstice celebrations communicate or reinforce particular worldview beliefs and values. A "worldview dimensions" framework conveys the notion that all worldviews attempt to transmit a particular social, moral and spiritual universe to adherents and followers in structurally similar ways in order to encourage or reinforce loyalty and devotion (Valk, 2010, p. 112).

In Worldview Dimension framework, Valk, Albayrak and Selcuk (2017) used six components to identify human's worldviews. *The first component* focuses on texts, sacred scriptures, narratives or stories that inform one's worldview. Among religious people of various traditions past and present, myths, sacred texts and scriptures (such as the Torah, Holy Bible, Qur'an, Bhagavad Gita and the Tao teaching) form an important source for beliefs, morals and values (Campbell and Moyers 1991; Hamilton 1998). For non-religious or secular people, narratives, novels or scientific and rational theories emerging from texts become the source for their worldviews (Valk et al, 2017, p. 18). *The second component* focuses on the teachings or doctrines that arise from the sources to which one gives priority. Those teachings may concern the beginnings of the universe, the earth and humans, as captured in creation myths in sacred scriptures and stories or even in science texts and theories (Moyers 1996). They may teach how we should live a moral and upright life, or prescribed rituals for living and dying (Campbell 1993). Teaching and doctrines can also be of a secular kind (such as Secularism, Darwinism, Marxism, Maoism, Capitalism and Scientism) and form the basis, acknowledged or unacknowledged, of educational or political systems in various places in the world (Ibid, p.19). *The third component* focuses on ethical principles that emerge from narratives, texts or teachings. These ethical principles serve to guide and direct the thoughts and actions of adherents, whether they are individuals, groups or even entities. Ethics involves discerning what it means to live a good life. According to Singer, this involves determining for oneself a life that is worth living or one that is satisfying and beyond the confines of traditional religious moral conduct (Singer 2010). Yet others reject such an individualistic approach to ethics and assert that in order for humans to flourish

ethics must be grounded in a particular religious tradition (Blackburn 2001). *The fourth component* focuses on rituals and symbols that reflect particular worldviews. Rituals are not exclusively linked to religions, but surface in all worldviews. Similarly, symbols pervade both religious and secular worldviews. The fact that rituals and symbols, religious or otherwise, can create controversy is testimony that they always point beyond themselves, are powerful and convey strong messages (Valk et. all, 2017, p.19). *The fifth component* focuses on communal and social engagements. These become important to any worldview for it is in such engagements that worldviews receive support and legitimacy. Social gatherings such as church suppers, events for young people and weekly meetings serve as important functions for the religiously minded in that they create group solidarity and convey group beliefs and values. Social gatherings whatever their variety serves similarly important functions for secular-minded people (Ibid, p. 20). *The sixth component* focuses on those special kinds of activities that create extraordinary happiness, joy and enthusiasm, or even frenzy and/or ecstasy in adherents. There are both religious and secular equivalents. Participating in a Eucharist, a pilgrimage to Mecca or a bar mitzvah are events that leave a mark on the participants, strengthening their religious faith, belief and values. Likewise, vicarious participation in sporting events, marching in July 4th parades or even gyrating feverishly at rock concerts can give rise to joy, happiness and even ecstasy that inculcates faith, beliefs and values of a secular kind in the participant or adherent (Ibid, p. 20).

In Muslim worldviews, if these six components framework apply to Muslim young people, the possible answer is that the Qur'an is the primary source of Islam that gives shape to their lives. The Qur'an addresses the religious, ethical, social and economic issues of the time in which it was revealed. It revealed how humans can overcome the morass in which they often find themselves and live more morally upright and productive lives. Yet, it is equally instructive for today, occupying a significant place in the lives of Muslims and serving as their most reliable guide. It reveals guiding principles that serve to give guidance and direction to an Islamic way of life. It is instructive in anchoring Muslims in their beliefs, prayers and ethical behaviour, and how to deal justly with others (Valk et all, 2017, p. 43).

Muslims are mandated to be good persons, to lead a good and virtuous life. The life of Prophet Muhammad occupies a central place in the life of Muslims; the Qur'an specifically refers to him as a role model, and hence an important example for Muslims. He was intimately involved in the revelatory process of the Qur'an, internalized its messages and

implanted them in his life. Muslim theologian and philosophers, past and present, interpret the teaching of Islam in the context of their social, historical and cultural background (Ibid, p. 49). Tradition, culture and context influence individual understanding of Islamic teachings. As individuals deepen their general understanding and experience of life, they are prone to interpret religious teachings in different ways.

Ethical principles guide and direct the thoughts and actions of Muslims, whether individually or collectively. These principles may correspond with those of other traditions, religious or secular, but they remain grounded in the Qur'an (ibid, p. 53). Rituals and symbols are also common to Islam that shapes the worldviews and lifestyle of Muslims. They regulate life and assist Muslims in keeping their worldviews dynamic. In short, rituals enhance and deepen both the religious and spiritual life of people. As touched upon earlier, three of the most important Islamic rituals are daily prayers, fasting and pilgrimages. Three of the most important symbols in Islam are the mosques, minaret and Ka'ba (Ibid, p. 57).

Muslim Turkish people meet at various times for religious reasons. Friday prayers and religious holidays are clear examples where both are involved. Muslims gather together in the mosques on Fridays and on religious holidays to pray, but they also have an opportunity to socialize. In the mosques, greetings and good wishes are exchanged, and excitement and happiness are shared.

Worldviews and Muslim Identity

Today Muslims mostly construct their worldviews and identity based on the fundamental principles of Islam, whether they are live in the West or the East. According to Ramadan (2004), Muslims 'define themselves on the basis of points of reference that explain their sense of belonging to the same community of faith and at the same time root them in the universe of Islam' (p. 9) throughout the diversity of their national cultures, the essence of their faith, their identity, and their being in the world. I believe that the fundamental principles of Islam empower all Muslims for evolution, adaptation and transformation to a variety of social and cultural environments.

The central question of identity '*Who are we?*' has occupied today's young people's minds (Middleton and Walsh, 1995) and is also a vital question for young Muslims in Turkey (Ok, 2009). It is imperative that young Muslims define what they are, what they want to be, and

how they place themselves in this new world; their worldview will shape their answers. Islamic culture becomes identified with the young generation's adaptation or negotiation to another social and cultural context. It also represents their way of being authentically Muslim in today's Turkey. Therefore, recognizing the elements of Muslim identity which are based on religious principles is very important to allow young Muslims to live in any environment; moreover 'cultures that are a specific way of living out these principles, adapted for a variety of societies, none having more legitimacy than any other provided that it respects the religious injunctions' (Ramadan, 2004, p. 78). There are four foundational pillars defining the meaning of '*Muslim identity*'; which Tariq Ramadan (2004) explores in his book '*Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*' which shall be considered in more detail in the accompanying sections.

1. One Faith, One Practice, and One Spirituality

One of the most significant principles of Muslim identity is *faith*, which is a personal sign that an individual believes in the Creator without identifying anything with Him (Ramadan, 2004). This is the message of the main concept of 'tawhid', or belief in the oneness of God and which is proclaimed by the 'shahada', a wholesome and honest demonstration of the nature of Muslim identity, surpassing all barriers. Shahada is expressed in religious activities such as prayer and fasting. Spirituality is closely linked with these two facets of Muslim identity, referring from an Islamic perspective to how an individual strengthens and enriches his/her faith. Spirituality involves memory and the passion required in the fight against the natural inclination to lose track of one's faith. All religious activities recommended by Islam, primarily prayer, are methods of 'dhikr' which means remembering: "Truly I am God; there is no god but I. So worship Me and perform the prayer in order to remember Me" (Ramadan, 2004, p. 79).

According to Islam, all Muslims should strive for exemplary behaviour that consists of achieving a state of complete remembrance and recollection. The Prophet Muhammad said that 'al-ihsan', which means excellence, is "to worship God as if you could see Him, for even if you cannot see Him, He sees you". In other words, an individual must think of God at all times (Ramadan, 2004, p. 79). Many discussions between sociologists and political scientists often forget to mention this aspect, implying that concepts such as faith and spirituality are not thought of as concrete data with an objective character (Ramadan, 2004, p. 79). However, it is important to note that the word 'Islam' means 'submission' to God and refers specifically

to the religious act of reverence. Therefore, identification with the Muslim identity requires acknowledgement of this first and rudimentary element of faith, enabling Muslims to perform religious practices that enrich their spiritual life. Faith and spirituality support these activities, which convey the existence of a necessary belief that gives life meaning, to take these away from Muslims is akin to separating them from their being.

2. An Understanding of the Texts and the Context

It is difficult to acquire true belief without understanding, for Muslims, this requires understanding the origins of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, in addition to the circumstances in which they live. Therefore, Muslims must develop an understanding of the origin of their sacred texts and also of the context circumstances so that they may realise how to remain faithful to the directions of Islam. This is the primary teaching of Islamic practice, which has occurred ever since the time of the Prophet and has continued to inhabit the ulama. Therefore, it can be said that Muslim identity is not restricted and inflexible (Ramadan, 2004, p. 80). Rather, it is built upon solid reasoning and active movement between the sources and the context with the main aim being to live a balanced life. This is the reason that, for Islam, the development of intellectual abilities is absolutely important and serves to promote the teachings of Islam. To be Muslim requires striving to develop one's abilities and to continuously gain knowledge, so much so that it can be argued that "to be Muslim is to learn." According to the Prophet, "Seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim man and woman." (Ibid, p. 80)

Broadly speaking, knowledge is a prerequisite for comprehending the Islamic sources in addition to the Creator, creation and all created beings. The Qur'an states that one can intensify one's awareness of God through knowledge and understanding (Ramadan, 2004, p. 80). There are two factors of understanding, the aforementioned being the first. The second factor is that Muslims should use this capacity to assist in making decisions between what is good and bad so that they may find the most appropriate way to please God regardless of the circumstances in which they are living. It is important to note that there can be no freedom without choice, and further, that there can be no knowledge or understanding without choice. Apart from faith and spirituality, another important element of the Muslim identity is understanding, which is gained through knowledge and choice, and is built upon freedom. Therefore, Muslim identity is flexible because it is based on intelligence combined with an

understanding of the sources and the context. Ultimately, Muslim identity is notable for its emphasis on intelligence, which is based upon knowledge, freedom and responsibility (Ibid).

3. Education and Transmission

Faith (*iman*) is a vow or pledge (*amaana*), and Muslims are obligated to share the vow with their children before friends and relatives who act as witnesses. To be Muslim requires teaching and sharing knowledge and this is something that was ordered by the Prophet when he said: “Warn those who are closest to you” (Ramadan, 2004, p. 81). Muslim identity is not restricted to the individual and the personal realm, but it requires espousing and communicating a view of life to others that is built upon faith, spirituality and understanding of ethical commands. Parents play a very important role in this by providing their children with the notion and essence of *what they are* so that they can ultimately choose to become responsible human beings and decide *what they want to be* (Ramadan, 2004, p. 81).

Muslims are convinced that the Qur’an is the last sacred Revelation and that therefore, it has a universal facet. Their duty before God is to make the meaning of the pledge recognised and to describe it in detail and as clearly as possible. This is where the responsibility ends since the concept of converting people is not one that is familiar to Islam. To share the meaning is to invite people to gain knowledge of the existence of God and towards a genuine understanding of His teachings. Conversion can only be accomplished by God through His revelation and this is something that occurs on an individual basis. The reason for this is that it concerns the heart of an individual, and as such no one else has the right to get involved. (Ramadan, 2004, pp. 81-82).

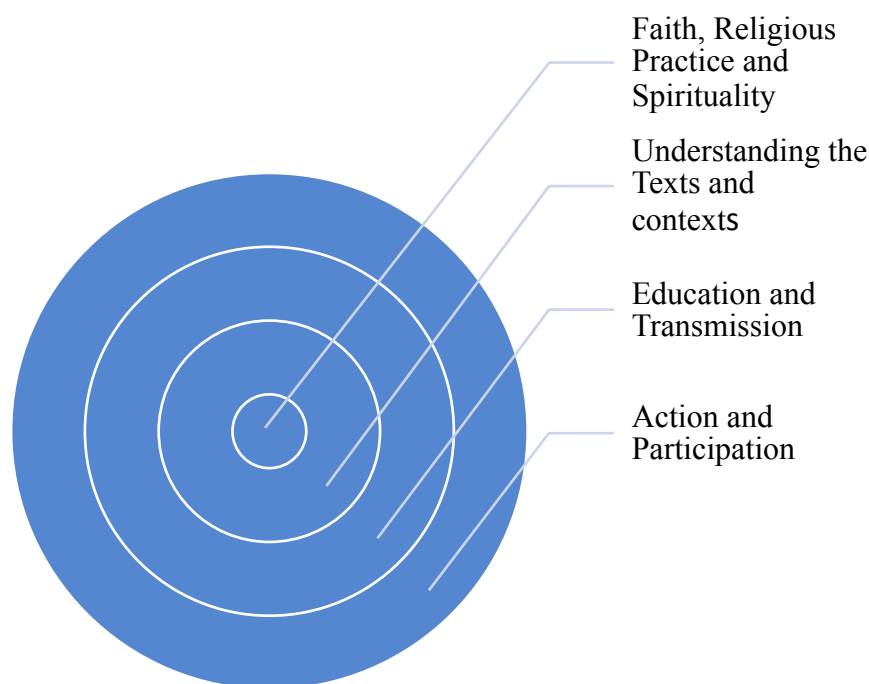
4. Action and Participation

The third keystone of Muslim identity is constant communication based on the acts of educating and disseminating which have been defined as the very basis of being Muslim.

The external expression of Muslim identity is communication and presentation of the faith through behaviour. To be Muslim means to behave in accordance with Islamic teachings, regardless of the surrounding circumstances, and nothing in Islam stipulates that one must withdraw from the community so that one may be closer to God. Instead, the opposite is the case, and according to the Qur’an belief is connected with good behaviour. The Prophet

emphasised this aspect of Muslim identity and its development includes the potential an individual has of behaving according to what an individual is and what that individual believes (Ramadan, 2004, p. 82).

The way an individual acts is built upon four factors of human life: expanding and safeguarding spiritual life in the community, spreading religious as well as secular education, advocating justice in every aspect of life and lastly, encouraging unity with all classes of people who are disregarded or marginalised. Regardless of location, a Muslim is a Muslim when he or she comprehends this important aspect of his or her existence on Earth: to be with God is equal to being with human beings. It is important to note that this does not mean only Muslims, but all of human kind and according to the Prophet: “The best among you is the one who behaves best toward people” (Ramadan, 2004, p. 82). One is obligated to participate in their community, this puts forth the idea of action in a community with other citizens who make up said community (Ramadan, 2004, p. 83). The fourth keystone of Muslim identity combines the two aspects of *acting* and *participating*, which can be likened to the individual and the social being which describe being Muslim in connection to community and the world.



Muslim Identity and Worldviews

These four aspects provide sufficient idea of the basics of a Muslim identity, individual and social, set apart from its cultural reading in a particular area of the world. The essence of faith

with practice and spirituality is the perspective from which life and the world can be viewed. Understanding of the source texts and context permits one to organise one's mind both on an individual level and in respect to their environment. More generally, education and transmission allow for the sharing of the pledge as a gift and for the ability for the message to be passed on. Finally, on an even larger scale, action and participation are the complete representation of Muslim identity through the manner in which one behaves towards oneself, other people, creation, the community and all of mankind. It becomes clear then, that the meaning of the Muslim identity is flexible, active and based on important principles whilst at the same time being in continuous interaction with the environment (Ramadan, 2004).

Worldviews and Islamic Education

Education occurs within a worldview milieu. Secularist claims that education transcends worldview demonstrates the plausibility structure of the prevailing naturalism story. Nevertheless, worldview as a storied vision for life has the capacity to fire the imagination of students and to lead to transformed praxis (Walsh, 2000). This vision of what life is ultimately about shapes the educational vision of the school. A school's educational vision, or what it seeks to do for students, corresponds to the religiously informed vision of and for life. Islam, when it is conceived in worldview terms, produces a God centred vision of and for the world. The education of Muslims might take place in mosques, schools or higher institutions and other forms of organisations established by them over the centuries.

What is Islamic (religious) education then? Douglass and Shaikh (2004, p. 8) offer a practical definition of Islamic Education as "(the) efforts by the Muslim community to educate its own, to pass along the heritage of Islamic knowledge, first and foremost through its primary sources, the 'Qur'an and the Sunnah'. In another definition of Islamic Education, Husain and Ashraf (1979, p. 1) define the term as "an education which trains the sensibility of pupils in such a manner that in their attitude to life, their actions, decisions and approach to all kind of knowledge, they are governed by spiritual and deeply felt ethical values of Islam. " From these definitions Islamic Education may refer to the process of the inculcation of knowledge in the Muslim community, as being based on the two main sources of Islam in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, with special emphasis on the Islamic spiritual and ethical values.

The aim of general education, according to some Western educationists is to produce the responsible human being and citizen. In contrast, special education aims at giving

competence in some occupation (Richmond 1968: 42). Looking at this general aim of education, we see that the democratic secular education focuses more on the material aspect of the human being, than the holistic development of human nature. The lack of spiritual care of learners is obviously apparent in stating their educational outcomes. As discussed previously, on the important question of the nature of human beings, Islam recognises that human beings are the perfect creation of God and are made up of several components, namely, body, soul and mind. Thus, educational aims should be designed to develop each of these components without neglecting of any of them. Failure to build up every component may result in the failure of the education itself. This means there should be physical aims, spiritual aims and mental aims (Al-Attas, 1979).

It has been acknowledged by educators that education serves a dual purpose, one for individuals and one for society. Through proper education, an individual's potentials - physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, and emotional are drawn out, cultivated, and developed. The educational goals of secular democratic societies are strongly influenced by the economic objective of profit maximization. In this respect, the First World Muslim Conference on Muslim Education commended its clear statement of an Islamic Educational Philosophy, which aims:

at the balanced growth of the total personality of Man through the training of Man's spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses. The training imparted to a Muslim must be such that faith is infused into the whole of his personality and creates in him an emotional attachment to Islam and enables him to follow the Quran and the Sunnah and be governed by the Islamic system of values willingly and joyfully so that he may proceed to the realization of his status as khalifat Allah to whom Allah has promised the authority of the universe (Al-Attas 1979, pp. 158-9).

Therefore, we may conclude that the integrated aim of Islamic Education is firstly to develop a balanced growth of the total personality of human beings through training of the spirit, the intellect, the rational self, feelings and the senses. Secondly, Islamic Education aims at achieving the complete submission to, and harmony with the Will of Allah by the individual, the community and by humanity at large. Thirdly, education should enable individuals to achieve social mobility by attaining their highest potential, each according to their own ability. Fourthly, education should promote the creative impulse in human beings to rule themselves and the universe by understanding the laws of nature and harnessing their forces,

and not by opposing them and coming into conflict with them. Finally, Islamic Education should instil piety and encourage self-discipline and self-purification as a means of opening the heart to fear and love of Allah.

Muslim Worldviews

In dealing with young people's worldviews and belief systems, however, several scholars categorize them within binary oppositions such as visible/invisible, apparent/hidden, external/internal, material/spiritual, and secular/religious (Geerts, 1960; Gilson, 1982, Berkes, 1998). It is imperative to discuss some fundamental components of Islamic worldviews to consider their impact on young people's daily interactions. What makes a worldview sacred or secular is not its subject matter, but rather the sources from which its nuclear notions and assumptions are deduced (al-Aswad, 2012, p. 11). Fundamentally, Muslim sacred worldviews are drawn from the Qur'an and the Prophet Mohammed's tradition. Islam has been perceived as encompassing different worldviews and practices within one unifying global entity or overarching Islamic worldviews, a holistic view embedded in the Qur'an and the Prophet's tradition.

Overarching Muslim worldviews typify the majority of Muslims, whose worldview population is more than 1.5 billion (Al-Aswad, 2012). Although Muslim worldviews hold common features based on the Qur'an (the world of Allah), revelation, and tradition (Hadith and praxis) of the Prophet Muhammad, they are different and drawn from various sources (Al-Aswad, 2012, and in Valk et al, 2010). Islam comprises various sects of which the two largest are the Sunni and the Shi'a. The Sunni, derived from the Arabic word "Sunnah", meaning the tradition of the Muhammad is the largest branch of Islam, constituting 90 percent of the religions' followers from all over the world (Bearman, Peter, and Vogel 2006). The second largest denomination of Islam includes those whose forbearers supported 'Ali ibn Abu Talib, cousin and son in-law of the Prophet, who was to be the fourth caliph but was killed in AD 661' (Al-Aswad, 2012). There is a significant theological dispute between Sunni and Shia; however, this dispute is not found in the basic doctrines and practices that include the five pillars of Islam. These pillars, the testimony of the oneness of Allah and Muhammad as His prophet, praying five times daily, almsgiving, fasting during the month of Ramadan, and participating in the pilgrimage to Mecca, must be observed by ordinary Muslims regardless of their sect, occupation, education, or exegeses of religious scholars (Ibid, p. 11).

The term ummah used by Muslims to denote the worldwide or universally unified community of the faithful that goes beyond a mere geographical community or nation. The ummah constitutes a significant component of the worldview or framework through which Muslims identify themselves and view the world or other people with whom they interact. The ummah, a trans-regional communal identity, is a binding element of individual Muslims in various geographic locations, regardless of their ethnic, cultural, or national backgrounds, Muslim people perceive themselves as being fully part of the ummah or Muslim community (al-Aswad, 2012, p. 22).

Contemporary Muslim worlds are characterized by ethnic, cultural, and ideological diversity. It is difficult and perhaps even impossible to understand Muslims' modes of behaviour and thinking without paying attention to their multiple worldviews, interpenetrating domains, and points of reference correlating with cultural constructs that render different experiential worlds, real or imaginary, comprehensible. Muslim cosmologies include, for example, those of the Sunni (including the Salafiyye a Sunni purist-reform movement calling for a return to Islam as understood and enacted by the pious forefathers), the Shi'a, and the Sufi (those adhering to a mystical forms of the faith), in both local and transnational contexts. In addition, there is the Wahhabi worldview, a movement which the Sunnis established in Saudi Arabia by Mohammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), which regards the Qur'an and Hadith as fundamental texts and considers Sufism, mysticism, and Shi'ism as forms of non-orthodox Islam (al-Aswad, 2005). Islam, however, is confronted not only with multiple cultures or worldviews of different Muslim communities, but also with Western attempts at imposing its essentially secular worldview through the process of globalization. Increases and changes in trans-communication, global flows of culture, capital, and material forces have recently and concurrently opened new venues for Muslims to rethink certain modes of both their worldviews and social lives (al-Aswad, 2012, p. 6).

Conclusion

This study applying the worldviews study theory that incorporate objective description and subjective interpretation, examines young people worldviews, perceptions and social imaginary of their understanding living in Turkey. This chapter has outlined a number of different theoretical perspectives of worldviews, including the term worldview's evolution history, definitions and characteristics of it. It has discussed some of the current theoretical worldviews study frameworks with giving answers from Islamic and secular worldviews.

Moreover, it has described the relationship of worldview and Islam with a focus on identity, education and Muslim worldviews.

Chapter 3 Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

The previous chapters reviewed literature in the field of cultural and social change of Turkish young people to present and critically engage with the worldview theory. This chapter will describe the research methodology used in the study, in relation to the research design, the data collection and analyses process. The discussion will clarify relevant issues regarding research methodologies.

This chapter will also provide justifications for the selection of particular methods in undertaking this research, as well as the essential steps in designing research methods in the study, with focus on focus group and semi-structured interview methods. The discussion will clarify the process of research design and administration of data collection. I begin the chapter with a discussion of problems pertaining to researching young people in general terms. I then discuss some key epistemological, ontological and methodological considerations regarding to theoretical frameworks and how the explorative nature of this research on selected young people in Turkey has led me to choose an interpretive research design. Then, I explain how the research data were analysed and presented. In the final section, I explicate the role of the researcher via a reflective account and discuss some ethical considerations in undertaking this study.

Research Questions

Before outlining the research methods used in this study it is helpful to restate the research questions in order to organise limit and focus the study. The aim of the study is to investigate Imam Hatip High Schools students' worldviews and identity discernment of these selected young Muslims, and understand the role of Religious education among their worldviews. Therefore, serious consideration is required to define clear research questions in undertaking this study. In order to fulfil this goal, the following questions are addressed:

1. What is the worldview of Imam-Hatip School's senior students and how do they identify themselves and make meaning of the world?

With this primary research question, I aimed to explore Imam-Hatip High School's senior students' worldviews and their making sense of understanding the world and

themselves in answering worldview's basic questions *Who am I? Where am I? What is the problem? And what is the solution?*

2. How do Imam-Hatip School's senior students conceptualize and make sense of Islam and its religious practices in their worldview?

Regarding this research question, I aimed to examine Imam-Hatip High School's senior pupils' understanding of Islam; how they interpret their experiences of Islam and what place Islam has from their point of view.

3. How do Imam-Hatip School's students conceptualize and make sense of Western culture and its secular/liberal practices in their worldview?

Regarding this research question. I aimed to examine Imam-Hatip High School's senior pupils' understanding of Western culture; how they interpret their experience of Western culture and what place Western culture has from their point of view.

4. How do Imam-Hatip School's senior students negotiate between Western culture and Islamic culture and construct their worldviews?

This question aimed to investigate how Imam-Hatip High School's senior students are negotiating between Western and Islamic culture and constructing their worldviews. The process of negotiating and constructing a hybrid identity or a worldview is one of the significant part of the data and analyses. This part also helps the study to consist an approach for future studies.

5. How do Imam-Hatip School's senior students perceive the role of Religious Education on this process of negotiating the worldviews?

With this last research question, I aimed to find out Imam-Hatip High School's senior students' perceptions of the role of Religious Education on the process of negotiating between bricolage worldviews. Here is the educational part come into agenda for discuss.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology used in the current study to address the above research questions. The methodological approach of this thesis is first discussed, which is informed by qualitative research methods. To address these research questions, a semi-structured interview and focus group interview schedule were designed.

The interview schedule were developed in English and then translated into the Turkish language. A copy of the interview schedule is provided in Appendix E and F.

Researching young people

Researching young people is a complicated venture when cultural factors enter into the meaning-making process (Ball et al., 2000; Taylor, 2005). Maintaining young people's interest throughout the interview is one of the challenges of interviewing them. According to Ball et al. (2000, p. 19), 'one can only get glimpses of their complex lives', because they 'select, revise and re-order their experiences during the interview'. I discuss that conceptualizing young people's formation of worldview is a process that reflects a complex interplay of individual, family and community processes on the one hand, and macro-structural influences on the other. Further, researching young people is complicated because the very term 'youth' is inextricably bound up with normative assumptions and social expectations. Researching the complex interactions between individual, structural, contextual/cultural and developmental factors pertaining to young people's worldview and choice requires an approach that takes into account the changes that they go through and the multi-dimensional factors surrounding their choices. However, there is no single way of researching how young people construct their identity and worldviews. Therefore, I limit my study with religious and cultural changes among young people lives regarding both Islam and West.

Concerning today's young people complex situations, I prefer a qualitative approach to the quantitative research paradigm (Marshall and Rossman, 2011), because it offers flexibility in design conducive to meeting the explorative objective as well as an opportunity for reflexivity during the emerging research process. To investigate the worldviews of Turkish young people via empirical research, I have chosen a qualitative/interpretive research design, which focuses on eliciting subjective narratives and personal perceptions on processes that shape particular group of young people's worldviews. Within this tradition, research concerns itself, in the main, with generating profound understanding of their interpretation and definitions (Schwandt, 1998).

Researching young people is inevitably bound up with values and positions that emanate from the way in which society is organized and their position in a society that emphasizes education. Moreover, researching young people from a particular faith background is a complex, value-laden process, which requires an explorative, in-depth qualitative research

methodology. This approach is also chosen as it allows for the study of a single case or a few cases, in depth (Silverman, 2011). Therefore, a qualitative approach is particularly appropriate for this study to explore how young Muslim students understand religious/secular phenomena and how to construct their worldviews.

Conducting research presupposes a commitment to a particular view of what counts as knowledge and as evidence to validate that knowledge. It also involves a particular way of going about how to find out about what is being researched. That is, it is suggested that research is often not independent of the researcher nor of the theoretical conceptualization adopted in pursuit of what is worth knowing. There is always some degree of subjective involvement with the research topic. A similar ontological and epistemological view underpins the way this research is designed. One important assumption underlying research on and with young people is the general consensus across empirical research of the existence of differential outcomes of young people's transitions for different worldviews (Vermeulen and Perlmann, 2000).

Research Paradigm

I acknowledge the need for clear definitions and articulations of my research frameworks as many of the terms used in qualitative research bear different meanings depending on the scholar using them (Schwandt, 2007, p. 37). In this part, the research design provides the ontological and epistemological presuppositions and understandings underlying this research, and then it explains and justifies the methodology and methods chosen.

At the heart of the qualitative debate, issues are related to epistemology and ontology. Ontology refers to what sort of things exists in the social world and assumptions about the form and nature of that social reality. Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge and ways of knowing and learning about social reality. The two are interconnected, since how we can know depends on the nature of the objects of knowledge, and determining what exists and its nature depends on how we can know. Regarding this, there are many different philosophical paradigms for research design. This study privileges the philosophy of Critical Realism for the ontological and epistemological assumptions. The philosophical tools of ontological realism, epistemic relativity and judgmental rationality provide powerful explanations of the world and worldviews. The adoption of such a

philosophical perspective, it is believed, will be more conducive to approximating the worldviews of young Muslims with regards to their experiences and discourse.

In what follows, I will take a closer look at critical realism and explain why critical realist philosophy chosen for this current study.

Critical Realism (CR)

Critical realism has become an increasingly popular research paradigm (Osborne, 1996; Nash, 2005) among other cultural studies. According to CR paradigm, natural and social reality is perceived as ontologically real, stratified and emergent, however, the knowledge of reality is obtained through a deep ontological association between the object and the knower, which is subjective and epistemically relative (Bhaskar, 2008).

CR is associated with Roy Bhaskar with his first published book a 'Realist Theory of Science' in 1975. He argues that for the existence of underlying causal powers and structures in the social world susceptible to investigation, despite evading sensory perception (Bhaskar, 1975). Bhaskar argues (1975) that in a laboratory, scientists employ the experimental method to control for causal factors, however, the element of contingency cannot be eliminated or suspended in an open social system.

We can easily imagine a world similar to ours, containing the same intransitive objects of scientific knowledge, but without any science to produce knowledge of them. In such a world, which has occurred and may come again, reality would be unspoken for and yet things would not cease to act and interact in all kinds of ways (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 22).

CR is realist because it is an attempt at a re-vindication of ontology rescuing it from the solipsism of anti-realists and radical constructivists. It is, on the other hand, critical because it subscribes to the fallibilism of epistemology (Paul, 2012, unpublished paper). In other words, although an ontological reality independent of the object exists, a critical approach is crucial given the transitive nature of knowledge (Scott, 2005). CR maintains the distinction between the real (intransitive), the actual and the empirical. It further destabilizes attempts to collapse the ontological dimension with the epistemological (Bhaskar and Lawson, 1998).

The salience of CR to social science is its understanding of the world as a stratified realm where mechanisms operate on a plethora of planes in an emergent fashion (Bhaskar & Lawson, 1998). The emergent properties of objects, however, cannot be reduced to the levels from which they transpired. This interaction cross-pollinates to create new combinations (ibid.). Central to social science is the designation of the structure/agency nexus as a framing device (Scott, 2007).

Bhaskar is concerned to underscore the manner in which intentional agency is influenced by social structures. Human acts such as saying, making and doing do not occur in a vacuum but as typical modalities secreted by the influence of social structures (Bhaskar, 1998).

People cannot communicate except by utilising existing media, produce except by applying themselves to materials which are already formed, or act save in some or other context. Speech requires language; making materials; action conditions; agency resources; activity rules. According to Bhaskar, then, transcendental analysis reveals that social structures are an ontological precondition for intentional agency. Notice here that he is not attempting to reduce intentional agency to social structure, but to show that both social structure and agency must exist, and, correlatively, both society and individuals (Kemp, 2005, pp. 177-178).

For instance, in current data report, during the debate of creation of human being and Earth (evolution theory), the Muslim individual's intentional agency, understood as their opinion of the theory of evolution, tacitly triggers a complex interplay of horizons. At the apex, in Islam, is the ontological acknowledgement of God as the Supreme Creator and determinant of existence who is transcendent and mind-independent of the individual. One can also argue that the Qur'an itself is considered an ontological reality transcending the spatiotemporal having eternally pre-existed in heaven, according to Islamic theology (Paul, 2012, unpublished thesis).

Holy Trinity of CR: Bhaskar says that there are events, which are in front of our eyes and that is a reality. But there is also a reality which is independent of reality which we see and constructs and those realities which is directly observable, these realities lies in structures which exist independently of the events if we can see those we can achieve objectivity of the world (Haji-Abdi, 2014). Regarding this, CR is grounded on the three principles which called

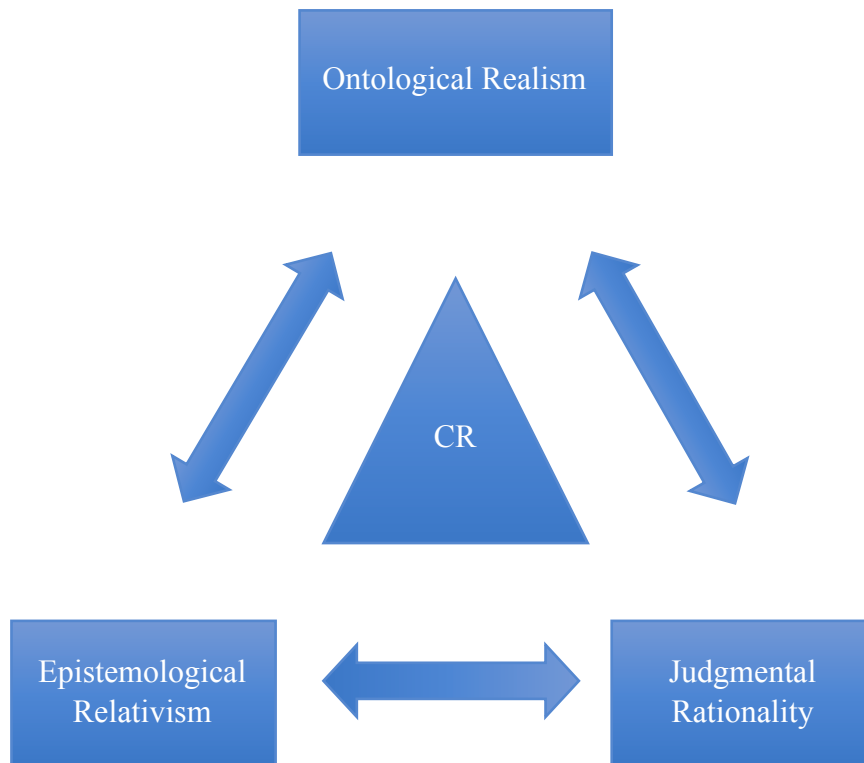
‘Holy Trinity’; ontological realism, epistemic relativism and judgmental rationality (Wright, 2007).

Overview of the Research Design

Ontology	Epistemology	Theoretical perspective	Methodology	Method
<p>Critical Realism</p> <p>Ontological realism</p> <p><i>CR ontology:</i> Natural-social reality exists independently of our ability to describe it and cannot be reduced to discourse, nor is it merely contained or constructed in the semiotics of our speech</p> <p>Judgmental rationality</p>	<p>Critical Realism</p> <p>Epistemic relativism</p> <p><i>CR epistemology:</i> Tempered by a view of reality as comprised of several irreducible strata, provides the evaluative means of making rational choices between competing knowledge based on their apparent relationship with an external reality</p>	<p>Worldview Theory</p>	<p>Grounded Theory</p> <p>A methodology that enables the researcher to move from the collection of data to the generation of theory, in a to-and-fro constant dialogue and comparison</p> <p>A Case Study</p> <p>Qualitative Methodology</p>	<p>Semi-structured Interviews</p> <p>Focus group Interviews</p> <p>Literature Survey</p> <p>Thematic analyses</p> <p>Interpretative approach</p>

The holy trinity of critical realism or basic critical realism is the compatibility of three things: Ontological Realism, that is realism about the world, Epistemological Relativity, that is the idea that the beliefs are socially produced, fallible, unchangeable and changing so our

knowledge is relative. And the third principle is that of Judgemental Rationality and this says that even though our knowledge is relative, we can produce in particular contexts, strong arguments for preferring one set of beliefs, one set of theories about the world to another (Bhaskar, R. 2016, edited by Garry Hawke).



Holy Trinity of Critical Realism

Ontological Realism: Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality, or more specifically, what one believes constitutes social reality (Blaikie, 2000, p. 8). In regard to research, it pertains to the worldviews and assumptions under which researchers operate in their quest for new knowledge (Guba et al., 2011, p. 102). One’s ontological position profoundly affects research in that it determines what of one’s reality the researcher can acquire knowledge of (Hay, C., 2002, p. 61). A basic understanding of a critical realist ontology is that *reality exists, absolutely or relatively, independently of our ability to describe it [...] That being does not equal knowing is proved by the fact that the globe did not suddenly change shape when it was discovered not to be flat and neither did the experience of living on it [...]* entities and phenomena can exist without being known or even if there is no possibility that they can come to be known (Wilkinson, 2013, pp. 419-442).

The researcher adopted a ‘critical realist ontology’, ontological realism, believing that ‘natural-social reality exists independently of our ability to describe it and cannot be reduced to discourse, nor is it merely contained or constructed in the semiotics of our speech (Sewell, 2005, in Wilkinson 2015). Natural-social reality means that humanity’s social being is natural and nature’s being is also socially constructed (Castree and MacMillan, 2001). CR presupposes that ontology is structured, differentiated and changing. This also involves a switch from events to mechanisms that generate events. In other words, it puts the emphasis on what produces events not the events themselves (Haji-Abdi A. 2014 p. 14). For this study, CR propose that while my participants may differ in their interpretations of reality among their worldviews, reality nonetheless exists in a manner that is outside or beyond a human capacity to know about it.

To explain the role of mechanisms, events and experiences, CR posits three ontological domains: the real, the actual and the empirical. The empirical domain relates to our direct or indirect experience. The actual includes the events happening independently of our experience. The real domain identifies the underlying mechanisms that generate events that we experience (Haji-Abdi, 2014, p.14). At the empirical level are the identified experiences and sensed perceptions of knowing subjects, who test and validate data in replicable experiments that have predictable results. Empirical research may be inductive or deductive and involves forming generalizations or hypotheses related to many observations of constant conjunctions/repeated patterns (Alderson, 2013, pp. 57-62). The actual level involves the actual objects and events that occur: many falling objects; subtle genetic changes in birds or peas over generations. Deduction at the actual level explains how, rather than why, objects fall or change, and it stands only as long as there are no exceptions. The hypothesis that all swans are white lasts until a black swan is observed, or that all emeralds are green lasts until a blue emerald is found (Ibid, pp-57-62). The real level attends to Levels 1 and 2 and to deeper, unseen structures and mechanisms. These generate causes and effects, and make them available to experience. The causes are established, or justified by their explanatory power. Examples include gravity, or analysis of the emerald's molecular structure and its refraction of light. The analysis demonstrates that, by definition, emeralds must be green; a blue emerald would not be an emerald (Ibid).

Epistemic Relativism: Epistemic relativism means that we are each positioned to see the world somewhat differently. Our experiences of the world vary. In terms of epistemic

relativism, we can now offer one reason why different people are disposed to believe or disbelieve in transcendent realities like God. Simply put, for whatever reason, some people personally experience such transcendent realities and interpret them as such; others do not (Archer, et al. 2004, p. 1).

Furthermore, Margaret Archer argues that CR emphasis on the epistemic fallacy,

'Critical realism does not deny the value and theory-leadenness of knowledge. What it does is counter the epistemic fallacy. The epistemic fallacy involves the fallacious inference that because there is no epistemologically objective view of the world, there is no objective world ontologically. Such an inference leads to the extravagant and relativist claim that to the extent that we embrace different world views, we inhabit objectively different worlds.' (Archer, 2004, p. 2)

CR articulates these understandings philosophically by showing that epistemological relativism is distinct from ontological realism and that knowing is *constellationally embedded* in being – that is to say that knowing is dependent on being and not being on knowing (Norrie, 2010, in Wilkinson, 2015). Therefore, I adopted an epistemic relativist approach to my study, which the nature of knowledge depends on the human agency. Further, the knowledge of reality is obtained through a deep ontological association between the object and the knower, which is subjective and epistemically relative (Bhaskar, 2008, in Demirel, A. unpublished thesis 2016).

The secularization process of West and its culture caused to move religion from public to private sphere; it also brings about a relativist understanding and approach to religious traditions (Wright, 2013). This secularization and modernization process also affects today's Turkey and young Muslims in the country through challenging their identities and worldviews. Young people's understanding of Islam (or the ultimate reality) might deal with a modernizing and rapidly changing world. In this respect, educationally, CR provides the relationship between the ontological reality of the religious and spiritual phenomena and their epistemically different interpretations (Hella and Wright, 2009). Regarding this relativist approach, for instance, my participants' understanding of the evolution theory or creation of universe come from their understanding or interpretation of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Prophet Muhammad's saying and tradition). As a similar example, their perception of Islam and West is relative, or centralize their own understanding. The definition of Islam or West

and its culture depends on their ideological standpoints. This relativist stance also argued by Wright (2016) in his Critical Religious Education for the definition of the good life, with giving example for a Muslim, Allah is the highest entity and living a good life pertains to submitting to His will (Wright, 2016).

Judgmental Rationality: Judgmental rationality is mediated through detailed attention to the processes of logic, discourse and debate that pertain to any particular field or discipline, the operation of effective and coherent research methods and design and personal introspection and reflexivity (Wilkinson, 2013). I adopted the judgemental rationality for the study, practising it is necessary as knowledge can be obtained through a relationship between the knower and the ontological reality of that knowledge (Scott, 2005; Wright, 2016). My participants' worldviews regarding the religious or secular traditions are constructed by different responses and perceptions in their daily life. It means that they make different critical judgments according to their ideological/ religious standpoints and backgrounds. It cannot be said that their judgments do not represent reality, but they are incomplete. Wright (2007) argues that reality is not represented fully and truthfully by any individual understanding, it is still possible to acquire a relatively objective account of it by virtue of making critical judgments between diverse truth claims.

To sum up, a critical realist philosophical framework is chosen for this study; first, CR provides a firm philosophical ground to investigate young Muslim's worldviews from ontological and epistemological approaches. Second, CR could work well with a qualitative research approach; third, CR has the potential of transforming the understanding of young Muslims by encouraging them to engage in reflective and critical negotiations between religious and secular worldviews. Fourth, CR provides this study a pedagogical approach called Critical Religious Education which developed by Andrew Wright (2007) for future studies as following study, whereas his approach allows students to engage critically with truth claims on an open horizon (Wright, 2004) and the ultimate ontological truth claims of religious and secular worldviews are taken seriously (Wright, 2007).

Furthermore, the research questions of this study are concerned with the narratives (discourses), interpretations and experiences of Turkish young people, particularly Imam Hatip High School's senior students. The kind of knowledge the research questions are based

on comes from participants' interpretations of events, life and their ideas, explored through interactions between research participants and the researcher. Which also is enriched with critical realist philosophy, to consider "the world is composed not only of events, states of affairs, experiences, impressions, and discourses, but also of underlying structures, powers, and tendencies that exist, whether or not detected or known through experience and/or discourse" (Patomaki and Wight, 2000, p.223). By adopting CR, this study considers reality as ontologically real and yet accessible to some extent through a critical, rational and informed judgment process.

Grounded theory (GT)

Methodology is concerned with the strategy for using the selected research methods (Crotty, 1998, p. 7). Since this research sought to understand how the participants constructed their worldviews among religious or secular traditions, particularly Islamic culture and Western culture, and how religious education affected their attitudes, perspectives and behaviours, I believe that grounded theory would be suitable methodology for data collected and analysing process of this study.

GT is one of the influential paradigms for qualitative research in the social science (Denzin, 1997, p. 18). Glaser describes GT, "the systematic generating of theory from data, that itself is systematically obtained from social research" (1978, p. 2). GT is a practical method for conducting research through a creative, interpretive process. "All is data and that theory is always emergent from the data" (Glaser & Holton, 2004). "The central focus of grounded theory is the development of theory through constant comparative analysis of data gained through theoretical sampling" (Glaser, 1998, p. 3).

"Grounded theory offers a set of flexible strategies not rigid prescriptions" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 513). The use of flexible and mixed strategies, for drawing interpretive conclusions from the data, is a helpful approach in understanding the "views and values as well as acts and facts" in the systems and schools studied (Charmaz, 2000, p. 525). The important feature of this general approach is that the theory is derived from the data.

GT methods foster seeing the data in fresh ways and exploring the researcher ideas about the data through early analytic writing (Charmaz, 2014, p.3) By adopting GT methods the

researcher can direct, manage, and stream- line his data collection and, moreover, construct an original analysis of his data (Ibid, p.3).

On the other hand, as a learner and first time user of GT, the researcher has some challenges to use of it. GT is often difficult to identify the emerging theories on a higher level of abstraction than the data itself (Suddaby, 2006, p. 636). New theoretical understandings about how the students were interpreting their reality beyond the anticipated perspectives or mere confirmation of preconceived notions of what was observed, or those of the researcher's own pre-understandings of what occurred. For instance, the notions 'secularism, modernity, postmodernity' are observed and interpreted differently by participants.

Thus, GT was chosen because it provided the systematic and helpful guidelines, and a practical way of collecting and analysing the data from the interviews and focus groups, and then a method to interpret them that not only stayed close to the data itself (grounded), but encouraged the creative generation of theories from that data that can directly address the research questions, namely to understand how participants' worldviews had been affected by Islamic culture and Western culture and its social changes.

Research Approach

A qualitative approach (QA) was taken to this research. Qualitative research (QR) methods, as Creswell has argued, enable complex questions about human experiences to be explored:

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The research builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (1998, p. 15).

From this perspective a qualitative approach provides a useful platform for exploring questions about people's lives, experiences and attitudes in relation to religious or secular worldviews. QA provide a perspective from which to recognize the various, differing and fluid character of people's views (Creswell, 1998). QA also enable people's experiences and multiple co-constructed views to be explored, generating data situated in the lived realities and particular contexts experienced by participants (Bloor et al. 2001, Glesne 2006). This research aims to explore how young Muslim students understand Islam and West via their

cultural elements, to construct their worldviews. Researching young people from a particular faith background is a complex, value-laden process, which requires an explorative, in-depth qualitative research methodology. This approach is also chosen as it allows for the study of a single case or a few cases, ‘an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, experiences, perspectives and histories’ (Snape & Spencer, 2003, p.3).

QR is beneficial for observing the processes and meanings of persons in their contextual conditions, in ‘how social experience is created and given meaning’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8). It is usually used when addressing research questions that entail understanding or explanation of social phenomena and their contexts. Also, in contrast to QR, it can provide detailed and information rich data through data collection tools which are sensitive and flexible to the social context in which the data are produced (Mason, 2002). Taking into account the aforementioned characteristics, the QR approach is well suited for addressing the research questions of this thesis.

As QR usually explains and presents phenomena as experienced by the research participants in naturalistic settings, in detail and from their perspectives, it presents opportunities ‘to unpack issues, to see what they are about or what lies inside, and to explore how they are understood by those connected with them’ (Ritchie, 2003, p. 27). It is an interactive process in which the persons studied teach the researcher about their worldviews. This study also is a single case study that addressed how a group of participant students identify themselves dealing with social changes of today’s world and the object of the study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). What is shared in this thesis is ‘the understanding and perceptions of others’ (Berg & Lune, 2012, p.8), as I attempted to have explored their worldviews during the qualitative interview method. QR pursuits aim to provide ‘contextual understanding on the basis of rich, nuanced and detailed data’ (Mason, 2002, p. 3).

Case study: Under the QR umbrella, there are a variety of research methods that can be employed to provide an exploration of complex phenomena in educational research settings (Creswell, 2003; Freebody, 2003). Case study research is generally defined as ‘an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’ (Yin, 2003, p.13). As a qualitative research strategy, it focuses on an in-depth investigation of an individual or a group as an entity over time within authentic settings (Creswell, 2007; Yin,

2003). Its use is usually viewed appropriate when the inquiry focus is to answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions to understand complex social phenomena over time (Yin, 2003).

This research, in seeking to explore the worldviews of young Muslim students from Imam Hatip Schools, complies with the notion of a contemporary phenomenon in authentic existence. The boundaries between ideologies, cultures and identity amongst others are continually blurred in an increasingly pluralistic and globalised society (Croucher, 2004). Therefore, the ability of the case study to address the ‘why’, ‘what’ and ‘how’ renders it an appropriate strategy for exploratory research (Rowley, 2002). However, this study does not develop as a case study methodology, rather it uses the case to reach the proper data. The case in this study is Imam Hatip School’s senior students, in City of Bursa province, in Turkey. The inference put forth alludes directly to the analytical process of the exploratory study. This study is initiated via a comprehensive review of the literature; identifying a criterion for further research. These inferences are then explored empirically via a single case study, Imam-Hatip Schools. The implication, therefore, is to contrast the mainly negative assumptions about the Islamic culture or western culture.

Case study advocates ‘naturalistic generalisation’ by the readers who can assess the relevance of the research findings to new circumstances (Stake, 1988) or ‘analytic generalisation’ in which the research findings are used to inform, build or elaborate upon a set of theoretical concepts, principles or propositions for more general applications in other circumstances (see Butler, 2011; Lewis & Ritchie, 2003; Yin, 2011). However, there is a rather repetitive argument that charges the case study of generalisation and subjectivity whereby case studies are merely a partial reflection and representation of the entire subject population (Saunders et al, 2009). Yin (2003) argues that produced results can be generalizable to theoretical propositions, and contends that the benefit in depth and richness of description outweighed this disadvantage (Lincoln & Guba, 2002).

Research Design

This section discusses the research design, delineating how the sample population was selected, consideration with regards to the ethical issues involved in research and the collection of data, attained through a series of thirty semi-structured interviews and two focus groups.

Research Sampling and Recruiting Research Participants

Sampling in qualitative research is an important issue, because the procedure chosen to identify, select, and acquire access to appropriate data sources should result in an optimal sample being recruited (Merriam, 2009; Mason, 2002). For this current study, the primary targets of the fieldwork research were senior students of IHS. They formulated the source from which the data was to be generated and collated. Different sampling strategies have been adopted for this research, which is also a common practice in qualitative research (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). As this comprised a rather exclusive and specialized sample population, the study utilized both “*purposive*” and “*snowball*” sampling (SRM, 2014).

The researcher’s choice of respondents for interviews was based on the purpose of the study rather than by random sampling or the selection of a large number of participants. Purposive sampling enables the researcher to select participants that are directly related to the objectives and purpose of the research question (Saunders, 2009). Purposive sampling is considered more suitable for in-depth studies (Ritchie et al., 2003). The purposive approach to the sampling process helps the sampling population to be independent and represent diversity (Mason, 2002). Having variation within the sample is seen as important in terms representativeness and comparability of the data (Teddlie and Yu, 2007). Therefore, the sample is heterogeneous as it focuses on a specific group in which all the sample members are diverse hence enabling the researcher to explore and examine the group/individuals to a greater level of detail.

On the other hand, in order to attract and engage potential participants to the research, “*Self Selection Snowball*” sampling was also utilised (Saunders, 2009, P.236). This entailed contacting a number of students based on recommendations from head teachers and acquaintances for interviews and possible focus group participation; notably, individuals voluntarily agreed to participate in the research process. Also, those selected and interviewed during the initial stage of the data collection were asked to recommend other potential research participants. While sampling through snowballing is other suitable method for choosing candidates fit for the purpose at hand, there is, however, the risk of having respondents sharing too many similarities. Consequently, there were two main problems relating to such a sampling strategy: the risk of reducing the richness of the collected data and the risk of sampling bias, which would have had major implications for the reliability and generalizability of the research findings.

The participants engaged in this study and selected for the semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews from city of Bursa, which it is the fourth largest city in Turkey. I chose two popular Anatolian Imam-Hatip High School in this providence, because of their reputation and popularity among public. Moreover, both schools are desirable where students prefer for their future plan and because of the religious education given and school's success at national examinations. Moreover, these schools were chosen for practicability and more diversity, also religious groups and their ideologies and western cultural elements are active in the cities rather than seaside or central cities.

The research sample includes a range of different level of participants (Grade 11 and 12) from two high schools, aged 17–19:

- 15 semi-structured face-to-face interviews (7 Male, 8 Female students) and one focus group interview (6 students) in Inegol Anatolian Imam-Hatip High School
- 15 semi-structured face-to-face interviews (8 Male, 7 Female students) and one focus group interview (6 students) in Bursa Ipekcilik Anatolian Imam-Hatip High School

With considerations to the 'exploratory' single case study nature of the research and the potential number of IHS senior students willing and able to participate the sample sizes amounted to thirty semi-structured interviews (15 male and 15 female) and two focus group interviews (6 male and 6 female).

As part of negotiating entry, I sought informed consent (see Appendix A and C). According to the principle of informed consent, research participation should be voluntary and based only on full information to being provided (De Vaus, 2001). De Vaus discusses eight key areas which consenting research participants should be informed about. Following De Vaus, I explained the research purpose, introduced myself as well as describing the processes of data collection and processing, how I selected participants, their role in the process and assured them that their participation was entirely on a voluntary basis and did not involve any risk to themselves. In addition to this, I drafted two information sheets (see Appendix B and D), one addressed to young people and the other addressed to managers of the schools. I shared these information sheets with potential research participants. In addition to these key areas, I reassured research participants that after initial agreement they would still retain the right to withdraw without having to explain or justify their reasons for doing so and that their

withdrawal would not disadvantage them in any way. I also made it clear that they would still be able to withdraw from the study even after their participation and up to the date when the writing-up would start in June 2016-2017. Furthermore, I sought permission to tape-record the interviews and reassured the volunteers of strict confidentiality regarding their participation and the information they would provide. Finally, I gave them contact details of myself and my university's details for any queries or concerns. In addition to the written information, those who had agreed to participate in the research were given a verbal explanation to reiterate the above before the start of the interview. Only those consenting to participate after they had been sufficiently informed about the research were then interviewed. The interviews were then transcribed and sent to the participants. Upon their agreement of the accuracy of the data the interviews were then subjected to analysis. Upon the completion of the analysis the participants were once more contacted to vouch safe for accuracy and final authorisation so as to commence with their publication in the study.

