

**STUDYING TRANSFORMATION OF ISLAMISM IN TURKEY IN A
LOCAL EXAMPLE: THE CASE OF YOLCU (1997- 2017)**

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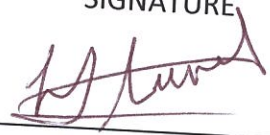

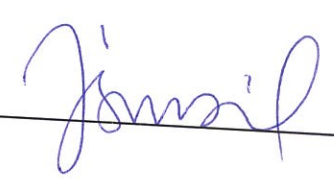
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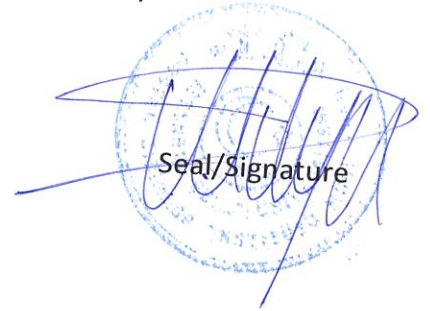
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ABSTRACT

STUDYING TRANSFORMATION OF ISLAMISM IN TURKEY IN A LOCAL EXAMPLE: THE CASE OF YOLCU (1997- 2017)

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This study explores the transformation of Islamism in Turkey since the ‘postmodern’ coup of February 28, 1997, and in particular, local Islamist groups in Anatolian cities, which are studied within the case of *Yolcu* from Samsun. The first part of the study examines what Islamism is and what it means to Muslims in Turkey, and also the historical phases of Islamism in order to clarify the background of the concept. In the second part, the 81 issues of *Yolcu* are analyzed by means of manifest and latent content analysis and semi-structured interviews with the founding members/writers of the magazine to demonstrate that Islamism has been transformed from rejection of the phenomenon of the ‘state’ to ownership to it within two decades. The study is mainly concentrated on the political side of the transformation and the questions are prepared under five dimensions: The February 28 process, modernization, the Kurdish question, religion and politics, and AK Party. This study has sought the answers of ‘how’ question through analyzing the sections *Seyir Defteri* written by the editor, *İstikamet*, *Yolcu’nun Heybesi* and *Dipnot* in the issues of *Yolcu*, and ‘why’ question through in-depth interviews. The main argument of this study is that Islamism in Turkey has dramatically been transformed in terms of political perception of the ‘state’ from a rejection of the ‘secular’ state to a “no state no religion” argument.

Keywords: Islamism, Transformation of Islamism, State, and AK Party

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE’DE İSLAMCILIĞIN DÖNÜŞÜMÜNÜ YENİDEN DÜŞÜNMEK: YOLCU DERGİSİ ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu çalışma Türkiye’de İslamcılığın 28 Şubat 1997 postmodern darbesinden günümüze enteresan bir dönüşüme uğradığını ve devlet algısının reddiyeden sahiplenmeye evrildiğini göstermeye çalışmaktadır. Bu dönüşümü anlamak için çok yönlü ve gruplu İslamcılığın içinden taşra kökenli, kentte eğitim görmüş ve hiçbir cemaat ve tarikat bağlantısı olmayan, daha evrensel ve muhalif ‘tevhid’ odaklı bir duruş tercih eden İslamcılığı Samsun’dan yayın yapan Yolcu özelinde çalışılması tercih edilmiştir. Bu dönüşümü anlamak için iki aşama oluşturulmuştur. İlk aşamada, dönüşümün daha iyi anlaşılması bağlamında İslamcılığın nasıl bir hareket olduğu ve modern Türkiye’de Müslümanlara ne ifade ettiği ve günümüz şeklini alan İslamcılığın tarihsel arka planı incelenmiştir. İkinci aşamada, genelde Samsun’daki İslamcı oluşumun özelde Yolcu’nun dönüşümünü anlamak için seksen bir (81) sayı, özellikle Seyir Defteri, İstikamet, Yolu’nun Heybesi ve Dipnot içerik analizi yöntemiyle incelenmiş ve kurucu yedi yazarla 28 Şubat, modernleşme, Kürt meselesi, din-devlet ilişkileri ve Ak Parti başlıkları altında derinlemesine mülakat yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın temel argümanı İslamcılığın siyasi bağlamda ‘devlet’ odaklı bir dönüşüme uğradığı ve seküler devlette oy kullanmanın tartışıldığı bir yerden ‘devlet olmadan din olmaz’ argümanının savunulduğu bir noktaya gelmesidir. Bizzat bu dönüşümün nasıllığını ve sebeplerini aramak bu çalışmanın temel amacıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İslamcılık, İslamcılığın Dönüşümü, Devlet Algısı, AK Parti

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*Dost mirasıyla her daim bizimle olan çokça özlediğim sevgili Babama ve bizi
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Islamism in Turkey: The Question of 'To Be or Not To Be'

Burası Türkiye ve tarih kaydediyor!¹

Islamism as "Contemporary Islamic Thought"² in the world began to arise as a reactive movement against colonialism in the Muslim countries in the 19th century. Intellectual formation and socio-political praxis of Islamism(s) differ from one Muslim country or region to another in relation to social, historical and economic background. The common characteristic of the Islamist movements in the Muslim countries has been the reactive process against the intellectual, technological, economic, military and political dominance of Western powers.³ Although Turkey was never colonized by the imperial powers, the Turkish society still felt a necessity for modernization from within. Hence, Islamism, on the one hand, was a project against the Western hegemony, but on the other hand, was keen on modernization of the society. Yet, implementing Islamism as a modernizing project is a common characteristic of all Islamism(s). In other words, Islamism has been an ideology for political liberation of Muslims from the Western hegemony in all cases.

Islamism in Turkey has been one of the core ideologies of the late Ottoman period and the modern Turkey later. "Islamism/pan-Islamism had no parallel in Islamic history. It was a European-type movement of liberation and change, clad in Islamic garments and apparently led by the traditional head of the Muslim community, the caliph."⁴ The main motivation of Islamism in the beginning was to revive Islamic way of life in socio-political areas by going back to Qur'an and traditional sources but

¹ "This is Turkey and history is recording!" The title of the first issue of *Yolcu* published in 1997.

² İsmail Kara, *İslamcılığın Siyasi Görüşleri 1: Hilafet ve Meşrutiyet* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2001), 39.

³ Aysegul Konsuoglu and Gul M. Kurtoglu Eskisar "İslamcilik ve Türkiye Uzerine Karsilastirmali Bir Degerlendirme," in *Siyasal İslam'ın Farklı Yüzleri*, ed. Aysegul Konsuoglu and Gul M. Kurtoglu Eskisar (İstanbul: Profil Yayıncılık, 2009), 10-11.

⁴ Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 18.

saving the state as a matter of survival shifted Islamists' focus to independence, political power and development. In this regard, it would not be wrong to say that Islamism has turned from an intellectual formation into an action-based movement in course of time.⁵ "Turning Islam into an ideology" was also a consequence of the era of Abdulhamid the Second. During his time, the revivalist orders⁶ used Islam as an historically organic ideology to mobilize the masses in defense of the society and its faith, and Sultan Abdulhamid used it to mobilize the masses in defense of the Ottoman state.⁷ "The revivalists and the sultan were Muslims sharing the same faith, but, in the name of that faith, the sultan sought to preserve the statist elite order while the masses sought liberation from its rule."⁸

Defining what Islamism is has always been one of the core issues in both the international intellectual environment and Turkey. The standpoint of the writer does determine the way s/he perceives and defines Islamism. Islamism can be defined as "Contemporary Islamic Thought"⁹ in the broadest sense. In addition to 'Islamism', terms such as 'political Islam', 'fundamentalism', 'neo-fundamentalism', 'radicalism', 'radical Islam' and 'Islamic modernism' are commonly used.¹⁰ While some authors has claimed that Islam is by definition political, others use the term 'political Islam' to distinguish groups that want to establish *Shari'a* as a legally binding system for society. Milton Viorst, for instance, highlights the criteria of a 'political movement' and Greg Barton states that 'Islamists...find in Islam something of a blue print for political engagement, and non-Islamists find nothing more specific than values and principles.¹¹ Beside some characterizations of 'Islamism' seem to be different, there

⁵ Lütfi Sunar, "İslamcılığı Konumlandırmak: Genel Bir Giriş," in *Bir Başka Hayata Karşı: 1980 Sonrası İslamcı Dergilerde Meseleler, Kavramlar ve İsimler*, Vol. 1, ed. Lütfi Sunar (Konya: Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2019), 1-2.

⁶ The religious groups, which supported modernization and opposed Sultan Abdulhamid while practicing a community-based religious populism at the grass roots during the era of Abdulhamid the Second.

⁷ Karpaz, *The Politicization of Islam*, 10.

⁸ Karpaz, *The Politicization of Islam*.

⁹ Kara, *İslamcılarının Siyasi Görüşleri 1: Hilafet ve Meşrutiyet*, 39.

¹⁰ Christoph Schuck, "A Conceptual Framework of Sunni Islam," *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 14 (2013): 485-486. Sunar, "İslamcılığı Konumlandırmak: Genel Bir Giriş," 2.

¹¹ Christoph Schuck, "A Conceptual Framework of Sunni Islam," 486.

are two common concepts in all; one is politicization of Islam¹² in a new world and the other is the ideal of an Islamic state,¹³ which is very open to criticism.¹⁴ Although the label of Islamism has also been criticized for being reductive, orientalist and Euro-centric,¹⁵ the use of Islamism has been admitted among Islamists in Turkey.¹⁶ In addition, "Islamists are Muslims who, rather than accept an inherited Muslim tradition, have developed their own self-conscious vision of Islam, which is the then brought to bear on social and political events within a particular national content".¹⁷

Islamism in Turkey can be differentiated from socialism, liberalism, nationalism and other ideologies exist in Muslim countries in several ways. Firstly, it represents a wider intellectual framework thanks to lack of institutionalization of Islamists. Secondly, Islamism between 1960-80 has demanded changes in social and political areas since Muslim individuals began to have new positions in public, which also means creating Islamic public appearing vis-à-vis public epiphany of secular modernization in Turkey. In other words, the Islamists after 60's attached importance to creating a social base for themselves while the visibility of Islamism was rising. The radical and utopist Islamism after 80s would be quite different from Islamism during 60s.¹⁸

Islamism in Turkey has been dramatically affected with the coming of AK Party, whose founders are known as Islamists or 'ex-Islamists', to the power in 2002. Although AK Party used to define its ideology as 'conservative-democrat', the Islamists have

¹² Lazaros Miliopoulos, "The Revolutionary Global Islamism – Politicized or Political Religion? Applying Eric Voegelin's Theory to the Dynamics of Political Islam," *Religion Compass* 7/4 (2013): 126.

¹³ Ewan Stein, "Studying Islamism after the Arab Spring," *Mediterranean Politics* 19 (2014): 149-150.

¹⁴ See Wael B. Hallaq, *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics and Modernity's Moral Predicament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

¹⁵ Ergün Yıldırım, "İslâmizm, İslâmlaşma ve İttihad-ı İslâm," in *Türkiye'de İslâmcılık Düşüncesi ve Hareketi Sempozyum Tebliğleri*, ed. İsmail Kara and Asım Öz (İstanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2013), 99-119.

D. Mehmet Doğan, "İslâmcılık: Bir Adlandırma Meselesi," in *Türkiye'de İslâmcılık Düşüncesi ve Hareketi Sempozyum Tebliğleri*, ed. İsmail Kara and Asım Öz (İstanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2013), 120-128.

¹⁶ Hulusi Şentürk, *Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar ve Siyaset: İslamcılık* (İstanbul: Çıra Yayınları, 2015), 21-23.

¹⁷ Jenny B. White, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics* (Washington, D.C.: The University of Washington Press, 2002), 23.

