

THE CONSTITUTIVE ROLE OF LOSS IN UNDERSTANDING
KEMALISM AND ISLAMISM IN CONTEMPORARY TURKEY:
A COMPARATIVE LOOK AT
REPUBLIC PROTESTS AND PALESTINE DEMONSTRATIONS

OĐUZ ALYANAK

BOĐAZIĐI UNIVERSITY

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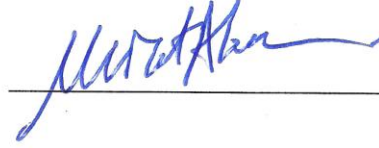
The Constitutive Role of Loss in Understanding
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The thesis of Oğuz Alyanak
has been approved by:

Asst. Prof. Dr. Zeynep Çağlayan Gambetti
(Thesis Advisor)



Asst. Prof. Dr. Murat Akan



Prof. Dr. Arzu Öztürkmen



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Thesis Abstract

Oğuz Alyanak, “The Constitutive Role of Loss in Understanding
Kemalism and Islamism in Contemporary Turkey: A Comparative Look
at Republic Protests and Palestine Demonstrations”

In the last decade, Turkey has witnessed widely attended demonstrations organized by Kemalist and Islamist NGOs and political parties. The questions regarding why these demonstrations are organized, and what they tell us about Turkey, both politically and socially, have been themes left yet unexplored in the academia.

In order to come up with answers to these questions, this thesis compares two of these demonstrations – the Republic Protest and the Palestine Demonstration, which took place at Çaglayan Square, Istanbul, on 29 April 2007 and 4 January 2010 respectively. Previous studies conducted on Kemalism and Islamism show us that in Turkey, the binary opposition between Kemalism and Islamism is deconstructing and a hybrid power, as in the form of the Justice and Development Party, is rising. Furthermore, these studies point out to how, in response to the hybrid, Kemalist and Islamist actors are waging a battle that they are gradually losing. Hence, it is argued that Kemalism and Islamism, as homogenous ideologies, are dissolving. However, what I find more important in these responses, and hypothesize in this thesis is that, in these demonstrations, what is lost also becomes constitutive of these actors; loss is the motivating force behind Kemalist and Islamist responses and acts as the *raison d’etre* (reason for being) for these actors. Loss, both material and symbolic, becomes an element through which these actors define themselves, reassert their identities and legitimize their existence. Responses to material loss, as in lives (Muslims killed in Gaza), the Presidential Palace, parliamentary power or a sacred heritage correspond to the symbolic loss of power, utopias, and belief in the assumptive Kemalist and Islamist worlds. Loss is traumatic; it invalidates the very existence of these actors and devours their world of meaning. It is also constitutive; it builds a new and nostalgic platform where the old memories trapped within the “essence” are brought up, reenacted and recontextualized within the contemporary. Therefore, I conclude that in order to understand what Kemalism and Islamism means in contemporary Turkey, and what the words, Kemalist and Islamist, denote, the symbolic meaning of loss needs further analysis. With its focus on Kemalist and Islamist performances, this thesis aims to provide a facet of such analysis.

Tez Özeti

Oğuz Alyanak, “The Constitutive Role of Loss in Understanding
Kemalism and Islamism in Contemporary Turkey: A Comparative Look
at Republic Protests and Palestine Demonstrations”

Türkiye, geride kalan on senede Kemalist ve İslamcı sivil toplum kuruluşları ve siyasal partiler tarafından düzenlenmiş, yüksek katılımlı mitinglere sahne oldu. Bu mitinglerin gerçekleşmesinin ardındaki sebepler ve bize, Türkiye'nin sosyal ve siyasal yapısı hakkında söyledikleri, akademik çalışmalarda henüz irdelenmemiş konular olarak ön plana çıkıyor.

Bu sorulara cevap bulabilmek adına bu tez, düzenlenen iki mitingin karşılaştırmalı analizini sunuyor: 29 Nisan 2007 ve 4 Ocak 2009 tarihinde İstanbul'un Çağlayan Meydanı'nda vuku bulan Cumhuriyet Mitingi ve İsrail'i telin, Filistin'e Destek Mitingi. Kemalizm ve İslamcılık üzerine bu güne yapılan çalışmalar gösteriyor ki, Kemalizm ve İslamcılık üzerinden kurgulanan ikilem yapıbozumuna uğruyor ve AK Parti bünyesinde temsil bulan melez bir yapı ortaya çıkıyor. Benzer çalışmalar, AKP'ye karşı kendini konumlandıran Kemalist ve İslamcı aktörlerin, kazanamayacakları bir savaşı sürdürmekte olduğundan bahsediyor ki bu, Kemalizm ve İslamcılığın, homojen ideolojiler olarak erimeye yüz tuttuğunu ortaya koyuyor. Fakat, bu savaşında benim önemli bulduğum ve bu tezin de ana temasını oluşturan bulgu, mitingler aracılığı ile “kayıp” olgusunun, Kemalist ve İslamcı aktörler için yeniden inşa görevi gördüğü; kayıp, bu aktörler için yıkıcı olduğu kadar yapıcı bir rol de oynuyor ve bir *raison d'être*, yani kendini yeniden kurgulama amacı olarak hizmet ediyor. Maddi ve sembolik anlamda kayıp, tezde irdelenen Kemalist ve İslamcı aktörlerin kimliklerini yeniden belirgin kılmasını ve eylemlerini meşrulaştırmasını sağlıyor. Maddi boyutu ile, Gazze'deki insanların, Çankaya Köşkü'nün, Meclis'teki temsiliyet gücünün ya da kutsal mirasın kaybı sembolik boyutta gücün, ütopyaların ve Kemalist ve İslamcıların farazi dünyasının kaybını temsil ediyor. Kayıp, irdelenen aktörlerin varoluşunu sorgulatması açısından travmatik olduğu kadar, yapıcı da. Kayıp üzerinden inşa edilen yeni ve nostaljik bir platformda “öz”de saklı olduğu düşünülen değerler vurgulanarak günümüze taşınıyor ve mitingler aracılığı ile eylem üzerinden yansıtılıyor. Bu sebeple şunu savunuyorum: Günümüz Türkiye'sinde Kemalizm ve İslamcılığı kavrayabilmemiz ve “Kemalist” ve “İslamcı” kavramlarının ne anlama geldiğini daha doğru analiz edebilmemiz için, kaybın sembolik yansımalarını irdelemeliyiz. Bu tez, bu savunmayı, sergilenen Kemalist ve İslamcı performanslara odaklanarak gerçekleştirmeyi amaçlıyor.

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In the process of writing this thesis, I have most certainly become a more stubborn, selfish and difficult person to deal with. However, friends like Defne, Ümit, Evren, Sevin, Merve, Can, as well as my flatmates, Barış and Görkem, whose space of maneuver in the apartment floor has been restricted by books and papers scattered around, have always been kind and thoughtful. I cannot thank them enough for being patient and keeping their faith in me and my work. The intellectual debates I have had with an intellectual figure, Bülent Tunga Yılmaz, have also been turned into valuable contributions to this thesis. His confidence in me never faded, and he truly deserves a special acknowledgment within the limited space hereby provided. I would also like to thank my family, who has provided me with the necessary financial and friendly support. Finally, many thanks to the editors at the Graduate Thesis Office, for working meticulously on this lengthy work.

To the two visionary ladies in my life, Nilgün and Sabahat

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2. THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
Conceptualizing Loss and Authenticity.....	10
Deconstructing the Binary: Approaches to Kemalism and Islamism.....	20
A Historical Survey of “isms” in Turkey.....	27
Historical Analysis: Kemalist and Islamist Mobilization.....	35
CHAPTER 3. FINDINGS ON THE REPUBLIC PROTEST AND PALESTINE DEMONSTRATION.....	52
Interviews.....	54
Observations on the Republic Protest and Palestine Demonstration.....	89
Reflections of the Demonstrations in the Media.....	132
CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSION.....	179
REFERENCES.....	184

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The question about how we perform our identities, and what the words through which we define ourselves denote, which any student of social sciences interested in performance studies and/or is familiar with the groundbreaking studies by J. L Austin or Judith Butler may have in mind, encouraged me to undertake a task that will be tackled within the subsequent chapters. Following the findings of previous studies, in which subjectivization and identity formation in Turkey are problematized, it would not be presumptuous to argue that in Turkey, we experience a time where ideologies and identities are becoming more uncertain and indeterminate,¹ spaces and symbols through which they are performed widely shared² and multivocal³ and actors representing them multiple, more peculiar and hybrid⁴ – which necessitates a revisiting of the binary oppositions through which subjectivities in Turkey are formulated. As White keenly puts it: “when Kemalists support Welfare, when leftists become Islamists, when Islamists are Yuppies, environmentalists, and secularists, the ground slips away from any simple division of society in Kemalist secularists and

¹ “Indeterminacy would be the most appropriate term to describe the situation of Turkey in the 1990s... all attempts to (re)create order resulted in a deepening of this ambiguity and disorder” writes Çelik in an article which scrutinizes the ideological and hegemonic clashes in Turkey in the post 1990 period. Çelik, Nur Betül, “The Kemalist Imaginary”, In *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis: Identities, Hegemonies and Social Change*, edited by David J. Howarth, Aletta J. Norval and Yanis Stavrakakis (Manchester University Press, 2000), p.198. In a similar line, Erdoğan analysis on “the Turkish social transformation” points out to an “on-going organic crisis”, in which the Kemalists search for meaning of Kemalism, which necessitates the Kemalist restoration of the sacred heritage of Kemalism. Erdoğan, Necmi, “Kemalist non-Governmental Organizations: Troubled Elites in Defence of a Sacred Heritage”, In *Civil Society in the Grip of Nationalism*, edited by Stefanos Yerasimos, Günter Seufert and Karin Vorhoff (Ergon: İstanbul, 2000), pp. 251, 263.

² See the chapter, “The Negotiated Landscape”, in Jenny White *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics* (University of Washington Press, February 2003), pp. 14-20.

³ David Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power*, (Yale University Press, 1989)

⁴ Nilüfer Göle, *Melez Desenler İslam ve Modernlik Üzerine*, (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2000)

Islamist radicals.”⁵ In other words, when the society in which we live in, and which this thesis tries to analyze, can no longer be explored by a “simple division”, when there are many actors competing for power, and when new and hybrid forms become more visible, and even dominant in the political and social scene, the questions regarding where one belongs and with which camp one identifies himself/herself with become more complex and challenging.

From a more theoretical perspective, whether this emphasis on indeterminacy, uncertainty, ambiguity, multivocality and hybridity deconstructs binary oppositions (such as Kemalist and Islamist, secularist and fundamentalist, civilized and backward, modern and oriental) and leaves researchers with peculiar subjectivities to analyze, and in more practical terms, whether this transformation tell us something about the developments in the political landscape of Turkey, such as the emergence of the Justice and Development Party, and the de-radicalization and de-sacralization of radical Islamist and Kemalist parties have been questions tackled with in previous studies conducted on the subject. What this thesis finds missing in these studies and preoccupies itself with, then, is the actual response to such peculiarization, and indeterminacy by Kemalist and Islamist actors.

This study looks at how Kemalists and Islamists react when “the grounds slips away”, and analyses what their responses tell us about Kemalism and Islamism today. In order to accomplish this aim, this thesis focuses on two recent demonstrations, the Republic Protest and the Palestine Demonstration⁶, both taking place in Istanbul’s Çağlayan Square on 29 April 2007 and 4 January 2009,

⁵ White, p.130.

⁶ The actual names of these demonstrations, in Turkish, are Cumhuriyet Mitingi and İsrail’i Tel’in, Filistin’e Destek Mitingi. In the rest of this thesis, I will be using the terms, “Republic Protest” and “Palestine Demonstration” in referring to them.

respectively. By analyzing interviews conducted with the organizers, raw footages obtained from media outlets and the reflections of these demonstrations in newspapers, this thesis aims to provide an elaborate answer to the following question: What do we learn from these demonstrations about Kemalism and Islamism?

My hypothesis is that loss, which is traumatic for it devours Kemalism and Islamism of meaning and belief, and Kemalist and Islamist actors of the power and reason to exist, is at the same time a constitutive element. Through their emphasis on loss and their response to it in demonstration grounds, Kemalist and Islamist actors find new platforms to perpetuate and reassert their identities. The demonstrations show us that in Turkey today, what we call Kemalism or Islamism is constructed upon and defined by the very element of loss. In the demonstrations, loss is experienced in many forms: It can be material, as in the loss of the Presidential Palace (Çankaya) for the Kemalists, or in the loss of lives (Muslims) and loss of lands (Gaza, Palestine) for the Islamists. It can also be symbolic, as in loss of power for both the Kemalists and Islamists in becoming the dominant discourse in Turkey, and loss of dreams and ideals or loss of belief in a Kemalist or Islamist future. What this thesis problematizes in greater detail is the latter form in which loss is experienced.

In other words, I look at what loss symbolically means for the demonstrators, and how it becomes an integral part of their discourses. What I conceptualize as loss has more to do with “a disruption of normative constancy of beliefs”, or what Kauffman calls the loss of the assumptive world.⁷ Loss, and the actual response to it,

⁷ Jeffrey Kauffman, *Loss of the Assumptive World: A Theory of Traumatic Loss*, (New York: NY Brunner-Routledge, 2002), p.2.

this thesis argues, has a constitutive role over defining subjects and defining their “assumptive world” because as its response, loss necessitates a search for meaning and these responses can be seen as struggles to reconstruct this meaning. According to Landmann, in responding to loss, actors do not only search for the “determining causal factors” but deal with “deeper questions embedded here, which may reveal a dawning perception that one’s assumptive world cannot encompass what has taken place”.⁸ Henceforth, in responding to loss in Çağlayan Square, demonstrators do not only point out to the causal factors, such as the loss of Çankaya or Gaza, but also draw the contours of their assumptive worlds, which provides an opportunity space to exist, and which they feel are threatened. What is feared to be lost, and is consequently responded, discovered and reenacted through performances, is the assumptive Kemalist and Islamist world in which a glorified and sacred essence is imagined to exist.⁹ Demonstrations give these actors new chances to respond to loss by reconstructing the belief in ideals, dreams and utopias, which make up the assumptive world, and by reasserting Kemalism and Islamism, as powerful ideologies within the contemporary. Çağlayan Square, as the venue for the actual performances, provides Kemalist and Islamist actors with a platform where a reaction to traumatic loss is performed in nostalgic and ritualistic forms.

In this regard, the thesis shows how Republic Protests and Palestine Demonstrations have been organized in response to the loss of Kemalism and

⁸ Landmann, Irene Smith, “Crises of Meaning in Trauma and Loss” In *Loss of the Assumptive World: A Theory of Traumatic Loss*, edited by Jeffrey Kauffman (New York: NY Brunner-Routledge, 2002), pp.13, 18.

⁹ As the analyses in the following sections will show, for the Kemalists, what constitutes the essence is located in the early Republican era; and for the Islamists, it is located in the late Ottoman Empire. This sacred essence is symbolized through elements such as sacred texts like the Nutuk, and the Quran; sacred figures such as Atatürk or Abdulhamid II; sacred narratives, such as narratives on the Independence War or on the Ottoman Empire.

Islamism, which has been problematized in other studies as the “de-sacralization of Kemalism”¹⁰ and Islamism.¹¹ An analysis on studies similar to this one show us that the rise of the hybrid, as in the form of the Justice and Development Party, has shattered Kemalist and Islamist worlds and rendered Kemalist and Islamist actors powerless: the more powerful the hybrid got, the weaker these actors became. The rise of the hybrid threatened the *raison d’etre* (the reason for being, or to exist), for Kemalist and Islamist actors for it represented a lost belief in Kemalism and Islamism, and a lost belief in the future these ideologies envisioned. The choice these actors were left with was to either become a part of the hybrid or continue on with demonstrations in every opportunity they were provided with. The analysis on

¹⁰ De-sacralization of Kemalism is a term borrowed from Arus Yumul. According to Yumul, the transformation in Turkish social life, and “the replacement of the heroic society that the Kemalists had envisioned by a culture of consumerism and hedonism was coupled with the gradual de-sacralization of Kemalism. The homogenously imagined and ideologically inspired dominant public sphere had undergone a substantial transformation through the intrusion of... subaltern counterpublics of all sorts.” Yumul, Arus, “Fashioning the Turkish Body Politic”, in *Turkey’s Engagement with Modernity*, edited by Celia J. Kerslake, Kerem Öktem and Philip Robins (Oxford University Press, 2010), p.358. The transformation of Kemalism has also been central to the following studies in the following forms: Tanıl Bora uses the term neo-Kemalism to describe the altered form Kemalism has taken in today’s society: Tanıl Bora, “Nationalist Discourses in Turkey”, *The Southatlantic Quarterly* 102, vol. 2 no. 3, (2003). According to Cizre and Çınar, the post-28 February 1997 period has introduced a shift in our understanding of Kemalism: Ümit Cizre and Menderes, Çınar “Turkey 2002: Kemalism, Islamism, and Politics in the Light of the February 28 Process”, *The Southatlantic Quarterly* 102, vol. 2 no. 3 (2003). According to Çelik, Kemalism is and has always been a fragmented imaginary: Çelik, “The Kemalist Imaginary”. According to Erdoğan the post-1980 period has witnessed a more civil version of Kemalism: Erdoğan, “Kemalist non-Governmental Organizations”. Both Çelik and Erdoğan speak of the dissolution and fragmentation of Kemalism in contemporary Turkey.

¹¹ The de-sacralization and gradual transformation of Islamism have been problematized by various studies as well. According to Yavuz, what Turkey is experiencing today is the new (form of) Islam. Hakan Yavuz, “Search for a New Social Contract in Turkey: Fettullah Gülen, the Virtue Party and the Kurds”, *SAIS Review*, vol. 19 no. 1 (1999), pp.114-143. According to Tuğal, Islamism in Turkey has and also currently is experiencing a process of de-radicalization. Cihan Tuğal, *Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2009) On new forms and faces of Islamist publicness in Turkey, also see, Göle, Nilüfer, “Yeni Sosyal Hareketler ve İslamcılık”, In *Melez Desenler*, (İstanbul : Metis Yayınları, 2000), pp.19-36 and Nilüfer Göle, *İslam’ın Yeni Kamusal Yüzleri: İslam ve Kamusal Alan Üzerine Bir Atölye Çalışması*, (İstanbul : Metis Yayınları, 2000), p.11. For the new path Islamization takes in the pop-age, see, Çelik, “The Kemalist Imaginary” , p.203. And for the integration of Islamism with neoliberalism and the conceptualization of Islamism in the neoliberal age see Yashin, Yael-Navarro, “The Market for Identities” In *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), p.247.

demonstrations contemplates upon how the latter is conducted by Kemalist and Islamist actors.

Since the material analyzed by this thesis has not been previously problematized in other studies, the majority of the analyses provided in the following sections are extracted from data I obtained through my field study conducted between March 2009 and January 2010. Hence, the primary source of data to test this hypothesis comes from the interviews conducted,¹² raw and unedited footages of the demonstrations obtained from various media outlets¹³ and newspaper articles published in seven different newspapers.¹⁴ The secondary source of data consists of previous studies conducted by academics on a wide range of issues, including but not limited to body politics, mobilization and vernacular politics, modernization, secularism and public life in Turkey. Although the material analyzed in these studies differs, where all these different studies meet is that as they approach identity politics in Turkey from different angles, they inevitably touch upon the Kemalist and Islamist binary opposition and explore the different ways Kemalism and Islamism is performed, either in daily life (and daily practices) or in ritualistic acts and

¹² Following interviews have been conducted and tape recorded by the author: Prof. Ali Ercan, then (during the time of Republic Demonstrations) vice-President of ADD – Atatürkist Thought Organization), interview by author, tape recording, ADD Ankara Headquarters, 1 May 2009; Ms. Şenal Sarihan, President of CKD – Association for the Republican Women, interview by author, tape recording, CKD Ankara Headquarters, 1 May 2009; Prof. Filiz Meriç, the Vice-President of ÇYDD - Association for Supporting Contemporary Living, interview by author, tape recording, ÇYDD Istanbul Headquarters, 13 May 2009; and Mr. Mustafa Kaya, Deputy Provincial Chairman and the head of the Foreign Relations Department for the Felicity Party, SP Istanbul Headquarters, 21 May 2009. I have also attended a special dinner with the Chairman of the Felicity Party, Prof. Numan Kurtulmuş in which I was given the chance to ask questions regarding the Palestine Demonstration. This dinner unfortunately went unrecorded. Numan Kurtulmuş, interview by author, Istanbul, 1 June 2009.

¹³ The following media outlets have been contacted by the researcher in order to obtain footages of the demonstrations: *CNNTurk*, *Samanyolu TV*, *Kanal7* and *TV5*. Parts of the analysis on demonstrations rely upon the footages obtained from these television channels. I would especially like to thank *CNNTurk* and *TV5* for being extremely kind to provide me with most of the material.

¹⁴ The majority of articles analyzed comes from the following newspapers: *Cumhuriyet*, *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Vatan*, *Yeni Şafak*, *Zaman* and *Milli Gazete*.

performances (such as commemorations). Here, analyses by Göle, Çınar, Özyürek, White and Navarro-Yashin among others are instrumental in understanding the role of performances in the construction of subjectivities in Turkey and the role of performances in understanding the meanings Kemalism and Islamism denote.¹⁵

The thesis will proceed as follows: The first chapter after this brief introduction will provide the theoretical framework on loss and authenticity. In order to conceptualize the meaning of authenticity, the theoretical chapter will include a section on this concept by borrowing analyses from the work of Charles Guignon¹⁶ and in order to understand the meaning and impact of loss, analyses from the edited volume by Kauffman¹⁷ will be revisited.

The section will continue with a literary review on similar studies on Turkey and focus on the Kemalist versus Islamist binary. Here, major works explaining Kemalism and Islamism will be revisited. The theoretical discussions in this chapter will also be contextualized within a historical framework. In order to accomplish this, studies by Ahmad, Mardin, Parla, Keyder, Toprak, Göle, Çınar, Yashin, Özyürek, Erdoğan and Yavuz will be instrumental in my analysis.

Chapter 3 will share an evaluation on the findings of the field study conducted. The chapter will begin by explaining my findings obtained through interviews conducted with the representatives of major Kemalist and Islamist NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and political parties. Prior to my explanation, I will try

¹⁵ Göle, *İslam'ın Yeni Kamusal Yüzleri*; Nilüfer Göle, *Modern Mahrem: Medeniyet ve Örtünme* (İstanbul : Metis Yayınları, 1991); Göle, *Melez Desenler*; Alev Çınar, *Modernity, Islam, and Secularity in Turkey: Bodies, Places and Time* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Esra Özyürek, *Modernlik Nostaljisi: Kemalizm, Laiklik ve Gündelik Hayatta Siyaset* (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2008); White; and Navarro-Yashin.

¹⁶ Charles Guignon, *On Being Authentic*, (New York: Routledge, 2008)

¹⁷ Jeffrey Kauffman, *Loss of the Assumptive World: A Theory of Traumatic Loss*, (New York: NY Brunner-Routledge, 2002)

to situate Kemalism and Islamism within the context of the contemporary by providing a brief theoretical account on how Kemalism and Islamism are approached from hybrid and authentic perspectives. By doing so, I will also be able to show where my observations fall within more contemporary theoretical discussions and explain how my evaluation on the findings obtained through my field research can be better illustrated by these theoretical discussions.. The chapter will continue with an ethnographic account on the demonstrations. I will be basing my ethnographic analyses on the morphological framework drawn by major anthropologists and folklorists such as Falassi, Stoetlje and Rappaport. The chapter will conclude with an investigation on the media where the reflections of these demonstrations in the media (to a large extent, newspaper articles) will be analyzed. All of my analyses in this chapter will specifically focus on how the element of loss is brought up in interviews, demonstrations and the media and what its utilization tell us about Kemalism and Islamism.

Chapter 4 will conclude the thesis by providing a critical argumentation on what I learnt by analyzing these demonstrations about Kemalism and Islamism.

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this chapter is to provide the theoretical framework outlining the main concepts that are central to this thesis, such as “loss”, and “authenticity”, followed by a brief literary and historical overview in which the different approaches to evaluating Kemalism and Islamism will be explained and a historical analysis will be shared.

In order to draw the theoretical framework for “loss”, the first section of this chapter will be borrowing extensively from the edited volume by Kauffman, *Loss of the Assumptive World*.¹⁸ By referring to this edited volume, my main aim will be to provide a theoretical discussion on the impact of loss on the subject. As the thesis proceeds, Kauffman’s conceptualization of the term will be implemented to the case analyzed. The analysis will also be bolstered through Özyürek and Yashin’s theoretical contributions. And in order to explain the role of the ideal of authenticity, I will be referring to Guignon’s influential text, *On Being Authentic*.¹⁹ Guignon’s theoretical reflections will be valuable for this thesis to elucidate what the actors interviewed with mean when they make a distinction between real and genuine Kemalism/Kemalists and Islamism/Islamist, and elaborate upon how they differentiate themselves from their “fake” and “corrupt” others.

The second part of this chapter, which is the literature review section, will first problematize Kemalism and Islamism as authentic and hybrid ideologies, and then

¹⁸ Jeffrey Kauffman, *Loss of the Assumptive World: A Theory of Traumatic Loss*, (New York: NY Brunner-Routledge, 2002)

¹⁹ Charles Guignon, *On Being Authentic*, (New York: Routledge, 2008)

provide the historical context in which the Kemalist versus Islamist binary can be situated. In this part of the chapter, works of major historians will be revisited, and accompanied by more contemporary studies on recent Turkish history by sociologists, political scientists and anthropologists.

Conceptualizing Loss and Authenticity

Traumatic loss disrupts the continuity of self-narratives, however, and undercuts our associated sense of identity. Faced with such profound invalidation, we struggle to attribute sense to the tragedy, find something of value in the loss, and reconstruct a new and viable sense of ourselves as protagonists.²⁰

Neimeyer et. al.

The concept of loss by far constitutes the most central theme of this thesis. The main reason why such leverage is given to the term is due to its perplexing characteristic where, as the above cited excerpt also points out, loss is both disruptive and constitutive of the self narrative. Not only does it disturb one's sense of identity, but it is also constitutive of a new sense of one's self as protagonist. A process of rediscovery is embedded within loss; the very feeling of loss brings forth its own response. In this part, I will try to outline both the disruptive and constitutive characteristics of loss.

As far as my research shows, loss is experienced by Kemalist and Islamist actors in both its material and ordinary, and symbolic and extraordinary forms. In other words, when faced with the sheer reality of Abdullah Gül's candidacy for Presidency, and the overgrowing power of the AKP in legislative, executive and judiciary branches, or Israel's invasion of the Gaza Strip and the AKP's lack of

²⁰ Kauffman, p.44.

support for the “Muslim brothers” in Palestine, what is conceived to be lost is not only material (Parliamentary power or human lives), but also symbolic (Kemalist and Islamist ideals for a “better world”). According to Özyürek, the Kemalist experience with loss today is reflected in the form of the “collapse” of a mode of modernity proposed by Kemalist actors.²¹ And my research shows that the Islamist experience with loss today is reflected in the form of the “collapse” of a mode of Islamic unity as proposed by Islamist actors. As a reflection of the symbolic and extraordinary aspect of loss, the assumptive worlds of Kemalism and Islamism shatter. Kemalist and Islamist dreams and ideals, and their respective visions for a modern, secular and rational, or a fair, spiritual and united society, all of which construct their assumptive worlds, collapse. Loss interrupts the self-narrative built up on these elements and starts to invalidate the very existence of the Kemalist and Islamist actors.

What is proposed within the context of the cases hereby analyzed is that the existence of the hybrid other leads to the shattering and disruption of the self-narrative, and the eventual loss of meaning in assumptive worlds of Kemalists and Islamists, in which symbols and elements become meaningful and real. But how does loss shatter the self narrative, and deconstruct an assumptive world? According to Kauffman, “assumption is the power of making real, constituting, constructing and bringing forth the human world.”²² Following this line of thought, assuming is creative in the sense that it is instructive in the making of the assumptive world. As much as the assumptive world is creative, it is also axiomatic - it creates spaces and narratives which are based on self-affirming truths. The assumptive world, according to Kauffman, is “the set of illusions that shelter the human soul. We recognize

²¹ Özyürek, p.22.

²² Kauffman, p.206.

assumptions that are normative in the sense of creative and protective, and need to account for assumptions that are destructive, ugly, shameful, dangerous, and bad.”²³

Within this world are located the ideal conditions for existence; and it provides a framework in which the existence of the self is protected. When faced with traumatic loss, the “self fragments and loses its protective illusions and value... in the loss of assumptive world protections, the self disintegrates in shame... loss coincides with terrible shame, helplessness, loss of control, panic, primitive affect disturbances.”²⁴

When the protective set of illusions and values shatters, what is conceived to be lost, argues Kauffman, is all: “What is lost in the traumatic loss of the assumptive world? The answer to this question is all. All is lost... ‘All is lost’ expresses an awareness of annihilation plus a sense that all is of greatest worth. ‘All is lost’ means that hope is lost, that there is no future.”²⁵ When all is lost, and when there is no consciousness to rely on, the subject lacks the elements through which it makes the world surrounding itself meaningful. Its “meaningful” world deconstructs.

Kauffman, paraphrasing Landsmann, argues that the loss of the assumptive world is a crisis of meaning: “when we experience events that do not fit into our schemas, or violate our assumptions, or shatter our illusions, we experience a crisis of meaning.”²⁶ This theoretical discussion can also protrude to explain the case I hereby analyze: When Kemalist and Islamist actors experience events that disrupts their line of narration, and runs contrary to the values defined within the conceptual borders of their assumptive worlds, they encounter a crisis of meaning. When the tools through

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., p.207.

²⁶ Ibid., p.4.

which meaning is constructed are taken away from the Kemalist and Islamist subject, it is also deprived of the capability to define its identity, describe its Kemalist and Islamist subject, or at least, make its way of experiencing trauma meaningful. This, according to Landsmann, leads to an “existential crisis.”²⁷ Therefore, in its encounter with the very existence and actions of the hybrid other, as crystallized by the AKP, the Kemalist and Islamist assumptive worlds deconstruct: Kemalist and Islamist actors face an existential crisis.

Here, the use of the word, “meaning” does not embody its ordinary connotation, but its existential employment. Ordinary meaningfulness, according to Landsmann, “includes a sense that life has a structure that is both comprehensible and satisfying; that we understand the world, our lives, and our roles; and that we feel sufficiently able to negotiate its demands and achieve our goals.” Extraordinary meaning, on the other hand, is built up on a struggle where “meaning or purpose in life is not a concrete, measurable truth but must be discovered, if not invented by ourselves. More abstract than beliefs about cause and effect, more inclusive than the specific systems of motivation and reward we each have, existential meaning is a sense of compelling emotional investment in existence itself, apart from defining particulars of our individual life, roles, goals and achievements.”²⁸

In contemporary Turkey, for Kemalist and Islamist actors, it is questionable whether the emotional investment in existence has its returns. Therefore, the loss of (extraordinary) meaning, as coined by Landsmann, is a painful experience for it breaks the bond between the subject and its *raison d’être* which requires new forms

²⁷ Ibid., p.20.

²⁸ Ibid., pp.14-15.

of inventing the truths that define the meaning in things one believes. The loss of “a meaningful world”²⁹ brings personal invulnerability:

Trauma and loss are experiences that push us to our limits. By definition, trauma overwhelms our usual abilities to cope and adjust, calling into question the most basic assumptions that organize our experiences of ourselves, our relationships, the world and the human condition itself(...)humans possess a fundamental will toward meaning, meaning is essential to human existence.³⁰

The experience of traumatic loss also brings its response. In responses to loss, the aim is to reconstruct a new sense of the Kemalist and Islamist “self”, and in order to reconstitute themselves, Kemalist and Islamist actors manifest their secular and religious identities in more explicit and excessively expressive forms. In the performative platform of Çağlayan Square, demonstrations are organized with the explicit and self-declared aim of responding to material loss. In the weeks preceding the demonstrations, through communicative channels offered by the visual and social media, and the press, people are invited to Çağlayan Square to send a message to the AKP not to elect Abdullah Gül as the President, or to take diplomatic as well as military action against Israel. However, within the demonstration ground, the messages sent well exceed the declared aims, and transform into responses to the symbolic loss. What is aimed turns out to be the reestablishment of Kemalist and Islamist ideals, reclamation of Kemalist and Islamist symbols and spaces and the reconstruction of the Kemalist and Islamist assumptive worlds. Hence, through these demonstrations, Kemalist and Islamist actors not only respond to a contemporary development, but also find a medium to respond to an existential crisis as exposed by symbolic loss.

²⁹ Ibid., p.19.

³⁰ Ibid., p.13.

What is interesting, and worth analyzing, however, is that in tackling with the answers to the question of “Why (me)?” the organizers of the demonstrations point out to the loss of true, and essential principles by which the society should be guided. Their responses at Çağlayan Square entails the rediscovery and recontextualization of the “essential/sacred” meaning hidden in the Kemalist and Islamist sacra, and the rediscovery and recontextualization of the authentic self. Demonstrations provide Kemalist and Islamist actors with a platform in which they can connect with the “true self”, and reconstruct the lost meaning by assuming the “Romanticist responsibility” to seek the lost or forgotten essence. In explaining this process of rediscovery, Guignon points out to three features:

The first is the attempt to recover a sense of oneness and wholeness that appears to have been lost with the rise of modernity. The second is the conviction that real ‘truth’ is discovered not by rational reflection and scientific method, but by a total immersion in one’s own deepest and most intense feelings. And the third is Romanticism’s discovery... that the self is the highest and most all-encompassing of all that is found in reality.³¹

The ideal of authenticity, according to Guignon, is an assumption that “there is a deep, “true self”, the “Real Me”, - in distinction from all that is not really me.”³² The real me, or the true self, according to Guignon, who, in his analysis, furthers a Rousseauan (and St. Augustinian) approach to authenticity, is located within the inner self: “our modern outlook is shaped by a distinctive set of binary oppositions that governs the way we sort things out in everyday life... we tend to make a distinction between the masks or persona we wear in the social arena and the Real Me lying beneath the surface of everyday life... The binary oppositions governing our thought lead us to see the natural side of life as pure, spontaneous and innocent,

³¹ Guignon, p.51

³² Ibid. p.6.

whereas the social or public side of life is seen as calculating, contrived, tainted, and so deformed and fallen.”³³ The truth, argues Guignon, lies not in the reflection of the essence, the appearance, or in the persona which is constructed in response social demands, but in the essence itself. In order to become authentic, the subject has to discover and “access” the Real Me or True Self: “Beneath the play of appearances and illusory demands, it seemed, we could get in touch with something real and exigent, something authoritative, something worthy of our respect and obedience.”³⁴

Implementing this theoretical insight to my analysis, it could very well be argued that the ideal for authenticity necessitates a categorization of the true and fake representatives of Kemalist and Islamist values. Through the door left ajar by Guignon’s analysis we can see how the main argument that is grounded against the AKP, which is that the AKP has a “hidden agenda”, makes sense, at least from a theoretical point of view. What is important to point out here is that the main arguments directed at the AKP do not reflect a theme where it is argued that the AKP does not represent Kemalist and Islamism, but rather that it does not do so in a “proper” or “sincere” manner or does it for other, hidden purposes. White argues that a similar argument was directed at the Welfare Party by the Kemalists:

It was also perceived to be yet another example of *takiye*, of hiding one’s true nature and purpose of interest of survival and achieving one’s ultimate goal, in this case presumably to remake the Turkish state into a religious one.”³⁵

What the AKP represents, I argue, is the hybrid: it embraces Kemalist and Islamist values as much as Kemalist and Islamist representatives do, and uses both Kemalist and Islamist paraphernalia and narratives in excessive forms. When faced with the

³³ Ibid., p.81.

³⁴ Ibid., p.140.

³⁵ White, p.137.

AKP, the Kemalist and Islamist actors have barely any evidence to argue that it lacks a Kemalist or an Islamist base. The AKP is neither adamant in its expression of anti-laicite as the Welfare Party was, nor does it forgo the demands of its Islamic constituents. What rather disturbs the Kemalist and Islamist actors, on the other hand, is that the AKP represents both; and building up on this commotion, both Kemalist and Islamist actors argue that it does not truly, or sincerely represent Kemalist and Islamist values, and even when it does, as is also mentioned by White, it does it to reach its final goal, which, as feared by Kemalist actors, is a state that practices the shari'a law.

In order to respond to AKP's contemporary representation of secularism and Islam, Kemalist and Islamist actors return to the essence. They carry the fight they wage from the contemporary in which they are weak to the past in which they were hegemonic. This sacred and glorified essence, according to Özyürek, serves as a litmus paper for both Kemalists and Islamists to test their disappointment with the contemporary.³⁶ Through nostalgia, these actors envision a society which runs harmoniously: for the Islamists, what enables harmony is religion (Islam), and for the Kemalists, it is secularism (laicite) and a Western lifestyle.³⁷ The assumptive worlds of both actors are found upon this idealized vision. However, in their encounter with the AKP, this vision deconstructs, and the society, from the perspective of Kemalist and Islamist actors, no longer runs in a harmonious fashion but rather turns into a cacophonous entity.

The attempts to reinstitute harmony involve the resurrection of the sacred aura. Through uses of Kemalist and Islamist "cults", Kemalism and Islamism are

³⁶ Özyürek, pp. 203-204.

³⁷ Ibid., p.204.

manifested in what Yashin calls the “medium of excessive repression, mystical, ritualesque and religious.”³⁸ The response to the loss of Kemalist and Islamist ideals comes in the form of revisiting the period and the actors in which these ideals find material form. Through the “mechanical reproduction” of the figures of Atatürk or Abdulhamid II, and the reification of narratives based on the times of the Prophet Mohammed and Ömer, the late Ottoman era, or the early modern Turkey, a Kemalist and Islamist “aura” is invoked.³⁹

By providing actors with the necessary tools, the demonstrations at Çağlayan bring about the discovery of the essence⁴⁰ in which the subject, in its pure, ideal, and powerful form presumably exists. By reaching out to the essential spirit and bonding with it, the demonstrators do not only reenact nostalgic memories, but also glorious narratives in which their assumptions were dominating.