Data Collection Methods

Selection of research methods is an important part of the planning of research by which data are to be collected. Each method has its own particular advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, the researcher considered which were the most appropriate methods in practice and what kind of data was desired before selecting the research methods. For this study, data were collected through semi-structured individual and focus group interviews with the sample of thirty Imam Hatip High School's senior students. The data covered the worldviews of those pupils and the role of religious education in the negotiation process between religious and secular worldviews. The data also include participant's accounts of their meaning making process of world, their evolving understanding, perceptions, experiences and identity situations.

The use of different research methods in the current study serves to provide different types of information for the research enquiry. Qualitative research methods generally enable the researcher to have more latitude to probe beyond surface responses, which allow and encourage participants to provide detail and descriptive responses on complex issues, such as participants' views of, aspirations in, and identifications with Islamic culture and western culture (Bryman, 2008). I chose the semi-structured interview format, because with this approach the dynamics of the interview process cannot be fully pre-determined and established in advance. With this in mind, I started to gather data with a set of sequenced

questions, also supported by a list of topics to be covered through a few main interview questions reflecting the central concern of the study, which were drafted in such a way as to trigger respondents into talking about issues of interest to the research (Rubin and Rubin, 2005, p.135).

Interviews

Interviews are one of the main sources of data in the qualitative research approach, by means of which insightful information can be obtained about the phenomenon under study (Bryman, 2008; Creswell, 2003; Legard et al., 2003). This method is a very good way of accessing people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality (Punch 1999, pp. 174-5). The main advantage of this method is that the researcher can easily adapt the questions as necessary, clarify doubt, and ensure that repeating or rephrasing the questions properly helps in the respondents' understanding of them (Sekaran 1992, p.197). Other reasons to use the interview for the collection of data is it offers flexibility, there is a high response rate and it provides a collection of supplementary information.

Qualitative interview, on the other hand, appeared more appropriate in this thesis, which emphasises the exploration of subjective views and expressions. According to Bryman (2008), qualitative interview encourages 'rambling or going off at tangents', giving insights into what the interviewee regards as relevant and important in response to particular questions. Respondents are encouraged to answer questions using their own words in their own terms (May, 2003). Such an approach raises the possibility of unexpected findings, as participants can potentially lead the interview and develop in detail in areas that they themselves regard as important or significant (Rubin and Rubin, 2005).

The collected data included respondents' accounts of their evolving understanding, perceptions, experiences and identity accounts. I also asked them about their ambitions, frustrations and critical incidents that defined their lives. Since the data collection involved semi-structured interviews, the drafted interview questions were mainly used as guidance to ensure that relevant data were collected.

Piloting student interview

After obtaining ethical approval both from my own university (UCL Institute of Education)

and the Turkish Ministry of National Education, during March 2015, I looked several schools (Imam-Hatip High Schools) for piloting. The purpose of piloting the pupil interview guideline was to give the researcher a ‘feel’ of the interview process (e.g. questioning and probing) with young Turkish people and how long the interviews were likely to take. Several students were invited to participate in the pilot phase of this study, with the purpose of testing the feasibility of the initial research design as well as improving the quality and efficiency of the main study phase. Four of them accepted to be interviewed, which lasted between 35 to 60 minutes, which were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The ‘flow’ of the interviews was generally smooth, as the transition from one question to another seemed logical. However, the wording and sequence of some questions, particularly students’ views of Islam and West in relation to its cultural elements such as secularization, modernization, radicalism, were later revised after the students appeared confused or to have misunderstood some of the questions. I revised this confusion with giving some examples to related phenomenon. Although a final interview guideline was drawn up for Turkish young people, it is important to restate that the wording and sequence of interview questions in each student interview are never exactly the same (Rubin and Rubin, 2005), since semi-structured interviews constitute a process of knowledge co- construction between researchers and participants. As a result, the pilot study phase was useful in helping me become more familiar with the research context and refining the data collection procedures for the main study phase. Moreover, its outcomes resulted in several important adjustments being made in relation to the initial research design.

The use of semi-structured interview

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007, p. 103), “an interview is a purposeful conversation ... that is directed by one in order to get information from the other”. In general, there are three main approaches to interviewing: structured, unstructured and semi-structured (Bryman, 2008). This section explains why semi-structured interview was the most suitable method for the purpose of the current study.

The semi-structured interview is also called the ‘guided interview’, and involves outlining the topics or subject areas to explored, within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe and ask questions that will illuminate that particular subject (Patton, 2002, p. 386). It was adopted as the main research method for this study. It is the principle research method because the

study reported in this thesis examines IHS pupils' subjective views of, aspirations in, and identifications with, both Islam and its culture, and West and its culture.

In designing the interview, I settled upon a semi-structured format, which has:

[...] a sequence of themes to be covered, as well as some suggested questions. Yet at the same time there is openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up the specific answers given and the stories told by the subjects (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.124).

In a semi-structured interview, the questions are predetermined but the interviewer can feel free to go beyond the bounds of specified questions in order to "seek both clarification and elaboration on the answers given, " (May, 2003, p. 11). Less formal interviews allow an interviewer to change the flow of questions, rearrange their wording, elucidate them or add to them (Cohen and Manion, 2011, p. 271). The researcher can, at will, change the order of questions and their wording, and vary the amount of time and attention given to different topics (Robson, 2002, p. 237), in order to achieve clearly defined purposes (Robson, 2002, p. 227). Semi-structured interviewing is seen advantageous, as it offers the researcher 'considerable flexibility over the range and order of questions within a loosely defined framework' (Wellington, 2001, p. 74). It can offer researchers in-depth information to comprehend contextualised views, knowledge and experiences of their participants (Legard et al., 2003).

All the interviews of students were held in familiar, safe and suitable environments at their respective schools either during or after classes. The venues were arranged by the teachers at the school, and were generally held in classrooms or staff rooms, or a comfortable room with a table for the recording equipment to be located. Participants were positioned in the room with the aim to be as free from external distraction as possible, and clearly heard and audiotaped by the machine, so their actual words and perspectives were recorded. Thirty students were interviewed in these semi-structured 'guided' conversations, which lasted between 35 to 65 minutes and were audio-recorded for later transcription. I developed and utilised an interview protocol, which comprised a set of questions. These questions were aimed to get some background information of the participants about their personality, family relations, social media and Internet usage exc.

The researcher stated at the beginning of each interview his explicit purpose for the interview, the aim of the research and the data gathering, as well as provided verbal and written assurances to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants' statements. The intention of these interviews was to build "an inter-subjective bridge between [the researcher] and their respondent to allow them to imaginatively share (and subsequently describe) their respondent's world" (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 104). This was done through expressing empathy, open-ended questions, pausing to allow participants to elaborate their responses, and gentle probes to uncover more of the interviewees' constructed meaning.

Focus group Interview and discussion

In addition to semi-structured interviews, the current study carried out focus group discussions with pupils from the IHS senior students with the aim to better understand, from the interactions of students, the views and experiences of same gender pupils in relation to their educational, social and religious aspirations. The use of focus group discussions were intended to give the researcher a different perspective into pupils' worldviews in religious/secular interpretations with a particular focus on the role of the religious education in shaping pupils' views of, and aspirations towards, identity.

Robson (2002, p. 284) identifies the focus group interview technique to be "*efficient*", as the range of data is "*increased by collecting from several people at the same time*"; the group environment and dynamics aid the focus on the most pertinent issue and "*it is easy to assess the extent which there is a constant and shared view.*" Therefore, the "*participants are empowered and able to make comments in their own words*" (Ibid), whilst those who are reluctant to be interviewed on their own can be encouraged to still contribute. Focus groups also created a space for participants to discuss additional issues related to their own worldviews approach and the effect of western culture on Islam. For example, participants prompted one another and asked each other questions that I had not thought of, or did not feel comfortable asking. As Kitzinger and Barbour have suggested:

Focus groups are ideal for exploring people's experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns. The method is particularly useful for allowing participants to generate their own questions, frames and concepts and to pursue their own priorities on their own terms, in their own vocabulary. (1999, p. 5)

Thus, focus groups are generated through the interactions of participants, rather than direct communication with the researcher, even though the researcher plays the role of a 'moderator' and facilitates the general direction and topics of discussion for participants (Barbour, 2007; Finch and Lewis, 2003). Such as the current study, as participants are encouraged to freely express or discuss their views, opinions and ideas on particular issues, which may be of value to the researcher. Focus group discussions encourage participants to debate, discuss and explain their views and perspectives. Participants are able to clarify and refine their thoughts and opinions through listening to the views and experiences of fellow participants (Kitzinger, 1994; Lewis, 1992; Stewart et al., 2006). Thus, focus group discussions produce data that draw primarily on the interactions of participants. Individuals can express personal viewpoints but may also respond and reflect on the opinions of others. For instance, in this study during the focus group discussion, participants had a hot debate on several issues, particularly the role of Islam and Islamic education on their worldviews.

As a 'rule of thumb', the size of a focus group discussion was suggested to be around four-six participants, with three focus group discussions recommended for each subgroup in order for data to reach saturation (Krueger and Casey, 2009). In the current study, two focus group discussions were conducted with pupils from the same gender based, which consisted six female and six male students for each group. Focus group discussion was used as a means to explore how pupils may share similar or different experiences in relation to their religious education and the expectations and aspirations of their background.

Although the focus group criterion fulfils the essential foundations required for an exploratory study, it does have a number of disadvantages that must be considered. It is an approach that is extremely reliant upon the honesty and integrity of the researcher and the participants. Therefore, conclusions drawn from the focus group interviews could be tainted by an inconsiderate and unethical procedure. Furthermore, the disadvantages of working with focus groups include discussions being taken over or derailed by particularly confident participants, and less confident participants being overwhelmed. This problem was addressed by combining focus groups with interviews to provide opportunities for all participants to voice their opinions and discuss their experiences (Creswell, 1998). The data from focus groups were used to contextualise and triangulate data from field notes and interviews (Vaughan, Schumm, & Sinagub, 1996) and it is greatly enhanced the analysis and triangulation of data.

Challenges and consideration of interviewing process

Interviewing is a more convenient method for eliciting a detailed description of the participant than other methods. It is, however, liable to be subject to the interviewer's bias and subjectivity (Cohen and Manion, 2011, p. 272). Conducting an interview, obeying its stringent rules and the huge amount of work ranging from design to analysis demands much time, effort and patience.

Interviewing is not a passive process, whereby the researcher merely gathers data, but on the contrary, is an interactive process in which the researcher and the researched interact and/or co-construct meanings (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 117). Certain personal attitudes, which emerge during an interview, may influence the validity of an interview negatively. These might be:

a tendency for the interview to see respondent in her own image; a tendency for the interviewer to seek answers that support her preconceived notions; misperceptions on the part of the interviewer of what the respondent is saying; and misunderstandings on the part of the respondent of what is being asked (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 282).

As "social desirability" theory indicates, some participants may tend to boost their personality in their answers, or try to help the interviewer by giving information about what they do not know. One effective way of increasing the validity of an interview is to reduce the bias (Cohen and Manion, 2011, p. 283). Religious views and age are considered by Cohen and Manion (2011, p. 282) as two factors which may contribute to bias on the part of both interviewer and interviewee. Gender and accent between interviewer and interviewee can be added to this list as other factors to be contemplated fully before starting an interview (May, 2003). A familiarity with the terminology of research content and changes in perspective about religious matters should also become in mind during an interview.

Objectivity and subjectivity are important concerns for an interviewer to take into account when planning and conducting interviews. May (2003) argued that there is an interchange of both objectivity and subjectivity in the interview process. In other words, although a mutual interrelationship during the dialogue creates a kind of friendship in the process of gathering data between the interviewer and interviewee, the objective aim of research requires a

"distance" in order to make a judgment of the situation. Furthermore, using interviewing techniques also involved managing the positional differences between the researcher and the researched. According to Kvale and Brinkman (2009, pp. 33-34) interviewing in a qualitative study involves 'power asymmetry between the researcher and the researched', and because of this power asymmetry there is always the risk of the researched expressing what the researcher wants to hear. Kvale and Brinkman suggest that this problematic requires critical reflection on the 'role of power in the production of interview knowledge' (p. 34)

In this current study, some challenges, which possibly affect the process of data collection, are given below:

- Most pupils who participated appeared expressive and talkative, with only a handful responding with very short answers. In those cases, the researcher would then rephrase the question before moving on.
- A few participants ask to wash his / her face during the interview; feeling distant to questions, not being able to focus on the subject.
- One of pupil expressed her family and personal problems, and feeling emotionally frayed, hence feeling restless.
- The effect of Feminism among the some female participants is observed.
- Some girls are shy and not very talkative.
- The students who shared their ideas did not want to answer some questions clearly because they did not want others to hear their stories.
- The fear of 'I am afraid to say something wrong, because of becoming a hypocrite'.
- Some thinks the school will get these reports and believe that the teachers will make pressure on their life.
- Uncertainty and lack of clarity in the responses given by the negative impact of community and family pressure.
- Low level of analysis and response ability of students.
- Keeping silent on issues that they are not familiar with or passing the question with unnecessary answers.
- Speech on unnecessary or irrelevant matters in the name of self-representation and avoidance of the original question or the answer.
- Agreeing other's opinion without thinking like them.

- For clarification of the phenomenon psychological and sociological events were included as effective roles in the interviews: e.g. the murder of a student named Ozgecan, the Iraq war, the ISIS incident, birthday parties, examples of western culture, alcohol and entertainment, social media usage... were obtained through examples.

Data Analysis

Qualitative research tends to produce large quantities of data, and the processes by which these data are developed into research findings need to be clear and thorough in order to be credible (Miles and Huberman 1994). It is common for research data to be sorted (or coded or indexed) in the initial phase by emerging concepts, themes or ideas, with the researcher ‘moving back and forth’ between the data and analyses to refine (and reconceptualise) various categories (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007; Mason, 2002; Merriam, 1998; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Strauss, 1987).

Defining a strategy for analysing data entails thinking about how to link the process of collecting, organizing and/or sorting the data as well as the method of analysis itself (Mason, 2002; Yin, 2009; Silverman, 2011; Berg & Lune 2012). The data analysis strategy lays out the specific procedures for addressing each of the research questions and the nature and form of the expected results. It includes the processes of organizing, reducing and describing the data as well as to drawing conclusions or interpretations. This study employs a variety of analytic strategies that involve sorting, organizing and reducing the data as well as assembling the data to interpret them.

The analysis carried out in this study will be presented in the five chapters by exploring each research question in turn. Accordingly, the way the data were coded for each question differed. In one section these differences will be outlined in more detail. The research questions were designed to relate to different aspects, or levels, of the worldview of Imam Hatip School’s senior students. In order to explore the worldview of those pupils, different levels of analysis are required, which, in this case will be identified as a focus on social contexts and social positions, on personal views and experiences and on practice and education. A breakdown of the thematic categories will be identified with each of these lenses.

The ways in which research data were managed, organized and analysed in the current study are discussed in this section. Data collected from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were audio recorded and later transcribed verbatim with the aid of transcription software with slow-motion playback for the ease of the researcher.

Grounded Theory and Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis examines talk as though it is a representation of what participants and researchers have experienced; a reflection of their attitudes and values (Frankland & Bloor, 1999; Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). Thematic analyses explore the content of data by grouping data according to themes, or codes; themes can be theoretically established prior to data collection or can emerge from that data in a more grounded manner (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data were analysed thematically, although I accept this requires what Kitzinger describes as an “interpretive leap” (2004, p. 138). I chose to perform literal, interpretative, and reflexive readings of the data to discover 1) the participants’ understanding of their social reality, 2) my interpretation of their accounts, and 3) my participation in their data construction (Mason, 1996, p. 109).

For this study, I used my research aims as the principal guide. In the case of this study, the aim was to map out processes underlying the way young people go about making meaning within the context of Islamic culture and western culture, with data collected through focus group discussion and semi- structured qualitative interviews covering personal experiences, daily narratives, perceptions, identities and attitudes. The strategy for analysing the collected data mainly drew on the principles of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) and thematic analysis (Agar, 1997; Braun and Clarck, 2006; Ely, Ruth, Downing and Anzul, 1997). At the center of the grounded approach is the analytical process called ‘coding’, which involves a way of reducing and conceptualizing data to develop concepts that serve as the building blocks of theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Thematic analysis is a way of finding patterns in the data and dissecting central ideas within them. I used thematic analysis and coding of the grounded theory approach in a complementary way, for the key steps in the latter, such as coding, categorizing and conceptualizing, are similarly used in the former (Ayres, 2008; Braun and Clarck, 2006).

The theoretical perspective adopted in this study influenced the formulation of the research questions as well as the general research design. As Glaser and Strauss (1967: 46) argue,

conviction about a particular theoretical perspective can potentially be ‘doctrinaire’ in that it delimits the emerging perspectives. Consequently, in my attempt to unpack processes underlying young people’s worldviews within the context of their religious or secular subcultures, I adopted a grounded theory approach and kept the study open via thematic analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). That is, the themes emerging from the individual interviews were first compared between the individual accounts to identify any specific patterns of the ways in which Turkish young people construct their identity among the worldviews. However, despite the fact that grounded theory advocates that researchers should not be carrying out data collection from an established philosophical or theoretical perspective, it is never possible to adopt a *tabula rasa* approach to data collection, that is, it is never devoid of theoretical perspectives (Usher, 1996).

Glaser and Holton propose that the researcher approaches grounded theory data analysis with a series of questions including “What is the main concern being faced by the participants?” and “What accounts for the continual resolving of this concern?” (Glaser & Holton, 2004, p. 48). They asserted that the researcher wrestles with these underlying questions through the process of coding the data, which Holton (2010) cohesively summarized as substantive and theoretical coding. These coding stages are imperative as they bind all the concepts of the methodology together and undergird the entire research process from conception to conclusion (Glaser & Holton, 2004; Holton 2010).

This approach to analysing from the outset has the advantage of capturing emerging ideas that are more grounded in the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) than based on previous knowledge from the existing literature. It has also a second advantage: it helps the researcher familiarize himself or herself with the immense quantity of data generated through the fieldwork, thereby reducing the risk of collecting unnecessary data that exceeds research objectives (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 12). After I collected and analysed the data line-by-line, I coded each incident with a key word, which synthesizes sections of data (Glaser & Holton, 2004). With this approach, coding is an essential part of the data analysis in that the codes are the thinking tools with which to make sense of the data. Some of the codes were ‘sensitizing concepts’ (Blumer, 1954) drawn from literature, while others emerged from the transcripts through manual coding. Accordingly, I fragmented coded segments from the transcript, I compared them to each other, and I grouped them conceptually. I gave a conceptual title for these groupings and I formed as many conceptual categories as possible.

As new evidence continues to be gathered, compared, analysed, and categorized, categories become dense and complex and their inter-relationships begin to become apparent (Kenny, M., & Fourie, R. 2015). Subsequently, a principal core category emerged. This encompasses the chief concern of the study, interact with most of the other categories in a significant capacity, and be sophisticated enough to account for the complexity and nuances within the data (Giske & Artinian, 2007; Glaser & Holton, 2004; Holton, 2010; Jones & Alony, 2011).

The following up stage, I reduced my focus to the core category and the categories, which meaningfully relate to it. I engaged in theoretical sampling and refined the interview questions accordingly (Jones & Alony, 2011). For the purpose of filtering out extraneous material, the collection and coding of incoming data is selectively restricted to focus exclusively on relevant data (Holton, 2010). As I saturated these categories, the core category become increasingly dense and its theoretical relationships with other relevant categories become apparent. Subsequently, I integrated the categories into higher-level substantive concepts to reach a higher level of conceptualization (Giske & Artinian, 2007; Glaser & Holton, 2004; Holton, 2010; Jones & Alony, 2011). Later, then I conceptualized the inter-relationships of the substantive concepts regarding the theoretical framework and emerging grounded theory.

Triangulation

Triangulation refers to ‘the use of different methods and sources to check the integrity of, or extend, inferences drawn from the data’ (Ritchie, 2003, p. 46). The combination of methods to collect and analyse the captured data enabled me to apply methodological triangulation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Silverman, 2011). According to Stake (2006), it is a process of repetitious data gathering and critical review of what is being said or interpreted. Different types of triangulation are described in the literature, such as the use of multiple and different methods, sources, theories, and researchers (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002; Patton, 2002). In this study, the data were collected from different sources, including interviews, focus group discussions and documents, and also different analyses method such as thematic analysis and grounded theory approach were used in order to increase the trustworthiness of the research findings. This provided an opportunity to see if the interpretations of data clearly reflected the participants’ perspectives and actions. The comparison process helped, on the one hand, to confirm which inferences were more likely to provide a robust explanation or interpretation of the young people’ approaches. On the other, it highlighted contradictions as conflicting

evidence emerged. This opened an opportunity to unpack new developments and understandings, which, in turn, brought me close to understanding the reality of Turkish young people worldviews.

The role of the researcher

Reflexivity in social research requires:

Critical reflection of how the researcher constructs knowledge from the research process – what sorts of factors influence the researcher’s construction of knowledge and how these influences are revealed in the planning, conduct, and writing up of the research (Guillemin and Gullam, 2004. p. 275).

In other words, although qualitative research methods such as semi-structured interviews often acquire data in the terms and language of participants, a reflexive researcher must also be aware of their own position in the generation of research materials, including “the social origins and coordinates (class, gender, ethnicity, etc.) of the individual researcher” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 32).

Kvale & Brinkmann (2009, p.242) envision a “reflexive objectivity” where the researcher, with a view towards augmenting objectivity, writes about her inevitable biases and presuppositions where appropriate. Furthermore, reflexivity promotes self- awareness of one’s values, attitudes and presuppositions and their potential impact on the phenomena under study.

The relationship between the researcher and the researched is crucial in determining the type of data collected. In my case I was interviewing young Muslims and this would inevitably have an effect on the language used, assumptions about shared meanings and the openness with which certain subjects were discussed. It meant that certain terms were automatically understood and did not need explaining. These factors contributed to the smooth running of individual and focus group interviews and it was easy to simply mention related subject, which lead the further discussion. Moreover, researchers’ background, aims, beliefs and values become particularly important if they are actively involved in the research design, process as well as the outcomes. The fact that I had a background in teaching of religious education in the past and coming from an Imam Hatip School background helped me

establishing trust also with the participants, which helped in having fruitful discussions on the research process. Conversely, knowing the interviewer may have affected the responses in certain ways. Respondents may have felt that they needed to give me an appropriate or approved answer for particular questions. It was probable that they had not thought about certain issues which I raised during the interview so may have answered in agreement with others. There was however disagreement between participants, which indicates that the frankness between us gave a feeling of safety to say whatever they felt. My role as the researcher/interviewer was discussed explicitly in focus group interviews when respondents asked me why I was conducting the research and what I what hoped to discover from the questions I had posed.

The relationship between the researcher and the participants can loosely be categorised into three types: participants who appear to share a lot in common with the researcher ('insider identity'), participants who appear to share something in common with the researcher ('insider-outsider identity') and participants who appear to share little or nothing in common with the researcher ('outsider identity') (Merriam et al. 2001). In the case of this research, the researcher, in identifying his heritage and association with the Turkish Muslim community, can be classified as an insider researcher. This insider-status has allowed for an exploration and discussion on the subject of both Islam and West due to a shared cultural and religious identity.

However, in the role of the researcher as the primary gatherer of data, there are a number of ethical issues that require consideration, which I mentioned those consideration challenges of interviewing process. Accordingly, the participants may behave differently under controlled conditions in order to impress or influence the research. Therefore, a further and major strategy that was employed to counter the effects of bias was to maintain neutrality and detachment (Patton, 1990). The aim of such an approach was to develop an objective attitude, which could only be attained by adopting the principle of reflexivity. This implied that both the researcher in question and participants comprehended their own personal perspectives in deciphering and interpreting the societal norms. In addition, the practical embodiment of reflexive practice is in the awareness of being reflexive. This entails an incumbency upon the researcher to meticulously record personal opinions, biases and preconceptions during as well as post and pre interviews and focus group sessions.

As can be seen, the status of the researcher can potentially influence the types of information shared by participants (Hall, 2004). My own interest in the research and my 'closeness' to both the subject area and the respondents will have consequences for both the study data and analyses. This situation results in what defines as the researcher potentially being the researched too. Internal features such as honesty, transparency, and self-critique confirm the validity of the research as well as external characteristics such as systematically analysing "reliable, factual and confirmable data" (Patton, 1990, p. 166). The data are reliable in the sense that they are gathered from reliable sources; people who can represent the position of the sites under investigation. The data are factual in that they are factually recorded on tape, in transcripts, and in field notes. The data are confirmable in that the sources used are generally available to others. Conversely, my religious background might have influenced the collection of data as well as the participant's interpretation and analysis. However, the researcher's subjective involvement in the research does not render the data obtained as less acceptable (Hymes, 1996). In fact, my religious affiliation and work background made it easier to build a trusting relationship with my participants, thus it helped in gaining more detailed and rich data.

Ethical Consideration

In contemporary social research, the issue of ethics plays a central role in the development of a research project, as it directly relates to the integrity of a piece of research (Bryman, 2008). According to May (2003, p. 59), "ethics is concerned with the attempt to formulate codes and principles of moral behaviour". In other words, it is a set of principles, which governs morality and acceptable conduct, to ensure researches are conducted in 'ethically acceptable' ways. The current study followed the ethical guidelines as drawn up by the British Education Research Association (BERA, 2018) and was approved by the Research Ethics Committee at University College London, Institute of Education (see Appendix G); and it also was approved by the Turkish Ministry of National Education. A number of ethical issues have been addressed in this research, such as obtaining informed consent, guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity, and protecting participants from risk or harm.

The research was conducted in accordance to the recommendations mandated by the 'British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) "*...All educational research should be conducted within an ethic of respect for: the person; knowledge; democratic values; the quality of educational research; academic freedom.*" (p. 5)

The ethical application of respect implies that the subjects of the study are fully informed and their consent requested before conducting the focus group discussions and interviewing process. This adheres to Cohen et al's (2007) principles of 'freedom' and 'self-determination', thus, allowing the subjects or participants to choose to withdraw or refuse consent for further participation. The subjects were also assured that all content generated as a result of their input would be treated as their own intellectual property and thus utilised for the purposes of the study with their consent.

There is an inherent responsibility to protect the anonymity of the research participants and ensure that data is confidential (Frankfort- Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992). Although the researcher was obviously aware of the participants that partook in the focus group discussions and interviews, their identities, official recordings via audio devices were destroyed and rendered inaccessible for identification. In addition, this application of respect as an ethical principle also implied the researcher had to evince for the validity and accuracy of the data by curtailing the element of "*inherent bias*" that may emanate from subjectivity (Taft, 1998).

Regarding the issues mentioned above, I sought voluntary informed consent of teachers, students, their schools and the local authority. First, I met with the head teachers of the two schools in Bursa to explain what the research was about and try to capture their interest. Next, I expressed an interest in participating in the study within each school. This was in order to explain the nature of the study, why it was being undertaken, how the findings would be communicated, and the potential future uses of the data and to assure them with regards to any concerns they had about confidentiality and anonymity. To back up this information I gave the head teachers a formal letter, which signed and confirmed by Ministry of Education and its Bursa branch; that contained an overview of the study, data collection process and what the research would require from the volunteer participants (See Appendix D). In general, the letter gave a more detailed description of the issues already raised in the meetings. It clearly stated that, while the findings would be disseminated, participants' identities would at all times be protected and no specific data disclosed without their permission or for any purposes other than my academic study. The potential recruits were overtly informed that they would have the opportunity to withdraw their consent and to stop participating at any stage.

Mindful of the issues mentioned above, all participants in the current study were fully informed of the purpose and procedures of the research. Participants were invited to

participate through voluntary based by their head teachers and a consent form (to be signed) which guaranteed their confidentiality and anonymity. Although it is not necessary according to Turkish law, who are age of 16 or more, the participating pupils were required to obtain the signed consent of a parent/guardian in order to participate in interviews and focus group discussions. Pupils themselves were also given a student version of the information letter and consent form, which they had to sign. Prior to each interview and focus group discussion, participants were reminded that participation was voluntary and that they could refuse to comment or answer any question, without reason. Participants were informed that they could end or leave the interview or focus group discussion at any time. Permission to audio-record was gained in written consent forms from parents, and again (orally) before the start of each interview and focus group discussion with the participants. Audio data were transcribed with the names of participants anonymised. The anonymity of participants was protected through the use of pseudonyms. During data collection, no interviews or focus group discussions ended prematurely. To summarize, I believe that the key ethical issues were covered during the data collecting process and data analyses process. However, I have kept the research process open and evolving, for initial thoughts regarding the study changed significantly as I went through the process.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the overall methodology of this thesis, which was informed by the qualitative research approach, has been explained and justified. Initially, the theoretical and methodological foundations of qualitative research were discussed, including the underlying presuppositions (the ontology, epistemology, and theoretical perspective) that provide a rationale for why this methodology and methods were chosen. Next, given the aims and objectives of this study, why a qualitative, case study research method best suited these was explained and justified. Subsequently, detailed descriptions of the participants and the instructional context of this study were provided and this was followed by a comprehensive presentation of the data collection and analysis processes. To collect data the researcher used the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion; and it was analysed by Grounded Theory approach and thematic analyses. Finally, there was discussion about the trustworthiness of this study, the role of the researcher, and the issues of ethics that needed to be addressed. In the next five chapters, the research findings will be presented based on the analysis of the collected data.

Chapter 4 Ultimate/ Existential Questions

Introduction

Starting from this chapter, the subsequent four chapters explore how Turkish young people construct, negotiate and experience changes in their lives between Western culture and Islamic culture. It presents Imam-Hatip High Schools' (HIS) senior students' (age 17–18) worldviews and their life-courses with a special focus on their attitudes to religion and social changes in the context of Western secular and Muslim collective identity. The data focus is how Imam-Hatip High School pupils make meaning of their life-world and how they might interpret experiences of Islam and engagement with Western culture and its social changes. It also attends to changes in the attitudes, reflections, and social and religious practices of these youths regarding Islamic and Western culture.

As mentioned previously, people's worldviews are shaped by their vision for a way of life through answering four basic questions:

- 1) *Who am I?* Or, what is the nature, task and purpose of a human being?
- 2) *Where am I?* or, what is the nature of the world and universe I live in?
- 3) *What's wrong?* Or, what is the basic problem or obstacle that keeps me from attaining fulfillment? In other words, how do I understand evil? And
- 4) *What is the remedy?* In other words, how do I find salvation?

(Walsh & Middleton, 1984, p. 35)

This data chapter presents answers to the ultimate and existential questions (above) from the worldviews of participants; it also explores research question 1: "What is the worldview of Imam-Hatip Schools' senior students and how do they identify themselves and make meaning of the world?"

Who are we?

1. *The concept of human nature*

In this section, the researcher looks at how IHS students answer the question of human nature; and their sense of world, identity or selfhood, by asking: 'Who are we?' General questions that we want to answer are: *'What does it mean to be human? Who are we as*

human beings? Or, what is the nature, task and purpose of human being?' (Walsh & Middleton, 1984; Sire, 2009). These questions have challenged the religious and philosophical thinkers of all civilizations and many different answers have been offered. They are worldview questions, basic to everyone, which concern our vision of life. All people adopt, consciously or unconsciously, some idea of what it means to be human; and we may not be able to articulate what we believe ourselves to be, but we 'function with an implicit awareness of an identity, a vision of who we are as human beings' (Walsh & Middleton, 1984, p. 52). Here our aim is to review Imam-Hatip Schools' senior pupils' understanding of who we are and why we are here; hence their answers might incorporate a secular western worldview such 'a highly complex machine, a naked ape, evolved biologically' (Sire, 2009, p. 22) or an Islamic worldview such 'a pinnacle of God's creation and not biologically evolved'. It forms the ultimate set of presuppositions for most of our aims and so our patterns of education.

Worldview also deals with such issues as the creation of the world, the creation and the interconnection of humans in that world, fate, death, resurrection, the afterlife, and the purpose of being a human in this world. It means that our identity and task as human beings is fundamentally rooted in our sense of the world or reality, which we inhabit (Middleton, 1995).

Above all, the first significant theme is to establish the participants' concept of 'human nature'. Discerning their understanding of human nature is pertinent because it will help to reveal the nature of the human as being the most important element and the central part of the educational process. The lack of understanding of the nature of the learner may be a cause of failure in all-educational processes. Therefore, the recommendations of the First World Conference on Islamic Education in Makkah (1970) first and foremost gave a very clear emphasis on this matter by stating: "No definition of education, no clarification of its aim is possible unless the nature of human and the significance of knowledge are first made clear" (Husain and Ashraf, 1979, p. 157).

2. What does our data say about nature of human beings?

The central issue addressed here is the relationship between human beings and their nature, consisting of four elements:

- a) the creation of human beings;
- b) the effects of family and environments;
- c) the story of creation and Evolution Theory; and
- d) the purpose of life and our mission.

a. Creation of human beings and their nature

The majority of participants believe that human beings are created by God. When I asked them ‘what is the meaning of being human’, a large number of answers are drawn by an Islamic worldview.

A human being is identified with interrogating why we are here and who we are, and what our purpose is in this world. Human beings are creatures that can think; in this respect it is a feature that distinguishes us from animals and plants. (Nisanur)

Here, interrogating is the first step in searching for identity or selfhood. It also helps us find answers about our identical worldview. The majority of participants emphasised that human beings are creatures distinguished from others because they have been endowed with intellect and free-will (*iradah*). Free-will plays an important role to state anyone’s situation in the world and hereafter. It is the destiny of people to decide which way they are going to follow. According to them:

If people use their free-will based on Islamic principles, they will be precious creators of this world and the next. If they take a position against Islam, they will be lost in both worlds. (Baha, Mehmet and Hulya)

However, God gives them space to use free-will for whatever they want to do, the human being is an independent, separate species and free in their choices. Here, the problem is, whether people’s choices are against Islam and the Qur’an; this is not acceptable in the majority of students’ worldview, because going against Islam and the Qur’an is understood as being against Allah, and therefore will be accounted for on Judgement Day. Students at Imam-Hatip Schools are taught this in religious education courses and thus are determined to follow Islam for fear of going against Allah.

Several students cited some verses about the creation of human beings in Qur'an. Mehmet explains his ideas by saying:

Allah says "And certainly did we create man from an extract of clay." it means Adam. God says that Adam and Eve were created first...

Kader adds her thoughts:

Qur'an says, "Allah created human from a clinging substance". Those who do not accept this, because of not believing in Him, I do not accept them either. For me, the authority is the Qur'an...

Moreover, Mehmet continues with the story of Adam and Eve, in his words:

Allah indicates in the Qur'an we are Muslim and we are responsible for our attitudes. We should be led by Qur'an and Hadith. It stated that Adam was created...

It is apparent that the Qur'an has an important place in some participants' worldview, and they shape and form their worldview with Qur'anic verses and interpretations. Their reality is profoundly influenced by the Qur'an and its calling, as opposed to Western liberal culture or science. Some students also compare scientific theories and Qur'anic verses, but if there is a discrepancy, they accept the authority of Islam and the Qur'an over that of science. In order to understand their views better, we should analyse the Turkish Islamic society. In the Turkish community, Qur'an has a higher status than anything else; and religious education, especially Imam-Hatip Schools, teach students how to treat Islam and Qur'an. Typically, Nursel gives another meaning of what humans really are by referencing some verses:

Human is vicegerent (Khalifah) of Allah on earth. In other words, a creature who represents Allah and carries out God's light and revelation. I would say, they are superior to other creatures. Humans are the most honorable of the created, whose soul has been taken from Allah, whose body had been taken from earth, who has his/her own mind and will (Iradah), and who is the caliph of Allah in the world.

A human being is dignified as being the vicegerent (khalifah) of Allah on earth (Qur'an,

2:30). To uphold this important position as khalifah, human beings were equipped the potential to enable them to fulfill this substantial responsibility.

Here the student references the verse *“And when your Lord said to the angels, I am going to place in the earth a vicegerent (khalifah), they said: What! Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, and we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness? He said: Surely I know what you do not know” (Baqarah: 30)*. The verse tells us why humans were sent to this world, and it proves the sanctity of humankind over other creatures, including angels, as evidence from nature of the creation of Adam. The superiority a human being possesses is being appointed as God's representative on earth and his ability to acquire and possess knowledge. The superior position held by human beings in relation to the angels and all other creatures derives from his appointment as God's vicegerent on earth. Secondly, God has breathed into them His spirit. Thirdly, their ability to learn and have knowledge leads to the prostration of angels before Adam (Ramadan, 2004). This explanation shows that some students are conscious of what the meaning of vicegerent is. They are distinguished from their peers when referencing the Qur'an and Hadiths.

On the other hand, some students who think the fundamental reality is Qur'an, nevertheless construct their worldview based on secular liberal culture. Those students theoretically support Islam, but practice Western liberal culture, and do not see this as a problem. Some of the participants believe that a secular worldview is equivalent to being an enemy of Islam and Qur'an, others believe that it is not a problem to have elements of both worldviews, while others believe that living with aspects of both worlds' traditions is inescapable in this age and that a hybrid worldview is inevitable and unavoidable. Derya states:

Humans is creatures who forgot Allah... When I am enjoying elements of the secular world, God does not come to my mind; for instance, I am watching TV, spending so much time on social media, I go shopping, I hang out with my friends, then I don't think about religion or tradition. So there are many things that attract our attention, and mean that we can quickly forget Allah.

Oguz also focuses on secular elements in his definition:

A human being is just a tool for getting money for himself, for family; is such a passenger carrying rewards (given by God for such a good deed) from this world to

the other world.

As can be seen in the statements above, secular Western culture is more dominant for these two students, so their definition of what it means to be human is impacted by secular elements. For instance, some responses to “who are we?” include that ‘*we are human beings who live in a capitalist system (Ozcan),..in doing so the goal is just earning money (Oguz)... for living for entertainment or coming for enjoying our life (Cagatay)*’.

These students, whether they like their current situation or not, a few of them still think about the hereafter and its responsibilities. It demonstrates that even as Western liberal culture forms their worldview, they still harbour the fear of Judgement Day within them. According to their views, we can say that God (Allah) has endowed human beings with natural attributes such as the heart and the intellect and the faculties relating to physical, intellectual and spiritual vision, experience and consciousness; however, human beings are forgetful by nature and often incline towards secularism and liberalism.

Surprisingly, there is evidence that liberal secular students have a positive effect on other students, because they interrogate the meaning of life, question what they learn, and search for meaning if they are not satisfied with what they are being taught at school, especially by their religious education teachers. They criticize their fellows and peers about accepting knowledge without thinking and urge them to question their teachers. According to them, ‘*accepting any given knowledge without thinking is a real problem because liberal and secular people make inquiries about knowledge they had*’ (Baha). They believe “*happiness comes sometimes with money, sometimes with sexual relations, or sometimes high status, but not with religious traditions; religion does not provide eternal pleasure because it is ambiguous and unclear and also no one can know and experience that there is Hereafter and Judgement day*” (Ozcan, Derya, and Oguz).

Reality is here, in this world; you can feel reality with your whole body and enjoy it. The laws of universe and science provide us everything that we desire, then it is reality.

(Baha and Sevgi).

b. The effects of Family and environment

Hulya points out another issue by emphasizing the effects of family and environment:

All babies come into the world as Muslim, but their families decide for their religion, so it could change during the life. We born in this world, and we live in Islam with other people. We might be varied, there are leftist, rightist, covered people or uncovered, Christians and Jews, or atheists... all kinds of people are.. Today's people are really diverse.

Ahmet supports some of Hulya's thought by saying:

I think, human being is like clay. People who around us might be effective how they want to meld them. If person want to knead his own dough with himself, he goes a way what he wishes. I mean, people commit a sin for themselves, or they acquire merit for themselves, too. That is why I identified human beings as a clay.

Parents play a very important role in the establishment of values, practices and norms of behavior in their children (Kearins, 1984). Some of my participants claim that '*nature of humanity is unique for everyone, however according to Islamic culture all children are born with a good nature and in a state of innocence; and their parents guide them to follow a way which is religious or without spirituality during their life*' (Mehmet, Nisanur, Nursel, and Serife).

Culture and religion have a strong influence on a person's life. A child is surrounded by religion from the moment of birth. Indeed, religion shapes a person's selfhood long before he or she becomes self-consciously aware. Culture is the meaning of life that is transmitted to others, especially children. The worldview of a particular way of being religious is mediated directly to children by those who nurture and socialise them and becomes an integral part of their self-understanding. Although passed on through individuals from generation to generation, these norms are cultural and vary from one social group to another. It is widely accepted that the role of family is decisive for each child's worldview.

'Fitrah' (nature) is an active inclination and a natural innate predisposition for goodness and submission to One God. In this sense, it is a characteristic of human nature that everyone is prone to believe in God; it is even not possible to be atheist without faith. Arguably, atheists

could be understood as having a belief, in the sense that they believe or accept some knowledge from science, other scholars, or any scientific findings. It shows us that belief is an important characteristic of human beings.

c. The story of creation and Evolution Theory

The next significant issue that emerged from the data is the story of creation and Evolution Theory. The majority of participants believe that humanity began with Adam and Eve, so Adam was the first human being who was created from clay by Allah; he also has created other generations. In this sense, Evolution Theory, which is advocated by the West, does not make sense in most of students' worldviews. Derya points this out by emphasizing weakness of nature:

Evolution Theory sounds like bullshit to me. Nothing is existence by itself, who created human beings! Nature? Or a tree? Nature does not balance its elements ultimately; trees are stable, they could be cut by a human, they do not move anywhere. Look at solar system! Sun is disappeared at night, moon come more powerful. Thus, I would say those weak creatures does not create such a perfect existence.

Nevertheless, 'Evolution Theory' was understood by some students as the evolution from apes to humans. This understanding of the theory leads them to discount it as not being an acceptable explanation for the creation of human beings; conversely they question the theory using scientific outcomes. In contrast, the Big Bang Theory is seen as more convincing and applicable than Evolution Theory; besides many participants believe '*Allah did that explosion and He controls universe*'. In addition, advocates of Evolution Theory and other scientific theories are not seen as giving proper explanations to those who believe in God, and to religious traditional questions like '*why evolution does not continue as its defenders claim?*' The lack of persuasive knowledge from scientists or atheists encourages young people not to believe these kind of theories; young people now seek out knowledge from the internet.

Sevgi describes another aspect of evolution; it seems she is more knowledgeable than her peers, and she follows:

S: It makes little sense first when it comes to evolution. I mean, it claims that human

was evolved from monkeys, which allegedly resulted in tailless apes. But if we have evolved from those apes, from what apes did evolve? Reptiles? Or from what? First of all, we need to get to the beginning point, where this evolution has begun?

MC: Do you believe this kind of evolution?

S: Yes, maybe. I mean, evolution has several stages: the human born; there is infancy stage, then childhood, after adolescence and adulthood, finally old age. Evolution is already like this. Today, science acknowledges that many kind of animals were evolved, that is proven. It can be, why not.

Some participants answered our interview questions with intelligence and reason. Their knowledge is an important factor in comprehending their worldview; if something is not acceptable in their religion, it is not acceptable for their reason either. This challenges pious students' mind, they ignore evolution theory because their intelligence and knowledge (shaped by traditional culture) does not find it suitable; they do not understand evolution regarding randomness or no planning for creation; however when you explain what you mean by evolution, they stop, think about it, and then some of them say it is reasonable, evolution might be true. It is apparent Islamic culture and tradition affects their worldviews and their experience and education does not equip them to deal with this issue.

In this respect, Ayse thinks like Sevgi. She adds:

I can say evolution is still there... himm, I thought it many times, I did research about this subject. I did not reach any good results.. ee I have been almost Atheist. I can be agnostic, however, I was Deist in that time. I read, searched, and deism was the reasonable one for me; there is God but also science too.

Some participants reflect ideas from Western liberal culture and ideology. They neither reject Evolution Theory, nor directly accept it; they just claim that science has not yet provided strong evidence that convinces them. Those students are searching and reading what they want to believe, so they do not assess evolution with simple understanding like others did.

Evolution is not just evolving or transforming from animals to human beings, it is wider than others think, it might be debatable, however, there is obvious evolution for human being; we are evolving every seconds, even people's life divided several levels such as infant, babyhood, childhood, young adult, adulthood" (Baha, Sevgi, and Ayse).

For them, the growth of humans and changes over time are also seen to be part of evolution. In this respect, it might be more helpful to ask: ‘what do you understand by Evolution Theory?’ When Evolution Theory is on the agenda, their understanding is that it means humans evolved from animals, which they see it as rejection of God, and therefore they reject the theory. It is observed that these students have not enough knowledge about what Evolution Theory is, so their responses are directly against it. Still, there are several students who conduct their own research and they find a reasonable solution for themselves by saying that evolution is real and still acceptable, but there is also Allah. It means that evolution does not thoroughly explain how human beings were created in these students’ worldview.

On the other hand, there is a student, Ozcan, who identifies himself as agnostic, who claims that:

How do we know the beginning of this world or the beginning of creation? We cannot know how human beings and existence were created... There are several theories that might be true or false. I think that I am a little different from other people, most of them live without thinking. I always think about these questions and I was convinced that they are unknown and there are not any correct answers. But I am an ordinary human. (Ozcan)

It shows us, our worldview influences how we understand the world and ourselves, but this does not mean that we cannot agree on anything. Historical facts, scientific facts – we have common criteria for this kind of knowledge – it is when we are trying to make sense of it in our life and in relation to the purpose of our life that our worldview makes a difference.

d. The purpose of life and our mission

Typically, there are some differences when it comes to the purpose of life and the mission of humans in this world. Baha speaks:

According to Quran, Allah has created the human to serve. Servanthood is not just worship, you know, servanthood means for me, to obey and practice what Quran says. How much you integrate it into your life, so you are such a person of servanthood.

Nisanur has a mystical aspect to explain what God’s intention might be by saying:

People like to think about things that give them satisfaction. In this aspect, the mystical thoughts are more dominant in my mind; therefore, Allah has created human beings as a creature to find a response for His affection, to give his love; and how should I say, to establish communication with them. I think, we have been created because of this.

On the other hand, Ozcan has no idea about his purpose for life and creation of God's intention. His goal is to be happy and he believes that the secular world affects this life goal. He says:

There is not any certain purpose of life for humans. It varies from person to person. My goal is to be happy; it is my only goal and my last point...

As social beings, humans have to live and interact with other human beings. As such, knowledge about the nature and quality of human interactions has to be learned and developed. A holistic and whole approach to human development will form a balanced and well-rounded personality. At this moment, the mission of human beings becomes important. According to Emre:

God didn't create humans just to live or to take pleasure for themselves. On the contrary, he did to see that we avoid what He prohibits; we live as what Qur'an says; we obey Allah or ignore Him. A person can live for enjoyment, but how much pleasure he/she has, their one side should be close to Islam. Believing in other religions is not a fault, we eventually have been Muslim but without consciousness, it was given us from birth. We could be responsible from others, if they do not learn Islam, or nobody teaches them. We cannot get rid of ourselves by saying we are Muslims, we should learn and search for real Islam.

Many pupils believe that they should spread the message and law of Islam. According to them, *'the purpose of life is not simply to affirm but to actualize; not simply to profess a belief in God but realize Allah's will'* (focus group discussion). Nursel highlights this point by saying:

You know, there is absolutely hereafter a thought for faithful people; even if they believe in other religions. A person who believes this will organise their life for the

hereafter. If someone doesn't believe hereafter, they live for a secular life.

Almost all of them agree that eventually there will be the last day on which all the dead will be raised in order to face judgment.

In conclusion for this section, four major issues have arisen from my participants regarding the 'who are we' question: 1) the concept of human nature; 1) the role of family and environment; 3) story of creation and Evolution theory; and 4) the purpose of life and mission of human beings. There are seven significant points emphasised in the data:

1. The Islamic worldview is dominant in the participants' worldview. The first major theme has to do with human beings, what they distinctively are and what meaning human existence has. The fact that it is second to the overall God-creation theme immediately distinguishes Islam from naturalistic humanism. According to the majority of pupils to be human is articulated as follows:
 - Human beings are the creation of God, and like all creatures they live only in response to God's revelation, they are not autonomous. This is quite distinct from the worldview of Western culture, which regards humanity as a law unto itself.
 - Humans are servants of God, living under His rules.
 - Human beings are unique creatures since they are considered as God's khalifah (vicegerent) and possess a good *fitrah*, free will, body, soul and mind.
2. The majority of students do not believe Evolution Theory (Darwinism) as a reality. It is meaningless and makes no sense for many of them. They reference Qur'an and Hadiths; they also draw on science as proof of their rejection of evolution. However, most of the participants do not have a proper understanding of evolution; they lack knowledge about this term, which emphasizes the randomness of creation. Given the meaning of evolution that there is no plan or design for creation, 'God does not exist' is seen by the students to be a consequence of this theory. The participants perceive 'evolution theory' as evolving from animals into human beings. A few of them point out that the evolution could refer to the fact that humans have evolved, however they do not fully understand the term and are suspicious of it.
3. One of the overarching themes of the students' worldviews is the God-creation distinction and relationship: they think about everything within that framework and live in every sphere of life in relation to the God who acts. Human beings are cultural-

historical creatures. God has placed us in a position of authority over the earth to cultivate and develop it. Both servanthood and authority are central to this humanness.

4. A minority of participants exhibited signs of a secular worldview. One of them openly identified as agnostic. He believed that there is no certainty in any knowledge. Also, a few of the students stated that their lives are more secular and that secularism affects how they think about the creation of human beings. However, their worldview is not a part of secular worldview, they just like to live in a secular world.
5. The role of parents is important for the establishment of values, practices, and norms of behavior in their children's worldviews. In this context, it is worthwhile considering the role of parents in constructing young peoples' worldview and identity.
6. Almost all of the students accept that there will be a Judgement Day in Hereafter, so death is not the end of this world, unlike a time of transition between this life and the eternal state, which will consist of either paradise or hell. Thus, they determine their purpose of life and prepare themselves for both worlds.
7. There are no atheist thoughts in their worldview. One participant said that she came close to being atheist because of the doubts about the creation of the world and human beings, then she became a Deist, which allows for both God and science to co-exist.

Where are we?

Worldviews are assumptions concerning the structure of the universe and is also concerned with people's place in the universe, setting boundaries between nature and culture on the one hand and the local and global on the other. This part identifies the answers of participants about the question '*Where am I?*' Extending this question to 'what is the nature of the world and universe I live in?' or 'What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?' is helpful in clarifying it (Sire, 2004). Our aim is to explore Imam-Hatip School's senior student's worldviews and their making sense of understanding what kind of world they live in. Their answers can reveal whether they see the world as created or autonomous, as chaotic or orderly, as matter or spirit, or whether they emphasize their subjective, personal relationship to the world or its objectivity apart from them.

The majority of participants believe that Allah is the fundamental reality of Islam and He is absolute Creator of universe. They do not accept any power but Allah. Mehmet expresses this point by saying:

Universe and world were created by Allah, only if Allah does. Just He desired to create world for human beings.

Hulya supports this with

“Almighty Allah creates everything. I do not admit any extraordinary power except Allah”.

Oguz adds his opinion:

I think Allah created the World because if we look at the beginning of everything, it is not possible to be spontaneity and to be without Creator.

Although cosmology as a scientific field is generally concerned with secular domains, its holistic paradigm and concern for order are inseparable from views about the cosmos more closely associated with religious considerations. Moreover, modernity is characterized by the belief that the world can be known objectively by means of the scientific method. ‘Reality is given, everybody lives in the same world, and beliefs are private additions that are all right as long as they have no socially public significance’ (Middleton & Walsh, 1995, p. 43). In this sense, there are two types of notions about the relationship between science and God: a) The Big Bang is a part of creation b) It is senseless. According to Nursel and Serife:

The Big Bang might be happened, but it is senseless asserting this theory to claim that ‘there is no God’. Many things are from creations, so the Big Bang is a part of creation too. There are definitely several stages of creation; it indicates that there is a Creator. (Nursel)

We are in a world, which consisted with an explosion that scientists told us; however, it has to be happened by a powerful energy, that we called God. I am Muslim so I believe Allah created the universe. (Serife)

Many of the students agree with these two thoughts in relation to science and God. Without God, science does not make any sense for them. Thus, some participants do not accept scientific theories and they stress that there is no coincidence in creation. Mehmet says:

As for me, The Big Bang Theory is not ever a reality.

Sevgi gives her opinion on the topic:

In fact, I am in the world of science, but I do not believe some of scientific theories such as Big Bang, and Evolution Theory. There could be scientific background, however everything that cannot be coincidence. I mean, breaking a piece of matter, then turning around and shaping its axis; occurring the clouds and raining; the formation of all creatures cannot be a coincidence. All this should be an initiator, which is God as a creator. This God is Allah Almighty.

According to participants, the world is not something that just happened to come into existence, it is made for a purpose, for God's glory. The world is both a material and a spiritual world; not a material world here and now and a spiritual world to come, but one that possesses both material and spiritual aspects. It is a world created by a God who became flesh and is part of history, and where each person is a unity of body and soul. Thus, there are several ideas about the purpose of the creation of world. One dominant answer provided is that Allah created the world for examination and testing how human beings act toward God's revelation; which is explained by Kader:

The world is created for examination, which is finding God and obeying Him.

Serife comments as follows:

According to our faith, Allah created the world for human beings as the best creature. It is occurred to believe God. We are here in examination, which awarded in Hereafter.

Sevgi sees the creation from another aspect, saying:

The first humans were Adam and Eve. They were sent to the world from heaven in which they fired. World is actually a punishment on people. I mean, Allah created the heaven as a suitable environment for human at first stage. But then, with eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve were sent to world to punish. Therefore, Allah created the world after heaven for punishing human beings.