¹⁸ Sunar, "İslamcılığı Konumlandırmak: Genel Bir Giriş," 2.

supported the party and 'power' became a new aspect of Islamism. This new practical field, politics, has brought mutual changes to sides, Islamists and the secular political system. One aspect of the phenomenon is that Ak Party is a catch-all party created by the Islamists stepped in the game. This new formation has intended to change socio-political structure of the state through democratic implementations. On the other hand, power as "the untouched-field" also transformed Islamists, their way of life and understanding in an indispensable way. That has been another turning point of Turkish politics, in which Islamists and the state have been mutually transformed. This thesis aims to examine and analyze the transformation of Islamism in Turkey, particularly the Islamist thinking of politics in a local context through analyzing a Samsun-based literary magazine, *Yolcu*¹⁹, which has been published since the postmodern coup of February 28, 1997.

1.2. Why *Yolcu*?

"Why *Yolcu*?" is an important question in this aspect. There are five notable reasons to start with. Firstly, current research projects or theses on Islamism in Turkey are usually on the groups based in İstanbul and Ankara. Samsun is a metropole located in the center of the Black Sea region, and characteristically an Anatolian²⁰ city, as well. Samsun has its own active Islamist group and *Yolcu* has been published by a group of Islamists in Samsun. Since Islamist thinking and argumentation may differ from center to periphery, it is crucial in this case to study an Islamist group located in an Anatolian city. More importantly, it is quite necessary to examine Islamism from a local perspective in order to see alternative perceptions and criticism. *Yolcu* is in that sense as an Anatolian literary magazine, which has published 3000 copies per issue, circulated and has readers all around the country.²¹ The founding writers define the magazine, as a platform in which writers and readers are equal and it is open to everyone who has a 'word' to raise under the motto of "an unpretending contribution

¹⁹ 77 issues of *Yolcu* are available at the Project of Islamist Magazines directed by Lütfi Sunar. Available online at: <http://katalog.idp.org.tr/dergiler/194/yolcu>

²⁰ Asiatic Turkey. Also used as a term to identify established culture and Muslim-Turkic tradition in the region.

²¹ Cem Gençoğlu, "Sözün Coğrafyası," filmed in 2007 at Samsun, video, 27:20, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzDVvnzW0a0&t=598s>.

to just, free and virtuous society”²². The writers avoid to point themselves but to point the magazine in which writers are also the readers of the magazine and the readers are also responsible for the writings in the magazine. Therefore, the magazine has kept a note in each issue, which says that ‘Reader is also responsible for the writings in the magazine!’²³

Secondly, *Yolcu* has had critical attitude and style in the issues. It has kept the title of each issue as a slogan or manifesto. The size of the magazine and wording was out of classical understanding of magazine publishing in Turkey and the editor has described *Yolcu*’s genre as ‘underground literature’.²⁴ The narrative in the cover page of the third issue published in 1998 can be good example in this sense.

A man from Southeast of Turkey;
Watching news on TV attentively under military control.
His village was burned, his son is missing.
He is seeking a ray of hope,
Since the food embargo was maintained against his city.
First the president appears on the screen:
“Laicism...”
Later the chief of defense:
“Laicism...”
Just then the president of constitutional court:
“Laicism...”
And, news continues so.
The man blushed with his whole face.
“Such a shame” says,
“We are demanding justice, human rights, life safety and property
protection while our country has such important issues...”
Long live, oligarchy!”²⁵

The story of the cover image of the sixth issue is also worthy to be mentioned here. Around 1999, when first issues were being published; things go very undemocratic and ‘comic’²⁶ in the country. The military overtakes the power indirectly and uses it

²² “Burası Türkiye ve Tarih Kaydediyor!” *Yolcu*, February-March 1998, 1. Gençoğlu, “Sözün Coğrafyası,” 7:20.

²³ “Yayınlanan yazılardan okur da sorumludur!” First stated in 7th issue and in the rest. Issues are available online at: <http://katalog.idp.org.tr/dergiler/194/yolcu>.

²⁴ Gençoğlu, “Sözün Coğrafyası,” 9:20.

²⁵ “Anlattığım Kimin Hikayesi!” *Yolcu*, April-May 1998, 1. <http://katalog.idp.org.tr/sayilar/11739/3-sayi>.

²⁶ Gençoğlu, “Sözün Coğrafyası,” 8:20.

fully to oppress the Islamic groups in Turkey in every aspect of life. Three writers of the magazine decided to go to photography studio and take photos of their feet with socks but without shoes. Then, the editor puts the photo on the first page and puts this title, “Çoraplarımızın rengiyle uyumlu değilse eğer; değişmesi gereken kanunlardır!”²⁷ This story is attention grabbing and gives us a hint to understand the attitude of *Yolcu* to issues. The wording of the magazine has been compared with left-wing magazines but it is the wording of ‘resistance’²⁸ for them, not leftist. “*Yolcu* has been devoted to be voice of a very old civilization. *Yolcu*’s voice is familiar to all. It is self-confident and painted by the colors of this geography. Its outcry is to be understood by those who prick up their ear to the sounds of this country.”²⁹ Nevertheless, it is a literary journal. A romantic discourse is essential. There are two reasons for the ‘romantic discourse’. First, it is related to its roots in countryside. *Yolcu*’s attitude is described as displaying an urban attitude while having country roots.³⁰ Therefore, their attitude necessitates raising their ‘words’ without fear. The second is the writers’ youthful exuberance³¹ and intellectual enthusiasm with a deep commitment to declaring their ‘words’. It has been both a need and a must for them to say what they think and to demonstrate where they stand.

Thirdly, *Yolcu* represents a group of Islamists who tries to be critical to the ideologies and the world system that we live in even though they are not majority. *Yolcu* has criticized ‘imperialism’, ‘materialism’, ‘humanism’, ‘capitalism’ and ‘modernization’ since the very first issue until today. The founding group has attached great importance to not belonging to any group, or community and to not being a publication of any religious order in Turkey. For that reason, the magazine has never taken advertisement, although they had to take a break due to financial problems in

²⁷“When the law does not match the colors of our socks, it must be amended!” Its visual is available at Appendix A.

²⁸ Gençoğlu, “Sözün Coğrafyası,” 9:40.

²⁹ “Fakat *Yolcu* Dergisi kadim bir medeniyetin sesi olmaya adanmıştır kendini. Tanıdık bir sestir onunki. Tanıdık, kendinden emin, bu coğrafyanın rengiyle boyanmış... Bir ülkenin, bu ülkenin sesine kulak kabartabilenlerin anlayabileceği bir çığlıktır onun seslendirdiği. Yenilgi yenilgi büyüyen, içten içe kendini yeniden üreten bir çığlıktır onunkisi...”

Gençoğlu, “Sözün Coğrafyası,” 9:35-10:10.

³⁰ Gençoğlu, “Sözün Coğrafyası,” 23:20.

³¹ Gençoğlu, “Sözün Coğrafyası,” 1:55.

2005. The majority of the founding members abstains from being part of the daily politics and the state bureaucracy, and rather preferred to stay critical, 'free' and 'just'. Their position has been described as in the documentary:

Yolcu, has been tried to abstain from the chaos which is known as the 'center'. (...) This is an Anatolian magazine. For the Anatolia, it is the roots of the exile in Istanbul. Hence, *Yolcu* happen to be a milestone, which underlines the tradition. Yes, the magazine has had roots in countryside but it has located itself beyond the countryside attitude.³²

Therefore, the magazine has had a quite variety of readers from all ideologies and groups in Turkey. This can be observed in the section of *Yolcu'nun Heybesi* in which letters all around the country have been mentioned or replied. Their 'resistance' attitude has been key in this interaction with the readers.

Fourthly, although *Yolcu* is one of the significant Islamist publications in Turkey, it has failed a scholarly attention to this day. The magazine began its life in spring 1997, just after the February 28, post-modern coup. It has reached its 95th issue at the moment. Although the magazine is known to be a literary magazine, it has spared one to three pages to declare their opinion on what is going on in the country and in the world. What is also important here is first issues date back to the 28 February process, which was Islamists' "failed" experience in the office by the *Refahyol*³³ rule. Since it is quite hard to study transformation of Islamism in Turkey entirely in a MA dissertation, this study aims to tell the story of the intellectual transformation of a group of Islamists in Samsun, by taking case of *Yolcu* from 1997 until 2017. It may be risky to study a journal that was never studied but I believe that *Yolcu* is an authentic case and deserves to be looked into.

Last but not least, it has been easy to reach the sources since the magazine is still active and has local branches. Furthermore, the founder writers/poets are also still

³² "Yola çıkışını mütevazı bir yürüyüş olarak tanımlayan Yolcu, 'merkez' denilen karmaşadan hep geri durmaya çalışır. (...) Bu bir Anadolu dergisidir. Anadolu ise İstanbul'daki sürgünün kökleridir. Bunun için Yolcu, geleneğe vurgu yapan bir işaret taşı olmalıdır. Evet, dergi taşrada çıkmıştır fakat taşralı bir duruşun ötesine konumlandırmıştır kendini."

Gençoğlu, "Sözün Coğrafyası," 20:50.

³³ A coalition government in 1996-97 led by Necmettin Erbakan who was the head of the Welfare Party.

active and available to give interviews about the magazine and the whole story of how things changed and are changing. I also grew up within same Islamist group in Samsun and went to high school there. I kept reading the journal for a while without knowing with writers and has witnessed the explicit changes in their point-of-views and ideas by observation through time. Then, I decided to take off to study the reasons behind and give a scholarly attention to them.

1.3. A Schizophrenic Cohesion of Modern Turkey: Islamism and the Political Power

In 1993, a group of Islamists came together to write and publish. Some of them were university students and some others were artisans or young teachers. They published the very first issue to raise their voice up. The first issue was a combination of philosophy and literature. Then, they attended at a conference in Trabzon. At the conference, as it is the custom in almost every official event in Turkey, the national anthem was recited. It is an unwritten rule in Turkey to stand up while singing or listening the national anthem. When the representatives of *Yolcu* hesitated to stand up, they kept sitting while national anthem was sung. Then, their photo was taken by the mass media and the members were arrested after the incident. The magazine had to take a break due to this incident until 1997. Majority of the writers in the magazine and all the writers that I interviewed with have voted since the *Refahiyol* administration, while some used to refuse to vote owing to their radical stance in 90s.³⁴ The interesting point is, one of the writers quoted a historical saying “A people who doesn’t have a state means doesn’t have a religion” and “A religion cannot be practiced without the existence of a state” in his interview.³⁵ He has also stated that they used to have an anti-state stance and perceive the state as ‘*tâğut*’, which meant oppression to them.³⁶ In other words, their perception of ‘state’ has transformed from the standpoint of perceiving state as ‘*tâğut*’ to the ‘no state no religion’ argument. The very inspiration of this study is to theorize the striking transformation from one point to another.

³⁴ Respondent 5, “Yolcu,” interview by Ayşenur A. Ayduran, Ankara, June 4, 2019, audio, 11:05.

³⁵ Respondent 2, “Yolcu,” interview by Ayşenur A. Ayduran, Samsun, January 12, 2017, audio, 1:08:50.

³⁶ Refers to devil but covers everything that obstructs people from obeying Allah. For more info: <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/tagut>

Islamism, as any other ideology, is a living, which may transform and shape itself according to the circumstances, situation of the country, politics and socio-economic standards of Islamists within the country. Regardless of AK Party's claims to have taken lesson from so called the 'failure' of the *Refahyol* administration-and accordingly define its own stance as 'conservative democrat' but not 'Islamist'-; it has mostly been in the center of debates on Islamism, and more importantly on the Islamism-state relation. Therefore, the Islamists, one way or another, had a chance to approach to the 'center' and to influence statecraft. One of the writers of the magazine pointed out an interesting aspect in the documentary³⁷ that "Actually, politics moved into the 'center' with us or we moved into the 'center' by politics."³⁸ One of the writers mentioned in the interview "I have never liked the idea of 'state'. I still do not. 'State' is the evil for me, the evil that has to exist. Its essence is evil. But, is it necessary? Yes, I believe its existence is necessary if you live in such a world full of states. Nevertheless, it does not mean that it is accurate and necessary at all. The 'state' is one of the worst inventions of human history."³⁹ He later adds, "I voted and I still vote (for AK Party) because one can vote for the aim of avoiding damages of the 'state' in case it could be much more harmful in others' hands."⁴⁰ The political position of the magazine is tended to separate 'the reality of the state' and their 'approach to state' as a Muslim citizen. For instance, one of writers said in the interview:

The state can do everything he wants for the sake of its existence. I think, the state was right in the *Mavi Marmara*⁴¹ incident. The state may not be consistent. It can change its discourse for the sake of its continuation but it cannot measure and direct my hatred toward Israel. None of the ministers

³⁷ Gençoğlu, "Sözün Coğrafyası."