The search for the pure, unspoiled and “authentic” subject, and the envisioning (which in this case also entails a process of remembering) of an idealized past in which the authentic subject is thought to have existed leads to the utilization of nostalgia in competing with the conditions of the contemporary. Performing Kemalism and Islamism turn into a process of reiterating messages of unity,

³⁸ Yashin, p.203.

³⁹ Ibid., p.202.

⁴⁰ This claim could also be problematized: What the essence consists of is another problem that needs further analysis because the essence itself also becomes an element over which different discourses compete. For example, the figures of Atatürk, Abdulhamid II, Prophet Mohammed or the narratives on the Islamic golden age, or the Independence War and the early Republican era are common to almost all actors within Turkey; yet, the ways these symbols or narratives are integrated into discourses differ. A widely used example in this regard is a picture taken in the opening of the National Assembly in 1920 in which Atatürk poses praying with mullahs: whereas for the Islamist newspaper, and the predecessor of *Vakit*, *akit*, the picture taken on this day emphasizes the Islamist characteristics of the early Republic and Atatürk himself, for Kemalists, the same picture cannot be interpreted as an evidence of Turkey’s Islamist essence. This picture caused controversy between Kemalists and Islamists (*Cumhuriyet* and *akit*) in the seventy-fifth year celebrations of the Republic. Özyürek, pp.199-200. As this example reveals, the regularity of references given to the Prophet Mohammed and Atatürk by various other actors also point out to an ambiguity regarding what the essence consists of.

solidarity and strength and displaying of power under the gazes of the others. The act of collectively performing a nostalgic narrative (in which the essence is located) enables the recontextualization of images from a glorified and idealized past in the contemporary – thus allowing Kemalist and Islamist actors analyzed by this study to rearticulate elements that are lost, outcompeted or outdated⁴¹ into their discourses. Nostalgia becomes a mode of performing Kemalism or Islamism in the demonstrations at Çağlayan.

Consequently, demonstrations become retrospective journeys for Kemalists and Islamists. And more importantly, demonstrations bring responsibilities which are assumed by Kemalist and Islamist actors to patch in the lacking parts of the imaginary. As Prof. Ali Ercan from the ADD clearly indicates in the interview, “it is the duty of the ADD to show people the true meaning Atatürk’s legacy entails”. As Ercan’s words make explicit, in response to the loss of meaning in Atatürk’s legacy, Kemalist actors such as the ADD take responsibility. In fact, as the proceeding chapters will show in greater length, the protection of Atatürk’s legacy becomes a part of ADD’s identity.

Therefore, the demonstrations analyzed, as this thesis contends, do more than simply show a reaction to contemporary developments. As interviews with the organizers reveal, the Republic Protests and Palestine Demonstrations have been primarily organized with the purpose of contesting the Justice and Development Party, and Israel (and the West). According to the organizers, the context necessitated these demonstrations to be organized. And accordingly, the liberal,

⁴¹ Certain academics coin the term “post-Kemalist” to describe the contemporary. See, for example, Haldun Gülalp, “AKP’s Conservative Democracy: A Post-Kemalist Liberalism?” *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association*, 2004. Also see Dağı, İhsan, *Turkey Between Democracy and Militarism: Post Kemalist Perspectives* (Ankara: Orion Publications, 2008)

Islamist or the Zionist other, as symbolized in a political party (AKP) or the state of Israel, served as the central purpose for the thousands gathering in the demonstration square. However, there is a deeper struggle, or “an existential crisis” attached to these demonstrations; the threat, as also hypothesized by this research, does not only come from outside but is also experienced within Kemalism and Islamism.

Performing Kemalism and Islamism reveals a complexity within them: it reveals a crisis where Kemalist and Islamist actors lack the necessary tools to make meaning of their own assumptive worlds. Furthermore, performances reveal a struggle to be authentic, which necessitates a retrospective analysis of Kemalism and Islamism, leading to the remembering of the past and its recontextualization in the contemporary. In this regard, Republic Protests and Palestine Demonstrations become mystical and ritualistic events performed to resurrect the pure, ideal and luminous essence and expose it in order to fight the conceptual darkness of the contemporary.⁴² In response to loss which threatens the very existence of Kemalist and Islamist actors, these actors aim to reconstitute their identities as protagonists once again.

Deconstructing the Binary: Approaches to Kemalism and Islamism

It should be noted from the beginning that above all, what this study problematizes is how certain actors in the civil and political platform in Turkey construct a firm

⁴² “Darkness” is a commonly used metaphor especially by the Kemalists. Accordingly, Mustafa Kemal is seen as the sun rising from darkness (from the ruins of the Ottomans) and the new Republic is conceived as a new and bright beginning in history. Atatürk’s revolutions are interpreted as principles towards enlightenment – thus is the Kemalist project conceived as an enlightenment project. AKP’s formation has disrupted this line of narrative as well. Consequently, the AKP’s use of light, as in the form of an electric bulb embedded to its party emblem, became a highly criticized image. A placard used in the Republic Protest in Çaglayan is thought provoking. It states: “Even Edison is deeply regretful” *Hurriyet*, 1 May 2007.

understanding of Kemalism and Islamism and perceive themselves as the “true” representatives of Kemalist and Islamist ideologies. Therefore, what I offer is an overview of the subject position of the Kemalist and Islamist actors whom I interviewed with. This indeed is a difficult task to overcome because it is hard to place oneself in the other’s shoes and analyze the structure in which one lives and experiences the world around him/herself from his/her perspective. I understand the complexity surrounding such a hermeneutical study where it is hard to grasp the worldview of the other simply by referring to their statements and performances. It is hard to create a “common understanding” through the interpretations of texts and statements uttered by these actors.⁴³ What is harder to do is to accomplish such a task without essentializing the subject positions of these actors or reconstructing the binaries. At this point, I agree with Taylor: in order to speak of an “intersubjective social reality” one needs to refer to pre-established categories.⁴⁴ Therefore, I am aware of the complexity this study entails: as I deconstruct the binary between Kemalism and Islamism by pointing out to the hybrid, I may be, at various points, unintentionally reconstructing such a binary in different forms.

In the following pages, I often refer to the statements and performances of Kemalist and Islamist actors and describe them to give the reader an understanding of the perceptions of these actors. Hence, a great part of this study on Republic Protests and Palestine demonstrations which will be provided in the following chapters involves hermeneutical analyses based on the material gathered during the preliminary stages of this thesis. This analysis reflects my findings obtained from the

⁴³ Charles Taylor, “Interpretations and Sciences of Man” in Marin, M. and McIntyre L.C, (eds.), *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science*, (The MIT Press, 1994), p.183.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.191.

interviews conducted with the organizers of Kemalist and Islamist demonstrations, as well as observations gathered during the time spent in their offices (which indeed proved to be a valuable contribution), observations gathered from numerous Kemalist and Islamist performances, including but not limited to the demonstrations at Çağlayan Square, and also the raw footage of these demonstrations gathered from media outlets, and from reflections of the demonstration in the media.

As far as the research conducted for this thesis including the field study reveals, approaches to Kemalism and Islamism come in diverse forms. There is a multitude of ways of conceptualizing these terms; in fact, almost each actor, whether from academic circles, media, politicians, civil society, or citizens attending demonstrations, has a different way of explaining, expressing and performing Kemalism and Islamism. Furthermore, there are multiple ways of attributing the terms “Kemalist” and Islamist” to actors from all walks of life: politicians, theologians, civil society activists, academics etc. It seems as if, being a Kemalist or an Islamist, or utilizing Kemalist and Islamist paraphernalia and displaying them in visual, verbal, corporeal and consumptive forms, is a trendy behavior in Turkey. References are made to Atatürk by almost every actor, including politicians of the radical wing of Islamists, the Welfare Party. For example, in his 1996 Party Convention, Necmeddin Erbakan, the Chairman of the Welfare Party, claimed that if Atatürk were alive today, he would be a member of the Welfare Party.⁴⁵ And actors, who are seen as protectors of the “Kemalist legacy”, such as the politicians of the Republican People’s Party, in 2008, allowed membership to “covered” women wearing apparel which is attributed to Islamism: the *çarşaf* (black chador). In fact, what my research reveals about this expansive and contextual use of Kemalism and

⁴⁵ Statement by Necmeddin Erbakan, cited in White, p.134.

Islamism is not a new finding. Ahmad, in *The Making of Modern Turkey*, shows how, almost half a century before Turkey witnessed the above cited debates, the Republican People's Party (CHP), "the party founded by Atatürk even promised to remove the 'six principles of Kemalism' from the constitution if re-elected."⁴⁶

By evaluating the different ways Kemalism and Islamism are expressed and performed, it can be claimed that Kemalism and Islamism cannot be necessarily thought in a binary fashion as two different, homogenous, and concrete ideologies. They do not represent monolithic systems of envisioning and organizing society, and are often performed in hybridity: they are utilized in and consumed by "hybrid patterns".⁴⁷ As Ahmad's example also shows, Kemalism and Islamism are not immutable ideologies either. They have in fact been interpreted and utilized in various forms in different contexts over time – so much so that the CHP, which is seen as the representative of the Kemalist heritage in political circles, could let go of the founding principles of Kemalism or by welcoming covered women as party members, act in a manner which runs contradictory to the principle of laïcité. Rather, what we see is that both Kemalism and Islamism, not as homogeneous ideologies but hybrid ones, have been vastly utilized in the formulation of discourses of social and political actors, and as contemporary examples show, they still are today.

This claim may sound surprising and even presumptuous at the first sight. Keeping in mind Mardin's critical remarks about conducting social science studies in Turkey, where "the influence of a perceptual frame inherited by a prominent group

⁴⁶ Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, (Routledge, 1993), p.108.

⁴⁷ Göle, *Melez Desenler*.

of modern Turkish scholars”⁴⁸ whose analyses draw the contours of Turkish social sciences at the expense of excluding the impact of “Ottoman conceptualizations of society” and “rejecting Islam as an element of social life,”⁴⁹ and emphasize a “historical break” from the Ottoman past, it is hard not to see any approach to studying Turkey other than one that takes shape within a framework which emphasizes and perpetuates binary oppositions of Kemalism and Islamism and rejects the presence of hybrid forms. As is uttered in Mardin’s momentous remarks:

While Turkish intellectuals of the 1980s and 1990s have mastered a superficial social analysis lacking the many layered depths of earlier Ottoman conceptualizations of a society, they stymied in their analysis of the dynamics of a society where cultural givens –that is, Islam– have acquired a new force.⁵⁰

However, Islam, even when it was seen as missing in discussions entailing Kemalism, was a constitutive element of Turkish politics and society. Even in its very lack of visibility in public spaces, it continued to shape political and social relations and continued to have an impact on the discourses of political actors. Religion, and more importantly, Islamic symbols, have been a part of the social fabric of Turkey; and Kemalist and Islamist symbols and narratives have been used interchangeably by both local agents and the governing elite in the history of modern Turkey. Both Mardin and Keyder, in their analyses show how a morality based on Islam, even when it was decoupled from the modernist agenda of the Kemalist ruling elite, continued to be an indispensable element utilized by local agents.⁵¹ The post-

⁴⁸ Mardin, Şerif, “Projects as Methodology: Some Thoughts on Modern Turkish Social Science” In *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, edited by Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (University of Washington Press, 1997), p.64.

⁴⁹ Ibid. pp. 64, 77.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.77.

⁵¹ For Keyder’s analysis on the decoupled existence of modernity and Islam, see Keyder, Çağlar, “Whither the Project of Modernity: Turkey in the 1990s”, In *Rethinking Modernity and National*

1950 conjuncture where the politicians of the CHP were gradually replaced by new actors in the political circles, on the other hand, has only enabled making the role of Islam more visible and public.⁵² As debates on Kemalism and Islamism progressed, Islam, in its changing faces, continued to shape and even obstruct the constructed binary of Kemalism and Islamism, hence leaving the researcher with a plurality of definitions on and approaches to Kemalism and Islamism. Kemalism, as was introduced by Mustafa Kemal and the Republican People's Party to Turkey in the early 1930s, or Islamism, as was defined by Sultan Abdulhamid and his proponents in the late nineteenth century, may point out to a world view with a well-defined set of principles and guidelines. However, to expect the same level of clarity today would require the researcher to disregard the developments in Turkish political and social history.

Therefore, what the researcher in search for a definition of Kemalism and Islamism in contemporary Turkey is left with is an ambiguous state where neither Kemalism, nor Islamism, can be explained by a singular definition. Instead, I argue that the answers have to be drawn from the hybrid. For example, in the encyclopedic texts on Kemalism and Islamism, which are edited volumes published by İletişim under the title, *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce* [Political Thought in Modern Turkey],⁵³ the issues, Kemalism and Islamism, respectively bring in a range of scholars whose approaches to the issues differ distinctively from each other. In the same volume, Attila İlhan's reflections on Kemalism as an ideology constructed on

Identity in Turkey, edited by Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (University of Washington Press, 1997)

⁵² Şerif Mardin, *Türkiye'de Din ve Siyaset*, (İletişim Yayınları, 1991), pp. 206-207.

⁵³ A nine volume encyclopedic contribution to Turkish political literature, edited by Murat Belge.

the National Struggle and on an anti-imperialist and anti-hegemonic discourse is accompanied (and countered) by Erdoğan, Yeğen and Çelik's reflections, which approach it as a hegemonic discourse. Then again, in the same volume, whereas Toktamış Ateş's analysis focuses on Kemalism's (and its revolutions') authenticity, Zürcher's text tackles its Ottoman background and shows how Kemalism has been constructed on the insights of Ottoman thinkers such as Yusuf Akçura and Ziya Gökalp. And the volume on Islamism portrays the different representations of Islamism by a range of actors starting with late Ottoman thinkers and spanning all the way to the AKP.

On the other hand, ethnographically and hermeneutically speaking, at the demonstration ground such as Çağlayan Square on 29 April 2007 (Republic Protest) or on 4 January 2009 (Palestine Demonstration), participants express their "Kemalist" and "Islamist" identities in variegated forms –not only does the dress code, but also the slogans chanted and placards raised differ– each adding a new dimension to our understanding of how Kemalism and Islamism in Turkey is perceived today under different subject positions. An ethnographic analysis, which will delineate the theatrical, verbal, corporeal and consumptive aspects of the actual demonstrations will be dealt in greater detail in the upcoming chapters. In this chapter, however, I aim to draw a general framework that I believe will allow us to locate arguments central to this thesis in a historical context and provide a literature review on discussions focusing on Kemalism and Islamism. Trying my best to avoid the pitfalls explicated by Mardin in his above-mentioned text, but also keeping in mind the complexities pointed out by Taylor, what I offer, in the following pages, is a polyphonic approach to dealing with the reflections of Kemalism and Islamism in the discourses of the actors defining themselves through these ideologies. First, I will

try to show how Kemalism and Islamism are conceived as authentic and homogenous ideologies by certain Kemalist and Islamist actors today. Then, I will look for my answers within the hybrid and argue how what we experience today and the debates that we tackle in the contemporary resemble the sort of debates that were present even in the early Kemalist era. In other words, I will show how the contemporary encounters with the hybrid are in fact a continuation of similar encounters of the past.

A Historical Survey of “isms” in Turkey

In the late-Ottoman period, and the early Republican era, a range of “isms” shaped the debates on saving a collapsing empire. These debates have also been evaluated in Akçura’s *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (Three Policies).⁵⁴ Among these, an ideology defended by the late nineteenth century Liberals was Ottomanism, which Ahmad explains as “a dynastic patriotism to which all religious and ethnics communities could owe allegiance without sacrificing their narrower aims and aspirations.”⁵⁵ It was a movement which aimed at unifying the various *millet*s (states) of the Ottoman Empire. However, with the loss of lands in the Balkan Wars, Ottomanism also lost its supporters and was subsequently abandoned.

The second approach was named pan-Islamism, and was defended by late Ottoman Sultans, including Abdulhamid II, proposing an Islamist unity among all Muslim nations.⁵⁶ Prioritizing the role of the Caliphate, pan-Islamism’s emphasis

⁵⁴ François Georgeon, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri: Yusuf Akçura 1976-1935* (Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul 2005)

⁵⁵ Ahmad, p.34.

⁵⁶ Islamism has been a matter of discussion in late nineteenth century by the Young Turks, under the rule of Sultan Abdulhamid II. In Akçura’s *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset*, Islamism is laid as one of the three ways

was on religious nationalism. However, with the abolishment of the Caliphate in 1924, pan-Islamism was shelved as a viable path, only to be resurrected by the Welfare Party's policies which aimed to establish common economic and political institutions among Muslim nations, such as the Developing 8 (D-8).

The final ideology of the early twentieth century was the pan-Turkist approach which carried aspirations similar to the pan-Islamist ideal, but with a different focus: Turkish nations. This approach, along with its slightly different version focusing on Turkic tribes, pan-Turanism, has been influential in both Gökbalp and Akçura's writings, which set the very foundations of the ideological path of the newly emerging Turkish Republic, which was later (early 1930s, according to Ahmad⁵⁷) to be known as Kemalism.

Kemalism, as an ideology, according to Parla, has been one of the many syntheses that Turkey has experienced in its modern history. For him, Kemalism is a hegemonic ideology that sets the principles through which the society is guided, tries to bring elements of Western modernity (such as solidarity, science, technology and progress), Turkishness (lingual and cultural nationalism) and religion (as an aspect that solely belongs to the private) together in harmony.⁵⁸ As a hegemonic ideology, it rules out its alternatives and argues that there is no other "better way of viewing the

to resurrect the collapsing Ottoman Empire. Later on, in 1913, by Ziya Gökbalp, Islamism is also evaluated as a possible element of a synthesis (Islamization, modernization and Turkification) Nevertheless, Islamism and the dream to unite under a pan-Islamic state was not pursued; Islamism, in the later writings of Akçura and Gökbalp, was hindered by nationalism. Abdulhamid's drive for a pan-Islamic state, in which the Ottoman Empire would play a central role as the caliphate, ended with his deposition in the counter-coup of 1909. Yusuf Akçura *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (Ankara: TTK, 1976) Ziya Gökbalp, *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Çağdaşlaşmak ve Doğru Yol* (İstanbul: İnkılap ve Aka, 1976) For Abdulhamid II's views on pan-Islamism, see Niyazi Berkeş, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (London: Hurst&Co., 1998), pp. 268-272.

⁵⁷ Ahmad, p.63.

⁵⁸ Taha Parla, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Rejimi* (İletişim Yayınları, 1993), pp. 208-9.

world.”⁵⁹ It is “preserved in a variety of legal, constitutional, practical-political and sociocultural ways, covering nearly the entire gamut of social and political life.”⁶⁰ Moreover, Kemalism is “preserved by the promotion of Kemal as the ‘Eternal Chief’, ‘the Grand Leader’, and ‘the father of us all.’ His image and his ideas adorn the landscape of social life; multiple portraits and posters of him hang in nearly every public meeting place... his extended ‘Message to Youth’ is memorized by every youngster.”⁶¹ This is an important point that needs to be kept in mind because as the analyses on the actual demonstrations and their reflections in the media will show further on, it will be seen that the image of Atatürk is an element that is used in the Republic Protests in a repetitive fashion – thus hinting at us about the aim to preserve Kemalism as a hegemonic ideology.

Nevertheless, in line with the changing nature of the national and international conjuncture, and the introduction of new actors and narratives in political and social platforms, the role the West, Turkishness and religion plays in shaping a Kemalist Turkey also shifts. According to Zürcher, Kemalism “is a model for development [which] belongs firmly to the period of the interbellum. It would be wrong to see in Kemalism a recipe for solving Turkey’s problems in the twenty-first century, but in searching for the roots of modern Turkey, every historian has to keep turning back to that remarkable generation of people born around 1880, without whom Turkey would probably not have survived.”⁶²

⁵⁹ Taha Parla and Andrew Davison, *Corporatist Ideology in Kemalist Turkey* (Syracuse University Press, 2004), pp. 36-7.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.37.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (I.B. Tauris, 1993), pp. 316-317.

Hence, when we look at the politics and society of post-1980 Turkey, as much as we see attempts to revitalize the Kemalist principles of the interbellum by Kemalist actors (as in the Republic Protests), we also see new paths that synthesize Western modernity, Turkish nationalism and the religion of Islam. Also, as much as there are attempts to revitalize the pan-Turkist ambitions of the early twentieth century (as in Nihal Atsız's pan-Turanist approach) or pan-Islamist nuances (as in Welfare Party's Islamist politics) there are new approaches, such as the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, which offer a middle ground between Turkish nationalism and Islam and sees Islam as a prerequisite for being a Turkish national.⁶³ Among these are the Nationalist Action movement, arguing for an anti-communist, anti-capitalist and nationalist path, and the Felicity Party's (and Welfare Party's) National Outlook movement (Milli Görüş), which is based on three doctrines: fair order (that rejects an interest-based economy), real economy, and the search for Hakk (freedoms and liberties as organized by Islam).

What is more important and relevant for the purposes of this thesis, however, are the different ways each path utilizes the element of Islam and how the Kemalist/corporatist ideology of the single party era shows similarities with the hybrid regime of the contemporary. In other words, what is important to point out here is that there is a certain level of continuity between 1923 and today. The element that is central to debates on these different paths, as far as the Turkish context is concerned, is still Islam. Either as an element that belongs to the private, or

⁶³ According to Zürcher, "the basic tenet of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis was that Islam held a special attraction for the Turks because of a number of striking similarities between their pre-Islamic culture and Islamic civilization... The mission of the Turks was a special one, to be the soldiers of Islam... Turkish culture was built on two pillars: a 2500 year long Turkish element and a 1000 year old Islamic element." Ibid., p.288.

in Yavuz's terms, as an element that the public is "cleansed" from⁶⁴, or an element that plays a central piece for both politics and the society, Islam is a common denominator for understanding Turkey. As Davison, citing Mardin, states:

Islam was a rich store of symbols and ways of thinking about society. It defined for many individuals the means by which they handled their encounters with daily life, served to crystallize their identities and regulate their psychological tensions, and provided modes of communication, mediation and community leadership. Islam constituted an integral element of self and source.⁶⁵

According to Mardin, Islam filled an "ethical vacuum"; it was an element that enabled "social cohesion". The failure of Kemalism as a transformative ideology, according to Mardin, was in its lack of creating a social ethos, which addresses people's hearts as much as their minds.⁶⁶ And in the multi-party period, Turkey has witnessed political parties emphasizing the role of religion to reestablish this missing social ethos. During the Ottoman Empire, this ethos has been constructed upon Islam. Islam, according to Mardin, was both a matter of conscience and an element of pressure. Either as an aesthetic necessity, or a cultural element, religion was a social dynamic that served multiple functions. However, by taking the radical step of replacing Islam with laïcité, the Kemalists, argues Mardin, also left a very fundamental philosophical base, or a world view, missing in their ideology.⁶⁷

Ahmad, citing Yakup Kadri's insights into the Kemalist revolution, also speaks of the lack of a similar "moral climate" in which he argues that the state's liberal approach to religion and to ideology in general proved to be a failure. The Menemen

⁶⁴ Hakan M. Yavuz,, "Cleansing Islam from the Public Sphere", *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 54, no. 1, (Fall 2000).

⁶⁵ Andrew Davison, *Secularism and Revivalism in Turkey*, (Yale University Press, 1998), p.155.

⁶⁶ Mardin, *Türkiye'de Din*, p.140.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.240-242.

incident, which was an uprising of a group of radical Islamist led by Derviş Mehmed, aiming for the restoration of the Caliphate and an Islamic order, led Kemalists to take stricter measures in substituting Turkish nationalism for Ottomanism and Islam.⁶⁸

With this incident, Kemalists became more wary of the role Islam plays in the social fabric and aimed for controlling, but not dismissing its role in the making of modern Turkey.

Therefore, it could be proposed that Kemalism was never completely devoid of religion. Islam was an element that was not missing in its entirety, but rather, regulated in Kemalism. It was, at the same time, a problematic element. Regulating Islam was a difficult task; and it challenged the very integrity and legitimacy of Kemalism. According to Berkeş, Kemalist secularism was vulnerable because it “lacked a doctrinal basis” and was constantly criticized for “tolerating religion”, “persecuting religion” or “keeping religion” within the confines of the state.⁶⁹ Thus, Kemalism’s approach to Islam has continued to be a dilemma facing the new Kemalist state. Islamist symbols and undertones⁷⁰ continued to be a matter of debate amongst Kemalist circles; and similar debates, as will be shown in the upcoming chapters, can be witnessed even today.

The politicians of the early Republican era approached Islam with positivistic lenses. Berkeş points out to the role of “rational Islam” in the early Kemalists’ agenda and argues that “the crux of all Mustafa Kemal’s experiments was not to Turkify Islam for the sake of Turkish nationalism, but to Turkify Islam for the sake

⁶⁸ Ahmad, pp. 60-61.

⁶⁹ Berkeş, p.502.

⁷⁰ Ahmad shows how the name, Gazi, which represent religious symbolism, was continued to be used by Atatürk until 1934, which he argues, reveals that Atatürk was not necessarily opposed to Islam. Ahmad, p.63.

of religious enlightenment.”⁷¹ The model early Kemalists implemented in establishing modern Turkey was Gökaldpist social corporatism. According to Parla, this model, following Durkheimian post-structuralism, organized society into an organic entity, in which each element was to be utilized for the greater good of the nation. Religion (Islam), as one of these elements for Ziya Gökaldp, was to serve as the “moral norm” with the purpose of organically binding people together.⁷² Religion in his view was important yet insufficient to hold a nation together. It was not a “*milli mefkure*”, a national ideal/norm superseding greater ideals, such as Turkishness and modernity, but an element accompanying them, to make society feel in solidarity and as one. Islam was “a cultural institution of value”, but “a modern nation [was to be] thought in terms of the positive sciences” and not Islam.⁷³

The model that Gökaldp has laid out in early 1900s, described as social corporatism by Parla and Davison⁷⁴, has later on been followed by politicians and other leading figures in Turkey. Hence, problems similar to the ones experienced in the early Kemalist stages, perpetuated and were at the same time tackled with. Parla and Davison argue that there is a “clear continuity” between the early statements of the Kemalists and their successors in 1930s and 1940s.⁷⁵ By pointing out to how religion (religious education) has been implemented by the new Republic and discussing the initiation of the “Religious and Moral Culture” classes by Kemalist

⁷¹ Berkeş, p.484.

⁷² Gökaldp problematized integrating Islamic mysticism (*tasavvuf*), as a moral norm which could embrace the nation and create bonds of solidarity. Rather than relying on orthodox Islamic values, Gökaldp’s social model included *tasavvuf*, which provided a more secular version of Islam. Taha Parla, *Ziya Gökaldp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye’de Korporatizm* (İletişim Yayınları, 2005), pp. 56, 81.

⁷³ Parla, Taha and Davison, Andrew, “Secularism and Laicism in Turkey” In *Secularisms: A Social Textbook*, edited by Janet R. Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini (Duke University Press, 2008), p.103.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.60.

generals after the 1980 coup, Parla and Davison also approach the politics of the post 1980 coup, which certain scholars see as the time for the reintroducing of Islamist policies⁷⁶, not as a reversal from the Kemalist course, but rather a continuation of it.⁷⁷

Drawing on Parla and Davison's analysis on the continuity of Kemalist social corporatism in the post 1980 context, Akan argues that the same continuity can be observed even today. According to Akan, cooptation with Kemalist principles is observed in the policies of the AKP and the organic-statist politics of the Kemalist era are reproduced:⁷⁸

The current institutions of laiklik do not satisfy 'twin tolerations', nor are the policies of the JDP, in great contradiction to their celebrated position, pushing Turkey towards 'democratic patterns of religious-state relations.' They are reproducing, rather, the religion and nation-state policies bequeathed by the Kemalist military-civilian establishment... AKP fits much better under 'organic statism' than 'twin tolerations'. With the victory of the JDP, Turkish democracy has proved 'resilient', but only with the cooptation and collaboration of the AKP into the organic-statist tradition in Turkey.⁷⁹

Gökalp's conceptualization of the social-corporatist role of religion, which, following Durkheimian positivism, represents a secularized version of religion⁸⁰, have been adopted by governments. Parla and Davison argue that although Gökalp's corporatism underwent ideological transformations within the Kemalist framework,

⁷⁶ See for example, Kaplan's case study on Turkish textbooks in the post-1980 era. Kaplan argues that the secularist narrative is absent in the textbooks used in this period and Islamist symbolism is integrated into the school curricula: "with the shift in the country's political culture since the 1980 coup, this secular historical narrative is absent in the currently used seventh-grade religion primer. Rather, emphasis is on the natural fit between the Turkish people and Islam; that is, the Turkish people's 'öz was realized only in Islam." Sam Kaplan, "Religious Nationalism": A Textbook Case from Turkey", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol. 25, no. 3 (2005)

⁷⁷ Parla and Davison, *Corporatist Ideology*, p.65.

⁷⁸ Akan, Murat, "Twin Tolerations or Siamese Twins? Kemalist Laicisim and Political Islam in Turkey", forthcoming, (2010) p.2.

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp.38-39.

⁸⁰ Parla, *Ziya Gökalp*, pp. 81,190.

the solidaristic core formulated by Gökalp remained.⁸¹ Islam, in its rationalized and secularized form, remained as the social glue, yet with contradictions which appear even today.

This analysis leaves us with the following question: How can the Justice and Development Party, which is detested by Kemalist actors today, be seen as a continuation of the Kemalist past? And more importantly, if AKP's policies resemble the policies of the early Kemalist establishment, how (and on what grounds) is its hybrid nature contested by the actors attending demonstrations?

The answers to these questions will be sought by reflections of the field study provided in the subsequent chapters. But first, it would be appropriate to speak of the historical context outlining the rise of the Welfare Party, along with its closure and the formation of subsequent parties, including its bifurcation in late twentieth century into the Justice and Development Party and the Felicity Party; as well as the rise of Kemalist NGOs in late 1980s.

Historical Analysis: Kemalist and Islamist Mobilization

At this stage of discussion, in order to further scrutinize contemporary Kemalist and Islamist performances, and situate them within a historical context, I propose that a brief overview of recent Turkish political history may enhance our analyses. After a brief introduction on some of the basic dynamics, such as the introduction of new social movements in the Turkish political and social scene, affects of migration and backlashes of urbanization and modernization, and the recurrent coups, which, I believe, have been shaping Turkish politics since the 1950s, I will focus on the 1990s and cover the rise and fall of the Welfare Party and its successors, the short lived

⁸¹ Parla and Davison, *Corporatist Ideology*, p.34.

Virtue Party and the comparatively longer lived Felicity Party and the Justice and Development Party, as well as the introduction of Kemalist NGOs into Turkish civil and political scene.

Over the last couple of decades, Turkey has undergone a process of “liberalization” where new actors were introduced into the public sphere and new forms of political activism were consequently experienced.⁸² These movements, represented by a range of actors including but not limited to guerilla/separationist forces, *tarikats* (Islamic brotherhoods), leftists/Marxists, feminist and LGBT activists, and environmentalists, have not only put the Kemalist/corporatist vision of a classless/conflict-ridden society under strain, but also challenged the corporatist norms this structure was built upon. The balance, which according to Keyder was sought between an anti-particularist, modernist and laicist structure defended mainly by the armed forces and a particularist system as envisioned by reformist factions, was only to be found partially in the post-1980 era when Turkey increased her relations with the United States and Europe and was consequentially pressured by outside actors.⁸³ Among these actors sprouting and gaining further visibility in the Turkish society, my focus, which is the Islamic movement, has become one of these forms⁸⁴ that offered alternative “faces of publicness” to the “habitus in which lifestyles, tastes and the practices of the everyday are described”.⁸⁵

⁸² Ayşe Kadioğlu, “The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the Construction of Official Identity”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 32, no. 2 (1996), pp. 177-193.

⁸³ Çağlar Keyder, *Türkiye’de Devlet ve Sınıflar*, İletişim Yayınları, 1989, pp. 266-7.

⁸⁴ Islamist movement cannot be taken as a uniform movement in itself. For example, the very fundamental divide within the Islamic movement, according to Göle, is between political Islamists and cultural Islamists. Göle (1991), p. 144. For Islam as a new social movement in Turkey and the debate over Islam becoming public, see Göle, Nilüfer, “Yeni Sosyal Hareketler ve İslamcılık”, In *Melez Desenler*, pp. 19-36.

⁸⁵ Göle, *İslamın Yeni Kamusal Yüzleri*, p.11.

Both politically and culturally, Islamic movement found ways to make itself visible⁸⁶: Islamist politics of the 1960s and 1970s under religiously oriented parties such as the National Order Party (MNP – closed down in 1971 for violating the constitutional article on laicism) and the National Salvation Party (MSP – closed down during the 1980 coup) have been reintroduced into the political arena after 1980 by the Welfare Party.⁸⁷ The Welfare Party's ideology, according to Toprak, prioritized “the role of Islam in the Turkish society” and resembled the policies of MSP, in terms of Islamicizing Turkish politics.⁸⁸ And although the Welfare Party, and its leader, Necmettin Erbakan, were banned from politics (following the “post-modern” coup of 1997) in 1998,⁸⁹ its ideology was to a certain extent preserved by its successors: the Virtue Party (FP - banned in 2001 for violating the article on laicism), the Felicity Party (SP) and the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which is the ruling party today.

Culturally, Islamization was incorporated as a new social movement of the “pop-age.”⁹⁰ Religion has become a commodity to be consumed within the newly emerging capitalist-consumerist culture in Turkey. As the Muslim sector was discovered by businesses, Islamic movement gained further visibility, recognition and importance. And as it gained importance, it became part of the same consumption cycle as the secularists and more importantly, offered an alternative

⁸⁶ The conceptualization of Islamism is a complex one, and takes various forms. For example, Hakan Yavuz separates political from statist and argues that Islam in Turkey takes three forms: state Islam (Kemalism), socio-cultural Islam (Nurcu movement, Gülen movement etc.) and political Islam (National Outlook). Yavuz, “Cleansing Islam”, pp.36-42.

⁸⁷ The Welfare Party was founded in 1983. It was not until 1991 that the Welfare Party gained seats in the Parliament. Four years later, they were a part of a coalition government.

⁸⁸ Binnaz Toprak, “Islam and Democracy in Turkey”, *Turkish Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2 (2005), p.182.

⁸⁹ The ban was withdrawn in 2008 by the Justice and Development Party.

⁹⁰ Çelik, “The Kemalist Imaginary”, p.203.

path to displaying the changing face of Islam in public.⁹¹ Democratization also gave impetus to the visualization of Islamism. According to Yavuz, the spread of democracy as well as market economy has led to “an unprecedented Islamization of the public sphere”.⁹²

The growing visibility of Islam in Turkey was also accelerated by economic changes. As Turkey was becoming more integrated with the global economy and the étatist approach to economics was being replaced with a neoliberal one, new actors found chances to become wealthy and move up in the socio-economic ladder. In explaining the “success” for the revival of the Islamists, Şerif Mardin, by analyzing the economic factors between the years 1950 and 1980, asserts an economic aspect by which he argues that economic changes in the multi-party period (1950 onwards) led to a process of de-peripherization,⁹³ where the population living in rural areas, called the periphery, flocked into urban centers, which constituted the core.⁹⁴ According to Keyder, who argues that the rise of the Democratic Party (DP) in the post 1950 period points out to a policy change (accelerating the social transformation described by Mardin as the process of de-peripherization) which prioritizes market economy, after 1950, the four biggest cities in Turkey have expanded 75 percent population-wise, which meant that one in every ten people from the rural side has been relocated into cities. As of 1970s, this movement, paraphrasing Keyder’s words, has collapsed cultural walls and swept away the elitist claims for traditional

⁹¹ Yashin’s interview with Karaduman is important in this regard. According to Karaduman, the owner of the Islamist fashion brand Tekbir, his business has “accomplished what preachers could not through their sermons.” Yashin, p.235.

⁹² Yavuz, “New Social Contract”, p. 123.

⁹³ Mardin, *Türkiye’de Din*, p.217.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 233.

privileges.⁹⁵ The movement of populations also challenged the economic and political hegemony of the Kemalist and modern center over the Islamist and traditional periphery; as the periphery became part of the center, it also became more vocal in economic and political life. The movement of populations from rural parts of Anatolia to urban centers meant the translocation of local culture, and local interpretations of Islam.

However, modernization (as in the form of market capitalism, urbanization and globalization) had its discontents, and encounters with modernization brought its backlashes with it. As Güralp argues, “Islamism is a product of the frustration of the promises of Western modernization and represents a critique of modernism.”⁹⁶ From this perspective, Islamization does not remain only as a social or political movement, but as also iterated by Güralp, is about “class identity”.⁹⁷ The rise of Islamism was also a response to unattained dreams of prosperity. As the center could not keep its promise of providing more welfare, faithfulness and return to God provided an escape to deal with the difficulties of the contemporary. The alternative dream offered by Islamism, with its emphasis on equality and justice, partially replaced the modern dream of the upper-class, and city life style. Without a surprise, political parties which could address the worries of the disappointed new-urbanites had their share of success in local and national elections. Therefore, the success of the Welfare Party in the 1994 local elections, and 1995 national elections, and the success of the AKP in the 2002 and 2007 national elections cannot only be explained through the

⁹⁵ Keyder, *Türkiye’de Devlet ve Sınıflar*, p.171.

⁹⁶ Güralp, Haldun, “Modernization Policies and Islamist Politics in Turkey”, In *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, edited by Kasaba and Bozdoğan (University of Washington Press, 1997), p.54.

⁹⁷ Haldun Güralp, “What Happened to Secularization”, *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, vol. 2, No. 3 (2003), p.394.

presence of the conservative population residing in big cities, but also through other parties' failure in addressing people's economic concerns.

Nevertheless, the success of Islamist parties and the integration of Islam into Turkish social, economic and political life have also brought modernist concerns which were later to be addressed by new actors. One of these concerns was that the "Islamization" of social life went parallel to the Islamization of politics which went parallel to the fear that the state was losing its capability to regulate religion as a social matter. Islamization of the society also meant the loss of the space of opportunity for Kemalist actors, in which these actors enjoyed freedoms that the laicist regime had endowed upon them until now. As the interviews with Kemalist organizations also point out, the fear was that religion was starting to regulate the state, and not vice versa. Şenal Sarıhan, from the Republic Women Association (CKD), for example, was worried not to find a place to eat that serves alcohol in one of her trips to Trabzon, an Anatolian city. Such worries pointed out to fears for the transformation of lifestyles that Kemalists enjoyed in public spaces. Although the judiciary kept its limits, and, paraphrasing Zürcher, Turkey continued to remain as a legally and institutionally secular republic,⁹⁸ the power of the Kemalists in public spaces, for whom the principle of laicite is constitutive, became further contested. The years 1994, 1995, 2002 and 2007 pointed out to the victory of the Islamists over Kemalists in the political arena.