Moreover, Hulya believes that the world is created for the honour of Prophet Muhammad, she explains:

First of all, Allah created the universe for honor of Prophet Muhammad... Allah created it because He loves us. Once the most beautiful creation in the world is human among the other creatures. The reason of creation is examination; this is a test to our Lord.

Love of God here is an important point to understand participant's worldview; which is a religious one related Islamic culture. The center of creation is Allah and His revelation (Qur'an); so many of them form their world with these spiritual factors. However, some participants emphasize God's intentions for the creation of the universe with notions 'to be known' and 'to serve Him'. Nursel indicates that:

Eeee, there is a Hadith, says: "I was a hidden treasure, I wanted to know, and I created the universe". Allah created to be recognized. Also it was created for examination for us. Now, human is examining with everything, with wealth, with health, with poverty, with justice...everyone is testing with something...

Ahmet agrees with this idea, and he supports his thought with a Quranic verse:

We believe Qur'an as the first source, Allah answers in the verse: "I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me. (51:56).

Several students reference some verses from Qur'an and Prophet Mohammed sayings to support, endorse and elaborate their ideas more clearly. Furthermore, majority of pupils state that there is orderliness, a regularity to the universe. This coherence of creation proves that there is a Creator; He is Allah. Kader and Hulya support this view when they say:

If humans live in this world, they need to investigate how it existed. They must believe in a creator. Human can understand by looking at the environment and its coherence that there is a Creator of this coherence. (Kader)

...This entire universe, all this beauty and all this order that has been through a creator and He is Allah. (Hulya)

One of the major themes is to reach God in their worldview to observe and search the world. A few of them justify this point with finding creator from creatures with observation. Nisanur points out:

There is a creator of this world. If we observe the universe, even looking at any object around us, with my mind and heart I would have come to that conclusion.

Sevgi admits it beside with causality:

I think, this magnificent coherence show us there is definitely a creator; such 'every art is been made by artist.

Some pupils interrogate other creatures and with using the causality and deduction method to understand the world. In this case, Baha explains:

For instance, a carpenter makes table; a teacher teaches knowledge; so a creator must be capable to create. It is illogical that a power capable of creating does not create.

A minority of participants have adopted some secular worldviews, such as secular humanism and agnosticism. Ozcan identifies himself as an agnostic and he says:

We live in a world not known that is created by whom. We cannot know what the right or wrong is. The existence of God also included. That is why I do not know.

However, a few students still maintain 'God images' in their worldview. For example, Baha states that:

We do not know why Allah created this universe; we need to ask Him. Whatever we say it is not true."

Oguz ponders questions of creation as depicted here:

"I do not know exactly the reason of creation, maybe there is something in His mind. I have thought this issue in myself, still I am thinking: Why did Allah create the World?"

Furthermore, Derya refers to secular humanistic understanding by underscoring the significance of the human self:

Ourselves is centre of our worldview. What we do in this world to do for ourselves."

There is an emphasis placed on the values of the individual person. Derya believes that human beings are special and valuable, so their thoughts and aspirations are vital in comprehending a person's worldview.

In summary, the construct of the world implies the idea of the 'structure of religious consciousness', which states nothing at all about things as they really are but only about how individuals or religious persons perceive them to be (Cox, 1996, p. 147). In this respect, the religious worldviews of students, which endow them with a unique imaginative sense of engagement with a spiritual, transcendent, and superior reality, accentuate the theme of a divine higher power surpassing any other.

As a result, the pupils focus attention on five themes:

1. The majority of pupils believe in God (Allah), and shape their worldview with the characteristics of an Islamic worldview. According to them, the world is created by God. God is the absolute creator and power. God as ruler of the universe did not just create the world; He is also the power who continuously guides it and keeps it going.
2. The majority of participants agree with the universe is essentially good and glorious, and a demonstration of God's goodness and purposes. This is so not merely because the coherence produces in us a sense of God's majesty, but also because God's purposes are to be found in the unwinding of events. Within this perspective, they look at the world not as a machine or using a scientific paradigm, but as a living reality or lively cosmos.
3. Almost all of the students assert a relationship between Science and God referencing the Big Bang theory. Their answers reveal two significant points: a) The Big Bang is a part of the creation by God; b) It is senseless. Moreover, some of the students reject the scientific theories or results relation to the spiritual or metanarrative stories. There is not accuracy in their response; however some of others references science when they claim that there is no coincidence in creation.
4. A minority of the participants revealed some secular worldview commitments, specifically agnostic and secular humanist. One student neither believes nor disbelieves in the existence of God, rather he claims that religious or metaphysical claims are unknowable. The others believe that human beings hold special value; their thoughts are significant. In addition, there is an emphasis on the values of the individual person.

5. There are no comments closely associated with atheism. Almost all of the pupils believe in God, even if few of them have views based on agnosticism.

What is right and wrong? Or what is the problem and solution?

After supplying answers to the questions *where are we?* and *who are we?*, inquiring the next worldview questions will be helpful to make sense of world. In this section, the researcher explores the third and fourth worldview questions, namely: *'What is the problem/wrong? And what is the solution/ right?'* Both questions are each other's corollary, and it points to discern the rights and wrongs, good and bad, or problems and solutions and also it shows how this is to be achieved in education. In doing so, there are three steps to give voice Imam Hatip School's senior students worldviews: firstly, to consider 'how we know what right and wrong is'; secondly, to look into what are the problems and wrongs with/in ourselves, others and the universe; and lastly, to review what are the participant's solutions.

1. How do you know what is right and wrong?

The researcher investigated the pupils' worldview to learn their sources of right and wrong; or "perhaps we are made in the image of a God whose character is good, or right and wrong are determined by human choice alone or what feels good, or the notions simply developed under an impetus toward cultural or physical survival" (Sire, 2009, p. 23). Moreover, we enquire into that human beings determined of free, and are we alone the maker of values. Orr states the subjects of issue by asking: "is the constitution of thing good or evil? By what ultimate principles ought human beings to be guide in the framing and ordering of their life? (In Sire, 2009, p.21). When analysing participants' answers, five different approaches come into agenda:

1. Qur'an and Sunnah is the only source of right and wrong.
2. We do not know the ultimate right and wrong.
3. Right and wrong are relative.
4. Right and wrong is learnt by experience and action.
5. Right is achievable with the mind, consciousness and heart.

1) Qur'an and Sunnah is the only source of right and wrong:

Nisanur explains as follows:

Islam actually unifies everyone in a common understanding.. Belief in God and worships show us what the right and wrong is... these are my truths, but directed by Islam. Our rights and wrongs must be faced to Islam.

Nisanur believes that Islam shapes people's worldviews in every case and instructs them on what is right and wrong. Emre agrees with her in a certain way adding: "God's words is a measure for the right and wrong". Kader also supports both of them, and she follows: "If it suits to Qur'an and Hadiths, I would accept them, otherwise do not". For Hulya both sources of truth are superior to any other forms of knowledge:

Islam is Qur'an and Hadiths; revelation of God and Life of Muhammad. These two sources are superior to all sects and religious groups. We do not separate each other. Right thing is to benefit all, wherever there is a true science, to benefit from it.

Nursel points out that Islam suits for the universe: "In fact there are universal truths, they has been presented in Qur'an and Islam". Serife agrees with her peers at school and evaluates the method of Muslims is quite important for education, by saying:

As I said, we need to think about this issue. At first, Qur'an is right one for us. However, if we say this is absolutely truth because it is written in Qur'an, it would be wrong, because the meaning of revelation was not embraced by us. But there is one thing works for, as long as we consider what Qur'an says, and filter it from our mind, we will understand Qur'an has already told us truths.

These students' worldview are in alignment with the Islamic worldview; they believe living a good life is possible by obeying what the Qur'an and Sunnah say.

2) We do not know the ultimate right and wrong: Some participants claim that right and wrong cannot be known. Baha expressed his thoughts on the topic here:

According to legal rules and law, we do not know what the ultimate right and wrong is. However, we can invite all people, especially who want to come with the idea of the right and wrong, and we can decide altogether what the right and wrong is. I know, it seems impossible. So, what is the today's wrong? A parliament which all people does not represent.. Whose right and whose wrong?...

Baha's understanding is a type of 'common sense', which he demands for the rights and wrongs where all human beings are represented. But he does not see any possibility for this. Also, Nisanur affirms:

Today, it is so hard to be able to distinguish what the right and wrong is; hence our religious scholars pray every time to distinguish it.

Even religious scholars do not know what the ultimate truth is, how she could reach final rights and practice them. Ozcan proclaims: "For me, there is not any absolute thing, we do not know what the right and wrong is fully". It seems his ideas are similar to those held by agnostics. Thus, these pupils share their understandings, which seem close to secular commitments.

3) Right and wrong are relative: Cagatay declares right and wrong depends on human beings. He asserts:

Everyone has their own rights and wrongs; they act according to them. I do not listen to others on any topic. I do what I know, I do not care anybody else that matters...

The above is a kind of secular worldview answer, according to naturalists each individual is free to choose whatever goal or commitment he or she wishes. Acting selflessly promotes a secular human flourishing. As stated by nihilists, the issue of human freedom goes deeper than naturalists see. To be sure 'I can do anything I want', but what I want is the result of past states of affairs over which ultimately I had no control' (Sire, 2009, p. 98). This student's approach supports a secular worldview.

4) Rights and wrongs are learnt by experience and actions: According to Oguz, we can learn right and wrong by our experiences. He articulates that when saying:

We can find the truth by experiencing and acting them. Others' rights may be wrong for me. Other idea and thoughts are true for them, but not for me. For example, I will try a new hairstyle and I wonder if it befits me; the only way is to find out the answer experience it. When it has done, it will be bad for someone, or it is impressed for another one. We do not know.

Oguz also asserts out that even truths are relative, people learn values by acting them; so the result gives benefit, it is right for them, otherwise, it is not. In this sense, Emre substantiates Oguz,

We can understand what the right and wrong is with experiment. For instance, I can understand who my friend is when I have money. I get the car today, but there won't be tomorrow, I saw they turn off me. They call me when they need something from me, but when I call them, I did not reach them or they reject me.

Both answers show us that participants view is close to positivism via an empiric approach. These are part of a secular worldview understanding.

5) Right is achievable with mind, consciousness and heart: Nursel supplies her opinion confirming that the Qur'an is the source of truth, but it should be backed up with consciousness and mind:

If human thinks with her own mind, she can find her truths. Everyone has their own truths, but these are not certain ones. There is Qur'an as a right source, however many different interpretations are made by scholars, sects, and think-tank schools; even in Islam, Muslims are varies; there are hundreds of different Islamic understanding. That is why we do not state what the ultimate right or wrong is. I prefer to follow what Qur'an says, and use my mind with my consciousness, then accept it. Yet this is not true for everyone.

Mehmet agrees with Nursel, and he focuses on the significance of the heart when he says:

What is the measure of the truths? Eee, there is two dimension in Islam: takwa (devotion) and Fetwa (religious law). If you get fetwas, it is related with heart. Do what your consciousness and heart let, do it! This is the significant point: ends up it in your heart. Right and wrongs are same; you have to decide using your consciousness and heart.

Both students have a Sufism background and Sufism informs their worldview. When a person says, 'follow your heart' or 'consult your heart' he/she is fully aware that he/she acts not only as an individual, but also as a member who complies with the ethics of his/her Sufi order. The order's identity becomes part of each of their own individual identity as being a

Sufi belonging to a specific order. However, they conform to the order without losing their individuality. A member of the order can gain knowledge of his/her real self, learning the desirable characteristic to which he/she aspires and the defective attributes against which he/she must protect.

2. What is the problem/ wrong?

While analysing answers by the participants, four main categories of problems arise from their responses:

- a) Communal/societal Problems;
- b) Personal/ Individual Problems;
- c) Religious/spiritual Problems
- d) Secular/Capitalist Problems.

i) Communal/societal Problems

In this category, peace, justice, social justice, racism, poverty and war appear on the agenda by students. These are called societal problems.

Nisanur stresses that *“Peace and justice are there when asked, but it changes for person to person”*, Nursel is in agreement:

No justice in the world because, ee our Lord’s justice will certainly come and set one day. I mean, there is powerful systems leading the world; justice is in their hands, thus no justice for all of us.

Oguz states his ideas adding another problem that is caused by injustice:

No justice in the world, if it does there is no poverty. Everybody give alms. At least, there would be no hungry people in Africa, food has sent them. Animals would not be killed, for example. People would not be harmful for ineffective aims. For instance, racism would not be a problem, no racism...

These students highlight the importance of justice and they believe that communities need Islam because Islam provides the light which guides humans to freedom and dignity, and in so doing helps to establish an upright, virtuous and benevolent society that fosters justice and promotes the well-being of all humanity. This also means that nobody has the right to use the resources for their own good, it should always be for the good of all.

Social injustices have created problems for human life in the past and continue to do so today. It affects the predicament of the individual; it distorts his/her personality and robs the individual of his/her freedom and dignity. This is a view is supported by Serife who says the following:

You know, there are many of problems, such as classification of people and societies. I mean you can say racism, todays. People's financial situation creates also classification like wealth and poor, it is social injustice.

In this context, Marxism is right to emphasize work and economic factors as integral to the shaping of human society, however there is more to human life than economics. Certainly many young people residing in some of the most economically advanced countries struggle with finding meaning and purpose for their lives. Emre agrees with what the naturalists say:

There is no such thing as social justice in our country. If the system let bank interest, there would be the moneylender and everything. Human forgets and despises the poor when become rich, I have got money so you do not, I can insult you to make disgrace. They think they live more beautiful life than other, so it is caused to be arrogance. Thus, we cannot talk about social justice.

In the Muslim world too there seems hardly any other problem as important and as urgent as the task of establishing social justice. It is my conviction, however, that there is a great deal in the religious and cultural heritage and historical experience of Muslims which is of great relevance in this regard. Yet, eradication of poverty, hunger, disease and ignorance are moral problems par excellence involving the value system of a society.

Nursel, Derya, and Oguz claim that injustice and social injustice is not the fault of a human's personal problems, rather society bears responsibility for problems caused by racism, wars, and terrorism. The students assert as follows:

If a crime is being processed, it is not just because of people's personal problems. Certainly, the impact of society is caused the psychological factors and it plays significant role processing these crimes. (Nursel)

Racism and the stereotypes of people... when human beings break down both of them, people, even terrorists, can extinguish the bad ideas from their mind. For instance, when someone says 'Turk' in America, 'cannibal' comes into the minds. However, if they live with Turks, learn their lives, they understand Turks are as like as one of them. (Oguz)

Wars can be a problem. The problems are bursting when people's benefits contradicted, or their ideas clashed, they are immediately angry to each other, and then fight. (Derya)

In this respect, social injustice and injustice can afflict the whole society when individual ambitions and interests overtake the dictates of collective welfare and public interest.

ii) Personal/Individual Problems

In this category, secular humanism, mercilessness, selfishness, greed, and power emerge from participant answers. Pupils claim that people have become self-centred. Evil is not something peripheral, rather, it is at the centre of the human personality, in the will.

Baha explains his opinions on the matter:

I think the biggest problem is human itself, or I can say human's passion... you know, when we are born, we come with good and bad sides together, if people want to be bad, or able to do qualified with bad attitudes, we are worse than before. Because of that reason we ruin the world. I mean, human being itself is problem for this world.

People seek to make themselves the centre and source of their own life; then the problem begins with demanding more from the world. Hulya asserts this point:

People were so selfish today. There is an expression, my father generally uses in his conversation, 'people ask more even they are so rich, they ask for sixth car if they have five, they ask for another new house, or bigger land'... it is about human will..

Probably the most powerful and influential ethical system, or set of systems in modern times has been utilitarianism. Its importance lies in trying to see moral action in terms of its utility, and utility in terms of whether something helps produce human happiness or reduce human suffering. Utilitarian is often coupled with the idea, celebrated by the scientific humanist, that the basis of all values in the individual human being, which is most important, is how individuals relate to one another (Smart, 2000). In this respect, Nursel agrees with Hulya and adds that to be unmerciful is a kind of selfishness.

Mercilessness, it will be a basic answer, but definitely mercifulness is the biggest problem in the world. Our consciousness, which we killed inside of us, is problem. Everything is related with consciousness. For example, terrorism, if we look at the Islamic geography, we are miserable..

God's norms for how humans ought to live are in people's hearts. This means that everybody is born with a sense of right and wrong, good and bad, and a sense that conforms to ethics. From this it follows that self-centredness can increase problems between communities and countries. Kader shares her thoughts of this aspect by saying:

Not to think of others, always want more even though the surplus itself. We already have seen that in wars. Western countries always exploit eastern countries, West demand their sources for themselves, and they just think themselves. There is selfishness.

Mehmet highlights the issue agreeing with Kader, he adds:

The problem is producing more, passion of taking more, greed, for me... while intending to say that I want this, I want that, they slowly begins to ask for the world. Everything should be mine. Ee everything and everyone should be under my command..hiimm, then get to see other people as slaves or as a lifeless objects. Beyond to give them an identity, behave them like rocks. It carries everything with a sense of self-selfishness. It causes to get worse for the world, such wars, massacres.. Killing each other.. The main point is self. Proclaiming themselves like Pharaoh causes all worse things.

The students proclaim that the world is no longer what it was meant to be because people want to be their own god and rule their own life. As a result, there is now an on-going battle between good and evil, between God and the devil, or between selfishness and generosity. Hence, this does not mean that everybody is selfish to the core, but that at the centre of their life is their own self. There is still in everybody a desire to love and to do good to other people, but this desire always conflicts with the desire to do what is primarily good for the self, as is defined by utilitarianism above. Even the best desires are not completely free from selfishness. Therefore “life will never be harmonious, it will always be a struggle” (Sire, 2009, p.18). Marx’s view of human nature and analysis of the human problem helps to clarify the issue in secular worldview. He asks “Is it really possible to make human beings fundamentally good if we have the right environment for them? (Sire, 2009, p.91). The answers will come in section of ‘what is the solution/ remedy, right?’

iii) Religious/Spiritual Problems

In this category, turning away from God and His orders, religions itself, human desires and ‘living without Islam’ seems a key issue arising from pupil’s worldview. There are three inseparable types of dialogues related to the self, God, and society. There are dialogues with the self, dialogues with God, and dialogues with others that are required to facilitate mystic harmony and spiritual balance (Aswad, 2012). Through achieving the balance of dialogues, as well as living in harmony with sacred principles, religions hope to reach a state of grace and spirituality of which few may be aware. According to Baha, the problem is Islamlessness:

Atheism is not the problem; I can say Islamlessness (living without Islam). Or humanlessness, I mean human is unaware of humanness. If human beings obey to Islam, they will be human and humanity will flourish.

He sees Islam as a lifesaver for people; obeying Islam is equal to being human. Problems arise when people have turned away from Allah and His system. Serife emphasize this point here:

To me, the problem of the world, abandoning His rules, then see our minds and wisdom is greater than His system, so constituting our own system beyond God is

completely wrong. The only reason to cause problem is to create our own system. If we obey God's order, there will not be any problem.

Islam and Qur'an are the only way for salvation, they claim, because God has provided guidance through the Qur'an and the Sunnah, or tradition of the Prophet. Moreover, there is a battle between Islam and secularism that can be called dualism. Nisanur assesses dualism by saying:

I think the biggest problem in this world is the problem of Hak (righteous) and Batil (superstitious, wrong). So, eee there is a real right (Hak), ee you can ask according to whom, people can reject the idea, also no toleration here; I see they are against all right things. Basically, it is a struggle between Hak (right) and batil (Wrong).

Nisanur separates reality into two categories: Hak (Ultimate right) and Batil (ultimate wrong), or sacred and secular. In this way, Allah and His revelation come to be identified with Hak or sacred, while the others are seen as Batil or secular. Their worldviews are dualistic because it has superimposed on the structure of creation the directional question of obedience or disobedience. The dualistic understand the Hak-Batil or right-wrong distinction (which is really question of obedience or disobedience) as a distinction within the structure of creation. According to her and a few others, most human culture gets identified as the realm of the secular. Those who hold such a worldview inevitably have trouble relating the Hak to Batil. Most Muslims today identify the sacred solely with their personal and individual life, so that their faith has less and less to do with culture. They have more influence in shaping culture from secular world.

When asked what leads to sin, a few participants replied human desires. Cagatay says, "*They cannot control their desires, self leads them*". This reminds us of the self-centred worldview noted above; desires come from evil, a hidden spy within the human (according to Islam). It is also a struggle between God and evil, mentioned as the problem of dualism. Consequently, humankind's way of life and values seem to be falling apart, slipping into the wrong way. Ahmet agrees with Cagatay, adding:

People do not live through what they believe in. Therefore, they believe in something without knowing the right one.

One thing to examine is that we live in a global city in which different cultures and worldviews interact. When one group seeks to impose its standard on a group that does not share the same values, culture and religion, conflict arises. So it seems to me that there is a great case for religious toleration, and for a form of society in which there can be a genuine plurality of beliefs and values. In this sense, Sevgi looks at the picture from another perspective; she sees religion as the source of problems and highlights the use of violence in the name of God:

I think there is a Creator, but I do not find today's religions and its culture are appropriate in our age. If there were only one religion on the world, perhaps people can live in peace. However, they do not live in peace because of millions of religions. Because, a religion says 'it is not true' the other religion claims 'that is true'; then conflicts begin each other, it causes wars and people died for nothing. Actually, religions are the reason of the war until now. Wars made between religions and people were died because of religion, only reason..

Sevgi believes that religions have often been intolerant. Nevertheless, there should be tolerance between people and religions. This tolerance should breed what might be called social personalism: "I respect the social values of the other person because I respect the person in question what another loves I love in a way because I love that person" (Smart, 2000, p. 116). Today, secular worldviews have also engaged in force and practiced intolerance of human values, and perhaps because of this religious and secular worldviews can both benefit from mutual criticism.

iv) *Secular Capitalist Problems*

In this category, participants debate about capitalism and its elements such as consumerism and imperialism. Nursel says:

There is a secular system named capitalism, we live under its control either we want or not to want; we are being exploited in this capitalist system. States, which have economic power, lead this world in any way. Zionism is leader of this system, and United States, Israel and Russia also included. However, Hak (righteous) is only one, Batil (superstitious) has many arms; and who ever serve this system are all Batil (Wrong).

Nursel emphasises that there is big differences between the industrial capitalist countries and their reproduction of a highly unequal capitalist system within developing nations. The pupils believe that the basic situation of capitalism causes these countries to be both backward and exploited. Dominant countries are endowed with technological, commercial, capital and socio-political predominance over dependent countries. Essentially, this is because the capitalist economic system thrives on, and is sustained by, exploitation and inequality. The national bourgeoisie, just like their international counterparts, seek profit maximization. Consequently, they will always formulate and implement policies which will enhance their capacity to expropriate surplus from the system. With respect to this matter, Hulya says:

Greed is the biggest problem in this world, for me. People are prone to demand more greed, so capitalism controls them easy. This is capitalist world, desiring things like crazy.

Under capitalism is the process of commodification, beginning with labour and ending with the designation of thoughts, ideas and social relations as commodities. Thus, these young Muslims have been troubled not simply by capitalism, but also by a subversive rationality grounded in the assumptions and norms, which made capitalism both thinkable and desirable. Emre stresses that it causes the loss of humanity:

Humanity is died, I think, everyone follows and protect their own benefit. They become a victim of themselves.

Sevgi points out another aspect of consumerism and imperialism. She claims that states consume people by using religions and traditions; so, there is no justice for anyone.

I do not believe that justice in the world. I think, there is no real justice, because, a lot of people were exploited. There are Exploiter States, which is most powerful, no justice if power dominates people. A revolution is exploded changes everything then another one become dominant. In this case justice is same, one side is more judicious, and other side is injustice. You know, an African Statements says: "when the people of Bible came our country, we have our land, they have just Bible. Then they teach us pray with closed eyes. When we open our eyes, we have Bible in our hands, they have our lands." Currently, I believe that people are exploited by using religion; I mean governments use religion to control its people.

With the coming of the capitalist system humankind has entered an extensively interactive world-system. Sevgi clarifies that this world-system works at various levels. A new perspective of globalization based on jointly realizing social justice, distributive equity and economic growth (efficiency) must therefore be engendered. This is to arise from the common will of the global community, or failing this, by grassroots communities in various nations. Ozcan evaluates the problem of humans with living without thinking; he declares that:

People live without thinking themselves, they commit others thought and ideas...they become robot, like a machine...

Another issue appearing on the agenda of the secular worldview is losing our humanness, becoming a robot or a machine. Ozcan mentioned this situation in his words, however today's young people do not realize how their life is bound to smart electronic devices. In modern times, a clear result of intelligence depending on the discovery and development of technical and instrumental rationality has been a decrease and even extinction of the human concept. The most obvious example in the debate of artificial intelligent asserts that smart machines have become increasingly integral to human lives. The machines, which are designed by intelligent humans become more dominant and start to control humans, which can cause tremendous ontological insecurity for people. However, when human beings realize that there is more than intelligence, they can comprehend that the best creature is the human being.

3. What is the solution/ remedy?

According to my participants' answers, five categories occur in reply to the question: '*what is the solution/ remedy?*' a) Religious solutions and responsibilities; b) Personal solutions and responsibilities; c) Communal solutions and responsibilities; d) Educational solutions and responsibilities; e) No solution at all.

i) Religious solutions and Responsibilities

A large number of pupils believe that Islam and Qur'an hold the solution for all human problems. Islam gives people responsibilities to act morally; the Qur'an encourages people to behave well to each other. Ahmet stresses that:

As I explained first, the solution is to live in accordance with the laws of religion. Everyone has faith and his or her thoughts and ideas develop around this belief. So I am a Muslim, Allah has created me. He knows us, even our hidden details and characters, better than anyone. We call it in Fikh (Islamic jurisprudence) Muamalat (transaction), social relations. Allah has determined the limits of it. He specifies what we can do; how to respond if we do, what kind of punishments wait us.. I mean If we accept Shari'a, God's order and rules, I believe that the problems will sort out.

Mehmet agrees with Ahmet, he says:

Living accordance with the Qur'anic verses...I mean, while you organize your life with Qur'an, and follows what Allah says in it, I think there are no problems.

According to Mehmet and Ahmet the Qur'an provides the basic solution by obeying what Allah says written in it; Allah knows human beings better than any other living creature. So, Islam presents a system, which is suitable for human nature. The Qur'an always emphasizes Judgement Day for its believers, so Muslims act according to its verses, because they know that wrongdoing will be punished by Allah in the hereafter. And there is the perspective of eternity, the knowledge that death is not the end, that there is a better life with God to come for everyone who wants it. Nisanur shares her thoughts on this:

Eee, I think everyone would be comfortable with the Shari'a (Islamic laws). Nobody hurts anyone; the penalty is obvious who made adulterous, or kill innocents. People afraid of it. It happens once or twice. For example, one of my friend made religious marriage with his girlfriend because of fornication; he did because he afraid of sanctions from sin.

The above means to believe that people will rise from the grave after dying and give account in the presence of Allah for all that they did in this world. Doers of good will be rewarded and doers of harm will be punished. This belief ensures that a person refrains from doing harm and it makes them owners of morality and virtues by directing them to goodness. No person will harm anybody else in a community where this belief exists; they demonstrate respect for each other's right and perform as many good deeds as possible. These actions will develop reciprocal love and feelings of trust amongst people. Belief in the hereafter plays a

vital role in individuals having good morality, providing safety and tranquillity in the community. Thus, Islam is a basic solution to all people. Serife determines this by saying:

The solution is to obey completely God's orders, who has created us. People should internalize the Qur'an's system as their regular life.

So, in their understanding, the ultimate purpose of human life is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Many students believe that even though God tests them with many different problems, they should still frequently express their gratitude that Allah has provided them with the chance to enter Paradise. Regardless of how much agency they ascribe to God's creatures, all of their actions are bracketed by his will. The Qur'an promises that God will intentionally provide opportunities for believers to demonstrate that they accept His plans as final.

"And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient, Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return. Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided." (2: 155-57)

In this point, Nursel adds her opinion by agreeing with the others:

Aliya Izzet Begovic (former president of Bosnia) said: "whatever the good and beautiful is in Islam for me"; I think so. If Islam settles in the center of our personality, no one can harm anyone; the world becomes a garden of Paradise. Solution is returning to Islam, having an Islamic identity.

ii) Personal solutions and Responsibilities

Some participants say that their primary goal is to change the individual, the self, and not the system. Somehow their spiritual life can be separated from their cultural life, and that means they can work in the accepted system, even it is secular. The starting point should be the self-personality. Molla Sadra states it in a poem (Meddeb, 2013, p.1): *Your cure is within you, but you are not aware; And your illness comes from within, but you see it now.* In this sense, Baha expresses:

To take a place for solution, I have changed my self, fully. Yet I have some minor weaknesses, but I get rid of them. So I do not think I have obvious weakness. In fact, I changed my self mentally.

Oguz also affirms the need for individual change when saying:

I think, people must fix themselves first. If everyone improves his or her self-correctness, the world would become more reliable. Whether I had a power in my hand, my solution might be: first to prevent all biases.

Both students' responses are close to a secular worldview. According to Nihilists, change starts with self, then it is possible to change people, says Skinner (1971, in Sire 2009), change their environment, the contingencies under which they act, the forces acting on them. A person must respond in kind, for in Skinner's view every person is only a reactor: "A person does not act on the world, the world acts on him" (Middleton and Walsh, 1995, p. 100). Those students begin to change themselves by removing weaknesses.

Conversely, Hulya believes that God alone helps people to find genuine solutions, so she wants to be a devout Muslim through expressing gratitude for her current situation. She says:

There is a problem, only solution that I can do in this situation: to praise to God for my current situation; to control my will; and to dominate my desires (nefs).

It seems that students avoid the tragic consequences of selfishness and pride and receive what really fulfils their lives. All the happiness and joy they seek when they substitute their desires for God's glory comes to them as a result of yielding their will to his. Human flourishing while not being a primary goal is a result of turning one's attention toward God and his glory (Sire, 2009). A devout Muslim is grateful to Allah for providing the opportunity to serve him and will strive to follow the divine instructions in even the smallest details of life.

iii) Communal Solutions and Responsibilities

Nisanur shares her ideas about the solution by saying:

Hence, it is said "you are a part of soil where you born". On condition that people embrace their own values, whether they find themselves, whether just tries to find or

struggles for it; not to take any pattern except themselves, I think the problems are all solvable; cause if human search herself, she will find Islam with it.

In Nisanur's view, Islam can solve problems and searching yourself also leads you to Islam. Prophet Muhammad said that: *"The best person is the one who is the most beneficial to people"*. To be beneficial Islam gives to every Muslim the duty to contribute to peace in the community. According to Muslim scholar Ghazzali, every Muslim has the duty of first setting himself/herself to rights, and then his/her household, his/her neighbours, his/her quarter, his/her/ town, the surrounding countryside, and so on, to the uttermost ends of the earth (Cook, 2003). The duty of a Muslim is to intervene when another is acting wrongly, because Allah demands this by saying 'to command right and forbid wrong' (Cook, 2003). Thus, a person should perform his duties on time without leaving it for the future, as he does not know when his life will cease and when death will arrive. Also, the world can fit everyone in it, relatedly, Baha declares:

The data shows us that the world capacity is available to survive seventy times of today's people populations. But not in this system; because, there is also some data about while how many tons of breads are wasting, how many people died from hunger! I mean it is not possible in this system; unfortunately it is true. There are many things that need to be changed. The economic system needs to be changed; for example, the education system needs to be changed anyway. It needs to be changes what human idolizes. It needs to question faction that they keep between each other, and to question what the sacred for them.

Baha questions the system and the self. He means that we are free from being bound by our own self, by society or other people. There is a fixed point outside society and outside of the self to hold on to, to judge from, and to work for changes in self and society. Baha dreams of a world similar to that which postmodernists also dream. Walter Brueggemann (in Middleton and Walsh, 1995, p. 62) captures the spirit of these prophecies well:

Imagine a world, no longer a closed arena of limited resources and fixed patterns of domination, no longer caught in endless destructive power struggles, but able to recall that lyrical day of creation when the morning stars sang for joy, a world no longer bent on hostility, but under God's presence as a place where creatures no longer hurt or destroy"

In addition to this issue, some pupils claim that realising the dream of this kind of a world might be possible with Islam, because Islam guarantees that every good and bad action will be judge in the hereafter. Those participants also believe that Judgment day comforts people and diminishes their sadness. For example, there are many nice people in the world who die without seeing reward for their goodness or suffer injustice without obtaining their rights and conversely where many cruel people die without receiving penalties. Judgment Day is a day where the actions of the just and the unjust, the good and the bad will be brought to light and everyone will receive their recompense with exactitude. As is revealed in the Qur'an: "*So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it*" (Zalzalah, 99: 7-8). Sevgi speaks of this matter with respect to God's examination:

Now, there is only one goal for people; you know, the large part of world is dominated by them, and they state a new world. I do not know actually, if the states was not established, or there was no governments; letting people could learn to live in peace if they manage themselves; you know, there will be no way to fight each other or become a war. Maybe then we can pass God's examination.

Emre implies another perspective, focusing on humanism and common sense:

I try to give all people equal rights and freedom. If you have a problem, I share it with everyone and we find a solution together. It is common sense. Whether it comes from religions or humanism, does not matter. I always give priority to humanism. We should work for human beings.

Emre's priority is human; even when all religions are under discussion. He agrees with White (1995, p.13) who claims that if people are God directed, rather than self-directed, they are not autonomous. He argues that '*all children must be protected against true believers who wish to impose on them a non-autonomous conception of the good life*' (ibid. p. 105). Humanity must always come first.

iv) *Educational Solutions and Responsibilities*

Baha implies that people should question their life, and education can help in this process. He says:

We must praise the quality of the society, not the quantity of it. That is why I do not think to marry and have kids. Reading and researching become more reasonable, my questions that I need to answer sounds like enough to me alive.

Baha highlights the importance of qualifying people with education. Moreover, he explains his reasoning with a Hadith from the Prophet Muhammad:

On the day of Judgement, a person cannot move from Allah's presence until they have been interrogated about four things: 1) Where they spent their life; 2) Where they wore their body; 3) Where they earned and spent their wealth; 4) What deeds they did with their knowledge (Et Tergib vet Terhib Volume I, p. 125).

This belief impels him to search for the meaning of life, and he wants to dedicate himself for his goals like saints living without any property and marriage. Nursel also emphasizes the importance of education by saying:

Certainly education... and to be consciousness. I do not mean that education giving at schools, unlike to educate yourself and mind.

In Nursel's view, education is about educating the citizen, achieving a world we want, one that goes beyond individual autonomy towards a commitment to others and to the achievement of common goals. She claims that Imam Hatip Schools have a mission to educate its pupils with moral and religious education. With respect to ethics, it is important that teachers encourage good acts and restrain evil ones. Moreover, teachers should help pupils to see that they have desires to do both good and bad, and that it is possible to use one's will to do good. Responsibility and forgiveness are important in personal relationships, with God and other people, and that both dimensions should comprise the ethos of Imam Hatip Schools.

Education is also a solution for students to provide peace and justice. Ozcan states that *'People should think; thinking can provides peace and justice'*. Kader agrees with her friend and she follows: *"I would nurture the human beings with education. Without education humanity can destroy itself"*. According to those students, education does not only have a 'What' aim, it also has a 'Why' purpose. God created us for living with peace, and education

is an integral component of this. Thus, wrongs need righting, and it is possible with education. Hulya focuses on the relationship between education and psychology, she posits:

First, solution is to identify the problem. Then I synthesize it. If I had opportunity, I would definitely try to talk people face to face. I improve all my skill with education, I would give them the necessary information, and I try to deal with them.

Hulya argues that people should always ask: what is the reality that people are living in, and will be living in? What do they need to be able to do well in this society? This means that the content of education will vary with and depend on the society where it takes place. For example, in a particular society they might have to learn about human's psychology, because it is applicable to that society. Moreover, it should be taught in a way that would help the children to judge it and to see what it really is. In Qur'an it is mentioned by God: *"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best"* (Qur'an 16: 125).

v) No solution

Some students believe that the solution is impossible for good. Derya expresses this issue:

Does everything have a solution! You know, what could be? I do not see any solution; it seems impossible.

Today's world seems full of human problems; there are no solutions while people continue to do what they desire to do. In this perspective, Derya declares that people do not look for any solutions. Moreover, Serife says:

Could it be a solution? Today's, this is very difficult. Hence Muslims do not follow what they believe. I mean even they accept Qur'an as a divine law; they believe in God, and What Allah says; however, they do not obey and act exactly according to Qur'an. There are many conflicts between each other. While we are not good Muslims, how we provide to adopt it for humanity.

Serife once accepted that Islam could be a solution, however when she criticises Muslims and tradition, she confirms that there is no solution. Hence in the Qur'an Allah is aware of His people: *"He is most knowing of who is rightly guided' exegetes agree to identify the 'rightly*

guided' with Islam, and indeed are probably often biased in their commentary". However, Serife questions people with being nominal cultural Muslims.

Turning to the participants' worldviews about the question 'what is right and wrong' compiled in a brief data report:

- 1) According to the data, the sources of the right and wrong varies: Majority of participants claim that Qur'an and Sunnah are the only source of right and wrong (Islamic worldview). However, some of them say the right and wrong are relative; so we do not know the ultimate right and wrong (Secular worldview). A few of them declare it learns by experience or mind, consciousness and heart (Both worldviews).
- 2) Participants give different answers to 'what is the problem/wrong' question. It seems the rate of their replies almost same: some believe that the problem is people have turned away from Allah and have become self-centred; some believe that religions itself is a real problem. Others claims that people are unjust, racist, greedy and merciless which causes big problems such as, wars, poverty, and massacres; some indicate that secular humanism, selfishness, human desires and power is the problem which leads people to commit wrong acts. Again, some state that individualism, utilitarianism, secularism, capitalism, consumerism, and imperialism cause major problems; unlike a minority of pupils who are unconcerned about any problems.
- 3) Participants' solutions also varies: a majority of pupils believe that Islam and Qur'an are the real solution for human's problem and all wrongs, the main goal of human beings is to glorify God and obey His rules; some of them claim that the solution is first to change themselves so that they are in a position to change the society. A few of the pupils prioritise humanity, and they see flourishing humanism as a solution. A large number of participants stressed that the remedy is education; unlike a minority who do not see any solution for future.

Conclusion

Everybody is brought up within a view of the world built on certain beliefs. It may be a world without a god, with a distant god, or with a god who matters in everyday life. It may be a world where death is seen as the end of life, the beginning of life, or the transformation into a different kind of life. It may be a world where the highest value is self-realization, money, or unselfish love. It may be a world with universal, objective ethical norms, with relative, inter-

subjective norms, or with subjective norms. And so on. And students will, by and large, take over these beliefs and form habits consistent with them (go to mosque, strive for higher salary, eat without giving thanks to God, act according to their horoscope, not kill animals, etc.). At first they will do so unquestioningly, and a lot of the beliefs will remain unquestioned, particularly if they are widespread in society.

Participants' worldviews affect how they see everything, even how they understand Islam and tradition; or how they read Qur'an and Hadiths. A worldview that lacks the comprehensiveness of religious worldview will necessarily cause them to misinterpret Islam and Western culture. With the reference to the West, some scholars argue that modern people have cut themselves off from the sacred and imaginative realities and live in secular and measurable time. They live in a world described by Max Weber in terms of "disenchantment" (Taylor, 2004, p. 249). However, other scholars, refuting the notions of disenchantment and disembodiment, say, "it is surprising to discover, on the basis of empirical research, that human rationality is not at all what the Western philosophical tradition has held it to be" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p. 4). In Muslim society, many Muslims are not detached from reality; rather, they live in an enchanted world, a world of spirits and forces, which can be described in terms of 'embodied spirituality' that requires ethical and aesthetic attitudes to the world that is also central to self-nurturance. Embodied spirituality necessitates an understanding that the world or nature is not inanimate and less than human, but animated and highly significant (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p. 566).

There is a given meaning for everybody's worldview. My participants are different and will shape their worldview in different ways, but this is why I conduct the research. This gives meaning to every part of their worldview, including education. Everyone has the same worth but the point is to what extent he or she lives their life according to their purpose. Some of them can see the meaning of their worldview by faith; others can see it by living in secular life. Some believe that God is the centre of life, both in theory and practice, and some believe the self is centre, other believes science is the centre. The world the pupils learn about is shaped by them. Both what is preferred and what is not preferred, what is done and what is not done, contribute to their worldviews. The purpose of this study then is to understand how they are negotiating with the world in their worldview. This data chapter explores how IHS students answer the four ultimate/existential questions derived by

‘Worldview Theory’; and how they construct their worldviews according to these questions. The following chapter will present the participants’ perception of Islam and its culture.

Chapter 5 Perception of Islam and Islamic Culture

Introduction

In the present study, an attempt has been made to explore the worldviews of Turkish young people from a selected group of Imam Hatip School's senior students through investigation their responses towards basic questions of 'Worldview Theory'. As explained in previous sections the inquiry was carried out through the implementation of thematic analysis.

In the twenty-first century, understanding Islam requires an appreciation of the broader struggle for the soul of Islam. As in the past, the religion of Islam, both faith and its practices, is a complex reality, a multidimensional faith and community. It is influenced by diverse and competing leaders and interpretations, from mainstream to extremist and traditionalist to modern reformers (Esposito, 2005). Thus, this chapter explains the construction of worldviews through discussing Islam and Islamic culture. It includes several items that aimed at exploring the degree of generational difference concerning participants' understanding of Islam. "What is Islam? What do Muslims believe? Have Muslims, like religious believers throughout the world, wrestled with issues of change and reform to assure the continued relevance of Islam to modern Muslim life? How has Islam informed the faith and culture of Muslim life?" (Esposito, 2005, p. xiv) By revealing the profile of worldviews towards Islam on a large scale enable us to understand the overall constitutive characteristics of participants' religious or secular worldviews. Therefore, exploring the concept of Islam is important to gain wide perspective of participant's worldview.

Islam is confronted not only with multiple cultures or worldviews of different Muslim communities, but also with Western attempts at imposing its essentially secular worldview through the process of globalization. Increases and changes in trans-communication, global flows of culture, capital, and material forces have recently, and concurrently, opened new venues for Muslims to rethink certain modes of both their worldviews and social lives. Therefore, in this section the concept of Islam will be explored from five different aspects: 1) Definition of Islam; 2) Tradition of Islam; 3) Symbols of Islam; 4) Praxis of Islam; and 5) Culture of Islam. These aspects are structured by the semi-structured interview questions to find out how young people explain and comprehend Islam from these perspectives. I believe that these pre-determined structures help us to understand my participant's meaning making process of Islam from different perspectives and may cover main points as a whole. On the

occasion that some unaddressed issues arise, these are integrated into the most relevant aspects of our structure.

Definition of ‘Islam’ in young people’s mind

Here, I asked the participants what Islam means for them. Each student has their own understanding of Islam of course, however, the data revealed three main themes. Basically the concept of Islam is understood by Imam Hatip Schools’ senior students as:

a) submission and peace, b) the true path (as-siratal mustaqim- the straight path), and c) religion of all people. These suggestions emerged from the data and there are differences between each one; for example, ‘submission to whom? Peace with whom? What is the straight path? Does Islam send to all people? Does Islam cover all revealed religions?’

Submission and Peace

Baha defines the term ‘Islam’ using the terminological approach:

In a word of sense, Islam means as submission to God, by extension, submission to peace. ‘Salom’ or ‘Salam’ implies ‘to be peaceful’ in Hebrew; also, ‘Islam’s stem means ‘submission and peace’. Mankind can submit many things but we have to submit ourselves to the second meaning of the word, which is peace. It only provides by submission to Allah. There is no other solution; otherwise, we corrupt each other soon.

It is a typical definition of Islam what Baha says above by both traditionalist and reformist. The word “Islam” has often been translated as “submission” to God, or “entering into the peace” of God, for these are indeed the two senses provided by the declension of the root ‘s-l-m’. Nevertheless, what is missing from this approach, which relies on simple translation, is the understanding of the fundamental conceptions of the Creator, human being, and the universe that underpins this conceptualization. It is assumed that the meaning is obvious, understood, and immediately accessible, whereas one cannot truly apprehend the meaning of “submission” or of “peace” in the Islamic universe of reference if one does not study, if only a little, what is meant at the heart of the Muslim tradition by the realities of “God,” the “human being,” and “Revelation.” In this respect, Nursel claims:

Islam is to surrender. It is a submission to 'Haqq' and truth. 'Haqq' means is "the thing is always right under any circumstances and through the space and time"; contrary, 'Batil' means the thing is always wrong under any circumstances through the space and time.

In Nursel's definition, she says submission has to be on Haqq, not Batil; and she identifies what she meant with Haqq and Batil. Basically, Islam means surrender or submission to the will of God, Muslims have tended to place primary emphasis on obeying or following God's will as set forth in Islamic law. However, when Nursel defines these terms, Islam represents Haqq and the West represents Batil. In this sense, we realize that she is clear about the meaning of Islam and what is referring through West. It is a scholastic traditional worldview of Muslims. Tariq Ramadan highlights the issue in his book *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (2004) by emphasising: "If the "act of faith" is in itself *simple*, and considered, in Islam, as *natural*, it is because it is born in the depths of time and mind and is considered an *essential* dimension of the human being, or, more precisely, the being that is becoming human" (p. 11). This explanation might cause some problems between reformist and liberal Muslims and Traditional Muslims.

On the other hand, there is the aspect of peace as Sevgi explains:

First of all, Islam is a religion of peace. But, It must be a peace because Islam requires peace; therefore, we should get along well with all people. Or we should help people.

Sevgi associates the word 'peace' with Islam and a requirement for being religious. Her definition is closer to a moderate worldview of Muslims. She emphasizes being helpful and acting in a peaceful way towards other human beings, regardless their religious worldviews and backgrounds. In other words, Sevgi believes that when you are a Muslim you should be even more peaceful than others who are not Muslim. However, Sevgi also concedes that today's Muslims are not peaceful, '*but it is not fault of Islam*', she adds. Below she explains this matter further:

First of all, Islam is a religion of peace. But, Today's Muslims do not seem to be so peaceful. To tell the truth, they are trying to find any problem to make war each other; even our country is same. It must be a peace because Islam requires peace;

therefore, we should get along well with all people. Or we should help people. However, I could not identify most Muslims in this sense of peace.

Sevgi's comments reveal that Islam does not always affect a Muslim's life in the way that it should. Sevgi holds a progressive Muslim worldview approach. She criticizes Muslims based on her personal understanding that faith without works is empty, or without merit. The Book of Deeds will be the basis for divine judgement. Thus the primacy of law over theology is the Islamic tradition. Additionally, Sevgi asserts:

When Islam is practiced in a real sense, that time, I believe all people in the world will embrace Islam.

Correspondingly, the Muslim community is described as consisting of those 'whose manners, ideas and concepts, rules and regulations, values and criteria are all derived from the Islamic source' (Sayyad Qutb, 2005).

All of those definitions could admit the whole of creation, here, in the universe of the "laws of nature" and "rule of instinct," everything is in itself already and eternally "Islamic"—submissive to and at peace with the Living One (*al-Hayy*), the Eternal (*al-Qayyum*), who grants life (*al-Muhyi*) and brings death (*al-Mumit*).

The True Path (as-sirat al-mustaqim (the straight path))

According to Oguz, Islam is the straight path for those who genuinely accept it.

In my definition, Islam means finding the true path, I define it as lights. But nobody understands these concepts that they do not look deeply. For example, the life we live in is very dark. If there were a light, it would be different. We are a world without light. Most people are unbeliever and faithless because of not to know what to believe, including myself.

One of the meanings of Islam is: the divinely mandated path, the straight path that Muslims are to follow, God's will or law. Oguz highlights significant points concerning 'how to be' and 'how to continue to be' Muslim. It is following the path of faithfulness to the principles of the living faith, of responsibility, of justice, of equity, of respect, and of freedom. These general principles are universal for Muslims and without them life is dark. Oguz illustrates

this troubling circumstance by employing ‘light’ as a symbol and an example of his faith, however, he finalizes his word by believing Allah might help the world and people to become more just. Kader also draws attention to similar points by saying:

Islam is to understand Qur’an correctly and practice what says. It is a true path with its rules that we will apply to our life.

Kader adds her definition of Islam:

I call Islam as the right way. Because there are so many denominations and sects in other religions, Islam has too. However, Islam is always one, from the first human Adam to last human being. Even Islam has many different interpretation, they will integrate each other at the end of discussion, to the straight path (sirati mustaqim).

Kader believes that faith places Muslims on the straight path and that certain acts demonstrate their commitment and faithfulness. She claims that if Muslims are to play the role of the leader of humankind, then it is necessary that the Muslim community be restored to its original forms, which is to join together on the straight path. These definitions show a part of traditional Islamic worldview and some part of it liberal reformist approach.

Religion of People

Some of the students affirm that Islam is the last divine religion; and they indicate that Islam is the name of the religion whose first prophet was Adam, and whose final prophet was Muhammad. It is a state of peace achieved through surrendered service to God and His final Prophet Muhammad. Emre states:

When I called Islam, a divine religion, which Allah is sent through the Messengers, comes to my mind.

According to the participants Muhammad was not the founder of Islam; he did not start a new religion. In keeping with his prophetic predecessors, Muhammad came as a religious reformer; he did not bring a new message from a new God, but called people back to the one, true god and a way of life that most of his contemporaries had forgotten or deviated from.

Therefore, Islam is the accepted, final, revised religion of God. Nisanur explains this point by saying:

Islam is the last divine religion, which covers all religions and sends for whole universe as long as the doomsday.

Their explanations remind me of the Salafi traditional way of understanding of Islam, because it is typical to accept Islam is the last divine religion and covers all religions too, for all kind of traditional and progressive Muslim worldviews. One of the traditionalists Muslim, Quld Bah, states, "Muslims belong to an ideal Divine system perfected by Allah as a way of fulfilling his grace and blessings unto mankind" (1998, p.1; in Ramadan, 2004). Moreover, Islam is a discipline, which give a purpose for our life. Serife expresses her thoughts:

I can say, Islam is a necessary regulation for people to be happy. It is a discipline.

Similarly, Ozcan maintains that: "*Islam is a religion which gives people the purpose of life*". According to these students, the final Prophet is an example in all aspects of life: how to treat friends, as well as enemies, what to eat and drink, how to make love and war. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the growths of Prophetic traditions. Therefore, in Islam, the purpose of life is not simply to affirm, but to actualize; not simply to profess belief in God, but to realize God's will and spread the message and law of Islam as the last divine religion.

Tradition Of Islam

Islam has passed through many stages in its development like all great world religions. Throughout its long history, the community of adherents has had to respond to internal and external threats to its existence and vitality (Esposito, 2005). As a result, Islam has a long tradition of religious renewal and reform, extending from its earliest history to the present.

Islam begins with the creation of human beings; the story of creation of human beings in the Qur'an started with a testimony and covenant that Allah brought together all mankind and made them bear witness by saying: "And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - Lest you should say on the day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware' " (Qur'an 7:172). This testimony is very important for the formation of the Islamic conception of humanity and story; it teaches us that 'in the heart and consciousness of each individual there exists an

essential and profound intuitive awareness and recognition of the presence of the Transcendent' (Ramadan, 2004, p. 16). Indeed, the idea of fitrah comes from this testimony and covenant, which is central to the Islamic conception of the human being, faith, and the sacred. It is explained by this verse in the Qur'an: "So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth". In this sense, my participants shed light on several thoughts they believe in about Islam throughout their own story of Islam.

Dynamics of Islam

Most of the participants reference a verse from the Qur'an to stress what they understand from the story of Islam. The quotation reads: "Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam. And those who were given the Scripture did not differ except after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves. And whoever disbelieves in the verses of Allah, then indeed, Allah is swift in [taking] account." (Ali Imran. 3:19) Nursel highlights this point by saying:

Once there are not many religions, just religion which is the same of Prophet Adam. "Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam." Islam is always there, from the first man, there is divine order, which is controlled by Allah. That's why we cannot say 'religions' with plural; they are beliefs and cults.

As we mentioned above in the definition of Islam, Nursel has the same notion as her friends. It represents a fundamental belief of every Muslim that Islam is the only religion in front of God. This belief covers the worldviews of traditional and progressive Muslims, except Western secularist. Baha in agreement with Nursel adds:

Today, the thing remains from Islam is only the teachings of Allah, His doctrines; nothing else might be long lasting and permanent, except Islam and Allah.

According to Baha and Nursel, there is one Islam, and the fundamental principles that define it are those to which all Muslims adhere, even though there may be an important margin allowed for evolution, transformation, and adaptation to various social and cultural environments. Moreover, they believe that if God is the Lord; the Muslim is His servant before whom submission (Islam) or obedience is the most natural and appropriate response.

The term 'Muslim' means "one who submits" or surrenders to god; it includes everyone who follows His guidance and performs His will; and it will last forever.

On the other hand, during the interview Hulya comments a little differently from her friends on the topic of Islam and other religions. She suggests that there is a clash between the great religions of the world:

That is to say, there is a clash between Islam and other religions. Islam is always on the Earth. We are Muslims, thank God, and live in Islamic culture. I think, other countries and religions want to collapse Islam and Qur'an. However, Allah has a word to complete His Glory (Islam) upon all other religions.

Hulya claims that Islam is not a heritage of any particular race or country, rather it is God's religion and it is for the whole world. Therefore, to Hulya, other religious traditions appear in opposition to Islam and subsequently this causes big problems for humanity. Hulya's comments are in contrast to the other students, however; most of them accept that Islam is the only religion in front of god.

Islam is living tradition

Nursel comments about Islam by saying:

Islam is my guide. Islam is influential in my worldview; but we can also be defeated by ourselves (nefs). I absolutely regard what Islam says and what Islam considers. I synthesize the ideas of Islam with my own thoughts; they are directed by Qur'an and Hadiths.

Nursel means that the Qur'an and Sunnah should lead Muslims' worldviews and shape their ideas. However, there is a possibility that 'self' might affect to misunderstand what Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad's hadiths state. Another participant, Mehmet, agrees, he states:

A Muslim must adhere to Qur'an and Sunnah in daily life. If they say 'My guide is Quran (Islam)', their whole life will change completely. So, you will live with Qur'an, you will go on its' true path, I do not think, there will be any trouble during the life.