³⁸ Gençoğlu, "Sözün Coğrafyası," 23:01.

³⁹ Respondent 4, interview by Ayşenur A. Aydurhan, Samsun, January, 14, 2017, audio, 36:05.

⁴⁰ Respondent 4, interview, 1:00:35.

⁴¹ In an aim to break the blockade in Gaza, the Gaza Freedom Flotilla, including the Mavi Marmara ship with many people from international groups, was organized to transport humanitarian aid to Gaza but the flotilla was confronted with an intervention by Israeli military forces. During this attack, 10 humanitarian aid workers lost their lives and 9 of them were Turkish citizens. Although Erdoğan used to support the flotilla in coming years after the incident, he said in 2016 "You did not ask transporting the aid to Gaza to the Prime Minister of the time."

For more info: <https://www.ihh.org.tr/en/mavi-marmara>

<https://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1260738-cumhurbaskani-erdogandan-ihhya-mavi-marmara-yaniti>

or bureaucrats can make a statement and say Turkish people and Israeli people are friends or allies.⁴²

Intellectual transformation of Islamism toward politics has ended up with a schizophrenic coercion. The Islamists in Turkey used to be opponents of a secular state and “the dominance of the secular nationalist project of westernization”⁴³ known as Kemalism⁴⁴. The Conservatives⁴⁵ and the Islamists used to be against the same ‘secular state’ with different arguments during 90’s. One of the main reasons of the mainstream conservative-traditionalist reaction to Kemalism is that Ottoman Empire has been proclaimed as an enemy and Ottoman-Islamic civilization has been alienated. Such a disposition has been perceived as one of the essential part of Turkish culture. Islam has mostly been a way of living and a matter of identity for the conservatives. For the mainstream Islamists, on the other hand, the reason has been Kemalism’s conveying the imperialist European colonialism, which oppressed Muslim societies all over the world and impaired socio-political structures of Muslims societies based upon Islam, to Turkey and making Muslims vulnerable against the oppression.⁴⁶ *Yolcu*, in that aspect, has criticized the Kemalist elites during 90s and demonstrated their standpoints based on the principles of ‘Tawhid’⁴⁷, ‘justice’, ‘freedom’, and ‘virtue’⁴⁸, and ‘living in dignity’⁴⁹. Regardless of AK Party’s official ideology, the Islamists began to enjoy the ‘power’ and to interact with ‘secular’ face of the state. The ‘schizophrenia’ of the interaction is that Islamists are to rule the

⁴² Respondent 3, interview by Ayşenur A. Ayduran, Samsun, January, 13, 2017, audio, 47:27.

⁴³ Burhanettin Duran, “Approaching the Kurdish Question via Adil Düzen: An Islamist Formula of the Welfare Party For Ethnic Coexistence,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 1, (1998): 112.

⁴⁴ It is the official ideology of the Republic. The Word is derived from the name of the founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. For this, see:

Umit Cizre, “Kurdish Nationalism From an Islamist Perspective: The Discourses of Turkish Islamist Writers,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 1, (1998): 75.

⁴⁵ For a political definition and its history, see: Philippe Raynaud & Stephane Rials *Siyaset Felsefesi Sözlüğü* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2017), 919-923.

There is no a common definition in Turkish case. Conserving existing political order and being very slow in social change are agreed on being the main components of it. For this, see:

Alev Çınar, “İslamcı Dergilerde Siyasal Düşüncenin Üretimi: Siyasi Kuram-İslami Düşünce İlişkisi,” in “*Bir Başka Hayata Karşı*”: 1980 Sonrası İslamcı Dergilerde Meseleler, Kavramlar ve İsimler, Vol. 2, ed. Lütfi Sunar (Konya: Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2019), 196-200.

⁴⁶ Çınar, “İslamcı Dergilerde Siyasal Düşüncenin Üretimi: Siyasi Kuram-İslami Düşünce İlişkisi,” 199.

⁴⁷ “Asserting oneness,” The oneness of God. For more info, see: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/tawhid>

⁴⁸ Anonym, “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, April-May 1998, 1.

⁴⁹ Anonym, “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, June-July 1998, 1.

office and the state while they are well aware of its being the 'evil' or 'tâğut'. It would not be so different from the beginning of the story, actually. "The rise of individual would provide a new vantage point to evaluate the role of the state and the function of the faith: 'modernity' in a way was rational individualism."⁵⁰

In light of the information above, this research is to examine and analyze the transformation of a group of Islamists in Samsun through the analysis of 81 issues of *Yolcu* and the in-depth interviews with seven (7) founding writers of the journal. Although, Islamists in Turkey have economically, socially, politically and intellectually transformed, this study will mostly concentrate on political dimensions of the transformation. Five main subjects were asked to the writers in order to understand the transformation. These are the February 28 process, the Turkish modernization, the Kurdish question, AK Party administration and Islamism-power relations.

1.4. How to Study Yolcu?

For a researcher, objectivity is of top priority. Apart from the researcher's own Islamist background and connection with the Islamist group in Samsun, the main goal of this study is to seek the answers of 'how' and 'why' questions in order to explain the transformation of Islamists by concentrating on a local instance, the *Yolcu magazine*. Objectivity simply means "the proper distance between the researcher and subjects that minimizes bias (...). Thus, the objective researcher is seen as scientifically distant, that is as someone who is not influenced by, and does not influence the study."⁵¹ To avoid such kind of complications, the researcher believes that pursuit of answers for proper questions emerging in mind is the very primary guidance and the methodology that will be followed in this research is of vital importance, indeed. For this study, entitled "Studying Transformation of Islamism in Turkey in a Local Example: The Case of Yolcu (1997-2017)", a qualitative methodology will be used owing to its appropriateness to the subject. Qualitative research "adopts a naturalistic approach which aims to retain fidelity to the real world and stresses the

⁵⁰ Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, 4.

⁵¹ Laura Krefting, "Rigor in Qualitative Research: The Assessment of Trustworthiness," *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 45 (1991): 217.

importance of ‘social reality in subjects’ perceptions of their environment”.⁵² In other words, it enables a researcher of social sciences to explore a “wide array of dimensions of the social world, and understandings, experiences, and imaginings of the participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings that they generate”.⁵³ As the first part of the research question is “How *Yolcu* has transformed?” This study will seek what are the patterns of the magazine, which concepts were used, which concepts were being hesitated to mention, and how the change took place. Since manifest and latent content analysis is “predominantly or exclusively using words as data”⁵⁴, This study will stress on key words and concepts, which are derived from the issues like “Tawhid’, ‘Justice’, ‘freedom’, ‘virtue’, ‘conscience’, ‘living in dignity’, ‘geography’, ‘country’ and ‘attitude’, and which are not mentioned such as ‘democracy’, ‘woman’ and ‘Turkishness’ and all will be classified and compared through three time intervals, which are 1997-2005, 2006-2010, and 2011-2017.

For the second part of the research question, the semi-structured interviews are chosen to collect data in order to understand the reasons of the transformation. The interviewing method can be detailed in the light of “number and length of interviews, the appropriateness and breadth of the interview sample given the goals of the study, the types of questions asked, the level of transcription detail, the practices taken to ensure transcript accuracy, and the resultant number of pages of interview transcripts”.⁵⁵ In the light of given information, in-depth interviews was conducted with the seven founding members/writers of the magazine in a one-to-one interaction in Samsun, Manisa and Ankara. The interviews were planned as semi-structured and new questions were asked in the compliance with the way the conversation was going. The time average of the interviews is one-and-half hour. The questions were asked under five dimensions: The February 28 process,

⁵² Rudy H. Gray & Iain L. Densten, “Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis Using Latent and Manifest Variables,” *Quality & Quantity* 32, (1998), 419.

⁵³ Jennifer Mason, *Qualitative Researching*, (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 2002), 18.

⁵⁴ Gray & Densten, “Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis Using Latent and Manifest Variables,” 419.

⁵⁵ Sarah J. Tracy, “Qualitative Quality: Eight ‘Big-Tent’ Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 16 (2010): 842.

modernization, the Kurdish question, religion and politics, and AK Party. The questions are:

- What was your motivation while forming a new magazine, *Yolcu*?
- How did you experience February 28 process and how did it affect your life? How was your personal experience?
- Islamization and modernization are two phenomena of Modern Turkey, which can be called a 'hate-love' relation. How is your approach to modernisation as a Muslim living in Turkey?
- Did the February 28 process affect your understanding of modernity? If yes, how?
- What do you think about Kurdish question? What does nationalism mean to you?
- Did you support the peace process? Why or why not?
- Do you think Islamism and nationalism interact each other? Is AK Party becoming nationalist? Do you think this posing a problem? Why or why not?
- Do you think AK Party and leadership of president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan are two different concepts to support? What do you think about AK Party after Erdoğan?
- Some theoreticians declare AK Party's era as reconciliation between government and people or 'normalization'. Do you agree with that?
- Do you vote? Have you ever voted for AK Party? Why or why not?
- What did 'state' mean to you during and after February 28 process and what does it mean to you now? What is your personal journey as a Muslim citizen?
- What do you think about 'democracy' discourse of AK Party after they came to power? Do you agree with that?
- Islamists in Turkey used to be opposition for decades. Islamists experienced 'power' by AK Party for the first time. What do you think of their accountability? Can they overcome the new phenomenon that is 'power'?

- How does the July 15 failed coup attempt affect your perception of 'state'?
- What does *Yolcu*, which has come a long way, say now?

1.5. Organization of the Study

This study is organized in five chapters. Chapter one, as the introductory chapter, covers a short introduction to the notion of Islamism, the reason of the study, the research question, methodology, and the organization of the study. Chapter two comprises a theoretical framework for the study based on the definition of Islamism, the historical background of the contemporary Islamic thought in Turkey and the periodization of Islamism, which is quite prerequisite to examine the transformation of Islamism. Chapter three consists of intellectual framework of Islamism in which characteristics of Islamist ideology will be discussed and Islamist groups in Turkey will be categorized in order to place *Yolcu* and Islamist group in Samsun in the larger picture. Chapter four includes the research results from the comparison of the terms and concepts frequently stated in 81 issues from 1997 to 2017, and also from in-depth interviews with founding members/writers of the magazine to provide valuable data for the reasons of the transformation. As a conclusion, chapter five aims to examine the levels of the transformation, which is the result of this study, emphasizes some problematic areas of studying Islamism in Turkey and future projects.

After all, it is necessary to give to the reader now the background information about Islamism in Turkey. Therefore, the next chapter will concentrate on the theoretical framework of Islamism and periodization of Islamist movement, which here “means a general mobilization people around cultural, political, and social issues that are presented and interpreted through an Islamic idiom”⁵⁶ in Turkey.

⁵⁶ White, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics*, 6.