Consequently, Islamization brought about the mobilization of Kemalist civil society activist in the domain of the civil realm. Disappointed in the CHP's failure to lead the government since the single party regime was abolished, these actors took over the task that was left unachieved by politicians. According to Necmi Erdoğan,

⁹⁸ Zürcher, p.289.

Kemalism before 1980s was represented at the political level, and not “accompanied by a ‘civil’ Kemalist common sense.”⁹⁹ After 1980, the answers to the “question over who should define the boundaries of moral behavior”¹⁰⁰ were no longer only regulated by the Kemalist state; and instead, such answers began to be sought within civil society. In this domain, Kemalism (and Kemalist institutions) have been losing power since the end of the early Republican era, and more specifically, since the end of the single party regime; and this power needed to be “restored”. As argued by Yavuz, “the state was no longer capable of imposing its Kemalist hegemony and lost its institutional coherence due to the penetration and effectiveness of diverse groups.”¹⁰¹ In order to “seek hegemony for or generate popular consent for the project of Kemalist restoration along the lines of ‘Kemalist nationalism’, ‘modernity’ and ‘laicism’”¹⁰², proponents of Kemalism (most of them academics and bureaucrats) founded Kemalist NGOs in 1989. These organizations, argues Yashin, “believed that there was a fundamental basis for Atatürkism, that Atatürkism was the ideal not only of the privileged and educated urbanites but also a large majority of the people who had not voted for the Welfare Party.”¹⁰³ Kemalists argued to reconstruct what Mardin believed to be a failure of Kemalism: that is, the social ethos.¹⁰⁴ Conversely, for these actors, Kemalism entailed such an ethos: “They wanted to think that Atatürkism was

⁹⁹ Erdoğan, p.251.

¹⁰⁰ Toprak, p.168.

¹⁰¹ Yavuz, “New Social Contract“, p.138.

¹⁰² Erdoğan, p.252.

¹⁰³ Yashin, p.144.

¹⁰⁴ Mardin, *Türkiye’de Din*, p.140.

not the established ideology of the state, but a tradition of Turkish society.”¹⁰⁵ With this approach, these NGOs claimed to be the ones (and be representative of the ones) “who never comprise the principles and reforms of Atatürk, who are honest, clean, and who seek the interests of the nations and not their own”; and they fought against those “who betray modern-laic Turkey and the principles and reforms of Atatürk, who exploit the national and religious sentiments, who are liars, thieves, under the influence of pro-Sharia-sectarian-racist organizations, who are involved in separatism, provocation and terror.”¹⁰⁶ They gave the same laicist fight that was given by politicians and army generals, but with one distinction: they were without the uniforms.¹⁰⁷

Therefore the increasing visibility of Islam in social, political and economic spheres has ignited its Kemalist reaction in the civil platform. This reaction, as is observed in the actions and statements of Kemalist NGOs, focused on reclaiming a Kemalist space that was felt to be threatened by new forms of political activism, mainly Kurdish separatist groups and Islamists. They wanted to reclaim a space in which religion would once again become a private choice, and not an element defining the social ethos. Either by contesting the proposed (by the Welfare Party, throughout the mid-1990s) construction of a mosque in Istanbul’s Taksim Square¹⁰⁸ or the election of a President with Islamist roots (Gül’s candidacy in 2007), the Kemalists vocalized their concerns for the Islamization of public spaces and fought against the loss of their modern spaces that they have won through Atatürk’s

¹⁰⁵ Yashin, p.144.

¹⁰⁶ “Ege Bölge Toplantısı”, *Atatürkçü Düşünce* 56 (December 1998), p. 31, cited in Erdoğan, p.259.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ See, “The Taksim Mosque: Insertion of Islam into Secular Space” In Çınar, pp.114-118.

policies. Kemalism was “reverberated” in a new and yet unexplored field of civil society.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, from the civil perspective, the Kemalist reaction to the growing visibility of Islam in the public has transformed Kemalism from a “compulsory devotion” into a “voluntary” one.¹¹⁰ The increasing visibility of Kurdish and Islamic movements, argues Erdoğan, necessitated “a Kemalist restoration” in the field of the civil society.¹¹¹ From a historical perspective, the Republic Protests, starting from 2006 and extending up until 2009, are only recent examples of a series of demonstrations organized by Kemalist NGOs to contest the loss of a Kemalist and secularist space. As Çınar shows, public contestations, by both Kemalist and Islamist actors, have been witnessed in Turkey’s public squares and gaining greater visibility since mid 1990s, if not, earlier.¹¹²

On the other hand, Islamism, which was a vernacular movement until the 1980s, and was associated with the periphery and the local, started to dominate the center as well as the political scene. The rise of the Welfare Party and the Justice and Development Party to power in 1997 and 2002 respectively corresponded to the rise of Islamism in the political domain. It could be argued that the municipal elections of 1994, in which the Welfare Party won a surprising share of the votes, as well as claiming the seats for the Ankara and Istanbul municipalities, provide a “breaking point” in the recent history of Turkey because for the first time in its modern history, the Kemalists were so deeply troubled and threatened by an Islamist political party and its policies. Yashin argues that with the 1994 local elections, “Ataturkist officials

¹⁰⁹ Erdoğan, p.251.

¹¹⁰ Özyürek, p.136.

¹¹¹ Erdoğan, p.251.

¹¹² Çınar.

found themselves in a situation where they had to invent a counter-definition of ‘society’. Coming forward as representatives of the state and preaching the principles of Atatürk, would no longer do, when the arena was left to the Welfare Party to define ‘society’, ‘the public’ or ‘the people’ in its own terms. Atatürkist officials found that they had to incorporate ‘society’ into their discourse and practice. At least, they had to produce an effect or an image of being representative of society.”¹¹³

Toprak argues that the divide among secularist-Islamist reached its peak during the Erbakan government. A civilian opposition was forming against Welfare:

...a civilian opposition to the Welfare Party, which started with its success in the municipal elections and reached a peak a few months after it came to power. Several examples could be given to demonstrate this civilian opposition: thousands of office secretaries faxing each other after Welfare’s municipal victory in Istanbul to urge the reporting of any harassment that uncovered women might encounter in public places; the protests against the Welfare Party mayor in the sub-municipality of the Beyoğlu district in Istanbul who ordered the restaurants to remove their outdoor tables, apparently because liquor was served; issuing of statements by business organizations, labor unions, NGOs, Professional organizations and academicians calling for Erbakan’s resignation; the chanting of slogans that Turkey will not be “another Iran” by thousands in stadiums before concerts and soccer games; mass celebrations of the Republic Day; the popularization of a military march composed for the tenth anniversary of the Republic; the popularization of the figure of Atatürk, as the public, once cynical about the predominance of his portrait/statues in government offices, public squares and schools, took to wearing pins and necklaces with his picture, circulating bumper stickers with slogans indicating commitment to his principles, and decorating walls with posters bearing his portrait.¹¹⁴

These demonstrations reached their peak with the Republic Day celebrations of 1994, which was not only an annual festival to celebrate the foundation of the Republic, but also “a show force against the Welfare Party”¹¹⁵ 13 years later, the

¹¹³ Yashin, p.146.

¹¹⁴ Toprak, p.172.

¹¹⁵ Yashin, pp.146-147.

same “show of force” was displayed by the same Kemalist civil actors, this time, in the wake of a Presidential election, and against the AKP.

As an outcome of increasing social protest from both Kemalist and Islamist circles and Erbakan’s poignant statements¹¹⁶ which agitated army generals, the army intervened in the situation. Erbakan was first forced out of the government, and a year later, in 1998, his party was closed down by the Constitutional Court for having an Islamist agenda and he was banned from entering politics. A similar move was almost taken by the army on 27 April 2007, only two days before the Republic Protest at Çağlayan, where Turkish Armed Forces uploaded a statement to their website, warning those who use religion for political purposes not to wage a war against Turkey’s secular regime.

The coup of 1997, although peaceful, introduced what Cizre and Menderes calls “a string of drastic pro-secular policy measures”.¹¹⁷ According to Cizre and Menderes:

All primary and secondary school curricula were altered so as to emphasize both the secularist history and character of the republic and the new security threats posed by political Islam and separatist movements. Teaching on Atatürkism was expanded to cover all courses taught at all levels and types of schools. The secondary school system for prayer-leaders and preachers (imam hatip) was scrapped and an eight-year mandatory schooling system was introduced. Appointments of university chancellors since 1997 were pointedly made from among staunch Kemalists. Teaching programs on Kemalist principles, the struggle against reactionism, and national security issues were also extended to top bureaucrats and prayer leaders. Finally, military institutions and personnel were actively involved in administering the programs.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Toprak cited from one of Erbakan’s speeches to support this point where Erbakan argues that “if need be, his party could come to power through bloodshed.” Toprak, p.172.

¹¹⁷ Ümit Cizre and Menderes Çınar, “Turkey 2002: Kemalism, Islamism, and Politics in the Light of the February 28 Process” *The Southatlantic Quarterly* 102, vol. 2 no. 3 (2003), p. 312.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

At this point, I find it necessary to elaborate on the different and fragmented ways Islam is represented in the political arena, especially in the period following the closure of the Welfare Party. This, I believe will allow us to scrutinize the reasons as to why the Felicity Party, the Islamist political party which organized Palestine demonstrations, is discontent with the ruling Justice and Development Party and discontent with the way the AKP represents Islam in the political arena. Furthermore, this brief analysis will help us to situate SP's approach to Islam.

The Felicity Party is the heir of the National Outlook movement that was previously represented by the Welfare Party. Not only does its politics resemble that of the Welfare, but also, both Necmeddin Erbakan, and his son, Fatih Erbakan, sit in the administrative board of the SP. Although the party is headed by Numan Kurtulmuş, a professor of economics, Erbakan is known to be the spiritual leader of both the party, and the National Outlook movement it represents. According to Yavuz, the roots of this movement go as far back as 1973, to the days of the National Order Party in which National Outlook started as a movement of the periphery and especially under Welfare Party, became a visible and powerful movement.¹¹⁹ This movement, which in many ways can be seen as an economic model implemented upon the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, bases its claims on a just system and constructs its understanding of justice on "Hakk", a term that has a religious connotation.¹²⁰

After the ban on the Virtue Party, the successor of Welfare, the movement was split in half between the young and progressive cadre lead by the young and ambitious Tayyip Erdoğan, who was to later become the Prime Minister, and the old yet experienced cadre organized around the legacy of the spiritual leader of the

¹¹⁹ Yavuz, "Cleansing Islam", p.34.

¹²⁰ Hakk is one of the 99 names of God in Islam.

National Outlook, Necmettin Erbakan, led by Recai Kutan (Virtue Party), and later on, by Numan Kurtulmuş (Felicity Party). The Islamist Welfare was therefore split into two movements. According to Akan, the latter represents the “radical wing” and the former (the SP), the “moderate wing” of political Islam.¹²¹ Whereas the former fragmentation (the AKP) integrated free market economics, Europeanization, and globalization (including having strong relations with international governance institutions such as the IMF and World Bank), the latter put its emphasis on “Hakk”, and kept distant to the values the AKP represented - thus allowing itself to be located at the anti-AKP camp, and arguing against AKP’s “third way”.¹²² The leaders of the AKP, according to Öniş and Keyman, “distanced their party from the Islamist label and sought to appeal to the widest possible swath of voters by presenting their party as a center-right formation that was ready to face the urgent problems of the Turkish economy with well-thought-out policies energetically pursued.”¹²³

As the AKP distanced itself from the Islamist label, tasks which were conducted by the National Outlook, such as celebrating the conquest of Istanbul on 29 May (Fetih Günü), commemorating the death of Abdulhamid II or celebrating the birth of the Prophet Mohammed (Kutlu Doğum) were left to the SP to perform. These Islamist rituals were undertaken by the SP. The AKP, on the other hand, by integrating elements of Western modernity, Europeanization and free market economics, became the other for the SP. And in relation to the AKP as one of its

¹²¹ Akan, p.1.

¹²² The term “third way” is coined to the AKP by Öniş and Keyman. The two discuss that the AKP, by distancing itself from Islamism (“Islamist label”), aiming to end cronyism and corruption, and prioritizing democratization, established itself as a party embracing with the global third way. Ziya Öniş and Fuat Keyman, “Turkey at the Polls: A New Path Emerges”, *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 14, no. 2 (2003), p.99.

¹²³ Ibid.

others, the Felicity Party aimed strengthen its position as the sole representative of the National Outlook movement, and struggled to legitimize its affiliation with Islam in its “authentic” form. In the eyes of certain Islamist intellectuals, and representatives from the Felicity Party, in comparison with the AKP, the SP stood for an authentic form of Islam and complemented its identity by emphasizing this authentic image. By distancing itself from other Islamist fragmentations such as the AKP, and keeping its close ties with Islamic brotherhoods the Felicity Party considered itself as the true representative of Islam and argued to preserve its authentic character. In my interview with Numan Kurtulmuş, he clearly stated that these Islamic brotherhoods represent the constituents of the SP; and the SP, as their representative, addresses the concerns of these brotherhoods whether people like it or not. Whereas the SP was seen as a party loyal to the teaching of the Quran, the AKP was dismissed as an Islamist party by certain circles. According to Ömer Serdaroğlu of the radically Islamist *Vakit* newspaper, what the AKP represents is a religion that is not based on Islam, but a different religion based on materialism and capitalism. Therefore, it does not “wear the shirt of National Outlook.”¹²⁴ Parallel to this, the former chairman of the Felicity Party, Recai Kutan contended in 2004 that the AKP is wearing the shirt of IMF, and not the shirt of the National Outlook.¹²⁵

As we approach today, we witness both Kemalist NGOs and the Islamist Felicity Party performing in public spaces against AKP’s policies. But at the same time, we experience the AKP taking over certain tasks that is undertaken by secularist and Islamist circles as well – such as participating in (and even organizing) the celebrations of the Republic Day or the Conquest Day. In other

¹²⁴ *Vakit*, 23 January 2008.

¹²⁵ *Türkiye Gazetesi*, 21 March 2004.

words, the AKP is as much capable and willing to actively participate in Kemalist and Islamist performances. Why then, do these actors demonstrate against the AKP? What is it that the AKP symbolizes that disturbs these actors? As the literature review has tried to show, the AKP, in its implementation of Kemalist policies, shows a certain level of continuity with the Kemalist era of the single party period. In fact, as was argued by Akan, Kemalists and the AKP are quite similar in their “conceptual and institutional mobilizations of religion.”¹²⁶ Both fit into the organic-statist model.

Yet perhaps, this hybridization is what is troublesome for both Kemalist and Islamist actors. Let me first open up the Kemalist side. As argued by Yavuz, during the AKP era, a new political language emerged that offered hybrid meanings to “politics, the nation, secularism, ethics and the state.”¹²⁷ This new language, according to Yavuz, obstructed the legitimacy of the two actors seen as the guardians of Kemalism: civil society activists and the military. The AKP era, Yavuz argues, has put an end to the dual sovereignty between military-civil ties.¹²⁸ What my research reveals is a finding that diverges from Yavuz’s to some extent. First, the political language established by the AKP has already been out there, long before the AKP came to power. However, the AKP represents the only political faction that has utilized this language without becoming a victim to a coup d’état. Second, although it could be argued that the military has softened its position towards the AKP, especially after its landslide victory in the national elections of 2007, the same cannot be argued for civil actors who have continued gathering crowds at Çağlayan in years following 2007. Furthermore, military’s powerful statement two days before

¹²⁶ Akan, p.39.

¹²⁷ Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, (Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.273.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.268.

the Republic Protest at Çağlayan took place also gives contradictory messages about the end to dual sovereignty as proposed by Yavuz.

For Kemalist NGOs, AKP's new political language is not even a Pandora's box, for as far as the interviews in the next chapter will further show, the answer regarding what is in the box is already shaped through fears and concerns in the heads of Kemalist actors. Within the Kemalist imaginary, no other actor other than Kemalist NGOs, let alone the AKP, can represent the Kemalist heritage.

Accordingly, the AKP is argued to have a hidden agenda which, similar to the Iranian case, aims to replace the modern face of Turkey, along with its institutions and proponents, with an Islamic vision where the society will be organized in line with Sharia. The fear that Turkey will become the next Iran, or Malaysia, and lose its "modern" identity acts as the *raison d'être* for Kemalist actors. Therefore, this "new" language where the AKP is open and bold in its use of the Kemalist paraphernalia and does not hesitate in making references to Kemalist narratives, does not appease Kemalists, but further irritate them. By gathering crowds in demonstrations grounds, these actors aim to defend Atatürk's secular legacy and argue to be the true and authentic representatives of Atatürk's Turkey.

The Felicity Party, on the other hand, is dissatisfied with the AKP's contextual use of Islam and argues that the reason for AKP's constant politization of Islam is to gain new constituents, and not to practice and implement Islam in its "proper" form. AKP's close relations with the European Union and the West, as well as with the "Zionists" up until very recently, are highly contested in both the demonstration grounds and public statements by members of the SP. For example, in the wake of the most recent flotilla incident, groups gathered in Taksim Square and at a following date, at Çağlayan Square, vocalized their criticisms to the AKP's moderate policies

towards Israel and the U.S. “The message that the crowds gathering at Taksim vocalize” as was mentioned by the master of the ceremony at the Taksim demonstration, “was targeting, most importantly, the AKP.” Similar concerns have been raised in the Palestine Demonstrations in both 2007 and 2009. Therefore, it could be argued that similar to the Kemalist, the Islamists also fear and contest AKP’s hybrid language.

Where this discussion leaves us today is a society where both Kemalist NGOs and Islamist Felicity Party fill demonstration grounds to protest against their common and hybrid other. The presence of the AKP brings these binaries in proximity and leaves them at an ironic and paradoxical situation. The Kemalists, who fear for the Islamization of their spaces, gather in demonstration grounds to decry the policies of the AKP. The Islamists, on the other hand, who fear for the lack of representation of Islam in their spaces, and are discontent with AKP’s utilization of Islamic symbols and narratives, which, for them is a clear indication of the desacralization of Islam, gather in similar demonstration grounds also to condemn the AKP. Two factions, whose performances vocalize conflicting visions, can come together in Turkey’s public spaces and find a commonality among each other. This commonality is represented by the hybrid other, which is also the party in power, the AKP.

CHAPTER III
FINDINGS ON THE REPUBLIC PROTEST
AND PALESTINE DEMONSTRATION

This chapter shares findings of the field study conducted between March 2009 and January 2010 and aims to come up with an answer to the following question: What do we learn about Kemalism and Islamism in light of the Republic Protests and Palestine Demonstrations? By analyzing these demonstrations, one of the key findings is the constitutive role of loss on Kemalist and Islamist actors. These demonstrations, I argue are social dramas which entail a retrospective journey among the demonstrators for the search for (and revival of) the elements that are deemed to be lost. By performing the lost Kemalist and Islamist identity, which is imagined to exist in a glorified essence, and symbolized through the bodies of Mustafa Kemal, Abdulhamid II, and Necmeddin Erbakan, Kemalist and Islamist actors aim to reconstruct their assumptive worlds, which has shattered and is deprived of its meaning as an outcome of the rising (and dominating) power of the hybrid. In response to the hybrid which conjoins Kemalist and Islamist values in same symbols and spaces, the organizers aim to display (and assert) an image in which the true, uncorrupted and unique meaning for the Kemalist and the Islamist is thought to exist. Loss, which is traumatic, for it deprives Kemalist and Islamist assumptive world of meaning, is also constitutive of the very Kemalist and Islamist actors which this section will analyze in greater length and profundity. The performances at Çağlayan Square are therefore ritualistic responses to the hybrid other.

The following sections will open up this argument piece by piece by looking at what is lost, why it is thought to be lost, and how it is searched for or argued to be

found through demonstrations. The answers to these questions will be extracted directly from the interviews conducted, raw footages of the demonstrations and newspaper articles. The section on interviews will begin with an introductory theoretical discussion which enframes hybrid and authentic approaches to Kemalism and Islamism. I find a brief theoretical introduction necessary because I believe that providing a contextual framework will help us to get a better grasp on the arguments that are uttered in the interviews by Kemalist and Islamist actors. Moreover, by explaining both hybrid and authentic approaches to Kemalism and Islamism, I will also get a better chance in explaining how these actors respond to their hybrid other. As the discussion furthers, descriptive analyses obtained through my interviews will be provided in greater length. In the sub sections, “Drifting Away from the Kemalist Legacy” and “Islamism as Loss of Essence” data obtained from the interviews will be evaluated to show how Republic Protests and Palestine Demonstrations are conceived of as ways to respond to loss by Kemalist and Islamist actors. As the interviews show in greater depth, as a consequence of the dominating power of the hybrid in the political and social scene, Kemalist and Islamist actors face an existential crisis.

The section following the insights on the interviews will include anthropological analyses on the demonstrations through which this thesis will describe how Kemalism and Islamism are performed in Çağlayan Square and explain how loss is utilized as a defining element of the demonstrators. These sections will describe how participants of these demonstrations perform; and what their performances signify. The focus will specifically be on the rites of demonstrations, including but not limited to the costumes, symbols such as flags and portraits, anthems and songs. The section will scrutinize the utilization of these symbols in

transforming these performances into nostalgic and ritualistic acts. It will show how these demonstrations transform into continuous acts of remembering, rediscovering and recontextualizing the glorified and sacred past which, as the interviews show, encapsulates the “true” meanings of Kemalism and Islamism that are deemed to be corrupted, misrepresented, lost and/or forgotten in the contemporary.

The final sub section on media will carry my analysis to a new platform and look at the reflections of the demonstrations in the Turkish press. The section will particularly focus on how (in which forms and contexts) loss is brought up by columnists, and whether it plays a central role in their interpretations and analyses on the demonstrations.

Interviews

As explained in the previous theoretical and historical sections, there are different ways of approaching Kemalism and Islamism. For certain actors, including the ones who have been interviewed with for this thesis, and whose discursive formulations will be laid out in greater detail in this section, Kemalism and Islamism represent homogenous, authentic and distinct categories. For others, Kemalism and Islamism are a part of a *mélange*, a hodge-podge of values and symbols that deconstruct within the hybrid. Before explaining the authentic point of view, let me elaborate how these ideologies take shape from the perspective of the hybrid. This way, I will also be able to use my findings obtained through my field research to show the Kemalist and Islamist responses given to the hybrid.

From the perspective of the hybrid, Kemalist and Islamist subjects assume “shared” identities within the *mélange* of contemporary values and ideologies. For

scholars such as Yashin, contemporary identities are fabrications of a neoliberal mechanism, called the market, and its engine, “commodification”; according to her argument, “identities are produced within the marketplace.”¹²⁹ For Yashin, “commodification proved to be a context and activity that was historically shared by Islamists and secularists alike, rather than a domain that divided them.”¹³⁰ In fact, Yashin goes a step further and argues that in their attempts to revitalize authentic claims, the “Islamists have taken more inspiration from secularists and from the West than they have from the Islamic and Ottoman past.”¹³¹ In other words, Yashin argues that the search for an authentic Islamist subject has borrowed more from its other, the secularists, than from the representatives of their Islamist heritage. The consuming culture, as Yashin coins the term, has also consumed the imaginary distinction between Kemalists and Islamists: identities, which are not “real in the essentialist sense of the secularists and Islamist, but are constructions” which are “manufactured” in the market, are not homogeneous entities.¹³² They interact with each other, and resemble one another.

There are other contemporary studies showing how the sheer distinction between Kemalism and Islamism, as imagined under essentialist approaches, collapse into each other and are deconstructed. According to Göle, the very attempt to offer an alternative modernity, even through the rediscovery and recontextualization of the “Islamist origin” creates new visibilities and new faces for Islam, such as Merve Kavakçı, “a thirty-one-year-old woman wearing a white

¹²⁹ Yashin, p.111.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.79.

¹³¹ Ibid., p.112.

¹³² Ibid., p.111.

headscarf with fashionable frameless eyeglasses and a long-skirted, modern two-piece suit...”¹³³ The image of Kavakçı, Göle argues, “blurs oppositional boundaries.” Göle continues: “Kavakçı cannot be situated in terms of geographical location, communitarian belonging, or cultural coding; as she crosses the boundaries, circulates among different locations –thereby placing them in “disjunctive” relation to one another– new social imaginaries are being shaped... Such surprising crossovers bring into question the fixity of categories and boundaries.”¹³⁴ Jenny White, in her book published in 2002 and called, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey*, which draws upon observations on the vernacular gathered in the late 1990s, makes an argument parallel to Göle’s and states: “when Kemalists support Welfare, when leftists become Islamists, when Islamists are Yuppies, environmentalists and secularists, the ground slips away from any simple division of society in Kemalist secularists and Islamist radicals.”¹³⁵

Here, the term hybridization is important in that it points out to how Kemalism and Islamism cannot be thought as homogeneous ideologies, but rather as hybrid and fragmented imaginaries. The term, hybrid, originated mainly from Bakhtin’s theory on Dostoyevsky and his notion on truth, in which Bakhtin argues that truth, in Dostoyevski’s novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, is created through mutual address, and is constructed upon several visions. This theory on polyphony (which can roughly be described as a situation of having multiple voices¹³⁶), was later taken up

¹³³ Nilüfer Göle, “Islam in Public: New Visibilities and New Imaginaries”, *Public Culture*, vol. 14 no. 1 (2002), pp. 177-180.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 182-83.

¹³⁵ White, p.130.

¹³⁶ Mikhail Mikhailovic Bakhtin, *The Dialogical Imagination: Four Essays*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981)

by Bhabha's work on post-colonial states where he argued that rather than colonialism being a stage that belongs to the past, protrudes into the present, shaping our relations of the contemporary. Hence, Bhabha proposes that culture itself is a hybrid entity, and it cannot be essential. Such hybridity, Bhabha argues, is formulated within what he calls the "third space of enunciation"¹³⁷

According to Göle, the term "hybridity" itself is often approached as a negative one because "it makes roots imperceptible, and brings concerns regarding an adulteration of an ancestry and the loss of purity."¹³⁸ Hybridization blurs the imaginary distinction between "an iconic Kemalist and Islamist."¹³⁹ These oppositional social models, which, according to White, does not exist in fact, but are self-ascriptive,¹⁴⁰ can no longer be thought as homogenous movements/models – the vernacular mobilization of different groups, representing a wide range of understanding on Kemalism or Islamism, reveals hybrid and heterogeneous forms. The model the Justice and Development Party represents, in a way fits into this hybrid form because what it represents is neither a Kemalist nor an Islamist imaginary – but rather a form that is in-between; and more importantly, a form that can incorporate elements of both imaginaries; a form in which confrontations (among binaries) can transform into cohabitation. Hence, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) is seen as an entity which threatens the very existence of essentialist Kemalist and Islamist mindsets. From this perspective, the hybrid, as represented by the AKP, becomes the common other for both Kemalist and Islamist actors.

¹³⁷ Khomi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (Routledge Classics, 1994)

¹³⁸ Göle, *Melez Desenler*, p.17.

¹³⁹ White, p.29.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

Also from this perspective, Kemalism and Islamism, as “solid” and “concrete” ideologies, begin to “evaporate”. The dissolution of Kemalism and Islamism, as dominating imaginaries, also points out to loss of a space where power is monopolized by Kemalist and Islamist actors, and more importantly, to loss of dreams for Kemalist and Islamist actors. Kemalist and Islamist ideals to create a modern Turkey, or a Turkey where Islamic teachings are central, transmute into dreams which end in disappointment.¹⁴¹

The social and political context in which the Republic Protests and the Palestine Demonstrations took place and which this thesis evaluates offers a strange fusion of competing and contesting values entrapped within the same spaces and symbols in the present. The loss of Kemalist hegemony, and the transformation of the official Kemalist discourse as a “unifying principle and factor of cohesion”¹⁴², and “the blending of Islam into the modern public space”¹⁴³, brings new and fragmented ways of imagining Kemalism and Islamism in Turkey. The integration of Islam with neoliberalism, for example, brings the creation of “new sociabilities” and “new Muslim subjectivities”¹⁴⁴ which contest old sociabilities and subjectivities.

Such transformation, however, is countered by Kemalist and Islamist actors. Republic Protests and Palestine Demonstrations are just two examples, among many others, of protest against this new, hybrid regime. These new sociabilities and new subjectivities are contested by old, canonical and “authentic” sociabilities and

¹⁴¹ Özyürek, p.51.

¹⁴² Erdoğan.

¹⁴³ Göle, “İslam in Public”, p.174.

¹⁴⁴ Kömeçoğlu, Uğur, “New Sociabilities: Islamic Cafes in Istanbul”, and Çayır, Kenan, “Islamic Novels: A Path to New Muslim Subjectivities.” In *Islam in Public: Turkey, Iran and Europe*, edited by Nilüfer Göle and Ludwig Ammann (Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2006)

subjectivities, where the Felicity Party, as the heir of the National Outlook Movement, displays itself as the guardian of the sacred canons, and Kemalist NGOs display their organizations as the “true” representatives of the Kemalist heritage.

From the authentic point of view, Kemalist and Islamist ideals define and organize the “space of opportunity”¹⁴⁵ or the “domain of existence”¹⁴⁶ for the publics to which these ideologies are addressed. From this perspective, only within this space or domain, Kemalist “truths” exist; and only within this space, can the modernist agenda of the early Republican era be pursued. The guidelines and principles set by the founding fathers and the texts they provided construct a Kemalist “lifeworld”¹⁴⁷ in which a sense of togetherness is experienced and lived (*erlebt*).

Let me elaborate on what I mean by the term “lifeworld” by providing an example that I experienced firsthand during my field research. In one of my visits to the Şişli branch of the Atatürkist Thought Organization (ADD), which came right after the interrogation of the rector of Başkent University, Mehmet Haberal, accused of having ties with a coup movement also known as the Ergenekon organization, and the police raids on ÇYDD’s offices (Association for Supporting Contemporary Life), I witnessed the concrete representation of a Kemalist “lifeworld” which was constructed on self-affirming truths. In the lobby, a group of around 30 ADD members, all wearing Atatürk pins and agitated by the recent developments, debated the government’s attitude towards Kemalist NGOs and indubitably agreed that the government was pursuing a secret agenda to topple the Kemalist regime and replace

¹⁴⁵ An opportunity space, according to Yavuz, represents “a forum of social interaction that creates new possibilities for augmenting networks of shared meaning and associational life”. Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, (Oxford University Press, 2003), p.24.

¹⁴⁶ Daniel Bertaux Paul Thompson, *Between Generations: Family Models, Myths and Memories* (Transaction Publishers, 2005).

¹⁴⁷ Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, (Northwestern University Press, 1970)

it with a regime based on Sharia law. In the room, as people conversed, only two channels were being watched –HaberTürk and Kanal B– because other channels, as was claimed by some of the members in the room, were seen as a part of the mainstream media which sided with the Justice and Development Party and pursued a slander campaign against the Kemalists. These other channels, according to the members present in the room, were propagating dissolute lies about the Kemalists. And what people sitting (and standing) in a room ornamented with Turkish flags, Atatürk portraits, and portraits of the then jailed Chairman of ADD, Şener Eruygur, agreed upon was that if Atatürk were to be alive, things would be much different. The Kemalist space, as entrapped within the confines of ADD’s Şişli branch, had its own self-evident and self-affirming truths that constructed a functioning “we-subjectivity.”¹⁴⁸ This subjectivity not only ritualized Atatürk’s principles, but also utilized them to fight against its other.

Would things really be that different, or does Atatürk’s presence (or as Yashin calls it, his “mystical apparition”¹⁴⁹) perform a soothing task for the Kemalists? Taha Parla, in his study on Atatürk’s *Speech (Nutuk)*, evaluates such an edificatory approach to Atatürk and his revolution as a sociological phenomenon, which, he argues, hints at Turkey’s political culture. The passion for a charismatic leader, for which Parla coins the term “Atacılık” (which can roughly be translated as a fetish for the founding father, “Ata”), “has become a constitutive and permanent psychological-political phenomenon that defines the political culture.”¹⁵⁰ For Parla, the images and ideals of Ata, as entrapped within the early modern Turkish history,

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p.109.

¹⁴⁹ Yashin, pp. 188-202.

¹⁵⁰ Taha Parla, *Atatürk’ün Nutuk’u* (Deniz Yayınları, 2008), p. 164.

shape the state of mind for certain actors even today. Accordingly, these actors, some of whom I have interviewed for this thesis, argue that an authentic Kemalist or Islamist version through which the society should be guided exists. In a conference organized by Istanbul's Yeditepe University on the topic of Kemalism in the twenty-first century, the main worry among the discussants crystallized as one where Turkey is drifting away from Atatürk's vision and is losing its ties with its Kemalist/Atatürkist past.¹⁵¹ On a similar line, in a public speech made by Recai Kutan, the ex-Chairman of the Felicity Party, the call was made for a new world order based on the just values of the Prophet Mohammed.¹⁵²

Such views, which deify the founders and representatives of these ideologies, such as Prophets and Sultans, or Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his brothers in arms, are bolstered by narratives on Kemalist and Islamist golden ages, as traced to the times of Prophet Mohammed or Sultan Abdulhamid II, or to Atatürk and the early Turkish Republic and perpetuated by fears of misinterpretation and corruption of the ideals set by the founding fathers and the loss of a Kemalist or an Islamist space. What is important to point out is that if ideals are lost, so is the legitimate space in which these actors exist. Hence the loss of ideals, which translates into the loss of a space of opportunity and existence for these actors, shape their *raison d'être*, thus motivating them to take action against actors and entities they feel threatened by.

¹⁵¹ See in this thesis, the section "Rediscovering the Lost Essence: Atatürk Türkiyesi and the Kuvayı Milliye Spirit" for a more in-depth analysis of this conference.

¹⁵² A more profound analysis on this speech is provided in the proceeding section entitled "Loss of Islamist Heritage and the Islamist Utopia: Call for a New World Order."

In other words, any shift in power in political, economic and social aspects, which for the Kemalists may translate into the rise of an Islamist political party, privatization of state owned enterprises, or loosening of regulations for women who are willing to attend classes with their turban, or, for the Islamists, lack of an Islamist political party (such as the Felicity Party) in the Parliament, tightening of economic relations with Israel and the introduction of new laicist measures to regulate public spaces, are all seen as threats which are feared and need to be avoided. Take for example, a series of panels and demonstrations organized around Turkey and in cities like Berlin by CKD and ÇYDD on

women's day since 2007. In these demonstrations organized by both NGOs, along with many others, including women's branches of the Republican People's Party, the participants celebrate the women's day



by reacting to the AKP's policies which aim to allow covered women to enter (be educated in or work in) public spaces (university campuses). Wreaths are laid to Anıtkabir in Ankara, as well as statues of Atatürk in other cities, which are symbolic acts for paying homage to Atatürk for the freedoms bestowed by him upon women in Turkey. The picture above shows a frame from one of the small demonstrations organized in Söke, İzmir. Or

take, for example, the comparably larger scale demonstrations organized by Islamist NGOs such as the İHH



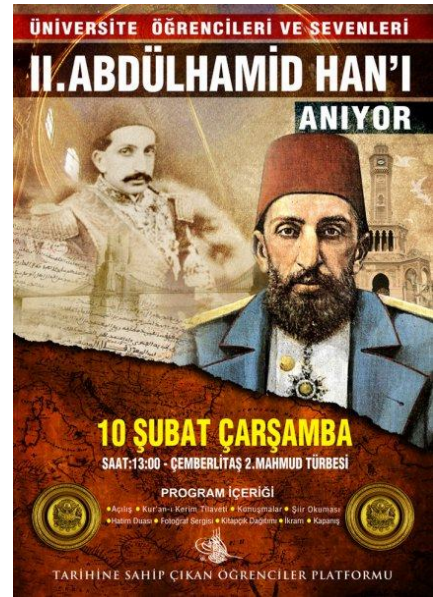
(İnsan Hakları Hareketi-Human Right Movement) and the Felicity Party in 2010,

following the flotilla incident which occurred when a flotillas carrying humanitarian aid were invaded by Israeli troops in international waters. (see the picture to the right, taken in the demonstration organized by İHH on 31 May 2010) As both examples explicitly show, fears and anger are transformed into messages uttered in demonstration grounds.

Furthermore, it is not only the very existence of the image of the founding father, or the utterance of the narrative entailing the founding moment, but also the fear of losing it, which motivates these actors to take preventative measures, as witnessed in the demonstrations, to protect the Kemalist and Islamist legacy. As the section on the actual demonstrations will show in greater length, by pinning images of Atatürks to their hearts or wearing bandanas with Quranic verses on their heads, the demonstrators do not only express their allegiance to their holy figures, but they also create new forms of embracing these figures.

Here, what I speak of, following Parla's keen insights into Turkey's political culture, is a mindset that struggles to organize the contemporary epoch in line with principles and

values which are deemed to be present in 1923, or in 1876; and a mindset which commemorates the birth and the death of its founders and followers, Atatürk¹⁵³, the



¹⁵³ The celebrations mentioned hereby are the National Holiday commemorating the foundation of the Republic, known as the Republic Day (October 29) and the National Holiday mourning the death of Atatürk (10 November). Especially in recent years, the ritualistic elements of these celebrations in these specific days have turned Atatürk's mausoleum, Anıtkabir into a temple where Kemalists, who have flocked the mausoleum, collectively demonstrated for protecting a secular Turkey.

Prophet Mohammed¹⁵⁴ or Abdulhamid II¹⁵⁵, or celebrates the establishment of the Ottoman Empire¹⁵⁶ and the Turkish Republic¹⁵⁷, with greater enthusiasm every year. Through demonstrations, these actors “perform history in the present” and by doing so, “reconstruct public memory”, “historicize the nation” and “nationalize time”.¹⁵⁸ Through commemorations, which, according to Çınar provide “a field of contestation and articulation of many histories, each interpellating a different national subject”¹⁵⁹, these actors recontextualize an alternative time and location within the contemporary. They live in what Bhabha calls a “double time” of the modern nation.¹⁶⁰

Studies on nostalgia and social memory may allow us to further delineate such essentialist approaches to Kemalism and Islamism. As Özyürek’s analysis on the role of nostalgia clearly shows, certain subjects aspire to live by what Özyürek calls “nostalgia for the modern”, which disregards alternative/Western paths to modernity through excessive and fanatical consumption of Kemalist symbols and narratives.¹⁶¹ Kemalists, who experience the collapse of their vision of modernity in the contemporary era, aspire to bring back the elements of the 1930’s Turkey.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁴ Known in Turkish as *Kutlu Doğum Haftası*.