Both students have a traditional view of Islam. For Muslims, the foundation of Islamic belief and practices is the Qur'an and the example and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. Muslim faith and practice are rooted in revelation, but expressed in a variety of beliefs, attitudes, rituals, laws, and values. It is widely accepted by all kinds of Muslim worldviews to follow the dictates of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The differences between this understanding and others are based upon the interpretation of these fundamental sources.

Ahmet continues with emphasizing Prophet Muhammad as an exemplar of Muslim life and piety. He says:

As we know, many non-Muslim Philosophers have described the life of the Prophet Muhammad and his character as the most beautiful. They did not accept Islam but they appreciated His life. We call 'Golden Age' about Muhammad's age. Those philosophers also know, the rules, which Muhammad have enforced, the judges given by him, and His Sunnah have been the most beautiful system. Muhammad is one of the best guide and pattern for humanity. Because he practiced through out what Allah orders.

Ahmet believes that Muhammad stands amongst the great religious figures, prophets and founders of religions whose remarkable character and personality inspired uncommon confidence and commitment. It is a belief that forms a part of the traditional and Sufi based worldviews. Muslims found Muhammad to be righteous, trustworthy, pious, compassionate, and honest. He was revered from earliest times and Muslims remembered and recounted what he said and did. During his lifetime and the following centuries, Muhammad has served as the ideal model for Muslim life, providing the pattern that all believers are to emulate. He is, as some Muslims say, 'the living Qur'an'- the witness whose behaviours and words reveal God's will. Thus the practices of the Prophet became a material source of Islamic law alongside the Qur'an (Esposito, 2005).

Generally, my participants imply that Islam must be practiced in every level of life, then all people might become live a peaceful life. In this context, most students belong to a group of traditional Muslims. Some of them are affected by their parent's worldviews which is a traditional worldview of Islam. This familial influence is substantiated by Nisanur who says:

My traditional way of Islam becomes from my family, who accept Islam as their guide. So, I grow up with their understanding of Islam and I want to prove myself to my family that Islam is my guide too.

Nisanur wants to gain her own understanding of Islam, rather than simply following what her parents believe and accept. Basically, many Muslims compromise Islam in this way. It must be criticized in order to come a proper understanding of Islam, otherwise it may be misrepresented in young minds. Accordingly, for Muslims throughout the centuries, the message of the Qur'an and the example of the Prophet Muhammad has constituted the formative and enduring foundation of faith and belief. They have served as the basic sources of Islamic law and the reference points for daily life. Muslims today, as in the past, continue to affirm that the Qur'an is the literal word of God, the Creator's immutable guidance for an otherwise transient world. This trans-historical significance is rooted in the belief that the Book and the Prophet provide eternal principles as norms on which Muslim life, both individual and collective, is to be patterned. The challenge for each generation of believers has been the continued formulation, appropriation, and implementation of Islam in history. Islamic history and civilization provide the record of that struggle to interpret and to follow the straight path.

Manipulation of Islam

The data indicates that Islam has been manipulated by wars where Muslim countries fight and kill each other for divine reasons. Ahmet analyses the issue as follows:

Currently, some terrorist group, particularly ISIS, manipulates Islam, it harms the meaning of Islam, and others misinterpret it. I mean, although people are aware of that is not Islam, some hidden powers and media introduce Islam is equal to terrorism. Most people believe what their country or government says about Islam; even governments know the reality of Islam, it seems they hide the truths. We should change it with supporting the peace.

He refers to ISIS as a terrorist group who use the name of Islam to fortify their aims. This demonstrates that Ahmet follows current issues surrounding Islam in his daily life, and he interprets the situation mentioned above with a manipulation of Islam. Ahmet also stresses that the mass media use ISIS to popularise certain views about Islam and terrorism which he

does not accept and would rather change this pervasive ideology with supporting peace. Therefore, he and some others are standby against radical Islam. Mehmet makes another point with respect to radical Islamism, he states:

For example, there are wars in the Middle East, and who have been murdered say 'Allahu Akbar' (Allah is the greatest), and who have been dead say 'Shahadat' (There is no god but God. Muhammad is the messenger of God). They dress as Muslims, all Muslims are brother, and the blood of brothers is forbidden in Islam, but they kill each other. Why? It is nonsense for me.

Mehmet takes a position against a radical and fundamentalist understanding of Islam which claims that those who fail to follow Islamic law, governments, and individuals, are guilty of being unbelievers; they are no longer Muslims, but atheists whose unbelief demands holy war. Some of the other participants agree with Mehmet's argument and it disturbs them to equate Islam with terrorism.

Another issue is the failure to practice real Islam. According to Sevgi:

There is war and blood in almost all Islamic countries, because we do not practice real Islam; we spend more time for secular world. In fact, if we live through what Islam says, I believe that Islam is the religion of peace and it will be peace all over the world.

Regrettably, Sevgi argues that Muslims are responsible for what is happening in today's world. It is a strong approach, which other students agree with. Notwithstanding whether Islam is, and always has been a peaceful religion, some Muslims may also be extremists and use terrorism as a means to an end. The reality is that the latter are not practicing the true Muslim faith; their misinterpretation of Islam is manufactured rhetoric and is not condoned by the vast majority of the world's practicing Muslims. It has contributed to the degeneration of Islam in the minds of many young people. Ahmet mentioned the issue by saying:

As Turkish society, I see Islam has been so degenerated by us in the last century. When we say 'I am a Muslim', we know that we do not mean it; also, we prefer to hide our Islamic identity in front of the community. However, Turkey's population is 99% Muslim. I think that it is because of the innovations made in the last century. Or

Hidden Powers play a big game on Turkish community with using West and its culture. It still continues to happen.

Ahmet and a few of his friends think like Western culture and its community play a significant role in causing the misrepresentation of Islam on the world stage. One might say it is part of a political agenda. In the pupils' words, I can see that religious terrorism is motivated and controlled by false rhetoric issuing from leaders who are in pursuit of powerful political goals. Islam and its culture might be understood with unexplainable violence and terrorism, however, it does not mean that West and Western culture propose the idea.

Symbols of Islam

Symbols are important aspects of human life. Human beings give special meaning and deeper expression to what is significant for them. Symbols carry meanings to new generations. In this part, I asked my participants "what are the most known symbols for Islam; what do these symbols mean to you; and why do you choice this symbol for Islam?" I divided the answers in three categories to analyse their perception in particular ways. It shows us that every worldview has its own symbols; so each of my participants has their own symbols when it comes to Islam.

Immaterial and spiritual symbols

Here, three of the most important symbols are Qur'an, Prophet Muhammad and Hijab. These are essential element of Islam, and most known symbols also.

i. Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad: The participants reported that Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad are the best-known symbols of Islam. Onur clearly and briefly explains his comment by saying:

There is no need looking for a symbol: Islam is equal to Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad.

Burak and Enes support this comment in a very direct way adding that "*I definitely say Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad*" and "*first and foremost the best symbol is Qur'an*". As we can see, these two significant symbols are totally completing each other. Fatih elaborates a little on the Prophet Muhammad saying:

Of course, our spiritual symbol is Our Prophet Muhammad. Because Allah says, “I have not been created the universe if Muhammad comes into the world”. He has created everything for the sake of Muhammad. All other prophets prayed to be a part of his community (followers).

Fatih sees Muhammad as a spiritual leader of all human beings; he is among those great religious figures, prophets and founders of religions, whose remarkable character, and personality inspired uncommon confidence and commitment. The belief is reflected in many of my participants’ comments.

Both symbols are the essence of the Islam for traditional and progressive worldviews. They accept that The Qur’an is central in the formation of an Islamic worldview, for Muslims believe that the Qur’an is the Word of God. The revelations made to Prophet Muhammad target the first addresses of the Qur’an: their perceptions, knowledge, experience, needs, problems, ethical values, religious beliefs, and cultural codes. Muhammad has served as the ideal model for Muslim life, providing the pattern that all believers are to emulate. He is, as some Muslims say, ‘the living Qur’an’- the witness whose behaviours and words reveal God’s will. He is an exemplar of Muslim Life and piety. Those participants are very close to following a traditionalist worldviews such as Sufism and Salafism.

ii. Makkah (Kaaba) and Shahada: Some of my participants understand Islam via visual and verbal context such as Kaaba (Pilgrimage) and Shahada (declaration of belief). For example, Sena says “*Islam is Makkah and Kaaba*” or Mehmet adds

There are many symbols of Islam, for me the biggest one is Sahahada (testimony of Allah and Muhammad).

Moreover, Burak points out other examples using verbal context:

When people speak, if they use some jargons such as “Inscallah (If Allah permits) , alhamdullillah (Thanks God), Masallah (Praise be), or Assalamu Aleykum”, these are all symbols of Islam.

The above could be interpreted as these young people needing tangible things to understand Islam, and they might have progressive worldview such as moderate reformist. They have a common understanding of Islam like a secularist might have.

iii. Veil (Tesettur and hijab): Several female participants' answer the interview question on religious symbols by citing the hijab or veil. It is easy to see why, because most of them are covered with a scarf or veil as part of their worship. Sena responds, *I absolutely say the veil that I am so please to be covered*. It is daily routine for these participants to be covered by veil or "Tesettur". Hilal supports this comment by saying, *I say Hijab, as I am a woman, the biggest symbol is the veil, I mean hijab*. She refers that there is a differences between Hijab and Veil and she consciously emphasize that by repeating the word 'hijab' twice. According to her and some other female participants, hijab has broader meaning, which includes other terms, such veil and Tesettur. Selva stress this point when she says, *It is hijab, (which is for me) Qur'an and mosque*.

What Selva means is that as a Muslim woman she could follow the Qur'an and her house is like a mosque for her. This understanding is referenced from the Salafi traditionalist worldview. Arguably, the hijab is one of the most controversial symbols in Islam today. It is highly likely that the parents of these students or previous generations in their families faced challenges wearing the hijab, because it was banned in Turkey from 1982 to 2013. The hijab was seen as an ostentatious religious symbol for a country that had become purposefully and distinctly Western and secular. However, the law was rescinded in 2013, to give freedom of expression to those who desired to wear it as a symbol of their devotion. In this sense, these students especially want to emphasize the hijab as a symbol of Islam (religious symbol) to show their awareness.

On the other hand, some participants do not agree with the expression "*hijab is Islamic symbol*". Specifically, they accept that the hijab might be one religious requirement of Islam, but equally without it a Muslim can represent Islam. This constitutes a reformist worldview, when a person states that some women can choose to wear coverings as an expression of their faith and devotion, but doing so remains an individual's choice. Some see coverings as symbols of liberation and even empowerment, especially during interactions with people who are then forced to focus on what women say, rather than on their appearance (Valk et al, 2017, p. 61). The hijab is a common complex issue between traditional and secular worldviews. According to the students wearing the hijab should always be a personal choice and decision; not expected, coerced and a representation of a greater or lesser form of piety (Valk et al, 2017).

Material and Cultural symbols

The crescent, mosques and minarets are popular symbol for Islam in this theme. These symbols are generally more tangible for these participants, which represent Islam in every region in very basic symbols to show that city, region, or village has a part of Islam or there are some Muslims living there.

i. The crescent: The star and the crescent have also become symbolic of Islam and are also incorporated in national flags. The Turkish national flag has become a sacred symbol. It not only contains the star and crescent, but also is a unique symbol of Turkish independence. Yusuf points out this with his explanation:

Our ancestors choice the “crescent and star” as our symbol. You know, the story behind these symbols; after a long war, during the night, the crescent and star fell on to our martyrs’ blood. It became a symbol of Turkish nationality and independence; also, it is a part of Islam. As you know, Prophet Muhammad’ flag used three crescents and Ottomans’ flag too. Its history came from past.

Burak states his thought by saying: “*it is Crescent and star*”.. Selda follows their comment with adding Sun to her explanation:

It is more commonly crescent. But also, Sun has an important symbol for me, it is shining and lightening, such Islam does for all world and Muslims.

She seems Islam might be centre for Muslim like Sun is, which is a progressive worldview context.

ii. Mosques, Azan, Minarets: Mosques and azan (the call to prayer) are yet other significant symbols. They reveal that there are Muslims living in the neighbourhood. The call to prayer evokes the spiritual world of Muslims, giving them peace, serenity and security. Kevser indicates,

Daily prays and the mosques are the symbol of Islam. One can understand easy who is Muslim or the city has Islamic sign via looking people or Minarets (which means pray and mosques).

Fatih adds, “*I can say mosques, I mean minarets*”. These students mostly understand a symbol must show some sign of its origin. For example, if I am a foreigner visiting Europe, I can look to see if there is a mosque or any minarets in the city and I from that I can determine that the people in attendance are Muslims. Correspondingly, Gole (1996) argues that minarets are a silent symbol of Islam in Europe and that, conversely, religious and political divides could be made on the basis of them owing to their public and visible representation of Islam and the presence of Muslims in Europe. Essentially, mosques and minarets attest to “the presence of Muslims in societies, their desire to stay there, their claim to the freedom conscience, and their right to worship and dress according to their personal interpretation of their religion” (1996, p. 3).

iii. Dress code and cleanliness: In this theme, I asked the students “how could you understand who is Muslim when you are visiting any Western city? Is there any symbol of Islam? Is it possible?” this questions lead them to find some symbols which not mentioned above. Symbols in Islam developed over time, arising from cultural expressions and the imaginations of fervent followers. For instance, the colour green has become symbolic, decorating many mosques, incorporated in numerous national flags, and sometimes used in elaborate bindings of the Qur’an. Another example, quotations written in fountain stones and gravestones also remind Muslims of God. In the context of the questions listed above Burak notes:

Dress code is important sign, if someone wears frock and Islamic cap, have a beard, they might be a Muslim.

Sena adds:

Growing beard is Sunnah of Islam, for men. In addition, if there are curtains in homes, or the home is so clean and private for the family, it is a symbol too; because it is hijab of home.

Sena stresses cleanliness in the home, and how the house must be private with curtains closed in the same that we (women) cover our bodies with the hijab. Muserref supports her friend’s comments;

Cleaning can be a symbol. Homes with curtains, and during the night, people wake up for pray.. These are symbols of Islamic culture.

Another participant, Mehmet, mentions similar thoughts:

For me, firstly it is cleanliness. If a person is clean and watches over his care, it can be a hint of Islam. Moreover, Prophet Muhammad said, "Cleanliness is half of faith" and "Cleanliness becomes from faith.

As we can see, these students believe that Secular or Western culture can be identified by its individual lifestyle; houses are not covered by curtains, it is possible to see inside of a house from the outside. In addition, some of the students remarked how Western people wear their shoes inside their homes which compromises the cleanliness of their homes. Therefore, for these students cleanliness is a symbol of Islam.

On the other hand, one of the participants, Kevser, argues:

We don't judge anyone because of their dress code. They can wear indecent clothes, but they would be more religious than you. Who knows!

Kevser has an alternative view to that of her friends. It can be identified as a progressive worldview, whereas the student comments quoted before Kevser relate more to a traditionalist interpretation. In a progressive reformist worldview, The Qur'an does not specify any form of head covering of dress. It simply says, "Let them (Women) draw their head covering over their bosoms" (Nur 24/31). The Qur'an speaks only of dressing modestly (A'raf 7.26). Various head coverings, or even full body coverings are cultural expressions of the injunction to dress in a way that is not suggestive and applies equally to men as to women.

iv. Other symbols (Brain, Wing...): According to some participants, Islam should have other symbols to represent Islam. On this matter, Yusuf says:

To be honest, I think the symbol of Islam must be 'brain'; I can say that we do not need a new symbol.

He is thinking deep about the symbols and “brain” symbolise the future of Islam in his mind. Onur also supplies a different symbol:

I think it is wing. Angels have wings too. Islam is as if an angel with one side of wing is white, the other is black; it seems heel and heaven. Also, there is a scale on his shoulders, which represents justice.

He describes a heroic symbol, which includes scales of justice, which is very important to be mentioned.

No symbol

Some participants think Islam does not need any symbols to be understood. Without symbols, Islam should have its own culture and discipline. Enes states ‘*We cannot say, there is specific symbol for Islam, it could not be.*’

Muhammed follows by saying:

First, Islam is not like other religions, which has images and symbols such as Christianity. In addition, Islam is not a religion of chapel or temple, for Muslims every clean place is available to pray. You do not have to look a mosque. So I can say that there is no image and symbol of Islam.

This concern, culturally, comes from the Islamic ban against any image or representation of God or Muhammad. Many Muslims extended this ban to any representation in art of the human form for fear that such statues and paintings might lead to idol worship; this resulted in the use of calligraphy and arabesque as dominant forms in Islamic art (Esposito, 2005). The students held a moderate worldview of this concern, their comments finding a compromise with other worldviews. They believe that there should be some symbols, but not one sole symbol of Islam. For example, Dilara says:

The veil comes into my mind when call the symbol of Islam, however there is no symbol for me. Because if you look at me, I have not hijab, but I am representing Islam.

Dilara is very clear that her appearance does not seem to be that of a Muslim female, because she is not covered by a hijab, however she still believes herself to be pious and a Muslim. Regarding Dilara's thoughts, Selva adds:

It is not necessary to be a symbol of Islam. We cannot say this is symbol of Islam or not, but it would be better if we had our signs.

There are several perspectives according to my participant regarding symbols of Islam, even some of them do not accept any symbol, and mostly they have some symbols for Islam and they look at those symbols in a religious way.

Praxis of Islam

'Praxis' is difficult to define precisely; I use the term with different levels of meaning. In contemporary literature, praxis usually refers to purposeful human activity that holds in dialectical unity both theory and practice, critical reflection and historical engagement (Groome, 1991). According to Groome, praxis can be viewed and pedagogically engaged with from three perspectives: it has active, reflective, and creative aspects. They overlap and unite as one in the existential life of agent-subjects in the world (1991, p.136). Praxis includes what we are intentionally doing and making in the world, as well as what we are receiving from, doing with, and making out of what is going on in the sociocultural reality around us (1991). Socially, it includes the whole of 'public life', or our social context, and what is going on, or being realized there (ibid).

The foundation of Islamic belief and practices is the Qur'an and the example and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. Muslim faith and practice are rooted in revelation, but expressed in a variety of beliefs, attitudes, rituals, laws, and values. Some of the most significant Islamic praxis today privilege piety centred on embodied micro-practices: prayer, observing rituals, negotiating public spaces, modesty, recitation and study sessions, listening to sermons, discussion of the meaning of religious texts (Sajoo, 2008). In the context of this study, I explore four different dimensions of praxis: a) rituals and practices of Islam; b) Communal and social engagements; c) How Should a Muslim be; d) Special activities.

Rituals and Practice of Islam

Rituals and practices shape the worldviews and lifestyle of Muslims; they regulate life and they assist Muslims in keeping their worldviews dynamic. I asked my participants about the rituals and practices of Islam; Fatih's response shows the common understanding, he says

There are five pillars of Islam, to be practically Muslim: the testimony of faith with saying shahada, performing daily five prayers, supporting the needy with alms and charity, fasting the month of Ramadan and the pilgrimage to Makkah. These are basic practices of Islam.

Most participants agree with Fatih's statements, because the popular rituals and practices are part of the five pillars of Islam, such prayers, fasting. The five pillars are core to a Muslim's duty to worship God. In addition to Fatih's answer, Halil also refers to what these practices mean to Muslims by saying:

There are rules and laws that Islam has commanded us. These are basically five pillars of Islam and six beliefs of Iman. But to do this, we need to have a certain knowledge and culture. It is not enough to have just this knowledge, because if Muslim doesn't think of the other person, and it doesn't help and rescue them catch when they are on the bad way, then I think it's not Islam. In other words, it is an evacuated state of Islam.

Halil reminds us of how Muslims should understand the pillars of Islam and Belief (Iman), as explained by Tariq Ramadan, the Muslim scholar. In Ramadan's book, he describes how the five pillars of Islam enlighten followers through: A conscious faith that bears witness; An ethic of responsibility; Participation; Inalienable independence; Justice (2012). These are main aims that Muslim should gain throughout the rituals and practices, which some of the participants have referred to.

Another question I asked my participants was "Do you practice Islam in your life?" to learn how they engage with Islam via rituals. Most of them try to practice Islam and its rituals. Generally, they understand practicing to mean daily prayers which is accepted as a core pillar of the five pillars. Yusuf indicates this in his words:

A Muslim must pray, it is like eating or drinking water. They should pray with their own desire. It is nonsense to say whether 'I do not pray', because of some bad things will happen. There are more than 70 verses in Qur'an mention the importance of praying. It must be enough for any Muslim to start to practice of their religion. However, Satan and our selfishness hinder to do.

Muslims are encouraged to pray daily; the Qur'an gives directives to pray up to five times a day, to plan one's day around communication with god, to always be connected to god and to give priority to god. Through prayer, a believer has a chance to feel close to god, to be spiritually purified and feel spiritually at peace; Selda refers to this:

For myself, I just read Qur'an in school. It calls us for pray, then I learned how to pray last year, and I pray if I have time. My first pray was last year. I felt different, something change inside of me even I practice it just a little.

Enes also mentions prayer:

Islam reminds me the beauty, religious and spiritual beauty. I mean, the beauty of our inner-self, for example, when I am praying, I am relieved, If I do not, there is a different feeling inside of my body.

Through prayer, a divine presence and power is felt; the love, blessing and grace of god is experienced. Muslims pray to god for support in leading obedient, responsible and fruitful lives. Prayers motivate Muslims to be gracious, thankful, caring and loving.

Many of my participants accept that prayer must be performed five times a day. Muslims do their best to perform it, because when Muslims worship five times each day they are declaring Islam's absolute or radical monotheism: 'I witness that there is no god but Allah'. Throughout the Qur'an, God reminds His people that He alone exists and is to be worshipped, this is why prayer is a priority in the practice of Islam.

Another important ritual and core pillar in Islam is fasting during Ramadan. Fasting entails refraining from food and drink, but it is much more than this. It is viewed as training in self-control; an exercise which develops strength for the real difficulties of life. It is a time for spiritual discipline, reflection and purification, a time to reassess values and behaviours, and

an opportunity to resist enslavement to habits. Moreover, the Ramadan fast diverts attention away from worldly matters to focus attention instead on worship, devotion, charity and empathy towards one's fellow humans.

Several participants revealed that they do not practice Islam daily. Burak stated that:

I do not practice Islam in my life, I do not pray, just fasting sometimes; or reciting Qur'an because of getting good mark...

Burak admits to following some Islamic requirements because of obligations placed by and rewards received from the school. Gonca challenges herself to pray, but says of this:

it is very hard to pray for myself. That is why I do not practice Islam wholly.

Some students struggle to pray because of the secular world. The highly complex lives they live in a modern, secular world, makes praying five times a day at set intervals difficult and impractical at times. For example, Onur agrees with Gonca when he says:

You can worship when you are free, but I am not free at all.

Onur is convinced that he is so busy with daily routines consisting of secular elements such as going to the shopping mall, spending time with friends in cafes, and on social media, that only after those activities, if you have time you can pray. Daily schedules are often determined for us, rather than by us. Nevertheless, Islam is flexible; it is not the number of times one engages in prayer that is most important. It is making time to pray whenever one is able. This places the onus, not on fulfilling a daily obligation in a mechanical way as if a scorecard is being kept, rather it indicates that when one prays, one must be sincere in being connected to god. The obligation to pray five times a day is reminder not to be negligent in staying connected to god, from the moment we rise to the moment we sleep; even when meeting that obligations becomes difficult (Valk et al, 2017, p. 58-9).

Communal and social engagements

Another noteworthy level of praxis is social life and communal engagements with other people. Or, as I have asked my participants 'how do they engage with society through Islam'? Incorporated in this subject area are mosques; especially Friday Sermon and

services; religious feasts, helping other people via solving their problem, wedding and funeral services, and Islamic conversations (sohbet). It is engaged in these activities that the Muslim community comes together to build their community in a variety of ways: extending personal greetings, sharing news and information, extending care and concern for others, supporting young and old members alike, meeting special needs, strengthening relationships, welcoming new members, networking and more (Valk et al, 2017, p.63). Kevser refers to this by saying:

Practicing Islam without consciousness is not Real Islam, it should be in our every seconds. I try to teach Islam who does not know what it is; I am volunteer for charity programs, and I attend Islamic conversation with my friends. Moreover, I study for explanation of Qur'an to learn how I practice it in my life.

Community activities as already described help young people to engage with their peer groups and enhance their worldviews. Kevser engages in these activities to practice Islam in a communal way via helping other people and Akif holds a similar view:

Except What Allah commands us, we should think about how we enrich Islam. I mean, we have to worry about other people's troubles and problems so that we can fulfill our worship and religious tasks. If we do not do anything for people living in bad condition to help them live better, we are in vain.

For Akif it is paramount that Muslims have concern for the problems of others and doing so involves gathering together. Moreover, Islam does not accept individualist approaches; this way of life must be practiced with the entire community, and not just amongst Muslim believers. It is a requirement of real Islam. In accord with Akif's comments, Selda says:

If Islam lived in full of meaning, I am sure that all people were in peace. I think, there would be no pressure, because Turkey is a multicultural and multi-national country, I mean there are many different religions, sects, ethnicities, and cultures. Everyone has places to worship; there are temples in everywhere. If everyone else practice comfortably what they believe, if they are free to what they want to believe, that time if we invite them to search Islam and its culture rather than to insult them or to fight them, then Turkey would become a real Islamic state.

As we can ascertain from the students, every religious, cultural and social event influences the individual; gatherings in which Islamic teachings or points of view surface in ways that go beyond ritual devotion serve to enhance an Islamic worldview. Social events often raise awareness about pressing issues and encourage individuals and groups of individuals to reassess their views and opinions, assisting them in making connections between Islam as a vision of life and a way of life. Community gatherings are one more block in shaping and influencing an Islamic worldview (Valk et al, 2017, p.62). Even small actions, may change the other people's reactions, as highlighted by Enes:

I try to practice Islam, for example, I help people, I carry the bags of old women, and If one of my friends get hungry, I take care of him.

Enes believes that Allah asks a person to do whatever is in their power to do. Subsequently, although Enes does not practice all of the rituals of Islam, he takes comfort in the fact that by helping people in the community he is still fulfilling his duty as a Muslim.

Turkish people come together at various times for religious and social reasons. One of the most important social gathering places is mosque. Burak indicates that in his words:

For example, Friday pray and sermon and Two religious feast (Prayer) .. all Muslims generally come to mosque and greeting each other. It is a good social and communal engagement.

During Friday prayers, sermons are given to encourage Muslims to lead faithful lives. Muslims gather in the mosques on Fridays and during religious holidays to pray and to socialize. As Akif explains:

We gather at mosques to discuss how we help each other. Although we do not have any action, we see each other and smile. As Prophet says 'Smile is a kind of charity..

Worship for Muslim in mosques involves the exchange of greetings and good wishes and sharing the excitement and happiness of others. In addition, the mosque is a place for community and family events or activities. Formerly, weddings and funerals were also conducted in mosques, as Muhammad advised.

How should a Muslim be?

Via this fundamental interview question, I sought to learn from the students what moral and ethical principles of Islam, according to their worldviews, would they classify as desirable in Muslims. Their answers were comprised of ethical, social, moral and practical attributes and qualities. Selda suggested as follows:

First, a good Muslim should be honest. Secondly, is to be knowledgeable, to love searching and reading; the first order of Qur'an was revealed that 'Ikra' means 'read'. That is why a good Muslim should love to read, does not matter what he/she reads, it might be better to focus on Qur'an and its interpretation. They have to be fair, reliable, and trustworthy and not to say any lie. They should follow every order of Islam, and practice them.

Selda refers to the Qur'an since it addresses the religious, ethical, social and economic issues of the time and how humans can overcome the morass in which they often find themselves and live more morally upright and productive lives. Faruk adds:

Also, there is morality, ethical principles of Islam, which we should practice always; however most of Muslims have problems about morals, because we do not follow what Qur'an reveals.

Islam assists believers in maintaining and sustaining a morally upright life and in shaping their ethical identities. In traditional worldviews, Muslims are mandated to lead a good and virtuous life. Ethical principles guide and direct the thoughts and actions of Muslims, whether individually or collectively. These principles may correspond with those of other traditions, religious or secular, but they remain grounded in the Qur'an. It reveals principles that serve to give guidance and direction for an Islamic way of life. It is instructive in anchoring Muslims in their beliefs, prayers and ethical behaviour. Nonetheless, in Islam principles also require interpretation and implementation, and here assistance may be garnered from other sources (Valk et al, 2017, p. 53). Here, some participants follows Valk' statements on how a Muslim can live a good life; Mehmet claims that:

First, a good Muslim must know and understand Islam well. On the other side, they must also know the positive science well, that the knowledge of positive sciences will

strengthen his faith as well, because the verses seen on the Qur'an find a proper meaning on the earth, and the admiration against Allah is also increased. Therefore, a Muslim should know both religious and positive sciences well. At the same time, it is necessary to look for solutions to the problems with what Islam offers and what the age and time requires.

Mehmet's thoughts were endorsed by several other participants. It is clear that they have moderated their worldviews to a progressive worldview. Some of them dedicate themselves to Islam, to be a good Muslim and live a good life in accord with the Salafi traditionalist worldview since the Salafi dedicate their life to Qur'an and Sunnah. For instance, Hilal's comments here align with Salafism:

There are people who dedicate their every moments to Allah and to the right path. In other words, they are support each step of their life with Islam and its culture. This is the way that I want to go, but I do not think I am.

Through this dedication, a Muslim has a chance to feel close to God, to be spiritually purified and feel spiritually at peace. In this way, they feel a divine presence and power; the love, blessing and grace of god are experienced. Yet, some questions arise in my participants mind regarding the nature of the good life: "What does it mean for Muslims in Turkey particularly? What does it mean for the different gender particularly women? What does it mean to live a good life in a modern democratic and secular nation, especially where numerous lifestyles are on display? What does it mean in terms of Western lifestyles, which is viewed by many as being progressive?" These are not easy questions to answer and they pose huge challenges for young Muslims, as well as for those from other religious perspectives whose way of life has been moulded by centuries of tradition and hence towards a more conservative lifestyle (Valk et al, 2017, p.57).

Regarding the above questions, some of the students answer them in a regretful or self-critical way. For example, Gonca, who does not wear the hijab and identifies herself as a modernist supports traditional worldviews, she asserts:

If someone says, "I am Muslim", she must follow what Islam requires. She must act its system. Especially a women who has hijab, must be careful than others, she will properly cover her body, not make up or wear shiny clothes. She could not engage

with men, and hanging out with them. Today's generation like this kind of relations, however, this is not a kind of Muslim what Islam wants.

As above, a number of responses given by the students surprisingly support traditional worldviews; even they do not follow the order of Islam and God. Some students were very strict about the dress code of women, which is radical Islamic worldview. For example, Seyma claims that:

If I have a daughter, I want her to be covered (veiled). God Bless all of us, today's, to be veiled is understood to be cover your head! No, it is not. You should cover all your body and attractive organs, because they lead you to be sinful. You wear jeans, peekaboo clothes, and just cover your head. What I understand this kind of Islam? Islam refers to wear chador. It should wear form all women who believe in Islam.

This issue is still debated in Turkey in both academic and public arenas and answers are still sought from different worldviews. Several participants explored these questions by providing examples from their own experiences and reflections. Fatih raised the following points:

However, I see who attend the mosque are more senior people. Why elders? So is Islam just sent to old people? In other words, there are people who act as Muslim only in month of Ramadan. Just a month they try to practice Islam. It is not true Islam.

Elif posited:

For instance, alcohol.. Turkey is a Muslim country, but alcohol is consuming too much. Is it 'haram' or not? If I am Muslim, I should not drink alcohol.

Both students claim that today's challenges regarding how to be a good Muslim, make us 'nominal or cultural Muslim' which is a part of secular worldview. According to them, today's Many Turkish people do not practice their religious beliefs; a claim disclosed by Onur who confessed:

I am in a bad position toward to Islam. I am not like a Muslim. Actually, nobody seems as a real Muslim for me. I do not identify myself as a Muslim. If I had been so

close to Islam, I would have been pray daily, I would dress as Muslims do, I would not wear what I wear. I would grow a beard.

Onur's comments illustrate that if you believe in Islam, you have to practice what Islam requires of you, otherwise, it does not make any sense. Ayse supports this notion:

Actually, I am not a good servant. I waste my time with useless things.

Special activities

Certain activities can be identified as representative where worldviews are concerned, such as Pilgrimage, celebrating some special day (this might be a religious based day like the birthday of the Prophet Muhammed), Valentine's day (for secular based), concerts, charity events, or marching. Most of my participants attend or have organized several charity events to help people who are in need; this is accepted as Islamic Praxis. Dilara explains:

For example, giving a charity is a good thing, or helping a poor person, even smiling to people is a benefaction. These are come from Islamic Culture. That is why I attend often this kind of funding event to help needy people.

This kind of organization creates a feeling of togetherness, unity and cooperation. It strengthens community membership and affiliation. Derya proudly shares her experiences:

..But I help poor people, also there are orphan programs organized by our school; I attend them, we go to orphans once a week, we care about them, we help them with their homework. I am happy to have this kind of life.

It appears that performing acts of goodness for others engenders feelings of graciousness, appreciation, care and love. The overall purpose is to enrich the two central components of Islam: belief in god and leading a good life via this kind of events. Halil states that

Islam is equal to jihad. It does not meant to fight or make war, unlike jihad is solving the problems of people in a peaceful way and struggle to help who are tortured by cruel people. For example, we organize marching for Palestinians to give voice to their voice. In addition, there are many other events organized by Islamic foundation to help immigrants, needy people, or whoever needs help.

According to Halil Islam consists of Jihad which means, “to strive or struggle” in the way of God and is sometimes referred to as the sixth pillar of Islam, although it has no such official status. Jihad, in its most general meaning, refers to the obligation incumbent on all Muslims, as individuals and as a community, to exert themselves to realize God’s will, to lead virtuous lives, and to increase the Islamic community through preaching, education, and so on (Esposito, 2005, p. 93). In this sense, young people attempt to organize special activities for other human beings.

The primary, or most central teachings and praxis of Islam concern two crucial, but simple beliefs: Muslims are to believe in God and they are to lead a good life. The main and well-known Pillars of Islam, which contain duties faithful Muslims are to embrace and perform, are critical, but they flow from these two central teachings and praxis. What one is to believe about God and how one is to lead a good life is assisted by the Pillars of Islam. Nevertheless, the pillars of Islam do not exhaust what it means to lead a good life. It is clear that not all Muslims are able to fulfil all of the five duties, yet all Muslims are able to lead a good life by being just, merciful, righteous, kind, loving, forgiving, and more. These are primarily what the Qur’an instructs Muslims to be and do. All the other teachings of Islam are to be understood in that spirit.

Culture of Islam

Humans are cultural beings in all of the contexts in which they belong, both in the course of a day, and throughout their lives (Droogers, 2014). All components mentioned and explored above, such as stories, teachings and doctrines, symbols, rituals and praxis are a part of culture and the cultural dimension of Islam. In this section, we will analyse the perceptions of the participants about Islamic culture and its components via these questions: “what does Islamic culture mean to you? What kind of behaviours/ attitudes/ principles are accepted as an element of Islamic culture, in your view? Could you give us some examples?”

Omer identifies Islamic culture in its most basic understanding which is supported by several other participants:

Islamic culture is the mode of people’s life, traditions, and customs of people. For instance, the attitudes of Prophet Mohammad and his Sunnah are a part of Islamic culture.

Correspondingly, Seyma comments “...*simply, Islamic culture is a kind of lifestyle to follow the orders and prohibitions in Islam*”. Both students attempt to characterise the culture of Islam via the Qur’an and Sunnah, which addresses perceptions, knowledge, experience, needs, problems, ethical values, religious beliefs, and cultural codes. In short, it addresses every aspect of existence. By contrast, one of the students does not agree with Omer and Seyma, rather Keyser denies the Islamic culture by saying:

Most people see Islamic culture as practicing the religion, I do not. Yeah, praying in a mosque is a culture of Islam, but Are we really practice what we believe, or we still live in our world for pleasure.

Keyser is not convinced by today’s culture because it is surrounded by secularism and modernism, she does not agree with what the others think. Regarding different aspects of culture, Mehmet indicates that:

Islamic culture is in so much diversity today. Islam emerged first in Saudi Arabian Peninsula but later on through Spain or Endulus. Because of this, Islam shapes with each nations in a different understanding, but Islamic doctrines are clear, however, in practice, it is so diverse. It is cultivated many different way through the world, I mean Turkish nations practice Islam in their own culture, Arabs are different, even Europeans too. It is a rich diversity.

Mehmet highlights the cultural diversity among Muslims and countries; time and space affect people, and people can change their cultural commitments over time. Furthermore, Yusuf observes:

It is true that saying there are perceptions of Islam of how many Muslims are in the world. Each Muslim has a different perception of Islam. What is important then is what and who am I; what I understood from the Qur’an and what I understood from Islam.

Yusuf explicitly supports the notion that ‘each Muslim is unique with his/her understanding of Islam’. A Muslim’s worldview affects their everyday life. Therefore, young people seek and find their way around, conferring and recognizing labels. Through this act of meaning-making existence is made familiar and reality becomes accessible (Droogers, 2014, p. 18).

Droogers states that reality also comes into being and takes forms through people's meaning-making (2014, p.18). In this regard some of the students advocate for a Turkish Islam. However, it is pertinent to ask, "Is there a distinct Turkish Islam? What has been the impact of globalization and modernity on the Turkish youth?" With respect to this issue, the students in the female focus group argued that regional Islam and the effect of region on culture. Selva asserts that:

Turkey is a secular state, which means to accept the separation between Islam and secular. I cannot think a separation of Islam and state. In fact, Islam is at every stage of our life, and we must believe and live in Islam in every field of our life such as eating, sleeping, law, and government.

Although Turkey is secular and modern, Islam still affects every level of life. It is not just Islam, a religion. Yavuz (2004) states that 'religion is an integral part of human societies and is an expression of humankind's almost visceral urge to search for meaning; moreover, religion can provide individuals with a sense of identity' (p. 214). Processes of globalization are shaping every aspect of Muslim life. Consequently, there might be a variety of understandings held by Muslims. Elif makes a point for regional Islam, and her peers agreed with her statement when she spoke as follows:

The most obvious example, Islam seems to be under one roof, but perhaps many, such as Iranian Islam, Turkish Islam, European Islam.. Even in Turkey, you expand this division in regions, regional Islam. It is completely related the culture. For instance, in Turkish Islam, what I experienced in my family; if you are a girl, you should first cover your body with hijab. It is very important for parent, even than daily prayers. However, they just do it, how about other requirements? Moreover, infidelity is a big sin both men and women, but in Turkish culture, it seems a sin for women. These differences definitely are not from Islam, it is our culture.

During their discussion, my participants proposed that 'we should accept the fact that there is a specific way of being Muslim, which reflects the Turkish understanding and practices'. They refer to this as the Turkish Islam, different from the Persian and Arab Islam due to 'its production of cultural norms and modes of thinking' with respect to religion, faith, personal life, ritual practices, and religious holidays. Thus, Turkish Islam covers a spectrum: from 'social mores to personal mores' and the interpretations of Islamic principles (Ocak, 1996,

p.79). It is a particular way of constructing and creating one's own way of being Muslim. Essentially, Turkish, Persian or Arab Islam implies religio-social modes of reasoning that are conditioned by time and space in any given society. Furthermore, Turkish scholars agree on the particularized and localized version of Islam in Turkey. Therefore, we can add that each worldview can be placed within a wider context, understood not only, or primarily for its idiosyncratic exclusivity, or its unique social or geographical boundaries.

Some of the participants see the Turkish culture as inherited by their ancestors, they refer to this as 'cultural Islam'. As Sebilay says here:

It is cultural Islam, what you see and hear from your parents you follow them.

Gonca is in agreement with Sebilay, adding

In other words, when I observe many people, especially youth, they follow their parents culture, for example, if their mum has hijab, they must do the same, it might not be their choice. Other things also be same, it's a transaction generation to generation.

It is evident that children experience a different learning process at home where they are influenced by parents. The backgrounds of parents will influence the quality of learning about the religion children receive. Children raised in households where daily prayers are performed are likely to connect religiosity to ritual observance; vice versa, parents follow secular and modern elements of life, they imitate secular attitudes from their parents. They provide pictures of what is morally good or bad in their lives and play a significant part in determining their actions, practices, and moral choices.

I hold the view that it might cause the complexity for young people regarding our questions 'What is Islam? Or which Islam I must believe: cultural, Turkish, parents..' Omer reflects this complexity in his words:

I do not adopt to Islamic culture, but I live in Turkish culture; but I only do what I think I need to do, not for Islam.

Omer differentiates the words of Islam, culture, and Turkey. Furthermore, it is quite possible that local worldviews and practices continue to prevail as popular worldviews, satisfying

young people's certain pragmatic and social needs, along with the core tenets of formal religions serving more spiritual and transcendental aspirations (El-Aswad, 2012, p.149).

On the other hand, some students already have a negative perception of Islam and its culture. For instance, Onur comments that:

Islamic culture evokes me a restriction. I mean, Islam is a culture of society, which restricts people, confronts what they do or not to do, and looks straight and narrow to our life. Cause we have our perceptions. it is closeness and monotheistic, and there are veiling, modest dress code and believe in One Almighty Allah. Moreover, there are prayers, pilgrimage, many rules.. they all shackle people. In addition, we know what Prophet said who dresses indecent or who drinks alcohol. That is why I acknowledge Islam as a restricting religion.

Similar thoughts come from a female participant about women's condition in society; Gonca posits:

Islamic culture seems to me a bit too prejudiced. I mean, women generally seems on back ground; I refuse it.

Both comments indicate that the globalization process today is also marked by the accelerated pace at which information and cultural exchanges take place, and by the scale and complexity of these exchanges (Akbar, 1994, p.4). Secularism and modernism consist by homogenization of culture. However, Islam is confronted not only with multiple cultures or worldviews of different Muslim communities, but also with Western attempts to impose its essentially secular worldview through the process of globalization. Increases and changes in trans-communication, global flows of culture, capital, and material forces have recently and concurrently opened new venues for Muslims to rethink certain modes of both their worldviews and social lives. (El-Aswad, 2012, p. 6)

Hilal during the group discussion outlined how the media affect our lives today. She observes that youth elaborates secular commitments. In addition, Turkish social media lead young people through secular way of life via its elements. She follows,

I am afraid, even our movies do not present Islamic culture well. There are many anti-Islamic commitments in it. If you look other countries, particularly Western, you

can find 'the Cross' as a symbol of religion almost every movies. Maybe, they are not religious, but they represent themselves using their religious symbols and images. However, Turkish movies are just disappointed our culture. They pretend the Turkish people are all secular, for instance, the veil not properly perform in the scenario, even they decide to perform the veil, they represent it in low social status such as a maid or servant cover herself, or peasant people. Or an Imam represent as a charlatan or self-seeker. Is this right for Islamic culture?

After all, students give examples for what kinds of attitudes and behaviours may be a part of culture of Islam or Turkish culture such as; respecting people who are fasting during Ramadan even you not fasting (Muserref); using a Miswak, or toothbrush (Akif); drinking water by standing (Ali); respecting the azan via closing music (Berk); being kind to your parents (Faruk); helping needy people (Elif)... These attitudes are an accepted part of culture by these students. Moreover, there are other actions, however the point here is to analyse the perceptions of the students. 'The ethical life world of religion, like any secular life world, is a complex habitus in which the rituals of intimacy are both inclusive and exclusive. Wearing a headscarf in a specific style, reciting the Qur'an in a favoured tonal-gestural manner and discouraging intermarriage all appear to be exclusionary. Yet in the dietary prohibition of pork and alcohol, the performance of the hajj and the rendering of zakat, the priority of the global Muslim prevails over the particularism of the local. Alternatively, consider the institution of foundations for socio-religious welfare, which defies a neat public/private or local/global division (McDonald, 2005, p.212). As a result, culture then becomes the human capacity for meaning-making, in terms of ideas, beliefs, artefacts, customs, actions, social patterns, and so on, thereby culture more or less is synonymous 'with way of life' (Droogers, 2014, p. 20). We should analyse the participant's perception throughout this context.

Conclusion

In this section, we explored how Islam is understood by Imam Hatip Schools' senior students and how they contrasted their worldview regarding their meaning making progress. In order to analyse their perceptions, we used a framework that consisted of data obtained from our semi-structured interview questions, covering the definition of Islam, tradition and story of Islam, symbols of Islam, praxis of Islam and culture of Islam. It is possible to list the basic arguments what particular Turkish young people determine regarding these five different aspects:

- The majority of the participants accept that Hz. Muhammad is the last prophet; Islam is the last religion; The Qur'an is the last Holy book revealed from Allah. They are all agreeing with fundamental principles of Islam, however, some principles may open for evolution, transformation and adaptation to various social and cultural changes. In this case, it will not be possible to speak of new form of religion that will meet the need in parallel with the change of humanity. However, it is known that society, culture and understandings are constantly changing and that change is a constant reality. Young people's worldview depends on these changes rather than the source of Islam. The result is that Islam is a dynamic religion that has to be reconstructed at all times and places. The forms of understanding of religion cannot be identified with Islam in any way.

- In a sense of Islam, participant's worldviews are constructed mostly by traditional worldviews such as scholastic and Salafi understanding. There is some progressive worldviews understanding like moderate and reformist way; however, a few of them show secular commitments regarding to Islam and its culture identifying secular-individualistic fashion tendency. There is no any extreme understanding of Islam in a radical or secular sense. Mostly they take a position against radicalization of Islam, particularly through terrorism and ISIS.

- Most of the participants claims that Islamic culture is diverse, but that there is specific way of being Turkish Muslim reflecting the Turkish understanding and practices. Whether Islam a way of life, each Muslim has their own understanding, however, Islam has moral and ethical principles, which mandate Muslims to be a good person whether individually or collectively. My participants explore how to live a good life in a modern democratic and secular Turkish nation, especially where there are numerous lifestyles are on display.

- The majority of participants have a symbolic understanding of Islam via symbols which lead them different interpretations of Islam. There should be material and immaterial symbols, spiritual and tangible ones. In addition, there may not be any symbol of Islam, however symbolization of Islam seems important and interesting for them. This is in contrast to the West, where young people mostly have few comprehensive symbols that reflect their worldviews.

Chapter 6 Perception of the West and Western Culture

Introduction

This chapter seeks to describe and explore the conceptions of ‘the West’ and ‘Western culture’. I used similar components, which I framed to comprehend Islam and Islamic culture; the framework used in this chapter is based largely on matters which I structured in the semi-structured interview to find out how Turkish young people identify the concept of West and its elements. These aspects are: a) Understanding of West; b) Story of West; c) Symbols of West; d) Praxis of West; and e) Culture of West. The content of these structures is often given particular shape by the culture in which the worldviews are embedded. A great insight can be gained by examining how beliefs and behaviours are given certain shape by the contexts in which they emerge. In this sense, I believe that understanding everyday life is an important step in understanding the whole life; and this leads us to understand young people’s perception through the West and its culture. Since it is not possible to observe people’s private lives and mentality worlds, we can understand their mentality and worldviews by observing and interpreting daily life practices. In order to understand the place and importance of religion or secularism in social life in traditional Turkish society, we need to look at daily life and young people’s commitments.

Understanding of the ‘West’ and its concepts

‘The West’ is a phrase in constant use and contemporary social theory centralises this phrase for deconstructing it via different categories such as the concept, the authority (Young, 1990). It has become traditional to emphasize, within historical and political debate, the West represents a variety of meanings dependent on the countries and individuals concerned. Vigorous debates about the meaning of the West are on-going in Turkey and Turkish Islam, because the West plays an important role in the formation of identities. Specifically, young people’s identities and worldviews are affected by Western concepts like individualism and materialism along with its secular and instrumental culture via globalisation.

Being familiar with the West, does not mean that we know much about it. Here, my aim is to explore what my participants know about this phrase and how they understand it within their own worldviews. According to the answers of the participants, we can evaluate their commitments using three themes.

Secular, Modern/Liberal, Free

Omer defines the West using the term secularity in his words by saying:

I think, West is a society which is secular and connected to the world's enthusiasm; also which is no bound with religion..

In his definition, Omer sees the West as secular, however, the term 'worldliness and unreligious' come into prominence. These are more common terms to use for describing the West and its culture by my participants. Particularly, the West is understood by my participants as unreligious or irreligious; the reality behind this comment is related that 'Islam is the only true religion' for Muslims. Therefore, mostly when they associate something with the West or its elements like secularism, they mean that it is worldliness and anti-Islam (unreligious). According to Yusuf, who in comparison to his peers is well read and when using certain terms fully understands their meaning:

West is a sort of secular understanding, which targets the world's pleasures and enjoyments.

Secularism is the religion of capitalism.

Yusuf utilises terms like world, enjoyment, pleasure and capitalism when referring to the West and secularism. Secularism appears to be a multi-dimensional phenomenon for my participants. The consensus among the students appeared to be that secularization is in contradiction to religion. In participant's worldviews, these terms have different meanings and practices, and I see that they refer what they understand or practice in their life world.

On the other hand, Dilara defines the West adding another element of Western culture, she follows:

A modern, contemporary society that always keeps up with the age, comes to my mind when you say 'West'.

What Dilara understands by the term modern is reforms and innovations. She points out the tension between past and present and between old and new. Some of her friends support her definition, according to them the West achieves to modernise itself, in this case, some of

them suggest that Turkish young people's goal should be to pioneer the changes based on the Western model in everyday life practices and human behaviours.

Burak adds one more term to define the West:

West represents Liberalism and modernism; also freedom, too.

The term 'liberalism' is used by this student as equivalent to freedom. Hence, the Turkish community or in a sense Islam restricts and criticises young people's choices and autonomy; whereas the West appears more liberal by giving more choice and autonomy to young people. Likewise, Onur shares a similar understanding of the West:

A free society.. Which its culture not criticized the people and looking them weird.

Apparently, these students are looking for freedom in everything and everyday life when they refers to liberalism. Theoretically, liberalism can be understood as providing the foundation for a maximally tolerant society. Any kind of intolerant effects, such as policies or religion, makes it difficult to sustain some cultural and religious practices. It is seen that these concepts, secularism, modernism and liberalism, are elements of Western culture regarding the participants' worldviews.

Civilization, Technology and Power

Akif describes the West with a notion:

You know, there is a notion called 'civilization'.. Here, West is civilization.

Civilization is for Akif, a symbol of the West issuing entirely from Western culture. Using the term civilization as a synonym for the West demonstrates the hegemony of westernization. Moreover, it incorporates technology and power. Some participants share their interpretations about the necessity of westernization via civilization, because they believe that power of the West comes from its civilization and there are two ways: '*To master the civilization of the West, or to be mastered by the powers of the West*'.

In this respect, Turkey is undeveloped in comparison to the West, and should adopt Western technology and science employing Western skills and methods. Sevgi highlights this point from another angle when saying:

It is a mind-set, a thought, a way of life that should be taken as an example in order to take Western civilization and innovations without forgetting our own culture.

Sevgi accepts the West as a model within the technical sphere of civilization; however, Islamic culture should not be overlooked in this integration process. A few participants support her viewpoint, which suggests that every civilization is a system of values. There is a belief, thought and movement system on the basis of all civilizations, because human beings are a believing, thinking and influencing entity (Ülken, 1953, p. 13). Here, it draws attention to the relations between material culture and spiritual culture; Western civilization predominantly represents material elements, whereas Islamic culture predominantly represents spirituality. These two cultures affect and impact each other. Therefore, the idea ‘*Turkish youth should protect their Islamic culture when westernisation process going on*’ is more acceptable by my participants.

Serife thinks differently from her friends about the West and civilization. In her opinion:

I think, there is no Civilization on West. Because civilization has roots, and is based on foundations. But, the West does not have root, even it had, it was completely refused at Renaissance term. Today’s West is totally a mindset, which wants to lead the whole world with its technology, power and exploitation.

Serife asserts that civilization does not come from the West. However, some other participants do not agree with her comments referring to Greek civilization in history. Essentially, civilizations exchange from each other and the power of civilizations possess is as a result of this integration. No civilization is pure; it is all a synthesis. Some participants mention that today's European Civilization is the composition of Greek and Latin civilization. Moreover, Serife states that technology and power control the people’s mind-set. Nevertheless, Yusuf supports Serife by supplying a quotation from a Turkish scholar:

West or East! This separation comes from Western culture. It is an important issue. Anyway...

Calling ‘Western civilization’ is strange to me. Civilization is not born in West. Cemil Meric, Turkish scholar, had a book called ‘Lights comes from the East’. Today, it seems ‘Light is coming from the West’. We did that, to Islam and to our culture.

Yusuf means that civilization's root is in the East; East here refers to Islam and Turkish culture emerging from Asia through to the Middle East. Yusuf claims that today's civilization should be international not national, however in the past it was built by Eastern worldviews. Yet, a few participants made similar interpretations with Yusuf's, their basic claim is that the today's West leading the world with its civilization, what Islam did in the past. Here, their understanding of the concepts is different when it comes to the terms 'culture' and 'civilization'. It has been used by some of them as synonymous with each other. However, a few students (*Yusuf and Halil*) try to clarify the issue with their comments. According to them, civilization is more related to technical developments that human beings invent and work; and culture is broader than civilisation regarding the values that society creates in its history. These are the values of science, art, morality and religion.

Mehmet foregrounds technology and science by saying:

I can define West: a community which has high technology and science affects their life for being happier and powerful.

These two elements directly relate to the modernization process of the West. Mehmet believes that the West uses its sophisticated technology for a good purpose which is to make people happier and life easier than it was in the past. In this sense, modern life has been fed from many different sources such as great discoveries in the science; the industrialisation of production, which transforms scientific knowledge into technology etc. currently, all these innovations part of westernization and modernization which my participant define the West using these terms. According to the majority of students, who has high technology and science becomes powerful and this power can control and lead the world; even change the future of youth. Today, Western countries seem to be the pioneers of science and technology; Enes comments:

Power comes to mind directly.. for example, USA, a state with power all around the world.