CHAPTER II

TRANSFORMATION OF ISLAMISM IN TURKEY

2.1. Being 'Islamist' in Turkey: A summary of a multifaceted portrayal

"Hayatının otuz senesini, ahlakı en ziyade tahrip eden müstebid bir idare altında geçirmiş olan bizler, bu sayede hür insanlar, faziletli, iffetli ve doğru vatandaşlar sırasına gireceğimizi ümit etmiştik."⁵⁷

Since concepts and experiences are two inseparable parts of human history, the history of Islamism in Turkey has been gone along with the effort naming transformation of the Ottoman intellectual class and then modernization of the political units of the Ottoman Empire. Then, it continued by the contribution of transformative Muslim thinkers and the Islamist magazines in modern Turkey. The journey of naming 'Islamism' is illustrative to comprehend transformation of the notion, as well., Although the history and birth of Islamism can be traced back to the Young Ottomans,⁵⁸ the new intellectual movement defined by different names during the late Ottoman period. The concept was coined after 60s.⁵⁹

The 'new concept'⁶⁰ was called as *İttihad-ı İslam* (Unity of all Muslims) and Pan-Islamism, which is a French-origin term declared by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh in the end of the 19th century.⁶¹ The influence of the pan movements of Germans and Slavs in the time showed up first in the texts written by the Young Ottomans in the late 1860s.⁶² "By underlining the concept of the sultan-caliph, Pan-Islamism aimed to deter European powers from attacking the empire as

⁵⁷ Said Halim Paşa, *Buhranlarımız ve Son Eserleri* (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2011), 56.

⁵⁸ The new Ottoman intellectual elite appeared in 1908.

⁵⁹ Mümtaz'er Türköne, *Siyasi İdeoloji Olarak İslamcılığın Doğuşu* (İstanbul: Etkileşim Yayınları), 107.

⁶⁰ Means the Islamist thinking here.

⁶¹ D. Mehmet Doğan, "İslamcılık: Bir Adlandırma Meselesi," 120.

⁶² Burhanettin Duran, "Transformation of Islamist Political Thought in Turkey from the Empire to the Early Republic (1908-1960): Necip Fazıl Kısakürek's Political Ideas" (PhD diss., Bilkent University, 2001), 146.

well as to forge a unity within the Ottoman Empire that might resist the inroads of further European penetration and arrest the internal forces of disintegration.”⁶³

Islamism refers to the transformation of the Muslim population in the Muslim territories, and in particular, of their understanding of Islam in the modern times. The impact of the project of modernization was so dramatic and transformative to the extent that it forced Muslims to find novel ways of explanations and answers to the new conditions and questions. It was Ziya Gökalp who first used the term of ‘Islamism’ in 1913 to describe the ideas of Ahmet Naim. Nonetheless, Ahmet Naim whom Gökalp called as ‘Islamist’ objected to the label.⁶⁴ In the same manner, ‘Islamism’ was not adopted among Islamists until 1960s, during which radical ideological movements within the country emerged or became popular. Moreover, the well-known figures of Islamism such as Namık Kemal, Said Halim Paşa, Ahmet Naim, Mehmet Akif, Necip Fazıl, Sezai Karakoç and the others, preferred not to call themselves as Islamist.⁶⁵ It would not be wrong to say that ‘Islamism’ and ‘being an Islamist’ has been a label, and consequently some of the Islamist groups in Turkey did not adopt it.⁶⁶ The terms such as Pan-Islamism, *İslamiler*, *İttihad-ı İslam* are used to describe the phenomenon until 1960s. One may ask, no doubt, that whether or not ‘Islamism’ is a correct translation of *İttihad-ı İslam* or Pan-Islamism and whether or not it intends to be so. It is a significant question needed to ask here. Since political, religious and intellectual circumstances are dramatically different before and after the creation of modern Turkey, especially before and after abolition of the Caliphate in 1924, it is necessary have a different classification and periodization in order to better describe the Islamist mobilization in Turkey. I will attempt to find some answers or insights to answer this question in the coming sections. Prior to this, it is of importance to make a clear definition what Islamism is.

⁶³ Duran, “Transformation of Islamist Political Thought in Turkey from the Empire to the Early Republic (1908-1960): Necip Fazıl Kısakürek’s Political Ideas,” 146.

⁶⁴ D. Mehmet Doğan, “İslamcılık: Bir Adlandırma Meselesi”, 126.

⁶⁵ D. Mehmet Doğan, “İslamcılık: Bir Adlandırma Meselesi”.

⁶⁶ Kenan Çağan, *Münevverden Entellektüele: Modernleşme, İslâmıcılık ve Yerlilik* (İstanbul: Tezkire Yayıncılık, 2015), 50.

2.2. The Definition of Islamism

Defining Islamism in Turkey is a challenging issue. Oftentimes it depends on a writer's perspective and which parameters s/he is using to explain the concept. There exists two core approaches to Islamism in Turkey, one secular and the other, an Islamists' approach. The secular approach emerged after the formation of the Republic and the emergence of the new secular elites. The works on Islamism by Tarık Zafer Tunaya, Şerif Mardin, Niyazi Berkes and Nilüfer Göle are to be mentioned in this category. Tarık Zafer Tunaya, one of the first to write on the subject, examined Islamism by underlining a clear distinction between 'religion' and 'politics', which makes his stand secular. According to mainstream interpretation of Islam, such a distinction can hardly be made, for Islam intends to organize all the aspects of the life. Islam seeks to cover all the aspects of human life, not just 'spiritual' matters but also 'mundane' affairs of this world.⁶⁷ Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h.), in his practice, dealt with all the aspects of life. He preached not only the true belief and spiritual practices but also was interested and gave advices on morality, economy, and politics. In other words, he served as the best role model for all the Muslims.⁶⁸

Tunaya employs historically much-criticized notions such as 'decline', 'progress', and backwardness, also known as the 'decline paradigm'⁶⁹ in order to examine Islamism. According to him, Islamism was the strongest and the most influential among ideological movements in the late Ottoman period.⁷⁰ He claims that Islamism is both an ideology and a political movement, which targets politics as a goal. In addition, he states that the main concern of Islamism is the idea of "returning back" to Islamic rules, since the decline of Ottoman administration was linked to non-Islamic policies and implementations by the Islamist intellectuals.⁷¹ He was one of the writers who

⁶⁷ Qur'an includes ayahs not only about spirituality and worship but also about social, economic, and legal codes. Surah Al-Hujurat can be an example of 'social', Surah Al-Baqarah can be an example of 'economic' and 'legal codes' for the betterment of the society.

⁶⁸ Muhammed Hamidullah, *İslâm Peygamberi* (İstanbul: Beyan Yayınları, 2017), 25.

Said Halim Paşa, *Buhranlarımız ve Son eserleri*, 185.

⁶⁹ Jane Hathaway, "Problems of Periodization in Ottoman History: The Fifteenth through the Eighteenth Centuries," *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* Vol. 20, No. 2 (Fall 1996), 25-31

⁷⁰ Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *İslamcılık Akımı* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2003), 1-4.

⁷¹ Tunaya, *İslamcılık Akımı*, 2.

explained Islamism through the myth of '*irtica* (reaction) and *mürteci* (reactionist)'.⁷² What differentiates this group of writers are their secular standpoint as well as their use of artificial terminology such as '*irtica*' (reaction) and '*türban*'⁷³ instead of '*başörtüsü*' (headscarf), which were rarely preferred and used by Islamists. Although most of the Turkish scholars have been influenced by the ideology of the Republican establishment and perceived the Turkish modernization as an engine for "reformation" and Westernization against a recalcitrant and "reactionary" traditional Islamic society⁷⁴ until the mid-1980s, some other intellectuals "such as Nilüfer Göle, İsmail Kara, Şerif Mardin, and Mete Tunçay have challenged this view, arguing that Islamic social movements are central agents for promoting a democratic and pluralistic society and that the Turkish example holds long-term promise for the rest of the Muslim world as well."⁷⁵

The second approach adopted by Islamists themselves appeared mostly after the 60s. Prior to referring to the views of Islamists on the matter, it should be noted here that it is necessary to make a sub-classification here and to study the Islamists into two groups. The first is the Islamist philosophers/poets who inspired the Islamist thinking and the second group is those who have writings on Islamism in Turkey. Nurettin Topçu, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, Sezai Karakoç, Rasim Özdenören, and İsmet Özel should be counted among the names that influenced and pioneered Islamism in Turkey. On the other hand, Ali Bulaç, Yasin Aktay, Hulusi Şentürk, Yıldız Ramazanoğlu, Cihan Aktaş and İsmail Kara are significant authors, all of whom penned valuable analyses of Islamism in Turkey. Of all these names, İsmail Kara deserves a special emphasis here for constituting a wider field of research and for his rich contribution to the literature on Islamism in Turkey. The main concern of these authors has been to understand and theorize a religion-based ideology challenged by modernity in a country administrated with secular principles to govern Muslim population.

⁷² Yücel Bulut "Türkiye'de İslamcılık ve Tercüme Faaliyetleri," in *Türkiye'de İslamcılık Düşüncesi ve Hareketi: Sempozyum Tebliğleri*, ed. İsmail Kara and Asım Öz (İstanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi, 2013), 341.

⁷³ Hijabi women in Turkey usually prefer to use '*başörtüsü*' instead of '*türban*'.

⁷⁴ M. Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 4.

⁷⁵ Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, 4.

There are several definitions of Islamism in Turkey. According to Karpaz Islamism is “a new and modern ideology wrapped in traditional religious garb”.⁷⁶ According to Ali Bulaç, Islamism means a dream for establishing of a new ‘world’, which is compatible with spiritual, moral, cultural and social values of Islam. It is an outcome of the ‘modern world’ and it has a ‘modernist mission’ even though it seems paradoxical. Islamists are, in that sense, the political name of those who “rethink” of Islam under material and social conditions of the modern world.⁷⁷ Yasin Aktay, on the other hand, develops a wider approach to analyze Islamism and relates it to political behavior. Any composition made by a Muslim in which Islam designates the core of political praxis can be called as Islamism according to him.⁷⁸ Salman Sayyid’s definition of Islamism has also been also used to define the concept in the writings on Islamism in Turkey.⁷⁹ For him, Islamism is not a specific ideology, in the sense of being a set system of beliefs and values. It is neither derived from Islam nor turning religion into an ideology. Rather, Islamism is a discourse that seeks to re-center Islam within the public sphere of Muslim communities.⁸⁰ In other words, Islamism is a political movement, which asserts that Islam is practical religion and has to be at the center to organize the political, social, cultural and economic aspects of life.⁸¹ According to Cihan Aktaş, Islamism is a strong historical wave/flow that questions both religious understanding and life-styles, and modernity while referencing religious sources.⁸² According to the article written by Bünyamin Bezci and Nebi Miş, Islamism is a contemporary form of connection with the world without secularization.⁸³ Islamism has been also defined as Islamic Revivification Movement in Turkey.⁸⁴

⁷⁶ Karpaz, *The Politicization of Islam*, 16.

⁷⁷ Ali Bulaç, “İslam’ın Üç Siyaset Tarzı veya İslamcıların Üç Nesli”, in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: İslamcılık*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), 50-51.

⁷⁸ Yasin Aktay, “Sunuş,” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: İslamcılık*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), 18.

⁷⁹ Aktay, “Sunuş,” 18. Sunar, “İslamcılığı Konumlandırmak: Genel Bir Giriş,” 2.

⁸⁰ Salman Sayyid, *Hilafeti Hatırlamak* (İstanbul: Vadi Yayınları, 2017), 33-34.

⁸¹ Sunar, “İslamcılığı Konumlandırmak: Genel Bir Giriş,” 2.

⁸² Cihan Aktaş, *Eksik Olan Artık Başka Bir Şey: İslamcılık* (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2016), 23.

⁸³ Bünyamin Bezci, and Nebi Miş, “İslamcılığın Dönüşümünü Tartışmak: İslamcılığın Dört Hali ve Muhafazakârlaşmak,” *Bilgi* 24 (Summer 2012): 7.

⁸⁴ Vahdettin Işık, “Muhafazakâr Yahut Reddiyecî Okuma Arasında İslamcılığı Yeniden Düşünmek,” in *“Bir Başka Hayata Karşı”: 1980 Sonrası İslamcı Dergilerde Meseleler, Kavramlar ve İsimler*, Vol. 2, ed. Lütfi Sunar (Konya: Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2019), 19.

In addition to all, there is an extensive conceptualization of Islamism in the writings of İsmail Kara. Kara constitutes his conceptualization of Islamism through its reciprocal relation with the modernization process from the end of 18th century until today. While taking the issue out of the dichotomy of modernity-religion, this study will mainly focus on his definition of Islamism.