¹⁵⁵ Annual commemoration for the death of Sultan Abdulhamid II, on 10 February. Various groups organize this commemorative event for Abdulhamid II, among them, the youth branch of the Felicity Party. For more information and video footage on this event organized by a student organization, see <http://www.istanbultarih.com/anma/> The above cited invitation/banner calling people for a gathering commemorating the death of Abdulhamid II is also obtained from this web site.

¹⁵⁶ *Fetih Günü* (Conquest Day), which is a demonstration organized by Anadolu Gençlik Derneği, also known as the youth branch of the Felicity Party, is celebrated annually on 29 May.

¹⁵⁷ The Republic Day, in Turkish, *Cumhuriyet Bayramı*, is celebrated annually on 29 October.

¹⁵⁸ Çınar, pp. 148-150.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.150.

¹⁶⁰ Bhabha cited in Çınar, p.144.

¹⁶¹ Özyürek, pp. 32-34.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p.22.

According to Özyürek, these actors evaluate the contemporary, along with its symbols and values, as degenerate and corrupt, and yearn to live (and to bring back) a time that they miss, which they imagine to be “pure” and “clean.”¹⁶³

As other studies on oral history also show, memories of the early Republican years continue to shape the mindsets of certain actors even today.¹⁶⁴ As interviews with actors who experienced Kemalism’s early year first hands reveal, what “Republic” meant to its children in the Kemalist golden age of the 1920s and 1930s, which according to Göle was a “utopian project for modernity” which carried the aim to provide a Western (*a la franga*) life style¹⁶⁵, was resurrected into the contemporary era in order to offer an alternative to the current mode of modernity, or to the current understanding of the Republic (for which, the organizers of the demonstrators coin the term, “Second Republic”) one which embraces elements that the Kemalists contest. The term “Republic”, which was equivalent to independence¹⁶⁶, carries the same connotation for the Kemalists almost a century after its establishment. Through the use of nostalgia, these actors wage a new Independence War in contemporary Turkey and aim to liberate “Atatürk’s Turkey”, a term coined by Başer in a symposium organized by Yeditepe University on the topic of defining Kemalism in the twenty-first century, from the threat posed by hybrid actors.

As much as the narratives on the Kemalist Golden Age continue to shape the mindset of Kemalist actors today, narratives on the Islamist utopia also continue to

¹⁶³ Ibid., p.17.

¹⁶⁴ Tan, Mine Göğüş, Özlem Şahin, Mustafa Sever and Aksu Bora, *Cumhuriyet’te Çocuktular*, (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2007) Also see the section titled, “Kemalist Babalar ve Modern Kızları” in Göle, *Modern Mahrem*, pp. 106-108.

¹⁶⁵ Göle, *Modern Mahrem*, p.86.

¹⁶⁶ Tan et. al, pp. 89-95.

play a constitutive role for certain actors. As Göle's interviews with Islamist actors clearly show, there are people (women, as far as Göle's study is concerned) who aspire to live according to the Islamist "origin, meaning that a return to such origin would bring equality to women and men.¹⁶⁷ The "loss of the ideal", Göle argues, borrowing from Bouhdiba's *La sexualite en Islam*, plays a constitutive role in planning an Islamist social project.¹⁶⁸ Islamist utopia, similar to its Kemalist counterpart, offers an alternative to Western modernity by introducing an alternative lifestyle through transforming the present in line with the ideals set by the utopia.¹⁶⁹

In the following two sections, my aim will be to provide more in depth information obtained through my interviews with the representatives of Kemalist and Islamist NGOs and political actors on their envisioning of Kemalism and Islamism.

Drifting Away from the Kemalist Legacy

Our final message was sent to the Atatürkists, that is to ourselves. To people who perceived themselves as shy, miserable and demoralized. This message was sent to show them that they are capable of becoming an important player. It was important to establish this sense of solidarity among Atatürkists (*Atatürkçüler*). This demonstration was therefore a trust-building one.

Prof. Ali Ercan from the ADD, responding to the question regarding the aims of the Republic Protest

I find the above cited words by Ercan, who was in the organizational committee of the Republic Protest in Çağlayan, important for two reasons: First, they show us how loss, for Kemalism/Kemalists (as in the form loss of a confident, strong, motivated, and united ideology/people) is brought up as a major concern and problematized

¹⁶⁷ Göle, *Modern Mahrem*, p.139.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.142-143.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* pp.143-144.

within the Kemalist imaginary; and second, they illustrate how the Republic Protests are seen as responses to counter loss and reformulate the Kemalist imaginary as a reaction to it. This formulation points out to a Kemalism that is more powerful, and not miserable, which, in its powerful form, assumes the task to counter the threats posed by the Islamist and imperialist others. Under this reformulation, the Kemalists unite in order to mend their lost dreams to organize a modern, secular Turkey in which Kemalist, as defined by these actors, is the official state ideology; and the possibility to unify around this common goal reasserts a fantasy, in which the very possibility to live this dream, and turn it into a reality, gives them the power and confidence to become an important player in Turkey once again.

The Kemalists (or as Ercan calls, the Atatürkists/Atatürkçüler), who have lost their position as “an important player”, and have been shaken by traumatic experiences of not only having a pro-Islamist Justice and Development Party in power for five years, but also anguished with the possibility of having Abdullah Gül, a person with an Islamist background, as the President and his wife, Hayrünişâ Gül, who wears the headscarf, as the First Lady, have consequently been driven into participating in the Republic Protests. What brought people out on the streets was the response to a painful event. It is a painful experience for the Kemalists because Gül’s presidency symbolizes the imminent threat of having the Kemalist and secularist legacy in Turkey obstructed. Furthermore, Gül’s presidency points out to a shattering of a Kemalist dream, where those in charge of Turkey would represent modern and laicist ideals, and not an Islamist heritage. In this sense, the actual response to such an experience points out to a lost dream; the response itself is a fight given against symbolic loss. What this response entails is the feeling of fear and loss – that things are changing, the Kemalist legacy is becoming abolished, and Turkey’s secular

appearance is being replaced, unless appropriate action is taken by the Kemalists. By being at Çağlayan Square, and acting in solidarity, the Kemalists reenact the glories of the Kemalist past and through the utilization of nostalgia, symbolically rise from their “shy, miserable and demoralized” position and regain the authority which they have lost. At Çağlayan, the Kemalists reconstruct their assumptive world, and reconstruct the dreams that make up this assumptive world, by rediscovering the true form of Kemalism and reenacting it in the contemporary. In this sense, the demonstration at Çağlayan can be seen as a journey towards the core taken to remember and bring out the essential teachings of Kemalism.

The message send at Çağlayan is therefore a reply to the loss of Kemalist image as Turkey’s modern, secular, enlightened and rational face and response to its replacement with a more Islamic oriented one, as represented by the potentiality of Gül’s presidency. In this demonstration, Kemalism is performed as a reaction to the “threat” of rising Islamism which results in a reflective journey for the Kemalists to search for and resurrect the Kemalist legacy. The performance itself is a symbolic search for the meaning that is lost and waiting to be rediscovered.

The Existentialist Problem with Defining Kemalism

However, the problem with reconstructing Kemalism, or the assumptive world in which it exists as a powerful player, is a problematic and existential one. Perhaps, it could be argued that Gül’s presidency is traumatic for the Kemalists to the extent that it forces them to take action against it. Yet, what Kemalism means, and who defines such meaning, has been a debated topic among Kemalist elites for some time. The problem is that there is not a single formulation of Kemalism, which stands superior

to its other definitions and is *the* Kemalism, and there probably has never been.

There are a number of actors other than civil society organizations (such as the military) that construct Kemalism in various forms.

This dilemma brings us to the following question: Which Kemalism, then, is the authentic version, or the Kemalism today? This is a vital question that Kemalist representatives interviewed with tackle in their analyses. For example, who gets to decide, paraphrasing Ercan's words, who uses the Turkish flag in the proper manner, and who uses it in an insincere and fake manner, and for other, hidden purposes? In the interviews, it was found that the later Republic Protests, such as the one in İzmir, which was co-organized by another Kemalist actor, Tuncay Özkan, the Chairman of the *BizKaçKişiyiz* (How Many are We) movement, was criticized by Kemalist NGOs such as the ADD and ÇYDD, for it was interpreted as a political act. According to Professor Meriç from the ÇYDD, "there [were] also those who made use of the common worries of the people. For example, we said that there would be no flyers of political parties. But there was one party that hung its flyer, and we had a hard time having it taken down. The common worry was to protect Republican values, but there were people who took this opportunity to act in ways that organizers have not thought of. There were slogans, for examples, that we have not approved of. These were minor occasions but they happened." The Kemalist spirit that was present in Çağlayan was seen as lacking or misrepresented in later demonstrations. Kemalism, as performed in İzmir, differed from its Çağlayan counterpart. How could this then be explained?

Because there exists multiple ways of conceptualizing Kemalism or multiple ways of interpreting "the six arrows", and because "everybody has a different image of Atatürk in mind" as Prof. Ali Ercan mentions in the interview, the answer to who

represents Kemalism at its best (and “proper” form), how (one becomes “an exemplary Kemalist”) and what Kemalism, in its essence (that is, as formulated by its founder, Atatürk himself) stands for becomes a convoluted issue which bothers Kemalist actors. For example, almost three decades ago, in his column on 22 June 1982, Attila İlhan, a Kemalist intellectual argues:

It is so surprising. We cannot simply come to terms with explaining Kemalism. (Atatürkçülük/Atatürkism). Can there be any reason for this other than having our political interest interfere with this business... In fact, when we examine Kemalism within a historical framework, we see that there have so far been three Kemalisms in Turkey: The first two have been experienced under the presidency of Atatürk himself; and they are the revolutionary and militarist democracy models. Because revolutions caused a backlash in society, the more militarist version of Kemalism was deemed necessary. The problem, however was that Atatürk passed away and could not accomplish this militarist phase. And others that followed Atatürk were unsuccessful in finishing this phase. The third, which I call İnönü Kemalism, was constructed upon failures... Kemalism, for me, is what the very first phase represents. The second phase was an extraordinary one, whereas the third was a corrupt and highly bureaucratized version of the doctrine.¹⁷⁰

On a similar fashion, only three years later, in his column on 12 November 1985, Uğur Mumcu makes a two-fold categorization to understanding Kemalism:

Is it Kemalism (Atatürkçülük) itself which has been transformed into an official ideology, or a fake, perverted imaginary that is alienated from the essence of Kemalism and reformatted to better suit their [referring to Kenan Evren] own ideology? Sadly, it is the latter... Kemalism, which is reformatted to suit the barren and uni-dimensional perspective of the government, is being transformed into an official ideology.¹⁷¹

In both Mumcu and İlhan’s columns the fear for the loss of the “true” meaning of Kemalism (and the loss of this meaning in defining the official state ideology), in its pure and essential form (what Mumcu calls the essence of Kemalism), crystallizes. Kemalism according to these intellectuals is being misunderstood or misused.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ *Milliyet*, 22 June 1982.

¹⁷¹ *Cumhuriyet*, 12 November 1985, In Uğur Mumcu, *Sahte Atatürkçülük* (umag, 2004), p. 239.

¹⁷² The cynical tone employed by Aziz Nesin in his famous poem written in 1968 on Atatürk explains the Kemalist fears regarding the misuses of Kemalism, and the exploitation of the Kemalist legacy:

Contemporary form of Kemalism, according to Mumcu and İlhan, is a misrepresentation of its original version. The “official state ideology” as uttered in Mumcu’s column, is seen as one that is perverted, reformatted and transformed. It is not the “real” Kemalism. The answer as to what Kemalism connotes today is constructed over what Kemalism is not, or in this case, what it has not (what Kemalism does not have is seen as the bonding with the essence – therefore, the kind of Kemalism experienced by Mumcu has departed from the “essence of Kemalism”). And accordingly, the current situation that Kemalist actors face today, in which they are pushed into becoming marginalized actors, is seen as a consequence of such failures, and misrepresentations in the past.

For representatives of Kemalist NGOs defining Kemalism turns into an unending project for chasing its true, authentic and essential formulation and criticizing its corrupt and distorted misrepresentations. As far as the interviews show, the fear for the loss of the Kemalist meaning (as embedded to the Kemalist essence) Mumcu iterates in his column is a fear that the Kemalist NGOs share 25 years after this passage was written.

In interviews, it is found that there are mainly two tenets of distress among Kemalist actors. The first and more visible one is the fear for Turkey’s Islamization. According to Şenal Sarihan, there has always been this sort of fear: “Twenty or so

“Altı oku soruyorsan, politika dehlizinde; hele partin senden sonra, devrimlerin tavizinde... yobazlarla gericiler, onlar bizden daha zinde! Atam, atam derler ama, bir adınız var sizin de... halkçılık devletçilik: anlatamam çok hazin de... çoktan beri sahteciler, ağır çeker her vezinde!... ilerledik ata’m öyle, şimdi görsen tanımazsın; Amerikan tarzındayız, arasan da bulamazsın, otuz yıldır izindegiz!” (If you are asking about the six arrows, it is in a political abyss; and your party after you, gives up on your revolutions... the reactionaries and fundamentalists, they are much more stronger than ourselves! Father, father they would utter, yes sir you do have a name... populism and etatism; cannot be described, in their sadness... those who have been faking for a long time, take it longer in each meter!... we have progressed, yes Father, you would not believe us if you were to see; we follow American style, you would not be able to find us even when you search for, we have been following you for the past thirty years!”)

years ago I was (with Akın Birdal¹⁷³) in Trabzon in a panel discussion on human rights. We could not find a place to eat which serves alcohol... today, this fear can have much more impact. In 17th of May [2009], for example, this fear can play a greater role in bringing people together. This fear has become more visible today.”

The other feared element concerns Kemalism’s false and distorted appearances in public which representatives of Kemalist organizations argue to be an outcome of misinformation and disinformation – that columnists, for example, do not reflect the truth but rather serve the purpose of “agitating people”. And as a result of such misinformation, these demonstrations have been evaluated by the media in a “wrong” and “contorted” way. This, according to the actors interviewed, leads to the loss of true meaning as represented in what these actors call “the essence of Kemalism”. Kemalism, as defined by other actors, does not represent essential principles properly and distorts them. And by organizing the Republic Protests, Kemalist NGOs assume the task to teach people about Kemalism’s true meaning.

But why would loss be such a constitutive element for Kemalist actors? Why would they be irritated by the loss of the “essential” meaning of Kemalism. As Kemalism, in Mumcu’s words, is being reformatted to be integrated into the ideologies of the others, or in Prof. Ercan’s and Prof. Meriç’s words, being manipulated, misused or misunderstood, something considered further worrisome is found: that the Kemalist legacy, which is to guide the Turkish youth and children (Turkey’s future guardians of secularism and Kemalism), is becoming conceptually ambiguous, spoiled and corrupt. There is a drifting away from the Kemalist legacy and its teachings, and loss of Kemalist values that would guide the society, which

¹⁷³ Akın Birdal is a Kurdish politician. He is a Member of the Parliament, representing DTP – Demokratik Toplum Partisi (Democratic Society Party). He has also served as the president of İnsan Hakları Derneği (Human Rights Association) in Turkey.

terrifies Kemalist actors; and this process of losing ties with the essential teachings of Kemalism, which are deemed modern, enlightening and rational ones, is seen as a path which would eventually lead to backwardness and shari'a.

Loss of Kemalist meaning and legacy is a motivating force for the Kemalists. In their formulations, Kemalism is constructed as a response to its distortion. Loss is equated with backwardness and sharia and is seen not only as something to be feared, but also prevented and fought against. This task starts to define the *raison d'être* for Kemalist NGOs. The Republic Protests, in this sense, transform into platforms for struggle. ÇYDD's role in educating youth is illustrative in this regard. The fear, as uttered in the interview with Professor Meriç, the Vice-Chairwoman of ÇYDD, is that a future that is not constructed on true Kemalist principles will transform Turkey into an Islamist state - one in which Kemalists become the marginalized. According to Meriç, "children must be raised as critical and questioning human beings and when they are brainwashed, they cannot be expected to become critical and questioning individuals. They learn what they are provided with and orient their behavior and emotions accordingly." This criticism is linked with Islamism and put right to the opposite of the issue of covering: "Those young women who cover", according to Prof. Meriç, as well as Şenal Sarihan from the CKD, "have been fed with dogmas and not given a chance to be raised as critical and independent individuals." Following this line of logic, both representatives argue that whereas "Kemalism provided women with every chance to become free and independent, Islamic paths have led to religious exploitation and manipulation which was also observed in Palestine Demonstrations".

In words of Meriç, we can see how loss of the Kemalist essence and the corruption of the meaning of Kemalism becomes principle in defining the aims of

these Kemalist NGOs, which eventually leads these actors to identifying themselves with this fear, and counter such fear with essentialist responses. Furthermore, the fear that materializes in light of these discussions is that Kemalism is having an organic crisis in which the very meaning of Kemalism and the values attached to Kemalism becomes debated. According to Sarihan, “this is a period where Atatürk is used extensively. Who is Atatürkist, who is not? Who really defends the revolutionary values of Mustafa Kemal and who makes use of them?” The Republic Protests, paraphrasing words of Sarihan were conducted to give a unified message against all those people who claim to be Kemalist “for other reasons”. The Republic Protests “held the true spirit of Kemalism.” The identical outcome was obtained throughout the interview conducted with Prof. Ali Ercan, who argued that “in [our] demonstration [referring to Tandoğan and Çağlayan], there have been many different ways of describing Atatürk, but not a single person attending the demonstration understood Atatürk in the wrong way. This is something common to all attendants of the Republic Protests.

Under the Kemalist imagery of the NGOs interviewed with, the contemporary society is conceived of as one which is drifting away from Kemalist principles. What defines Kemalism, as a response to its drifting away, becomes the fear for the loss of its “true” and “authentic” connotation. The Republic Protest at Çağlayan, in return, is seen as a platform to overcome this crisis by collectively performing what Kemalism has lost, and what Kemalism should denote. The organizers of the demonstration assume the task to react to loss of meaning for Kemalism by rediscovering and recontextualizing its pure and essential form.

Rediscovering the Lost Essence: Atatürk Türkiye'si and the Kuvayı Milliye Spirit

The ambiguity with Kemalism regarding the different ways of interpreting what the concept itself stands for, what its legacy entails, and whether this legacy is suitable with tackling with a Turkey in which the AKP is the ruling party and holds the majority in the Parliament has also been carried into academic discussions. The worry that not only Kemalism itself is losing its meaning but also that Kemalism is being used by other actors for political gains and therefore the image of Kemalism is becoming distorted constituted the launching point for the two-day symposium in November 2006. The title of the symposium was “Kemalism (*Atatürkçülük*) in the beginning of the twenty-first century: Problems with Understanding and Explaining.”¹⁷⁴ The opening speech by the Chairman of the Institute, Mr. Edip Başer, who is an ex-General, is worth analyzing for it reveals the fear and irritation with the different ways Kemalism is conceptualized today. Moreover, Mr. Başer’s speech illustrates the concern for drifting away from the ideals set by Atatürk. This concern becomes more meaningful when one contextualizes this conference within the current flux in Turkish politics, in which the AKP is in power, the role of the army is weakening and ex-Generals are being interrogated for planning a coup d’etat. In this regard, Başer’s speech does more than simply vocalize a concern regarding the loss of conceptual clarity for Kemalism. While his speech vocalizes a worry for the loss of meaning, it does at the same time point out to the loss of the power of the army over defining what Kemalism connotes. This illustrates a concern regarding a translocation of power from the army generals to new actors. From Başer’s

¹⁷⁴ “21. Yüzyılın Başında Atatürkçülük; Anlaşılması ve Anlatılmasındaki Sorunlar”, *Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü* (Yeditepe Üniversitesi, May 2008).

perspective, this is perceived as a threat for Turkey as a whole. According to Başer, “Turkey has drifted far away from Atatürk’s Turkey (*Atatürk Türkiyesi*)... [which] is a clear indication of how our national consciousness and national unity is under threat.” In order to fight against this threat, Başer argues (and perhaps hints at the upcoming demonstrations organized almost six months later) that “Kemalists today need to be organized and remain in solidarity. Civil society organizations need to act together. By acting together, they can employ the greatest, most effective and democratic control mechanism of all: ‘social reaction’... It is the duty of all individuals, no matter how old they are or what their gender is, to act with respect to the Kuvayı Milliye [National Force] spirit and reorganize their behavior in line with our nation’s interests”.¹⁷⁵

The Kuvayı Milliye spirit, which Başer emphasizes, is revolutionary Kemalist ideology which, paraphrasing Başer’s words, describes what Kemalism, in its essential form, should employ. However, according to Başer, this spirit is missing in today’s Turkey. The fear for forgetting the Kemalist past is constitutive of the Kemalism Başer constructs.¹⁷⁶ Could this spirit then be found and reinstructed? The final part of Başer’s speech tackles this question by directing us to the role nostalgia plays in reformulating Kemalism in its essential framework. It directs the participants of the symposium to the location of the Kemalist essence:

If you need additional strength, read about Gallipoli or the Sivas Congress; in sum, read about the history of Independence. Look at what your ancestors did

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., pp.7-8

¹⁷⁶ Başer’s criticism on forgetting the past is ironic because Kemalist history is itself built upon forgetfulness. In her study on the status of the Alevi community in Turkey, and the ideological role of Kemalism in suppressing the Alevi identity, Leyla Neyzi also argues that Kemalism constructs its identity on “denial of the past” and “remembering to forget”. Therefore, what is asked of the Kemalists to forget and what needs to be remembered becomes a controversial issue. Leyla Neyzi, “Remembering to Forget: Sabbetaenism, National Identity and Subjectivity in Turkey”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 44 no. 1 (January 2002).

before and after the Independence War? This will be enough to regain consciousness and remind yourselves that making others conscious about the threats is a vital duty for all.¹⁷⁷

As Başer's concerns show, what Kemalism lacks today is solidarity; and emphasizing what it lacks, Başer points out that the power to act as "one" once again can be found by revisiting the past, which according to Başer means rediscovering the essence, and informing others about it through democratic mechanisms, such as mass demonstrations. By revisiting the past, not only do the Kemalists refer to the essence but also bring it to the contemporary era and use it as a tool to fight against other threats/enemies. This glorified essence, which is argued to be hidden in the pages of Atatürk's *Nutuk*, or in mythologized narratives on the Independence War, is brought back into the contemporary imaginary to fill in what Kemalism lacks, and what Kemalist actors such as Başer argue to be lost, yet only waiting to be recovered.

Overall, this section has tried to provide some examples to illustrate how Kemalism is conceptualized as a response to loss. It was found that Kemalism represents a lacking imaginary, one which perceived in its contemporary form as a misrecognized or misused ideology by its opportunists. The fear that Kemalism is losing its meaning as a powerful discourse to regulate society, and Turkey is drifting away from the Kemalist legacy is the central theme in discussions among Kemalist actors. Within such a context in which the very foundations of Kemalism are being debated and perceived as threatened by other actors, the Republic Protests come as a response to fight against the "enemies" of Kemalism, and more important, reconstruct the meaning for Kemalism in order to replace its "contorted" or

¹⁷⁷ "21. Yüzyılın Başında Atatürkçülük; Anlaşılması ve Anlatılmasındaki Sorunlar", *Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü – Yeditepe Üniversitesi*, (May 2008). p.9.

“corrupted” connotation. The struggle itself entails a search for meaning for Kemalist actors.

Islamist Response to the Loss of Essence

Yes, we are a political party and this demonstration was organized under the jurisprudence of this party. But, Gaza, the problems in the Middle East and Palestine are shared by the Turkish nation, no matter which identity people represent.¹⁷⁸ These problems are shared by all of us. As the National Outlook movement, we conduct politics in this geography, in our motherland, in this country which we feel as the original owners. And we are a movement that has paid the price for it. Four of our political parties have been shut down for unaccountable reasons and we are the fifth party trying to follow the same path. It is known by everyone that people of the National Outlook movement are in no way affiliated with terrorist actions. No one can claim the opposite. However, there are so many provocateurs in all different demonstrations; they try to make us look ugly to both international and national media.”

Mr. Mustafa Kaya, Deputy Provincial Chairman and the head of the Foreign Relations Department for the Felicity Party responding to a question on the reasons for organizing demonstrations at Çağlayan Square

The main aim of this section is to explain why Palestine Demonstration may be seen as a significant performance in understanding the constitutive role of loss in formulating an Islamist imaginary in Turkey. When the main motives behind organizing the Palestine Demonstration are revealed, it is found that this demonstration does more than simply respond to the Zionist other. Although material loss, as in the form of the loss of lives in Palestine, and the loss of sacred lands which were previously occupied by Muslims is one of the driving motivations for the crowds gathering at Çağlayan, what this action signifies points out to the symbolic loss of meaning and power for Islamism. Islamism, as imagined and defended by the Felicity Party, does not exist; the sort of Islamic identity that the AKP is argued to

¹⁷⁸ Mr. Kaya uses the term, “bütün toplum kesimleri”, which literally means all groups within the Turkish nation.

represent is different, and transformed. Therefore, as much as the crowds gathering at Çağlayan Square respond to the Zionist other, they do, simultaneously respond to the hybrid other in Turkey, that is, the Justice and Development Party, which forgoes the responsibility to look after “Islamic brothers” in the “Muslims geography”, and rather collaborates with the imperialist powers of the world, both politically and economically. The AKP does not act like an Islamist should; it does not assume the identity of the Muslim big brother. The AKP, which is a fragmentation of the Islamist heritage (as was explained in the previous section), has lost its ties with its “roots” and turned into a form that is ignorant of its heritage. It is unwilling to send soldiers to stop Israel from de-sacralizing the Muslim geography. Here, for the organizers of the demonstration, loss is experienced in the form of the loss of an Islamist identity, which would respond to Israel instead of acting as a witness to such suffering. Hence, argues Mr Kaya in the above mentioned excerpt, that the problems of Gaza are problems which are shared by Turkey as well. And hence chants the crowd at Çağlayan, “The soldiers of Turkey to Palestine! “(*Mehmetçik Filistin’e*)¹⁷⁹ Consequently, the Felicity Party tries to fill in the gap that is left unoccupied by the AKP. Demonstrations, in this regard, are responses to the AKP’s incapacity to embrace its Islamist duties. What makes Israeli invasion traumatic is not necessarily the material loss that is experienced, but this loss of meaning, the loss of an Islamist identity, and the loss of the “big brother” to keep an eye on its Muslim brothers. By keeping its distance with the suffering in Palestine, the AKP also keeps its distance with its Islamic duties.

¹⁷⁹ One of the points uttered in the interview with Mr Kaya was that the Muslim world has kept its silence in response to Israel’s invasion. This came as an indigestible blow to the faithful believers, who would have expected a new Intifada, in which Turkey would also contribute. This expectance was crystallized in one of the slogans uttered in the demonstration :“*Mehmetçik Filistin’e*” (the soldiers of Turkey to Palestine).

Let me elaborate a little more on how “loss” is conceptualized in the interview.

In the interview, loss is formulated in two ways: first, loss is material – people are dying in Palestine and this necessitates a humanitarian response from Muslims. As

Mr Kaya argues:

all the bleeding wounds are within the Muslim geography. This is not something we have specifically chosen. It is the reality. People die in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and Palestine... The mission [in the Palestine Demonstration] was that Palestinians could vocalize their demands through us. Why? Because we share a common history, and live in the same geography. And even if we did not, what happened in Gaza was oppression; no matter where you are on Earth, people should react against oppression and end it.

The second way loss is experienced is in its abstract and symbolic form: that is, loss of values such as Islamic unity and Muslim brotherhood, which define Islamism in its pan-Islamic essence, but are lacking in the contemporary. The representation of Islam by the AKP, and the lack of power of a “truly” Islamist part, which is loyal to the Islamic sacra and pays homage to it through its policies, such as the Felicity, points out to a shattered Islamist world – one which lacked the capacity to prevent this invasion from taking place. Islamism, as is represented by the dominant discourse in Turkey, has lost its meaning as a unifying value among Muslim nations. This is conceived of as something that requires a response.

In responding to Israel’s invasion of Gaza, the questions that are raised by the Islamists and the criticisms they come up with do not only denounce the Zionist other, but also problematize the role and meaning of Islamism in Turkey today. The reaction to the trauma encountered by the Israeli invasion turns into a reflective experience in which Islamists start to question their incapacity to prevent such defeats. Answers are sought within Islamism. The answer to the question, “Why is there so much suffering in Muslim nations today?” is sought in the contemporary structure where the orders of Islam are not properly practiced both in the political

and social platforms. Parallels are drawn with a period in which Islamism was hegemonizing (late Ottoman period, especially under the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II) and the contemporary era, which is compared with the nostalgic past, is perceived as a lacking imaginary. Loss of the Islamist essence plays a principle role in defining Felicity Party's discourse. And under the leadership of the Felicity Party, the response to loss is carried into a performative platform. The gathering of hundreds of thousands of people at Çağlayan brings hope for renovating the shattered walls of the assumptive Islamist world. Islamism, as performed at Çağlayan Square, reinvigorates an Islamist imaginary in which Islamism can once again become powerful. It ambitions for an imaginary where Islam is properly represented. Therefore, in the Palestine Demonstration, what is staged is not only anti-Israeli sentiments, but also a journey to find and recontextualize Islamism that can be used for patching the lacking imaginary of the contemporary.

The Existentialist Problem with Defining Islamism

The reconstruction of Islamism and the envisioning of an Islamist imaginary in which Islam is the central element encounter an existentialist problem which results in the (problematic) existence of different formulations and representations of Islamism, and different forms in which Islam, as an element, becomes attributed to discourses in Turkey. This is a point also mentioned in the interview with Mr. Kaya, in which he argued that in Turkey, Islam is a shared, yet not properly represented element. Kaya continued by pointing out to the different ways Islam is performed in public and was critical in his tone in approaching these different representations.

According to Kaya, such performances do not represent the values that Islam should and rather illustrate Islamism in a wrong and corrupt form.

Representatives from the SP take it even further and argue this is done intentionally in order to push them [the Felicity Party] aside, as the true representative of Islam in Turkey. According to Mr. Kaya, the Felicity Party fights against those who are trying to delegitimize and deform the Islamist image that they represent. For Kaya, the national and international media tries to portray an “ugly picture” of the Islamists in Turkey, desacralizes the meaning of Islamism and therefore, calumniates its image. Kaya points out to the example of “figures such as Ali Kalkancı, Fadime Şahin and Müslüm Gündüz who were all intentionally brought into spotlight during the Welfare Party government.”¹⁸⁰ However, he argues that they will continue to fight against “those who try to push [them] aside” because they are “a part of this country’s future and will remain so.”

The central theme of the interviews as well as public speeches points out to the worries and concerns of the Islamists about the desacralization and misconceptualization of Islamism. It is argued that in Turkey, the meaning of Islamism is losing its ties with its Islamist past and the Islamist essence. What is feared to be lost is interpreted by these actors as what is lacking or missing in the contemporary – and in order to rediscover and bring back the lost elements, a return to the essence is deemed necessary.

If Mr. Kaya is right in his argument, that there are wrong and corrupt forms of Islamism, then what is the right or unique form? How can the representatives of the

¹⁸⁰ Müslüm Gündüz, leader of the Aczmendi sect (*tarikât*), which is a very fundamentalist Islamist sect, was caught sexually harassing Fadime Şahin, a young girl who, as was reflected in the mainstream media, wanted to be informed about the Nur teachings of the sect, but was driven into a sex play. This has obviously become a hotly debated issue back then; people started to question the real aims of *tarikats*. Mr. Kaya is arguing that this has all been set up by “others”.

Felicity Party argue that their attribution of Islam to their Islamist imaginary is the right and proper one? A similar question is also raised by the anthropologist Hamid El-Zein: “If Islam is constructed by so many different discourses, can it still be Islam?”¹⁸¹ Or parallel to a question raised in the previous section on Kemalism, we could ask: if there are many representations of Islamism, than what is the Islamism? And when there are many forms of Islamism, represented by numerous actors, then how does the Felicity Party’s formulation differ from other forms of Islamism?

Questions similar to the ones raised in the paragraph above have been occupying the minds of Islamist intellectuals in Turkey. Ali Bulaç, an Islamist intellectual, and columnist for the newspaper *Zaman*, makes an interesting historical evaluation of Islamism in Turkey and problematizes the transformation of Islam over time. Parallel to İlhan’s argument (on Kemalism, which was covered in the previous section), Bulaç divides Islamism into three phases: The first generation Islamists (1856-1924) who were saviors (*kurtarıcı*), second generation Islamists (1950-2000) who were constructive (*yapıcı*) and third generation Islamists (2000-) who are transformative (*dönüştürücü*).¹⁸² Bulaç adds that three generations mean three different meanings for Islamism and three different ways of becoming and acting political and continues:

What is different about Islamists is that they take the religion of Islam as reference and become visible with their Muslim identity. Without a doubt, in a Muslim society or country, people are also Muslim, but Islamism... is not completely separate but different from ümmi Islam - Islam of the ummah. In this sense, Islamism, as I conceptualize it, can best be identified as ‘kitabi Islam’, or Islam of the book... which in its essence is a literature which uses the Quran, books on Muhammed (*hadis kitapları*), the canon of jurisprudence

¹⁸¹ Bobby Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*, (London: Faber, 1982), p.37.

¹⁸² Bulaç, Ali, “İslam’ın Üç Siyaset Tarzı veya İslamcıların Üç Nesli”, In *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: İslamcılık*, edited by Yasin Aktay (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005), p.48-50.

of Islam (*tedvin edilmiş fıkıh kaynakları*), and other general Islamist literature whenever it finds necessary.¹⁸³

Bulaç furthers his analysis on Islamism and elaborates on the different meanings Islamism denotes in different phases. For example, whereas the first phase (generation) was about *aslu'd din (dinin aslı)*, that is the essence of religion, the second phase was about Islamization of politics and Islamization of the society. The third generation of Islamists, on the other hand, transformed as an outcome of urbanization and globalization and therefore represented the new face of Islam. Bulaç's analysis, which gives a detailed evaluation of the issue, is instructive in supporting the argument on how Islamism has diverged from its essence (*aslu'd din*) as it turned more into a cultural movement and as Islam became shared, interpreted or consumed by different actors in different forms. According to Bulaç, since its saviors in the 1850s, Islamism has lost its ties with its essence, transformed, and turned into a movement with a new face. The material form of this new understanding of Islam is represented by the Justice and Development Party. This new and contemporary face, as the following excerpts taken from the interview and from speeches of the representatives of the Felicity Party show, is conceptualized as a corrupt one and is consequently contested.

The question that needs to be asked at this point is: where does the Felicity Party locate itself within this ambiguous scenery and where does the Palestine Demonstration fall? How does the Felicity Party integrate Islam in its discourse and define itself? And what role does the transformation Bulaç speaks of play in Felicity Party's conceptualization of Islamism in Turkey? Does it contradict other versions of Islam, or lead to essentialist claims by the representatives of the Felicity Party? If this

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 51.

is the case, then what do these claims tell us about the Islamism Felicity Party envisions? Does the Felicity Party construct an Islamism that emphasizes, similar to Kemalist actors' conceptualization of Kemalism, the loss of its essence?

Resentment towards the contemporary political and social structure constitutes a major part of Mr Kaya's interview. Mr Kaya centralizes the worry of Islamism being understood the wrong way and criticizes actors who misrepresent Islamism or use Islam for making political and economic gains for corrupting Islam's meaning. In return, Felicity Party's understanding on Islamism, it is argued, aims for a system built on "real" peace and welfare for all the people in the world. For example, according to Kaya, the Islamist response (for a structure built on the notion of right-*hak*¹⁸⁴) to a contemporary built on the images of the Western powers is a reaction to a threat hidden in Western values which are dominant, and Western interest groups which are powerful, and do not want to lose the power they practice over sustaining the current structure which is oppressive. These groups, according to Kaya, do not want real peace that Islamism, in its essence, aims to bring because they profit from conflict and war. Islamism, as idealized by the Felicity Party offers as an alternative to Western values: and it is argued that if it were Islamic values and not Western ones, the picture today would have been much more peaceful:

We see an embargo put on us; and we ask why? The answer is because what we [the Felicity Party] say [in our speeches] discloses the aims of international and national interest groups. For example, when we argue for D-8, which stands for the Developing Eight, during the 54th Government led by the Welfare Party¹⁸⁵ and explain our goal of turning this group into an international institution, this obviously does not benefit other international interest groups. We argue for a world that is *hak*-oriented; we argue that Western civilizations did not provide humanity with peace; we utter these claims about Western civilizations; such as Romans who fed people to lions in the arenas prioritize

¹⁸⁴ It should be noted that the use of the word, "hak" stands for both right and God.

¹⁸⁵ A coalition between Welfare and DoğruYol-True Path- Party called RefahYol.

power... In the last three hundred years, Western civilizations, along with their values, have been dominant in the world; and in the last three hundred years, the world drowned in blood and tears... millions of people died. All of these sufferings should not have happened. But while we are stating all these, someone else thinks about conquering energy sources; some people argue that what we do is against their national interests and therefore should be hindered... When we lay our arguments as a political movement, when we struggle for real peace and welfare for all the people in the West, in Europe and in the U.S., these people respond to us in return and argue that we threaten their future.