Fatih supports his friend when he says:

Meaning of West, for me, is Europe, USA, UK.. those countries which has power.

As we see, the first countries that come to mind on the subject of power are the USA, UK, and some European countries which represent the West. It is obvious those countries have power because of their technology, science, and politics, a claim that is supported by my participants. This thinking seems to me to be a result of the impact of the mass media on Turkish young people, because currently, Turkey is dealing with many big issues and struggles which West and Western countries may seem a solution for Turkey's future politics. Besides, it is common in Turkey to accept the West as powerful, especially the younger generation. When I asked the reason for this, some of the students replied that Western countries, especially the USA, the UK and Germany are strong in their economy, military and politics.

Non-Muslim and Artificial society

Ozcan defines the West with its contradictions that drives him to make his own definition through being artificial. He says:

West, is a plastic and artificial society which is also produce many ideas to improve the world and it teaches via changing the old to new, date to update; moreover, it aims to create better Earth for human beings, however, it is also destroyed them.

Ozcan believes that the West has a good side such as education, science, technology, human rights etc., however, its bad side also affect our world like capitalism, war, economic exploitation. This contradiction orients him to think Western society as artificial and plastic one, which seems it has no tension between West and East regarding cultural originality. He means the west is not stable following its realities, because it ruins the world and human life with its bad side. Selva goes along Ozcan, she follows:

The West is an artificial civilization, which is constructed and is manipulating the people; it has economic power, high technology and modern secular level, however, not all these unite us around peace.

Selva claims that the West has what human beings need, yet, it does not help to live in a peaceful world. It needs to be criticising as my participant do. According to them, western civilization condemned by itself in different forms: firstly, ideology of the West, especially secularism, materialism, consumerism racism; secondly; social roles and identities in the

West, especially young people, rejection of religion and morality. In fact, rejection of religion or being unreligious is effective in the minds of my participants. Furkan clarifies this by saying:

West is mostly nonreligious understanding, but dominantly Christian community, maybe there are Jews or other religions, too.

As mentioned above, Turkish young people mostly think ‘Islam is only religion in front of God’; such expression creates an impression on their worldviews that Western people’s religions and beliefs are non-Islamic. For instance, even being Christian or Jews is not acceptable for most of them regarding to be a religious. Elif explains what she thinks about West by claiming:

West is Non-Muslim part of the world, Islam is out of its context.

According to Elif, western youth rejects religion and morality because the western society has long since ceased to care about these values. In this respect, Islam is central of their worldviews; however, it has become conventional to define West by reference to Islam. It is obvious that there is a contradiction between Western civilization and the religion of Islam in Turkish youth’s minds. Halil reflects it clearly by saying:

For me, West represents an unfair system.. It is always against to religious authority.

Halil means that the West collapse of the society based on values and principle, which are against to religion, particularly Islam. In fact, West does not offer a new culture or system to some of my participant, who seem as conservative traditional worldviews.

Tradition/Story of West

Tradition is a set of meanings that people develop in everyday life and convey via culture. On the one hand, the system of meaning builds social life through existing symbols and stories, while on the other hand it presents these symbols and stories to the members of society as reality. In this way, cultural elements such as industrialization, globalization, modernity, religion and secularism come to the fore as an essential part of daily life. My participants’ worldviews and identities obviously are affected by tradition and culture of West. Here, they tell the story of west and what it means to them; how they interpret the tradition of west via

their own understandings. Generally, stories and tradition are two kinds; first is metanarrative stories, which form a significant aspect of traditional religious worldviews; second is secular worldviews, which formed by secular elements as capitalism and secular humanism. My participant's commitments and interpretations are explicitly metanarrative stories rather than implicitly metanarrative ones. In their understanding, they told their individual stories what West and its culture means to them, which are dynamics and premises of West.

Dynamics of West

This section looks at key themes emerging from data, which also form parts of the Western culture and tradition. Everyday life is shaped by elements such as religion, modernization, secularization and technological developments, as my data supports all these terms.

1. Modernization and secularism: These two important themes generally come to the mind first almost all my participant. Although they do not directly refer the terms, their commitments resulted with the elements of modernization and secularisation at the end of the discussion. However, they apply these terms in broader sense the next part of the analyses, which I examine their negotiation process between Islamic culture/worldviews and Western culture/worldviews. Here, they lightly mention how the tradition of west affects their worldviews and daily life.

Kevser identify the West in very simple terms:

Western tradition is more secular and modern.

She means that Turkey also is a secular and modern country, but when we think about the Western tradition, it is more secular and modern. Traditional Islamic societies differ radically from Western societies in the aspect of modernization and secularisation. Kevser emphasizes the differences between the modernization process in the West and the modernization project in Turkey in her following interpretations during focus group interviews. Some students support similar thought in their expression such as '*Islam fits with modernity and its elements*' (Ahmet). In this context, the fundamental consideration is that modernisation is a process which fully compatible with Islamic religion. It is mostly acceptable by my students; although modernization is limited to technological and scientific progress, it does not include cultural and spiritual transformation.

One of the dynamics of modernization is secularism, which is stated by Selda when I asked her ‘how does your life affected by western tradition/culture’. She criticises Turkish youth to follow secular life, and she follows:

We see life through rose spectacles; and we treat life as eternal. We focus secular pleasures, and we forget what we done in here because we follow our desires, and take example what secular world offers us.

She believe that Turkish young people’s daily life is surrounded by secular pleasures which mostly life of Western people. Here, secular pleasures refer reducing appearances of religious worship, ritual and religiosity in everyday life. It has resulted the process in which Islam gradually loses the encompassing and important role in its traditional society and on the youth. She points out that modernism with the intense secular life brought by westernization process, offers the shopping mall instead of place of worship (mosque), offers material instead of spiritual, and offers this world instead of after-world, offers science instead of religion; all which can call ‘secularism’. Throughout those offers, Islam is weakening in Turkish young people’s worldview, secularism become more dominant, because it pushes the Islam and its doctrine to the private sphere. Thus, Onur clearly states that:

The environment is important to me. It is not possible to live with secular pleasures in a place like (Inegol, a traditional city). I am looking for a more laic city, a city where no one else has messed me up to live. For example, I would like to live in cities such as Izmir, New York or London.

Although, Turkey is a modern and secular country and the process of secularism has affected its youth, Islam plays a significant role on young people’s worldview. Secularism and modernism, are still questioning, because afterlife has a dominant impact. Omer and Betul affirm:

Western tradition represent a secular value system, they make the rules for harmony of life. However, Muslims live for a certain purpose: live for Hereafter. (Omer)

We are just focused on this world, and we are just struggling for this world. No one thinks about the other world, afterlife. I am in too. (Betul)

Two things emerged from the above interpretations; first, some of participants use ‘laicism’ and ‘worldliness’ as a synonym of ‘secularism’. It is their definition of secularism in the Turkish context. Secularism and laicism are close to each other in terms of content and relation. It is even used interchangeably. In this context, secularity, in fact, points to a situation in which the influence of religion decreases in many areas of life such as social, cultural, economic, educational etc.. This situation can be monitored easily in our participants’ life, and in the process of transformation in the Western sense of everyday life in Turkey. In this respect, we can say that the effect of secularism is profound and pervasive. Second, however, as the secularization process has reduced the central importance of Islam, the withdrawal of “religion” into the private sphere has emerged more in the routines of everyday life. In this sense, thinking about the afterlife is one of the effective factors.

2. Globalization: A phenomenon that emerged from the data respecting modernization is the globalization of human society. Turkey has a globalized society from which young people can encounter a wide variety of cultural habits, norms, beliefs, values, and worldviews. One implication of globalization is that people are confronted with increasing numbers of opportunities and alternative options. Turkish youth, via mass media and social media (internet), can easily reach the alternative worldviews and value systems in a global society. The mass media introduces new religious doctrines, books, knowledge and interpretations, practices and ritual codes, ideas, and ways of thinking. According to our small survey and focus group commitments, all my participants are influenced by mass and social media in their daily life. Sometimes, it has resulted in questioning Islamic and Western ideologies in different aspects and continued with rejecting or refusing some aspect of this ideology concerning their diversity of experience and their own course of identification. In this point, traditional religiosity and understanding may decline or it might be changed with opposite worldviews.

Globalization encompasses many processes that occur in various ways, not monotonous in time and space. These processes are multifaceted, besides interdependence and interaction among themselves, as well as they have economic, socio-political and socio-cultural dimensions (Halis, 2015). Regarding this global effect on Turkey, Mehmet asserts that:

Our ancestor identifies the west as ‘joy and speed’. In the morning we leave the house in a hurry, without even having breakfast, we are going to school/work immediately.

We take some bagel and coffee, and return the home at night. We are all stuck the secular global world, I think. It is a vicious cycle.

He refers the very busy life and its vicious circle via globalization and secular effect. In this sense, we claim that changes in the economic production process and relations, fast food culture, the disappearance of local productions differences during the time and the fast-paced, more and more working hours and always trying to be more faster to catch the time, and the new and uniform type of human model of urban culture are produced by the globalization.

3. Individualism: According to our focus group discussion, the concept of individualism, particularly the phrase ‘Religion is individual’ is becoming more common in today’s generation. However, accepting individuality and our own choices plays an effective role in shaping our way of life and our worldview. Ozcan gives a voice who think like him by saying:

I am what I am. They do not understand me because they look through a single aspect. ‘it is not like that, you should do like..’ people just give advice to us. I am still on my own way; I can say ‘this is me, as an individual.’

This kind of discourses begin to observe and becoming more spread around young people’s daily life. During the focus group discussion, majority of the participants accepted the discourse such as ‘*it is my opinion, I live the way I want, it is my life, ‘I am important as an individual’*’ are more dominant in the society, especially young generations. For Selva, it is all coming from West and its culture. She indicates that:

West implements the concept of individuality; especially with ‘Personal Development’ books. It is effective for our mindset and they easily shape the mind.

Surprisingly, this individual discourses lean in to Islam via secularization; individual religiosity began to empower. In traditional Turkish society, individual belief systems and religious practices were strongly dependent on the beliefs of the community/parent and Qur’anic verses. Cultural and social differentiation resulted in people increasingly participating in different universes of meaning, each governed by its own set of values. Within each institutional sphere, norms and values have become functional, rational, and, above all, autonomous (Halman& Draulans, 2006). In this interpretation, secularization can

be seen as ‘the repercussion of these changes on the religious subsystem. It denotes a societal process in which an overarching and transcendent religious system is reduced to a subsystem of society alongside other subsystems, the overarching claims of which have a shrinking relevance’ (Dobbelaere, 1995, p. 1; see also Dobbelaere 2002, p.166). The individual has become the main point of reference in the shaping of values, attitudes, and beliefs. Increasingly, people believe in whatever they themselves want to believe in, which is not necessarily what Islam tells them to believe. In other words, traditional dogmatic beliefs have been replaced by a more modern and personalized way of believing. Enes explains his opinion regarding the individual religiosity:

We should balance our time; give some time to our secular side, and some time for religious side. But, we must free the young people, they should make their own decision, they live a modern life, they find their own way. For example, they do not overwhelm themselves, like wearing burqa, frocks.. I do not accept them. A Muslim can live an individual way.

This understanding has resulted with ‘religion becomes a matter of personal choice’ which clearly explained by Grace Davie. Davie states that religion becomes instead a matter of personal choice could understood: “I go to church (or to another religious organization) because I want to, maybe for a short period or maybe for longer, to fulfil a particular rather than a general need in my life and where I will continue my attachment so long as it provides what I want, but I have no obligation either to attend in the first place or to continue if I don’t want to” (2006, p. 281).

We can say this development, regarding Turkish young people’s commitments, as a shift away from the traditional understanding of Islam to a reformist and individualistic one. In this respect, the traditional way of Islam has lost much of its influence on young people’s lives and it seems also decline the religiosity of them, such us attendance of mosque for daily five prayer. In West, this individualist religiosity is much common on youth’s worldview, which has resulted in a situation that Davie characterized as ‘Believing without belonging’ (Davie, 2006. p.3). Nevertheless, we should add that secularization does not increase individual religiosity but decreases religious beliefs and practices, for example, fasting in secular cities is not common, or attendance at Friday Sermons.

Premises of West

When I mention the story of West to my participant, they shared their own understandings of Western culture. Their daily life experience is one of the most suitable means to trace the story of west and its elements. In that way, their daily life patterns, designs, mind-set structures, perceptions of the west and world, the concept of life can be clearly observed and it could be their own story.

i. Understanding Freedom of West: Most of my participants believe that the West presents a freer life and rights for youth which appeals to them. According to most of them, the west sets no limitation or pressure on its younger generations. Dilara explains her thought regarding her story:

One of the things I admire is the western way of life. I mean, I don't like doing anything with the pressure, the west doesn't have that restriction.

She emphasizes the freedom of west and she is not happy with the attitude of today's Muslim parents towards their young children. She follows by saying:

I observe my friends and other girls, especially who wears hijab; they say 'my mum does not let me do this, do that..' the parents restrict their life. Their decision is not counted. However, my parents generally comforted me, did not restrict me, I would like to do same to my children.

In this sense, Turkish young women feel more pressure because most of the female participants mentioned how their parents control their lives and make decision on their behalf, especially when the concern is religiosity or Islam. Dilara, and a few more students want to be more liberal regarding their children choices, particularly wearing veils (hijab).

Furthermore, Burak sees the western culture a good choice to live. He states that:

We do not take Eastern culture as a pattern for us, Western culture is more close to us. It is more free and relaxed; however, East has a traditional understanding.

In his mind, the East represents a traditional understanding of the world and Islam, whereas the West represents a progressive worldview which supports being free and flexible in

society. Some of students believe that western life way introduce comfortable life in today's Turkey.

On the other hand, Sevilay questions the freedom by saying:

Freedom, freedom has been said, freedom: what for? Until where? What is freedom?

Everyone claims that 'there should be more freedom for us' but, no one knows what it is, according to her. Sevilay adds, 'I'm free as long as I put my own limits' when she describes what she means by freedom. There is the concept of individual freedom in her commitments. However, Ayse does not agree with her friend, she argues that:

How could a Muslim be free, regarding what? For me, I am free while I serve to God.

In her explanation, God is centre of freedom rather than religions; although the concept of individual freedom that lies at the heart of liberal understandings, religions control every aspect of human life. The main point here is to serve God to be free, particularly Muslims. We can say participants have a traditional liberal freedom of religious belief and expression. Some of them indicates with accepting liberalism which is a foundational liberal principle has been religious freedom. It reflects that liberalism has taken religious commitments seriously and has insisted on the importance of people being able to live according to their avowed religious doctrines. However, today those with religious commitments are apt to see themselves as critics of liberalism.

ii. A diversity of beliefs and practices of all kinds: One of the findings for story of west is being multi-cultural and multi-faith or multi-religions. This subject matter was debated in the focus groups both positively and negatively. Gonca notes that:

West consist from different religions, such Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism..

According to her, religious diversity is one of the key elements of the western story. Most of the students accept that 'Christianity is major religion of Western people; however there are many other beliefs too'. Muserref observes:

Churches a good example of West related to religion, in history. There are many impressive churches in Europe, it shows us religion (Christianity) is important for them, and it shapes their life and worldviews.

Nevertheless, she elaborates by emphasizing how the West have moved away from Christianity over time and has become a multi-faith culture.

Then, it changes a little, the authority of church is changing; the church begins to press people, this pressure affected people to move away from religions. If we consider this to be a culture and civilization, it is the denial and decline of religion and culture of West. So, we might not say 'the west has a deep rooted culture.'

This understanding is supported by several other students. Enes comments that

It is not clear what the West believes. Our values are clear. Western people always belong to different religions. They are not monotheist like us.

It proposes them to understand the west as a multi-faith society, not a monotheistic society like Turkey, which consist majority of population by Muslims. Some of the students believe that Turkey belonged to the Muslim world historically, geographically and culturally. That is, to a world ontologically different from, and antagonistic to, the West. Although the social and political structures of modern Western societies embody the values of tolerance, pluralism, Multi-cultural/faith and individual freedoms, which are fundamental in the cultural and religious spheres, most crucially, my participants concern the west a diversity of beliefs and practices of all kinds.

On the other hand, one of the students argues that the West turns to materialism rather than spirituality, Seyma:

In other words, it is a culture that is emptied; only material things are at the forefront. Material is the only matter, like money, which is devoid of spirituality.

Spirituality is important for my participants, because Islam teaches them to be more spiritual if they want to go to Heaven. This understanding leads them to be spiritual even they do not practice Islam in their lives, because the afterlife is more important than this world, according to Islam and most of them. Regarding this, Fatih adds:

The West will not save me after I died. There is eternal life, and we pay off what we did. Therefore, it is hard for the west to give us a value. West is an instant-life style.

In his comments, we can see how a traditional worldview compromises the west and its elements.

iii. Human rights and Equality: In those themes, which mentioned in a different meaning by my participants, seem confused and mostly they do not accept some feminist thoughts regarding human rights and equality, especially the female participants. Therefore, the themes contain a negative meaning in their worldview. Burak gives those themes as an example in his comments:

For instance, they say there is equality between women and men.

Burak appears to be implying that ‘Western people believe that there in an equality between genders’, however, that is not the case in reality. It is understandable in his following comments about what he tries to explain:

For example, the West advocates monogamy, via saying that ‘every woman is special’; it is her right. However, the west transforms women into a sexual object, using them for their comfort and benefit.

This kind of contradictory commitments are common on my participant’s worldviews regarding this issue. Sena indicates that:

The West is a nation that has crushed its own women and has insulted them. Now they are trying to sell what they have learned from us. Nevertheless, of course, it has changed.

Most of the students, believe that Islam give better rights to people, particularly women, rather than Western culture. Islam claims that it present better life world for women and give their rights according to God’s verses. One of the issues that all of my students reacted strongly to is against Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender +(LGBT+) activities in Turkey. During the focus group, one of the hotly contested debates was surrounding this issue and none of the students were accepting of these activities in Turkish society; they believe that it spread from the West to Turkey as is evident by following assertion:

Does not the increase of LGBT activities show that the society is under the influence of the West? (focus group)

iv. Capitalism /consumer culture: According to some of students, capitalism has become an almost universal way of life controlled by the West to consume underdeveloped countries. Selva acknowledges:

Capitalism, is an element of West, controls the economy, lead the public, surpassing a master group of people, and control the money.

Selva believes that capitalism controls people using the economy and money, and that being a consumer of capital economy is unavoidable. Young people's lives are surrounded by the capitalist system because of the urban life, which is shaped mostly by capitalist minds to consume people. The places where urban people frequent (restaurants, cafes, hairdressing salons, parks, tea gardens, shopping malls, cinemas / theatres, etc.) organized in such a way as to meet all of their economic and social needs simultaneously; urban life culture forms the daily life habits of the city. Ahmet argues this by saying:

Shopping malls are the most important capitalist products. People see it as a religious rituals, such circumambulation it every day, you do not ignore it.

Shopping malls are very visible products of consumer culture, and most of the participants think that the West and Western system consumes them via shopping malls. As noted by Ahmet, they constitute their daily rituals. Living an urban life which is more secular and consist of several dynamics, such as the rise of the modern state, the growth of capitalism, stimulated the differentiation of society, eventually causing religion to lose its dominant and coordinating influence. In the form of a universalization of Western culture, shopping malls take into account of religious rituals.

v. Hegemonic: A few students identify the west as a hegemony because of the powerful Western countries effects on the other culture and countries. . Halil argues that in his comments:

Western culture despises the other culture, scorning is a part of it. This is a kind of hegemony. They made changes during the history to set up their own culture throughout their own desires and volition.

In his thought, Western culture has a huge effect on other cultures throughout history and the culture shaped by western cultural elements, which seems hegemony on cultures. However, Sena interpret the west in a proper understanding, and she adds:

...how you look at the West, you can see it from that perspective. If you take the good parts of the west and live without giving up your culture, the west is like a very calm and gentle cat. However, if you do not look at the West in correct perspective, that time you will westernize; then it will swallow you like a lion; and you are absolutely destroyed.

Symbols of West

Symbols are part of our daily life and they all have meanings for culture. During our interviews, my participants have different positions on cultural symbols, and so I divided their answers into three main categories, which I also did in the previous chapter for ‘symbols of Islam’. Western symbols are contingent upon both time and place and the form they take varies according to Turkish young people.

Immaterial and spiritual symbols

Some of the participants claim that religion and its symbols, such as Christianity, the cross and churches should be foremost when someone speaks about the west and its culture. One student, Yusuf, shares his thoughts:

Throughout history, people have produced various symbols. The people of the west produce the ‘cross’; they put it in their armor, bodies, and flags; it has become a symbol of West, it is valuable. We respect their faith.

Yusuf stresses that the ‘cross’ represents the west as a symbol, because west has a history with the religion Christianity. Although most Turkish Muslims do not like western symbols like the cross, he advises that they should respect others in spite of their symbols. Muhammad also supports Yusuf:

When we consider the symbol of the West as religious, Christianity comes first, and the symbol of Christianity is the cross, churches, and Bible.

In my participant's worldview, if some symbols are in Islam, there must be counter symbols for West. Basically, they compare both cultures in a religious way and the revolt against the West and globalisation become more dominant in their worldviews. Their social behaviour changes and is directed by these symbols and at the same time affects their way of life.

Similarly, Selda says:

The stars are coming for the West. Because the stars take their light from the sun. I think the stars need us (Islam). They need to learn our religion.

Selda compares the western symbol with the symbol of Islam to prove 'Islam is superior than West'. For understanding this complex approach, we need to explore the process of how their worldview constructed, by which contemporary Islam is being politicised. While acknowledging the cultural diversity in Turkey and Islam, we can claim that there is a specific view of the world shared by most of Turkish young people: "Christianity is religion of west!"

Secular and cultural Symbols

The public sphere becomes a site for modern and secular performances in Turkey. In contrast with the formation of the public sphere in the West, secular and cultural symbols are pivotal signs in the making and representation of the west. Secularism is enacted as a modern social imaginary through gendered, corporeal, and spatial performances. In that respect, some common spaces are transformed as they gain additional symbolic value and become public sites of visual modernity and gendered secular performances.

According to Omer:

Comfort and freedom become symbol of the West. Capitalism also is a symbol; we are all in capitalist circle.

He refers that comfort and freedom affect the young people's lifestyles and they issue from western culture. Omer continues with a capitalist circle which is inescapable for most of the participants. Interestingly, these symbols are accepted by participants as the effects of secularism and modernity in Turkey. Nisa observes as follows:

Shopping malls are a symbol of West and are a part of capitalism. It offers more quality and expensive products and leads us to buy more. That is a secular mind.

Here, shopping malls are accepted as a Western symbol of capitalism and consumer society. Nisa defines 'secular mind' using both symbols mentioned above. In fact, one of the key topics of discussion in sociology is the consumer society. Consumption can play an instrumental role in the construction of a secular lifestyle in this context, because of its constant shopping, destruction, and its connection with capitalism. Enes and Seyma also support his friend's commitments by adding:

Brain might be a symbol of science of West, and Shopping malls are symbol of daily routine. (Enes)

Money is definitely come into prominence. (Seyma)

Shopping malls have now become a symbol, which is part of a daily routine, leading to increased consumption. Hence, youths have been constrained by the process of production, dependent on the previous generations and are more consumption-oriented. At the same time, youths have also become consumers of popular models, messages, products and values proffered by mass media. Nevertheless, in the 21st century, while cities are creating a new cultural pattern which is produced by the interaction with globalization. McDonalds, part of a fast food culture, has become a symbol of globalization and spreading Western values all over the world and has become a network that connects the global and the local. As a result, the process of secularization, which is defined as liberation from metaphysical and religious control, represents the elimination of religion, oriented worldviews and destruction of all supernatural myths and sacred symbols (Attas, 1995, pp. 43-45; Lyon, 1996, p. 15).

On the other hand, several female participants remarked in the focus group that woman is a symbol of the west. As can be seen in the following quote, Selva says:

I think, the woman is the symbol of the west. When we get into the street, we see secluded images of women, they are shinny and attractive. It is something from Western culture; there is nothing like this in Turkish and Islamic culture.

This could be interpreted that the modern secular way of life caused a radical change for gender roles framed by Islam. Secularism denotes a modern way of life where women are emancipated from religion and have removed the veil from their dress code. Therefore, ‘woman’ is symbol of the social whole in the west and Islam. One of the student reports that by adding:

If we say Hijab symbol of Islam, then modern clothes and miniskirts, high heels and jeans are symbols of West. (Kevser)

Most of them expressed their thought with secular comments how it makes women as the modern individual and for the modern ways of being private and public. Dress code and self-presentation of women becomes a symbolic way of being modern and western. Nevertheless, Turkish parliament, art halls such as opera, concert, theatre halls, schools, work places, restaurants and coffee shops, spaces like beaches, malls and public transportations all become site for modern self-presentation, particularly for women. Several participants also reported that fashion is one of the symbols of the west, through the following quote:

Fashion comes forward as a symbol in our daily lives.

As discussed earlier, Turkish Muslims’ discourse generally equates fashion and the fashion for veiling with loss of religious faith and Islamic principles. During the focus group interviews, those who were assumed to have a traditional worldview understanding defined fashion as forcing a nation lose its roots, its ethics and its religious concerns. They consider fashion as a threat to the Islamic lifestyle, for this reason many of the students did not support fashion.

However, on the other hand, several of the students thought differently about fashion. For them, “it is a reality of our life and daily routine for everyone, even they do not aware of it’. Most of female participants agree with this statement and they point out ‘fashion for veiling’, which is inescapable for Muslim women in Turkey, even radical ones. In the 21st century, global and local markets use fashion for Muslim women; they offer various veiling styles for different classes of women who willingly choose to dress according to Islamic principles. This issue was a contentious one for my participants during the interviews.

Popular culture elements (music, artists, ...)

Some of the students identify popular cultural elements as symbols of the west. For instance, Onur shares his thoughts:

Rihanna comes as symbol of West for me. The letter 'R' is her symbol. I like the way her accent of English. That is why I have a fascination with English. I want to learn it all time; I always have a dictionary in my pocket.

As can be seen, popular culture is one of the effects their worldview, this student wears her famous singer or footballer's shirts and follows their style for his dress code. It is apparent that he is one of the secular worldview candidates practicing a secular modern way for his self-presentation. Interestingly, he is a keen fan of Rihanna, and he continues by saying:

Even my girlfriend should be just like Rihanna, she follows Rihanna's style, moreover, I would love to have all my friends and people around me like Rihanna. Her hairstyle, fashion, songs really are attracted for me.

One of the major symbols is from football, which is mentioned by Fatih:

Football also comes to mind as a symbol of West, such as England and Spain. They are become identical with it.

In non-Western context such as Turkey, secularism and modernity's manifestations are overemphasized, as are the performances of belonging to modern or post-modern life.

Praxis of the West

Praxis, such as rituals, practices of particular worldviews, social and communal activities are all aspects of worldviews. Praxis is generally associated with religious worldviews, however, there is a secular dimension to it. Praxis that emerges from secular worldviews are similar in nature to religious ones, but there are some differences in form and structures. For instance, religious praxis is rooted in belief and faith, while secular ones are based on lucid and objective rationality. By way of an example, parading on national holidays is a ritual that binds people to their country via loyalty and devotion. In addition, celebrating special days such as mothers' day and valentines' day is a secular praxis of the West. Within this theme, I

will explore what types of western praxis find a place in Turkish young people's worldview. I will also evaluate how western praxis affects their daily lives and identity construction.

Popular culture as rituals and practices

I consider as popular culture the daily practices of my participants' such as shopping, entertainments, music and TV shows/cinema, Internet and social media and fashion. I suggest that these practices could be referred to as rituals, because they form an integral part of today's young people's daily routines. In this sense, Enes comments:

I like to enjoy the life; I spend most of my time to entertain myself, walking around, and hanging out with my friends. I still want to be like that.

Most of the participants spend their time at shopping malls hanging out their friends, following the latest fashions, or searching the Internet, especially social media. One of them Hilal, states that:

I follow the western fashion, even it is a veil fashion. I spend my time on the shopping malls; shops and markets all similar with West, it is our ritual now.

The shopping malls does not correspond to a purely material, objective thing, but on the contrary, it gains a largely symbolic, indicative dimension with the rise of consumerist capitalism which most of my participant claim that capitalism is a part of Western cultural component.

Ayse supports her friend via adding her thoughts:

We emulate Western style fashion, mostly all young people like that. I do not follow my own cultural dress code; rather I prefer to wear as Western. That is why I can say, Western culture more effective in my daily life.

One of the subjects to emerge from her thoughts is fashion as a praxis, which is also admitted as a symbol of west. Although, my participants study at Anatolian Imam Hatip Schools (faith-based high schools), most of them follow 'Islamic fashion or veiling fashion'. It appears that these students accept fashion as an effect of western culture. One possible reason could be the shifting meaning of the practice of veiling with secular and modern worldviews;

that young women are at the core of alterations in Turkey. Fashion shows and new designs for veiling target the purchasing power of Turkish young women which also has the associated effect of changing their dress codes (of Islam).

On the other hand, a few students criticize 'veiled fashion', Selva declares:

I hate western fashion. However, there is something called 'veiled fashion', I hate it more. It could not be a veil fashion, it is surprise me.

According to Selva, fashion evokes sexual deviance and consumerism. She criticizes the fashion for veiling because it indicates the surrender of religion and its practices to capitalist consumption culture. It has been accepted as a reflection of an 'American dream' or 'Westernization' because Turkish Muslim women have already begun transforming their religious rituals into secular rituals. On the contrary, one student, who does not cover her body with the hijab, argues that Imam Hatip's females and some of the women who wear the hijab do not properly represent Islam. When I asked her 'why do you not cover your body with the hijab when you are studying at a faith-based school?' She answered:

First of all, when I look around, there are many factors that prevent me from hijab. If a Muslim woman is going to have hijab, she should never do makeup, but who is seen around, do it. That really disgusts me. Second, they should not wear tight. Again I see outside in many hijab women, they wear tight jeans. They are pushing me away, I do not want to be like them. It makes more sense to not wear veil when you see these examples. There is a complexity in their worldview.

In her observation, we consider that Turkish young people, particularly women, have been affected by western dress codes, however they do not give up their veiling, even it makes them inappropriate with respect to Islam.

I did a small survey during my interviews with all my participants about their daily life and routines. One finding is that almost all of them use social media daily, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Wikipedia and more. This does not surprise me at all, digital socialising is now widespread for youth around the world. The reason for this is not explicitly clear from the data, but I may have something to say with my experience and observation during the interviews: Young people spend more time in this virtual reality; they try to meet

their real life needs and live a new world. Sometimes the boundary between the virtual world and the real world becomes obscure, so that in the real world they do not follow their religious instructions, rather they make serious decision in their new digital life. Several participants remarked in the focus group that Internet (music and movies) and social media is their essential praxis, resulting in the neglect of Islam and its rituals, Dilara identifies this in her comments below:

For example, we spend a lot of time on social media; our phones always are in our hands. The effect of Internet is known; everything is there, and it is forgotten us the religion. Islam does not come into my mind, I think that is the effect of the west on my worldview.

Similar comments are expressed by Elif, she follows:

I watch many American and western series, it is affected my worldview, but I enjoy it. So, there is no more time for Islam.

As we can see, the Internet and social media offer us new ways to connect with one another, present ourselves, and other activities that are critical to identity formation, expression and their worldviews. Although we cannot predict how technological innovation will evolve over the next decade, we do know that individuals will be using these tools in ways that enable them to meet their relational, self-presentational, and identity-based goals which become praxis for all youth. They have a chance to make their voices and choices heard with the help of social media. However, the majority realize that they spend a lot of time on it, which distances them from Islam and its rituals. Moreover, the reason for this is Western culture's effect on their worldview and identity construction indicated by most of my participants like Burak:

Today, we are influenced by western culture, from the social media we use and the music we listen. It is a part of our life, now, checking our social media every seconds.

As Burak indicates, the use of social media has become a habit for today's youth and is responding to their demands for a wide range of audiences from all cultures and nations. The effect is a secular impact on their worldviews.

Secular and Modern/Postmodern Practices

The most important themes emerged from data is the secularization of Turkey. It is mentioned directly or indirectly through westernization process in each dialogue during our interviews. The question here is what my participants think about secular, modern or postmodern practices while they remain in Muslim identity and Islamic worldview; and what kind of secular/modern practices they have in daily life. Since Turkey is a laic (secular) state, Turkish people associated with their Islamic culture. Thus, there is a dichotomy in society: religious or secular. Each praxis is associated with an opposite kind of practices. Omer claims that

Secular practices lead us to get more pleasure from life such as having a better car, be with a more beautiful woman, staying at luxury house, buying large property..

In this sense, for some participants, secularization refers to the decline in religious attendance; it refers to the shaping their life in a secular way such as pleasure with this world; whereas yet some others use the term indirectly to indicate religious change or a decline in individual piety. Providing specific examples for what kind of secular modern practices they have, Onur says:

I am trying to practice Western culture in my life. I am wearing transparent thongs and t-shirts. I prefer sexy clothes to show off. There are songs that are against our religion, I listen them, which I like it. I memorize these songs and sing. I follow Western fashion; I create my own style. I do not want to follow Muslim society. In this way, I am trying to destroy the facts. Traditional cultures are ridiculous for me.

It may be that this participant considers himself as a secular and modern, because his arguments show us how he adopts a secular lifestyle and easily acts and behaves in an individualistic fashion without engaging in Islamic traditional worldviews practices. In this way, although Islam becomes repellent to him, he prefers to become a western secular. Burak gives another similar example:

I go to the western-style parties. I enjoy the time that I spend with girls and alcohol. Because I live in Western culture. I drink alcohol; I have a girlfriend. Everyone will be responsible from his or her own decisions. This is my life and I enjoy it.

This suggests that the modern era entices people to be more individualistic, and Turkish young Muslims are increasingly impacted by this phenomenon. They are inclined to adopt what the West offers them via modernization and secularization; even their religious practices have become more individualistic. On the contrary, the religious or secular dichotomy is complex when it comes to practice. According to Ahmet:

We have a doubt in our life. Qur'an orders different things that we practice today. For example: alcohol. Qur'an says it is prohibited for Muslims, even it consists one drop. Look at our attitudes, it is completely complexity. I believe that secular rituals weakened our religious side.

As can be seen in this quote, most of the students agree that Islam has lost some ground; the key dispute concerns why, how much, in what way and with what prospects. It is important to find out their conceptions for future studies. However, these comments suggest that faith may be changed and shaped by external effects, but it does not fade away. Furthermore, Halil argues the issue sharing his comments:

I would like to stay away from Western culture that breaks the concept of family. Now, we see Turkish youth, they desire to be age 18. Why is that? They think they are going to be free when they are 18. But, for me, they start to ruin their life. They want to do whatever they want, at the end of day, they lost their own culture and understanding.

His traditional understanding of Islam does not let him to follow a secular way of life, because they like to be their own religious worldview. This could be interpreted as some participants have been raised in more religious contexts and, assuming that orientations remain stable throughout their lives, we could predict that these young people would be more religious than others who have been raised and socialized in more secular contexts and with modern secular influences.

In focus group discussions, the participants had a heated debate about secularization in religious practice and rituals. I asked them to give some examples from their life experiences. In the next paragraph, they supplied examples of secular, modern practices they have encountered. Most of them claim that Turkey's experiences with worship in their daily lives and rituals show us the impact of secularization. Giving examples by some students have

various symptoms of secularization such as ‘visiting tomb’ (Fatih gave this example). It is possible to see such secular implications in the use of the word ‘sacred’ for spaces. A person who is regarded as a saint (evliya) in the cemetery of Turkey was transformed into a tomb, which places commonly known as "holy" as perceived by people. This sense of perception firstly results in a division in minds. The most typical example of this mentality is that women cover the headscarf as they enter these places. It is seen that this practice is institutionalized in many tombs. There are warnings at the tomb entrances that ‘women should wear headscarves’. This is clearly a reflection of the perception of the tomb as sacred and the outside as secular, or non-religious.

On the other hand, it is important that some discourse and way of life show the effects of secularization. We argued this example in our previous themes, which was ‘no longer have mosques in the center of the living space’; on the contrary, shopping malls occupy the most central places in the city. In Turkey, villages, neighbourhoods, broadly cities were built around the mosques; the streets and avenues of the city/villages always met in the mosque. By contrast, today, shopping malls are located at the center of life and the cities. This change ultimately gives an insight into what the society prioritizes, and of course, it should be considered an important indicator of secularization.

Communal and Social Engagements

Praxis and rituals contribute for communality whether they are religious or secular; they are powerful manifestations of society’s values. For western social praxis, we can give parties, concerts, birthday celebrations, first communion, or weddings and funeral ceremonies as examples. I asked my participant about their communal or social engagements related to Western culture. Dilara stated:

I go to parties and social meetings to be socialise with the community. I have no concern during this gathering, related to Islam or opposite gender. It does not bother me.

Several students experienced these types of activities with their peer group or community members. During those activities, community assures them a place and voice. However, there are still religious concerns if the content of the activities is in contradiction with Islam. For instance, Elif notes that

If there is a concert, we all want to go and entertain our self. Sometimes, I want to go café bar, but I have some concern because, I wear hijab.

The majority of the participants celebrate birthdays in a communal way; whether it is their own, their friends, their parents or relatives. In this western culture engagement, it can be said birthday, funeral and wedding ceremonies bind together members of family or community. They transmit social values, even if these are sourced from Western culture, and provide continuity. In Turkey, communal and social togetherness is provided by organisations, clubs or associations. However, a few students feel that they do not belong to any society or any community. Sebilay reflects her thought by saying:

It is so painful situation, but I do not have nobody to turn to myself. I went several religious cult and club to fill my emptiness, and then I realize that those clubs are becoming degenerate. Something is happened to me, and then you are alone with yourselves. Is there any midway for us?

Her comment suggests that communal or social rituals do not provide similar outcomes for each young people. Sometimes it changes of their status because young people's lifestyles in have become more secularized.

Culture of West

As Turkish youth discuss western culture via their own understandings above, all mentioned consumer goods, technology, institutions, ideas, beliefs, ideologies and tradition, which are also created by society. The next question I want to analyse in this section is what Turkish youth think about Western culture via their worldviews and how they are applicable to their lives. The answers are divided in two categories, namely, negative and positive approaches toward to western culture. In the context of culture, the fundamental consideration is that western culture is a process of emancipating young Muslims, and is fully compatible with Islam, in Turkey.

Negative approaches

My participants criticize western culture in two distinct ways:

- a) Ideologies of the West (especially secularism, modernization, materialism, consumerism, feminism..)
- b) Social roles and identities regarding to the West (especially of the young people) such as immorality, family relations.

A common reaction to western culture by the students was that ‘it is not compatible with Islam’. Several of them support this notion; Kevser asserted:

A culture which is not compatible with Islam, comes to my mind first. One of our scholar describes this culture as non-Muslim or unbeliever’s culture where people are secular and individual.

This indicates that they have traditional worldviews approach to the West and its culture. In this worldview it is not acceptable to follow western culture as a lifestyle for Muslims. The students are in opposition to Turkey’s westernization process, and their reaction is to highlight traditional Islamic values in a social and ideological context. One student remarked:

It is a way far away from Islam. Whether it’s fashion, speeches or music.. it is a lot of differences. Their life style and culture is completely different from us. It seems to me that there is a very high, staggering, gloomy, strenuous environment. (Hilal)

In her comments Hilal differentiates Islamic culture from Western culture via some examples. Essentially, she compares the fundamental basis of Islam and the West, and she is not happy with cultures that are not based on Islam. The following comments is more stronger than previous ones, Selva claims that

I do not think it is worth to take values from West. As I said, what is good is good in Islam. That is why I do not care the west.

In her interpretation, confrontation is strictly defined in the context of ‘good against bad’. In her side, the ‘good’ is Islam, while the West, westernization, western culture and lifestyle are all derived from ‘the bad’. According to this perception, Islam and the religious community of Muslim represent an exemplary society for all human beings. It is a traditional worldview of Islam which accepts it as a comprehensive system of values and lifestyle for Muslims.

The second criticism raised by the students was western culture's social role and relations when compared with Islam. The concept of morality, which has a social and local aspect related to practice was one issue discussed, Seyma asserted:

I think the West is deprived of morality; on the other hand, morality is very important in Islam.

According to some of the participants, they believed like Seyma that Muslims should experience the prominence of Islam intensively including its ethical principles. However, with the Western culture, secularization process affected and curtailed the influence of Islam on society. This is a move towards a western way of life which is not seen as having a positive effect on the youth. Seyma continues:

There is no family relation, as we understood in here. We see this in their movies; young people are in their own way, the parents are in their own way. When the child come to the age of 18 is breaking away from the family.it is a huge mistake that the West has made to youth.

She points out that the Western youth reject religion and morality, especially family relationships, because their society has long ceased to bother about these values. Such experiences create an impression on their minds that individual life does not need to be guided by any religious or ethical principles or even parents/families. On the contrary, Muslims should find ways in their daily life to be guided by Islamic principles and values. A similar concern is raised by another participant, Gonca:

West has deviated young generation.. Look at their family relations and friendships.. or Godlessness, immorality.. in other words, attracting people o abominable things or adultery...

The above comment suggests that morality cannot be independent of God, because 'good' cannot be understood without Allah's confirmation. Traditionally, Islam expresses what is right and asks the mind to approve and act in ways result in access to paradise and keep one away from hell. Nevertheless, the above comments also indicate that the West cannot be salvaged owing to its lack of spiritual power; it has fallen into moral degradation and the dissolution of family life. In contrast, Turkey can be saved through restoring Islam and

reviving Islamic spirituality in society as an antidote to the ‘poison’ of the West and its values. These arguments were broadly discussed during the one of focus group interviews. One of the participants elaborates by saying ‘*Here, I see my own languor and frustration when I look the West.*’ The westernization process is perceived as a denial of its genuine Islamic values, traditions and institutions and, therefore, it is seen a threat to Islam and its influence. The long-term effects of westernization efforts might result in the degeneration of the Turkish-Muslim ethos and is subsequently a challenge to the traditional structure of Turkish society.

Positive approaches

Several participants reported that western culture is a reality and it is now universal via technology and media. Hilal stresses that

Currently, Western culture is a reality; people inevitably grow under the influence of this culture.

This reality has been accepted by most of my participants even though they are not happy with it. Nevertheless, the history of the westernization process shows young people how Turkey became secular and more western during the history of the republic. Selda acknowledges that by adding

Art, fashion, music have been influenced by Western culture. First, revolutions came from West; such as we changed the Arabic alphabet to the Latina alphabet. Like jean, like a hat, that is what we brought in from the west. Our laws came from the west, so we are westernly disfigured. We're already living like them. I cannot see an Islamic state around me, women wearing pants and jeans, miniskirts, or people with cigarette, alcohol in their hands, all of them actually in the way of being a Western.

In this case, elements of western culture formed part of Islam and Turkish young people via change in every level of life, which mentioned by participant above quote. Although the westernization is a process of subordination to the West and alienation from the Islamic civilization, which several of them stated as a negative approach, majority of the participants aware that western culture is compatible. It seems like an inevitable process for young

generation. A common understanding of those students are given by Sena, in the following quotes:

In what environment you are, in fact, it is shaping yourself and character, and your personality changes. If I live in a western culture environment, it will affect myself and I begin to behave like them, then it seems to be normal.

In addition, Sebilay points out how Western culture benefits the young generation with respect to education and science.

In Western culture, they have wider perspective than us. They are investing in education, developing in the science. They look better than us, more harmonious, more human.

A few participants really like the western lifestyle, such as Onur, he purposes that

I love Western culture elements, because my tastes fit it. I don't think the Eastern culture can give me same pleasure. It is like living in village. The West is more comfortable and more self-expressing culture for me.

As can be seen in the above quote, Onur likens Eastern culture to living in a village, Western culture is more attractive to him than the Islamic culture. The following comments are similar to Onur's:

They live more comfortable and beautiful life in this world. I'd like to live in Western culture, because I love it. (Dilara)

These comments suggest that there is cultural adaptability for Turkish young people regarding their identity and worldviews. When individuals come into contact with western culture they are influenced by it, adopting dominant cultural elements and following it in their life world. It seems western culture influences the majority of participants. Fatih emphasize this issue by adding his thought:

I envy them; I mean they do everything to keep alive their culture.

Several participants remarked, in the focus group discussion, that popular cultural elements, which the general name of efforts to make sense of the world, are what they gain from the

west in a positive way. According to them, fashion, modern dress codes, shopping malls, cinema, TV, internet, social media, art and architecture, colours we prefer, music, systems all related with culture, particularly the West. Most of the approaches that examine the forms of popular culture produces in everyday life are concerned within the living culture. Therefore, the basic question comes to result from focus group interviews: *'So we are not westernized? How is it possible?'* In addition, Turkish youth of identities is overset through popular cultural representations produced at both the global and local levels, influenced form Western culture.

On the other hand, a few students have some religious and moral concerns, while simultaneously admiring the western culture lifestyle. For example, Onur adds:

If I had a child, I would like to grow up in Western culture. At least, they are more objective. However, I would not want to take immoral attitudes of the West. Nobody wants a corrupted society. Nevertheless, there is immorality everywhere, because if you leave a human free, that human can be stuck. I think people should have a caretaker, a shepherd like prophets.

It may be that this participant considers ethical principles. Nonetheless, it indicates that Islamic values have been persistently felt in numerous areas of life; even when surrounded by modern/postmodern and secular principles, Turkish Muslims give importance to ethical principles to separate religious values from all spheres of life. As a result, in secular/western societies where young Muslims face the challenges, the ethical values emphasized by Islam are still at play, and their impact in many areas of society is still clearly visible. This may stem from that fact that ethical values are closely tied to religious worldviews. While secular social structures and their values may dominate most young people, their influence on individual or collective thought and behaviour can never be absolute.

Some themes are not clear from the data, students are discussed some issues on the focus group:

How can men be allowed to make coloured hairstyle according to religion, but how can it be explained that they are not suitable for society?
Are the reactions given according to religion or culture when it comes to women's dress code?

Conclusion

As a result, there are some significant points Turkish young people might have regarding the questions: what does West and its culture mean to these particular young people? How do they understand and comprehend it? Indirectly, we try to find some answer also for those questions: What does it mean to live in a modern and secular nation, especially where numerous worldviews are on display? What does it mean in terms of Western lifestyles, which is viewed by many as being progressive? My main focus is on this under-researched area of their worldviews towards western culture and its elements. Although my findings are generally compatible with western culture, there are several areas in which my participants differ from the West. Summarizing the data:

- The majority of my participants are aware of western culture and its main characteristics, such as secularism, modernism, individualism, liberal and democratic, civilization and technology. They all identify that the West and its culture are compatible with Islam.
- Some participants more inclined to traditional worldviews have the idea that ‘Turkish Muslim youth should protect their religious side while westernization process going on’. The westernization process is perceived as a denial of genuine Islamic values, traditions and institutions, therefore it is viewed as a threat to Islam and its influence. However, the view is also that traditional dogmatic beliefs have been replaced by a more modern and personalized way of believing.
- The findings suggest that the dichotomy of religious and secular understandings of life has affected most of the student’s worldviews. Both sides have their own supporters; and the secular and religious aspects of society in Islamic tradition have changed and evolved over time.
- Western culture and its elements exert a major influence on Turkish young people with respect to individuality and religion. The tendency is ‘religion becomes a matter of personal choice’.
- The participants show a clear preference for western culture. It is more attractive than Islamic culture for Turkish youth. Mosques are no longer the centerpiece of living spaces in Turkey; on the contrary, shopping malls occupy the most central places of the city.

- There has been a significant recognition that Turkish society and its institutions may continually change, develop, evolve or improve in response to changing circumstances towards western culture. According to this approach, Islam should not be limited to the mosque or religious rituals, but, instead, should be accepted as a comprehensive way of life distinct from any other secular ideology and culture.
- There is not direct effect of postmodernity on participants' worldviews. There are some clue of belonging to postmodernity, yet secularism and modernity's manifestations are overemphasized.
- My study offers suggestive evidence for a debate that Western culture and modernity is universal. Most of the participants claim that today's West is leading the world with its civilization as Islam did in the past. To question the integrity and the universal validity of western culture, it is necessary to emphasize its main characteristics. I have addressed only the role of western culture upon my participant's worldviews and identity constructions.

Chapter 7 Building Bridges between Western culture and Islamic Culture

The Negotiation Process of Imam Hatip High School's Students on West and Islam

Introduction

In previous chapters, it has been examined how multiple understandings of Islam and West and their culture and elements hold a certain degree of influence over Turkish young people. This has been underscored by the emergence of multiple worldviews; a consequence of the appropriation and reinterpretation of Western culture and its elements by Islamic society. That indicates an interconnectedness and mutual relationship between the dissimilar cultural agendas of both Islam and the West.

The popularization of culture by massification is one of the most fundamental features of the era in which we live. It is apparent that almost everything has become widespread through various communication channels and has started to be included in culture and worldviews. During this process, traditional structures rapidly erode and take on new forms. It is certain that such a change will directly or indirectly affects all people and institutions of society. It is evident that the phenomenon of religion or worldviews, which has recently become rapidly visible, has attracted the attention of scientists and much research has been done on the subject.

The relationship between the West and Islam is ever more relevant. A change in the cultural field has inevitably affected all other areas of society. For this reason, almost all social institutions, from economy to family, from politics to religion have started to 'change' by taking the share of cultural change. Undoubtedly, religion is one of the most obvious areas where this change is observed. However, critical engagement with such an issue needs a deeper understanding of West and Islam and both cultures, avoiding essentialist definitions of single sets of well-defined and separated ideas. Therefore, this chapter claims the existence of multiple worldviews that, in an entangling process, contributes to their mutual creation and evolution via negotiation.

This section focuses more closely on the negotiation process and hybridisation of the participants' worldviews. In part one; I explore young people's perception toward the negotiation between both cultures in their worldviews. Here, we see what type of worldview they could be a part of, and how they stand by thorough this process, such as 'do they build a bridge between both cultures, or are they against to be in this process'. In part two; I show the interaction between multiple worldviews throughout the question 'what kind of negotiation they have in their worldviews?' In part three, I present several hybrid examples of the participant's worldview and identity discernments, which are given by them to demonstrate compatibility between Western values and Islamic claims.

Negotiation or contradictions on the participants' worldviews

A. Traditional worldviews

Those who hold traditional worldviews, he or she rejects any negotiation with the West and its culture. In our typology which drawn in conclusion part, we explained all traditional structures and divided traditional worldviews into three categories, they are: scholastic traditionalism, Salafi traditionalism, and Sufism. Some of my participants do not accept negotiation with western culture because they view westernization as a process of subordination to the West and subsequently alienation from Islamic culture. Omer expresses his thoughts in this way:

Someone who sees him/herself as a Muslim must live like a Muslim. If there's a contradiction, I think it's wrong. They must obey the rules of religion, fulfill assumptions of Islam, do not do things that should not be done. It must be more organized and ordinate.

Omer is very clear about obedience to what Islam asks of its followers. In his understanding, Islam is organized, and ordinate with its religious scholars. Therefore, Muslims must follow and fulfil the requirements of Islam. Yusuf is more lenient than his friend, he says:

We all have Muslim names, but I don't know how Muslim I am. However, I can say that I'm eager to be. I don't accept a definition of secular Muslim. I think it's wrong to put a set of extension or insertion behind and front of 'Islam'. Nevertheless, we can't say that you're not from Islam if they identify themselves as secular; everyone has their own judgment. However, I don't see myself as secular.

In Yusuf's view, negotiation should not be a reality. However, some participants make sense of secularization and modernization with Islam, which is sometimes compatible, or sometimes contradiction. Yusuf does not accept this kind of hybrid identity and worldview, however he is quite receptive against who identify themselves with a bricolage worldviews. Selda has similar understanding with both interpretations, she argues by saying

Such a hybrid identity cannot be acceptable, because I do not think that if someone devotes much time to the world, they would devote the rest of time for religious duties. Because they will watch TV for hours, they will listen to music and will forget the prayer during this time, they will forget the Qur'an, I think the two cannot be hold together: You're either religious or secular.

Here, in the last sentence, Selda clarifies her idea in a strict way by stating that 'you are either religious or secular'. Western culture appears equivalent to secularism in her mind. Although she does not agree with hybridisation, she gives some reasons from daily activities which relates to western culture to support her commitments. In this sense, secularization is clear-cut and limited to daily life and anti-religious progress. It does not include cultural and spiritual transformations or negotiations. These students strongly support scholastic traditional way of life.

A few participants are very strongly against the West and its culture, they are mostly Salafi traditionalist. Fatih stresses:

Oh, whatever Islam says, whatever the Qur'an says, I think, it is the way we must follow. So the Western culture or West will not save me on the Judgement day.. In the Hereafter... the west will not be with me there. Therefore, it is difficult to give values of west to us; it is a moment of life.

These types of reflections are also stated in the previous chapter, which is perception of west and its culture. Fatih has a very strict understanding and sees no way to compromise with the west. The Qur'an serves as his primary sacred text when responding to the west. He serves to shed more light on sacred scriptures and what emerges from it. He questions 'how West will lead him on the judgment day and can western culture shed new light on him'. One of the

participants, Halil, mentions that worship of God and love of Allah must be Muslim's aim in this world. Creating a new understanding of Islam like hybridization could destroy the faith. He follows

They say 'I can commit adultery, but let me go to prayer'. Falling into big sins, will darken one's heart; it makes their heart stone and over time it destroys the love of Allah given to their heart. It becomes no differences with the stone, I mean, there is no feeling in your heart, not faith and no mercy... The West cannot say the right (Haqq), Islam says the right.