Islamism is a collective term for the various political, intellectual, and scholarly efforts and inquiries, predominantly activist and eclectic in nature, that have aimed to “return” Islam as a whole (in terms of belief, formal worship, morality, philosophy, politics, law, etc.) to its dominant position in (Muslim) life, to civilize and unite Muslims and the Islamic world, secure their development, and free them from Western imperialism, their cruel and despotic rulers, exploitation, slavish imitation, and false belief.⁸⁵

As he asserts in his book on Islamism, the history of modernization in the Ottoman Empire and Muslim societies is primarily linked to military defeats and colonialism, and secondarily to orientalist missionary movements. Islamism in Turkey has to be considered by through the modernization movement and the socio-political influences of the western powers.⁸⁶ Since Islamism has a kind of ‘hate-love’ relation with modernity, it is somehow sensible to say that the ‘hate-love’ interaction caused doubled discourse and praxis. On one hand, Islamic principles have been introduced as sources of progress; on the other hand, some principles that might be perceived as an obstacle against the modernization have been re-interpreted or ignored in order to religiously justify the process.⁸⁷

The approaches to Islamism in Turkey also require a thematic classification within itself according to religion-modernity dilemma. The first approach analyzed the concept based on the ‘conflict’ between ‘modernity’ and ‘religion’ in general and the Kemalist elites who are ‘modernists’ and Islamists or religious groups who are ‘reactionists’ in specific. Having a positivist perspective, the writings of Bernard Lewis, Tarık Zafer Tunaya, Niyazi Berkes and Feroz Ahmad seem to epitomize the approach in this aspect since the history of the Turkish modernization has been perceived as a

⁸⁵ İsmail Kara, *Türkiye’de İslamcılık Düşüncesi: Metinler Kişiler*, expanded 4th ed., vol. 1 (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2011), 17.

⁸⁶ Kara, *İslamcıların Siyasi Görüşleri 1: Hilafet ve Meşrutiyet*, 19.

⁸⁷ Kara, *İslamcıların Siyasi Görüşleri 1: Hilafet ve Meşrutiyet*, 20.

black-and-white phenomenon and explained in ideological and reductionist way based on the concepts of 'modern' and 'reaction'.⁸⁸ In contrast to it, the second approach perceives the Ottoman and Turkish modernization as a dialectical process and considers complexity of the religion-modernity interaction. Taking the phenomenon out of 'reactionary' dilemma, the new approach concentrates on the adaptation of the religious groups with the modern conditions by emphasizing 'continuity'. In addition, this approach, which is mainly constructed around the notion of adaptation, does not disclaim the philosophical incompatibility of Islam with modernity and secular principles. Rather, it does not gloss over the dramatic effects of the creation of the Republic on the adaptation of 'Islamism' with modernization.. 'Modernization' and 'Islamization' have been studied as outcomes of the secularization process, which are transforming each other.⁸⁹ The works of Kemal H. Karpat, Şerif Mardin, Eric Jan Zürcher, İsmail Kara, Ahmet Davutoğlu, Yasin Aktay and Nurullah Ardiç illustrate this view.⁹⁰

Having attempted to define Islamism, it is necessary now to outline briefly the history of Islamism to understand present-day status of the Islamist groups in Turkey through examining its background.

2.3. A Brief History of Islamism

Islamism, which appeared after a political and intellectual crisis within the Ottoman Empire, has had several phases. It is highly significant to touch upon periods of Islamism in order to fully study the transformation. There is not much attempt to periodize the history of Islamism in Turkey. This study will be based on combination of two works of periodization.

1. The Period Of *İttihad-ı İslam* (1870-1908): The period of *İttihad-ı İslam* is important in terms of the concept of Islamism's being formed. Firstly, military defeats faced by

⁸⁸ Nurullah Ardiç, "Türk Sekülerleşmesi İncelemelerinde Paradigma Değişimine Doğru," *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, Cilt 6, Sayı 11, 2018, 595-599.

⁸⁹ Ardiç, "Türk Sekülerleşmesi İncelemelerinde Paradigma Değişimine Doğru," 599-609.

⁹⁰ Ardiç, "Türk Sekülerleşmesi İncelemelerinde Paradigma Değişimine Doğru." Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, 4.

the Ottoman Empire opened a new road and led the state members to think of copying Western techniques to cover 'deficiency' up. A vital question also emerged. Is it only technique to take or does technique come with its own philosophy/mentality? This dilemma sparked off an intense intellectual debate. The first disputes that will be connected to Islamism later, were primarily on imitation of non-Muslim, conflict between religion and science, attire, foreign⁹¹ teacher, foreign language and modern schooling. In addition, some of these topics are still being discussed today in terms of Islamism. The Hatt-i Sharif of Gülhane (1839) and The Edict of Reform (1856) are of vital importance since these two rescripts took the reform debates to the legal areas, such as law, political thought, structure of the Empire, administrations, rights and freedoms, equality and system of government. During such a turbulent period of history, the idea of *ittihad-ı İslam* came up in order to conserve the political unity of Muslims.⁹²

2. The Period of Islamism (1908 – 1924): Although Islamism in Turkey dates back to late 18th century, the first Islamic figures showed up in the period of Islamism such as Namık Kemal, Ahmet Midhat Efendi and Ziya Paşa. These figures were not only important Islamists, but also major nationalists and Westernizers.⁹³ The relationship between Islamists and Sultan Abdulhamid II in this period since Islamist intellectuals; members of religious institution (*ilmiye*) and religious orders were almost entirely against Sultan Abdulhamid II's rule. This period is called 'the period of Islamism' for two reasons. One is that it was an active period in terms of public debates. Islamist thought enjoyed a noticeable place in public discourse through the writers and influential publishing houses. Secondly, this period is known as Islamists' being drawn together with political system.⁹⁴ Although most of the Islamists stood against the Sultan-caliph, it was a time when Sultan Abdulhamid II's understanding of modernization and Islamists' effort for Islamization were in line.⁹⁵ For most Islamists,

⁹¹ 'Foreign' here mostly comprises non-Muslim.

⁹² Kara, "Türkiye'de İslamcılık Düşüncesi ve Hareketi Üzerine Notlar", 22-23.

⁹³ Ismail Kara, "A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey," *Sophia Journal of Asian, African, and Middle Eastern Studies*, No. 35 (2017), 139.

⁹⁴ Kara, "A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey," 140.

⁹⁵ Karpas, *The Politicization of Islam*, 16.

the idea of modernization went hand in hand with the idea of Islamization. At the same time, Sultan Abdulhamid II's understanding of Islam and morality (*ahlak*) was quite close to that of Islamists, as seen in his religious and educational policies, especially in the textbooks published at the time. The period was also rich in terms of newspapers and journals. Islamists' strong tie with publishing/magazines began in this era.⁹⁶ "These publications also exemplify two divergent trends: one toward a modern and secular approach, and the other toward a conservative and traditional one."⁹⁷ It is worth to note here that the second period till the abolition of caliphate in 1924, the Islamist thought in Turkey would never again reach enormous scope, degree of perspective, or intellectual heights.⁹⁸

Lütfi Sunar suggests a different periodization and marks 1924 as a milestone. The era up to that point is the 'Beginning' period of Islamism, according to him. The Islamists in that period, 'the first generation' of Islamism, constituted the basis of the Islamist thought giving much thought to both 'Islam' and 'progress'. They sought to challenge the assumption that Islam is to blame for 'backwardness'. Therefore, they specifically concentrated on the history of the Islamic civilization and its brightness. Nevertheless, it was not an intellectually homogenous period. Although Mehmet Akif was critical to the phenomenon of 'technic' since it has strong ties with Western values, Said Halim Paşa thought of transferring the 'Western' knowledge through synthesis based on the basis of Islam.⁹⁹

3. The Period of Conservative Nationalism (1924 – 1960): This period is of vital importance for Islamist thought (being forced) to transform or to be able to exist in modern Turkey after the Republican regime was formed. There are two turning points in this period that had social and political impacts on the coming decades in Turkey. These are the Lausanne peace process, the closure off the first parliament, and three critical laws were passed on 3 March 1924: The abolition of caliphate, the unification of Education Law (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat*), and the closure of the Ministry of

⁹⁶ Kara, "Türkiye'de İslamcılık Düşüncesi ve Hareketi Üzerine Notlar," 24-25.

⁹⁷ Kara, "A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey," 141.

⁹⁸ Kara, "A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey".

⁹⁹ Sunar, "İslamcılığı Konumlandırmak: Genel Bir Giriş," 8.

Religious Affairs and Pious Endowments (*Şeriye ve Evkaf Vekaleti*). In addition, there was another fateful closure in 1925 that is the closure of the *tekkes* and the passage of the Law for the Restoration of Order (*Tahrir-i Sükun Kanunu*).

From 1924 onward, publishing houses owned by Islamists were closed down and they were banned from expressing their thoughts. The state intervened more and more in the religious sphere; Religious education was repressed at every level, and teachers fled or went into hiding.¹⁰⁰ Respected religious figures that spoke out against the reforms were exiled or executed. In addition to all, “Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*) was established in place of erstwhile ministry, but despite its ostensible purpose of offering services of a religious nature, it functioned more to control and transform Turkish religious culture in line with the demands of the state.”¹⁰¹

This phase is called conservative nationalism because Islamists, under the harsh political conditions of the single-party period, found a place for themselves under the umbrella of conservatism and nationalism. It was not possible to demonstrate Islamist tendencies until 1970s. Islamism, as a legitimate term and both historically and ideologically substantial movement came only to be recognized only after 1970’s. For that reason, the best-known figures of the period, Nurettin Topçu, Necip Fazıl and Sezai Karakoç, were called conservative nationalists than Islamists. Such problematic descriptions confuse the attempts to make proper classifications within Islamism. Since Islamism has had several waves and contains marks of other ideologies of modern world such as conservatism, nationalism, socialism, liberalism and Kemalism, a detailed and proper classification within Islamism is necessary.

Apart from other forms of nationalism in Turkish history, specifically state nationalism, which mostly emphasizes on the pre-Islamic civilizations of Anatolia, and ethno-nationalism, with its prominence on the Turkish race.¹⁰² Conservative-nationalist discourse in that era articulated itself through history, highlighting

¹⁰⁰ Kara, “A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey,” 142.

¹⁰¹ Kara, “A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey,” 143.

¹⁰² Kara, “A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey”.

importance and 'greatness' of Ottoman history and sultan-caliphs, in order to justify 'religion'. This was like two faces of the same coin. Turkish republican ideology intended to eliminate religion through the obliteration of the past and tradition. In response to this, conservative nationalism used history, historical figures and heroes to defend religion and to critique the republican ideology. So, the phenomena of history, tradition, Islam, Muslimness and the republican ideology were used as common ground by the two sides in order to justify their ideological standpoints. Furthermore, it is worthy to state here that this mode of opposition was not radical, but relatively soft and indirect.¹⁰³

According to Sunar, followed the "beginning" are the periods of "silence" (1924-1945) and "recovery" (1945-1960). Lutfi Sunar suggests a different periodization and marks 1924 as a milestone. The era up that point is the 'Beginning' period of Islamism according to him. During the years between 1924 and 1945, Islamists in Turkey were subjected to oppression and intellectual suppression. Therefore, 'silence' has been the characteristics of the period until multi-party system.¹⁰⁴ With the transition to the multi-party system in 1945, Islamists had relatively more space and freedom for publishing their ideas. Islamists in this period were more concerned with society and Muslim individuals than state. In a way, they had to face the reality of 'nation-state' and admit the Republic. The Islamists were not government officials anymore and the biggest concern for Islamists was to build a new Islamic identity.¹⁰⁵

In addition, the first Islamist magazines of Islamists groups in the modern Turkey emerged in this period. These were *Hareket* (Action) published by Nurettin Topçu and *Büyük Doğu* (The Great East) published by Necip Fazıl Kısakürek. Not only did the magazines dramatically influence the masses but also helped the Islamist figures serve as role models for the Islamic communities and for the Islamist politicians as well.