The Chairman of the Felicity Party Prof. Numan Kurtulmuş's speech in which he commemorates the birth of Prophet Mohammed, also points out to a similar anxiety over today's structure. Kurtulmuş's speech is illustrative for it points out to a "more beautiful world" in which values of Mohammed and not Western values are maintained. Here, we also see the constitutive role of the Islamist sacra (as in the form of Prophet Mohammed's teachings) in the assumptive world of the Felicity Party. The present, which is seen as an representation of loss of Islamist values, is conceived of as "darkness." The emphasis on the Prophet's life, and his teachings, are brought up by Mr Kurtulmuş as an alternative to the "moral collapse" which, according to Kurtulmuş, we are experiencing today:

Our Prophet has been a guide to humanity with his divine message and exemplary life. He taught us to defend justice when oppression pervades, and defend brotherhood when hatred and enmity persists. In these days when humanity is being drifted into a material and moral collapse, we need to understand the values He represents more than ever. He is the guarantee of peace and comfort. We can only illuminate this darkness by using the light he brought. We can only constitute a more beautiful world by holding on to his values. The event organized for commemorating his birth is an important chance to understand Him. This week is a channel through which his exemplary life and divine message can be comprehended. May the Allah Almighty allow us to represent his values properly.¹⁸⁶

Islamism of the Felicity Party brings out the goal of transforming Turkey into a morally developed nation, and aims for constructing a system that is built on "real"

¹⁸⁶ Karanlığı O'nunla Aydınlatabiliriz, Available: <http://www.saadet.org.tr/haber.asp?list=1&haber=2438> [10 May 2009]

peace and on “properly” understood and at represented values of sacred figures of Islam. The way Islamism is conceptualized by the current AKP government points out to a lacking imaginary that describes the corruptedness of the contemporary. In this imaginary, the true meaning of Islamism is lost. Islam is not properly represented and understood . “The need” as Prof. Kurtulmuş points out, to understand the values the Prophet represents, and the light he provides to illuminate darkness, are constitutive of the Islamism the Felicity Party adopts and defends. What the contemporary imaginary is missing is Islamism, as conceptualized by Islamist actors. And in order to find the missing elements, Islamists prioritize the sacred Islamist heritage.

Loss of Islamist Heritage and the Islamist Utopia: Call for a New World Order

Islamism, similar to Kemalism, is constructed in response to the loss of its heritage – and demonstrations, such as commemoration of the death of Sultan Abdulhamid and the birth of Prophet Mohammed or gathering against the Israeli invasion of Gaza, occupation of the al-Aqsa Mosque, or occupation of Eastern Turkestan by the Chinese, take place in order to rediscover this lost heritage. The lost meaning of Islamism is discovered in public squares.

In responding to the Palestinian invasion by Israel, supporters of the Felicity Party and other Islamist publics gathered at Çağlayan represent the lost essence and the aim to revive it. Islamists, similar to Kemalists, employ essentialist claims to offer an alternative to the contemporary which is challenged and threatened by inner and outer enemies. In this regard, Islamist actors argue that salvation is attainable

only by returning to the essence.¹⁸⁷ In his party convention on December 2009, a few days before the demonstration at Çağlayan, the Chairman of the Felicity Party, Prof. Numan Kurtulmuş, states: “Our path is the path of Prophet Mohammed and Prophet Hussein. We are never pro-pragmatist.”¹⁸⁸

The Islamist essence, according to the Felicity Party, entails an Islamic unity of all Muslims not only in Turkey, but also in the “Muslim geography”. Accordingly, the policies that the Felicity Party supports are argued to be aimed at mending the grief and pain in the Islamic world (*İslam dünyası*) in which Turkey, rather than witnessing the suffering, plays a central role.¹⁸⁹ In conceptualizing Islamism, the emphasis on the pan-Islamist essence, and a leader with pan-Islamist ideals (Abdulhamid II), becomes integrated into Felicity Party’s Islamist discourse. The lack of an Islamist leader (to assume the role of the caliphate) and his Islamist ideal for a greater unity among Islamic countries and the Muslims in this geography, is interpreted as a missing element, and Islamism is constructed as a response to his lack of existence.

The assumptive world of the Islamists is a vision that the Felicity Party constructs. And within this vision, the true and essential meaning of Islamism is found. In the 2008 convention of Muslim Community Organization, Recai Kutan, the ex-Chairman of the Felicity Party argues that what they aim for is a new world order that brings Muslim nations closer, under the same organizational scheme:

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Prof. Numan Kurtulmuş by Aynur Erdoğan. “Numan Kurtulmuş, ‘Çözüm İslam’da’ dedi, *Dünya Bülteni*, 8 October 2008. Similar points have been raised in my interview with Prof. Kurtulmuş.

¹⁸⁸ Prof. Numan Kurtulmuş’s speech in the SP Party Convention [İl başkanları ve müfettişleri toplantısı] on 27 December 2009, Available: http://www.rasthaber.com/21112_Bizim%20yolumuz%20Hz%20Muhammedin%20ve%20%20Imam%20Huseyin%20yoludur.html [20 March 2010]

¹⁸⁹ Speech given by Prof. Numan Kurtulmuş on 7 August 2009, extracted from Milli Gazete, “Avrupa, İslam Dünyası ve Saadet”, *Milli Gazete*, 16 August 2009.

We Muslims ask for a peaceful and just world. We represent the principles and essence of this world. Therefore, we have to produce solutions as Muslims who have our own world-view and system of values... [In this convention] we must take the first steps for founding a New World Order based on the following principles: It will be founded on morals and spiritualism. It is based on dialogue and not conflict. The New World Order will take justice, and not double standards as its founding principle and be based on equality, and not arrogance and pride. There will be cooperation and solidarity. Fascism and oppression will be replaced with human rights, freedoms and democracy... We have already vocalized these demands under the D-8 initiative. We try to keep the things that we have uttered for years, such as an Islamic United Nations, Defense Pact, Cultural Cooperation Organization, Common Market and Currency (such as the Islamic Dinar) on the agenda.¹⁹⁰

It could then be argued that Islamism, as envisaged in this vision shared by Kutun, is visualized upon an imaginary with many missing elements (deemed necessary for the construction of a New World Order) which need to be patched in. And the location for these elements is found in a New World Order defended by the Felicity Party, which represents essential principles, such as “an essential world view and system of values.” In their encounter with Israel, these essential values Felicity Party vocalize are brought up to offer an alternative vision through which Islamism is made meaningful. This solution entails a process which brings the nostalgic imaginary of the Islamist past back into the corrupt imaginary of the contemporary.

Observations on the Republic Protest and the Palestine Demonstration

In the previous section, the findings gathered from the interviews were shared in order to explain what the Republic Protests and Palestine Demonstrations meant for the very people organizing them. The section, in a descriptive manner, pointed out to the purposes of these demonstrations and has shown how loss was a constitutive element defining these purposes. Indeed, the analysis on the interviews have

¹⁹⁰ “Yeni Bir Dünyaya Doğru”, Available: <http://www.saadet.org.tr/haber.asp?list=3&haber=1865>, [6 February 2010]

provided crucial elements regarding how fears for the loss of a Kemalist and Islamist space, and fears for the loss of the Kemalist and Islamist heritage (and loss of the “true/proper teachings” of Kemalism and Islamism) have become characteristic features of Kemalist and Islamist actors, which not only define their *raison d’être*, but also motivate these actors to take action by flocking into demonstration grounds. In this section, I will offer an ethnography of performances and focus on how demonstrations were organized to reach these purposes. And in order to accomplish this goal, I will be focusing on the actual performances and as an observer of these demonstrations, I will be scrutinizing the different “movements” or “rites” that define the flow of the demonstrations.

To start with, let me briefly problematize why I find it necessary to provide the reader with greater detail on the demonstrations. I find the dynamics underlining these popular protests worth a closer look for a simple reason: The verbal, non-verbal and cultural forms visible in these demonstrations may further tell us about the different ways people express themselves in a performative platform. Events such as demonstrations provide an important field of analysis because they offer what Falassi calls “a spatial temporal dimension” or “a time out of time”; “they happen within an exceptional frame of time and space, and their meaning is considered to go beyond their literal and explicit aspects.”¹⁹¹ These events, in other words, may open up new perspectives (and offer new meanings) for us to analyze the society in which they take place, and to reevaluate the constructed binary between Kemalism and Islamism. For these reasons, the demonstrations require a closer look. The apparel the demonstrators wear, the insignia they carry, and the slogans they chant do have a

¹⁹¹ Alessandro Falassi, *Time Out of Time: Essays on the Festival*, (University of New Mexico Press, 1987), p.4.

language of their own, and these elements may offer us new findings that did not fully come up in the interviews.

Situating a Performance: Complexities at Enframing
Republic Protests and Palestine Demonstrations

At this point, I would like to begin by sharing an observation I made by watching these demonstrations. I find this observation important because it points out to an intricacy with defining these demonstrations and contextualizing them within a theoretical framework. The answer to the question, “What (kind of performance) are these demonstrations?” is a difficult one. The performances that are analyzed in this thesis, I argue, offer morphological complexities. They resemble other social occasions in terms of their planning and organization, and at the same time differ from these social occasions regarding their timing and attendance. They cannot be located within the four-fold taxonomy offered by Öztürkmen: “national holidays, other important holidays related to the Republic’s Reforms, local holidays with ‘national significance’ and traditionally celebrated local festivals”.¹⁹² Yet at the same time, in terms of the way they are organized and conducted, there are certain similarities. For example, although they resemble the celebration of national holidays, and provide “clues for interpreting communally agreed-upon vantage points” and “represent moment[s] of social reconciliation” and therefore deserve greater attention¹⁹³, at the same time, they are not nationally celebrated holidays. In my interview, the Chairwoman of CKD has argued that the Republic Protest was a

¹⁹² Arzu Öztürkmen, “Celebrating National Holidays in Turkey” *New Perspectives on Turkey*, no. 25 (2001), pp. 48-9.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.73.

“collective soothing experience.” By participating in it, the Kemalists have seen that they are not alone, and others share fears similar to theirs, and that Kemalists are ready to join forces to fight a war against their hybrid other, the AKP. The celebration of the Republic Day on every 29 October, or the Conquest Day on every 29 May also provide moments of collective belonging, reconciliation and invocation and in this sense, are similar to the Republic Protests and Palestine Demonstrations. Yet, whereas the former two recur periodically, the latter two occurred in a more spontaneous manner, and as reactions to political developments. In the literature review section of this thesis, it was argued that going approximately 15 years back, the Republic Day in 1994 was celebrated in a different fashion: That day, the participants did not only celebrate the founding of the Turkish Republic but also protested against the electoral victory of the Welfare Party. In 2007, however, a similar protest was enacted not as a part of a national celebration, but in a totally different context. There were protests of smaller scale in 1994 as well; however, it was probably for the first time in the recent Turkish history that a demonstration of such great scale, which was not a national holiday, was organized by Kemalist civil society organizations. The Republic Protest carried purposes similar to other national celebrations, but this time, the intended goals needed to be accomplished within a shorter timeframe.

Following Öztürkmen’s analysis, it could be further argued that these demonstrations may be providing new platforms for Kemalist and Islamist actors to revitalize the enthusiasm that is missing in national holidays, or other nationally celebrated occasions. As the “bonds that used to bring masses together disappeared”, not only did we witness new and “modernized” forms of celebrating national holidays, but also alternative events with the aim of reconstructing the bonds that are

lost.¹⁹⁴ As was argued by the vice-Chairman of ADD in my interview, the main goal for organizing the Republic Protest was to boost confidence in Kemalists. This could very well be interpreted as other Kemalist celebrations, including the Republic Day and the Commemoration of Atatürk's passing away, being deemed insufficient for boosting Kemalist confidence. There were demonstrations other than the Republic Protest, such as the 222A movement¹⁹⁵, which was repeated in 2008 and 2009 by civil society organizations who have also participated in the Republic Protest. The 222A movement was another one of these social occasions to bring Kemalist actors together for a common cause.

Furthermore, what I found by analyzing these performances was that the very act of performing the protests at Çağlayan entails elements which make these performances come in categorical proximity with festivals and rituals. Obviously, there are differences between a religious festival and these demonstrations – yet at the same time, similarities can be observed. My aim here is not to essentialize the cases provided hereby and offer them as “unique” forms of performances, however, the social occasions analyzed do not fit into a single category – be it a festival or a ritual. The Republic Protest and Palestine Demonstration at Çağlayan bring in festivalessque and ritualistic elements within the same performative platform.

I will not get into a discussion on performative taxonomies, but what I rather want to show is that these demonstrations signify not only one, but all three forms of a performance: verbal, non-verbal and cultural.¹⁹⁶ They entail carnivalesque, oral and oratory, dramatic, ritualistic, folkloric and popularly entertaining features, and can be

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 72.

¹⁹⁵ This was a short-lived attempt by the Kemalist NGOs to organize an annual protest movement against turban on every 2 February, at 2 PM, in Anıtkabir (Atatürk's Mausoleum).

¹⁹⁶ Richard Bauman, *Folklore, Cultural Performances and Popular Entertainments* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992)

categorized as social dramas¹⁹⁷ as well as festivals, rituals, and to a certain extent, spectacles. Therefore, the problem that I want to point out to is related to the eclectic nature of these performances. Before getting into the actual analysis, I believe that it is of some importance to problematize the morphology of the performances and delineate their resemblances to festivals and rituals.

Festivals, Rituals and Demonstrations

A festival, according to Alessandro Falassi, is

a periodically recurrent social occasion in which, through a multiplicity of forms and a series of coordinated events, participate directly or indirectly and to various degrees, all members of a whole community, united by ethnic, linguistic, religious, historical bonds, and sharing a worldview. Both the social function and the symbolic meaning of the festival are closely related to a series of overt values that the community recognizes as essential to its ideology and worldview, to its social identity, its historical continuity, and to its physical survival, which is ultimately what festival celebrates.¹⁹⁸

Although this definition does not fully correlate to the sorts of performances witnessed in the demonstrations at Çağlayan (for example, it cannot be argued that these demonstrations do occur in a periodical pattern), by looking at the social function and the symbolic meaning of these demonstrations, it could very well be argued that these performances embrace features of festivals. In these demonstrations which reflect multiple interpretations of shared experiences of a group, we witness active engagement of participants, anticipation for a response, manipulation of temporal reality and transformation of individuals into responsible actors all of

¹⁹⁷ Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, (PAJ Publications, 1988)

¹⁹⁸ Falassi, p.2.

which, according to Stoeltje, define a festival.¹⁹⁹ These demonstrations also fit into the structure of a typical festival – there is an opening ceremony (singing of the national anthem), reenactment of a ritual and elements of drama and contest (collective chanting and singing, staging of myths/narratives cinevision displays of the “holy figures” of the movements, etc.), a considerable amount of consumption (of food, beverages, as well as flags and other paraphernalia sold by vendors), dance and music (traditional/folk music and dancing) and a concluding event (a concluding speech by the main organizer) characterized by an increase in spontaneity of actions and intensity of feelings.²⁰⁰

But at the same time, simply by watching these demonstrations or attending them, one could also observe that there are also ritualistic elements embedded in these performances. I would argue that at the same time, these demonstrations can be considered as social dramas because they reflect aspects of what Turner calls human ritualization.²⁰¹ What is a ritual then? And how can a ritualistic performance be defined? Here, two accompanying arguments can be provided. According to Turner, a ritual is not only a “standardized unit act... but a complex sequence of symbolic acts. [It is] a transformative performance revealing major classifications, categories, and contradictions or cultural processes.”²⁰² On an accompanying argument, a ritual, according to Rappaport, “may be defined as the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not encoded by the performers.”²⁰³ It is “an order of acts and utterances and as such is enlived or realized only when

¹⁹⁹ Stoeltje, Beverly, “Festival” In *Folklore, Cultural Performances and Popular Entertainments*, edited by Richard Bauman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.264-266.

²⁰¹ Turner, p.11.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p.75.

²⁰³ Bauman, p.252.

those acts are performed and those utterances are voiced. This relationship... cannot help but specify as well the relationship of the performers to that which they are performing.”²⁰⁴

Although the difference is scant²⁰⁵, what separates a ritual from a festival, according to the folklorist Beverly Stoeltje, is that whereas a festival explores and experiments with meaning, a ritual attempts to control meaning.²⁰⁶ Interesting enough, in Republic Protests and Palestine Demonstrations, attempts to both control and experiment with meaning can be found. As much as the podium (and the organizing NGOs/political parties) is constitutive of the placards raised and slogans chanted, this does not completely restrict the crowd to perform in deviating forms both before and during the actual demonstration. This was also a point brought up in my interview with the Vice-Chairwoman of ÇYDD, Prof. Filiz Meriç. When I asked about the range of slogans and chants observed and heard during the Republic Protest, Meriç argued that it cannot be expected of the organizers to have control over all demonstrators. The organizers cannot have absolute monopoly over every slogan uttered and every placard raised.

Finally, it is also important to point out that both rituals, and festivals, provide platforms for the initiation of rites. Falassi argues that these rites of purification, passage, reversal, conspicuous display, conspicuous consumption, ritual dramas and exchange, provide “safeguard for various forms of benediction and procession of sacred objects around an through significant points of the festival space setting, in

²⁰⁴ Ibid, p.254.

²⁰⁵ Stoeltje argues that “much of the literature on religion, ritual, festival, fiesta, or carnival does not distinguish between the two related form”, which are a ritual and a festival. Bauman, p.262.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 262.

order to renew the magical defenses of the community against natural and supernatural enemies.”²⁰⁷ Accordingly, the Republic Protests and Palestine

Demonstrations:

as a rite of purification and cleansing, though the “solemn expulsion of some sort of scapegoat carrying the “evil” and negative”²⁰⁸ out of the community, as displayed in puppets of President George Bush and Israeli flags put on fire or flags of the AKP or portraits of its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, torn down from the walls and sidewalks, or by wearing flags and bandanas with messages inscribed on them, cleanse the Kemalist and Islamist imaginary of corruptedness of its other;

as a rite of passage, which, according to Turner, allows transcending a liminal, interstructural situation that signifies a process of transformation and “transition as a process, a becoming”²⁰⁹, signify the reorganization and restructuring of Kemalist and Islamist publics, and act as a passageway for their transformation into powerful actors (from meek individuals to conscripts of enlightenment –Işğın Savaşçıları, Aydınlanmanın Savaşçıları–, and conscripts of the Prophet Ömer and Allah) acting in solidarity;

as a rite of reversal, invert the roles of citizens and soldiers, where the demonstrators perform their inverted roles of protecting the Kemalist or Islamist heritage by attending



²⁰⁷ Falassi, pp. 4-5.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p.5.

²⁰⁹ Turner, Victor, “Betwixt and Between”, In *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Antropological Approach*, edited by William A. Lessa and Evan Z. Vogt, (Harper &Row. 1972), p.338.

these demonstrations, and become “soldiers without uniforms” (the placard on the picture above states: I love my Ata, country, soldiers and the police forces, what about you?);

as a rite of conspicuous display, bring in abundance insignia and paraphernalia that signify Kemalist and Islamist imaginaries, and through the abundant and visible use of symbols, construct a new notion of reality²¹⁰ in which Kemalism or Islamism exist as a hegemonic discourse;

as a rite of conspicuous consumption, provide a temporary economy (of food, hats, umbrellas and flags) within the boundaries of the demonstration ground, which correlates to the consumption of Kemalism and Islamism in material forms;

as a ritual drama, stage narratives of the past, sing folk songs and perform theatrical acts, through which the past is remembered and is yearned for;

as a rite of exchange, exchanges the demonstrators pledge for protecting the Kemalist and Islamist legacy by voting against the candidate of the AKP as the new President of the Turkish Republic in the referendum, or boycotting Israeli (and Western) consumers products (as well as exchange money and membership) in return for a “better (modern, enlightened, just) future”;

and as a rite of competition, transform the display of Kemalism and Islamism into a game where demonstrators compete to act as exemplary Kemalists and Islamist.

The following two sections of this chapter will be organized in line with Fallasi’s conceptualization of these rites. I will specifically be looking at verbal,

²¹⁰ According to the anthropologist, David Kertzer, symbols are ways of creating “reality”: “Our notions of reality are the product of an artificially constructed symbol system...” Kertzer, p.4. Moreover, for Kertzer, symbols have three duties: they condense “a rich variety of meanings” in one symbol, “vocalize a multiplicity of meanings under one symbol” and/or do not represent a “single precise meaning” by one symbol. Kertzer, p.11.

bodily and material/cultural forms of expression in these demonstrations by focusing on the preparations, the costume, slogans and chants, theatrical forms of dramatic elements and finally, consumptive elements of these demonstrations.

Preparations for the Demonstration

Preparations start almost a month prior to the demonstration day. Busses are arranged (for people from other cities and/or districts to participate in the demonstration, often free of charge), slogans are arranged (which require a final approval from both the official headquarters and the police), names of the participating actors are listed (and presented to the Municipality as well as the police), placards are written, columnists are informed, officials of the municipality and the police are notified about the date, time and location of the event. Handbooks, which contain information about the venue, approved slogans and placards, participators and media coverage about previous occasions are prepared and given to the volunteers who are responsible for organizing the demonstration ground (the sound system, the podium, the lectern, flags and other paraphernalia) both before and during the demonstration day.

Volunteers walk around streets of the city where the demonstration takes place, or sometimes even reach out to people in other cities (as this was the case with the Republic Protests). They initiate discussions through the social media (using the Internet) in order to create awareness and to attract greater crowds to participate. As the section on media will delineate in greater length, representatives of organizing parties are active in the week prior to the event, finding coverage in visual and written media and inviting citizens to participate in the demonstration.

For the preparation of Republic Protests²¹¹, members/volunteers (and among the volunteers, the most active ones being the youth branches) assume great responsibility. They (in the Şişli branch, around 20 youngsters formed the organizational team) gather in weekly meetings to arrange and share the tasks each volunteer assumes, and present reports to the administrative division of each branch. It is the task of each administrative division to inform the official headquarters in Ankara about the decisions taken and the tasks undertaken.

Most work gets accomplished through the use of active networks of civil society organizations. One of the reasons why the Republic Protests have raised such awareness and millions were gathered at the demonstration grounds was most certainly a result of the amount of collaboration among different society organizations, which united their forces under an umbrella organization called the USTKB (Ulusal Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları Birliği – National Union of Civil Society Organizations).²¹²

And for the preparation of the Palestine Demonstration, although my research had limited access regarding such information, I presume that the members and

²¹¹ My observations on the preparation of the Republic Demonstrations are drawn from my field research in ADD Kadıköy branch, the largest branch of ADD in Istanbul, before the demonstration was held in Ankara on 17 May 2009. I have been in the ADD Kadıköy branch three times, and have attended one meeting where high school and college students gathered around a table and had a brainstorming session that lasted for over two hours about the roles they would assume and the tasks that they have to undertake for this demonstration to become a successful event. Over twenty youth were involved in this meeting and at the end of the meeting, each assumed a task. After the meeting, the head of the Kadıköy Branch entered the room, spoke with the youth and obtained information about the topics raised during the meeting. I have found out later on that the arrangements made by the youth would be discussed by the board of the Istanbul branch and sent to the Ankara headquarters for the final decision. This observation can give an idea about the role of youth in decision-making process for the Republican Demonstrations.

²¹² The USTKB, which identifies itself as “the true representatives/holders of a secular, modern and democratic Republic” was founded in 1997 “as a response to the extraordinary conditions of Turkey... in order to organize and promote projects to protect a democratic and secular Turkey, and perpetuate the most basic principles of our Republic.” In its board of advisors, members from CKD and ADD, along with other Kemalist NGOs and the newspaper, *Cumhuriyet*, sit. For more information on the USTKB, visit <http://www.ulusalstkb.org/>

volunteers of the Anatolian Youth Organization (AGD – Anadolu Gençlik Derneği), which also acts as a youth branch of the Felicity Party, have taken an active role in the preparations for the Palestine Demonstrations.

All this effort is put for a demonstration which will last two to three hours, or four, depending on the time consumed by walking to the demonstration area, the number of performers on stage and of course, the enthusiasm of the crowd. It is the responsibility of the organizers to prepare the demonstration arena, provide necessary tools and equipment; including hats, placards, flags, etc. This responsibility is shared by street vendors, who sell flags, bandanas, pins, hats, as well as beverages, bagels, sandwiches etc. My research did not reveal any information regarding whether these vendors have the permission to be present at the Çağlayan Square or whether they have any affiliation with the organizers. Nevertheless, common knowledge on street vendors in Turkey tell us that for the most part, vendors, which are a part of the informal economy, appear in the demonstration ground regardless of the necessary permission from the organizers or the police. And they become a part of the demonstration economy where hats, beverages, food and flags are among the most demanded products.

Nevertheless, in the Republic Protests, a number of flags, pictures of Atatürk as well as placards were given to the participants in the demonstration area. The participants were also asked to bring their own flags and portraits of Atatürk. However, there was a restriction on the types of placards that were to be carried by the demonstrators. My interviews as well as my field research show that no other placards were allowed to be brought by the participants from outside and no slogan other than the ones written down in the program were chanted.

On the other hand, my field study did not return any significant information on the preparations for the Palestine Demonstrations which may tell us two things. First, the preparations for the Republic Protests were conducted in greater transparency and in fact, anyone willing to give a hand with the preparations was welcomed by the organizers. In one of my visits to the Şişli branch of the ADD, I was asked to help young volunteers distribute flyers in the neighboring areas about the-then-upcoming Republic Protest in 2009. No such offer was made to me at the offices of the SP.

Second, it is harder to penetrate into the organizational scheme of the Palestine Demonstration. The fact that such a demonstration was organized by a political party may be one reason as to why it was harder for me to gain first-hand information (and experience) on the preparations for the Palestine Demonstrations. However, it should also be taken into account that whereas my visits to the ADD came prior to a new demonstration and for them, I seemed like a good candidate to run errands during the preparatory stage, my visit to SP's offices came at a time when there were no plans to organize another Palestine Demonstration. If I were to visit their offices in late 2009 and not mid-2008, the officials might have asked of me to help them with the preparations for a new demonstration. Yet at the same time, it should be noted that there was more emphasis within the Şişli branch of ADD than at the district headquarters of the SP on the element of outsider participation/intervention in/with the internal affairs of these organizations. It seemed as if the SP was more reserved in welcoming "outsiders" who are willing to help them with organizing the Palestine Demonstration.

The Walk to the Demonstration Ground

Although footages that I have obtained on the Palestine Demonstration included pre-demonstration gatherings of crowds and marches to Çağlayan, it was hard to find much to analyze in those clips except for people with umbrellas walking to Çağlayan Square, with flags (of Turkey, Palestine and the Felicity Party) in their hands, and with food and beverages which



they bought from the street vendors, for whom the demonstration offered opportunities to profit. What was interesting on the path to the demonstration ground, however, was the overwhelming presence of religious insignia in public spaces. The view on the day of the Palestine Demonstration has offered a contradiction with arguments that propose that Turkish public spaces are cleansed off of Islamic insignia. The Palestine Demonstration, both temporally and spatially, has offered an opportunity for the Islamists to express themselves in public. Religious undertones were present on the streets, in buses, ferries and trains which, for certain citizens sharing these spaces, came as a disturbing scenery. One of the interesting observations I made on the bus to Çağlayan was not about people wearing such insignia (Palestinian flags, green bandanas with Quranic scripts written on them), but on people who possibly did not attend the demonstrations and were using public transportation for other purposes that day. Their reactions came in the form of discontented gazes or verbal utterances; an old lady sitting next to me uttered in a

low tone while nodding her head: “They have invaded everywhere!”²¹³ Apparently, the visibility of religious insignia in public spaces was not easily digested by certain segments of the society. In fact, as the analysis on the media will further show, a large segment of the media was also unwelcoming to the Palestine Demonstration.

The march to demonstration for the Republic Protest on the other hand, was a demonstration by itself. The fact that this demonstration was held in 29 April, on a sunny day definitely contributes to my analysis here. Nevertheless, this march to Çağlayan, is very interesting because it brings out the festivaesque elements in the demonstrations. Prior to gathering in the demonstration arena, one could see people sitting on the green with their families, eating *simit*²¹⁴ and drinking tea or *ayran*²¹⁵ that they bought from vendors, and enjoying the sunshine on a nice, Sunday morning. The march to demonstration turns into a giant Kemalist picnic where food and beverages as well as the Kemalist paraphernalia is simultaneously consumed.

On the way to the demonstration platform, people chant slogans and through these slogans, we get to observe how the demonstrators describe themselves; such as “the Kemalists are coming”, “crazy Turks are marching”. They carry flags, raise their placards, and give interviews to TV channels about their presence and reason for participation. What I find important in this pre-protest demonstration is that there exists no authority over people as they are walking to Çağlayan Square. This gives them an opportunity to say what they want to say, shout whatever slogan they want to shout, or raise demands which may not necessarily fit into the framework of the protest. In fact, I have watched a number of interviews which were conducted prior

²¹³ “Her yeri ele geçirdiler!”

²¹⁴ Turkish bagels.

²¹⁵ Yoghurt drink.

to the gathering of people in Çağlayan, and people would have varying demands from the government or as they say “from the Turkish state” in general. Most of these demands would be regarding the economic situation, or other social issues related to economic incapacity.

Costumes of the Demonstrations

Courtesy of NTVMSNBC

Although the costumes of the demonstrations are diverse, certain patterns can still be observed at Çağlayan Square. In this part, I will try to bring out a couple of these patterns which I believe carry important symbolic meanings.



Rather than focusing on the obvious differences, such as the overwhelming presence of the veil/black chador in Palestine Demonstrations versus the overpowering presence of women with permed hair in Republic Protests²¹⁶, I will try point out to other garments that seem subtle, but reflect important symbolic meanings. These garments are flags, *puşis*, bandanas and *kalpaks* (culpacs).

²¹⁶ A wide range of literature on body politics, specifically focusing on the symbolic meaning of the veil already exists. Hence, I chose to contribute to this literature by pointing out to other garments which serve similar purposes. For an illustrative text on the veil issue, see for example, Göle, *Modern Mahrem*.

Flags

The first garment that serves as the costume of the demonstrations is the flags. In both demonstrations, flags are not only symbols that are brandished, but they are also an indispensable part of the apparel worn: In the Republic Protest, the abundance of the Turkish flag, often worn as a cape, is a very visible component of the costume.

Although Article 26 of the Charter on the Turkish flag prohibits the use of the Turkish flag as a garment,²¹⁷ the Republic Protest at Çağlayan provides cases that run contrary to this Charter. There are also demonstrators

who are immersed in flags – not only do they wear it, but also embrace it with enthusiasm. There are demonstrators, for example, who paint their faces to the colors of the flag. The flag, in this sense, exceeds juridical boundaries and becomes a symbol which

signifies the values that the participants take possession of, identify themselves with and fear to lose.



The flag in Republic Protest also, comes in assorted patterns. Flags which include Atatürk's portrait constitute a large share of the flags of the Republic Protest. In the Palestine Demonstration, it is the Palestinian flags that serve the same purpose, which also comes in an assortment of patterns.



²¹⁷ Article 26 states that the Turkish flag cannot be used as a garment worn as a dress or a uniform. According to Article 21, lecterns in demonstrations approved by the state can be covered with the Turkish flag. For more information on this Charter, see the web site for the Ministry of Justice <http://www.mevzuat.adalet.gov.tr/html /5140.html>

Within the red triangle of the Palestinian flag are embedded a crescent and a star – thus symbolizing the bonding and solidarity between the two countries. Also in the Palestine Demonstration, chequered shawls are a symbolic part of the costume of most participants. Similar to the flags of the Palestine Demonstration, these shawls also unite the two nations within the same garment and symbolize solidarity. After this brief introduction, let me now elaborate on the costume of both demonstrations in greater depth.



In the Republic Protests, the podium, which is a central element of the demonstration, is ornamented in such a way that it reflects the values that the organizers identify themselves

with and aim to promote, protect and perpetuate. The podium is covered with Turkish flags some of which have pictures of Atatürk embedded in them. Behind the podium, a huge portrait of Atatürk is hung. By having his portrait, the organizers promote the feeling that Atatürk watches over the demonstrators, who gather at Çağlayan to protect his legacy. Flags with Atatürk's portrait are also brought into the demonstration ground by the participants. As the picture above shows, Çağlayan Square is colored by the redness of the Turkish flags on the day of the demonstration.

The extensive use of these “new” Turkish flags²¹⁸ does not only reflect the nationalistic elements present on the demonstration ground, but also symbolizes a

²¹⁸ On the other hand, actions that damage the moral value of the flag are rendered illegal by law. This is a point that is mentioned by Engin Ardiç, a columnist for *Sabah*, after the Republic Protest in İzmir took place. In his column on 26 November 2009, Ardiç looks at how “some people” idealize everything that Atatürk does and contradicts the use of Turkish flags with pictures of Atatürk wearing a culpac hat by arguing: “Is there an article in the Law on the Flag that states that drawing something

return to the authentic Kemalist self. Since flags are symbols that are also shared by “others”, including the Islamists (as in Palestine Demonstrations), and the ruling government, the incorporation of Atatürk into the Turkish flag separates Kemalists from their “others” in terms of the values that they articulate to the symbol. The values that the Turkish flag connotes for the Kemalists, who are attending the Republic Demonstration, represent a more modern, nationalist and enlightened Turkey, as envisioned by Atatürk in the *Nutuk*. So does Atatürk’s portrait behind the podium, where he is pictured wearing a tie and a blazer. The concern that the Turkish flag is used in other demonstrations, and that the Kemalist values the Turkish flag symbolize are dissolving are countered by the integration of Atatürk’s image into the flag.

The presence of Atatürk’s images is one thing that clearly separates the Republic Protests from the Palestine Demonstration. As my observation during the field study show, there has not been a single image of Atatürk in Palestine Demonstrations, whereas in their Kemalist counterparts, Atatürk, along with the flag becomes an extensively used symbol.

One interpretation that I find valuable in my evaluation of the flag is that these symbols, like all other symbols, are multivocal – when brandished, or worn around the body, the Turkish flag connotes a multitude of meanings. In the Republic Protest, the Turkish flag, along with its altered version (with Atatürk’s image embedded), does more than symbolize Turkishness. It emphasizes a “modern”, and secular interpretation of Turkishness. On the other hand, in a specific context in which the

on the flag or embedding a picture on the flag is illegal, or not? You will probably tell me that ‘But this is Atatürk. He is not an ordinary person’ And I will ask you: ‘But is there an article that states that pictures of Atatürk can be embedded. Furthermore, is not the culpac against the Hat Reform?’“ *Sabah*, 26 November 2009.

crowd chants in Arabic, and waves flags of Palestine and the Felicity Party, as in the Palestine Demonstration, the abundant use of the Turkish flag does not only illustrate the presence of nationalism, but in fact, show us how, as a tool of a demonstration with religious undertones, Turkishness embraces Islamist elements.

Furthermore, there are also new flags where Turkish and Palestinian symbols and colors are displayed on the same flag. This also points out to an antagonism embedded in the symbol itself for it runs contrary to the Turkish flags used in Kemalist performances in which it is secularism, and not Islamism, that the flag signifies. In the Republic Protests, it is observed that it is pictures of Atatürk, and not Palestinian flags or flags of the Felicity Party, that are brandished along side with the Turkish flag. Therefore, what accompanies the flag becomes an important component that also defines the values that are attached to the flag. Such antagonism also comes as a disturbing scene for the Kemalists, who perceive themselves as the true beholders and representatives of the Turkish flag. In the interviews, Prof. Ali Ercan argues that “the Turkish flags used in the Palestine Demonstration do not reflect the true meanings.” He further argues that the Turkish flags used in the Palestine Demonstration are “fakes”. Moreover, according to Şenal Sarihan, “the flag of the reactionaries is the turban” and not the Turkish flag. The reason that Kemalist organizations contest the use of the Turkish flag in the Palestine demonstrations crystallizes as a response to the Islamist, religious connotation it assumes. Although the symbols are the same, the Turkish flag of the Palestine Demonstration signifies meanings other than the Turkish flag of the Republic Protest. The same piece of cloth signifies different and contesting imaginaries.

Islamism, as performed in the Palestine Demonstration, and enveloped in the choice of the flags, is linked first with the Turkishness (as in the form of Turkish

nationalism) and then with Muslimness (as in the form of Islamic brotherhood). The performance in the Palestine Demonstration hints at the spectator that under the Islamist imaginary, the Turkish nation belongs to the Muslim geography. In response to the suffering encountered by Israel's invasion of Palestine, which has also revealed the loss of unity among Muslim nations and more importantly, pointed out to the lack of an Islamist political power to counter Israel's actions, an Islamist imaginary in which Turkishness and Islam amalgamates is socially constructed. In this sense, a new sense of belonging is symbolized by the Turkish flag of the Palestine Demonstration. And the Palestine Demonstration provides the platform to reconstruct this state of belonging. The loss of elements that unifies Muslims in Turkey and the Middle East is countered by an Islamist imagery in which Turkey plays the role of the "big brother". This role, it is argued through slogans of the demonstrators and speeches of the organizers, has been one that is not properly undertaken by the current Turkish government.

The Turkish flag of the Palestine Demonstration serves to bring Turkey in proximity with the "Muslim geography".²¹⁹ Contrary to the Kemalist, secularist imaginary in which Turkey is located in the "West", and the Kemalist argument uttered during the interviews that Turkishness embodies "Western" elements of rationality, scientificity and laicite²²⁰, this very particular demonstration relocates

²¹⁹ For a similar debate, see, "The Place of Turkey: Contested Regionalism in an Ambiguous Arena" in Yashin, pp. 44-77.

²²⁰The way Kemalists link Turkishness and science and laicite is clearly illustrated in the following excerpt taken from the interview with Prof. Ali Ercan from the ADD: "Religion is religion and science is science... This is what laicite really means. Before 1600s in Europe, they were together, after that, they were separated. For us, this separation is not achieved. It was achieved during Atatürk's times, we ended our middle ages (which for Europe ended in 1453) For us, in 1453, nothing changed. Our middle ages ended in 1923. In the structure of the state, which one will guide? Science or religion? If religion, than it is a theocratic state, if science, than a laicist state. If Turkey is a laicist state, then it should follow science. When you ask me about the role of religion, I would say that it is very big.

Turkey in the East, and attributes Turkishness values of spirituality, morality and (religious) brotherhood, which are seen as lacking values in the contemporary. The Turkish flag of the Palestine Demonstration represents a Muslim nation; a nation which is organized around Islamic principles, and the flag is attributed a religious connotation. When the Turkish flag is used in a context in which the crowd chants in Arabic or Quaranic verses are cited, it embraces a spiritual and Islamist character which the Kemalists contest. It also represents values that the Justice and Development Party, as a party with an Islamist heritage, is unwilling to undertake.