His reflection elaborates that Islam expresses what is right and asks the mind and heart to approve and act to win paradise and keep away from hell. In terms of Qur'an, worship is one of the reasons for the existence of human being in the world: in the verses, Allah says: "I have created people and jinns to worship me" (51 / Zariyat, 56). Worship is not limited to the popular rituals such as praying, fasting, and pilgrimage; it also includes behaviours, manners, and attitudes in life. This inclusion finds its expression in the Qur'an as follows: "Say: 'No doubt my prayer, worship, life and death are only for Allah, the Lord of the worlds' "(6 / En'am, 162). Regarding this, Halil rejects any negotiation because he believes that in the end it will destroy your religious side. In the context of their axis, the fundamental consideration is Islam and westernization is not fully compatible with the Islamic religion and culture. This extract is an interesting example given by Hilal, she tells her story regarding to stay in traditional understanding:

I do not join my friends who are living under the influence of the harsh Western cultures, I get angry to them. I advise them about how they live. I do not share same environment with men and live like Westerns. I had a memory: one morning when I had a bagel from grocery, I saw one of my fifth grade classmate (a boy). He stopped me and said "Good morning, how are you? Ayy! what a change of you!"(pointing her hijab) and he extended his hand to shake. But, I stooped a while; it is completely wrong me to shake a man's hand, or even look him or speak with him. So, I did not shake and I said "I do not shake any men's hand, sorry, have a good day". When I entered to home, I thought what I did? Nothing wrong for me, it must be like did, even in my family, we do not speak or see our male cousins when we come together, and we all have limits to each other. In fact, you would not find any men's number in my mobile phone, except my father.

It is a common story of traditionalist worldviews and daily practices. Conservative Islam is probably the dominant trend with this young Muslim, as well as some other participants. The basic norms are taken into account, especially mixed gender relationships, drinking alcohol, eating halal... similar example is stated by Selva, she argues

I wouldn't go to a place surrounded by western culture. Because my current identity does not allow me to go places where alcoholic beverages, dancing with western music, and mixed gender party present. These elements are western. Why should I be in an environment where contradict with me? Those who live in this way live their own truths, I wouldn't mind. I invite them to goodness, I work for their goodness. As a result, there should not be a Muslim woman in this kind of environment, so I can try to get my friends away from there.

In this context, although these young people have very strict understanding and reject negotiation with Western culture, they can accept and respect this kind of hybrid identities and worldviews via establishing good relations with people, respecting their right, not deceiving someone etc. Even when surrounded by western secular principles, those traditionalist young Muslims give importance to ethical principles to separate religious values from all spheres of life. As we observed from my participants, even in secular culture dominates, the ethical values emphasized by Islam are still at play, and their impact in many areas of society is still clearly visible. In fact, Islam wants to keep the human in the balance between the world and the hereafter; it reminds us that the main purpose of traditionalist Muslim's actions in the world is the other world (ahirat). This basic mentality of Islam is to exclude dualities that are likely to occur in the life of a Muslim such: World-Hereafter, material-immaterial, religious-secular.

B. Secular Worldviews

In this study, three kind of secular understanding of Islam occurred through our data. These are social (Instrumental) Muslims, cultural (nominal) Muslims and passively religious Muslims' worldviews. Those who has secular worldviews, they identify themselves as a Muslim, however, they do not practice Islam and its requirements; mostly they are practically secular and pleased to follow secular practices in their daily life world. In this sense, secularization does not mean the removal of religion from the head and heart. Nor is it the abandonment of religious devotion and religious belonging. Here, secularization means that

the requirements of religion are not implemented and internalized, making it normally acceptable. As I observed from my participants, according to their commitments 'secular understanding of Islam has a problem with the practical side rather than the theoretical side of religion'.

A few of the participants might be in a secular worldviews approaches directly, but a part of religious side is still there. Onur is one of them, and he states that

I'm a Muslim, but I belong to the western secular culture. Which stage I am, I don't know but I am far away from Islam.

In his thought, there is a position against to practical Islam, and he identifies himself a part of western culture. In his other comments, he follows

Frankly, I see myself as secular. Because I don't live very much with religion, I always see myself belonging to a secular world. I give my religiousness a low grade (mark).

As we see, he compares his secular identity throughout practice of Islam, which also we call religiosity. He does not attend any praxis of Islam. This form of worldview, which does not concern the fulfilment of the requirements of Islam, is secular piety. This is the form of religiosity appropriate to modernization and secularization. Burak has also similar approaches to Islam, he regretfully tells about his religiosity by saying

Currently I wasn't praying, I was before. Because my truth has changed. I know what I did was wrong, I can't deny it, but I can't do. I think, I will go to hell and Allah is punished me, but I do not deny Allah, therefore He will pity me and put it in heaven I think.

In his commitments, we can easily see that he still identifies himself as a believer even he is completely live in a secular way of life. He is in a private relationship with Islam and Allah, moreover he advocates the restriction of religion to private affairs and is exclusion from daily life. He appears to be religious in theory, but believes that religion should be private, such as prayer, personal morality. Muslims living in a modern, democratic and secular society are confronted by numerous sources that give shape to their worldviews and address some of the life's perplexing questions. It may be that these participants consider finding answers in their

worldviews for the question ‘What I want is a theoretical religiosity or am I seeking a practical religiosity?’ Therefore, they have to cope with in the face of secularization and modernization through ideas and not practices. This paradoxical conclusion that secular young Muslim fall into forces us to think about the nature of genuine piety.

One of the students, Omer, mentions the role of family and environment for how they shape his worldviews. He maintains that

I want my own thought and life to be close to postmodernism (the English term is exactly used), but my environment and family do not allow me to do; I have to live as a modernist.

Surprisingly, he used the term ‘postmodernism’ and he tries to differentiate it from ‘modernisation’. The reason for this is not clear, but he implies that family and environment affect young people’s life world. The force of secularization has acted on everyone, but not everyone feels the effects in the same way. In this respect, how children are brought up has an enormous impact on their subsequent propensity to identify with Islam.

As a result, among Turkish Muslims today, we find a variety of secular tendencies. Some of them come from a traditional heritage, but are essentially secular such as agnostic, whereas others interpret secularism through religiosity.

C. Progressive Worldviews

Most of the participants’ worldviews are in this category, which is one of the significant finding of the study. Turkish Muslims have acquired a hybrid understanding of Islam and West in the last two decades. Yet it is the public sphere that must be understood as the site where Islam and modernity enter into dialogue and conflict, altering both religious and secular worldviews. In the study, we have two kinds of progressive worldviews: Moderate Salafi Reformist Muslims and Liberal-Laic Reformist Muslims. Progressive Muslims develop multiple critiques towards Islam and West; they concern moderation between both culture and its elements. It is widespread on my participants and they are influenced by progressive worldviews of practicing to adopt their needs and actions.

According to Imam-Hatip Schools’ students’ interpretations, they mostly represent a moderate Salafi reformist understanding, which protect their Muslim identity and religious

practices, but also to recognize the Western culture and its constitutional structure. Hilal gives common understanding of this worldviews in her comments:

I am neither secular nor traditional; I have drawn my path from both sides. In this case, I can define myself as both secular and Muslim. In a hadith our Prophet (saw) said that: "Work for this world as much as you are going to live in it; work for afterlife as much as you are going to live there". We came this world for an examination...

She mentions a hadith, which is also one of the main sources of Islam, to describe her identity discernments with a bricolage and hybrid one. According to her interpretations, the (postmodern) convergence brought contrasts together, enabling the inclusion of traditional religious people, objectified by the modern/secular, into the sphere of the secular world. Hilal follow her comments by adding

If a person has her own will, she can live all sorts of things. By synthesizing from the west and from the east can live in a balance. Isn't that right? I wish I could live like that.

Here, she emphasizes to live in a balanced way in this world by combining opposite poles is the right way for most of the students. Kevser supports similar idea and proposes that

I think both culture should be in our life.. We should learn from the West, but after fulfilling our Islamic principles... I might be uncomfortable if I admire being secular. We should take what western culture offers us in practically, and live it in positive way; but not take their negative side such as alcohol, party life, destroying the family... (she follows)

We listen to their music, we dress like them, we live like them. It's like we don't have anything different from them. This is reality. When we go to Istanbul, we cannot understand whether the people in that crowd are Muslim or Western. So we're so interbedded...

The participants show a clear preference for their worldviews, which is hybridisation of different kind of understandings. Here their commitments show that Islam and secularism are in close encounters, conflicts and intertwined in the new directions: Turkish young Muslims

see the West as a reality and they seek ways of combining religiousness and secularity, Islam and modernity, and transform the meaning of both. The main point here is harmony and balance of opposite worldviews in individual mind. Selda explain this issue stating that:

We have to serve many people such as a smiling, helping them, feeding an orphan. These are our religious and faithful services. The rest of time we have is our own time that we spend for listening music, browsing and wandering on the internet, hanging out with friends, enjoying our times, of course, these are some secular moments we like, but we need it. Therefore, we should balance our time between religious services and secular pleasures.

It is observed that these two poles, religious and secular, which are seen as opposed to each other, are intertwined in the postmodern periods and have started to gain an important place in the daily life of individuals with Islamic identities. These participants introduce a hybrid identity into the context, and they also redefine progressive worldviews as freedom for individuals to live their lives in accordance with their religious or irreligious beliefs. It is a new synthesis mediating tradition and modernity, religion and secularity.

If we observe young people's daily life and practices, they are already in the westernization process. Muserref points out this issue by emphasizing the globalization of the world, she states that:

Western culture has an impact on my daily life. Because the books we read, whether the houses we live in, the globalization of the world.. the fact that we live in a global world, I can follow all the events that are happening in France in Europe in the future, in social media. In a way, you get used to be living in this culture, which inevitably change your worldview and thoughts. Then you start to think like their mindset, even reading a book affects you.

As we can see, western culture is very effective in young people's life world and daily practices. In this sense, Islamic culture has acquired many diverse dimensions in participant's worldviews. Their life seems surrounded by western culture and its structures, particularly secularisation and modernization. The break from religious values and acceleration of technological innovations have been increasingly pushing youth to live in the western sense, to adopt rational thinking and to engage with gains only, which has left "blessings" out of

life. Moreover, there are some postmodern signs in their worldviews that compromise and enables different or even opposed styles of life, as shaped by different goals and values scales, to live in the same place together in peace. Sena is one of example of this hybrid worldviews, she says

My Muslim identity is visible and apprehensible, because the person who looks me from the outside understands my Muslim identity more or less. My thoughts are traditional, but my daily life is inevitably modern. However, I don't have a secular understanding that gives up our values. What kind of environment you are in, it actually shapes your personality in that way which also changes your personality (worldview). If I surrounded by the western environment, sure, it is inevitable to affect your life style.

Sena's commitments show that traditional worldviews has led to a new conception of holiness and new forms of worldviews due to the social changes that have merged as a result of the modernization and secularization process. Although religious and secular terms are used together, it is possible to see the traces of change in their meaning making process, especially in dimensions that represent the lifestyles of the religious/secular. The attitudes of young Muslim people towards western culture with a focus on lifestyle lead to changes in social structure and values.

Betul shares her thoughts by giving example of modern Muslim families around her, she indicates

...In other words, modernity is not an obstacle to Islam, so there are many modern Muslim families around me. But, they are modern secular in their daily life, they also perform their worship, but they also benefit the opportunities of modern life.

Continuing part of her commitments in focus group interviews, she also gives examples such as universities, beaches, concert halls, shopping centres, which are accepted as secular sections, that Muslims benefit all of them in. It seems she mentions some postmodern commitments, here. This situation can be in the form of the spread of bricolage worldviews even that appear completely opposite worldviews to each other. Therefore, when we look at everyday life, the world and the meaning frames represented by the "headscarf" (Islam) and "open belly" (Secular) can come together in a same worldview and, more importantly, there

is no inconsistency between both worldviews. What decodes the postmodern characteristic in such events is the normalization of the inconsistency between them. Because postmodernity has no regularity and consistency in the context, it also proposes instability (Tekin, 2011, 23).

On the other hand, Dilara has a liberal laic approach of Islam, and she completely supports living a western lifestyle. She stresses her thoughts with her angers to who not accept a liberal laic way of Islam:

I'd go to places where there was a western-style life, parties, and I'd have fun. I have no limit in male relationships, I behave normally, shake hands, hang out together. I mean, I have boyfriend and other male friends. It does not bother me, as a result. Some girls say that 'Don't hang out with males, Even they do not walk on the same street, or line; they disqualify them because of their gender, even they don't accept looking to a male' it is not acceptable to have a boyfriend. If you have, it is just for sexual relationship they perceived. Is has been taught by our teachers. It is ridiculous, Okay, this is a Faith based schools, but it is not an obstacle to have this worldviews both in your life.

Her understanding is a form of worldview in which not compliance with religious rules and religious rituals is taken into consideration second. She is a modern liberal who regulates her lifestyle with western culture elements, rather than divine values or faith. In her conversations, we can trace a transformation in the perception of secular worldviews. She possibly has a personal piety types. The main factor underlying such a situation is that young people who cannot obey the commandments and orders of religion sufficiently prefer postmodern discourses with its notions of 'anything goes'. Similarly, it is observed that there is a "secular religious" demographic who accept religion only as a sacred and inner bond between God and his servant and strives not to reflect their religious beliefs in their daily lives.

Consequently, I can describe the worldviews of the participants as mixed one, which is mainly consisted with traditional/scholastic worldviews and moderate/liberal and partly with secular/cultural worldviews.

What kind of negotiation is acceptable by Imam-Hatip Students?

In this part, I explore the participants' meaning making process during the negotiation between worldviews using the main question: 'what kind of negotiation do you accept or suggest?' The aim here is to characterize Turkish young people's identity and worldviews in this century, particularly how they negotiate. I use several follow up questions to get more interpretation of my participants, such as: '*if you are invited one of your friend's birthday party to a pub/bar which include alcoholic beverages, Pop/Party music, funny atmosphere and mix sex/gender. What do you do? (Do you look for a negotiating to go?)' or 'can a Muslim be both secular and religious? (According to their answer) How is it possible? Or why not?'*' with these questions I intended to discover their perception of the negotiation process.

Yusuf states his perception regarding how today's youth understands this negotiation:

Well, young people say a wrong discourse nowadays: 'We'll take the good side of the West, we will abandoned bad side of it' ...that's already completely wrong, something impossible. Anyway, something cannot be considered independent from its components... If they had taken the good directions of the West, they would have had to get mass production, they had to get the quality, but they couldn't do it either...

There is a common perception amongst Turkish young people which is 'We can take the good side of West, not bad side of it'. However, Yusuf clearly explains that it is not possible to take one side of any culture, he says that there are many different components in western culture that might affect you in a variety of ways. Therefore, are you want to negotiate with Western culture, you should be aware of its multifarious elements and their effects upon your worldviews. I observe the common perception on Sena's interpretation when I asked her 'Can a person be both secular and religious?' she simply gave the answer which Yusuf criticize above, she comments

Could be. If such an identity does not destroy Islam and its values, and it suits itself, it could be such an identity. But if it gives up our values, and it's crossing borders, and it's not set bounds to immorality, I look bad at such an identity.

She wants to maintain her Islamic identity, but she is also open to western idea and values as long as they do not come into conflict with her Islamic side. The position of Islam in their commitment is also observed by the on-going contradictions between Islamic belief-based practices and attitudes and Western practices and attitudes. Although it is stated in previous statements, religion is a phenomenon belonging to the private sphere, there is a rupture between western values and religious values and therefore 'bad and good' is used as a way to describe this negotiation. It has become one of the means of coping with religion and for this reason; it emerges as a modern phenomenon. Nevertheless, some participants seek harmony and balance without rejecting either cultures. In this respect, Onur uses the dress codes of Muslims as an example:

I am against to cover our body as a whole neither to open belly as a naked. There should be a balance; therefore, I find dressing like burqa or very light (indecent) absurd.

It is obvious that he is looking for a gap between the two culture's dress codes. According to him, there must be a dress code, rather than full body covered or opened. In fact, in many participant's discourse contemporary clothing, fashion, alcohol consumption are discussed that relates to liberal laic worldviews. This shows that the secularization and modernization process has spread to daily life.

Some students claim that west has useful elements to improve personal development, such as Internet and social media. With the widespread use of mass media in the last decade of the 21st century, significant changes in social life and daily practices began to take place. In this period, it is possible to transmit information at an unprecedented rate. Consequently, culture, which is one of the most basic elements of the social structure, has become easily transferable to other regions by crossing the borders of the geography where it is located. This creates a process an engagement between Islamic culture and western culture. Muserref and Ahmet argue that by saying

Even if we are affected from the west, we need to consider how much and why we are affected. For example, I use social media, but I use it for useful sharing, sharing information from literary texts or sciences. (Muserref)

If we know the limits of the west, we can take their technology and thoughts... I know that the Internet is useful; there is a benefit and also a loss. I personally saw where the damage could come from by experiencing and observing. (Ahmet)

The limitation of negotiation is that using one cultures element in a good way, without ignoring other cultures' values. Thus, a new form of culture 'bricolage' emerged in this context, and this reflects the general atmosphere of the century.

On the other hand, Fatih claims that negotiation must be for competition with Western culture. He follows,

In other words, you will learn from the West, you will also get the Western culture, if you don't get the Western culture at this time, you cannot compete the West... in scientific degree... you need to get the knowledge of your own Islamic thought, and then, after completing it, you need to learn the western culture.

Since western culture understanding increases the interest of science and knowledge, Muslims have a positive approach to the visibility of secularity in the public sphere and in the media. In this sense, Fatih suggests that young people must learn West and its productions to compete with itself in an Islamic way; however, learning Islam must come first.

A few participants acknowledge the individuality regarding the concept 'religion is a phenomenon belonging to the private sphere'. Selva says:

I do not want to impose a thought. I would like the young people to pass the truth and through their own filters and put forward their own thoughts. I do not want to be raised by the direction of someone, whether western or Islamic identity, I interpret my own understanding of my own synthesis. This is more unique posture.

In this sense, negotiation completely depends on individual mind. According to her interpretation clear boundaries have disappeared between both cultures, opposing concepts and thought structures can co-exist, meaning that they have experienced a transition from a 'grey world from a black and white world' as an individual. Sebilay presents another aspect of the individual negotiation process pointing out that 'people follow what they want to do'. She continues adding:

On the other hand, there are people who say that I drink alcohol but also I am praying; at least I go to Friday sermons. People ask what they want to hear and what they want to believe. For example, my mother asks me that we wear jeans as a woman, but is it permissible or not, in Islam? I say: 'Mom, please, okay, but what do you want to hear right now?' I had the same situation. You know, like what's going to happen. We're trying to hear things we want to hear. I'm sure people know as well as most of them, even they don't feel right in drinking alcohol, but the things they follow what they want to do...

In fact, young people criticise that people can negotiate with any cultures without putting the certain lines between both worldviews. The idea that such lines and distinctions may cause difficulties in their daily life. According to this student, people dissolve distinctions between right and wrong (according to Islam) and empty these concepts with their own desires. Thus, from the elimination of distinctions emerges the world of 'anything goes'; when expressed in a postmodern language, it reveals new forms of understanding. Therefore, it can be said that the effect of this intellectual logic on religious life in today's Turkish youth appears to be a kind of worldview in which rather than choosing between extremes can be summarized as "there is not only black or white, there are grey areas".

Examples of Hybrid Identity and Worldviews on participants' worldviews

In this part, I ask for examples of hybridisation of identity and worldview to participants. This part is related the previous one to explore how Imam Hatip Students experience a dualist perception in their life world. For a deeper understanding of their approach, I also asked specific questions like: *'What of the Muslim who eats during Ramadan; but only in private, in hiding, away from communal eyes? Is he secular or what? What of she who does not eating during Ramadan, but does drink wine occasionally? What of those Muslims who break fasting with drinking alcohol? Are these Muslims secularist or sinners or ignorant? What of the individual or community whose observance of traditional commandments are partial, or almost non-existent, like Izmir or Other seaside regions?' Or are they engaged in the never-ending movements, interpretation, and transformation of their own traditions/worldviews, always continually being negotiated and negotiated a new worldview by individuals over the course of time?' My intention is to illuminate how worldviews and identity adapt to culture by giving examples from my participants.*

Dilara shares her thoughts from her observation of her peers, she comments,

Some young people say, 'we love to drink alcohol, we like it, we don't get drunk, we drink and have fun in our house, we don't harm anyone, our family knows it, but we also pray'. Or some girls say:, we dress indecent, we make up, we love to have fun, but we are good people, we love our religion, we try to worship'...this may be our way of life, we can drink, but ultimately we cannot stay away from religion. There is a conflict but ultimately there is nefis (bad side of soul), if he cannot prevent himself and if he wants to experience religion, it seems normal to me, this is not a problem. Actually, I'm one of them. I am under the influence of this kind of life, I can understand them. The way I look at them is different, I understand them.

As we see, hybridisation of both cultures is acceptable in some participant's worldviews. In this century, new and different interpretations and experiences of Islam are observed and breaking structures and articulations compatible with the western model are both imagined and embodied in Turkey. These kind of examples of my participants' worldviews emerged and manifested as cultural integration, also visible in the public sphere. As *"Both I can pray at the mosque, and drinking alcohol"* discourses establish identity between 'mosque' and 'sacred' and 'alcohol' via secularism and everyday life; this division is internalized and legitimized in their minds. In this context, the mosque is seen as a place of worship, the sacred, and the location for the expression of the sacred, whereas everyday life is perceived as those areas that exist outside the sacred. Indeed, the distinction between religious and the secular area as a sanctuary in Turkey is very evident, and the daily connections between two are broken. Moreover, some claims that it happens without people's control; Sebilay (a hijab female) states that by saying,

... without realizing it, my thoughts has changed. For example, in social media I see, some girls are drinking alcohol with their father. I was saying, what is good relation. I can drink if I don't get drunk. Isn't it forbidden in Islam because of to be drunk? Then go on...

She is a Muslim female who follows the basic requirements of Islam; however, her argument is with respect to the prohibition of alcohol. She believes that alcohol was banned because people were unable to drink moderately and became intoxicated at prayer time, but if one can drink without becoming intoxicated, then alcohol is permitted. Whatever the religious

validity of such assertions, they clearly contribute to making Islam Western-compatible. However, such a view represents the “lazy” discourse of secular or seldom-practicing Muslims when they are asked to explain their worldviews.

Selva gives similar example of hybrid identities, she says

An identity has been constructed by today's young Muslims who like to be secular such as their tattoos, and secular dress codes and also make prayer, fasting in Ramadan, and follow some religious principle. This seems very logical, but these people are deprived of the identity of Islam; people who cannot fully digest Islam... It is not simply to exclude them, or to criticize them because they have such an identity, but to tell them that it is wrong...

She emphasizes that even this hybrid identity is acceptable and logical for today, the reason behind it is a misunderstanding of Islam and its sources (Quran and Hadith). Here, we again see the privatization and subjectification of religion. We can also see a dualist perception of identity, because she implies that even though young Muslims possess secular tendencies, they are still praying and fasting. This issue was mentioned during the focus group interviews during which students debated about how secular youth become more religious in the month of Ramadan. In this context, the perception and experience of the month of Ramadan and the special/blessed nights are typical examples given by participants, which are considered to be ‘holy’, while other times in comparison are perceived as less religious. Worship and prayers are privatized for a considerable amount of young people during Ramadan, whereas at other times it can be abandoned. This attitude can make the time (outside of the sacred times) private and disconnected from religion. Discourses like ‘I can pray and drink alcohol’ or ‘the place of prayers is different from the place of entertainment’ and the experiences fed from these discourses have secular implications. Again, the privatization and subjectification of religion, as a product of a similar perception, makes itself felt in postmodern times.

Kevser points out another important issue in her comments, which is the identity change of Muslim women, especially young girls with hijab, during last decades. She maintains

There are more examples of both cultures that we cannot escape. Contradictions occur but nobody seems uncomfortable. There are immodest women who say that I

am praying, all right, how you pray then. Prayer is a worship that should detain us from our pleasures. It means Islam is not control our life... (she follows)

...On the other hand, we look at traditional Muslim women, who have the desire to be more showy and flashy, and not praying. As a result, hijab is an order of Allah but our intensions and worldviews have different views form each other.

One of the heated debates during the focus group interviews was with respect to the hijab (turban-veiling) and the role of women in public spheres, as Kevser mentions above. According to participants, the appearance of the woman with the hijab (turban), which closed the front row in such concerts and listened to famous pop artists, has become almost ordinary. Moreover, seeing the showy and flashy girls in the street while they are walking with their traditional mums with hijab; or a mum prays at her house, while her daughter is listening to Madonna in the other room. Nevertheless, one of the participants shares his personal life experiences, he states that

There's a girl I'm dating, we're having an affair, but she's a Muslim female with hijab. I've been dating her for four years and I can tell you there's no limit between us. (Enes)

In this example, some Muslim young females do not see any contradiction towards Islam and western lifestyles, while they are engaged in sexual affairs. All of the examples, attitudes and identities that generally arise in conservative sections of society are patterns that demonstrate how the “religious is reflected in the public sphere with a ‘secular’ connection. In addition, although those who exhibit such patterns define themselves as secular, their tendency towards religion is observed in the public sphere. Hence, Turkey's secular socio-religious values expressed in the change process are more dominant trends of convergence between the values instead of contrasts.

At the same time, It can be seen as an indication that Islam, and hence identity, in Turkish society is clearly ‘changing’. Likewise, the hijab (Tesettur) fashion shows organized by some hijab (tesettur) clothing brands can be interpreted as heralding that religion has recently taken on a new form. Therefore, although the concepts of brand and fashion show reflect the basic dynamics of women desires, it can be considered as a clear indicator that Islam has become to adopt western culture and its elements in this century (postmodern periods).

Selda mentions how she sees the Muslim youth in Turkey regarding the western culture,

Today's young people in love with the world affairs, alcohol, making up or something. Such things are the weak points of us. Every person has a weakness, I think. It's like taking an interest in flowers... To devote more time to the secular world. Such identities are common now.

These kind of understandings are sometimes interconnected, which makes the participants anxious and sometimes excited. Selda points out another aspect of worldview is the pleasure dimension of religion or secularism. In her interpretation, secular culture promises pleasure to young people; to enjoy secular music, art, lifestyle, human relationships. Islam also has promises in this world. Young people do not know that religiosity is a pleasure today. When it comes to Islamic worldview, it is understood as less enjoyment and more restriction. This kind of worldview in the eyes of the youth is a phenomenon that restricts free behaviour, singing, traveling with the opposite sex, and having fun. In this sense, hybridisation of the worldviews and the creation of a hybrid identity is more compatible for this century.

Some of the participants give some contrary examples to proof how hybrid identity might surprise people in today's world. Sebilay and Elif say

I have a friend who is not wearing hijab (turban)... If you look at her religious way of living, she is much better than me, even I cover my body with hijab. She doesn't miss daily five time prayer. So sometimes, I even wish 'I was not veiling but be like her'. I would very much like to be a person who lives as religiously as she does. (Sebilay)

I love my friends who seems secular than traditional, more than my faithful friends. I know they have boyfriends, drink alcohol, having party but they do not lie or they have moral. Bu in this school (IHL) they say lie and not honest to each other. (Elif)

This kind of contradictions on identity make the most of the opportunities offered by the present era in order to claim the worldviews adopt to society. This builds an identity and a life style which several worldviews and cultures combine each other; this perspective and the way of life stem from the combination or hybridisation of secular and religious. Thus, such an identity can be regarded as an indication that we are in a postmodern era in which

everything blends together into a new shape, where it is hard to find the pure form of anything.

Conclusion

The Turkish case is one of the particular in that it combines a majority-Muslim population and history with a secularist vision of the state and modernity. The experiences of religious/secular worldviews in these contexts reveal both Islamic culture and Western culture. The case of IHL student's worldview illustrates the ability of religious traditions to absorb and rearticulate the global discourse of secularism and modernity. This protean nature of religious traditions reflects to re-evaluate the role of religion in the public sphere and daily life world. Young Turkish Muslims, intentionally or unintentionally, selectively borrow from the ideas, practices, and institutions of Western culture. However, this borrowing takes place in a context, channelling identity through a filter that comprises their Islamic cultural tradition. Thus, in the end, participants follow their own trajectory without thinking of contrasts. Therefore, in this chapter investigate the participants' identity and worldviews through negotiation process. This chapter addresses:

- Some of participant claim that the fundamental consideration is Islam and westernization is not fully compatible with the Islamic religion and culture, so there is no negotiation between both culture and traditions. Some claims that secular religiosity, which not concerns the fulfillment of the requirements of Islam, is appropriate to modernization and secularization, for young people. Some of them claims that Islam and secularism are in close encounters, conflicts and intertwined in the new directions through hybridization or identity and worldviews.
- My data challenges the argument that Islam and West are inherently contradictory; rather, data shows the way in which they interact and transform each other culture. New forms of worldviews are compatible with Western culture both empower and transform Turkish Muslim youth and help the process of negotiation of the modernity and Islam; secular practices and religious practices. As a result of the formation of hybridization, young people create their own identity, which is mixed, and bricolage.
- By focusing on the worldviews of participants, this chapter describes that Islam in Turkey operates as a source of social stability and a motivational force for hybridization of identity rather than as a fundamentalist return to the past or a radical

understanding. In this respect, religious worldviews are not fixed in practice but are protean and open to change, by examining Imam Hatip Schools' senior students' perceptions in Turkey.

- As a snapshot, with the increase in the visibility of the western culture in the public sphere, the process of modernization of religious Muslims is accelerating, and it is possible for Islam to find and continue new channels and to transform and gain new forms, and secularization and Islamization are experienced together. Islamic lifestyles are modernizing and Islamic identities are transformed in this process. At the same time, religious young people continue to insist on preserving Islamic forms. On the one hand, 'veiling' continues to be presented formally as a religious duty while on the other hand, dressing with fashion is transforming the meaning attributed to clothing by tendency to be aesthetic and attractive.
- Although admitting that Islam has lost direction in the postmodern reflections, my participants think that acting in accordance with the logic of both modern secular and religious. For example, Muslim woman with her hijab presents eclectic understanding which stands out as a modern and Muslim, and also as a clothing style, it corresponds to an internal negotiation process in which it is possible to dress up without ignoring the modern, elegant and religious rules.
- Some of my participants reconcile Islamic values with secular discourses on their worldviews and identity; and building deliberative bridges between tradition and modernity, secularity and religiosity; however some of them do not. Who look for negotiation; seek to bridge secular and religious arguments over common concerns to form a religio-secular identity. Moreover, they try to find answers for the question: 'Is it possible to build a bridge between secular and religious discourse and worldviews?'
- It has also been claimed that the worldviews of IHL students is an exception among other school's student regarding to find out a new way for meaning making of life. In fact in Turkey the forced coexistence of Western values and Islamic claims due to globalization (universalization of Western modernity), that usually leads to a clash, merged into compatibility that introduced an alternative worldviews, which we can call progressive moderate or hybridization of them.
- Today's Turkish youth appears to be a kind or worldview in which they are articulated rather than choosing between some extremes; which can be summarized as "there is not only black or white, there are grey areas". In this respect, sharp

boundaries have disappeared between both culture both in thoughts and in daily life and that opposing concepts and thought structures can co-exist, meaning that they have experienced a transition from a 'grey world from a black and white world' as an individual.

- There is no clearer example of the radical Islam movement. Although there is a little engagement with radical Islamic worldviews because of the Syrian crises (ISIS) and refuge issue, they do not affect to be radicalized in their worldviews. Rather, my participants clearly contribute to making Islam Western-compatible. However, they has to cope with in the face of secularization and modernization through the ideas not practices.
- It seems that in postmodern times when it was permissible to question everything, some of the commandments of Islam that were considered untouchable were opened to discussion and became 'touchable'. Discourses like 'I can pray and drink alcohol' or 'the place of prayers is different from the place of entertainment' and the experiences fed from these discourses have secular implications. Again, the privatization and subjectification of religion, as a product of a similar perception, makes itself felt in postmodern times. Thus, religion is a phenomenon belonging to the private sphere.

Chapter 8 The Role of Religious Education

The Role of Religious Education among Imam-Hatip School's senior students' worldview and identity discernment

Introduction

Religious Education (RE), particularly Islamic education which trains young people's worldview in such a manner that in their attitude to life and world, their actions, decisions and approaches to all kinds of knowledge and life worlds, in Islamic principles. Young Muslims are trained by the spiritual and ethical values of Islam to acquire knowledge to develop as rational, righteous beings towards their families, society and all human beings. Thus, religious education cannot be imparted easily in any society. Therefore, this part examines the role of RE among selected group of Imam-Hatip School's (IHS) pupils' worldviews and identity construction.

Education has been one of the effective methods of changing the attitudes of young people and thus leading them to accept and initiate social change. On the other hand, Imam-Hatip Schools are the most common in Turkey, which gives Islamic religious education to its students. In this respect, it is important for this study that find out IHS senior student's perceptions about the role of religious education while they negotiate the worldviews during the social changes between western culture and Islamic culture. Moreover, in this chapter I want to identify IHS students' interpretations of religion and education in relation to their own and others' experiences through their worldviews. I will investigate how religious education and its teachers enable their pupils to make sense of the world and their place in it, and what the roles of RE and its teachers are.

I start with a look at two key aspects of student's commitments regarding to the role of religious education on their worldviews and identity discernments: In first part, attention given the critical issues, which young people's narratives tell us such as education system, RE teachers, curriculum, contents; in last part; exploring Imam-Hatip generation and Imam Hatip consciousness which participants emphasize in their identity construction.

Critical Issues in the Religious Education on pupils' perceptions at Imam-Hatip Schools

What are the issues that affect student's worldviews and their identity discernments process? There are many themes emerged from the data regarding religious education and its contents facing IHS students on their education journey. These challenges are reflected by pupils' worldviews and their perception of RE and its elements.

Globalization, which has been experienced all around the world since the beginning of the nineteenth century, can be seen almost in all components of a society. As a natural consequence of this process it is seen that any change emerged in a particular segment of the society would trigger the changes of the others. The religious issues of young people occupy an important place among their worldviews. As it is known, social structures and values such as family, education, environment, religion, customs and traditions and cultural elements play a major role in the integration of young people with society, in solving identity problems and shaping their personalities and worldviews. Among these basic factors in socialization, especially religion has an important role. From this point of view, the formation, adoption and living of religious beliefs and attitudes of young people, in short, their religious socialization and identity construction are very pressing concerns, because religious attitudes and behaviours, thereby worldviews are also facing changes.

Islam, especially other worldviews and attitudes to occur in the development or change, the person's family, friends, close environment, schools and teachers, publications, religious institutions and people, groups, communication tools ... etc. as effective factors. Young people construct their identity and worldviews with all these similar socio-cultural factors acquired knowledge and experience, according to their own developments and abilities. Moreover, these personal worldviews are embodied and formed in response to lived experience. An examination of this lived experience may therefore provide insight into these personal worldviews and enable individuals to trace the impact these may have on their teaching of RE. Here, my participants tell their life narrative aspects of their identity, worldviews and RE relations.

Education system failure to fulfilment

Some participants criticize the Turkish education system among religious education, which in their view seems to be failing. Fatih shares his opinions on the matter:

I think there are a lot of shortcomings in the education system; the quality of the teachers is negotiable. Some of them work just for salary, but some of them work for God sake. Then, where is the system?...

In his commitments, Fatih believes that there is a problem in education system, which some participants also support. The system itself does not fulfil students' expectations. He laments that education has become relegated to an economic investment, with teachers as salaried workers who serve as propagators of knowledge, rather than exemplars and models of character and personality. Especially, RE teachers seems a big problem, which is also promoted by Sebilay. She follows:

In fact, I don't know whether it is the education system, or the teachers who are appointed from the authority or all the teachers are similar in our country. Even if the students are wrong (not qualified), they can improve their quality and approach us properly, it will certainly improve. That's what I believe.

She discusses the education system and its core element, teachers that decrease the quality of education in young pupil's mind. As both students criticize similar subject matters, it can be said that one of the discussed, debated and attempted solution-generating issue among the issues of Turkey is primarily the issue of education, particularly the education system and teachers. Furkan adds other problems within the education system, particularly regarding religious education at IHS. He explains:

We are studying in this school unnecessarily, an empty education. I do not think that it provides a contribution to practical life. You know, the teachers come in here to tell us nothing; the classrooms are not equipped.. school's physical conditions are not good enough for education...

In his comments, first he sees the education he studies does not contribute to his practical life and the challenges he faces. By referring to 'practical life' he means that education should comprise the time and space which students practice what they learn about Islam and its cultural life; also which make a consciousness for taking responsibility about the requirements of Islam. In this way, education will be more effective on people's worldviews, according to Furkan. It is an important point emerged from the data, education should involve young people's life world practically and theoretically. It is known that education affects the

lives of all people living in a society from seven to seventy. You can witness the criticism, assertion or solution offer of almost every level of people on an educational issue. Here, this pupil's interpretation of education suggests that the education system needs to be fixed and benefit the lives of pupils in a practical way. A few of the educational issues elucidated by my participants during the focus group interviews were concerning the inability to raise quality people at all levels, the lack of equality of opportunity, crowded classes, ever-falling success rates, teacher training, hopes connected to universities, private tutoring and schools, decisions that are changed almost every year, textbooks and finance.

RE Teacher's effects on students' worldview

As the students mentioned above, one of the issues in RE is the teachers and their effects on student's worldview.

a) Inefficacy of RE teachers: According to one of female students,

There are all kinds of teachers. Some, for example, have lived their traditions, for example, who have been trained for a year or two, but believe that they have forgotten that training and are now trying to follow whatever is in the curriculum. Some of them are new season teachers. They do what they suggest us not to do. In other words, there are teachers who have different ideas, who are opposed to Islam but who are teachers of religion. They use religion for their own ambitions, and I certainly mean it. In the student's mindset, there are also teachers who seem to be religious and try to instill different ideas. There are teachers who are really good, but passive. It is a kind of chaos.

Hilal describes the RE teachers in her experiences during the years she studies. Her descriptions for teachers are really effective to understand the RE teacher from eyes of pupils. These are almost failed teachers models for education. According to her commitments, RE teachers have several problems such as lack of knowledge, traditional way of teaching, not well-trained, not understand their student's worldviews, being passive, negative attitudes toward religion (Islam), which all are caused chaos for pupils. Muserref proposes another problem about RE and its teaching, she says

I do not think that the Religious Education teachers are sufficient, except only a few. They cannot pass the knowledge to the student. The ones who worry about it are a few in this school.

The transmission of knowledge is vital to continuation of education and learning process for her. She does not feel that she gains more knowledge from RE teachers. In addition to this problem, some teachers and pupils are uncomfortable or even offensive, especially where there has not been sufficient training implemented. Kevser states that:

Some teachers impose their own ideas, then you can't be yourself...no objectivity. You can't put your own ideas in there, they don't make you talk. They are trying to emulate their ideas more important than us.

She wants to feel that pupils can have the freedom to express their own ideas and thoughts in front of their teachers. In Kevser's experience some of the teachers do not listen to what the students say, teachers may even humiliate him/her in front of the class. These actions cause tension between students and teachers. The students were effectively forced to be adherents to and practitioners of Islamic teachings and prevented from expressing any doubts about it. On many occasions, I found that the religious views of the teachers were aggressively impressed upon the students without much opportunity for reflection.

Omer and Onur point out similar problem regarding their RE teachers reactions.

I don't see the quality of religious education courses enough. If you come to this school, you will receive religious education, which is sufficient and successful. However, the teachers are not very helpful in solving our problems. They slightly seems to do. (Omer)

Teachers who entered religious education in our school are very old. Even my mother's teacher is still at school. I think they're old-fashioned and closed-mind. This has created a phenomenon in my mind, old people see only certain things, they have rules, they live and teach in moulds in certain ways. (Onur)

They both expect to be integrated themselves into religious education and to sort out their own issues regarding the life and Islam, especially Western culture and its innovative elements. In this scenario, RE teachers seems untrained and unprepared and therefore the full potential of the RE lessons is unlikely to be realised. They suggest that RE teachers should focus on pupil's interpretation, pursuing engagement, getting them to think and consider, and using their own experiences to inform their learning. In this case, there is a depth of learning

from different aspects of the life, because teachers seek understanding and connection, instead of simply the accumulation of knowledge. However, this method does not confused with the 'integrative religious education' model or interpretative RE model. Furkan also mentions similar issue in his given thought:

There are some teachers who don't care about the students, they just reads what they know from the old curriculum...

Because if you break a student's enthusiasm in the first place, you cannot improve the enthusiasm of that student beyond any possibility.

According to their commitments as long as the teacher continues to be a kind of faceless person, without a warm personality who does not respond emotionally to the needs of their pupils, they are more or less useless. In addition to the right kind of text-book, and the right of training, these students also insist that the RE teacher should possess an agreeable personality to which young people can responds enthusiastically, and they try to solve their contemporary issues. Moreover, preparing the RE topic seems increasing their awareness of their worldviews enabling them to identify aspects of their worldviews. This observation provides a clear example of how the processes of preparing, teaching and evaluating RE lessons may well enable teachers to become more aware of aspects of their pupil's worldviews.

Sebilay emphasises another issue for RE teachers, she follows

Of course, I'm not impressed by the teachers who teach religious education like mathematic. In other words, a certain historical course has been like this, we see the life of the Prophet in this way. I was absolutely impressed by the teacher who explained me in a spiritual sense.

She is looking for a passionate teaching model from her teachers; which seems compatible with traditional Islamic education. She also mentioned this issue during her debates in focus group, pointing out the RE teachers must different from other subject's teacher in a sense of teaching with passion and spiritual. Nevertheless, a few participants claim that the teacher today is looked upon as a mere functionary who draws a salary from state and has certain specific responsibilities to discharge. Their duties end with these responsibilities and they are seldom expected to go beyond them. However, my participant's comments say that RE

teachers are more than a mere functionary; they are a model to be emulated. For this reason in Islam, the teacher is required not only to be a man of learning but also to be a person of virtue, a pious human whose conduct by itself could have an impact upon the minds of the young. It was not only what they taught that mattered; what they did, the way they conducted themselves, their deportment in class and outside, are all expected to conform to an ideal which their pupils could unhesitatingly accept.

b) Teacher and pupils' relationship: Some students are pleased to have RE teachers in their educational life, which they help to shape it in a positive way. Dilara shares her first year experiences how her RE teachers change her mind to continue education at IHS:

The teachers are interested in, and they teach us in effective way. For example, when I first came to this school, we have a teacher, he was very interested in me, I did not want to come to this school at the beginning, so I said that it would try one week, and then I could go another school. However, this one week returned to a year, I can say that the teacher changed it ... The conversations we made, and the speeches of RE teachers were effective in my life.

Here, one of her RE teacher played a main role in her worldview to be a part of the faith school which also change her identity indirectly towards an Islamic understanding. RE teacher's sincere approach toward the pupil has changed her life in a positive way; these interactions also effective at decreasing the dropout rate of the school. Students feel more secure and interested when face with teachers' sincerity. Therefore, teachers' modelling could help the students to behave more balanced and careful regarding their choices.

Muhammed points out another important interaction about their struggles, he states that

Teachers help us in our struggle with the problems we face today. Teachers have modern approaches; these interested teachers are renewing themselves.

His point is how RE teachers could help to solve today's problem that young people face, he found his teacher are good enough to sort out the issues because most of the teachers use modern/ western approaches such as students centred models of education with following currents changes in education. These RE teachers are value their students and take into consideration their developmental characteristics, abilities and capacities, interests, desires

and needs, values, attitudes and tendencies, individual separations. According to participants, those who are aware of all aspects of their students and are conscious and principled in their relations with pupils make effective teachers and role models. Betul shares the similar thought about the RE teachers, she follows

Yes, they are very interested in solving my own problems in my own world. They are very helpful; to find the right way that I go on.

In her thought, she clearly explains that RE teachers are important to create good identification models for young people. Nevertheless, RE teachers can be positive role models for them, which affect pupil's attitudes, worldviews and course success positively. This situation also shows the necessity to train the teachers of IHL RE courses with the qualifications required by their professions, because participants carefully follow their teachers' steps to construct their identity and worldviews.

On the other hand, some students do not agree with others about RE teachers' impacts among their worldviews and they have negative influences about this relationship. Fatih claims that, while mentioning his schoolteachers' relationships with their pupils;

In general, the teacher-student relationship is very poor... They see the student as an object, no different from the stone, they don't value it, unfortunately, we are the reason why they are there...

Why, the training and knowledge they have been got could fail to improve themselves. 'You're a student, I'm a teacher, I'm on top, you're at the beginning of the road, let's see what's going on,' they say. If you cannot speak with the student as an intimate, such as friends, if you don't invite young people for a coffee/tea conversation, or if you do not ask is there any problem with their own life, any family issues or spiritual issues... If you don't offer us a solution or anything they can do for us... How they then shape our worldviews and be a pattern for us?

He expostulates about his RE teachers for their wrong approaches and attitudes toward the students. It obviously affects this student's mind-set about the RE teachers. Most of my participants expect mutual affinity and interrelationship with their teachers. When it is considered in terms of education, attitude plays an important role in the realization of learning due to its effect on the formation of students' decisions and behaviours. In this

context, interaction between teachers and students also affects pupil's preference about RE. Students' positive attitude towards RE course or teacher has an important role in their success and learning. In addition, students' attitudes towards the personal and professional characteristics of the teacher and their behaviours in this direction have a significant effect on their positive attitude towards the course. Developing a positive attitude towards the lesson, the student's participation increases, he / she enjoys the lesson and his / her motivation increases. Thus, it is possible for the student to be successful in the course and achieve the objectives of the course, which is help to shape their worldviews.

Omer also has similar thought against the RE teachers relations, he states that

Because of my different thoughts, teachers told me that I was on the wrong track; they didn't try to understand me. I don't need a support like this; I don't have a problem with myself.

He thinks that teachers do not want to understand what is going on in their pupil's life. Omer claims that he always thinks different from his friends, so the teachers do not accept him with his differences, he claims. In addition, Yusuf supports his friend's claim by adding

Some teachers give information that will not solve the problem of young people, do not teach anything, they are insufficient. They think that we should overcome our problems with our own experiences.

The students require that their RE teacher's provide them with direction on how to be a good person. However, several of the participants are not happy with the relationships of teachers. In this sense, RE teachers blended views from different perspectives to develop a hybrid understanding for all of their pupils. Recounting lived experiences to provide evidence for the students' worldviews formation is one of the duties expected from teachers by my participants. Gonca considers her reaction against to teacher, while she hates them:

I think the teachers are also after their own interests. I mean, they don't think about us at all. There is already such a hadith: "Make matters easy and do not make them difficult. Be bearers of good tidings and do not cause others to hate you." That's what they made me hate. Many of them didn't know how to approach me with friendly hand.

Most of the participants anticipate a friendly touch to their life by RE teachers, because they have a Muslim identity, particular shaping by IHS and its teachers. Their interactions also change pupils' attitudes toward IHS and RE courses. According to this, many of them claims that students' attitudes towards RE teachers increase while their attitudes towards RE courses increase. On the contrary, students' attitudes towards their RE courses decrease while their attitudes towards their RE teachers decrease. It seems a normal reaction for the progress. In this respect, it is worth to research in terms of developing positive attitudes and changing negative ones towards these RE courses and teachers that are important for gaining professional formation.

During the focus group interviews, attitudes of teacher and administrators are the common factors that participants mostly deal with. They think that students have taken good examples of their RE teachers as a role model such as taking responsibility, sharing their thoughts, solving their problems, communications with others around, understanding pupil's worldviews and life conditions. They are trying to be sparing, aware of how to act in school, community and society. They are anticipating that teachers and principals need to care for every student fairly and to foster his or her moral development, including moral knowledge, feeling and actions. Nevertheless, the rest of participants believe that RE teachers are trustful, good model and have close relationship with students.

Students' quality

One of the themes to emerge from data is quality of pupils for education. Muserref acknowledges that by sharing her interpretation about IHS students:

There is a diversity of students; some are sad to be at school every day, and some are those who are keen to learn from school. That depends on the student. It is totally end with us. The education system gives to who demands.

Participants discuss their capability and ability for Islamic education; according to Muserref, diversity of students shows the quality of schools. However, at IHS has very important place on the eyes of participants, either some students do not want to study these schools; most of them love to study there. The tendency of students is compatible with their worldviews. Moreover, the peer group effects has very important place in their RE progress. Halil gives an example about this issue, he states

If there is one bad student, who comes to school with the parents' pressure, changes the worldviews and thoughts of others with his/her mindset through scribble their thoughts.

According to him, even one pupil can change the atmosphere of a classroom and other pupil's worldview via negative way, because IHS is better for who comes to study these schools voluntarily. If some of them come to school without his/her own desire, it may cause to be against Islam and Islamic education. They probably drop out of the school or graduate from it without gaining more practical or theoretical knowledge about Islam. Mehmet also points out similar issue giving his friend as an example:

There is a student who will graduate in this year like me. He can neither read the Qur'an nor perform the other requirements. Now, how can you be an example to people?

Mostly, IHS student' expected to be a leader for religious community such as Imam, Qur'an course teacher, or Religious educator. However, if they are lack of the knowledge of Islam and its culture, how they could lead the communities, questioning by Mehmet.

On the other hand, Sebilay has an optimistic understanding comparing with her friends, about the quality of Imam Hatip students. She shows her interest clarifying her thoughts:

The quality of the students is absolutely good ... In terms of education; there are very rare contradictions in my environment and life world. Believe me; even if there was no teacher correcting me in this school, my friends were in my circle. The quality of the circle of friends is really great. Religious conversation is really intense and there is a lot of human diversity in the Imam Hatip. Some of them send their family by force; some come willingly, some say my friend beside me is not very pious but very contrary thought, and there is such a perfect environment. There are pupils with many different thoughts, you see all kinds of people here and you know more people in the sense of general culture in the sense of the world. So, you observe much kind of worldviews in this school.

She briefly explains the conditions of the pupils in this school. The diversity of students and diversity of quality of them give a hope for future religious education, for some of my

participants. When I asked them in the focus group interviews ‘what kind of approach you could request from the authorities’, their answer is that an approach which is teacher and student-centred, research based, participatory, questioning, creative and democratic values should occur for IHL students.

The role of parents

A few students mention the role of parents their preference and choices. Regarding their interpretation, parents seems still effective to make decision behalf of their children, which make the young people uncomfortable towards the Islam and its culture. Onur is one of these students who do not agree with his parents and he believes that his parents caused him to hate Islam and Islamic culture, even religious education. He says,

First of all, let me tell you, my parents had main role in choosing this school. If you say that my family is religious, himm, when they need the God side, they are, otherwise, I can say that they are not good Muslims. For example, they behave as Muslims in month of Ramadan, they are praying, fasting and perform some religious requirements, after Ramadan they completely change. Or they have debts to pay on time, they need Allah, then they become Muslims. In normal times, I have a father who swears and lives differently (against to Islam). He forces me to pray, but he does not.

As Onur, there are other participants who are sent to study at IHS as a result of the pressure of their parents. Unsurprisingly, this parental pressure can makes those participants resentful towards Islam and religious education. Considering that the child generally adopts the parents’ ideology; and the level of living of the religious principles of the family significantly affects them. In addition to being the institution where the first religious information is given to the child, the family is very important spirituality, mentally and socially. However, my participants interrogating his parents for not asking him what he wants to do. According to him, their misunderstanding of Islam has already affected his worldview, and resulted choosing a secular life style and worldview. From this point of view, sometimes religious orders are misinterpreted and misunderstood by the commentators, and the parents who follow them are pressuring their children on the basis of these comments in order to better raise their children. For example, praying (salat) is a religious ritual that orders to avoid the bad and ugly behaviours toward others. As Onur’s case, his father does not practice Islam but

he expects his son to which is unacceptable to Onur; because he convinced himself that his parents are not good Muslims, except Ramadan or special needs time.

Halil, on the other hand, comments about the parent's inefficacy regarding to religious education. He follows,

Schools are the place where this youth will grow. Let me give an example from my own parents, my parent are a primary school graduate. What they can give me the most is how to sit next to an older, how to get up and how to talk. Because they also learned from the traditions, they did not learn from the school. They can give me that, but on the other hand, they can't give me anything about my vital point of view or a social environment. The parents cannot give the basis for this, and the importance given to the education system in the schools will be the solution for them.

In his comments, parents can teach the basic knowledge of values, which comes from tradition and culture. Otherwise, they might not have a proper religious education for their children. Basically, the parents ask from their children to be good in society, and sometimes to success this they might use pressure on their children. When we consider this situation as a problem in religious education, it is possible to say that the problems encountered in religious and moral education in the family are generally caused by errors of knowledge, behaviour and method. The repressive attitude of the parents to educate their children and the rejection of the differences and different opinions may prevent the development of their own identity and worldviews. As we see, some parents have an attitude that oppressive and conservative and prevent free behaviour.

Issues in RE curriculum and content

A few of participants address the RE curriculum and content issue in their school as a problematic. Yusuf questions today conflicts most young faced regarding Islam and West, which is also in education as religious or secular modern education, by commenting

In terms of religious education, I do not find the school's curriculum and contents nor the education system sufficient, because it can tell the issues that prevent the understanding of Islam. Or it could be a teacher that prevents Islam from being understood. Thus, the curriculum and content is important. Our country is already

governed by an educational system established on the conflict of religion and science. Therefore, the curriculum is completely contrary with itself.

His interpretation of educational content is impressive, because he genuinely examines the education system and the components of it. He is concerned that the challenges of secularity and competing belief systems require attention within the curriculum of every Imam Hatip School. For him, the educational system is conflicted, because of this duality: religious or secular. Students who receive information about positive science in schools and use the products of technology everywhere, make their lives in an environment where not only these knowledge and technical products are used; they are also involved in the socio-cultural events of the society in which they live. These social events include Islam and its values, worship and morality. As with all subjects, it is essential to give accurate and sufficient information about the subjects falling within the field of religion when the youth needs it, depending on their desire to learn why and how the event that interests him / her. It is necessary to give information according to the actuality of the subject and the growing youth, and in short, the principle of actuality of education should also be applied in RE.

Halil also seeks proper answers about the RE curriculum and content which teaching currently at IHS. He challenges this issue by searching an answer for it:

The question we have to ask is, I think, the student who studied at this school for four years and worked and graduated according to the curriculum and content; he does not speak Arabic, nor does he have neither the knowledge of tafsir, nor the knowledge of hadith...