¹⁰³ Kara, "Türkiye'de İslamcılık Düşüncesi ve Hareketi Üzerine Notlar," 28.

¹⁰⁴ Sunar, "İslamcılığı Konumlandırmak: Genel Bir Giriş," 8.

¹⁰⁵ Sunar, "İslamcılığı Konumlandırmak: Genel Bir Giriş," 9.

Last but not least, the dawn of the multi-party period led to a new era for Muslims in Turkey. Democrat Party (DP) won the first multi-party elections in 1950 by mostly the votes of whose voice had needed a hearing in the halls of the parliament even though the members of the DP came actually from the Republican People's Party (CHP), which had governed the country for more than two decades.¹⁰⁶ Besides, the social change led by industrialization and migration to the urban cities in 1960s and 70s would bring about a dramatic change in Muslim families and Islamic communities. It would also lead another wave, which needed an Islamist mobilization in the cities. Thus, Islamism has entered a new phase during which it would be more visible, radical and ideological than ever.

4. The Period of Radical and Intellectual Islamism (1960-1980): This era is key in terms of visibility of Islamists in social and political arena in Turkey. Even though political change in the previous period had a negative effect on the Turkish Muslims and minimalized their relation with other Muslims from Egypt, the Indian subcontinent, Iran, North Africa, and the Caucasus. Islamists in this period has formed their own interpretation of 'Islamism' under the 'new' circumstances. Turkey had inside and outside interactions in this era that would primarily affect the Turkish Muslims and led them to give birth to a new understanding of Islam that is radical, ideological, demanding, having a strong voice and no tie with the Ottoman past. There are two key reasons for phenomenon. One is the first military coup in 1960. The execution of Adnan Menderes, the prime minister had a powerful influence on Turkey at the national and international level. Having developed the discourse on *İrtica* (reaction) by the Kemalist elites was "always one of the most important justifications for these military interventions, which shows just how focused the coup actors and their policies were on the religious sphere."¹⁰⁷ From 1960 onward, Islamists in Turkey began to face an attention-grabbing relation with the coups. On one hand, Islamists mostly had to lapse into silence or had to develop a silent disobedience against the ruling ideology. In other words, the coups crippled the 'awakening' of Islamist movements in Turkey. On the other hand, the circumstances after the coups pushed

¹⁰⁶ Kara, "A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey," 145-46.

¹⁰⁷ Kara, "A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey," 147.

Islamists to transform, and find some other ‘proper’ ways to express their identity within a secular state. Kara points out that, “In a somewhat counterintuitive fashion, these military interventions historically went hand in hand with the revivification of Islamist movements, or at least helped drive these movements into new periods of development.”¹⁰⁸

Second factor to point is the external influences on Islamists in Turkey, mainly came through the translated books from several Muslim organizations such as Muslim Brotherhood, Jamaat-e-Islami, particularly the books of well-known figures, Sayyid Qutb¹⁰⁹ and Maududi.¹¹⁰ Such a trend, opening up to new ideas from the other parts of the world, is by no means peculiar to the Islamist movement, but could also be observed in the other ideological movements in Turkey. As a matter of fact, the phenomenon of ‘translation’ has been one of the vital components of civilizations.¹¹¹ The translations, in that sense, had a great impact on the religious culture, the religious publishing and new understanding of the religion-state relations in this period. As a consequence, the new generation of Islamists at the time dissociated themselves from the conservative-nationalists. From a historical and sociological perspective, the second generation of Islamists developed a distinct understanding from their predecessors.¹¹² One of prominent characteristics of this ‘new’ Islamism was having a different view of religion and aiming to return to the original sources of Islam, the Qur’an and Sunnah.¹¹³ Even though the ‘new’ Islamism was not a monolithic entity, there are some common features needed to be touched upon. This was Islamism with a new Salafi-Wahabi interpretation, which is activist, radical, jihadist, politically demanding, and never hiding its oppositional tendencies. More

¹⁰⁸ Kara, “A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey”.

¹⁰⁹Hamza Türkmen, “Seyyid Kutup Türkiye’de Nasıl Algılandı?,” in *Türkiye’de İslamcılık Düşüncesi ve Hareketi: Sempozyum Tebliğleri*, ed. İsmail Kara & Asım Öz et al. (İstanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi, 2013), 369-378.

¹¹⁰ Abdulhamit Birişik, “Mevdûdî İslamcılığının Türkiye’ye Giriş Biçimi ve Türkiye İslamcılığına Etkisi,” in *Türkiye’de İslamcılık Düşüncesi ve Hareketi: Sempozyum Tebliğleri*, ed. İsmail Kara & Asım Öz et al. (İstanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi, 2013), 379-403.

¹¹¹ Yücel Bulut, “Türkiye’de İslâmıcılık ve Tercüme Faaliyetleri,” in *Türkiye’de İslamcılık Düşüncesi ve Hareketi: Sempozyum Tebliğleri*, ed. İsmail Kara & Asım Öz et al. (İstanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi, 2013), 345.

¹¹² Bulaç, “İslam’ın Üç Siyaset Tarzı veya İslamcıların Üç Nesli,” 49.

¹¹³ Kara, “A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey,” 147.

importantly, “this new Islamism viewed its own history less through the lens of the Turkish or Ottoman past, in both of which it was poorly grounded, and more through that of Egypt, Pakistan and later Iran.”¹¹⁴ It was mostly distant from traditional Islam, Sufism, and the religious orders. Instead, it preferred an emotional, interventionist interpretation of the faith. In addition, it did not hesitate to use the threat of excommunication (*takfir*) or charges of blasphemy (*shirk*) to silence opponents.¹¹⁵

That the second generation of Islamists embraced translations was not something new, but rather has historical roots. The intellectual life in the late Ottoman Empire and in modern Turkey have always benefitted from the translated books written in foreign languages.¹¹⁶ What makes translation in this period distinctive is the relation between the selecting of books to translate and historical disconnection of Islamists with traditional understanding of Islam thanks to secular policies of the early Republican regime. In other words, it was a push for the rising generation of Islamists to find or re-form a new understanding of Islam, which has two dimensions. First, they wanted to prove that Islam is not a religion, preaching only the daily rituals, but it also has political, social, economic and ideological demands, having its own distinct system for each sphere.¹¹⁷ Second, they also sought to prove to the ‘outside world’ that Islam is such a rational religion that is not incompatible with science. After Islamists’ effort to conserve their identity in the previous period, the new form of Islamism can be observed in this period, which has a ‘hate-love’ relation with the modernization. Thanks to the spread of nationalist and socialist ideologies as well as internationalism all over the world, a considerable amount of books written by Muslim figures were translated. Among these authors were Sayyid Qutb from Egypt, Maududi from Pakistan, and later Ali Sheriati, who greatly influenced the Iran Islamic revolution in 1979. In addition to this, translations of the books written by authors such as Rene Guenon, Frithjof Schuon and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, of the traditionalist

¹¹⁴ Kara, “A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey”.

¹¹⁵ Kara, “A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey,” 148.

¹¹⁶ Bulut, “Türkiye’de İslamcılık ve Tercüme Faaliyetleri,” 339-340.

¹¹⁷ Bulut, “Türkiye’de İslamcılık ve Tercüme Faaliyetleri,” 355.

school have reached to the masses. The influence of these writers was of a much different kind.¹¹⁸

The new activist understanding of Islamist movement appeared like a tree without roots in a sense. It needs to be problematized since the new Islamist, activist understanding, which is detached from its historical, traditional background, had difficulties into design and conduct its ideology in a practical way. According to Kara:

The biggest problem confronting these translation movements was that they did not correspond particularly well to Turkey's unique historical experience, its religious and political culture, or the historical and conceptual world of its Muslim public. Because of this, and because of the popularity of these translations, it became quite difficult for Muslims in Turkey to return to their own sources and their own historical experiences, whether pre-1924 or pre-1960.¹¹⁹

In order to comprehend transformation of Islamism and the ideological transformation of the Islamists in Turkey from 1960 until today, we need to refer to terms of 'silence' and 'return'. In the period between 1924-60, there was a 'silence' among Muslims to the secular policies of the Republican ideology, which was perceived as signs of adoption of non-Islamic policies by new activist Islamist understanding. Not only cultural absence of Turkish Muslims' historical experience of Islam prevented new Islamists to observe and notice disobedience and revivification in 'silence', but also it led them to seek for an imaginary solution for existing issues through the idea of 'return' to the original sources of Islam. A new version of Islamism, which was emerging would be obliged to face with two concepts in time. Firstly, Islamists would face their radical and activist character through coups in the coming decades, especially February 28 process, known as a post-modern coup in Turkey. Especially, the February 28 process acutely forced Islamists to re-think of their 'radicalism', indeed. Second confrontation would be about the idea of 'return' since individual interpretation of Islam via glossing the Islamic jurisprudence over, begun to show up.

¹¹⁸ İlhan Kutluer, "Rene Guenon'dan Seyyid Hüseyin Nasr'a: Gelenekselci Ekol'e Ait Öğretilerin Türkiye'ye İntikali ve Algılanış Biçimleri," in *Türkiye'de İslamcılık Düşüncesi ve Hareketi: Sempozyum Tebliğleri*, ed. İsmail Kara & Asım Öz et al. (İstanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi, 2013), 404-405.

¹¹⁹ Kara, "A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey," 148.

Last but not least, another important development in this period was the rise of Necmettin Erbakan and the National Order (*Milli Nizam*) Party (MNP) in the late 60s and 70s. The creation of a political party by Islamists would enable Islamists to emerge in a new field, which they never distinguished from religion for centuries.

5. The Period of Integration (1980-2000): After 1980, Turkey has entered a new phase in its history. It has opened up to the world, which also triggered a cultural integration to the global order of the neoliberal system..¹²⁰ It is also of vital significance since today's Islamists' discourse and socio-political stand of AK Party can be traced back to this period that started with the coup of September 12, 1980. Thanks to indispensable consequences of the coup, ideological groups in Turkey including Islamists are forced to integrate with upcoming neoliberal system by ignoring of each's own consent. "People of all stripes were imprisoned, books banned, publications shut down, and retired generals placed in charge of various different private organizations and foundations. Everyone was forced into a state of quite acquiescence."¹²¹

Economy and change in terminology used by Islamists in socio-political culture are two key areas where the integration has been clearly seen. Wealth, enrichment and institutions have always been vital to Islamists for they wanted all these to serve Muslims, the homeland, and the Islamic world, and to spread Islam and raising new generations of Muslims. It is not a coincidence that the first interest-free banking and conceptualization of 'Islamic Banking' and 'Islamic capitalism' entered Turkey in 80s and enjoyed the support of many Muslim thinkers. ¹²² In addition, the developmentalist rhetoric of Islamists such as "the great Turkey", "heavy industry" including the understanding of "Muslims deserve the best, the most beautiful and the most expensive" is another reason why Islamists in Turkey supported the idea of neoliberal economy. ¹²³ Economy, for Islamists, has been ironically both; the

¹²⁰ Sunar, "İslamcılığı Konumlandırma: Genel Bir Giriş," 11.

¹²¹ Kara, "A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey," 150.

¹²² Kara, "A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey," 153.