It could therefore be argued that the Turkish flags brandished in an Islamist demonstration represent a different meaning. And by using the Turkish flag, participants of the Palestine Demonstration perform the Islamist values they follow. In this regard, the motto of this demonstration, “You’re the voice, shout it out loud!” is well chosen for it empowers the participants to not only shout out their frustration towards Israel, the United States or the EU, but also shout out loud their identities, preferences, value systems and life styles, which they find to be threatened. The motto of the demonstrations empowers the demonstrators to respond to loss: By using the Turkish flag as an intermediary, the crowd at Çağlayan responds to loss of an Islamist imaginary in which Islam is the central element. The Turkish flag, then, becomes an agent to express a message that Mr. Kaya also mentions: “We are a part of this country’s future.”

Most people in the world and in our country are religious, there is much more to be done in terms of scientific and logical thinking.”

Puşi

Courtesy of Milli Görüş Portalı: <http://www.milligorportal.com/showthread.php?t=26165>



In the Palestine Demonstration, the podium is black, representing the solemn mood of the organizers and the grieving for the killings in Palestine and all around the podium are flags of Palestine, the Felicity Party and Turkey brandished.

The lectern itself is covered with a Turkish flag and at the two sides of the flag hangs two chequered shawls. These shawls, also known in Turkey as *puşi*, are apparels for daily wear for men in South-eastern Turkey, as well as men in the Middle East.

However, the presence of *puşi* in this demonstration organized by the Felicity Party is thought-provoking for the *puşi* does not necessarily signify an Islamist imaginary – unlike the *takke*, the Islamist skullcap, or the *cübbe*, the Islamist trench coat, which are worn by male members of Islamist sects, and are often associated with Islamist communities, the *puşi* is a



traditional headwear often seen as a part of the daily wear in the Middle East.

Why then, are these chequered shawls worn by the organizers of the demonstration? What does the *puşi*, in this specific context symbolize? Does it tell us something about Islamism? In order to understand what the *puşi* signifies, and whether it is attributed an Islamist connotation, one needs to look at the context in which it is used.

It would be too simplistic to argue that this apparel is worn because the demonstration is about Palestine. Also, when we look at other demonstrations organized by the Felicity Party, such as the demonstration denouncing Chinese invasion of East Turkestan, we do not find similar apparels being used. Therefore, we have to look for other ways to explain the symbolic role of these shawls in this demonstration. I will point out to two of these ways:

First, it could be argued that the “traditional” element that is symbolized by this garment is what the Felicity Party discovers, and attributes to its formulation of Islamism. With this use of this garment, loss is countered by bringing back of the element of traditionalism, in which the essential form of Islam is argued to be found. The shawl, as a symbol of the Palestine Demonstration, becomes a utility in which traditional Islam finds form. By wearing it, the Felicity Party displays its role as the guardian of the traditional values of Islam.

It could also be argued that by wearing these shawls, the Felicity Party also constructs an Islamist image which transcends the boundaries of Turkey and embraces with the Middle East. It is observed that some of the organizers on the podium, as well as demonstrators, are also wearing similar shawls where on the one end of this apparel, lies a Palestinian flag, and on the other, a Turkish flag. This shawl, in this specific context, does more than protecting the participants from the cold, January weather at Çağlayan Square. Similar to the veil or the headscarf, this shawl has a political implication on the day of the Palestine Demonstration: the apparel used by the organizers present on the podium, as well as the demonstrators on ground, symbolizes a vision in which Islamist and nationalist elements merge. Just like the shawl itself, where both ends are connected by a cotton thread, within the Islamist imaginary (of the National Outlook Movement) religion (Islam) and

nationalism (Turkishness) are two elements that are bonded with one another. The Felicity Party, as portrayed in the demonstration ground, assumes the symbolic role of a mediator between Turkey and Palestine and between nationalism and Islam. The two colossal flags (Turkish flag and the flag of the Felicity Party) hung at the top of the podium also strengthen the statement that in Turkey, as well as in its wider region, the Felicity Party is the representative of Islam.

Bandanas

Other than flags, a garment that was visible in both demonstration, and was complementary to the costume of the demonstrations was the bandanas. In the Republic Protest, most demonstrators were wearing red and white



bandanas with inscriptions that stated: “Atam İzindeyiz”²²¹ In the Palestine Demonstrations, on the other hand, a great many demonstrators were wearing green bandanas with Arabic inscriptions that stated: “God is great.”

What this thesis finds important about these bandanas are the values that they envelop. The very act of wearing these bandanas, I argue, allows demonstrators to perform acts through which they convey their messages in corporeal forms. The messages



that these bandanas carry not only reflect the general themes of these demonstrations,

²²¹ In English, the inscription reads: “Father, we follow you.”

but also perform an act where allegiance is paid to holy figures. By wearing the bandana, the demonstrators perform a ritual drama where they cleanse themselves – the bandanas, in other words are garments that complement a rite of purification. In the Republic Protest, pledge is paid to Atatürk to protect his legacy; and in the Palestine Demonstration, pledge is paid to God and the Prophets to protect the Islamist legacy. In the Republic Protest, participants take oaths to cleanse modern and secular Turkey from “the forces of darkness”; and in the Palestine Demonstration, participants take oath to cleanse the unity and holiness of Islam from “Zionist and imperialist others.” The bandanas reflect physical and material forms these pledges take.

By wearing these bandanas, the demonstrators accomplish two things. First, they make their messages visible in conspicuous forms. The use of bandanas is, in a sense, also a rite of conspicuous display. Considering that heads are the most visible components of the participants at Çağlayan, the very act of surrounding the head with a bandana becomes an effective mean to publicly display the messages that the demonstrators embody. Second, the head is not only a visible component of the body, but it also reflects an antagonism embedded. In my interview with Filiç Meriç from the ÇYDD, it was argued that by covering their heads with the veil, the young girls of Turkey also blacken their future, and obstruct their chances for enlightenment. Similar messages were also given in the placards: In numerous placards, the metaphor of “light” and enlightenment were brought up as central themes. The covering of heads with bandanas in this context, however, ironically serves to fight darkness. Similar to portraits of Atatürk pinned at people’s hearts, the bandanas which cover the heads of a considerable amount of the demonstrators at Çağlayan reflect people’s allegiance to the ideology they perform.

Kalpaks (culpacs)

One final garment that was hard to miss in my observations on the Republic Protest is the culpac. In its evaluation of the Republic Protest at Çağlayan, *Le Figaro* states in its headline: “In Turkey, the culpac fights against the veil.”²²²



Culpacs have originated as a part of a uniform for soldiers and are usually used in winter time in order to be protected from the cold. Nevertheless, like other garments linked with warfare (such as patched, motley pants and dog-tags), they have become a product of consumption, and reflect fashionable tastes today.



In Turkey, the culpac also represent a history that encircles the Independence War (and more specifically, the National Struggle period – see the picture above which is symbolic of the Sakarya Battle fought during the Turkish Independence War). Interesting enough, with the foundation of the new Republic, and the “Hat and Dress Revolution”, the public use of culpacs were banned in early modern Turkey, by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk himself. Today, however, one can see culpacs on people’s heads; and there is even a Kemalist magazine called “The Culpac”.



In the Republic Protests, the culpacs were visible in two forms; on the heads of some of the demonstrators, and on portraits of Atatürk/ Turkish flags. But how can

²²² *Hürriyet*, 1 May 2007.

we interpret the use of these winter garments in late April? As a response to this question, I propose two answers. First, through culpacs, the demonstrators reenact Atatürk's image and the revolutionary values he defended during the National Struggle period. This period and the proceeding foundation of the Republic, which symbolizes the golden age of Kemalism, is collectively remembered and yearned for by demonstrators at Çaglayan Square. Moreover, the presence of culpac hints at us the ambition to replace to contemporary image of Atatürk, which is desecrated by the use of other actors, including the AKP, with his older, and "authentic" image. Thus, culpacs become tools to tackle the fears for loss of Atatürk's "authentic" image and his revolutionary principles and values. Second, the uses of culpac bring out the festivaesque element where roles are inverted. By wearing the culpac, the demonstrators transform into soldiers who are ready and willing to wage another Independence War to promote and protect Atatürk's legacy, which, according to the demonstrators, is the secular and modern Turkey.

Slogans and Marches of the Demonstrations

The audibles used in this demonstration, including slogans, marches and theme songs, require a brief analysis because similar to the costumes, they are descriptive of the context in which the demonstration takes place. Moreover, the choice of audibles may also hint at us about the different verbal forms through which the demonstrators express their identities. The National Anthem aside (which initiates the beginning of the demonstration), both demonstrations bring out a variety of slogans, marches and theme songs. In this section, I will evaluate a number of them.

The Palestine

Demonstration initiates when the master of ceremony asks of the participants to lower their umbrellas and flags to get ready for the National Anthem.



Numan Kurtulmuş, the chairman

of the Felicity Party, and Fatih Erbakan, board member of the party who is also the son of Necmettin Erbakan, the spiritual leader of the National Outlook Movement arrives to the demonstration ground. Consequently, the anthem is played and the crowd sings it along. As the national anthem is being sung, many of the demonstrators point their fingers to the sky, as a way of addressing God, or point their thumbs up, as a way of referring to the National Outlook movement; while, in the Republic Protests, participants hold pictures of Atatürk as the anthem is being sung.²²³ The reactions of the demonstrators to the National Anthem reveal us the meaning they attribute to the anthem. Whereas in the Palestine Demonstration, the participants dedicate their act of singing the anthem to God and to the National Outlook Movement, the participants of the Republic Protest dedicate their act to Atatürk and to the National Struggle period. The anthem in Palestine Demonstration is followed by enthusiastic chants of “Curse on you, Israel” which are then followed by tekbirs [Allah is great].

²²³ When the Israeli invasion of Palestine was initiated in late 2008, a group of protestors carrying Turkish flags sang the national anthem in front of the General Consulate of Israel in Ankara. While the national anthem was being sung, similar to the picture observed in Çağlayan, some of the protestors pointed their fingers to the sky while others raised their thumbs.

In the Republic Protest, the National Anthem is also sung with great respect. Unlike other anthems and marches which have been turned into popular songs and are sung throughout the demonstration, such as the 10th year anthem, special veneration is paid to the National Anthem. In the Republic Protest, the anthem is followed by enthusiastic chants of “Turkey is a secular country, and will remain so.”²²⁴ In the Palestine Demonstration, the continuity between the anthem and the chanting signifies an amalgamation of religious and nationalistic elements. This continuity serves to contextualize an element of the past, which is the Arabic language, within the contemporary. Similar to the Turkish flag, the national anthem, which is a shared symbol, is attributed a religious connotation when it is sung in the Palestine Demonstration. In the Republic Protest, on the other hand, the emphasis on Turkey’s secular identity is reflected on the National Anthem.

An element that separates the Republic Protest is the theme song. The “theme song” of the Palestine demonstration is *Intifada* (shaking off/rebellion). The lyrics of *Intifada* calls for a new resurrection, an Intifada [holy struggle] to be given in Jerusalem, Sarajevo, Mecca, Damascus, and more importantly, Ankara (the capital, where the Parliament is located), against oppression with whatever means possible – stones, 11 year old “raiders” (*akıncılar*), mothers whose kids have been killed. The main song of the Republic Protests, on the other hand, is the march commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Turkish Republic (*10. Yıl Marşı*). The remixed version of this march, which led to even more heated discussions among different actors,²²⁵ is constantly played in the Çağlayan Square and it is sung along and danced along by

²²⁴ Türkiye laikdir, laik kalacak.

²²⁵ The remixed version was used first in the 1997 Republic Day celebrations, following the victory of the Welfare Party in local elections.

the audience.²²⁶ This march is important because of the discussion and disturbance it instigates and the criticism it brings²²⁷ – the march, as used in the Republic Protest, becomes an element through which Kemalists differentiate themselves from their others. Therefore, the tenth year march becomes an element that is controversial, or in the eyes of the Islamist press (as uttered in the column by Akif Emre from *Yeni Şafak*) “strictly ideological”.²²⁸ The very affiliation of Kemalism with the 10th Year March, as is clearly done in Çağlayan Square, upsets other actors. For example, Ahmet Kekeç tries to deconstruct the Kemalist possession of the 10th year march:

I like the 10th year March. But I am also against it because it is used as an alternative to the Independence March. (*İstiklal Marşı*). It is argued by some people, such as those who have previously advocated for having the edhan sung in Turkish, that the content of the Independence March is Islamist, and therefore the march of the Turkish Republic has to be the 10th Year March... I have an alternative to end all this fuss. Let us call the 10th Year March the March of the White Turks, and the Independence March the march of all the Turks.²²⁹

²²⁶ For a study on the 10th year celebration of the Turkish Republic, 10. Yıl. Marşı, see Çınar.

²²⁷ The discussion on the 10th year March vs. the Independence March is a heavily debated topic in Turkey because the poet who has written the Independence March, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, is known for his Islamist inclinations and is well respected among Islamist circles. Therefore, the use of the 10th Year March, and not the Independence March, is a statement by itself for the Kemalist NGOs organizing the Republic Protest. Whereas the Independence March is a shared element among different actors in Turkey, the 10th Year March becomes an element that is attributed solely to the Kemalist imaginary. And when it is used by other actors, such as the AKP, it causes disturbance. For example, when this march is played and sung along in the youth branch meeting of the Justice and Development Party, it causes great disturbance among various columnists. According to Mehmet Yılmaz from *Hürriyet*, the singing of the 10th year march by the youth branches of the AKP is an example of *takiye* – that is, acting in a manner that is deceitful and covers what one truly represents. *Hürriyet*, 17 April 2008. According to Ilicak, since (28 February) 1997, the 10th year march has an anti-Islamist and militarist meanings therefore, when it is sung by the AKP, people will start to think of the AKP practicing *takiyye*. *Sabah*, 20 April 2008.

²²⁸ *Yeni Şafak*, 17 April 2008.

²²⁹ *Yeni Şafak*, 6 March 2004. “White Turk” here is used to describe the educated, rich elite in Turkey who defend laicite and Turkish nationalism.

Theatrical Forms of Dramatic Elements

Resurrecting Atatürk

The image of Atatürk, as in the forms of Kemalist paraphernalia or the in narratives on the Independence War becomes a collectively embraced and commonly cited element in the Republic Protest. In fact, one of the commonly observed patterns in the Republic Protest at Çağlayan is the demonstrators establishing physical



connection with Atatürk's image. (see for example, the picture to the right where an old lady hugs Atatürk's portrait) Not only does the loss of his ideals, but also the loss of his very image, disturbs the demonstrators at Çağlayan. In response, the demonstration turns into a ritualistic act to resurrect his image. Prior to the

demonstration, the organizers ask of the participants to bring their Turkish flags and Atatürk portraits, which hints at us about the aim to promote Atatürk's image in more conspicuous and visible forms. The image of Atatürk, and the values he embodies, similar to images of Abdulhamid II or Necmeddin Erbakan in the Palestine Demonstration, is brought into the demonstration ground in the form of cine-



vision, or is embedded on Turkish flags, pinned to participants' shirts, or drawn on placards. By summoning an image of the past into the contemporary, the demonstrators connect with the values of the early Republic and construct a sense of permanence which complements the message that Atatürk, along with his ideals,

lives. (the placard raised by one of the participants of the demonstration states:

“*Yaşayacak.*”²³⁰

Atatürk lives at Çağlayan through his appearance in cine-vision display. With the help of technology, the sacra is resurrected. Through cinevision, Atatürk’s 1927 address to the Grand National Assembly, also known as the *Nutuk*, is listened



altogether. The *Nutuk*, which covers the Turkish War of Independence, is an important source or as Adak calls it, a “sacred text of the Turkish Republic”²³¹ for the Kemalists to remember and take lessons from the path followed by “Atatürk and his brothers-in-arms” in establishing an independent Turkey. By addressing the audience with citations from the *Nutuk*, as well as the collective act of watching a video in which *Nutuk* is being read by Atatürk, the organizers respond to desacralization of Kemalism. By utilizing this sacred text, the demonstrators are asked to act collectively and respond to Kemalism’s loss. Even 80 years after its first presentation in the Parliament by Atatürk, *Nutuk* serves exactly the same purpose. It creates a sense of solidarity by pointing out to the threats that are/will be faced, the enemies that will have to be tackled and provides future generations with tips and more importantly, with the responsibility regarding the ways the Turks can maintain an independent Turkish Republic.

²³⁰ “He will live.” See the second picture on page 121.

²³¹ Hülya Adak, “National Myths and Self Na(rra)tions”, *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, vol. 2 no. 3 (2003), p.512.

Ritualizing Erbakan

Courtesy of DEWA, a Turkish-Austrian Internet-based Newspaper.

Pictures of Erbakan (and Sultan Abdulhamid II) in the Palestine Demonstration serve a purpose similar to Atatürk's visualization at the Republic Protest. The presence of Necmettin Erbakan, even if it is through a video-call, is important because Erbakan is the spiritual leader of the



National Outlook movement. He is, in the eyes of the Islamists addressed by this demonstration, a holy figure – one which is equated with the Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II. As was discussed in the chapter on literature review, during Abdulhamid's reign, Islamism (in the form of a pan-Islamist ideal) was the dominant discourse. The presence of Erbakan's figure on the screen, on the other hand, is a symbolic act that reveals a yearning for Abdulhamid's Islamism to become the dominating discourse in Turkey. As the placard rose by one of the demonstrators show, his presence at Çağlayan symbolically represents the loss of a glorified Islamist imaginary in which Islamism was powerful. Because leaders such as Necmettin Erbakan are politically inactive, the true representatives of Islamism are argued to be missing in the contemporary political structure. The placard symbolizes the fury and regret in having leaders, such as Prime Minister Erdoğan, who are ignorant of Islamist demands. As the placard states, if Islamist leaders such as Sultan Abdulhamid II or Erbakan were to live or be in power, the trauma faced today (in Palestine) would not have been experienced.

Similar to Atatürk's address to the Parliament in 1927 which is conveyed through cine-vision display, Erbakan's speech, reflected on the screen and transferred through a video-call, is also important for it points out to the elements that are missing in contemporary Turkey and asks of the demonstrators to take appropriate action to fight against the "enemy". Erbakan asks of the demonstrators to respond to the loss of these elements in a "responsible" manner. Similar to SP's Chairman, Kurtulmuş's speech at Çağlayan, in which he resembles the demonstrators to the children of the Prophet and the Caliphates, Erbakan resembles demonstrators to soldiers who will fight to transform the contemporary in line with Islamist ideals. His speech, in a way, enacts a rite of inversion. In his speech, Erbakan argues that Palestine, since the times of Prophet Ömer, has been a world of Islamic communities (he uses the world, İslam dünyası, which roughly translates to a world of Islam) for over 1500 years. According to Erbakan, Palestine does not only struggle for itself, but for the Islamic world as a whole. Throughout history, Muslims struggled for improvements and the betterment of humanity, and saved humanity."

Through Erbakan's presence, and his carefully listened speech on acting as "responsible believers", the struggles of the past can be remembered and shared by the demonstrators at Çağlayan. Similar to Atatürk's address to the Parliament which is reflected on the screen, through a video-call, Erbakan's image initiates the rite of social drama at Çağlayan. Through this collective theatrical performance, the theme, that is the lack of a Muslim power, in the contemporary, is brought up as a concern which needs to be addressed by the demonstrators. Erbakan's speech is also important for it creates a sense of unity and draws the boundaries of a shared Islamist imaginary. His presence reformulates the meaning of Islam that is deemed to be lost. He is seen as the missing element in the contemporary. The Islamist imaginary he

draws becomes one that is timeless and universal; the messages embedded in the video-call portray demonstrators as fighters for humanity and Islam. Similar to the role Prophet Mohammed or Abdulhamid II assumes in the Islamist imaginary, Erbakan's image offers a gateway through which the present can be put in comparison with the idealized past, and criticized.

Mothers of Mohammad

Women are also important and visible symbols of the Palestine Demonstration.

Contrary to the Republic Protest, most of the women in the Palestine Demonstration are wearing headscarves, black chadors and black trench coats. Yet, what I find

further interesting, and consider to be a new finding, is that women in this

demonstration are also intermediaries to other elements. For example, women in the Palestine Demonstration make themselves distinct not only with what they wear, but with what they carry. One of the poignant



visuals of the Palestine demonstrations is the baby dolls covered in blood. Women in this specific context symbolize maternity; and the baby dolls that they carry become symbols of resistance. Maternity, in this specific context, does not only represent a woman's biological capability to give birth. These dolls attribute women a new identity, as the mothers of Palestine, who may have lost their kids (or their own lives) as they waged a war against "the Zionist other". Loss, within this specific context, is performed through the bodies of women: the response to the loss of children (Muslim children, more specifically) in Palestine is countered with the role of Muslim women

as Muslim mothers. Women's body, and her maternity, becomes a medium of response to the loss of children in Palestine. By having the capability of bearing new children who represent the next generation of Muslims, women, and the baby dolls they carry, symbolize a response to traumatic loss. The master of ceremony recognizes the presence of women with baby dolls and constructs a story in which women, as "proud mothers of the Muslim society", play a central role. Through his speech, women assume an integral responsibility in reconstructing the authentic Islamist identity. The master of the ceremony mentions that Palestinian mothers are happy when they give birth to a boy because a new warrior of Palestine against the Zionists is born. He finishes his words by stating: "As Mohammeds grow, Israel will shrink and will finally be annihilated."²³² The crowd replies: "*Allah-u Ekber*"²³³

Consumptive Elements of the Demonstrations

Consumption is a central element to both demonstrations. According to a study conducted on the number of sales for flags during the Republic Protests, it has been found that in the six demonstrations organized at various cities around Turkey (Ankara, Istanbul, Manisa, Çanakkale, Muğla and İzmir) which spanned for a time period of over two months, 20 million liras worth of Turkish flags, in different sizes and patterns, were sold.²³⁴ According to the same news piece which shared information on the flag economy, the chairman of one of the biggest flag providers in

²³² The reference to Mohammed here has a double meaning. By using the name Mohammed, the master of ceremony makes reference both to Prophet Mohammed and a child, named Mohammed, who was killed in Israeli bombings.

²³³ "God is Great".

²³⁴ *Hürriyet*, 15 May 2007.

Turkey, Ekrem Dernek, proudly stated that flag sales in Turkey have exceeded even the sales of American flags following September 11. The vastness of this figure can be better grasped when compared with the (flag) sales figure of 3 million Liras in 2008, the year when the national football team made it to the semi-finals in the European Cup.²³⁵

There were other materials other than flags that were conspicuously consumed in the demonstration ground. So far in my analysis, I have problematized some of the consumptive forms that are descriptive of and complementary to the performances at Çağlayan. Although the main focus of my research did not cover the consumptive modes of demonstrations, and hence, I only came up with limited findings on its role, my ethnographic analyses point out that the conspicuous consumption of food and insignia at Çağlayan provides a lively economy while at the same time, reveals how commodified forms of Kemalism and Islamism are consumed within the marketplace the demonstration ground provides.²³⁶

In the previous sections, it was argued, by paraphrasing Yashin, that identities in Turkey are produced within the marketplace. As my observations on the demonstrations show, the most visible intermediary agents that become a part of this production cycle, and therefore serve a key role, are the street vendors, who are an indispensable part of the marketplace. On the demonstration day, these vendors provided demonstrators with necessary garments and insignia to express themselves. Although their entry to Çağlayan Square was to some extent blockaded by the

²³⁵ *Hürriyet*, 23 June 2008.

²³⁶ Yashin, pp. 78-113.

police²³⁷, vendors selling flags, portraits, bandanas, as well as food and beverages could nevertheless be seen, wandering both within and outside the borders of the demonstration ground. Moreover, vendors also accompany the walk to the demonstration ground. On the two sides of the streets leading to Çağlayan, which is an immense platform with many exits and entrances, vendors lined up to offer the demonstrators their much demanded products.

Undoubtedly, the consumptive elements of both demonstrations require a more in-depth evaluation. Unfortunately, the material obtained during my field research limits the capacity to come up with such an assessment. Nevertheless, protruding from the observations provided above, illustrative questions can be directed which I believe may provide a starting ground for new studies focusing on the consumptive elements of demonstrations.

The first question that needs further analysis is on the level of interaction between civil society organizers and the producers of the flags and other paraphernalia. Is there any organic link between the two? Do the companies which produce these flags, for example, have any ideological affiliation?

Second, who gets to decide the design on the flags and paraphernalia used in the demonstrations? My field study has shown that the organizers ask of the demonstrators to bring their flags to the demonstration ground, and also provide these flags in the demonstration ground. Moreover, prior to the demonstration, they congregate in order to finalize their decisions on the flags waved, placards carried and the slogans chanted, as well as the general flow of the demonstration, including the music to be used. However, how was the integration of Atatürk's portrait on the Turkish flag, for example, decided in the first place?

²³⁷ Yashin makes a similar observation for the “flag campaign” demonstration that took place in Taksim Square in 1994. See Yashin, pp. 147-9.

I believe that the answers to these two questions can further enhance our analyses on demonstrations staged in Turkey by revealing the opportunities it economically provides to both the organizers and the other actors benefiting from such demonstrations.

Concluding Remarks

In this section, personal observations on the two demonstrations organized at Çağlayan were shared. By focusing on the festivaesque and ritualistic elements of these performances, and evaluating the symbolic meaning these elements signified, I have tried to show the different ways the demonstrators expressed themselves. Similarities and differences between the two demonstrations were brought up along this analysis.

It was found that in both demonstrations, communicating with the imaginary authentic core, that is, the essence, in which the subject is envisioned to be found in its purest form, was a central, repetitive and definitive pattern. By smothering in Turkish flags and embracing with pictures of Atatürk, or wearing bandanas that stated “God is great” in Arabic scripture, participants became one and unified their bodies and hearts as well as their thoughts in Kemalist and Islamist ideals. The internalization of loss and reactions to it were reflected onto symbolic and often corporeal forms. Abstract Kemalist and Islamist messages were transformed into material and consumable substances, which found form in flags, bandanas, portraits and pinnacles.

In the Republic Protests, Atatürk’s revolutions and the formation of the new Turkish nation were brought up as the main pillars that constructed the essence of

Kemalism. What the organizers, as well as the demonstrators uttered in their slogans, speeches and interviews with TV channels, or express through verbal and corporeal forms in the Republic Protests displays their faithfulness to Kemalist principles, and reveals the aim to reenact the struggle for independence in contemporary Turkey. A new Independence War was staged at Çağlayan. The struggle that was given in early Republican era, and in the Independence War, to construct a new, modern and most importantly, secular Turkey, and the unity and strength of Kemalists during the early Republican era was collectively vocalized at Çağlayan as what is lacking in Turkey today. The demonstration turned into a gathering of Kemalists to reconstitute the lost power, spaces, ideals and unity. By attending the Republic Protest, participants collectively remembered the struggle for independence given almost a century ago, and recontextualized the memories of past struggles to clash with the others/threats/enemies in the contemporary. The feeling of being incapacitated, which is a reflection of the lack of necessary ideological tools and power to fight against the other in the contemporary forced the demonstrators to seek for that power and capacity within an earlier period. This period was deemed to represent Kemalism at its ideal state, and was thus approached as the golden age of Kemalism. Henceforth, demonstrators at Çağlayan Square were guided by the nostalgia that was reenacted throughout the demonstration.

On a similar line, in the Palestine Demonstrations, the savior was sought for in a late Ottoman sultan, Sultan Abdulhamid II, and his more contemporary reflection, Necmeddin Erbakan; the two revolutionary figures who have aimed for Islamist revivalism during the times they were politically active and were taken down by a coup d'état in 27 April 1909 and 28 February 1997 respectively. What is interesting is that, although their ideals remain, both figures are non-existent in the political

platform today. Consequently, their visibility at Çağlayan, similar to Atatürk's visibility, initiated a nostalgic response by the demonstrators. Their appearance on the demonstration ground, either through video-calls or through placards, carried symbolic messages that exceeded spatial and temporal boundaries. Through the glorification and adoration of these figures, and the sacralization and ritualization of their values and ideals, a new imaginary for contemporary Turkey, which serves as an idealized alternative was constructed. Therefore, similar to the Republic Protest, the Palestine Demonstration was also guided by nostalgia. People who felt that their life-styles were threatened, and feared the loss and gradual deterioration of Islamic values, embraced their minds as well as hearts with the holy figures of Islam and expressed it in verbal, non-verbal and cultural forms.

Falassi's argument, which has been instrumental for this section, was that festivals create their own spatial temporal dimension, and construct a certain meaning that exceeds both spatial and temporal limitations. Through the enactment of different rites, this section has shown how the Republic Protest and Palestine Demonstration, both taking place at Çağlayan, have managed to create their own spatiality and temporality, and conveyed symbolic meanings which have gone beyond both literal and explicit aspects of the demonstrations.

Moreover, as ritualistic performances, people attended these demonstrations to soothe their pain, share their anger, feel that they are not alone in their ways of thinking and more importantly, find solutions to the problems they face in contemporary Turkey. Unable to find these solutions within the current structure in which Kemalism is no longer the dominating discourse, or Islam is not "properly" practiced and displayed in public, and therefore lacks the political, social and economic power over its others, and lacks the political, social and economic power to

transform the contemporary in line with its ideals, the participants chose to attend these demonstrations in which the spirit (of Atatürk and of Sultan Abdulhamid II) which represents the lost, abandoned or forgotten essence would be recovered. Through their performances, demonstrators struggled to solve the problems they found in Turkey, and they have struggled to do so by filling in the gap that they argued to be lacking in contemporary Turkey.

The Reflections of the Demonstrations in the Media

The final section of this chapter looks at the evaluation of the Republic Protest and Palestine Demonstration in the Turkish press. The section particularly focuses on how (in which forms and contexts) the theme of loss is brought up by columnists, and whether it plays a central role in their interpretations and analyses on the demonstrations.

The media is an important agent in shaping the discussion on Kemalism and Islamism because it acts as an agent in which meaning is produced. The perspective from which a specific media agent (a specific newspaper or columnist) evaluates an event can be constitutive of the numerous ways different ideologies are interpreted and different subjectivities are construed. Previous studies conducted on media's role in conceptualizing subjectivities in Turkey point out to the integral role media plays in the shaping of subjectivities, ideologies and discourses:

Communication networks have simultaneously reshaped consciousness of a shared identity previously taken for granted and increased an awareness of differences. The media, by offering many opportunities for politically conscious elites to diffuse their ideas, have brought ethno-linguistic and ethno-religious identities into public space and contributed to the fragmentation of

authority by multiplying not just its voices but also their subjects and most important, their contexts.²³⁸

Moreover, the media's role is integral for it acts as the mirror of the society or the "public gaze" as Çınar calls, which reflects and interprets the different ways publics communicate with each other and "marks bodies and places and in order to situate them".²³⁹ It provides alternative and marginalized publics and repressed or forgotten narratives with a chance to become vocal and discernable in the society. According to Yavuz, beginning with 1980, the Turkish media started to create "communicative spaces" for minorities, in which "suppressed collective memory and history" was broadcasted.²⁴⁰ Accordingly, Yavuz gives reference to the use of the Islamist *Samanyolu TV* and *Zaman* newspaper by the Nurcu movement. On a similar line, throughout my field research I have found that the Felicity Party uses *Milli Gazete* and *Kanal 5*, and the Kemalist actors such as the ADD, CKD and ÇYDD affiliate themselves with *Cumhuriyet* and *Kanal B*.²⁴¹

The following parts of this section will look at the different ways newspapers and columnists analyze these demonstrations. The first part will try to support the theory with practical examples: in problematizing "loss" (and the response to "loss") in the media, the first part will show how columnists and newspapers, similar to the representatives of the NGOs interviewed with, assume the responsibility to teach their public about the "true" meanings of Kemalism and Islamism and the "proper"

²³⁸ Hakan M. Yavuz, "Media Identities for Alevis and Kurds in Turkey." In *New Media in the Muslim World The Emerging Public Sphere*, edited by Dale F. Eickelman and John W. Anderson (Indiana University Press, 2005), p.195.

²³⁹ Çınar, pp. 50-51.

²⁴⁰ Yavuz, "Media Identities", p.183.

²⁴¹ The ADD Kadıköy branch, along with other Istanbul branches of ADD, organizes protest demonstrations every week (every Monday) to protest against the imprisonment of Mustafa Balbay, a columnist for *Cumhuriyet*, who is accused for having ties with the Ergenekon organization.

ways of acting as an exemplary Kemalist or Islamist. The columns will illustrate how the fear that Kemalism and Islamism are losing their “true” and “authentic” meaning and/or drifting away from the essential principles and guidelines raises a major concern in the media. The part following this will show how these concerns are also brought up in columnists’ evaluation of the Republic Protest and Palestine Demonstration.

Searching for the True Islamist and True Kemalist

A comparative look at the articles of various columnists reveals a clash within the press over the use of the terms Kemalism/Kemalist and Islamism/Islamist. An analysis on newspapers’ coverage also shows that the fear that Kemalism or Islamism is being perceived in a wrong fashion and the worry that Kemalists and Islamists are facing a slander campaign (*karalama kampanyası*) becomes principle in defining this clash among different media agents. The following pages will provide examples to show how these concerns are carried into the pages of newspapers. In these examples, I will primarily look at how columnists distinguish their Islamism or Kemalism from other formulations.

One example of the search for the “true” meaning of Islamism (and the authentic Islamist subject) comes from *Türkiye Gazetesi*, a newspaper owned by the Islamically-oriented corporation, İhlas Holding, which is also known for its affiliation with the Gülen community.²⁴² In a column published in *Türkiye Gazetesi*,

²⁴² This affiliation is discussed in an article published on Gülen’s web site: en.fgulen.com. Maigre, Marie-Elisabeth, “The Influence of the Gülen Movement in the Emergence of a Turkish Cultural Third Way” Conference Papers: Contributions of the Gülen Movement, 2007. For the article, see <http://en.fgulen.com/conference-papers/contributions-of-the-gulen-movement/2442-the-influence-of-the-gulen-movement-in-the-emergence-of-a-turkish-cultural-third-way.html>, [8 January 2010]

the authentic Islamist subject is found within an essential Islamist imaginary founded upon the verses of the Quran, symbolized by Prophet Mohammed, and equated with sincerity: a true Islamist is portrayed as one who sincerely practices religion as ordered by God and Prophet Mohammed. In his column entitled “Being a genuine Muslim” (*Gerçek Müslüman Olmak*), Mehmet Ali Demirbaş provides his readers with theological answers regarding how one becomes a true Muslim.²⁴³ According to Demirbaş, in order to become a true Muslim, one has to practice the duties commanded by religion (*ibadet*) in the “right” way – that is as they are ordered by Allah. Moreover, one has to be sincere in his/her love of God. And those who are sincere in their love of God, and those who are not hypocrites, have to keep their distance from others who are sectless and non-believers:

One can only love God and God himself. One has to forget about property, rank, respect and fame when one loves God. These values are not values of sincerity (*ihlas*), but of hypocrisy (*riya*). One would commit sins by pursuing such values. Those who follow orders which have been fabricated after Prophet Mohammed’s passing away (*bid’at*), those who act in forbidden ways (haram), and become friends with the sectless (*mezhepsiz*) and infidel (*kafir*) cannot be sincere.

In a similar line, in 2005, Mehmet Şevket Eygi from *Milli Gazete* opened his column to questions on Islam, Muslims and Islamists, and answered them in two days. In his column, Eygi’s construction of the Islamist subject focuses specifically on what is deemed to be lost: that is, the values Islamism lacks in the present. Eygi points out to the loss of the true meanings of Islam in defining the kind of Islamism that he believes is being experienced in the world today. According to Eygi, Muslims have to work much harder than they already do to associate themselves with the authentic Islamist self: “Islam is a religion that is closed to reforms because its principles are sent by Allah and Muslims, in relation with how much they follow these principles,

²⁴³ *Türkiye Gazetesi*, 7 May 2006.

can be categorized roughly as good Muslims, average Muslims (*orta dereceli Müslüman*) and bad Muslims – “*avam, havas, havassül havas.*”²⁴⁴ Eygi’s elaboration of Islam in today’s society carries sharp criticisms which entail the fear and resentment over the transformation of the Islamist subject and the transformation of Islamism, which according to Eygi, desacralizes Islam. In responding to a question regarding the condition of Muslims today, he argues: “Unfortunately, there is a big difference between Muslims and Islam today. Islam is in a holy place, and Muslims have remained far behind it. This is the main reason for all the defections, captivity, instigation and mischief experienced today.”

Eygi’s essentialist emphasis and response to the way Islam, in its contemporary form, is practiced and perceived, reveals the loss of elements which are originally found in the “holy place” in which Eygi locates the essence of Islamism. Eygi’s criticisms to the present are motivated by his fear of drifting away from the sacra, or what he calls, the condition with “having remained far behind the holy place” in which Islam, in its pure form, is located. As Eygi defines the essence of Islam, and aims to reconstruct and reorient the meaning of Islamism in line with what this essence encapsulates, he also draws the contours of Islamism’s “insincere” and “fake” others. Similar to Demirbaş, who argues that the true believers have to keep their distance from other non-believers, for *Milli Gazete* in general, and Eygi in particular, the essential Islamist subject differs from its misrepresentations. For example, Abdullah Gül and the Justice and Development Party do not represent the Islamist identity in its true form, which can only be found in the National Outlook movement. It is argued that the ex-members of Welfare, having drifted away from the National Outlook movement, have also lost their Islamist ties. Thus qualifying

²⁴⁴ *Milli Gazete*, 19 September 2005.

ex-National Outlook members as Islamists is criticized by the columnists of *Milli Gazete*. In his 4 May 2007 column, Abdulkadir Özkan elaborates on this point by criticizing the international media for choosing the title “Islamist candidate blocked” to describe the Republic Protests.²⁴⁵ In a parallel line, in his column on 6 January 2009, Ayhan Demir from *Milli Gazete* distinguishes Muslim elites/governors from the Muslim people (*halk*), which, he argues, points out to two different understandings on Islamism. Demir argues that “whereas the Muslim elite (mainly referring to and criticizing the AKP government) kept its silence in responding to the violence in Palestine, Muslim people all around the world, including those in Turkey, the Muslims from Istanbul to Van, Bayburt to Diyarbakır, organized demonstrations against Zionism.”²⁴⁶ For Demir, those who have come to the Palestine Demonstrations were the true and sincere representatives of Islam in Turkey.