It may be that these participants consider for future of RE, because they give examples from themselves querying why most of those students are not knowledgeable about what Imam Hatip Schools taught them. The reason for this is not clear from the data, but these questioning was debated in the focus groups. In this focus group discussion, Omer gave an answer regarding this interrogation of RE curriculum and content:

I'm not happy with the content of the courses because there is no consciousness course. There is a class of fiqh and akaid, but there is no course to increase human consciousness

He is looking for a consciousness, which could make them a proper religious or faithful Muslim and give them responsibility about their faith, also make them a human with a cause, after getting all those RE courses. In this respect, religion is understood universally as referring to the deeper meanings which we have generated to live with, both individually and collectively. Moreover, the global and secular impacts the pupil's worldview, which might prevent to get this consciousness. Therefore, it is the one of the approach regarding globalization, in order to see the inevitable changes in the direction of worldviews, to interpret these changes in time, to protect the separation of religious and secular, and to realize the unity of life. Here, students suggest that the right selection of educational curricula and contents, and methods is possible for a good RE to reach its aims.

Ahmet emphasises the RE teachers role rather than RE curriculum and content. He comments

... I did not benefit from the religious education we received in the Imam Hatip and the lessons we read from books; but I had a lot of benefits in our one-on-one conversations with teachers. Because the education system is corrupted that if you go according to this content and curriculum via these books, it does not work. However, the one-to-one conversation with the teachers is worth 40 to 50 pages of those books.

He underlines how RE teachers are more effective than RE books and contents; in addition, he believes that current contents of RE do not respond young people's problems and challenges.

The impact of changes in religious education policy

Some participants complained about the change of education policy almost every year, which they believe affects the quality of RE and student's attitudes towards authority. Halil explains the issue with his words,

When I told my friend who memorizes the Holy Quran in Imam Hatip High School, he says me 'I came here with the force of my parents'. He says I won't be an imam. The Imam will be the leader of community who will speak and inform Muslims. This is not going to be solved because of the problems associated with the education system, since there is no regular education policy, it changes all time.

According to his comments, one of the reasons that young people failed to be educated in this school is education policy, which changes regularly in the country. In this form, it seems that the method mostly followed in IHSs is based on traditional systems which is not answering the pupil's requests. Therefore, students do not want to be an Imam or Religious Leader, educators. Each learning takes place in an environment. Learning environment; is the totality of mental, physical, social, cultural and environmental influences that affect the learning experience of the individual or group in learning. When evaluated in terms of a pupil's learning, the education policy and system do not constitute a high quality-learning environment for students, which might be caused failed RE.

Hilal mentions another issue that concerns her:

'Teachers other than religious education do not talk about religious education' they say. But who gives them that right. Anyone can express his or her opinion about religious education.

RE teachers, do not let others to speak about religion and education in case of Islam, according to Hilal. She appears to mean that RE should give attention of young people's ideas, thoughts and worldviews to be effective on their life world. However, current IHS do not concern much about its pupils which half of the participants agree with. As they discuss, the predominant method of IHLs today is based on a one-way communication, a method where the teacher is active and the student is mostly passive. In the current education system, the system decides which subjects will be taught and which books or workshops will be followed and the education takes place in this way. Of course, in this method, the teacher asks questions from time to time, the student answers or the student asks questions, the teacher answers, but, because this process is not planned questions and answers always change according to the situation that occurred at that moment. During the semester, the RE teachers focus on explaining their lessons and the students focus on listening, not giving a voice behalf of students.

Positive impacts of RE on pupil's worldviews and identity discernment

RE is very important place in young people's worldviews and identity construction. Most of the participants are pleased to attend RE courses that they taught it helps them to see world and shape it via Islamic culture. In this sense, Hilal shares her thought by following,

The religious education that I had is a positive impact on my worldview. For example, hijab. I've been wearing the veil since grade five. I started by admiring my big sister hijab. My parents never pushed me to cover my body with hijab, I willingly did.

She gives hijab as an example for RE's positive effects on her worldview, because she points out that RE brings in a conscious to follow Islam and its culture. RE is generally defined as the process of behavioural changing in the religious behaviour of an individual, which Hilal's case might be a good example. Nevertheless, RE therefore directs human instincts in the appropriate direction. Everyone has these innate instincts and, if they were not directed to the appropriate conditions, this may present a dangerous situation in both personal and social fields.

During the interview, Ayse made attention about students' desire about RE and IHS. The dialogue follows as below

Well, do you advise young people to study at Imam-Hatip Schools?

I would.

Why would you? What are you gonna tell that person?

Because she/he can complete herself/himself in both religious and modern terms, and also really good education they have in our school, it develops your both spiritual and modern skills.

In her contexts, Islamic education has both short-term and long-term goals for world life which are to develop students' spiritual and worldly skills via using religious and modern methods. They are like rings of a complementary chain and each is of great importance. Nevertheless, RE should not be seen as a course that only teaches religious knowledge. The students have to deal with some problems arising from the development process throughout their life adventure. In the face of these difficulties, we consider guidance as a process that helps the young person to better understand himself, to realize the opportunities around him, to choose the most suitable one for himself and to realize himself.

Gonca adds the benefits of RE in her worldview, she states that,

I came this school and learned to read the Quran better. I've learned to think things well. If I had gone to another school, I wouldn't have thought so much as I thought. This school changed my thinking and looking at my life.

She clearly indicates that the RE and IHS changes her way of thinking and worldview positively. As we have seen, religion and education plays a fundamental role in establishing the identity and worldview. When the purpose of human coming to earth is considered as establishing a social order based on morality, it cannot be considered that a person who determines a religious life as a target is unsuccessful and happy. Here, Gonca have a better understanding of this world after getting RE courses at IHS. This student constructs herself and her environment regarding the Islam and its culture; RE determines the direction of this shaping and helps her to maintain the right direction. Therefore, RE is the process, which forms behavioural change in the religious behaviour of the students.

Sebilay affirms how Imam Hatip School helps her to make meaning with today's world, she says

The biggest thing that Imam Hatip is gained to me is that when a person is Muslim, she/he can be free while living in Islamic culture. Even though I could live what way I want to live.

She learned from RE living in Islamic culture does not prevent her to live modern and free. The ability of an educated, civilized person to benefit humanity, as well as their capacity to communicate with others, is a goal of learning that creates understanding and shares these values in a civic conversation. Its goal is to engage in collaborative efforts to solve common problems and to create a civilized society that shares knowledge for the benefit of all. In this respect, RE lead young people make all choices, which belong to freedom and to know God and all spiritual phenomena.

Negative Impacts of RE on pupil's worldviews and identity discernment

Some pupils have negative experiences in their education at Imam Hatip Schools. One of them is Elif, who did not find what she was expecting when she came the school, she explains:

When I heard about Imam-Hatip School, I expected a very beautiful environment. I came here by hoping for something like this, such friendships and peer group support, but there is no such things... there is too much gossip between friends... Islam as it deteriorates; it gets worse as people start to disobey.

She complains about her friends' attitudes and claims that some of them collapse morality and Islam via their bad behaviours and practices. Here, the situation in which Elif is involved in her belief, her free will and her development, but the important role of the environmental factor is clearly seen. It may causes to take a stand against RE or Islam itself, which also indirectly affect the participant's worldview and identity.

Sebilay tells her story about how she got confused at IHS. She expresses that

When I began to study at Imam-Hatip, I had doubts about religious issues, especially in year 9 and 10. Because, I read the Qur'an but I do not understand. I pray, I speak with God, but I fell into a void, as I don't know what I read. Suddenly, I found myself questioning God and religion while reading the interpretation of Qur'an. During those doubtful times, I watched many movies related to questioning God. They are all effects my worldview... but I have solved this problem now, because, the only problem that Islam is misunderstood or it is told wrong.

She doubt about her beliefs because of the confusion about the theory and practices. There are many different interpretations of Qur'an that cause this problem on young people's mind, if they do not have enough knowledge (tafsir) about how they could read Qur'an and understand its requirements. Certainly religious problems are not only about belief. Along with faith, the existence of some problems in terms of religious knowledge-learning, practice-living is a fact. The problems encountered in all these areas and the problems awaiting a solution make the young anxious and sometimes drag them into crises. It can even be said that this lack of solution causes the dissolution of social problems and unrest. However, it should be stated here that the social and cultural environment of the students changing and differentiating during the education period and the rise of their education levels could lead to the emergence of some religious problems as well as the solution of the existing problems.

The role of Imam-Hatip schools on Pupil's worldviews and identity

IHL generations and consciousness (soul) of Imam-Hatip

Some participants mention about the place of Imam-Hatip in Turkish society, which turn into an identity for those school's graduate students. Selda shares her interpretation of Imam-Hatip while concerning about the Western culture and its effects on young people;

I have a mission: To live Islam correctly. That is why imam Hatip (religious education) gives a direction to our lives... And I try to reveal the problems of Islam today and I see our generation elaborate on Western culture. As a young I feel this problem.

In this case, Imam-Hatip Schools lead its students toward an Islamic understanding of the world via RE; even the students are not ready to get this view because of their interest in Western culture. Clearly, these schools and RE affect the young people's worldviews and mind-set. Although Selda complains about her peers who admire the West and its culture, she, herself, also has similar life world which is close to a western worldview. The conflicts of duality at Imam-Hatips are seen common among the participants. Another student, Selva, tells her experience gained from this school, by saying:

The religious education I received at this school has created me a consciousness, a religious consciousness. Because we see, being an Imam Hatip student is important to have an Islamic consciousness.

Imam Hatip Schools consist a specific 'consciousness' among it pupils which is known and accepted by Turkish society. It has very special place in Muslim communities and most of people in the society. Selva realizes that she got the soul of Imam Hatip while she studying there, which Islam is much effective on pupil's mind-set. In this respect, the Imam-Hatip schools are not just public vocational secondary educational institutions geared toward preparing students to become knowledgeable about Islam, and upon graduation, preferably occupy religious functionary positions such as imam or muezzin posts in the mosques around the country or become Koran teachers and other religious subjects instructors, also it penetrates its identity to students. Islam shapes this identity in its traditional approaches and helps students to become more close traditional worldviews.

One of the participant, Muserref, acknowledge how 28th February 1997 ‘postmodern coup’ affect the Imam Hatip generation in negative way and after that date this identity became more stronger and public protects this identity through sending their children to these schools. She says

After 28th February postmodern military coup, those who stayed at Imam Hatip Schools wanted to leave something to the world as someone who knew the importance of religious education.

Although my participants are a new generation of Turkish youth who study at IH schools, most of them are aware of the history of these schools, particularly February 28, 1997. In history, Secularist (Kemalists) regime regularly appeals military and judiciary interventions to prevent religious policies against secularism. During this coup, military leaders (generals) imposed certain policies on politicians to fight against Islamic reactions; the generals and their civilian allies directly targeted the Imam-Hatip Schools and the Qur’an courses. The reason was the increasing number of students attending Imam-Hatip schools as voters and supporters of Islamists. They closed the secondary Imam-Hatip schools, changed the university entrance exam system to one with an extremely low coefficient for calculating the scores of Imam-Hatip graduates, and forbade the teaching of the Qur’an to children under fifteen years of age, only allowing those between twelve and fifteen to attend summer Qur’an courses. Moreover, they strictly imposed the headscarf ban in all educational institutions (Kuru, 2006; Sogukdere, 2004). Here, Muserref states during these harsh restrictions and bans many of the pupils struggled, but they did not leave Imam-Hatip Schools with its Islamic education and values. Therefore, it empowered the Imam Hatip identity and consciousness for future generations. Consequently, these schools have become especially popular among traditionalist and religious families throughout the country. Nevertheless, Ahmet supports similar idea about Imam Hatip. He adds,

I think this shows that Imam Hatip gives not only religious education but also moral education throughout conscious, or the effect of religious education is shown on our worldviews.

Here, he emphasises that other important point is that RE should be viewed as a will and conscience education. Because the information about religion is not taught just to know, they have to illuminate our conscience. It is required to take place in spiritual world of human

such as the power of faith and will and the power of morale. Not only the basic principles of Islam regarding the principles of faith, but also their worship, such as prayer and fasting, appear to be movements to strengthen human will. Moreover, in the minds of these participants, the Imam-Hatip schools produced cultural continuity without any heightened capacity to incorporate changes or to create new cultural conditions that would disrupt familiar norms and intergenerational ties.

On the other hand, a few students claim that the consciousness and identity of Imam-Hatip has lost its meaning among today's young generations, and IHS students. Kevser point out the issue by commenting,

I don't think the students represent the spirit of the Imam Hatip. The new generation is completely contradictory ... We are a religious (faith) school, we must represent the Islamic culture. But they want to be like a western.

She laments that current pupils are more likely live as Western, and Western culture is more effective in their life rather than Islam. This generation of youth do not represent the identity of Imam Hatip, which their parents and older generations left as a legacy for them. According to her, these schools of Religious education, particularly Islam, and the pupils should consist their worldviews and identities around it. Seyma, supports her friend statements by adding,

In other words, anymore there is nothing we call imam Hatip consciousness... according to this consciousness, I come here to serve the religion of Allah. I'm studying here for God's sake. I think it is the aim of life, but it does not exist anymore.

Her comments show us that western secular culture change the young people's identity discernments via a new understanding. There is still a consciousness of Imam Hatip, it continues but not during last decades, it has been changed and new identities occur during the new social changes. Therefore, it has lost the meaning what it means for previous generations.

During the semi-structured and focus group interviews, I asked a question to all of my participants, 'Why do you choose to study at Imam-Hatip School?' in this paragraph, I just give their answers without categorised them under certain themes: RE, Moral values and

characteristics of schools, togetherness of academic and moral education, good modelling, social norms and social developments.

Shortcomings of Imam-Hatip schools

Some students inform their thoughts against this school's atmosphere regarding their own experiences at IHS. Dilara tells her story about the school; she follows

I wish my friends would be like me. They're judging me without respect, and you've to walk around the dorm with your hijab (Tesettur). But I'm not covering my body with it, why should I wear because it's necessary or they judge me? They also don't say very good things about Ataturk. This is me, I cant change myself. It causes to put distance between my self and both Islam and Imam-Hatip Schools.

She mentions the reactions of her peer groups, RE teachers and administrators of school. This student identifies herself as a secular modern, which she had bad experiences regarding her life world. Other's reactions to her, because of her identity and worldviews, affects her position against to RE and Imam Hatip Schools. The secular worldviews on her life is increasingly gaining value; the divergence in her experience during the more impressionable years across the religious-secular divide has certain repercussions. She may undergo an "identity crisis" at the personal level in a cultural setting that seems to embody a clash of cultural ideals that necessitates negotiations within the self.

Another pupil, Omer, also mentions similar problems that he experienced. He states that,

When I was in secondary school before I came to this school, I was a much better person. Right now, I'm not that much to say, frankly... Or this school disinclines people from religion.

Administration and many teachers have problems. I never missed a prayer before I came to this school. I performed all requirements. I don't remember ever shouting at my parents once. I did not smoke. When I came to this school, I started everything. I mean, since the first day I came.

His reaction is against to IH schools, its teachers, and administration. He seems in a clash of identity. The contradictions inherent in religious schooling affect the process of identity formation in the students. Subscribing to one aspect of the learning process may mean

culturally disadvantaging students in the other setting. As the students become increasingly aware of the discrepancies between their RE and the realities of secular society, they reacted with two dissimilar responses.

Yusuf and Akif do not see these schools good enough for RE. They really want to change the policy and most of the rules and they want to support today's youth requirements regarding their problems and challenges. They propose that by adding,

To understand Turkey, Imam Hatip is a very good pattern for diversity. .. however, we must change the name of it (Imam Hatip) These schools are not equipped to raise Imams. (Yusuf)

If I come to a higher place (in Politics) in the future, I am thinking of changing the Imam Hatips, I don't like it current policy. (Akif)

According to them, the secular outlook on life that provides the core concept for developing the curriculum largely ignores the spiritual dimension of the individual. At present, most Muslim countries have pursued a secular system of education modelled after the Western system, even though the Western mentality conflicts with the Islamic way of life. Under the current system of education, today's younger generations are encouraged to promote material advancement regardless of whether they neglect their spiritual development. In this respect, Imam Hatip School is a pattern for all Turkish youth with its spiritual and modern values. Furthermore, Sena gives her solution to the issues experienced at this school:

What kind of Imam Hatip I suggest... Which is interested in doing more activities with its students. Religious educator should support all students and be friend of them, without searching their fault and mistakes. There should be close relations between teachers, students, and administration officers...

Conclusion

My participants have discussed the Religious Education and its effects among their worldviews and identity constructions. According to their commitments, the critical issues regarding to Religious education and Imam Hatip Schools are summarized as follows:

- Some of them think that the Turkish Education system is incompatible with today's young people's worldviews. Whether the system is contemporary, there are still many problematic issues for the participants, such as the lack of equality of opportunity, crowded classes, ever-falling success rates, teacher training, hopes connected to universities, decisions that are changed almost every year, curriculum and content of RE, text books of RE. All these issues affect the pupil's interest in RE and IHS, thus, it causes problem between young people's worldviews and today's social changes to religious education.
- For the participants, RE teachers, possess both positive and negative attributes. Issues such as a lack of knowledge, traditional way of teaching, not well-trained, not understand their student's worldviews, being passive, negative attitudes toward religion, lack of passing knowledge are more common ones which seem problematic and causes conflict among pupils. On the other hand, valuing the students and taking into consideration their developmental characteristics, abilities and capacities, interests, desires and needs, values, attitudes and tendencies, individual separations accepted as RE teacher's positive impacts on young peoples' worldviews and identity construction.

My participants suggested that RE teachers should focus on pupil's interpretation, pursuing engagement, getting them to think and consider, and using their own experiences to inform their learning. In addition, RE teachers should integrate worldviews from different perspectives to develop a hybrid understanding for all of their pupils, and they should convey lived experiences to provide evidence for the students' worldviews. Nevertheless, they should be a role model which incorporates taking responsibility, sharing thoughts, solving student's problems, communications with others around, understanding pupil's worldviews and life conditions, and foster the pupil's moral development, knowledge and actions.

All these interactions between RE teachers and students affect young people's preference for Religious Education, which directly influence the success, learning and personal characteristic (worldviews) of student.

- The quality of the students depends on individual level, and is change from student to student. Some of them are good enough for RE and school, some are lack of interest for RE. However, the diversity of pupils and quality are acceptable and develop future RE approaches. Most of them looking for an RE approach which is teacher and

student-centred, integrative, research based, participatory, questioning, creative and democratic values.

- One of the factor for effectiveness of RE is parent's role on their child. Their repressive attitudes toward their child such as rejection of the differences, pressure for traditional or cultural understanding of Islam, pressure of practicing of Islam are negative factors which prevent the development of child identity and worldview.
- Current changes in general education and RE policy are evaluated by pupils which result that it does not establish learning environments for students. Moreover, duality of educational curriculum and content, religious or secular; cause to create conflicts on the pupil's identity and worldviews. Students are looking for integrative educational curricula and contents for a good RE.
- Imam Hatip Schools have a tradition in Turkish society, which is accepted as an identity by the school's alumni. Some prevention, which mentioned before, made against to IH schools during the education history of Turkey, like 28th February 1997, which is referred to as the postmodern coup by Turkish media. Although there are many problems going on at Imam Hatip Schools, it has begun to lose its popularity among the school students; IHS are growing up by numbers and they are very important for RE in Turkey.

After all these critical issues mentioned by participants, it is evident that RE plays a fundamental role in establishing their identity and worldview. RE is a process that forms behavioural change in the religious behaviour of the students, and directs student instincts in the appropriate direction. RE, with its fundamental position in participants' life, leads to some changes. The impacts of RE are outlined as follows:

- It is determined that the attitudes of IHS students towards RE courses are at "intermediate" level. It is possible to interpret this result as the content of the RE courses and the teaching process do not adequately address the interests, needs and expectations of the IHL student. On the other hand, there are various reasons for the problems experienced by the relevant stakeholders other than students.
- It has been stated that the majority of IHS students notice RE courses, however, goals related to the future are secular oriented rather than religious. Probably, this situation causes problems between students and RE course teachers. In addition, in the curriculum preparation process, it is observed that the analyses to be carried out

especially for student interests and needs are often lacking. This situation is reflected in the student indifference. Therefore, more research should be done about the approaches of IHS students towards RE courses. In line with the data to be obtained in these researches, the curriculum of religious courses and teaching process should be reviewed in a way that addresses the developmental characteristics of IHS students and their interests, needs and expectations.

- In order to develop good relations with students, first, it is necessary to know them well and our teachers' competence scores are low. It is seen that although RE teachers are goodwill in the relations with the students, they do not have the necessary infrastructure and equipment for effective communication and the problems students face are largely caused problems. However, the fact that teachers' positions in the competency items examined in this dimension were about knowing the students with their various characteristics and knowing their developmental characteristics and indicating that they had various problems due to lack of understanding of their emotions and thoughts shows that this perception is not healthy enough.
- The relationship between the values and behaviors that are accepted in society and religion, which is an element of culture, is an important point in our study. In this sense, it is essential that the values formed within the cultural world are given to the youth with their spiritual essence beyond their material structure. In this respect, it is very important for education and educators to know how values and moral judgments are gained in the development of personality. In this respect, theories examining moral development are not only theories, but also explain how moral values are understood and how such values will guide individuals in their behavior towards other individuals. Moral development theories will help educators considerably in the studies of moral education to be planned.
- RE establishes a worldview, which is created by the effect of several factors, such as religion, cultures, traditions, secularism and modernity, postmodernity, individualism, and so on. RE has an active role to play in forming pupil's worldviews and identities, because it constitutes a system, which leads to changes in the student's life world.
- The students proposed multiple suggestions for an RE model during the 'discussion' part, as follows:
 - 1) follow the traditional way, but do not ignore current issues mentioned above and contemporary educational requirements

- 2) do not to pressure the pupil's for identical worldviews, such as being traditional
- 3) teach all pupils, with equality of opportunity
- 4) be an active, modern and reformist education
- 5) establish a moral system

To sum up, my participants provide a RE model that builds a love of learning along with the academic skills to continue a student's education for life. It achieves understanding of Islam and West in the country and the influence of both cultures on young people's worldviews and in society. It supports the formation of Muslim character by helping students achieve spiritual goals through the pursuit of knowledge and service to the community and society. It contributes to the spiritual and moral development of students and it strives to cultivate behaviour that reflects Islamic morals and values as prescribed by the Qur'an and Sunnah. It encourages pupils to investigate, reflect on, evaluate and respond to such questions in the light of the teachings of Islam and Western traditions. It foster an open spirit of inquiry in which faith and reason leads toward higher knowledge, sound individual life choices and responsible citizenship. It promotes respect for the rights of other people to hold beliefs different from one's own.

Chapter 9 Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

This study explores the nature and general characteristics of the workings-out of Islamic guidance in the lives of a selected group of Imam-Hatip High School pupils by exploring their worldview and their personal ways of interpreting and making sense of Islamic culture and Western culture. The first chapter outlines the purpose, background and context of this research, research questions and aims, the personal motivation of the researcher, significance of the study and research design. Chapter 2 identifies the literature related to the concept of worldview. It addresses the definition of worldview, the evolution of the concept, its essential characteristics, worldviews frameworks, Muslim worldviews in Turkey, and identity formation of young Muslim. Chapter 3 provides justifications for the selection of particular methods in undertaking this research, with focus on focus group and semi-structured interview methods; and it clarifies the process of research design and administration of data collection. It also explicates the role of the researcher via a reflective account and discusses some ethical considerations in undertaking this study.

Starting from chapter 4 (Data Chapters) with following four chapters (Chapter 5-6-7-8) explore how Turkish young people construct, negotiate and experience changes in their lives between Western culture and Islamic culture. It presents Imam-Hatip High Schools' senior students' (age 17–18) worldviews and their life-courses with a special focus on their attitudes to religion and social changes in the context of Western secular and Muslim collective identity. The data focus is how Imam-Hatip High School pupils make meaning of their life-world and how they might interpret experiences of Islam and engagement with Western culture and its social changes. It also focuses on changes in the attitudes, reflections, and social and religious practices of these youths regarding Islamic and Western culture; and the role of religious education among their identity discernment.

This Chapter (9) offers a critical reflection on the key findings of this study by utilizing the findings garnered from the review of literature to act as supporting data evidence for the information gathered through the empirical case study. In this final chapter, firstly, the key findings of this study are summarized and discussed in order to address the research questions of this thesis. It is crucial to mention that the Turkish Muslim typology created in the study was completely shaped on the results obtained from the data. In general, although

the studies in the literature are examined in order to evaluate the worldviews on a specific typology, the typology has been created based on the possible worldviews and characteristics of the participant students. So, in Turkey typology of worldview shows wider and more diverse, this research has taken up only nine separate worldviews in accordance discourse and actions of the participants. Therefore, this typology is a unique, which has been developed and generalized by the results of data reports together with the literature research. Next, after considering the contributions, recommendations, and limitations of the research, its practical implications are presented as well as proposals being made regarding potentially fruitful future directions for further enquiry.

Discussion of the Findings and Contributions of this study

This section contains a summary and discussion of the key contributions of this thesis in relation to the extant literature in terms of its findings and the methodology employed.

Growing religious and cultural diversity in Turkey

Turkey has changed, and an urban dweller can no longer avoid meeting a religious other. The religious and cultural landscape in Turkey are dramatically affected by modernization and secularization in the last twenty years, visible from the diverse forms of dress and the languages spoken on the street, secular Muslim subjectivities and modernist pious Muslim young people have shown around the cities. “The robes, head dress, veils and multi-colored faces of all races and faiths have become obvious on the streets” (Kirkwood, 2007, p. 1). Alongside this increasing religious and cultural diversity is a growth in ‘secularism’, understood as “a decline in the salience and significance of religion culturally, politically, institutionally and within individual consciousness” (Mason, Singleton, & Webber, 2007, p. 204). It creates challenges for social cohesion, policy and education in Turkey today. How well are Turkish young people addressing these challenges socially and educationally, especially in Islamic tradition?

Turkish young people have grown up in a society characterized by globalization, individualism, secularism, modernism and post-modernity as well as the increasing cultural and religious pluralism already referred to. Much has been written on the impact of these global forces or flows on society in general, and youth in particular (Heelas, 2005; Schreiter, 1997; Taylor, 2007; Wright, 2000). According to researchers, such rapid global and cultural

changes in their world have led the young people to “a radical isolation of the individual in post-traditional society” (Mason et al., 2007, 320). A young Turkish growing up today does not enjoy the same security and resilience of the fairly stable social, religious, communal and familial environment of the previous generation. There is an apparent trend toward retreating into one’s own world of relationships and away from engaging with the wider community that includes the religious other or ‘stranger’ (Mason et al., 2007, p. 321). These forces have therefore challenged young peoples’ attitudes and capacity to empathize with those who are different in religion, culture or values from them. It is here that the questions arise of how Turkish young Muslims react to these social changes, how they understand development and progress; and how they construct their worldviews regarding to these challenges.

With modernization, the process by which the results of science and technology are applied in society, discussion is started. The debate is part of modern culture’s quest for a corresponding worldview. Students of religion are the children of their times. They are challenged by the subject of their study, simply because religion, just like secularization, is at issue in their own culture. In addition, with modernity, came a new emphasis on the individual as the agent of reason and a lessening of the control of most forms of religious authority. With this, the purpose of life partly became self-understanding and a search to be true to oneself. I wonder how it affects the Turkish youth. Turkish young people are responding to their world, characterized by the challenges of globalization, secularism, post-modernity, individualism, and a pluralism of faiths among many issues, in order to make meaning of their lives today. In this respect, Charles Taylor makes a compelling argument that the secular culture in which young people are immersed is a spiritual and moral phenomenon, and therefore presents not simply a negative influence on religious faith but a new opportunity for dialogue and witness by communities of faith (2007).

Thus, in this study, through exploring the data, I illustrate how young people's worldviews and identities are created, contested, recreated and given meaning through their everyday life and culture which they grow up, and finally, their contact with Western culture and social changes. The data analyse recognizes that worldviews and identities are not fixed or immutable but rather that they are fluid, temporal and constantly evolving. Situating the worldview of young people within social and educational contexts demonstrate how complex and hybrid their identities have become. Indeed the research highlights how young people's sense of identity is immersed in a multi-cultural and plural world and surrounded by Western

culture and secularity. Moreover, young people's relationship with the West and/or Islamic culture is not a simple binary one, i.e. the influences of the West and the global can exist in the same space at the same time.

1. Typology of Muslim worldviews in Turkey

The phenomena of religious and cultural diversity have concerned scholars responding to the effects of globalization (Ok, 2006). Turkey has been profoundly affected by globalization and social movements to become one of the diverse Muslim nations in Europe. The issue of diversity should not be taken as only related to the relations between different cultural traditions but also to intra-group diversity within the same cultural tradition. Turkish society is more homogeneous than other Muslim countries in terms of faith population (ibid.). Therefore, young people who grow up with different faiths, or different versions of the same faith, should also be seen as part of the diversity of cultures, faith and ethnic groups.

Islam is 'one and present a body of opinion whose essential axes are identifiable and accepted by the various trends or schools of thought, in spite of their great diversity' (Ramadan, 2004, p. 23). This diversity leads to different understandings among Muslims, which this study identifies as the differing worldviews of today's Muslims. Many different worldviews accept that the scriptural points of references for Islam are the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The many different worldviews encompassed in Muslim identities are outside the scope of this study, as they are all identified differently from one country to another. Therefore, this study limits itself to explain the distinctive characteristic of broad worldviews represented by Turkish Muslims. It is essential to clarify that the classification of worldviews in this study (see Figure above) is our own; however, Tariq Ramadan's six major tendencies of Islam, Omid Safi's progressive Muslim approaches and David Voas's classifications are also helpful to name the worldviews of Turkish young people. Moreover, the Turkish Muslim typology created in the study was completely shaped on the results obtained from the data. In general, although the studies in the literature are examined in order to evaluate the worldviews on a specific typology, the typology has been created based on the possible worldviews and characteristics of the participant students. So, in Turkey typology of worldview shows wider and more diverse, this research has taken up only nine separate worldviews in accordance discourse and actions of the participants. Therefore, this typology is a unique, which has been developed and generalized by the results of data reports together with the literature research. These are the reference point for participants' thinking, their daily life-world, their discourse

and their engagement with social changes of twenty first century and Western secular culture. Here is my first contribution of knowledge regarding of the key findings:

Traditional Muslim worldviews

There are three worldviews that the data can describe as traditional; they give priority to the protection of strict traditional practice; so it makes them uninterested in and even rejecting of any connection with the Western culture.

1. *Scholastic traditionalism:* This kind of worldview is spread out various regions of the Muslim world, including the West. The Qur'an and Sunnah are so important in this line of thought in a distinctive way; and are characterized by a strict and sometimes even exclusive reference to one or other of the Schools of jurisprudence such as the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii, Hanbali and Jafari. In Turkey, Hanifi (%77. 5) and Shafii (%11.1) Muslims are dominant among others; and adherents of these schools do not allow to criticism or in questioning of the legal opinions of the School. The Qur'an and Sunnah are sources of each provision of Islam and the meaning is applicative by recognized scholars of given Schools; so there is no wise interpretation of Text, therefore it does not realistically allow development (Ramadan, 2004). They 'insist on the essential aspects of worship, on dress code, and rules for applying Islam, that rely on the opinions of scholars'. There is no room for reform (ijtihad) or for a rereading which are taken to be baseless and unacceptable liberties and modernizations' (ibid, p.25). They are concerned mostly with religious practice and try to protect traditional practices in daily life; yet Western social milieu and culture do not generally interest them, which they do not conceive any way of participating. Therefore, Islamic education has to be based on a traditional way, which perceives through traditional reading of legal principles; also it has to be teaching how to be and remain Muslim.

2. *Salafi Traditionalism:* They are so close to 'scholastic traditionalist' but there are some distinctive differences in contrast with scholastic ones: they reject the mediation of the juridical Schools as we mentioned above. It has been called 'salafi' because they are concerned to follow salaf, which means the companions of the Prophet and pious Muslims of the first three-generation of Islam. They avoid and prohibit any interpretive reading of the references, Qur'an and Sunnah. They insist on the necessity of reference to and on the authenticity of the Texts quoted to justify a certain attitude or action, whether in the area of religious practice, dress code, or social behavior (Ramadan, 2004, p. 25). Only Qur'an has

constraining force, and it cannot be subjected to interpretations that must contain error or innovation (Ibid). They refuse any kind of involvement in a space that is considered non-Islamic. Their relationship with social environment is same of term of first years of Islam (the realm of unbeliever and the realm of war), which is still operational for Salafi traditionalist. Therefore, they want to protect any religious practice from Western cultural influences with isolation it. Moreover, a fundamentalist group of Salafi traditionalism which is called '**Political Literalist Salafism**' by Tariq Ramadan, go over to strictly political activism; and the caliphate, authority, law and so on are retained by its adherents. They do not involve with others and they call for jihad and opposition to the West by all means (any idea of involvement or collaboration with Western societies).

3. Sufism: Sufi circles are essentially oriented toward the spiritual life and mystical experience; and Sufism is much diversified such as Naqshbandis, Qadiris, and Mawlawi... According to them, the scriptural Texts have a deep meaning that requires time for mediation and understanding; this is a call to inner life and away from disturbance and disharmony (Ramadan, 2004, p. 28). They believe that the Qur'an has two levels of meaning: an outer and an inner level. The outer level is accessible to all, but is less valuable, while the inner level is accessible only to initiated disciples of the mystical orders (Yukleyen, 2008, p. 381). Sufism is the way to remembrance and nearness and it is the only path to the experience of closeness to God. They seek the divine love and truth based on the teaching or a spiritual guide (sheikh); and they are intended to increase Islamic consciousness in society with spirituality.

Progressive Muslim worldviews

There are two kinds of worldview that the data explains as progressive Muslim worldview in this study: Salafi reformism or moderate Muslims and Liberal or rationalist reformist Muslims. Those who are progressive, develop a critical and non-apologetic 'multiple critique' with respect to both Islam and modernity (Safi, 2007). This double engagement with the varieties of Islam and modernity, plus an emphasis on concrete social action and transformation, are the defining characteristics of progressive Islam today.

1. Moderate Muslims (Salafi reformism): They share some common understanding with Scholastic and Salafi traditionalism, but they concern moderation in religious practices and social milieu in order to 'rediscover the pristine energy of an unmediated reading of the

Qur'an and the Sunnah' (Ramadan, 2004, p. 26). Their approach is to adopt a reading based on the purposes and intentions of the law and jurisprudence; in this respect they believe that the practice of reform (ijtihad) is an objective and constant factor in the application of Islam in every time and place. This trend is affected by reformist thinkers of West and the well-known names in the Muslim world included al-Afgani, Rida, Muhammad Iqbal, Hasan al-Banna, Mewdudi, Seyyid Qutb, Ali Shariati, and in Turkey Said Al-Nursi, Abdullah Cevdet, Ali Bulac, Muhammed Hamidullah, Hayreddin Karaman, Mustafa Islamoglu; in addition to the many others whose influence is restricted to a national level. All these reformists have different ideas, which they are varied. However, even their divergent ideas are so important for each of their followers, what does 'unite them is a very dynamic relation to the scriptural sources and a constant desire to use reason in the treatment of the Text in order to deal with the new challenges of their age and the social, economic, and political evolution of societies' (Ramadan, 2004, p. 26). They want to do reform in response to context of social life from the Western context; but they have to remain faithful to Islam. So, the aim is 'to protect the Muslim identity and religious practice, to recognize the Western constitutional structure, to become involved as a citizen at the social level, and to live with true loyalty to the country to which one belongs' (Ibid). Salafi reformist or moderate Muslims' thought is widespread in Turkey; Turkish young Muslims are influenced by this worldview of practicing, which they adopt in keeping with their needs and actions.

2. Liberal or Rationalist Reformism: This kind of worldview has been born out of the influence of Western thought- the reformist school- and they are named as liberal or rationalist, also it 'has supported the application in the Muslim world of the social and political system that resulted from the process of secularization in Europe and Turkey (Ramadan, 2004, p. 27). In Turkey, the liberals are the defenders of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's secularization project and also they are defenders of the complete separation of the religious arena from ordering of public and political life, which is called 'laicism'. The supporters of liberal reformism encourage Muslims for integration and complete adaptation to the elements of Western worldviews. They don't insist on the daily practice of religion and hold essentially only to its spiritual dimension, lived on an individual and private basis, or else the maintenance of an attachment to the culture of origin (ibid, p. 27). The majority of the liberals are opposed to any display of distinctive clothing that might be synonymous with seclusion or even fundamentalism (Ibid). They believe that the Qur'an and the Sunnah cannot be the point of reference when it comes to norms of behavior and that is applied reason that

must now set the criteria for social conduct. So, reason and the primacy of the individual is significant point for social evolution (Individualism). This worldview is very widespread in Western region of Turkey and we can say on new generation of Turkish young people.

Secular Muslim worldviews

What is secular Muslim? What of a Muslim who obeys the Islamic rules, goes the mosque only in holy festival (Ramadan, and Aid-ul Edha), and does not otherwise maintain any traditional practices? Is he/she secular, or partially religious, or neither?

There are three kind of secular Muslim worldviews, which I converted the typology from Christian's scholar David Voas (2009), these are social or instrumental Muslims, nominal (cultural) Muslims, and passively religious Muslims. Basically, these people call themselves Muslim, but their practical purposes are all secular. 'They live in a world centred on their social relationships, in which God has no everyday role; also they do not expect God's help (till they really need some help) or believe that things will happen God willing' (Voas, 2009, p. 2). They are indifferent to religion for the good reason that it given them nothing practical importance. '*Believing without belonging*' phrase is suitable for this kind of worldview.

1. Social or instrumental Muslims: Secular practice is more common rather than religious practice on these people. They partake in religion only when they surrounded by those who are religious, or often to invite them with a group of membership for Friday or festivals sermons and pray. Those Muslims accept particular religious ceremonies such as religious engagement and marriage, or religious funeral services, and they accompany their religious friends or parents. Some of them proud of sending their children an Islamic school to learn something about Islam and its culture, however they do not need to engage with any of Islamic elements except social and cultural conversations. They generally identify themselves as spiritual with private relationship with believing in a personal God.

2. Nominal (Cultural) Muslims: Some people specify their religious background, just as they can name their birthplace, father's occupation, and some religious school that they attended in childhood, but whether these things make any difference to how they see themselves or the way they are perceived by others is not all certain. They like to mention their religious parents or grandfather and grandmothers religiosity with a proud of Islam by saying 'My grandfather is a hajji (did pilgrim)' or 'my grandmother covers her head with Islamic scarf'.

It is a kind of self-description as claiming to Turkish Muslim by using their relative's identities. Some of them are unsure whether Allah exists, but it does not play a part in their lives. 'They do not engage in religious practice and do not give the matter much thought. They do not refer to God or religion in answer to questions about what they believe in, what is important to them, what guides them morally, what makes them happy or sad, their purpose in life or what happens after they die' (Day, 2011, and Voas, 2009). They assume that religious identity is something one acquires through birth or early upbringing and a familial heritage.

3. Passively Religious Muslims: They are distinguished from purely nominal or cultural Muslims by their belief in God and acceptance of basic Islamic doctrines. They sometimes practice their beliefs and tradition with meaning it. However, they prefer to practice religion when they exactly need more help from God side. Moreover, they believe in some spiritual or supernatural things such as telling fortunes or future with using cards or cups, lucky stars days, or anything else, praying at tombs or appeal some help from dead Islamic scholars or leaders. Those kinds of issues are important and required to hold for fortunes.

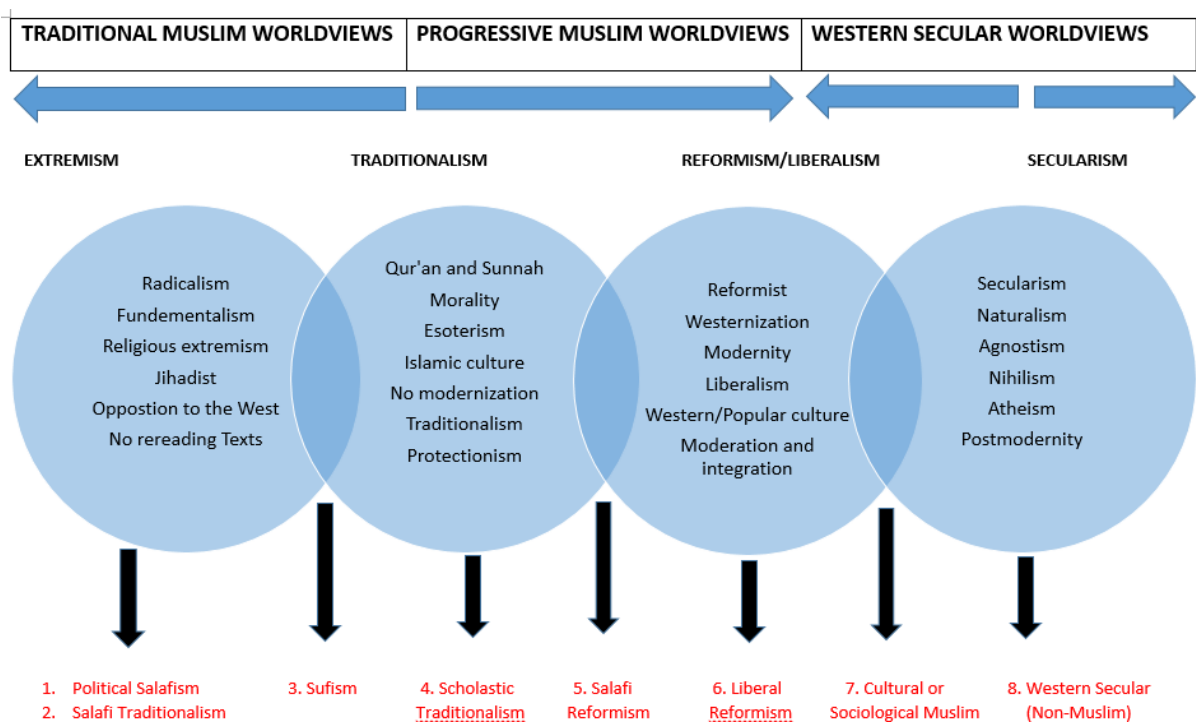


Figure 1 Typology of Worldviews of Turkey

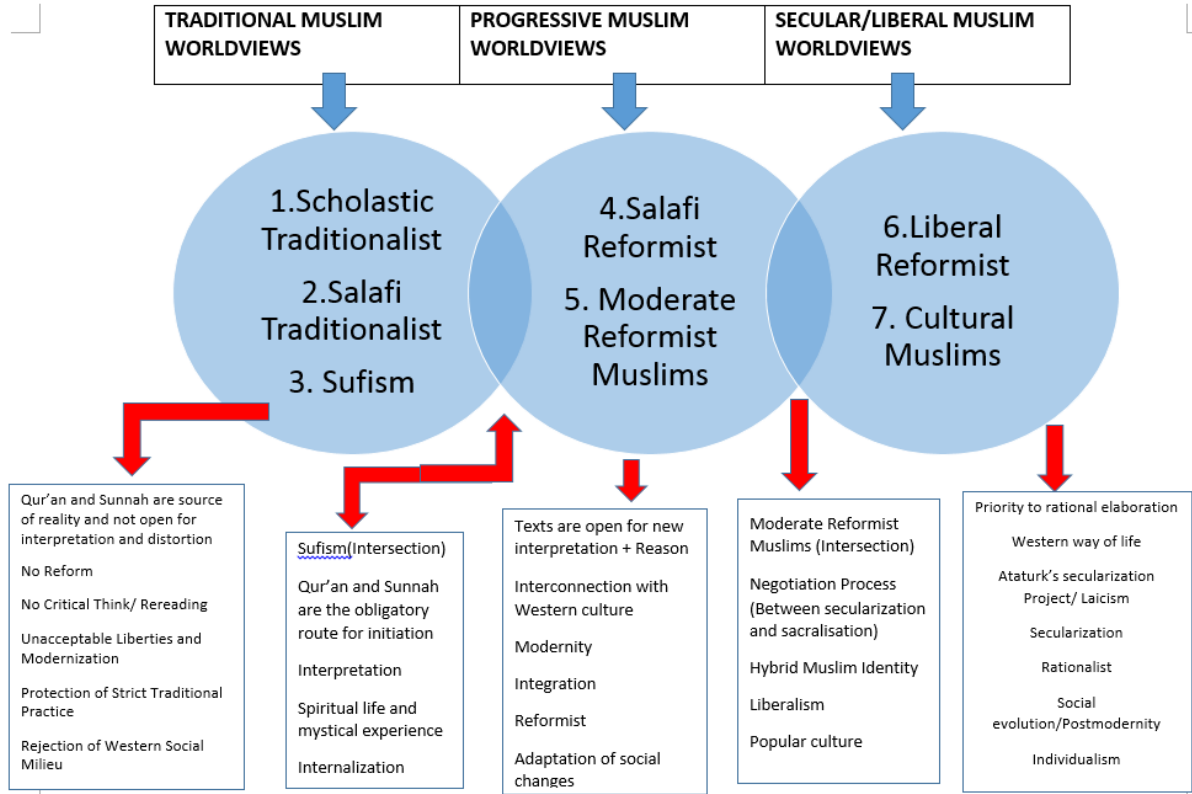
Discussion of Typology of IHS' Students Worldviews

This study has dealt with Turkish Muslim worldviews, which up to now have not been examined in sufficient depth. Further, the significance of worldviews and social cosmologies for Muslims has not been fully addressed in religious literature. This study has examined the Imam-Hatip School pupils experience by focusing on their worldviews, an integrative construct that includes attention not only to religious beliefs, but also to the larger systems of meanings and imagination that condition how Muslims conceive of and inhabit the world around them.

Islam in this study is described as a vision of life and a way of life for the perspective of IH School's students; and is presented as possessing an all-encompassing worldview. Muslim worldview encompasses entwines spiritual, mystical, ethical, material and practical dimension (al-Aswad, 2012, p. 142). Moreover, Islam in a comprehensive view is an uncovering of beliefs, values, principles and practices, from the perspective of individuals who embrace it and who live in a modern, secular and democratic country, Turkey. From this perspective my typology of worldviews are not intended to be representative of Islam in Turkey or even beyond but it will reveal how a group of individuals uniquely associated with each other understand Islam from their particular life situation. Therefore, this study reveals that Muslim worldviews are as dynamic inexpression as any other worldviews religious or secular.

According to al-Aswad (2012), worldview serves as an interpretative framework through which people construct and comprehend how their world is ordered. Here, 'the Muslim worldviews is a holistic construct based in the integrated relationship between conceptual or cosmological elements and the religion of Islam as a whole' (Al-Aswad, 2012, p.149). For the Muslim in this study, 'the sacred is not detached from the mundane world, where most social and cultural relationships are perceived in religious terms' (Ibid). Muslim worldviews are 'not rigid or static paradigms; and Islam is a lived religion, not utilitarian force imposing its worldviews on its adherents' (Ibid). Therefore, Muslim worldviews are characterized by being culturally, ethically, and regionally different. This diversity, however, strengthens the underlying unity and sustains the future of the overall Muslim worldviews.

Figure 2: Typology of Imam Hatip School's Worldviews



If you check the Figure 2 comparing to the Figure 1 above, my analysis shows that the typology of Imam Hatip School senior students' worldviews are similar with overall Muslim worldviews. However, my participant's worldviews are mostly constructed on progressive Muslim worldviews. They embrace different religious traditions (i.e. Sunni and Shi'ite, Hanafi, Safi..) within the Turkish community, they share, to a significant extent, a common textual language and common religious beliefs based on the Qur'an, with their basic duties expressed in the five pillars of Islam: profession of faith, prayer, almsgiving, fasting and pilgrimage.

On the other hand, although all of the students are affiliated with Islam, the psychological and social landscapes of the young people are shot through both consciously and unconsciously with secularization. This means that if they have religious beliefs or practice Islam it is held by their society to be a private matter. Several of them will have dissociated themselves from their religion and a few others will never or less have practice a religious tradition. Among these young people there will be a pervasive individualism in spirituality and religious expression and often dominant spirituality which rejects belonging to a specific worldview we classified above. Moreover, secular modernity predominant in Turkey has not weakened

Muslim worldviews. As Berger notes, “The proposition that modernity leads to a decline of religion is, in principal, ‘value free’ (Berger, 1999, p. 3). Furthermore, in their daily lives and involvements in traditional, modern, and secular activities, Muslims wish to be morally, socially, and economically secure or covered. They apply secular practices both traditional and modern in their daily activities.

Religious and secular worldviews and identity are not accompanied by a specific worldview, however, this study try to fit the most compatible one for our participants. Turkish youth, in particular IHS students, are in middle ground who are neither especially religious nor overtly secular. Many of them remain interested to attend Friday sermons, or at least Holy festivals’ sermon, and they keep away themselves some of prohibited product such as pork or ham, or some alcohol beverage. They believe in something out there called Islamic values but mostly concerning duties to others rather than duties to Allah, and they are willing to identify their worldview with Islamic cultural elements. Therefore, it is not easy to say ‘this participants has exactly from this typology of worldview’; everyone would be either religious or not religious, so the division of worldviews does not really work. It is more useful to view my participants’ worldview with their fuzzy or hybrid religiosity or identity; my focus is on Imam Hatip School’s senior students and the analysis of data applied to the component of the worldviews typology.

The emphasizes the fact that there is one Islam with multiple worldviews and traditions, this is an essential conclusion because, on the one hand, it reflects the way young Muslim people define not only themselves but also the world in which they live and on the other, it emphasizes the unity of Islam that encompasses various worldviews and traditions (Al-Aswad, 2012, p. 34).

2. Dilemma of Turkish Young People: Clash of worldviews and identity Crisis

In the modern Turkey, young Muslims are on the horns of a dilemma, which are Islam and West. There is a shifting view between the Western lifestyle and traditional Islam (religious-conservatism). Young Muslims has conflict when secular (postmodern) lifestyle become over the religious principles, then they feel pressure to choice one of the lifestyle, rather than hybridization. It brings new forms of meaning and worldviews to the agenda. My second key findings and contribution is about Turkish young people’s dilemma regarding the worldview and identity.

In this part, I give some statistics information about my participant's negotiation process, and transmission from different worldviews in their understanding. Yet, I evaluate these statistics regarding the assessments of their worldviews. Then I discuss the dilemma of my participants regarding the findings of the data.

Assessments of the participants' worldviews by statics

Human beings are essentially meaning-makers. We are beings who by acting, thinking, feeling, experiencing, in short by living, try at any time and in any place to give meaning, that is order, to the world. We give meaning by worldviews. Worldviews are culturally produced and individually internalized networks of culturally constructed significations of the world in which we live our lives. These worldviews are basically descriptive and normative symbolic representative significations of our world. Worldviews may be considered to be images of and ideals and norms for the world, while these images, ideals and norms are simultaneously the culturally shaped, mental apparatuses for our being in the world (Droogers, 2014).

Thus, this part reflects on the following questions to explore the participants' worldviews regarding to negotiation:

- What are the dominant and effective worldviews of the participants?
- Do dominant worldviews undergo any change during the fieldwork? If so, in which worldview does it tend to be?
- How many different worldviews might exist in their actions and expressions?
- What is the relationship between their practical actions and theories? Are there different views of the world?
- To what extent are Muslim worldviews considered as diversifying and unifying factors of their identities?
- How many participants have mixed culture or hybrid identity? Are Muslim worldviews compatible with modernity and Western or secular worldviews?

Constructing the worldview or Clashing of worldviews

In tables, I divided the worldviews to four different categories regarding their effectiveness on young people's everyday life and practices. These are dominant, effective, lightly has some clue and sings, and inclined future worldviews. There are thirty participants for the

statics assessments. This study is not one sided, for I am also critical of the religious attitude towards approving the adaptation of modern/secular instruments while they contest and accommodation of cultural modernity, above all of its worldview and its values.

a. Dominant Worldviews statics

Muslim worldviews	Male	Female	Total	Percentage %
Traditional Worldviews	7	4	11	%37
Progressive Worldviews	4	10	14	%47
Secular Worldviews	4	1	5	%16

Dominant worldview implies that which worldview is more explicit theoretically and intuitionally among young people. The table shows us that the dominant worldview of young people is the moderate-liberal worldviews (%47), which I call Progressive. Although the secular worldviews has a small number (%16), it has also been placed among the youth. Traditional worldviews (%37) has a sufficiently large majority on the participants. Accordingly, the worldviews of the participants regarding the Islamic and Western culture are in equilibrium and hybrids and mixed culture has emerged. According to this result, the religious education program should be more progressive than traditional methods; these interaction processes of the students should be well observed and reflected to the programs as pedagogically. In spite of the traditional education given, it should be taken into consideration in these changes in education, which can be called as secular, in terms of the worldviews and identity awareness of the students.

When we look at the distribution between male and female students, male students are seen as more traditional or secular; in both worldviews male participants are majority, which it could mean that they are either sacred or secular comparing with female students. On the other hand, female students are more compatible with both culture and they can synthesize them in their lives. This may lead to the conclusion that female students are more docile or adaptable.

Male Participants	Dominant Worldview	Effective Worldview	Lightly has some clues/signs	Inclined future worldviews to be or remain
Yusuf	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Sufism	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Burak	Secular Social/ Instrumental	Progressive Liberal Reformist	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Liberal Reformist
Onur	Secular Social/ Instrumental	Progressive Liberal Reformist	Traditional Scholastic	Secular Social/ Instrumental
Faruk	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Sufism	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Muhammed	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Scholastic	Traditional Sufism	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Enes	Secular Social/ Instrumental	Progressive Liberal Reformist	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Liberal Reformist
Fatih	Traditional Salafism	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Scholastic	Traditional Scholastic
Akif	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Sufism	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Berk	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Sufism	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Furkan	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Secular Social/ Instrumental	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Liberal Reformist
Halil Ibrahim	Traditional Salafism	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Mustafa	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Scholastic	Traditional Sufism	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Omer	Secular Agnostic	Secular Nominal Cultural	Secular Social/ Instrumental	Secular Nominal Cultural
Ahmet	Traditional Salafism	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Emre	Progressive Liberal	Secular Social/	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Liberal

Table 1: Worldviews Typology of Male Students

Female Participants	Dominant Worldview	Effective Worldview	Lightly has some clues/signs	Inclined future worldviews to be or remain
Sena	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Scholastic	Traditional Sufism	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Dilara	Secular Social/ Instrumental	Progressive Liberal Reformist	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Liberal Reformist
Selva	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Sufism	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Muserref	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Scholastic	Traditional Sufism	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Kevser	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Scholastic	Traditional Sufism	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Hilal	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Salafism	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Selda	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Liberal Reformist	Secular Social/ Instrumental	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Ayse	Progressive Liberal Reformist	Secular Social/ Instrumental	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Betul	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Sufism	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Gonca	Progressive Liberal Reformist	Secular Social/ Instrumental	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Elif	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Liberal Reformist	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Sebilay	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Secular Social/ Instrumental	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Seyma	Traditional Sufism	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Scholastic
Sevgi	Traditional Salafism	Progressive Moderate Reformist	Traditional Scholastic	Progressive Moderate Reformist
Fatma	Progressive Liberal Reformist	Secular Social/ Instrumental	Secular Nominal Cultural	Progressive Liberal Reformist

Table 2: Worldviews Typology of Female Students

b. Effective Worldviews Statics

An effective worldview mean here which worldview’s practices are applicable and is accepted by participants in daily lives. In this group, the highest percentage of the worldview is progressive (%47) again.