¹²³ Ercan Yıldırım, *Neoliberal İslamcılık (1980-2015): İslamcıların Dünya Sistemine Entegrasyonu* (İstanbul: Pınar Yayınları, 2015), 33.

strongest tool for Islamists to revivify their existence and the strongest part of their integration to the capitalist/neoliberal system. Islamists has always and reasonably criticized for their enthusiastic endeavors towards economic integration to the capitalist system.¹²⁴

On the other hand, terminological formation of Islamism that we have today, including the use of the term of Islamism, and the rising visibility of Islamists in public, specifically in politics, date to this period. Most of Islamist intellectuals preferred to take a stand against two things in this period. One is westernization¹²⁵ and secularization process in the form of Kemalism in Turkey, and the second is traditional understanding of Islam.¹²⁶ In order to compete Kemalist ideology Islamists embraced the notions of multiculturalism, pluralism, advocated living together, not marginalizing, and tolerance, instead of terminology of Islamic knowledge.¹²⁷ The characteristic debate in this period has been over the Agreement of Madina¹²⁸ (*Medine Vesikası*), which shows Islamists' emphasis on the pluralistic society.¹²⁹

The rise of the term 'political Islam' and the explicit distinction between the forms of "political", "cultural" or "moderate" Islam would take Muslims from self-modernizing unit to the next, self-liberalizing. The domestic and international circumstances forced Islamist intellectually to choose the 'soft' one. Neologism in intellectual world of Islamists in Turkey has led many to advocate "cultural" or "moderate" Islam in order not to be stigmatized as 'radical' in the form of "political Islam" since it is linked with terrorism, armed struggle, violence, fundamentalism, a rejection of democracy and secularism.¹³⁰ *Refah Partisi* (Welfare Party), which is the first to link its political

¹²⁴ Yıldırım, *Neoliberal İslamcılık*, 203.

¹²⁵ Also refers to modernization here.

¹²⁶ Kenan Çayır, *Türkiye'de İslamcılık ve İslami Edebiyat: Toplu Hidayet Söyleminden Yeni Bireysel Müslümanlıklara* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2008), 6.

¹²⁷ Ercan Yıldırım, *Neoliberal İslamcılık (1980-2015)*, 577.

¹²⁸ It is a social and political agreement reached by the Muslims, the Jews and the polytheist Arabs under the leadership of Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h.) in the city of Madina after a while of the Muslims' migration to the city. For more information, see: <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/medine-vesikasi>.

¹²⁹ Sunar, "İslamcılığı Konumlandırmak: Genel Bir Giriş," 11.

¹³⁰ İsmail Kara, *Müslüman Kalarak Avrupalı Olmak: Çağdaş Türk Düşüncesinde Din Siyaset Tarih Medeniyet* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2017), 38-39.

stance with the religion of Islam, adopting legal pluralism or commonly known as the 'just order' (*adil düzen*) project instead of National Outlook perspective and the creation of AK Party in 2001 with a blurred ideology are the indirect conclusions of the integration period. Here, it would not be wrong to say that this neologism was also a consequence of ideological change in the international arena. Moreover, an intellectual confusion among AK Party founders, the lack of Islamic characterization in intellectual formation of the Party, and more importantly its insistence on 'conservative-democracy' or 'democracy' discourse during the last sixteen years cannot be analyzed without the neologism and intellectual shift that started to take place in this period.

6. The Period of Neo-conservatism: Adaptation to the State and Integration with the Order (2000-): Although the February 28 process is known to cause a social disintegration within the Islamist groups, the roots of the disintegration and discursive change date back to 1980s. The discursive change of Islamists has demonstrated itself frequently through the phenomena of economic liberalism, civil society, participatory democracy and human rights in that sense.¹³¹ Islamism in this period has two dimensions. The first is that the Islamists developed a liberal globalizing discourse in the first decade until 2010, and then a conservative language and discourse have been preferred after 2010.¹³² One of the distinctive features of this period is the adaptation of Islamists to the 'state' and to integrate with the system through the leadership of Erdoğan and AK Party. The July 15 coup attempt and the reaction of the Islamists to the incident has been a good example in that sense.

Having outlined the various periods of the history of Islamism, it is crucial to touch upon the key role of magazines in each period published by Islamist groups in Turkey. Even though the features of the Islamist mobilization differ from one period to another, Islamist groups have always kept their voice up via publications even though the names of the magazines and the pioneering figures have been changeable. *Yolcu*,

¹³¹ Sunar, "İslamcılığı Konumlandırmak: Genel Bir Giriş," 12.

¹³² Sunar, "İslamcılığı Konumlandırmak: Genel Bir Giriş".

as being of one of these magazines, began its life in such atmosphere with a zeal, and also necessity, according to its staff to say their 'words' openly as a response to political circumstances after the February 28 process in 1997. The next chapter will be mentioning acceptances and refutations of the mindset of Islamists in order to demonstrate the intellectual formation of Islamists in general and to introduce the founding writers of the magazine in particular. Then, classification Islamists in Turkey will be touched upon in order place the Islamist group in Samsun within Islamism in Turkey.



CHAPTER III

“FIGHTING FIRE WITH FIRE”: STUDYING ISLAMISM TODAY THROUGH ITS TWIN SISTER MODERNIZATION

3.1. Intellectual frame of Islamism: Assumptions and Refusals

“Are we to create a strong society and then make it a Muslim one, or to create a Muslim society and then make it a strong one?”¹³³

Having explored the periods of Islamism in Turkey, in this chapter, I will examine assumptions and refusals of the Islamist thinking to properly explain the intellectual transformation of today’s Islamists. It is necessary to understand the characteristics of Islamism formed in last two periods that will enable us to grasp sociological and ideological background from which *Yolcu* emerged, and in relation, certain attitudes, approaches and mindset that are adopted by its writers formed. It would not be wrong to say that main subject matters tackled and assumptions made by within the Islamist thought and discourse in Turkey have been closely parallel to those of the other Muslim countries. The main issue for almost all the Muslim populations has been to answer the question of “how to adapt to the process of modernization while remaining Muslim”.¹³⁴ They sought to bring distinctive problems into focus at both the societal level (as an Islamic nation) and at the political level (as an Islamic state).¹³⁵ There are several main assumptions that also keep refusals inside.

The first point that is emphasized by the Islamist thought has been the return-to-the-sources movement.¹³⁶ This significant notion is foundational for the modern Islamist thought. Returning to the sources refers to a certain acknowledgement of Qur’an,

¹³³ İsmet Özel, *Üç Zor Mesele: Teknik, Medeniyet, Yabancılaşma* (İstanbul: TİYO Yayıncılık, 2018), 359.

¹³⁴ Kara, *Müslüman Kalarak Avrupalı Olmak*, 43.

¹³⁵ Kara, *Müslüman Kalarak Avrupalı Olmak*.

¹³⁶ Tunaya, *İslâmcılık Akımı*, 2. Kara, *Müslüman Kalarak Avrupalı Olmak*, 44.

Bulaç, “İslam’ın Üç Siyaset Tarzı veya İslamcıların Üç Nesli,” 59. Şentürk, *İslamcılık*, 111.

Nilüfer Göle, *Modern Mahrem* (İstanbul: Metis yayınları, 2016), 138-139. Bünyamin Bezci, and Nebi Miş, “İslamcılığın Dönüşümünü Tartışmak: İslamcılığın Dört Hali ve Muhafazakârlaşmak,” *Bilgi* 24 (Summer 2012): 7.

the example of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) as the main sources, considering also the time/context in which the Prophet lived. This notion has occurred as an historical approach. “The time of the prophet and the first four caliphs was held up as the sole period in Islamic history that the tenets of the religion were properly followed. This meant that Islam had been misunderstood ever since. Contemporary problems concerning the distinction between “true” Islam and “historical” Islam are also rooted in this turn.”¹³⁷ As a result of the rejection of the history of the Islamic of the Islamic tradition and knowledge by the Islamist thought, Islamists embraced a different interpretation of the religion and its practice. Kara asserts in his article that:

Virtually all of the Islamic sciences underwent a change in terms of their method and the definition, content, and relative hierarchy of their central concepts. The value attributed to the disciplines themselves, the knowledge they produced, and the sources upon which they relied also changed, as did the esteem for the ulema and Islam’s main religious schools (*mezhep*). As part of this process, much was either transformed or jettisoned. One prominent example is the rise of “scientific” exegesis, which strove to connect the verses of the Qur’an to modern scientific theories and findings.¹³⁸

Although the “resources” were used ideally plural here by referring to Qur’an, Sunnah and the first implementation of Islam by the companions of the Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h.), it is substantially meant to be returning to Qur’an in practice. More importantly, Qur’an is re-interpreted in a modern context but not in its entirety, while the other primary sources¹³⁹ have mostly been neglected. Therefore, the movement can also be referred as return-to-the-Qur’an movement.¹⁴⁰

The efforts to re-interpret the main sources of Islam have had a transformative impact on the mindset, terminological hierarchy, and the methodological framework of Islamic knowledge. The refusal of the traditional methods in knowledge also

¹³⁷ Kara, “A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey,” 155.

¹³⁸ Kara, “A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey,” 156.

¹³⁹ There are four sources. Qur’an, Sunnah, Ijma (consensus of Muslim scholars), and Qiyas (the deduction of legal prescription from the Qur’an or Sunnah by analogic reasoning).

¹⁴⁰ M. Suat Mertoğlu, “Kaynaklara Dönüş Hareketi: Selefi Bir Talep Mi, Modern Bir Yöneliş Mi?,” in *Türkiye’de İslamcılık Düşüncesi ve Hareketi: Sempozyum Tebliğleri*, ed. İsmail Kara & Asım Öz et al. (İstanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi, 2013), 148.

brought about confusions and a chaotic scholarly environment while a proliferation of individual interpretations of the religion has been observed.

(...) Others include new efforts to interpret the Qur'an, the revival of debates over sound versus weak hadith, the increasing credibility individuals' authority to interpret the traditional sources of Islam for themselves, a growing hostility to the compartmentalization of Islam within the boundaries of its traditional schools, the emergence of the "New Theology" and the privileged status it accorded to human will, freedom, and reason, and the rise of a new focus in the study of Islamic history on the period of the prophet Muhammad and the first four caliphs to the exclusion of virtually everything else.¹⁴¹

The second point that illustrates the intellectual standpoint of the Islamist thought and helps us understand their mindset is their insistence to highlight the difference between culture and civilization and define the two notions in a certain way. The notion of civilization¹⁴² has been viewed as universal and attributed to only science and technology. Since it is identified as universal and unattached from any cultural and philosophical background, the imitation of it has not been seen problematic. In this sense, the idea of Islamic civilization has been a contra conceptualization among Islamists to be able to respond Western intellectual domination. The idea of Islamic civilization has been discussed by majority of the Muslim intellectuals since the 19th century, but brought to the center of today's Islamic understanding by Sezai Karakoç. Even though there are criticisms¹⁴³ to the notion of "civilization", the "Islamic civilization" has been described as an "alternative modernization" instead of imitation. Furthermore, this conceptualization has been highly referred by AK Party administration in last decade and used as a political tool for both inside politics and discourse of foreign affairs.¹⁴⁴ The concept of "Islamic civilization" is actually an imitation of the Western civilization since philosophy behind each technic is disregarded. The religious and cultural terms, especially those are necessary to justify

¹⁴¹ Kara, "A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey," 156.

¹⁴² Refers to the Western civilization here.

¹⁴³ For more, see: Kemal H. Karpat *The Politicization of Islam*. Nurettin Topçu, *Kültür ve Medeniyet*, İsmet Özel, *Üç Zor Mesele: Teknik, Medeniyet, Yabancılaşma*.

¹⁴⁴ Burhanettin Duran, "Türkiye İslamcılığında Medeniyet Söylemi ve Sezai Karakoç'un Düşüncesi," in *Türkiye'de İslamcılık Düşüncesi ve Hareketi: Sempozyum Tebliğleri*, ed. İsmail Kara & Asım Öz et al. (İstanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi, 2013), 289-290.

the adherence to modernization, had to be refused, re-interpreted or revised for the sake of the notion of the (Islamic) civilization.

It is necessary to open a parenthesis here and briefly touch upon the transformation the Islamic notions. For instance, the notions of “wisdom” (*37 hikmet*) and “satisfaction” (*kanaat*) have undergone a narrowing of the meaning. *Wisdom* described and praised in one of the hadith as follow: “*wisdom* is the lost property of believers, wherever he finds it, then he is most deserving of it.” *Wisdom*, however, has come to denote as the materialization or the technics of the Western modernization in terms of justification of “civilization”. Satisfaction, on the other hand, is interpreted from a capitalistic perspective and has not seen as first priority for a Muslim in everyday practices as before in order to justify the contemporary economic system. It is possible to say that the change of terms used by the Muslims for centuries and their evolution and semantic narrowing is illustrative of today’s understanding of Islam and the disposition of Muslims towards the global system and values.