The Islamist press, and among those newspapers such as *Milli Gazete* is critical of the government for not truly representing the ideological path constructed by the Welfare Party, which according to the *Milli Gazete*, adopts Islam in its true form. Columnists such as Demir criticize the government for sending out the “wrong image” of Islam to the national and international community. On the other hand, this wrong image, to the eyes of more liberal or secular columnists, does not seem to be that wrong. For example, Ergun Babahan from the newspaper, *Sabah*, argues that the Republic Protest in Çağlayan is a demonstration against Justice and Development Party which in the eyes of the society represents the continuation of the National Outlook framework.²⁴⁷ In a similar line, Gündüz Aktan, columnist for *Radikal*,

²⁴⁵ *Milli Gazete*, 4 May 2007.

²⁴⁶ *Milli Gazete*, 6 January 2009.

²⁴⁷ *Sabah*, 30 April 2007.

equates Justice and Development Party's Islamism with that of the National Outlook movement by arguing that the only reason Prime Minister Erdoğan nominated Abdullah Gül was because he came from the cadres of the National Outlook.²⁴⁸ Under the gaze of these columnists, both the Justice and Development Party and the Felicity Party are seen as representatives of the National Outlook movement. Under the label of Islamism, both parties are put in the same ideological basket. The Islamist media, in an effort to exonerate such stigmatization (and in an effort to differentiate its bond with Islam from that of the AKP) stresses the distinction between AKP's Islamism and Islamism of other fractions (such as Felicity Party's National Outlook). Then again, in the above cited column on 4 May 2007, Özkan states: "Is it not obvious that both Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül do everything they can to stress that they do not represent an Islamic identity in politics and have undressed from the National Outlook uniform."²⁴⁹

Following the above cited examples, it could be argued that within the media there are different and contested approaches to conceptualizing Islamism. In this ambiguous evaluation, newspapers such as *Milli Gazete* take it as a task to reconstruct what Islamism in its authentic form stands for and differentiate SP's Islamism from the misrepresentations of Islamism. As both Eygi and Demir's column clearly show, these columnists cannot accept the association of "fake", "insincere", "wrong" and "corrupted" actors and values with the Islamism the Felicity Party claims to defend and represent. In response to the fake and insincere others, and as an apprehensive reaction to its dominant power to desacralize the Islamist essence and more importantly, transform it, the Islamist subject, in its "true"

²⁴⁸ *Radikal*, 5 May 2007.

²⁴⁹ *Milli Gazete*, 4 May 2007.

and “authentic” form, is constructed by *Milli Gazete*. Islamism, as illustrated by *Milli Gazete*’s approach, is conceptualized as a response to the loss of its holiness, and as a response to the transformation of Muslims from good Muslims to bad Muslims, as uttered in the above mentioned column by Eygi.

The search for a true and authentic representative of Kemalism is also debated among Kemalist circles. In an interview given to a magazine, Prof. Sina Akşin, the Chairman of the Atatürkist Thought Organization (ADD) argues that what Turkey needs is a true Kemalist party which would bring back the principles of the Kemalist revolution. The tone of his words point out to a worried state of mind – one that is concerned with the loss of “true” Kemalism in Turkey today. In his argument, Akşin argues that the sort of Kemalism that is experienced today, especially in politics, differs from the Kemalism that was experienced during the single party era:

Since 1950, there has not been a single Kemalist (*Atatürkçü*) party; Kemalism only exists in demonstrations. Of course the Republic, laicite, the Civil Code is all in place. And because they are all in place, we believe that things are going well. But they are not. What we need to do is to reintroduce a Kemalist revolution... the Kemalists in Turkey need a Kemalist political party in which they can vote. It is great to have a Kemalist army, but what we need is a civil movement that needs to become political. Kemalism in Turkey needs to be better organized. That is why a Kemalist party is a necessity.²⁵⁰

A controversial
move by the same
political party that
Prof. Akşin finds
insufficient in
representing
Kemalism in



²⁵⁰ “Türkiye’nin Gerçek Kemalist bir Partiye İhtiyacı var”, *İleri*, no. 4 (May-June 2001).

Turkey, that is, the Republican People's Party (CHP), lead to intense debates within the media regarding what Kemalism truly represents. In late 2008, for the first time in its history, the CHP granted membership to women wearing the headscarf and the turban. This came to be known in the media as “çarşaf açılımı”,²⁵¹ or the full veil opening. Consequently, in early 2009, the CHP loosened its position on Quran courses and argued that Quran courses/houses, which are to be built and regulated by the state, should be opened in every district. This came to be known as “kuran kursu açılımı”, or the Quran courses opening.²⁵²

Even though these acts were symbolic, their impact was huge and perhaps, traumatic, because for the first time in its history, a Kemalist political party known for its ardent position on laicite integrated policies that they would in any other context despise. Furthermore, this move by the CHP was perceived as a clear signal for drifting away from the Kemalist legacy, and disrespect for the Kemalist heritage. In the eyes of the Kemalist actors, the path that Atatürk designated for the future generations to follow was obstructed. CHP, in line with Akşin's above-cited criticisms, was no longer seen as the guardian of Kemalism, or the political party which truly represents Kemalist revolutions. Following this event, the media was split into two camps. There were those who supported such “openings” and those who were against them. A famous Turkish poet, Ataol Behramoğlu, who also writes a column in *Cumhuriyet* on a freelance basis, was quite displeased with CHP's welcoming of members with full veil and the turban. Moreover, he was strained by the loss of CHP's loyalty to Kemalism. In

²⁵¹ “CHP'de türbanlı çarşafly üye devri”, *NTVMSNBC*, 17 November 2008, Available: <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/466111.asp>. [22 April 2009] The picture presented above is also taken from the same source.

²⁵² *Milliyet*, 5 February 2009.

his column entitled “CHP is making me sad”, he wrote: “One is embarrassed by watching these images [referring to the welcoming ceremony of women with head cover and turban] on TV.”²⁵³ In an earlier article, another critic of the CHP’s move, a prominent Turkish artist, Bedri Baykam criticized CHP’s veil opening by raising the following questions:

The CHP is known to be the party which has put an end to the full veil. Now, are they imagining a future as the party which has legitimized the full veil? If there are to be more CHP members wearing this garment, would it not contradict the *Nutuk* and the discourse on “modern Turkish women”? Is the RPP not throwing away decades-old reform on religious insignia and clothing? Who will put a stop to people with beards and baggy trousers (*şalvar*) flocking to the party?²⁵⁴

On the other hand, the writer of another newspaper, Ertuğrul Özkök from *Hürriyet*, was supportive of CHP’s approach. In fact, in his column, he has provided a picture taken in 1949 of his family, where his mother was uncovered yet his grandmother and aunt were wearing the full veil. He called this picture “the family picture of Turkey.”²⁵⁵

Özkök’s family, or as he calls it, “the family picture of Turkey” (*Türkiye’nin Aile Fotoğrafı*)²⁵⁶



²⁵³ *Cumhuriyet*, 8 February 2009.

²⁵⁴ *Cumhuriyet*, 26 November 2008.

²⁵⁵ “*Yeni Şafak*, 2 December 2008.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

The full veil opening by the CHP was also discussed extensively by the Islamist press – and although some columnists found it insincere, others were pleased about CHP’s “Islamization.”²⁵⁷ Yunus Vehbi Yavuz from *Vakit* wrote: “If the CHP can handle this new project, the religious community in Turkey will embrace the CHP which is becoming more religious... That’s what we expect of the CHP and hope that new moves follow this one.”²⁵⁸ In his column, Yavuz also took this chance created by RPP’s move to redefine the concept of laicite. Yavuz’s column shows how an Islamist interpretation of a move by a political party following Kemalist principles take this chance to attribute new meanings to elements (such as laicite) that are central to Kemalism:

Religiosity does not contradict laicite, it in fact completes it. Laicite is not about excluding religion but acknowledging that religion is real and each person practicing his religion should be left free to do so. Laicite is about not intervening with religion and its orders.²⁵⁹

The examples for debates on Kemalism and Islamism in the media are numerous. The ones highlighted here are some of the most recent ones which also allow this thesis to provide information about the context in which the Republic Protests and Palestine Demonstrations were taking place. As the examples show, how each newspaper conceptualizes Kemalism and Islamism, and which elements and values are attributed to these concepts differs. The answers given to the question on “who truly represents the authentic form of

²⁵⁷ Following the CHP’s Kuran courses opening, the Chairman of the Felicity Party, Numan Kurtulmuş stated: “There are 75 million Muslims in the society. I congratulate the RPP for this move. Let it be known that religion, religiosity and being a Muslim is no single political party or individual’s property... However, let this also be known. There is a legislation that prevents children under 15 years of age to attend Quran courses. If the RPP is sincere in their opening, then they should propose for an amendment on this article.” *Cumhuriyet*, 7 February 2009.

²⁵⁸ *Habervaktim*, 13 February 2009 available at <http://www.habervaktim.com/yazaroku.php?id=11651> [20 December 2010]

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Islamism, or Kemalism?” continues to be a controversial topic within the press. Yet what these different approaches to interpreting contemporary developments show is that both Kemalism and Islamism are conceptualized in an antagonistic environment – one in which different actors compete over dominating the meanings that these concepts connote. By analyzing the different ways Kemalism and Islamism is defined within the press, we can conclude that the search for meaning, and the search for a “true” Kemalist or Islamist, is a disputed, and perhaps an everlasting one.

The Coverage of the Demonstrations

The second part of the section will be looking at how the Republic Protest and Palestine Demonstration have been carried into the pages of the newspapers and in light of media’s coverage of the demonstrations, problematize their role in defining Kemalism and Islamism. By analyzing articles written by prominent columnists from different newspapers, the section will specifically try to show whether loss has been brought up as a constitutive element of Kemalism and Islamism.

In order to analyze the media’s coverage of the demonstrations, and explicate the differing ways different actors in the media react to Kemalist and Islamist performances, this section will be looking at 1) the coverage of Republic Protests by *Cumhuriyet* 2) the coverage of Republic Protests by other media²⁶⁰ (*Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Zaman*, *Yeni Şafak*, and *Milli Gazete*) 3) the coverage of Palestine Demonstrations by *Milli Gazete* and 4) the coverage of Palestine Demonstrations by

²⁶⁰ “Other media” here refers to a categorization that is made by Kemalist and Islamist actors/NGOs, which crystallized after the interviews. Therefore, what we call the other in our analysis in this section reflects the perception of the organizers of the demonstrations.

other media (*Hürriyet, Milliyet, Zaman, Yeni Şafak, Cumhuriyet*). The descriptive analyses of newspapers' coverage on the Republic Protest and Palestine Demonstration in Çaglayan will explore the different ways newspapers approach to these demonstrations and analyze what these different approaches tell us about the ways Kemalism and Islamism are conceptualized.

The Republic Protest and *Cumhuriyet*

As one of the oldest newspapers in Turkey (established in 1924), *Cumhuriyet* is known for its fervent Kemalist position. Following the motto, "The enlightened people of this country, what suits you the best is the Republic (*Cumhuriyet*)", the newspaper provides a platform for "enlightened" Kemalist intellectuals, among them, army officials, judges, professors and civil society leaders to share their evaluations on contemporary developments. The specific focus of this part will be on how the Kemalist intellectuals contemplate upon the Republic Protest in Çaglayan Square.

It could be argued that in the coverage of the Republic Protests by *Cumhuriyet*, two themes crystallize. First is that these demonstrations are evaluated as democratic platforms through which Kemalists in Turkey make their dissent vocal. Here, the emphasis on democracy becomes a means for *Cumhuriyet* to defend Kemalism against accusations of militarization. However, rather than rejecting these accusations completely, *Cumhuriyet's* discourse constructs a strange amalgam which combines civil and military vocabulary. For example, the Republic Protest in Çaglayan is seen as a civil intervention²⁶¹, a civil coup d'etat²⁶², or a civil warning²⁶³

²⁶¹ According to Sirmen, these demonstrations are civil coups against Abdullah Gül's presidency. *Cumhuriyet*, 27 April 2007.

²⁶² *Cumhuriyet*, 30 April 2007.

to the parliament, and the aim of the demonstration, similar to the *raison d'être* of the Kemalist institutions analyzed by this thesis, is interpreted as taking over the task of guardianship of Kemalism (and guardianship of protecting and perpetuating the principles and revolutions of Atatürk) which, according to the columnists, the Parliament defectively performs.²⁶⁴ Henceforth, under the gaze of *Cumhuriyet*, the Republic Protests serve the purpose of protecting the image of Mustafa Kemal and defending the conceptual integrity of Kemalism against inner and outer threats, which is argued to be no longer a task for the Turkish army. In a sense, similar to the Kemalist institutions which were established as “soldiers without uniforms”²⁶⁵, *Cumhuriyet*'s approach to the Republic Protest attributes the mission of the army to the demonstrators at Çağlayan. The loss of a guardian of Kemalism, such as the military, or the RPP, in defending (and defining) Kemalism is countered with the establishment of a new guardian – which are the demonstrators at Çağlayan.

Following the discussion on the first point, the second point is that these demonstrations also represent a hope to not only defend, but also revitalize the Kemalist legacy and transform the present in line with the values that Kemalism, in its essence, presumably represents. *Cumhuriyet* points to threats that Kemalism faces today, and constructs its discourse over this fear. The fear is that the constitutive role of Kemalism in defining the norms through which the society is structured, such as laicite, modernity, enlightenment and rationality is being lost and replaced. In response to this fear, *Cumhuriyet* rediscovers the “revolutionary spirit” of Kemalism.

²⁶³ *Cumhuriyet*, 30 April 2007.

²⁶⁴ *Cumhuriyet*, 1 May 2007.

²⁶⁵ Erdoğan, p. 259.

The demonstration in Çağlayan is evaluated as a Kemalist “revolution”.²⁶⁶ In order to remember what the “revolutionary spirit” in Kemalism entails, articles in *Cumhuriyet* cite aphorisms from Atatürk. The Republic Protest is evaluated as a platform which initially serves the purpose of uniting Kemalists under a common and authentic imaginary. The demonstration itself is interpreted as an event that bonds people around a common and collectively shared theme. As Behramoğlu, on his column on 28 April 2007 writes: “This is not about representing the values of the Republic, laicite, democracy and the social welfare state only in words (*sözde*). This is about representing these values in their essence (*özde*), and as Pir Sultan writes in his poem, ‘Becoming one by bonding with the essence, and walking altogether’.”²⁶⁷

According to *Cumhuriyet*, through these protests, the Kemalists in Turkey form a solid, homogenous entity and stand firmer against their others/enemies.

Cumhuriyet’s perception of the Republic Protests perpetuates the solidaristic corporatism of Kemalism, which defends a classless and united society.²⁶⁸

Furthermore, this demonstration is interpreted as mass gathering of the children of Atatürk and in response to the loss of Kemalist legacy, perpetuates the belief that the legacy of Atatürk is in the right hands. The way columnists of *Cumhuriyet* convey their experiences on the Republic Protest allows for a continuity of the past within the context of the contemporary, either by making references to the Independence War, the Battle of Dardanelles or other glorified narratives, or by simply conceptualizing the demonstration as a joyful gathering of Kemalists, who constitute

²⁶⁶ In his column the day after the Protest, Ümit Zileli argues that that day of 29 April is a day of Revolution. *Cumhuriyet*, 30 April 2007.

²⁶⁷ *Cumhuriyet*, 28 April 2007.

²⁶⁸ Parla and Davison, *Corporatist Ideology*, p.60.

a big and strong family. As Hikmet Çetinkaya, on the day of the demonstrations writes:

Today, I had to be in Istanbul; in Çağlayan and embrace with the men, women and children of Mustafa Kemal. And I had to shout outloud: ‘Are you ready to grow bigger, spread our hopes, become a society that is ridden of religious brotherhoods, and criminal organizations? Are you ready to construct a life where we no longer fight... wave your hands to the ships passing by the straits of Çanakkale, facing the sun in the shores of Kızılırmak? Are you ready to say ‘no to sharia, no to coup d’etat?’ Are you ready for embrace laicite, the Republic and democracy tightly? I had to be at Çağlayan, along with the children of Mustafa Kemal.²⁶⁹

The “family” metaphor is of great importance because it provides the demonstrators with a sense of belonging through which they embrace their past – that is, by bonding the participants of the demonstration together, by blood. The demonstrators at Çağlayan are not only citizens of Turkey, who are attached to this country *jus soli*, but also see themselves as the “owners”, “possessors” or “inheritors” of this country who are attached *jus sanguine*. What this shows is a perpetuation of the Kemalist legacy, not only by spirit (as in “revolutionary spirit”), but also by blood. The demonstration becomes a gathering of the father with his children which allows for the reenactment of the image of Atatürk and his ideals in the Çağlayan Square. For *Cumhuriyet*, the demonstrators are not only unified by ideology, but are also solidified by a stronger bond. Considering that family in Turkey plays a crucial role as the building block of the society, and plays a determining role over social relations,²⁷⁰ the impact of the family metaphor used by *Cumhuriyet* becomes further important. The very act of coining the term, “children of Mustafa Kemal”, attributes a greater conscientiousness to the demonstrators. They become a part of the family,

²⁶⁹ *Cumhuriyet*, 29 April 2007.

²⁷⁰ Dicle Koğacıoğlu, “The Tradition Effect: Framing Honor Crimes in Turkey”, *Differences*, vol.15, no.2, (2004), pp.118-152.

whose father is Mustafa Kemal, a holy figure whose legacy, which is a Turkish Republic which embodies Kemalist principles, needs to be continued.

The Republic Protest is conceived as a long-expected event. The aims of the demonstration are carried into headlines and columns before the demonstration day comes. On 26th of April 2007, three days before the Republic Protest in Çağlayan, *Cumhuriyet* announces from the first page: “Istanbul, it is your turn now!” Two days later, again from the first page, *Cumhuriyet* announces: “Preparations are almost over. Hundreds of NGOs will be attending this demonstration in which the following message will be given: “In solidarity and fraternity, we will stand against sharia, separationism, coup d’etat and racism and maintain our loyalty to the principles of Atatürk, his revolutions and our Republic.” On the same day, İlhan Selçuk, the editor in chief for *Cumhuriyet* writes in his column: “The Parliament and the Square... The people (halk) who has given up hope in the Parliament are becoming visible in the Square.”²⁷¹

According to *Cumhuriyet*, the Republic Protests are conceived as democratic outcries by the Kemalists against the path that Turkey is following. In his column on 28 April, Hikmet Çetinkaya shares his discontent with the way contemporary Turkey is progressing and sees Republic Protests as ways to challenge this path. The feeling of sadness (as an inability to counter defeat) and more importantly, fear, are visible in Çetinkaya’s column: “Today, I repine. I feel sad. I feel my hopes are fading like a man feels sad when it rains at night... Believe me, all the corners of my heart on fire, they are devastated and rebellious. I think of the demonstration tomorrow, in Çağlayan Square at 13.30. The children of Mustafa Kemal will be there, the women,

²⁷¹ *Cumhuriyet*, 28 April 2007.

the men, the elderly and the youth.”²⁷² According to Orhan Bursalı, the Republic Protest in Çağlayan offers a solution to the dilemmas Turkey is facing today by vocalizing the concerns of millions of people.²⁷³

As democratic outcries, the Republic Protests are interpreted as “corrective” performances. In response to the things that are going wrong, and in response to a “wronged consciousness” in Turkey, the Republic Protest is evaluated by *Cumhuriyet* as a collective performance through which right and true meanings can be saved. In this sense, the performance itself is not only a reaction to the encounter with the AKP, but also a response to the loss and corruption of the consciousness such encounter brings. The loss of Kemalist values, which is considered as a potential outcome of Abdullah Gül’s presidency, becomes an integral part of *Cumhuriyet*’s evaluation of the Republic Protest. Republic Protests, in this regard, are not considered to be simple reactions to the other, but entail a struggle to reinstitute Kemalist hegemony. For example, in his column, Sirmen writes: “Two weeks ago I was at Tandoğan Square. And today, I will be in Çağlayan... The reason I will walk to Çağlayan is not solely based on Çankaya [Gül’s potential presidency], laicite or a regime crisis. It is about the consciousness that only a democracy and laicite can get us somewhere. We have no way out other than crying out loud that we will save what needs to be saved, correct what needs to be corrected and show that we are ready to do so... Today, we will be at Çağlayan. Today, I will be at Çağlayan. So will you!”²⁷⁴

²⁷² *Cumhuriyet*, 28 April 2007.

²⁷³ *Cumhuriyet*, 29 April 2007.

²⁷⁴ *Cumhuriyet*, 29 April 2009.

Sirmen's column is illustrative for it sees the Kemalist revolutions, ideas and values as things that need to be saved. According to Sirmen, the demonstration is not only a response to the Justice and Development Party, but carries a greater responsibility for defending the Kemalist imaginary. A Turkish Republic built upon Kemalist principles is under threat – it needs to be saved and corrected. The Kemalist response of the demonstrators, as vocalized by Sirmen, is one that is motivated by the loss of (Kemalist) values that define the Kemalist Turkish Republic. Kemalism, as illustrated in Sirmen's columns, becomes a response to its very lack of existence.

The day after the demonstration, columnists of *Cumhuriyet* evaluate the messages given in the Republic Protests. *Cumhuriyet* introduces a special section (6 pages) on the Republic Protests to share and evaluate the outcomes of the demonstration.²⁷⁵ Erdal Atabek's column is worth examining for it reveals the aim to revitalize the legacy of Atatürk and the Republic and the ambition to stay firm and together as an "orchestra". The orchestra metaphor, similar to the "family" metaphor, replaces a fragmented imaginary with a more solidified one – it symbolizes a response to loss of Kemalist solidarity and integrity.

We are the children of the Republic. The Republic's children are the ones who grow with the proud history of the Independence Wars, and carry the self confidence of following Atatürkist culture, laicite and a fully independent Turkey. The Republic's women have been children who utilized such culture... Then times changed, and individualism was discovered. The common goods that tied people together were replaced with individual goods and interests. People became distanced from one another. They became alienated. But is there not a way out of this dilemma? An orchestra! Could we not become an orchestra? Could we not play in an orchestra where everyone plays a different note, which altogether becomes a symphony? Could we not get to know each other? Could we not become one? An orchestra where everyone feels that the rhythm constructs the same harmony and creates the same melody. A laicist, independent Turkish Republic... 'Republic's Children', 'Republic's Women' and 'Privates of the Republic', will write the symphonies of glory for modern Turkey. Not an

²⁷⁵ The next day, another two pages are dedicated to the special section on the Republic Protests.

Arabic ‘yalelli’, hymns of dervish lodges or sounds of arabesque. But 10th year marches, Independence Marches, ‘Dağ Başını Duman Almış’ and with Atatürk... we are all afoot.²⁷⁶

Atabek’s column is also thought-provoking for it brings in the element of change – that times are changing, and what this change anticipates is the dissolution of Kemalism in Turkey. Rather than singing Arabic songs or arabesque, which according to Atabek contradict and disrespect Atatürk’s legacy, Kemalists need to become one big orchestra to sing and play the songs and notes that Atatürk himself wrote.

The same message to remain in unity and solidarity is reiterated by İlhan Selçuk. In Selçuk’s column, the element of fear for the threatening other is illustrated in further clarity. Moreover, Selçuk also points out to what Kemalism lacks – that is money, and more importantly, unity.

First Ankara, then Istanbul. Millions defending laicite. Demonstrations which are one of a kind. Red and white flags with crescents and stars. People, people and more people... and people underneath the flags. Everyone, all pure, polite, modern, laicist, good and beautiful, disciplined, enlightened, and all citizens of Atatürk’s Republic... Yet realities are harsh. Those attending the demonstrations are unorganized, they lack money. And the Islamists have both. Those who gnash at us are entrepreneurs of religion; they have religious brotherhoods everywhere, and possess enourmous amounts of money. What we need to do, and what the demonstrators shouted outloud, was to unite. Today, we must unite.²⁷⁷

As much as these evaluations praised the organizers and the demonstrators, they also criticized (and otherized) the media for blockading the messages sent by Kemalist NGOs. “However, this time, even the media, which has been supporting the policies of the Justice and Development Party, has awakened” argues Çetinkaya and asks: “But what has changed?” He continues: “why does our ‘glorious media’, which did

²⁷⁶ *Cumhuriyet*, 30 April 2009.

²⁷⁷ *Cumhuriyet*, 1 May 2007.

not carry the message before and after the first, Tandoğan demonstration to their pages or reflect them on the screens, had to put the Çağlayan demonstration in their headlines? The answer is clear: The sleeping giant has awakened.”²⁷⁸

According to *Cumhuriyet*, the Republic Protest was an awakening of the Kemalists. It was an attempt to find solutions to the problems of contemporary Turkey. And more importantly, the demonstration in Çağlayan had a transcendent aim: it was not only a reaction to the AKP, but also a “corrective” response to the loss (and corruption) of Kemalist ideals through which Turkish politics and the society must be aligned. As Balbay describes: “The Çağlayan demonstration was an awakening which has been ignited by the presidential elections. However, the fears that lay underneath are found in a society that is becoming more corrupt every day.”²⁷⁹ The fears, as stated by Balbay, are multiple. And in order for the Kemalists to overcome fears, the present needs to be transformed in line with Kemalist principles. In other words, the glorified essence needs to be remembered and recontextualized. In order for such transformation to occur, the Kemalists need to awaken, shake themselves from the almost 70 year long sleep, and embrace with their father. And in order for this to happen, in Çağlayan, the father has to meet with his sons and daughters.

The Republic Protest and the Other Media

The Republic Protest at Çağlayan has also been carried into columns and headlines by other newspapers. In fact, compared with the (lack of) coverage of the demonstration at Tandoğan two weeks prior to the demonstration at Çağlayan (which

²⁷⁸ *Cumhuriyet*, 1 May 2009.

²⁷⁹ *Cumhuriyet*, 1 May 2009.

has drawn heavy criticism from Kemalist publics), the Republic Protest in Çağlayan has attracted greater attention.²⁸⁰ Also according to a research by *Medya Takip Merkezi* compared with the first demonstration in Ankara, this time, the international media has paid greater attention to the Çağlayan Demonstration.²⁸¹

In these discussions, two themes are prevalent: In the first theme, newspapers such as *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Radikal* and *Vatan* evaluate these demonstrations in a fashion similar to *Cumhuriyet*. These newspapers interpret this demonstration as a democratic response, argue that laicite is a common denominator of Turkey, and point out to the polarization within society. Their columnists are more inclined to acknowledging the existence of military's influence on Turkish politics, but are at the same time critical of it. The Republic Protests are conceived of as exemplary civil and democratic platforms to divert military's influences on Turkish politics. Similar to Islamist media's ambition to prevent being placed in the same imaginary with the Justice and Development Party, these newspapers aim to deconstruct a discourse which equates Republic Protests to coup d'états and places organizers on the same platform with the military. There is a clear attempt by columnists in these newspapers to define the Republics protests and their participators in a neutral, non-partisan, and most importantly civilian and democratic way. Whereas in *Cumhuriyet*, these demonstrations were seen as "civilian coup d'états", in *Vatan*, for example, they are construed as democratic performances. Güngör Mengi coins the term "*demokrasi Çağlayan'ı*", (a cascade of democracy) to describe the Republic Protest

²⁸⁰ According to a research by Medyatava, the coverage of the Çağlayan Demonstrations by television channels have risen by 48%; and by national media, by 22%. Available at: <http://www.haberx.com/Haberler/Mayis-2007/MEDYA-CUMHURİYET-MITINGINE-NE-KADAR-YER-VERDI-1015875.aspx> [8 November 2010]

²⁸¹ Ibid.

in Çağlayan.²⁸² According to Zülfü Livaneli, this demonstration is “a democratic reaction”.²⁸³ And Güneri Civaoglu coins the term, “unarmed forces” to describe the demonstrators.²⁸⁴ Furthermore, on 30 April 2007, Ferai Tınç states that “these demonstrations show that Atatürkism and laicite are not only the concerns of those who support coups. This crowd shows that democracy is flourishing in this country.”²⁸⁵

Moreover, these newspapers also see the Republic Protest as a performance in which a modern, secular, enlightened and democratic image of Turkey is put on display for the international community in general and the international media in particular. The Republic Protest in Çağlayan is perceived as an important event for it sends a message to the international media and shows that the demands of the Kemalist demonstrators are not necessarily in favor of a military intervention. The Kemalist aim for modernization and progress is now sought after in the civilian platform. Therefore, the call for modernity and laicite is not necessarily a militarist and nationalist one. This perception is important for it aims to exonerate the demonstrators from stigmatization by the international media, and the Islamist media. Similar to Özkan’s criticism of the international media, Melih Aşık criticizes the international media for using the terms “nationalist” and “putschists” for those who stand against the Justice and Development Party. Furthermore, for Aşık, what these demonstrations have clarified is the “true” image of the Kemalists, for whom he coins the term “genuine democrats” in Turkey. Those who have organized and

²⁸² *Vatan*, 30 April 2007.

²⁸³ *Vatan*, 30 April 2007.

²⁸⁴ *Milliyet*, 1 May 2007.

²⁸⁵ *Hürriyet*, 30 April 2007.

attended the Republic Protests are the “genuine democrats”, and those who are criticizing these demonstrations are the fake others: “A big lesson was taught to Europe. The deceitful EU was trying to display the AKP as democratic and others as nationalist and putschists. The whole world has seen who genuine democrats are. Without laicite, there can be no democracy. Those who did not know this now do so.”²⁸⁶

The second theme is more critical of the demonstrations. This theme, in response to a warning by the military which was published on the website of the Turkish Armed Forces on the night of the 27 April 2007, prioritizes the affiliation of Kemalists with the military and points out to the anti-democratic²⁸⁷ and militarist links of the demonstrators, including the NGOs organizing these demonstrations. Here, for example, the participants of the Republic Protests are accused by the columnists of newspapers such as *Yeni Şafak*²⁸⁸ and *Zaman* of being supporters of a coup d’etat²⁸⁹ which runs contrary to the motto of the Çağlayan demonstration which denounces both Islamism and militarism (no sharia, no coup d’etat). Such accusations continue as the Ergenekon investigation proceeds.²⁹⁰ In fact it is

²⁸⁶ *Milliyet*, 1 May 2007.

²⁸⁷ For example, in his column, Abdulhamid Bilici from *Zaman* asks: “Who is the real threat to democracy?” and aims to deconstruct the claim of the Republic Protest for being democratic in nature. *Zaman*, 5 May 2007.

²⁸⁸ According to Düzgören, the demonstration in Tandoğan was organized in a fashion which resembles the days of the post-modern coup of 28 February 1997. *Yeni Şafak*, 23 April 2007. According to Bayramoğlu, the demonstrations in Çağlayan and Tandoğan are organized by para-military civil society organizations... The chaos in Ankara [the Parliament] and Istanbul go hand in hand. And although it is breath-taking for some, for me it is threatening” *Yeni Şafak*”, 2 May 2007.

²⁸⁹ In his columns, Mümtaz’er Türköne asks: “It is time for a decision. Which one? We have two choices: a richer and more respected country thanks to a democratic path to be followed... or a dark and dirty world where guns speak more than the people.” *Zaman*, 1 May 2007.

²⁹⁰ The investigation against the clandestine organization, Ergenekon, which presumably has ties with military and security personnel and is accused for planning a coup d’etat to topple the AKP government started in 2007. A number of retired military personnel, as well as academics and journalists were detained as the investigation proceeded. The trial hearings continue as of today.

observed that as of 2009, almost two years after the initial demonstration at Çağlayan, one of the debated issues within the press was whether the organizers/participants/supporters of the Republic Protests were affiliated with the Ergenekon organization.²⁹¹

Demonstrations are also criticized for being intolerant of others, and inciting hatred for religion and Muslim lifestyles under the theme of “complete independence. (*tam bağımsızlık*)”²⁹² It is argued that the way Islam is conceptualized in the Republic Protests reflects a wrong and prejudiced view and only serves to polarize the society. The peak of this point of view is perceived in Karagül’s column in *Yeni Şafak* on 2 May 2007:

Do you want a civil war? What if the whole conflict spreads on the streets? What if it turns into saying ‘no’ to living with people who are different than those gathering at Çağlayan? We live in Turkey; and even a small spark is big enough to push Turkey into a point of no return.²⁹³

From this critical perspective, the Republic Protests are interpreted as events to be feared, which, considering that the demonstration itself was organized on a feeling of fear is ironic and furthermore illustrative in showing us that one of the main elements that define the other’s approach towards Kemalism is fear. The Republic Protests, as discussed by Karagül, do not only symbolize the Kemalist fear of losing Kemalist dreams, but also the Islamist fear for the Kemalist aim to reconstruct an imaginary in which Kemalism is dominant. Newspapers and columnists who vocalize such a fear emphasize the lack of toleration and respect for others who may be holding different views and opinions regarding the values praised or condemned in Republic Protests.

²⁹¹ *Haber7*, 18 March 2009, Available at <http://www.haber7.com/haber/20090318/Cumhuriyet-mitingleri-darbe-girisimi-mi.php> [10 December 2010]

²⁹² Nihal B. Karaca from *Zaman* calls these demonstrations a conspiracy for nationalism. *Zaman*, 2 May 2007.

²⁹³ *Yeni Şafak*, 2 May 2007.

Whereas, in *Cumhuriyet*'s evaluation, Republic Protests symbolize a response to the desacralization of Kemalism, in the evaluation of the same performance by other newspapers such as *Yeni Şafak* and *Zaman*, what the performance symbolizes becomes the exact opposite: the desacralization of Islamism.

In this regard, demonstrators' lack of respect for religion and sacred symbols, including for Prophet Mohammed, and "fanatical appropriation of the principle of laicite" are brought up as one of the central issues of criticism. According to Akif Emre, "it is no coincidence that the messages given by both the military and participants coincide –both of them scorn sacred things [referring to the celebrations of Prophet Mohammed's birth] and call it modernity and laicite."²⁹⁴ M. Nedim Hazar of *Zaman* also criticizes the Kemalist "disrespect" for Prophet Mohammed's birthday celebrations. Moreover, Hazar's words reveal the Islamist fear for the loss of Islam's sacredness:

I looked at the pictures on newspapers that are posted as images threatening this country. A couple of young kids, who covered their heads, are chanting in the name of their Prophet. And it is argued that these kids are threatening the regime... Then, I compared the pictures with other ones. On the one side were covered kids, on the other were generals with shoulders full of epaulettes. I could not figure out who is afraid of whom.²⁹⁵

Milli Gazete's approach to the Republic Protest in Çağlayan, compared with that of *Yeni Şafak* and *Zaman*, also points to the discontent with the messages given by the demonstrators and in contrast with certain columnists who would argue that this demonstration does not create polarization, but rather a unification of

²⁹⁴ *Yeni Şafak*, 1 May 2007.

²⁹⁵ *Zaman*, 3 May 2007. The point about the celebrations on Prophet Mohammed's birthday are also brought up by columnists of *Milli Gazete*. On his 2 May 2007 column, Ekrem Kızıldağ brings the topic up. *Milli Gazete*, 2 May 2007.

people,²⁹⁶ *Milli Gazete* prioritizes the argument that “these demonstrations do not serve well for the unity of this nation, but rather bring about separationism and polarization”. From this perspective, *Milli Gazete*’s interpretation clearly runs contrary to *Cumhuriyet*’s perception of unity and harmony.

On the other hand, an interesting observation is made in analyzing the approach by *Milli Gazete*. Unlike most of the columnists of *Yeni Şafak* and *Zaman*, certain columnists from *Milli Gazete* also choose to sympathize with messages of anti-imperialism and nationalism that are conveyed through the Republic Protests. This is important for showing us how two sides thought to be located in two opposite poles, that is, Kemalists and Islamists, can find a common ground, and more importantly, a common other, through performances. Özkan sympathizes with the anti-imperialist messages of the Republic Protest. According to Özkan, the society is restless because “people believe that this country is not ruled in the proper way and is not progressing in the right direction. Social unrest can be seen on the streets... This is important, because our people are finally coming to an understanding about what is really happening. Our nation wants national independence; it is against a country whose banks, televisions and even land is on sale. Either these problems which create unrest need to be solved, or we should go for elections right away. There is no problem that national will cannot solve.”²⁹⁷

While othering the Kemalists as putschists or militarists and criticizing them, columnists of *Milli Gazete* draw upon similarities. However, when sympathizing with the demonstrators, *Milli Gazete* does not simply applaud the

²⁹⁶ *Vatan*, 30 April 2007.

²⁹⁷ *Milli Gazete*, 2 May 2007.

Kemalists. Columnists who choose to sympathize with the messages vocalized in the Republic Protest do so with an aim to de-marginalize the Islamists. For example, similar to Mr. Kaya's utterance that they are a part of this country's future, these columnists argue that the symbols that are visible in Çağlayan do not only belong to the Kemalists. Through empathy, *Milli Gazete* defends the elements such as the army, the flags, the call to prayers, or mosques, which are also integrated into the discourse of the Islamists. In fact, we see that Özkan is even critical of the Kemalists' attempt to hegemonize the meanings of elements such as laicite or even Atatürk, at the expense of excluding the others from interpreting the meanings of these symbols. Özkan argues:

The demonstrators have no right to claim that they own the military, democracy, the Republic, laicite and Atatürk. Even if they do claim to own these institutions, can they have the right to restrict access to these values and symbols by others in this society? For example, is it only the children of those who are gathering at Çağlayan who join the army? Is it only the children or relatives of those attending the demonstration who die on the field fighting? This is illogical. Such logic can not be democratic. And moreover, they have not even stopped demonstrating as the call the prayer was being sung. And how did they justify their action? By arguing that they own the call to prayer (*ezan*), they own the mosques and they own Allah as well. Would it not be better if they were to argue that they own it as much as others do? These values are shared by the society as a whole... But if they continue arguing that these values are only possessed by them, then this will turn into defiance.²⁹⁸

In a similar line, Müftüoğlu argues on the same day that “no one attending those demonstrations can claim that their faith or nationalism is stronger. The answer to that cannot be given by any human.” Müftüoğlu also feels distressed about the use of Turkish flags in the demonstrations; and being similar to Mr. Mustafa Kaya, who in his interview mentioned that they also carry the same flag and are a part of this nation's future, Müftüoğlu states:

²⁹⁸ *Milli Gazete*, 1 May 2007.