Muslim worldviews	Male	Female	Total	Percentage %
Traditional Worldviews	2	7	9	%30
Progressive Worldviews	10	4	14	%47
Secular Worldviews	3	4	7	%23

It shows that the student synthesize Islamic and Western practices in their worldview and everyday life. Secular worldview’s practices are increase (%23) and it is close with traditional (%30) ones. Modernization and secularization process appear more effectively in their lives. It was also observed that secular activities are higher in female students. Here, male participants seem more adaptable with other worldviews in practice. Religious education is less effective through the practices (praxis), since students are more secular and more accepting and synthesizing their worldviews in daily life.

c. Lightly has some clues/signs of other worldviews statics

Muslim worldviews	Male	Female	Total	Percentage %
Traditional Worldviews	14	11	25	%83
Progressive Worldviews	0	2	2	%7
Secular Worldviews	1	2	3	%10

Despite dominant and effective worldviews, are there any other worldview’s signs and practices on the participants? In this group, it is evident that traditional worldviews (%83) take place in every student's life, practices or thoughts. Secular worldviews (%10) also have taken place in the life of the students. Comparing the male and female participants, it is

understood that males are more conservative than the females in the traditional structure; female students can adapt the secular more quickly. Religious education at this point has reached every student and has provided a positive or negative contribution in shaping the worldviews. In the next stage, the result of a group is to make good synthesis with West and its culture in line with the needs of young people without departing from tradition.

d. Inclined future worldviews (might be or remain)

Muslim worldviews	Male	Female	Total	Percentage %
Traditional Worldviews	1	1	2	%7
Progressive Worldviews	12	14	26	%86
Secular Worldviews	1	1	2	%7

Here, I have tried to specify which worldview of actions and expressions will remain among my participants, or they change tendencies to another worldview for future. Accordingly, the shaping of forward-looking worldviews is seen to be associated with progressive reformist worldviews (%86), and the rate is very high. The students have now synthesized the West-Islam and have accepted the two as an inseparable whole for their identity and view of the world. Although the suggestions of religious education at schools express the opposite, the situation is different in real students. Therefore, this study suggests that new methods and approaches should be determined according to this result.

If we look at the change rate between dominant worldviews and inclined future worldviews, it is %60, which means that 18 students changed their dominant worldviews to another one during the fieldwork; and just 12 of them (%40) remain in similar worldviews. This rate is higher on male participants than females. Female students rate shows that many of them stay with their own worldview. But when we look at the overall percentage, the rate of change is high, which suggests that over time, young people are shaped by changing their worldview with active social interactions. The change is inevitable in this case, so this change should also be in the methods and techniques of religious education; therefore, appropriate religious education can be given to the students in the main units of education.

To sum up, theoretically religious and secular worldviews either ontological neither epistemological nor ethical priorities are two different system which it caused many tensions and contradictions and paradoxes in Turkey among young people. However, it introduces original, complex, hybrid, colorful and ironic combinations. In religious circles, while young people try to create new spaces in the public sphere and create new identities, new discourses and worldviews that are effective in the construction of identity express the transition from individual Islam instead of collective Islam; and they also to soften the notion of Islamist to Islamic. Modern (Postmodern) secular lifestyles seem to challenge traditional worldviews in reshaping religiosity and synthesizing new forms of understanding. Traditional worldviews resist against to Western culture and cultural change, but new forms of worldviews are observed in social context depending on social change.

Identity Crisis and Identity Discernment of Turkish Young People

Islam not only provided a framework for spiritual development and a code of conduct for worldview, but also provided a strong basis for identity. Identity is not an abstract concept but actually manifests itself in the actions people partake in. Young Muslims are finding new spaces in which to express their Muslim identity, sometimes having moved away from community structures established by social changes of the century. This process is indicative of how Muslims are actively identifying with Islam and its culture.

A self-discovery experience of young people is complicated because of resolving the internal conflict with religious or secular world. Young people come to terms with what their identity should look like in relation to the both worldviews. Therefore, examining the identity crisis development and experience and common coping mechanism for dealing with the crisis of identity is important to us. The process of negotiating with other worldviews can often be very challenging and ambiguous, and thus labelled a crisis identity. Hence, discussing of these issues would require a local inquiry within its relevant historical, cultural, and personal experiences. It is impossible to analyse young people's worldview and identity without paying attention to the roles of self-fragmentations, cultural-fragmentations, current social changes in contemporary society, religious and secular concepts, and self-regulation.

In the course of this change, Muslims leave within the world of this crisis to discover self and experience God in relation to what a Muslim identity should look like. A discussion around the phenomenon of identity is necessary to rethink the essence of our nature in relation to our

contemporary life. Initially, to begin with a recognition of the fact what my participants worldviews emphasize that today young people are facing a world fundamentally different from anything their parents faced before. Therefore, it calls for a new understanding of their worldview in relation to today's social changes.

Today's Issue: Open Identity

There are four fundamental elements of Muslim identity which explained in the literature (see Chapter 2): 1) live a faith, a religious practice and spirituality; 2) develop and understanding from basic texts and from life's context; 3) educate and bear witness; and 4) act and participate (Ramadan, 2012, p. 10). It must be noted that the definition of identity that is set out here is anything but closed and secular. Although the first element, which gives a foundation to faith and its practice, is fixed, the same cannot be said of the other three, which oblige us to consider the times we live in and our society so that we can have a better understanding of our life context, adapt our education, improve the transition, know how to act, and refine our environment in society. So the identity is open and dynamic, in constant dialogue with their context and society (Ramadan, 2004, 2012).

Faith, Religious Practice and Spirituality

In this element of Muslim identity, majority of participants seem in 'scholastic traditionalist worldview' understanding. They accept Qur'an and Sunnah as main source of Islam with regarding all rules of God are so essential for them. So, most of them follow Hanafi School jurisprudence and law (fiqh), hence there is no wise interpretation of holy sources, they accept what Hanafi School interprets. They do not acknowledge any development about faith and religious practice because they rely on the opinions of scholars. However they insist on the essential aspects of worship, rules of Islamic culture and Islamic dress code such headscarf. Western culture does not include any religious practice or spirituality; pupils believe that Islamic rituals must be how Allah order and Prophet Muhammad practiced them. Some students would find religious practice and spirituality problematic in West; for example, some Sufi making rituals with mixed gender for remembrance of Allah. In this sense, majority of students accept a juridical school such Hanafi and Safi with loyalty to protect original faith and spirituality of Islam.

Understanding the Text and context

Salafi Reformist interpretation is more common in this level of Muslim identity. Most of them believe that Qur'an send by God for every time and space, so it must be open for new interpretations and the practice of reform (ijtihad). According to students, Qur'an and Sunnah should respond today's Muslims problems and Text and context must deal with the new challenges of our age and social, economic and politic issues. Generally, most of them claim Western context needs to be recognized but remaining Muslim should be in front of everything. So, they do not give up both worldviews features except loyalty to Islam. There is negotiation to interpret the new context with holy Text. Science and mind should work together to sort out any problems facing young people in Turkey.

Education and transmission

Here, secular liberal worldviews commitments are more dominant on majority of participants. Turkey has become secular after establishing the Republic of Turkey and education systems has also become secular even religious education courses are compulsory in all state's school. It has affected all the schools' system and transmission of education to new generation. Secular practices take part in society and student's worldviews, which is more common than last decades. According to pupils, education system must be secular, because it provides much opportunity for transmission of knowledge and engagement of other culture and traditions. Also using technology in every level of education is more useful than before. Nevertheless, equality and justice are more visible in secular system because of giving equal rights to all students such as mixed gender schools, freedom for dress code, liberal approached to other religions.

Action and participation

In this big circle, young people's worldview is mostly compatible with 'liberal reformist worldview's features. Western secular and liberal culture attracts young people to become liberal and reformist. Social media, Television, and Internet encourage young people and it really allures them become a part of secular world. Popular culture element has very important place in young people's daily life, and it formalizes their world towards a Western liberal culture. Sometimes popular cultures affect their mind strongly, for instance, one of my male participants states that he falls in love with Rihanna; she has an important role in his

life; memorizing her songs, imitating what she does such her hair style and clothes style direct him to live like her; even this students images '*her family to act like Rihanna, and if he marry someone else, she should be like Rihanna*'. This is a 'postmodern spirituality', which the old religious certainties are dissolved and rediscovered in the cinema, the shopping mall and the music of Rihanna (Partridge & Melton, 2004). Therefore, many of students do not insist on daily practice of Islam, unlike they encourage their peers for integration and adaptation to the elements of Western culture. According to participants, if this world for all people, they can live together without fighting, it is normal to have other worldviews that they combine in their lives and attitudes. If a Muslim female pay attention of her attitudes such as wearing headscarf, or not shaking hand with other sex, or limiting her action toward males, it should not disturb anyone else in society, vice versa, whether a female prefers to be Western modern or secular such as wearing miniskirts, being so relax with other sex, or not practicing any religious rituals, she should be welcome in society, too. Thus, their action and participation toward society and religion is more reformist and liberal.

Discussion

Our age is still coloured by secularization, rationalization, individualization, globalization, and so on, while we also may observe a growing significance of forms (transformed, secularized) forms of religiosity and modern religion. So there is a paradoxical concurrence of secularization and of sacralisation, and of the effects both these processes have: "the secular" and "the sacred" (Willaime, 2006). It effects of the cultural movements towards secularization and sacralisation, cannot be considered to be completely separated societal and cultural domains of life (Asad, 2003). The secular and the sacred are 'moving things', continuously changing things, which mutually influence, even penetrate each other. These 'moving thing' being cultural undercurrents towards "the secular" and towards "the sacred", are also working in what we call religion. So, even that domain of life that we call 'religious' is shaped by secular forces and by 'sacred' forces (Asad, 2003).

Young students of Turkey have expressed their crisis as a feeling of being torn apart between their culture, impacted by a Muslim worldview, and modern, global, secular ways of life, impacted by a Western worldview. They speak Turkish, eat indigenous food, use incense, and wear traditional costumes (headscarf) so they try to identify themselves with their society, but at the same time they learn and can speak English, and employ symbols signifying Western modernity, such as using computers, networking through cyber circulation (including

internet, Facebook, tweeter, Instagram) eating Western fast food (Burger Kings, McDonald, etc.) wearing western clothes, using expensive perfumes, following fashions.. However, it can be assumed that symbols of Western culture do not have deep impact on their beliefs, values, or behavior. In principle, an individual could wear jeans and running shoes, eat hamburgers, even watch a Disney cartoon, and remain fully embedded in his/her traditional culture.

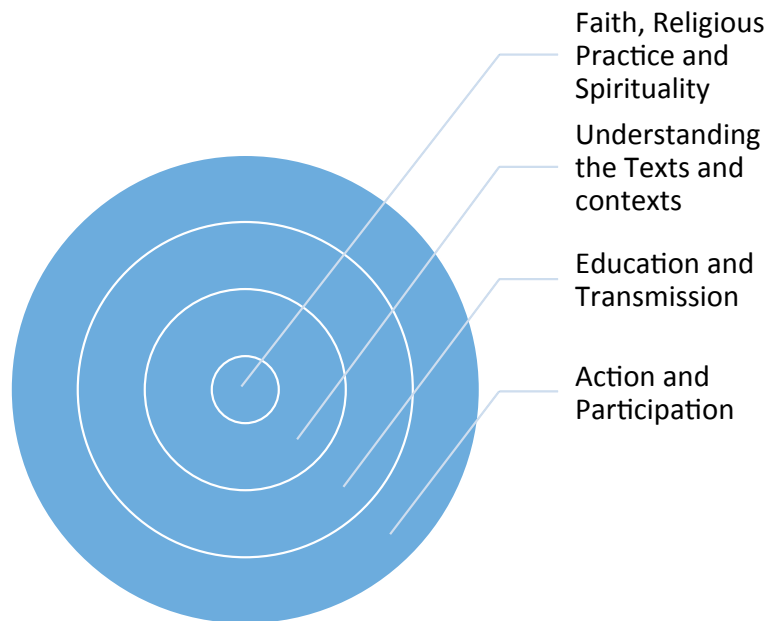


Figure 3 Muslim Identity 1

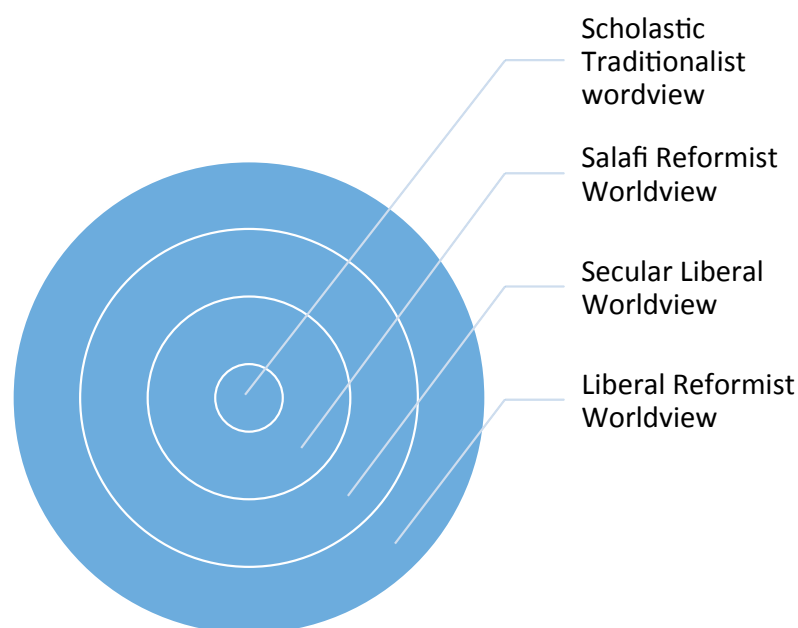


Figure 3.1 Comparison with IHL identity 1

Turkish Muslims young seek to know how it is possible to move toward the center of Western culture without compromising deeply held religious beliefs and traditions. Navigating the cultural conflicts between Islam and the West is not a trivial challenge given sharply contrasting worldviews (Palmer, 2001). Yet, these young people are finding ways to adapt to both culture and each other's worldviews and values. However, given the reasons such as the confliction and contradiction of young people, the shaping effect of the current education system which tightly interconnected with society including its political and economic system, the individualization and emancipation offered by modernity, and the persistence of mass communication devices to encourage secular life, Turkish youth is at peace with Islam.

It can be said that being religious is also in a strong relationship with cultural factors. The processes of modernism and secularism are criticized with a rationalist-positivist perspective in both Europe and Turkey. Modernization, secularization, urbanization, industrialization, etc. factors and the decline of institutional religions, which led to two main problems: first, the formative influence of religion on society's mentality and morality has weakened; the second, while excessive individualization provides self-confidence, on the one hand, it isolates it in the crowd (Yapici, 2012). In this process, it is seen that among the people who are at risk of losing their spiritual and social support, those who desire to cope with existential concerns and find meaning in their lives have started to turn to religion again (Köse, 2002). In other words, the tendency of individualization in religious life has accelerated. However, religion and religiosity did not disappear completely in this process, but it continued its existence by changing its shape through individualization and internalization (Kaylık, 2006; Çelik, 2006; Günay, 2006).

From this point of view, although modernity and secularism provide a comfortable and relax life, it can be said that young people's inability to satisfy their inner world and their desire to realize themselves and to cope with existential concerns emerge as a need to seek refuge in religion and spirituality. In my opinion, it is seen that Turkish youth maintains its relationship with corporate religion with the effect of historical and social reasons, especially theological reasons. However, individual religiousness tendencies are also strengthened. For the most part, my participants' worldview consideration looks like compasses: its stable pole represent Islam, other edge is represent the social changes that young people face today. They want to remain faithful to Islamic values and consistent with their environment. In other words, it is

not a question of de-emphasizing their Muslim identities to become more western or secular; rather I argue that it is possible to be devout, sincere, and practicing Muslims while being liberal or Western, or secular. Considering the currents of postmodernity that have disturbed the Turkish cultural waters, with the consequent complexity of young people against inherited religious embodiment, this study calls for the opening up of new and flexible tracts to access their lives and worldviews.

3. Implications for Religious Education

This section examines the implications of this study in relation to culture and education for RE teachers, practitioners, policy makers, and researchers.

The cultural context for religious education today

A key factor hampering the influence and effectiveness of religious institutions today in their struggling the challenges to pay attention to, and deepen their understanding of contemporary culture. The importance of this is highlighted in the words of my participants arising out of the research: “Today, we are in a new age of understanding Islamic culture with secular liberal commitments. There is no similarity to the culture of my parents’ generation, it is completely integrated today’s generation”. If parenting, teaching and religious institutions are to have a significant influence on culture, its forms and directions, and on the individual’s response to one’s ambient culture, it needs to gain some understanding of the history, conclusions and attitudes of the new sciences, as well as contemporary philosophical understanding and perspectives, and today’s young people’s worldviews.

In other words, when economic and social changes occur, they inevitably bring about significant cultural shifts and since culture impacts powerfully on people’s lives, it is essential to understand its nature in order to appreciate how it affects religious belief and practice (Brennan, 2005). Particularly, the situation of young people cannot be properly understood without attention to how social and cultural forces affect them (Warren, 1995). Indeed, there is a profound symbiosis between young people and popular culture: youth cannot be understood apart from popular culture, and much of popular culture cannot be interpreted without attention to young people (Beaudoin, 1998). Contemporary lived cultures shape the meaning system and values of the rising generation (Brennan, 2005). An important dimension of religious education concerns meanings and values. In my discussion I want to

focus on a few aspects of worldviews, a few presuppositions that I regard important in education: what reality is like, what the meaning of life is, and what therefore the aim of education is. To form a worldview is very close to the main task for upbringing: to give children a framework for understanding and interpreting the world they live in, to find meaning, purpose and direction for their lives. Allen suggests that the central task of education is to initiate the young in the meaning or meanings of life (1991, p. 51).

In an era of such unforeseen, profound and accelerating economic, social and cultural change, the role of education system and centrality of religious education within that system, becomes crucially important. It has never been more urgent than in our contemporary and emerging cultural reality. With globalization some challenges to RE have isolated: the first and main effect of the global age is that it brings about a thorough relativization of religion, which religious truth becomes an increasingly subjective matter. A second effect of globalization results the privatization of religion; and third effect of it is fundamentalism, which stems from the fear of losing one's personal or religious identity (Brennan, 2005). This process of change and transformation as part of religious belief becomes a permanent culture, due to an education authority. This is because the most effective way to convert a community is to develop an educational philosophy, which puts the values of the religion into practice (Oruc, 2010). In this way, there is a reciprocal relationship between the concepts of religion, education, culture and a complex structure affects each area in the specified aspects.

What kind of religious education should be?

One of the great challenges facing the world in the twenty-first century is the provision of quality RE. In this era characterized by globalization, established versus fundamentalist religion and, above all the clash between the Islamic and Western civilization, the provision of authentic, highly quality RE and properly trained teachers is of immeasurable importance. A growing awareness of this new challenge will be reflected in this analysis of the situation in the Turkish Imam Hatip School system, which will point to the need for very significant improvements in the content and quality of the religious education syllabus as well as in the adequate training of component religious educators and students.

In this section, I identify student's demands for a good RE and how participants see current RE at Imam Hatip Schools. Good and quality RE can be a vital component in the creation of better people, who by definition will be better citizens and better citizens will inevitably wish

to promote and fashion a better society. One of the most important issues of young people in religious and cultural terms "who am I among all this?" they find it difficult to find the answer to the question. The answer to this question that the theories about RE are difficult to solve is "what kind of religious education?" is followed by the question. Questions such as liberating religious teaching but how? What factors lead to high quality learning and teaching in RE, and what are the main obstacles to this? Challenging and countering the influence of Western secular worldviews in Turkish society, I question Turkish youth's perception toward RE. Thus, RE can play a central role in preparing pupils for life in today's multicultural Turkey.

a) RE should establish in traditional way

Berk claims that RE should be traditional, like madrasah education. He comments

Religious education should be learned in madrasah. You can go East side of Turkey, and find a Sheyk (or Ulama) to learn religion deeply. Now, we all imitate our parents, because they taught us basic thing about religion; that is it. So we don't have an Islamic understanding based on knowledge. We live in Islam according to culture and tradition. Let young people learn Islam from the center!

In his comments, he suggests that RE should learn from its center which classic madrasah education is. During the history of Turkey, Madrasahs are always effective for Islamic education. He believes that traditional society forms the basic core of the Muslim world. It still believes in the revelations stored in the Qur'an and looks to the Sunnah for interpretation and guidance. Therefore, the best way to learn Islam is traditional education for him. According to a few participants, knowledge and virtue used to go hand in hand in the traditional education system. Not only did the students acquire worldly knowledge, they are also trained intellectually and emotionally to be religious. There is no objection to scientific knowledge but the scientists believed that by acquiring knowledge about the phenomenal world they were only strengthening their belief in the greatness and power of the Creator. Thus, RE established in a traditional way.

Ahmet purposes a traditional model of teaching, which is story-telling method. He indicates his interpretation by giving an example of his experiences from primary school years,

...I mean, he says I am Muslim, but Islam has no effect on his life. I would like to prefer to teach these people with stories; telling them impressive stories. Because in our primary school, our teacher impressed us by telling stories.

Story-telling is a good method for him, to get a good RE. RE teachers use this method often in their lectures and teaching. Ahmet believes that those stories from Qur'an or Life of Prophet Muhammad and His followers (Ashab) are an effective way to educate young people; it also teaches spiritual meaning of Islam.

On the other hand, Burak proposes that education in a traditional way create challenges for young people because the effectiveness of Western culture among youth is strong. He follows,

I see religious education at school close to the traditional understanding. There seems to be an attitude against to Western culture. That's why we're having trouble understanding our problems facing today.

He argues that RE does not engage with what students face in the twenty first century. In this sense, RE balance both cultural developments on participants' worldviews. Most of the pupils agree that religious education is a matter of knowledge: information about religion must be based on the basic principles that are free from superstition and sophistication. Both the faith and the worship issues of importance and fundamentals (i.e., obligatory (fardh), Sunnah, obedience) must be properly taught. Traditional system of education is resisting change but preserving spiritual values, and modern education is ignoring the inroads into values through Western textbooks and methodology, according to their interpretations in focus group interviews.

Accordingly, the effective religious educator directs students toward intellectual understanding. This should be done with fairness and integrity. The RE teacher makes accessible a rich and deep knowledge of the tradition he or she shows forth the tradition in a luminous manner. The style of showing, however, needs to be dialogical. The tradition has to be open to questioning. It is not an idol.

b) RE should not pressure the pupil's for identical worldviews

Dilara mentions about how RE teachers pressure the students to think similar and they teach them as everyone has identical worldviews. She criticizes that by saying:

Sometimes teachers get into political issues in classes, and I say, 'sorry teacher, let's not go into politics, let's not talk about those issues; isn't it forbidden?' but, everyone is looking at me, taking a weird attitude. 'Everybody thinks in this school the same way' they said. How do you know that we think the same way, what kind of logic is that, they want us to think the same way (in worldview) I do not think so. I'm criticizing this too.

As her commitments show us that RE teachers sometimes push the pupils to think in same way; they accept all Imam Hatip students should be in traditional worldviews or moderate ones. However, she ignores what they say, and she defences herself being different from other pupils. It is a kind of teacher-student relationship based on teacher's worldviews. Where this education system applies, the following teacher-student relationship is often dominant, which literally reflects Imam Hatip's current educational situation. In teacher-centred system; the teacher teaches, the student learns; the teacher knows everything, and the student knows nothing; the teacher thinks and the student thinks about himself; the teacher speaks and the student listens quietly. Nevertheless, the teacher disciplines, the student is disciplined; the teacher chooses and forces the student to choose, and the student applies it; the teacher determines the subject and the student follows it. While the teacher is a subject in the learning process, the student is only an object. Therefore, in such a model which also largely use at IHS, the task of the teacher is to collect as much information as possible to the mind, and the task of the student is to take and memorize the information given without any comments, additions and subtractions, and to repeat them when necessary. However, the effective RE teacher enables students in classrooms to cross over into the inner world of the other and to return to their own religious world transformed. In this way, they can discover the deeper roots of their own heritage.

c) RE should be taught for all pupils

Fatih indicates that one of the problem at Imam Hatip Schools, is RE does not teach equally for all students. There is diversity among all pupils, some of them knowledgeable about

Islam, some still needs more, some not, some of them even do not accept any knowledge regarding Islam. He states that by adding his thoughts

There are differences between all students, when teaching us you should be aware about our abilities. There are some who do not know religious issues much; some of them know better, or some of them have family issues in their life. So, education must balance it via teachers. Otherwise, you will lose the young generations, even they will go all the way to religion.. there are examples from my close friends.

He points out an important issue that Religious educator must think about it. Learning is mostly individual. Young people's learning abilities, opportunities and conditions, perceptions, desire to learn; learning styles, interest learning speed, learning level varies from individual to individual. Therefore, although the information encountered and obtained is the same for all people, the perception and processing of the information varies from individual to individual. In addition, some people become aware of the truth by feeling, watching, and thinking, and others.

Ahmet gives an example how RE should teach who lives in secular life in a secular city. He says,

I mean, if you go to a secular city, they live in a secular life, but I think the important thing in Islam is to sit at the drinking table (alcohol) and make your notification and serve upon them. You will not drink, but you will not say anything who drink alcohol. When the time comes, you should start to teach them in a moral way.

He prefers an inclusive religious education for who has secular worldviews or secular identity. In his respect, RE should be first neutral rather than traditional or biased, especially in secular cities. In this situation RE teachers should inform pupils about other worldviews; then start to teach morality rather than certain requirements of Islam, such as preventing alcohol who drinks regularly. The outcome is an emphasis upon neutrality that 'RE should be neutral such that children should be aware of many different views'.

Yet Akif emphasises another point of RE teaching, he states

You know, educating a good person, making it better can be done easily. The important thing is to educate a person who is not good. It is to educate a person who

is bad, who has bad lessons, and who has bad morals. The important thing is having the ingenuity. I thank God for giving us such a duty. Because Allah does not grant this task to everyone.

His approach is that RE is a blessing from Allah for who teach Islam, in this respect religious educators should teach Islam and its values to students who has no knowledge about it or in a bad progress toward to be Muslim. His suggestion for RE is that there is a need to avoid indoctrination; also there is a need to avoid discrimination against to pupils who has no proper understanding of religion. RE should expand an interpretation of spirituality for these pupils.

d) RE should be an active, modern and reformist

Some participants purpose that RE should be an active educational model which Prophet Muhammad advised his followers. Hilal shares her ideas about how Prophet Muhammad methods was successful on that society,

. ...it has already succeeded in Islam because our prophet followed his kind methods. If the Prophet Muhammad went to say that 'drinking (alcohol) was forbidden in Islam, those people would say that we would not stop drinking. Adultery is likewise ... Adultery is gradually prohibited. Suddenly the verse did not go down. If adultery was forbidden after a certain period, the Prophet's first reaction from the first day would be that the people there would not abandon adultery.

According to her, this method should practice at Imam Hatip School and Religious Education courses. It helps to understand and learn basic requirements of religion gradually for pupils. It is an active educational model for RE. Halil also mentions similar idea in his comments, he criticises RE by saying

We should ingratiate the education. Today, it is hard to do that, because education is emptied with its content and curriculum. It is constantly trying to teach, constantly giving information, and more information. The youth needs to know what it will do to perceive what is to be taught. This is a big issue in Imam Hatip Schools, now.

According to these students, RE should establish a model which students integrate the course wholly. Above all, it can be said that active religious education should be based on a student-

centred rather than teacher-centred education. In this model, the main role of the teacher should guide the students instead of teaching them. How will this be? In active religious education, RE teacher gives the students the purpose and purpose of the course, the subjects to be taught (according to the weeks), the resources to be used, the methods and techniques to be followed in detail in a written form. Therefore, the student knows which subjects to learn when and where. In fact, if all teachers apply this method, a number of repetitions are prevented. Because sometimes the same subject is repeated by different lectures and lecturers, which wastes time and effort.

Another important and different dimension of the teacher-student relationship mentioning by participants (Halil, Ahmet) is that not only RE teacher comes to the class in a prepared manner, but also all the students come to the class. Therefore, RE teacher does not tell the course in active education, the teacher makes guidance and lead the discussions. Prepared for the course, the students are describing and processing the course. The task of the teacher is to present the subject only at the beginning of the lesson and to make a short evaluation of the lesson in the last five minutes of the lesson.

Elif adds another point of RE by commenting,

We have very good teachers and we need reformist views. I love them because they understand our state of humanity, because they know our problems in our world life. We also have old teachers in the traditional approach. We also need them, so we can learn traditional ideas.

She emphasizes that RE should be modern and reformist with its teachers. Although traditional ways is necessary for RE, modern education should encouraged the scientific attitude to life and hence secularism and individualism. However, traditional culture and attitude to life are thus in conflict with modernity. This conflict is tearing apart not only the old and the young but also the traditionalist and modernist among the young. This group-conflict is affecting the character of the society. Those who are devoted to religion are in conflict with those who are more or less secular in attitude. Onur shares his thought regarding this issue, he says,

Some of the teachers think that the effect of the Western culture will not be harmful, but it seems to me that most of them represent an Arabic culture, the religious

(education) lessons more drowsiness. I think the western method is more fun and advantageous.

Here, several of them agree with RE should cover modern education through reformist approached and active educational models. This is a system embracing an integrated system of education, is necessary but integration is not an easy process. On the other hand, the intensification of the crisis that we face today in Turkish society and in Turkish education system stems from this failure. Although religious education is compulsory in Turkey, there has been a few attempts to teach literature and fine arts, social sciences and natural sciences from Islamic point of view. Therefore, there is a conflict between what students are learning from Islam and what is given to them through the humanities or social sciences and natural sciences.

e) RE should establish a moral system

Ibrahim suggest that RE should make appoint of morality, in his interpretations. He emphasizes,

With Moral education, the problems can be sorted out and corrected. But the education system needs to change fundamentally from the beginning, why do I repeat it too often?... I studied in a madrasah for a year. Every madrasah I went, the book of morality (Ahlaq) was in front of me. When I first went to the madrasa, they told me that you should read the book of Et-Talimu Mûteallim (Moral Attitudes toward Teachers). I read that book for three months... I completed my education better with the moral lectures I received. This kind of a system should also exist. We have no future without decency and morality.

In his comments, ahlaq refers to moral education, which Qur'an requires of every human being. In this sense acquiring knowledge, ethics and a moral worldviews is a foundation for achieving what the Qur'an asks for Muslims. It is basically to enjoin what is good and prevent what is evil. Ibrahim shares his own experiences in his madrasah education, why morality is important for young peoples. According to him, RE should give a person the knowledge to recognize the task, the moral foundation to know what to do; and the personal resources to carry out the task. Through ethical and moral teaching, an educated person would act in a socially responsible manner, acquire the social graces of civilized life, and

would partake of and contribute to the sum of skill and knowledge according to their time (Oruc, 2010). In this respect, RE is to prepare young people to become morally educated. The goal of RE is not to make students intellectually or technically knowledgeable but to make them virtuous.

Halil has similar thoughts regarding the importance of moral education integrated to RE. He mentions current situation of Imams in the society. He follows,

If you go around you will see a mosque in every neighborhood. Each mosque has an Imam at least.. you know, our biggest problem is those Imams who do not engage with the young people and his followers (jamaat). Imam is a leader for youth and community, they must be an example for everybody.. especially with a good morality.. think now, we are graduated from Imam Hatip Schools, we should be eager for our religious duty and love it much. It is possible to teach those students in this school.

It is obvious in his comments that the religion is the most fundamental of the social establishments that is necessary to internalize the concepts of ‘morality’ and ‘conscience’. Without these norms religious leader, Imams and our future Imams, we cannot mention a proper RE for young generation. RE should aims to establish a moral system, which is transferred to the next generation thorough education.

As seen on my participant’s experiences, moral development is not a process that can be achieved by external pressure. Moral development is a level of cognitive ability and consciousness that will develop by young people's own experiences, questioning, thinking and discussion, and confronting different views and problems. Where there is oppression and coercion, it can be said that moral development has slowed down and even stopped, as we see examples of Imam in Halil’s interpretations. Religion has strong ties to morality, many participants believe that Islam is the source of morality, they view morality as originating in the will of God, and thus, we cannot mention any moral activities without religion (Islam). This involves not only building upon the young person’s characteristics and socialization into the norms of a society, but also some deliberate intervention in the teaching and learning environments of home and school to encourage virtuous behavior and on-going moral development (Lee, 2011, p. 383). Therefore, my participants suggest that RE should establish a moral system.

Limitations of the study

In order to address the research questions of this study, a variety of data was collected and a range of analysis techniques were utilized. However, some limitations emerged with regard to the research design and analysis, which need to be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings and contributions.

Firstly, the sample size of this study was relatively small; the empirical research in this study was limited to Imam Hatip High Schools' student, which thirty students and two focus groups, in City of Bursa, Turkey. Thus some generalization may be unjustified for other schools in country. In order to increase generalizability respondents from other schools and cities would also need to be included in the future. Although, it was difficult to select the most representative sample of schools or compare the findings from more than one school, because of diversity of students (from different social, economic and geographical backgrounds), it may be assumed that the conclusions were reasonably applicable for the Turkish young Muslim, excluding the regional differences.

Second, the qualitative nature of this study, the analysis of regulation processes may have been influenced by my subjective opinion regarding these processes, as I was the only researcher who carried out the analysis of the data sets. Nevertheless, in order to make certain that the interpretations and findings correctly reflected students' worldviews and commitments, I put aside my preconceived notions about the regulation of learning theory and remained open- minded paying great attention not to let any of my personal beliefs and assumptions have an impact on any part of the research process. Also, the analysis process was subject to verification through the literature, interactions and discussions with my supervisor.

Third, the timing of undertaking the field research is also seen as limitation to the study. The fieldwork was carried out at the end of 2016. Religious attitudes, interpretations and Muslim identities may change over time, and conducted in five or ten years may reveal different results. In addition, the results derived from primary data were limited by the methodology, data collection and analysis techniques applied in this study.

Lastly, the present study employed qualitative methods to gather information from students; but excluded RE teachers, schools administrations, policy makers' perception and

pedagogical and educational authority. It is recommended that future research also examine their perceptions and worldviews. It would be reasonable to consider exploring their opinions, commitments, and perceptions; and this would be particularly helpful to get more comprehensive data for analysis.

Recommendations and Future Research

As this is an exploratory study, it was naturally limited in terms of its empirical scope and focus. The contributions, limitations and implications of this study points towards potentially valuable directions for future research. Therefore, the study concludes by offering a number of recommendations.

Firstly, regarding the findings of this study, it would be fruitful to continue to explore the dynamic and reciprocal nature of worldviews of young people in different subject areas. Extending this line of research would contribute to our understanding of how today's youth navigating the cultural conflicts between Islam and the West and its cultures. The present study should also be expanded to include the study of other schools' students. How does the salience of the various identities and worldviews for Muslim students compare? Since the participants in my research study deemed their religious identity to be the most salient, cultural fragmentation offers another interesting dynamic for further consideration of the identity negotiation process. The fact that the strength of these students' identities and worldviews were not measured longitudinally creates an avenue for further research. One should ask, which worldview or identity remains salient over time with physical distance and under what circumstances?

Secondly, findings obtained from the study have some pertinent implications for Islamic Education, RE teachers, and the education authority. The recommendations addressed in this section aim at improving the policy, pedagogy, and curriculum of RE as well as implementation of Islamic Education at all levels:

- RE, which consists largely of teacher based, was found to be inadequate for active RE and it was described as insipid and spiritless. The reasons for the failure of religious education to convey affective religiosity, and the question of how students have satisfied the affective component their religiosity remain unexplored. Therefore, RE in high schools deserves further investigation.

- The implications drawn out in this chapter are extremely important, but they are based upon reactions of a relatively small group of students in restricted age- group (senior students' age 17-18) and in a limited geographical area. This might be extended:
 - Is there any further evidence that IHS students become more and more postmodern in their worldviews and commitments? How about other secondary and High schools' students' worldview?
 - What might be done to find answers to issues of Islamic Religious Education raised by post-secular and post-modern cultures and expressed by students?
 - Is there any progress that Imam Hatip Schools and Islamic Religious Education attempt to adopt the social changes and a form of postmodern culture?
- RE teachers should adopt more student-centred approaches and emphasize active learning rather than sticking to conventional and more passive learning styles; this will develop student's creativity and critical thinking as well as making teaching more efficient and successful.
- RE teachers need to develop their skills in using new educational technologies. They need to be trained to use these new teaching tools as well as the new teaching and learning methods/techniques. This will enhance their confidence as well as their skills. Apart from the theoretical aspects, the practical skills involved in using the new teaching technologies should be integrated in the courses.
- RE teachers lack adequate pedagogic knowledge as well as knowledge of their students. The curriculum itself lacks representation of students' diverse needs and individual experiences, their voice simply is not reflected in the curriculum as well as in the actual classroom (Kaymakcan, 2007). The classroom practices should follow the curricular objectives rather than the style and format of examination papers. A comprehensive and balanced emphasis of the curriculum to develop the intellectual, physical, spiritual, moral and emotional potential should be given the highest priority.
- Educational administrators and RE teachers should provide appropriate learning experiences, especially for moral and spiritual development.
- There is a desperate requirement for a fundamental module that introduces pedagogic educational concepts in some detail within worldviews. These modules can be built into existing curricula or introduced as separate specialized bodies of study. These modules

should be developed within a critical analytical framework that introduces both classical and contemporary Islamic formulations alongside contemporary secular developments in the field.

- The understanding of what Islamic education is and entails must be revisited, re-examined and reformulated in consideration to its classical heritage that sought to develop the holistic personality of the individual.

In this respect, the current study has sought to contribute to the small but growing understanding/knowledge base regarding how Imam Hatip School students experience, aspire and identify with Islam and West as part of their future pathways in the hope of the religious education beyond compulsory education. It is my hope that this research will inform researchers, teachers, educational authorities as well as curriculum developers about the importance of students' worldviews and negotiation processes, and hence contribute to the development of better, more effective practices regarding educational inquiry.

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APPENDIX A: PARENTS CONSENT FORM

APPENDIX A: PARENTS CONSENT FORM

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Title of Study: Worldviews and Identity Discernment of Turkish Youth: An investigation of Imam-Hatip High Schools' senior students' meaning-making of the world in the 21st century

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for considering allowing your child to participate in this research. The information sheet accompanying this consent form includes all the information relating to the project. However, if you have any questions arising from that, please do not hesitate to ask the researcher (Cabir Altintas) before you decide whether to give consent. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time. Please note that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify your child from any publications.

I understand that if I or my child decides at any time during the research that no longer wishes to participate in this project, I or my child can notify the researchers involved and my child will be withdrawn from it immediately.

I consent my child to be audio recorded during interviews in this research study.

I consent to the processing of my child's personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Parents Statement:

I _____

agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to let my child _____ take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Please circle your relationship to the child named above:

Father Mother Guardian Other.....

Signed _____ **Date** _____

Please return this consent form to your child's head teacher.

Thank you.

(Note: This consent form will be translated into Turkish by the researcher.)

APPENDIX B: PARENTS INFORMATION SHEET

APPENDIX B: PARENTS INFORMATION SHEET 1

REC Reference Number:

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Study: Worldviews and Identity Discernment of Turkish youths: An investigation of Imam-Hatip School's senior student's meaning-making progress of world in 21st century

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Cabir Altintas. I am a Turkish student sponsored by the Ministry of Education in Turkey and I am doing a doctoral study at UCL Institute of Education. I would like to ask for your permission for your child to participate in this postgraduate research project, which is about their worldviews and identity construction in relation to the Western culture and Islamic culture.

You should allow your child to participate only if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage him/her in any way. Before you decide whether to give permission, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your child's participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The purpose of this research project is to explore how Turkish young people; Imam Hatip High School's students; negotiate and experience upon changes in their lives between Western culture and Islamic culture. It will present young people's worldview and their life courses with a special focus on their attitudes to religion and social changes in the context of Western secular and Muslim collective identity. Your child's participation in this project will be valuable in understanding how they understand Islam and West; and respond to it within a context where they are surrounded with diversity, both within Islam and in relation to other religious worldviews and secular traditions.

If you choose to give permission, I will invite your child to participate in a written task and interview with me individually and in a focus group. They are designed to help me find out how these young people make meaning and how they might interpret their experiences of Islam and engagement with Western culture. They are not designed to test your child or assess his/her ability, and he/she will not be given a mark or grade. The interviews and written tasks will take place in any place on school premises that the school management considers suitable at a time agreed with your child's teachers, and will last for 40-60 minutes. In the interview I will talk to them about their understanding of Islam and invite them to debate it with in a focus group.

Your child's participation in the study will be voluntary. He/she will be able to withdraw at any stage without giving a reason. They will not be exposed to any kind of risk if they agree to participate. I will keep copies of their written answers, and audio record and transcribe their interviews. However, anything they write or say will remain completely confidential and anonymous. His/her name will be removed from all documents and tapes. They will be stored securely, and only my supervisors and I will have full access to them. Though I may refer to something they write or say in my thesis or in lectures and seminars, he/she will not be named, and it will be impossible for anyone to identify them or their school. Should you decide to withdraw your child from the project you may ask for their written answers to be

returned to them and the interview tapes and interview transcriptions destroyed at any time before 31st August 2017. Throughout the process I will follow the strict ethical rules required by UCL Institute of Education and meet the legal requirements of the 1998 Data Protection Act.

The results will be published in my doctoral thesis, in some journals and will be presented in international seminars. And I will feed back to Ministry of Education in Turkey.

If you wish further information, please contact me via email caltintas@ioe.ac.uk or at +905365468531. Your Head Teacher has given permission for me to do my research in your school, and your child's RE teacher(s) have agreed to take part in the project. It is up to you to decide whether to allow your child to participate or not. If you decide to consent to your child participating, please keep this information sheet and sign the consent form provided. Please be aware also that if you decide to give permission, your child is still free to withdraw from the research project without giving a reason.

Finally, if you feel this study harms your child in any way you can contact UCL Institute of Education using the details below for further advice and information:

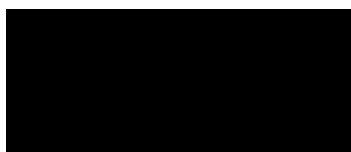
Professor Andrew Wright

UCL Institute of Education
University College London
20 Bedford Way
London WC1H 0AL

a.wright@ioe.ac.uk
01435 882608
room 793

Yours sincerely,

Cabir Altintas



(Note: This information sheet will be translated into Turkish by the researcher.)

APPENDIX C: STUDENT CONSENT FORM

APPENDIX C: STUDENT CONSENT FORM

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Title of Study: Worldviews and Identity Discernment of Turkish youths: An investigation of Imam-Hatip School's senior student's meaning-making progress of world in 21th century

Dear Student,

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or the explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher or your religious education teacher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

- *I understand that if I decide at any time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researchers involved and withdraw from it immediately without giving any reason. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to the point of publication or up until the point stated on the Information Sheet.*
- *I consent to my interview being recorded.*
- *I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be treated in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.*

Participant's Statement:

I _____

agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Full name (in capitals):

Signed _____

Date _____

Please return this form to your teacher.

Thank you!

(Note: This consent form will be translated into Turkish by the researcher.)

APPENDIX D: STUDENTS INFORMATION SHEET

APPENDIX D: STUDENTS INFORMATION SHEET

REC Reference Number:

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Study: Worldviews and Identity Discernment of Turkish youths: An investigation of Imam-Hatip School's senior student's meaning-making progress of world in 21th century

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Cabir Altintas. I am a Turkish student sponsored by the Ministry of Education in Turkey and I am doing a doctoral study at UCL Institute of Education. I would like to invite you to take part in my research project which is about worldviews and identity construction of Turkish youth in relation to the Western culture and Islamic culture.

You should only agree to participate if you want to. Choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you make your decision it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what you will be asked to do. Please take time to read this information sheet carefully and discuss it with your classmates, teachers and parents if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The purpose of this research project is to explore how Turkish young people; Imam Hatip High School's students; negotiate and experience upon changes in their lives between Western culture and Islamic culture. It will present young people's world view and their life courses with a special focus on their attitudes to religion and social changes in the context of Western secular and Muslim collective identity. Your participation in this project will be valuable in understanding how you understand Islam and West; and respond to it within a context where you are surrounded with diversity, both within Islam and in relation to other religious worldviews and secular traditions.

I am inviting you to participate in an interview with me individually and in a focus group. You are help me find out how young people make meaning and how they might interpret their experiences of Islam and engagement with Western culture. You are not designed to test you or assess your ability, and you will not be given a mark or grade. I am not interested in right or wrong answers but in your personal understanding. The interviews will take place in any place on school premises that the school management considers suitable at a time agreed with your teachers, and will last for 40-60 minutes. In the interview I will talk to you about your understanding of Islam and invite you to debate it with in a focus group.

Your participation in the study will be voluntary. You will be able to withdraw at any stage without giving a reason. You will not be exposed to any kind of risk if you agree to participate I will keep copies of your answers, and audio record and transcribe your interviews. However anything you write or say will remain completely confidential and anonymous. Your name will be removed from all documents and tapes. You will be stored securely, and only my supervisors and I will have full access to them. Though I may refer to something you write or say in my thesis or in lectures and seminars, you will not be named, and it will be impossible for anyone to identify you or your school. Should you decide to withdraw from the project you may ask for your audio answers to be returned to you and the interview tapes and interview transcriptions destroyed at any time before 31st August 2017. Throughout the process I will

follow the strict ethical rules required by UCL Institute of Education and meet the legal requirements of the 1998 Data Protection Act.

The results will be published in my doctoral thesis, in some journals and will be presented in international seminars. And I will feed back to Ministry of Education in Turkey.

Your Head Teacher has given permission for me to do my research in your school, and your RE teacher(s) have agreed to take part in the project.

If you would like any further information, please contact me via email caltintas@ioe.ac.uk or at +905365468531.

If you decide to participate, then please sign and return the attached form.

Finally, if you feel this study harms you in any way you can contact UCL Institute of Education using the details below for further advice and information:

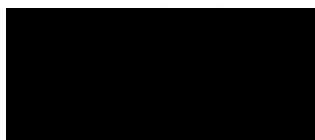
Professor Andrew Wright

UCL Institute of Education
University College London
20 Bedford Way
London WC1H 0AL

a.wright@ioe.ac.uk
01435 882608
room 793

Yours sincerely,

Cabir Altintas



(Note: This information sheet will be translated into Turkish by the researcher.)

APPENDIX E: Semi-structured Interview with Imam-Hatip School's Senior Students

APPENDIX E: Semi-structured Interview with Imam-Hatip School's Senior Students

Introduction:

- Presentation: Brief information about the purpose of study, benefit of their contributions, thanks speech...
- The interview situation: the recording, ethical process... (total : 60 minutes last)

Background Information forms:

Gender. Age. Class. Grand Average of Grades. Father's educational background and profession. Mother educational background and profession. Brother/ sister. Ethnicity. Family's economic situation. How long have you been living in this city?

Category 1 includes research questions 1:

What is the worldview of Imam-Hatip School's senior students and how do they identify themselves and make meaning of the world?

- 1) What kind of world we live in? Some people believes that the universe created by God/Allah; others believe it is not created by God or anyone else, it exists by itself from atoms and molecules. What do you think?
 - What do you think about Big Bang Theory?
 - (If the answer is God) What could be God's intention for the creation of the universe?
 - What is the situation of human beings in this world? Why we are here?
- 2) How about human beings? Who are we? Again, some believes that God/Allah created us, and atheists believe we are constitutes from chemical and physical properties. What do you think?
 - What do you think about evolution theory? Do you believe it? Why? Why not?
 - How do you describe yourself in connection of the world? What is your purpose of life?
 - How will your life end? What happens to persons at death?
- 3) There are many problems facing human beings in the world. What is the problem in this world? What is wrong with human beings? What do you think?
 - (If they get stuck) For example, social justice, terrorism, poverty, equality, human rights, cold wars for gas and oil...
 - (If it is necessary, be more specific) Recently, there are some murderer case in Turkey made people so sad and angry such as Ozgecan (18 years old young student), Firat Yilmaz (senior university student). What is the problem here? What is wrong with human beings?
- 4) What is the solution/ remedy? How can we make the universe better place?
 - How could we provide peace and justice?
 - How could you sort out those problems?

Category 2 includes Research Question 2, 3 and 4:

Research Question 2: How do Imam-Hatip School's senior students conceptualize and make sense of Islam and its religious practices in their worldview?

Research Question 3: How do Imam-Hatip School's students conceptualize and make sense of Western culture and its secular practices in their worldview?

Research Question 4: How do Imam-Hatip School's senior students negotiate between Western culture and Islamic culture and construct their worldviews?

- 1) What does Islam mean to you?
 - What does practising of Islam mean to you? (Five pillars, Qur'an, Daily Prayer purpose of life...)
 - What are the symbols of Islam for you?
 - What place Islam has in your worldview?
 - If you have kids, what are the Islamic cultural forces that you do not want your children shaped by?
- 2) What does Western culture mean to you?
 - What does practicing Western culture mean to you? (Social media (Facebook twitter, Instagram. Internet.) Fashion, popular culture, music...)
 - What are the symbols of Western culture for you?
 - What place Western culture has in your worldview?
 - If you have kids, what are the Western cultural forces that you do not want your children shaped by?
- 3) Is it possible to be both secular and Muslim; and how do you make decisions when choices come to Islam or Western culture?
 - Is there any contradiction/conflicts between West and Islam in your worldview (If yes) What are they and how do you deal with those conflicts?
 - For example: if you are invited one of your friend's birthday party to a pub/bar which include alcoholic beverages, Pop/Party music, funny atmosphere and mix sex/gender. What do you do? (Do you look for a negotiating to go?)
 - (Or) what do you think about drinking alcohol; wearing miniskirt or no headscarf; shaking, hugging, and kissing each other regardless of gender role and go disco and pubs for parties?

Category 3 includes Research Question 5:

How do Imam-Hatip School's senior students perceive the role of Religious Education on this process of negotiating the worldviews?

- 4) What is the role of religious education you perceived over constructing your worldview? Does Religious Education help you understand Islam and Western culture? In which way?
 - How does Religious Education you perceived deal with the process of negotiating between West and Islam?
 - How do we know what is right or wrong? Some says there is no message from God, the self is the kingpin; others believe it is based on the teaching of God' message. What do you think?
 - Does religious education and its teachers address the problems facing young people today?

APPENDIX F: Focus Group Interview

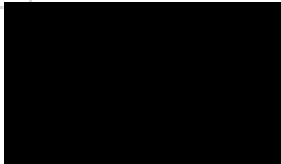

APPENDIX F: Focus Group Interview:

Introduction: to explain briefly the issues that we talk about in interviews:

- 1) What do you think about the creation of human beings and the universe?
- 2) How do you identify yourself and your worldview in relation to your responses?
- 3) What does Islam mean to you? To each other?
- 4) What does Western culture mean to you? To each other?
- 5) What is the problem that human beings facing today? Why?
- 6) What is the solution for those problems?
- 7) What do you think practicing Western culture and Islamic culture together?
- 8) What is the role of religious education you perceived over constructing your worldview?

APPENDIX G: UCL ETHICAL APPROVAL

APPENDIX G: UCL ETHICAL APPROVAL

Departmental use	
<p>If a project raises particularly challenging ethics issues, or a more detailed review would be appropriate, you must refer the application to the Research Ethics and Governance Coordinator (via researchethics@ioe.ac.uk) so that it can be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee for consideration. A Research Ethics Committee Chair, ethics department representative and the Research Ethics and Governance Coordinator can advise you, either to support your review process, or help decide whether an application should be referred to the REC.</p> <p><i>Also see 'when to pass a student ethics review up to the Research Ethics Committee':</i> http://www.ioe.ac.uk/about/policiesProcedures/42253.html</p>	
Student name	CABIR ALTINTAS
Student department	IOE CURRICULUM, PEDAGOGY & ASSESSMENT
Course	PH D
Project title	Worldviews and Identity Discernment of Turkish youths: An investigation of Imam-Hatip School's senior student's meaning-making progress of world in 21th century
Reviewer 1	
Supervisor/first reviewer name	Andrew Wright
Do you foresee any ethical difficulties with this research?	No
Supervisor/first reviewer signature	
Date	16 March 2015
Reviewer 2	
Second reviewer name	Michael Reiss
Do you foresee any ethical difficulties with this research?	No – previous feedback I provided has been satisfactorily taken into account
Supervisor/second reviewer signature	
Date	15 March 2015

Decision on behalf of reviews	
Decision	Approved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Approved subject to the following additional measures <input type="checkbox"/>
	Not approved for the reasons given below <input type="checkbox"/>
	Referred to REC for review <input type="checkbox"/>
Points to be noted by other reviewers and in report to REC	
Comments from reviewers for the applicant	
Recording – supervisors/reviewers should submit all approved ethics forms to the relevant course administrator	
Recorded in the student information system	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>