How can one endure leaving our flag, which has taken its form from the essence and blood of our nation, open to the exploitation of some people who follow their own ideology, who constantly curse sharia, which means a totality of religion of Allah? Do not these people have a bad conscience about exploiting our flag and faith?... But do not forget! You only fill a Square. But we are 70 million.²⁹⁹

The key theme in both Özkan's and Müftüoğlu's columns is "sharing". Both Kemalists and Islamist clash over these shared values, and in Çağlayan Square, through performances, Kemalist and Islamist actors aim to act as the "true" representatives of these symbols. In other words, it is argued that the meanings attributed to the call to prayer, mosques, God, the military, or even the Turkish flag and Atatürk gain their true and essential meaning when they are a part of the Kemalist or Islamist imaginary. The formulations of the other are seen as exploitations of meaning and are consequently rejected. What these debates reveal is an antagonism over what the symbols signify.

Finally, the response of the columnists of *Milli Gazete* to the Republic Protest also brings in the argument that Islamists in Turkey are being perceived in a "wrong" manner. While the Kemalists aim to show their "true face", as was stated by Aşık in his above mentioned column, to their others, the Islamists also use the Republic Protests to show the true meaning of Islamism to their other. In this sense, the Republic Protest turns into a platform where both Kemalists and Islamists construct their identity, and conceptualize Kemalism and Islamism on essentialist interpretations. In their responses to the Republic Protests, the Islamist press in return expects to be listened to and understood in the proper manner. In her column, Afet Ilgaz argues that the real problem in Turkey is

²⁹⁹ *Milli Gazete*, 1 May 2007. The next day, Mehmet Şevki Eygi also argues that the demonstration only represents the views of the minority, and on the other side of the medallion, lies Turkey's majority. He states: "How many people do you think would come if the conservatives, human rights activists, pro-democracy protesters would come to a well organized demonstration? At least three to five million." *Milli Gazete*, 2 May 2007.

about understanding Necmettin Erbakan in the wrong way. According to Ilgaz, “many of the messages send at the Çağlayan demonstrations were already vocalized by Erbakan. And it is therefore the ignorance of Türkan Saylan to blame Turkey’s backwardness on Islam and the National Outlook.”³⁰⁰

In their evaluation, newspapers evaluated in this part approach the Republic Protest with both commending and appraising lenses. Whether this demonstration is a democratic element or not is a theme extensively problematized among columnists. Moreover, for more Islamically oriented newspapers, Republic Protests are seen as threats which deplore the sacredness of Islam and are feared for attacking and othering Islamically oriented lifestyles. Although certain columnists sympathize with the anti-imperialist messages given at the demonstration, such displays of empathy expect the same sympathy to be shown for the Islamists in Turkey, who do not only share similar messages, but also similar values and symbols.

The Palestine Demonstration and *Milli Gazete*

Milli Gazete’s approach to the Palestine Demonstration is similar to *Cumhuriyet*’s approach to the Republic Protest. In *Cumhuriyet*’s evaluation of the Republic Protest, it was found that this performance was interpreted as a gathering of Kemalists (more precisely, a gathering of Atatürk’s children) to protect the Kemalist legacy. For *Milli Gazete*, we see that the Palestine Demonstration is construed as a gathering of faithful and conscientious believers who attend the demonstration to show their loyalty to their religion and protect Islam from inner and outer threats.

³⁰⁰ *Milli Gazete*, 2 May 2007.

Also similar to *Cumhuriyet*, which acts as a deliberative platform for Kemalist intellectuals (such as representatives of NGOs), *Milli Gazete* offers a similar platform for Islamist intellectuals (such as members of the Felicity Party). In this platform, the reasons for the discontent with the present, either in the form of Israel's invasion of Gaza, neoliberal policies of the Justice and Development Party, or the implementation of laicist policies (such as the ban on wearing headscarf in public universities) by the state, are schematized as misunderstanding, corruptly implementing or simply breaking off from the Islamist essence. In their responses, columnists of *Milli Gazete* construct an Islamism that responds to (and fears of) losing ties with essential Islam. Consequently, columnists of *Milli Gazete* undertake the task to inform their public about proper ways of interpreting Islamism. In response to Islamism's corrupt and ugly portrayals, *Milli Gazete*'s columnists point out to a pure and candid form which they argue to be embodied by the principles of Prophet Mohammed, and ideals of Sultan Abdulhamid II and Necmettin Erbakan. Columns provide a platform for the Islamists to search the true meaning of Islamism. For example, in articles that are published in his daily column, Mehmet Şevket Eygi informs the public *Milli Gazete* addresses on being/remaining true, authentic and sincere (*samimi*) Muslims. In his column on 9 January 2009, Eygi shares a 30 point manifesto in which he discusses the threats that Muslims have to be aware of. The central threat is perceived as change – that is, change in the form of Islamism and the alteration of the Islamist essence. He argues:

The universal and essential commands of Islam cannot change. Islam has fundamental values and these values cannot be altered. Justice, for example, or honesty and righteousness, and sincerity in our relations with Allah... Muslims must have two main aims. First, to understand Islam as God and his Prophet asks us to, second, to reach modernity, not remain in the same level as non-Muslims, transcend them, and be stronger compared to them. Independence will come by embracing with the Quran, with the principles

set by our Prophet (*sünnet*), and with our Islamic brotherhood without undertaking any reforms... Our main sources are the Quran and the unity/solidarity of Islamist intellectuals (*icma*). Sources that run contrary to these are backward and invalid.³⁰¹

It is also found that in its way of addressing its public, and in its formulation of Islamism, *Milli Gazete* differs from other Islamically-oriented newspapers such as *Yeni Şafak* or *Zaman*. It portrays itself as the true representative of Islamism within the Turkish press by pointing out to the missing elements in other newspapers' approach to Islam. The return to the true form of Islam is the self-declared vision of *Milli Gazete*. In the "Corporate/About Us Section, it states: "Separating two full pages to family and life, *Milli Gazete* outcompetes all other newspapers by struggling on behalf of our nation to not to break off from its essential ego (*öz benlik*)"³⁰²

In *Milli Gazete*'s evaluation of the Palestine Demonstration, this aim of revitalizing the essential ego is prioritized. By locating themselves in opposition to their others, be it Kemalists, Israel, Zionism, the collaborators of imperialists, the AKP, or other Islamist press and broadcasting channels, such as *Kanal 7*, columnists of *Milli Gazete* perpetuate the ambition to construct an Islamist self that is "pure" and "clean". By aiming to represent a purer and cleaner form of Islamism, which, as was also uttered in Eygi's above cited column, dismisses reforms and remains loyal to the principles set by the Prophet and written in the Quran, *Milli Gazete* confronts the transformed Islamist formulations of its others. Unlike its others, who are seen as "ignoble" and who have lost their ties with the essence of Islam, or use Islam for other purposes, people attending the Palestine Demonstration, according to *Milli Gazete*, revitalize the essence. In his column on 6 January 2009, that is, two days

³⁰¹ *Milli Gazete*, 9 December 2009.

³⁰² Ibid.

after the Palestine Demonstration in Çağlayan Square, Ibrahim Tenekeci further clarifies this point by making the following statement: “The biggest answer to be given to these ignoble people is to remain in Islam (*İslam kalmak*) and to have our children grow under the umbrella of Islam. Thank Allah that despite of all the perverse propaganda and big projects, the people of Anatolia remain clean and afoot.”³⁰³

Following up on the content analysis conducted on *Milli Gazete*'s coverage of the Palestine Demonstrations, three points crystallize: the emphasis on human rights, the highlighting of sending the “correct” Islamist image to the others, and the call for Islamic unity and harmony.

In the previous section, it was discussed that the Republic Protests were interpreted by some newspapers as democratic reactions. We have also shown that the emphasis on democracy came as a response to criticisms over Kemalism's “undemocratic” nature. In fact, the element of democracy initiated confrontation between different newspapers on the nature of the Republic Protests. On a similar line, in *Milli Gazete*'s evaluation of the Palestine Demonstration, it is observed that the emphasis on humanity, and not democracy, creates the same kind of tensions among different newspapers.

In response to the encounter with Israel's operation in Gaza, *Milli Gazete* offers a humanitarian path that can only be found in the Islamist imaginary of the National Outlook movement, which is seen as the true representative of Islamism in Turkey. For example, Şakir Takım shares parts of the speech of the Chairman of the Felicity Party, Numan Kurtulmuş, who calls for everyone who has taken its share

³⁰³ *Milli Gazete*, 6 January 2009

from humanity to act.³⁰⁴ Takım’s column asks of faithful believers to take up the task that the government does not assume. Moreover, in his column on 3 January, Ali Haydar Haksal argues that humanity has been killed in Gaza and continues: “I invite every sensitive person to the Big Demonstrations this Sunday. Leave your warm chairs for two hours, shout out loud to the rest of the world and struggle for the awakening and resurrection of humanity.”³⁰⁵

By emphasizing the role of humanity, *Milli Gazete* finds a platform to criticize its “inhumane” and “ignorant” others and by integrating the element of humanity within the conceptual borders of Islamism (as represented in Felicity Party’s National Outlook movement), *Milli Gazete* offers an Islamist imaginary that is an alternative to the contemporary imaginary, in which the true form of Islam is deemed to be missing. For example, we see that in *Milli Gazete*, the call for humanity vocalized in Çağlayan is separated from other calls for humanity within the international community. The trauma experienced in Gaza is seen as a litmus test for humanity where those that do not respond to this call by attending or supporting the Palestine Demonstration fail.³⁰⁶ The call at Çağlayan Square, which is vocalized by the Felicity Party, is conceived as more sincere and conscientious. Miyasoğlu makes a comparison between the war in Vietnam and the war in Gaza and argues that the international community could not pass the test of humanity and conscience. According to Miyasoğlu, whereas the international community was interested greatly in the humanitarian conditions of the Vietnamese, the condition of Palestinians was greatly overlooked by the media. His comparison also criticizes the attitude of the

³⁰⁴ *Milli Gazete*, 4 January 2009.

³⁰⁵ *Milli Gazete*, 3 January 2009.

³⁰⁶ *Milli Gazete*, 4 January 2009.

“Turkish intellectuals”, who according to Miyasoğlu, kept their silence by arguing that “this war [war in Palestine] is not our war.”³⁰⁷

Building up on the argument that the contemporary structure in Turkey, and in the world, lacks humanity and conscience, *Milli Gazete* points out to actors who are responsible for the killings in Gaza, either by participating in the killings, or remaining silent to the killings, and otherizes them. More importantly, this process in which an Islamist reaction is vocalized entails a search for meaning for Islamism among columnists of *Milli Gazete*. Columnists respond to the question, “Why was Gaza invaded” with another question: “Why was it not prevented?” The answers they give prioritize not only loss of humanity and conscience but also to the loss of Islamist unity and integrity, and lack of an Islamist power to prevent such suffering to happen in the first place. Following our content analyses, it could be argued that for the columnists of *Milli Gazete*, the element of humanity serves as a tool for the Islamists to reunite and embrace the teachings that the essence entails. Palestine Demonstration is interpreted as a conscientious act and by gathering together and shouting out loud, an Islamist alternative to the contemporary structure is offered.

For Takım, Palestine Demonstration symbolizes a responsibility for brothers – by attending, the demonstrators accomplish a duty of brotherhood. Similar to *Cumhuriyet*’s use of the family metaphor, *Milli Gazete*’s utilization of brotherhood is significant for it unites the demonstrators and provides them with a new sense of belonging – one which is identified by a family-bond, and one in which the common denominator is a shared religion (Islam). Brotherhood becomes a phrase to describe solidarity among Muslims, and unites the attendants of the demonstrations under the metaphor of Muslim brothers. By seeing Palestine Demonstrations as a gathering of

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

Muslim brothers (*din kardeşleri*), *Milli Gazete* constructs an image of “us” that not only shares a common mission, but is also organically bonded. Furthermore, this bond is interpreted as one that is “pure” and “sincere”. According to Takım:

From the beginning, Felicity Party and other organizations have accomplished their task... The speech by Kurtulmuş which has pointed out to the responsibilities of Turkey, have been to the point. And the speech by the guest of honor, the leader of Milli Görüş, Prof . Dr. Necmeddin Erbakan warned Muslims... I thank everyone organizing this demonstration and of course the demonstrators who have attended despite the rain and cold weather. May Allah love you even more. You have shown that you are with the oppressed; and accomplished your duty of brotherhood. You have given Turkey a cleaner face. With those prayers, teardrops, and your sincerity, I plead for this oppression to stop. But we have much more to do. ³⁰⁸

Second, through these demonstrations *Milli Gazete* clarifies the image of the Islamists and the image of the Felicity Party in Turkey. Parallel to Ilgaz’s response to the Republic Protests, in which she argued that the Islamists in Turkey are understood the “wrong way”, the Palestine Demonstrations serve the purpose of sending correct messages to their others about Islamists in Turkey.

Islamism, as performed in Palestine Demonstrations, is conceptualized as a response to its corrupt versions formulated by other actors. Through Palestine Demonstrations, columnists of *Milli Gazete* are provided with a chance to analyze the reactions of other media corporations and political parties and criticize them for not attending or broadcasting the Palestine Demonstrations. For example, Zeki Ceyhan questions the sincerity and sensitivity of people in Turkey, who would have flocked the streets when the Armenian journalist Hrant Dink was murdered, but did not attend the demonstrations in Çağlayan against Israel.³⁰⁹ Such comparison allows Ceylan to portray the demonstrators of the Palestine Demonstration as sincere in their demand for freedom and humanity. On a similar fashion, in his column on 6

³⁰⁸ *Milli Gazete*, 6 January 2009.

³⁰⁹ *Milli Gazete*, 7 January 2009.

January, Odabaş attacks the AKP for showing an American made war movie, Mel Gibson’s “We were soldiers”, in the night of the Israeli invasion on state television. This, according to Odabaş is “self-explanatory for showing the attitude of the state towards the condition in Palestine.” For Odabaş, the state, which is complying with the demands of imperialists, is ignorant of the killing of “our brothers in Palestine”. In return, Odabaş argues that the demonstrators, for which he uses the term “us”, have responded to the state, “who collects [our] taxes to support the Zionists”.

From another angle, Takım criticizes an Islamist media agent, *Kanal 7*, which hesitated in showing extensive footage of the demonstrators, as if to hide those responsible for organizing this demonstration and consequently concealing the image of the Felicity Party.³¹⁰ A similar attitude is adopted in Ali Haydar Haksal’s 10 January column, in which Haksal argues that the pro-government media has done all it could to belittle, overlook and hide the impact of the demonstration.³¹¹ Two days before this criticism, Haksal were to coin the term “pro-Israeli (*İsrailci*) media” to condemn the media in Turkey which did not carry the demonstration to its pages. Haksal column was full of accusation for the other and is instrumental in showing how *Milli Gazete* challenges the “Islamist” stigmatization and aims to deconstruct it:

This is not only a problem for the Felicity Party. This is a problem of humanity. This is an outcry for Turkey. Nevertheless, the pro-government media has concealed it in such a way that they did not want the Felicity Party to be visible. Yet, the more this demonstration was visible, the more Turkey would become visible... Was this demonstration all about a demonstrator burning the flag of Israel, Mr Ertuğrul Özkök? You call us the Islamist media when you want to. But do you ever stop talking in a way similar to the Zionists? You, the pro-Israelis... You never think of humanity, but only care for your own interests... and for the interests of the Zionist Jews. These characteristics defines your ethics.³¹²

³¹⁰ *Milli Gazete*, 6 January 2009.

³¹¹ *Milli Gazete*, 10 January 2009.

³¹² *Milli Gazete*, 8 January 2009. As of 2009, Özkök was the managing editor for *Hürriyet*.

Haksal's column is further descriptive for revealing how the conceptualization of Islamism comes as a response to Islamism's misconceptualization by its other. The fear that other ways of conceptualizing Islamism in Turkey, as in Özkök's understanding on Islamism (that Islamists burn flags of Israel) would become the dominant discourse through which Islamism is explained in Turkey and perceived in the international community becomes constitutive of *Milli Gazete*'s approach to orienting its Islamist discourse.

And third, uniting, harmonizing and solidifying the Islamists within Turkey and within the Islamic geography is brought up as the common aim of the demonstration, thus revitalizing essentialism and symbolizing pan-Islamist ambitions. In his above cited column, Tenekeci states: "In our Independence March, it states 'Do not let my homeland encounter with the ignoble'. From Indonesia to Bosnia, we see and know every part of the world where Muslims live as our fatherland... With help from Allah, the Islamic Confederacy (*İslam Birliği*) will one day become a reality."³¹³

Within the discursive formulation of *Milli Gazete*, Islamism is acknowledged as a norm that transcends boundaries. Islamism constructed by *Milli Gazete* is not limited within the borders of Turkey, but spans an entire "geography". The way *Milli Gazete* uses the terms Islamist or Islamism to describe the participants of the Palestine demonstration exceeds spatial limitations (i.e the borders of Çaglayan Square) and reaches out to the Arab world in particular and the whole "Muslim world" in general. Müslim Coşkun, in his column on 6 January argues that the Turkish nation has successfully accomplished its mission of protecting the "Islamic

³¹³ *Milli Gazete*, 6 January 2009.

world” (Islam dünyası) by gathering in Çağlayan Square. Now, it is the responsibility of the bigger brother, Turkey and the Turkish government, to comply with its commitments.³¹⁴ Islamism is constructed in response to the fear that there remains no authority to protect the Islamic world, and no “bigger brother” to glorify Islamic unity.

The next day, in the same newspaper, Arif Çarkçı locates Turkey in the Islamic world by arguing that “Turkey, among the Islamic world, has raised the loudest voice against Israel”.³¹⁵ The transcending identity of Islamism as constructed by *Milli Gazete* serves a unificatory purpose for each and every individual within the Muslim geography. Ömer Vehbi Hatipoğlu, in his column takes a further step in his analysis and states that “it is the brotherhood of Islam that serves as the common denominator bringing our beloved nation, its Turk and Kurd together.”³¹⁶ It is interesting to see how Hatipoğlu includes other fragmentations within the society (i.e ethnic communities) and dissolves all these fragmentations within the Islamic pot whose guiding principle is a religious (Islamic) brotherhood. Islam, as it is conceptualized by National Outlook, becomes a remedy to solve the issues of Turkey and the Islamist geography it is located in. It is nuanced as an element that ties communities of different ethnic groups or races together and creates solidarity.

³¹⁴ *Milli Gazete*, 6 January 2009.

³¹⁵ *Milli Gazete*, 7 January 2009.

³¹⁶ Hatipoğlu begins his column with his observations on demonstration of smaller scale which took place in Diyarbakır within the same week the Palestine Demonstration in Çağlayan was organized. Then he jumps into the demonstration in Çağlayan and argues that it served as an example to the Islamic world.

Palestine Demonstration and Other Media

In approaching the Palestine Demonstration, the following observation is made regarding other media: Although columnists of newspapers such as *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Vatan*, *Sabah*, *Zaman*, *Yeni Şafak* and *Cumhuriyet* are very attentive of the war in Palestine, and their coverage of the situation in Gaza reveals an anti-Israeli and anti-American attitude that is not much different from *Milli Gazete*, when evaluating the demonstrations in Çağlayan, the very same columnists are either disparaging towards a demonstration organized by the Felicity Party (and the Islamists), fearful for the increasing visibility and strength of the Islamism in Turkey or simply ignorant of the protests.

The elements that other newspapers prioritize in their evaluation of the Palestine Demonstration differ from the elements brought up by *Milli Gazete*. *Milli Gazete*'s emphasis on humanity, for example, is approached with a more cynical attitude – and instead of conceiving the Palestine Demonstration as a humanitarian call, these newspapers paradoxically prioritize the lack of humanity which they argue to observe in the demonstration. In its coverage of the demonstration, *Milliyet*, for example, points out to flags that are set on fire, separation of men and women in Çağlayan Square, Intifada chants and pictures of people collectively praying.³¹⁷ *Hürriyet*, in addition, draws attention to the placards of Erbakan and Abdulhamid II and Erbakan's video-call.³¹⁸ In his column in *Cumhuriyet*, Birgit points out to the presence of a representative from HAMAS and describes demonstrators as a crowd in which pennants of "God is Great" (*kelime-i şehadet*) are dominant.³¹⁹ What is

³¹⁷ *Milliyet*, 4 January 2009.

³¹⁸ *Hürriyet*, 4 January 2009.

common to all these evaluations is that instead of defining the Palestine Demonstration as an anti-imperialist or humanitarian reaction, these newspapers bring out Islamist elements through which they appraise this performance. Through the presence of Islamist symbols and figures, the Palestine Demonstration, according to certain columnists of other media, turns into an Islamist performance – one which these columnists approach with greater fear and concern. There are, however, also columnists who praise the aim of the demonstration in Çağlayan; however, compared with the rest, their number is slim.

In analyzing the ways other press approaches the Palestine Protests, the part of this section will look mainly at two points. The first point will contemplate upon the reasons for the lack of coverage by newspapers analyzed in this part and the second will explore the critical attitude and interpret what it tells about media's conduct of the Palestine Demonstration.

The demonstration in Çağlayan, organized by the Felicity Party, came at a time when the humanitarian condition in Gaza was exacerbating. In response, Turkish media in general was not insensible to Israel's invasion of Palestine, and in fact, confronted with the issue, adopting a provocative and highly critical attitude. In the days both preceding and following the demonstrations newspapers were flocked with news, columns and op-eds on the humanitarian conditions in the Middle East.

Nevertheless, compared with the Republic Protest in Çağlayan which caused an upheaval within the pages of almost all newspapers in Turkey, the Palestine Demonstration did not find as much coverage in headlines or columns. For example, *Cumhuriyet*, which has covered another demonstration on Palestine –“Filistin için 3

³¹⁹ *Cumhuriyet*, 6 January 2009.

Dakika Ses Çıkar (Shout out for Palestine for 3 Minutes)³²⁰, did not cover the Palestine Demonstration in its pages as a news piece. Another demonstration was deemed more important as compared with the one organized by the Felicity Party. Within the week preceding and following the demonstration, Palestine Demonstration was mentioned only twice, once by Orhan Birgit³²¹ and the other by Şükran Soner.³²² Birgit's piece focused on the radical elements in the demonstration and interpreted it as a political move by the Felicity Party. The true aim behind the Palestine Demonstration, for Birgit, was to attract constituents. Birgit also argued that the demonstration laid a heavy blow on AKP and its constituents. Soner's column, on the other hand, entailed a hopeful wish for another demonstration, "Barış için İnsan Zinciri" (Human Chain for Peace) to attract greater crowds. This demonstration, contrary to the Palestine Demonstration organized by the Felicity Party, Soner argued, was not organized by a political party or motivated by religious feelings.

Although more Islamically oriented newspapers such as *Zaman* and *Yeni Şafak* approach the war in Palestine in general and the Palestine Demonstrations in particular in a fashion similar to *Milli Gazete* –for example, articulate the element of Zionism to their other³²³ or exculpate HAMAS³²⁴ (and even resemble the HAMAS to Kuvayı Milliye, the local forces which have contributed to Turkey's Independence War, thus combining Turkishness and Islam in the same imaginary), ask everyone in Turkey to pray for Gaza and reach Allah or argue that the arsenal given to the

³²⁰ *Cumhuriyet*, 8 January 2009.

³²¹ *Cumhuriyet*, 6 January 2009.

³²² *Cumhuriyet*, 6 January 2009.

³²³ *Yeni Şafak*, 7 January 2009; *Zaman*, 8 January 2009.

³²⁴ *Yeni Şafak*, 7 January 2009

Muslim world is prayers, tekbers and the Quran³²⁵ – the demonstration organized by the Felicity Party constituted only a minor share in these columns. What was clear in all these newspapers was a demand to react to Israel’s invasion of Palestine; and this demand, similar to *Milli Gazete*’s coverage, was brought up both as a humanitarian and Islamic duty. For example, in the columns of Ali Bulaç³²⁶ and Ahmed Şahin,³²⁷ aphorisms from Prophet Mohammed and citations from the Quran were shared with the readers. Through their columns, the Islamic past was resurrected in the contemporary to take lessons from and follow. Nevertheless, the impact of the demonstration in Çağlayan was not taken up as an issue of importance in most of the columns.

The silent attitude adopted by the media in general in evaluating Palestine Demonstrations, needs to be questioned further. Why did the press, other than *Milli Gazete*, not pay more attention to the demonstration at Çağlayan? Was it not a democratic, humanitarian and collective reaction that hundreds of thousands attended? Was it organized at the wrong time or in the wrong place? Or perhaps, is there something that was surprising about this demonstration; for example, was it something unexpected that such a large crowd would attend a demonstration organized by an Islamist political party?

Two arguments can be hypothesized regarding this silence. Firstly, the Islamist and radical other is no longer a minor player and is feared to become a powerful actor in Turkey. I have already discussed how newspapers such as *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet* and *Cumhuriyet* nuanced the presence of religious themes in this demonstration. The

³²⁵ *Zaman*, 6 January 2009; *Yeni Şafak*, 5 January 2009

³²⁶ *Zaman*, 5 January 2009

³²⁷ *Zaman*, 5 January 2009.

demonstration has proved that the National Outlook movement can attract greater crowds, is organized, visible and active. It can compete with other actors –the AKP and Kemalist NGOs– in gathering crowds for a demonstration it organizes. It does not need to restrict its Islamist performances only to celebrate Prophet Muhammed’s birth. It is also capable of organizing mass protests like the Kemalists do.

Secondly, newspapers other than *Milli Gazete* hesitate in attributing the success in conducting this demonstration to an Islamist political party, especially at a time when Turkey was on the brink of local elections. Having seen radical and marginalized Islamist factions all together in growing solidarity and unity at Çağlayan Square, these newspapers were unwilling to strengthen the image of the Felicity Party by giving it further visibility. Even when Islam, as a “constitutive/building block” or an “adhesive” of Turkish nation was uttered in the pages of these newspapers, there was no mention of the Felicity Party as one of the representative of Islam in Turkey. Unlike the Republic Protests, which were co-organized by over hundred non-governmental organizations, the presence of one political party and one movement –Felicity Party and the National Outlook– behind the Palestine Demonstration was brought up as a concern. In this regard, as much as this demonstration was a civil performance, for the columnists of other newspapers, it also signified a political act. Whereas in the columns of *Milli Gazete*, this demonstration would be depicted as victorious event for not only the Muslim communities in Turkey and the region, but also the Felicity Party, in columns of other newspapers, the role of the Felicity Party as the organizer of this demonstration was hardly mentioned.

In instances where Felicity Party was uttered as the organizing force behind this demonstration, columnists interpreted this event as one which serves political

interests³²⁸ and pointed out to its lack of greater support from civil society in large. The demonstration, in other words, was marginalized as a radical act. According to Süngü, who in his column argues that Muslim communities in the region lack solidarity, “a demonstration organized by two consumer organizations and a political party is not enough to reflect people’s anger and cannot be sufficient to turn it into a collective boycott.” Süngü makes his dissent explicit: “It would have been better if the demonstration in Çağlayan was organized not by the Felicity Party, but civil society organizations.”³²⁹

The fear that Islamization is becoming dominant was also brought up. As the responses to the Palestine Demonstrations show, Islamism is perceived with an increasing suspicion over “Islamization” of political, social and economic spheres. This was a fear that was also constitutive of the way Kemalist organizations identified their aims behind the Republic Protest. The fear that Turkey would become the next Iran or Malaysia resurrects as Islamism is performed in public spaces such as Çağlayan Square. The more Islamism becomes performed in public squares, the greater this fear grows. For example, other Islamist demonstrations such as the celebration of Prophet Mohammed’s birthday, known as Kutlu Doğum Haftası cause agitation among the Kemalist media. Whereas the Islamist media explains this ritual as a revivification of old traditions (and a response to the loss of the Islamic spirit in

³²⁸ See, for example, Berkan’s column in *Radikal*: *Radikal*, 6 January 2009. According to Berkan, the main aim of the demonstration was not to support Gaza, but to send a message to the Justice and Development Party. In his column, Mehmet Tezkan argues on a similar line. According to Tezkan, the reason for this demonstration was to attract the more conservative constituents of the AKP. *Vatan*, 6 January 2009. *Milli Gazete*, in return, argued that criticisms regarding Felicity Party’s role in Palestine Demonstration were illegitimate and no other force but the one offered by the Felicity Party and the D-8 (developing eight- a group of Muslim countries organized by Necmettin Erbakan in 1997) could stop Zionist massacres. For example, in his column, Yusuf Genç argued that those who criticize the leadership of the Felicity Party in organizing an anti-Israel demonstration need to come up with a stronger alternative and step up to act. *Milli Gazete*, 1 January 2009.

³²⁹ *Yeni Şafak*, 7 January 2009.

Turkey), the Kemalist media, by focusing on the ways of performing this ritual –for example, small children with headcovers reading the Quran together- sees it as a forced imposition of the Islamist life style.³³⁰

One of the critical remarks on the Palestine Demonstration in Çağlayan comes from a prominent columnist and journalist, Mehmet Ali Birand. In his column on 6 January 2009, Birand writes that Islam is on the rise. He notes: “Political Islam in Turkey is rising. What happens in Palestine will inevitably affect Turkey. We can already see that things are stirring slowly. Some are getting ready to use this opportunity to force others into militancy. It is so easy to create fanatical Islamists, so easy to send people to die in the name of religion.”³³¹

In a similar fashion, Rauf Tamer, in his column in *Posta*, on 5 January 2009 warns people: “There are new demonstrations taking place. But be careful. These are solely Islam-based (*İslam-tabanlı*) demonstrations. They may even affect the results of the upcoming local elections.”³³² He warns people more about the content of the Palestine demonstrations in his column on 8 January: “People of Palestine is different from Hamas. Warning Israel is different from burning bridges with them. And performances in demonstrations are different from threatening our Jewish community. So, we have to be careful about the wording and the style.”³³³

Among those columnists that covered the Palestine Demonstrations, although scant, the elements of tolerance and humanity were also observed. Rather than simply criticizing these actions, these columnists showed empathy and tried to

³³⁰ *Milli Gazete*, 28 April 2008.

³³¹ *Milliyet*, 6 January 2009.

³³² *Hürriyet*, 5 January 2009.

³³³ *Hürriyet*, 8 January 2009.

understand the steps taken that would lead to such Islamists public demonstrations to take place. Ferai Tınç, for example, wrote:

The day before, *Al Jazeera* was showing coverage from the Palestine Demonstrations. The one in Istanbul was the most crowded. The feeling of religious solidarity was at its peak. Green flags, placards with verses from Quran written on them were visible. And it was not only the Israeli military, but also the Judaism in general that was targeted. However, we can as well argue that it is the responsibility of the Israeli politician to account for their actions in front of their people. They could have acted in a more responsible (adam gibi) manner and prevent their peoples' image from being targeted. Thus we see Turkey, with its Islamic identity, taking a step forward within the international community. Thus, Turkey becomes the country that supports Gaza the most.³³⁴

Tınç's column, along with Ahmet Hakan's³³⁵ were the only two articles written on the Palestine Demonstration within the week preceding and following the demonstration day which has approached the issue with greater empathy and tolerance. Nevertheless, the dominant approach within the other press was one of critical and ignorant. What this shows is that the media in large opposes the sort of Islamism *Milli Gazete* and the Felicity Party visualizes. Even when both camps bring out similar elements in their approaches, their interpretations over how these elements are attributed into Islamism compete. The emphasis on humanity is clearly different in these newspapers than in *Milli Gazete*. Whereas *Milli Gazete*'s perception of humanity is one that carries an Islamic connotation, the same element in the Palestine Demonstrations is seen as one which carries a political connotation – one which hides a secret, Islamist agenda to transform Turkey into an Islamist state.

³³⁴ *Hürriyet*, 4 January 2009.

³³⁵ *Hürriyet*, 5 January 2009.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

It was a bright spring day in 2007 when my grandmother, a keen follower of political discussions in Turkey shared her discontent with the way Atatürk's image and Islam is exploited in Turkey while watching the Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, making a speech on the upcoming elections. She argued, in a disgruntled manner and with a Turkish flag attached to the window frame behind her, that those who call themselves Kemalists, and the ones who claim to be faithful believers of the religion of Islam, know nothing about Atatürk or Islam. In her contestation of the AKP's representation of Kemalist and Islamist values, similar to the people interviewed by Özyürek in her insightful study, *Nostalgia for the Modern*, not only was she frustrated, but also traumatized to see her dream of having Atatürk's Turkey collapse.³³⁶ In her own words, my grandmother has argued that she could not believe what has become of the heritage left to future generations by Atatürk. She ended her argument by pointing out to the television screen and stating: "If it is these people, who represent the values of Atatürk or the true essence of Islam, then I am not an Atatürkist... nor am I a Muslim!" A similar cry was shouted out loud in one of the placards raised at Çaglayan Square, on 29 April 2007. It read: "Justice and Development Party (AKP), I am also Islamic, but I am not a fundamentalist." (see the image to the right)



³³⁶ An interview Özyürek gives reference to is conducted with Nilüfer Gürsoy for a documentary. In the interview, Gürsoy states that for the past 75 years, she has been waiting for her dreams which she argued were attained in her childhood, during the early years of the Republic, to be attained. According to Özyürek, Gürsoy is the child of a Republic, who has been a part of grand modernist project. Yet sadly, as of today, she has not seen these dreams being attained. Özyürek, p.51.

This concern which, as I was to find out by watching a number of demonstrations organized by non-governmental organizations and political parties, is not unique to my grandmother, constructed the very motivation of this thesis. I wanted to look for the reasons as to why people were discontented with the way Kemalism and Islamism were represented in Turkey. And more importantly, if people were dissatisfied with the ways Kemalism and Islamism were put on display in the political and social scene, what did it point out to? What did their dissatisfaction tell us about Turkish politics, and Turkish society?

The main motivation for writing this thesis crystallized at a time when Turkey was in flux. Politically, elections were approaching and each political party was organizing demonstrations. Socially, people were at unrest due to political uncertainties. And economically, the increase in growth rate experienced between 2003 and 2006 started slowing down, giving the early signals of an upcoming global economic crisis, whose impact on Turkey was to be felt considerably.

Turkey was months away from the general elections; but more importantly, days away from the election of its President. The AKP was only missing a couple of votes from obtaining the Parliamentary majority to elect the President, where the name of its candidate was kept as a total secret until the very deadline. Among columnists, academics and lawyers the discussions were on a judicial concern over the election mechanism itself, which necessitated the presence of at least a two-thirds quorum in the Parliament building. Whether the AKP held the legitimacy to choose the next President of the Republic of Turkey became the major topic of discussion within media. At the heart of all these discussions lays a more vital concern or a “secret agenda”, which was half-heartedly declared within these discussions, yet shouted out loud through demonstrations all around Turkey: Having the next

President of Turkey as someone with Islamist roots; and having a first lady, who wears the headscarf.

The inquietude with contemporary developments brought people from their houses into public squares. The Republic Protest at Çağlayan was only one of the many organized by Kemalist institutions in the past three years. The Islamists, on the other hand, have been effectively using public spaces since 2004 to convey their displeasure with the ruling government.

After looking at Kemalist and Islamist performances, I have argued in this thesis that what we call Kemalism or Islamism today constructs and defines itself with loss. Loss is both a feared and a motivating element for Kemalist and Islamist actors. Loss, which is traumatic for it devours Kemalist and Islamist world of meaning to exist, is also constitutive. Loss of Kemalist and Islamist dreams, and loss of belief in Kemalism and Islamism, lead to people questioning about what symbols and values that are symbolic of these ideologies, such as Atatürk or Islam, means. The lack of finding an answer to this question, and a powerful actor through which such an answer can be sought after, brought flocks of people out of their houses to attend demonstrations. At a post-modern age where “thick” ideologies fragment and dissolve, these demonstrations have been platforms to contest this deconstructive trend. By attending them, the demonstrators collectively utilized nostalgia, thus embracing with a Kemalist or Islamist past and recontextualizing it in the contemporary.

From the perspective of the organizers, these Kemalist and Islamist rituals gave them visibility, legitimacy and power as the “true” representatives of Kemalism and Islamism in Turkey and strengthened their institutional image in the fight they give against their other, which crystallizes as the Justice and Development Party. From

the perspective of the demonstrators, the Çağlayan Square was a safe haven in which Kemalists and Islamists could embrace with the “essence” and offer nostalgic alternatives to the present, and challenge the hybridization experienced in contemporary Turkey.

Overall, this thesis attempted to provide a reading on Turkish politics and society by looking at two demonstrations. These demonstrations have provided me with “flashes” through which I was able to analyze the domain of the “political” in Turkey.³³⁷ Hypothesizing that loss is a constitutive element for Kemalist and Islamist actors, I have started by exploring theories on loss and authenticity. Also in Chapter 2, the literature review section allowed me to provide a brief historical discussion. With the help of this section I was able to provide a more detailed account on similar studies. The discussions provided in Chapter 2 were also essential to illustrate my findings and observations which were to be provided in Chapter 3. In Chapter 3, I have shared my findings on the demonstrations. The field research conducted following the Republic Protests has given me a chance not only to reflect the view of the organizers, but also describe and analyze the general atmosphere at Çağlayan on the demonstration day. Furthermore, by surveying the media, I was able to show how discussions on these demonstrations were perpetuated in columns and analyze what these discussions told us about the role of loss in understanding Kemalism and Islamism.

My findings show me that loss, in both its material and symbolic forms, is the *leitmotif* (leading/guiding motif) for Kemalist and Islamist actors. Although loss is disruptive of the self narrative and hence its effects are traumatic, it is also constitutive of Kemalism and Islamism in Turkey today. It can therefore be

³³⁷ Yashin, citing Benjamin, argues that her “imaginary register for research” are based on blinks for tracing the political. Yashin, p.15.

concluded that loss, as an element that is feared and needs to be prevented and fought against, constructs the *raison d'être* for Kemalist and Islamist actors.

Demonstrations are performances through which messages are conveyed – both to the government, and to the media and academia. And only by analyzing them, one can get a more complete picture on some of the main discussions that are taking place in Turkey today. I hope that this thesis has partially accomplished this task by looking at some of the actors, and some of their performances, which were deemed to be important and representative of Kemalism and Islamism. And I hope that by looking at a field where little has been written, I have contributed to the literature on political sciences in general and Turkish politics in particular.

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