The third point is concerned with reflecting a new and different understanding of morality and mode of living. This is crucial in terms of analyzing the transformation of the everyday practices of Muslims. This new understanding of morality, like the return-to-the-sources movement, is highly critical of the passivity and servility of an ascetic lifestyle.¹⁴⁵ Rejecting traditional Islamic understanding of morality perceived as “passive” fatalism and referring to individual interpretation of religion, Islamism emphasizes on more active Muslim individuals and societies. “Its lifestyle, in turn, is more visible, and based on human will, reason, and personal determination, with a strong emphasis on personal effort, jihad¹⁴⁶, strength, prosperity, greatness, and fighting fire with fire.”¹⁴⁷ This assumption has brought its rejection within that is the

¹⁴⁵ Kara, İsmail, “A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey,” 158.

¹⁴⁶ Refers to the idea of Jihad in a new sense as a personal quest to conquer one’s baser self rather than the prominence over the idea of jihad as a struggle against the infidel.

¹⁴⁷ Kara, İsmail, “A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey”, 158.

traditional understanding of morality and rejection of Sufism and the religious orders, which have been one of the sources of Islamic knowledge in Turkey for centuries.¹⁴⁸

One of the prominent features of Islamism is the tendency of intervention. Since Islamism promotes visibility and an active participation of Muslims, the notion of intervention corresponds to the desire to direct politics at institutional level and the tendency to Islamize masses at societal level. Therefore, the majority of the Islamists perceived the “silence” of Muslims in the early republican period until 60s as a sign of “obedience”¹⁴⁹ to the Kemalist elites who ruled the country in an “un-Islamic” way. The Islamic visibility and being active have been supported by selected verses of the Qur’an and hadith.¹⁵⁰ This motivation of socio-political revivification would give birth to National Outlook (*Milli Görüş*) movement in 70s, which pioneered the Islamist political mobilization. Some of the members of National Outlook movement would later establish AK Party.

Finally, the views of Islamist with regard to women and family need to be touched upon briefly. This is somehow difficult to write since the complicated nature of the topics involving women and family from an Islamist perspective in such a world, considering rigid dogmas of modernity. Just like the other modernization movements in Turkey, Islamism puts women in the showcase by means of its modernist and activist structure. In other words, ‘woman’ has been the flag of the politicization of Islam.¹⁵¹ While the orientalist discourse has portrayed Muslim/oriental woman as ‘beautiful, passionate, obedient slaves, surrounded by and always under the hungry eye of men’¹⁵², Islamists, with a defensive motivation, sought to free them from this negative stereotype by portraying a modern Muslim woman, wearing headscarf “but” educated¹⁵³, extroverted, employed, and equal to men. She is socially active

¹⁴⁸ For more, see: Mustafa Kara, *Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar Tarihi* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2016). Mahmud Erol Kılıç, *Tasavvufa Giriş* (İstanbul: Sufi Kitap, 2017).

¹⁴⁹ It has a negative connotation here.

¹⁵⁰ “The promotion of the virtue and the prevention of the vice” has been the one the most credited in this sense.

¹⁵¹ Göle, *Modern Mahrem*, 114.

¹⁵² Göle, *Modern Mahrem*, 115. Kara, İsmail, “A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey,” 158.

¹⁵³ Means having university degree.

and confident, well aware of her rights and freedoms. She is “not chained” to home and of course opposed to polygamy.¹⁵⁴ On the contrary, this requires a rejection of a Muslim woman portrayal, which is covered black from head to toe, never leaving the house, “uneducated”¹⁵⁵, subservient to her husband even though one wants to be like and it is religiously not prohibited. On the other hand, the attempts to question women’ position identified by society and tradition have been charged with the label of “feminist” by people.¹⁵⁶ This is a multifaceted dilemma in a sense.¹⁵⁷ Besides, it is also necessary to state here that Islamists in Turkey have preferred a selective modernization when it comes to the issues involving women and have adopted a ‘double discourse’. While visibility and activeness of hijabi women have been advocated by Islamists, they preferred not to challenge, even favored, the traditional view towards women, which advocated the obedience of women to men, be it their father, husband and brother.

3.2. How to place *Yolcu* within Islamism in Turkey?

Islamists correspond, at present, a wide range of groups and communities in Turkey. Islamists can roughly be classified into two groups: The first group refers to those who maintain a traditional understanding and belong to a religious order, community or to a Sufi path, and the second group are those who form an activist mode of living without traditional understanding of Islam. Besides, Islamism in Turkey has some social, political, economic, cultural and religious dimensions. This is manifest when various organizations, such as religious communities and orders, publications and other political organizations are observed.¹⁵⁸ Reflecting the diversity of the movement, Islamism in Turkey might be classified into four groups:

- a) Political Organization(s) like the defunct Welfare Party.

¹⁵⁴ Kara, İsmail, “A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey,” 158.

¹⁵⁵ The essential character of education in Islam is a wider concept than today’s understanding, in which all sciences are linked to the eternity, to the one Creator.

¹⁵⁶ Aktaş, *İslâmcılık*, 95.

¹⁵⁷ Nazife Şişman, “Türk Akademisinin İmkânsız: “Başörtüsünü Anlamak,” in *Türkiye’de İslamcılık Düşüncesi ve Hareketi: Sempozyum Tebliğleri*, ed. İsmail Kara & Asım Öz et al. (İstanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi, 2013), 579-586.

¹⁵⁸ Duran, “Transformation of Islamist Political Thought in Turkey From the Empire to the Early Republic (1908-1960): Necip Fazıl Kısakürek’s Political Ideas,” 12.

- b) Religious Orders (*tarikats*) and communities like several branches of Nakshibendi order and communities of Said Nursi and Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan.
- c) Intellectuals like Nurettin Topçu, Sezai Karakoç and İsmet Özel.
- d) Journals like Sebilürreşad, Hareket, İktibas, Büyük Doğu, Akıncılar, Dergâh, Altınoluk, Barbar, Beyan, Furkan, Yolcu and etc., and independent associations, like IHH and Hüdayi Vakfı.¹⁵⁹

Islamists in Turkey are scattered in various groups, acquired different dimensions, characteristics as well as political theories in Turkey, which can be observed when the magazines produced by the Islamist circles are analyzed.¹⁶⁰ Studying the Islamist magazines and their approach to politics will give the readers clues as to how and why things have changed from past to present. Published in Samsun since 1997, *Yolcu* is one of these Islamist magazines, witnessing some of the key moments and turns in the history of Islamism. It is an independent magazine that does not have any organic connection with any religious community and Sufi order. *Yolcu* not only reflects diversity of the perspectives within the Islamist publications but also indicates the transformation around the phenomenon of the ‘state’ among the Islamist circles in the last 22 years. In the next chapter, I will attempt to analyze the issues of *Yolcu* along with the semi-structured in-depth interviews with the founding members/writers of the magazine in order to explain the characteristics of the transformation of Islamism in Turkey in the last two decades.

¹⁵⁹ Duran, “Transformation of Islamist Political Thought in Turkey From the Empire to the Early Republic (1908-1960): Necip Fazıl Kısakürek’s Political Ideas,” 12.

¹⁶⁰ Çınar, “İslamcı Dergilerde Siyasal Düşüncenin Üretimi,” 183.

CHAPTER IV

FROM REJECTION TO OWNERSHIP: THE STORY OF YOLCU IN SAMSUN

4.1. “No State No Religion”: Studying the Political Codes of Islamism in Turkey Through a Local Example

“Biz bu topraklara geri döndük!”¹⁶¹

Yolcu defines itself as “a magazine of words” (*söz dergisi*) more than a literary or intellectual one. The main theme of the magazine was declared by the Editor as:

The finest of the words has already been said. For us, it is the Revelation; and the words of the Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h.). What we shall do is to say the nearest to that “Very Finest of The Words” we are subject to; to rebuilt and bloom it in our hearts.¹⁶²

Yolcu has had distinctive place among the Islamist magazines in Turkey. This is, firstly, because of that from its inception it has developed a relationship with inmates, attracting a large audience from prisons. It formed this tradition since the very first issue. The magazine has kept a characteristic editorial note in all issues that read “It is free of charge for those who are in prisons and those who are poor!” One motivation for such a note was owing to that they were thousands of political prisoners from different backgrounds and ideologies in prisons, when the magazine was established. The message reached to prisons, a considerable amount of readers, particularly those who were sentenced for their faith and their leftist disposition, in particular members of Dev-Sol or DHKP-C.¹⁶³ The anti-imperialist style of the magazine had made it very compelling for prisoners. Behind the note was in fact an implicit reference to the imprisonment of a famous politician, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, now the President of Turkish Republic, for reciting a poem, the same year *Yolcu* came

¹⁶¹ Respondent 2, interview, 40:00.

¹⁶² “Bizim ana temamız şu: En güzel söz söylenmiştir. Bizim için en güzel söz Vahiydir ve bizim için en güzel söz Hz. Peygamber (S.A.V.)'in sözüdür. Bizim yapacağımız şey, o ‘En Güzel Söz’e yakın sözler söylemek. Muhatap olduğumuz o ‘En Güzel Söz’ü kalbimizde yeniden inşa edip, yeşertmek...” Ömer İdris Akdin, “*Yolcu Dergisi*,” filmed by TRT Haber, last modified November 6, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCDCecAKkM>

¹⁶³ Ömer İdris Akdin, “*Yolcu Dergisi*,” 4:40. Respondent 5, interview, 42:20. Respondent 1, “*Yolcu*,” interview by Ayşenur A. Ayduran, Manisa, January 12, 2017, audio, 1:08:50.

into being in 1997. The note started to appear in the magazine following his imprisonment.¹⁶⁴ Up to the present, the note is still kept. The note, the magazine's anti-capitalist and its having the features of 'underground literature' has contributed its recognition and granted it a distinct place in Turkey. Many letters sent by prisoners were published, and their questions were answered in the section *Yolcu'nun Heybesi*¹⁶⁵ in the issues. *Yolcu'nun Heybesi* lasted until 2006.¹⁶⁶ Later, e-mails began to take place of the readers' letters. The second reason that distinguishes *Yolcu's* from the other magazines is the characteristic design of the first and last pages.¹⁶⁷ Its size, style and photos have been different from many other magazines, including from mainstream Islamist magazines in Turkey. It has been both appreciated and criticized by the readers.¹⁶⁸

According to its writers, publishing *Yolcu* was born from a necessity to develop their stance toward the February 28 post-modern coup and to speak up their 'words' against the oppression and 'comic' implementations during the process.¹⁶⁹ "The 28 February process created a chaotic, dark and in a sense 'comic' atmosphere for all of us" says the editor of the magazine.¹⁷⁰ Therefore, *Yolcu* had been a platform for people to declare their reaction against undemocratic implementations of the time. *Yolcu* has been always known among Islamists for its critical attitude to the February 28 post-modern coup.¹⁷¹

In order to understand the transformation of their ideas, it is quite requisite to get background information about the writers and the magazine's socio-political orientation. Although the second issue of *Yolcu* appeared in January 1998¹⁷², the

¹⁶⁴ Ferhat Kalender, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 53, 2009, 2.

¹⁶⁵ Gençoğlu, "Sözün Coğrafyası," 15:50.

¹⁶⁶ Nevzat Onmuş, "Yolcu'nun Heybesi," *Yolcu*, January-February 2006, 19.

¹⁶⁷ Some examples can be seen at the appendix.

¹⁶⁸ Gençoğlu, "Sözün Coğrafyası," 6:26.

¹⁶⁹ Gençoğlu, "Sözün Coğrafyası," 8:20.

¹⁷⁰ Ömer İdris Akdin, "Yolcu Dergisi," filmed by TRT Haber, last modified November 6, 2018, 3:15. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCDCecAKkM>

¹⁷¹ Naman Bakaç, "28 Şubat Darbesi ve Edebiyat Dergilerinin Tutumu," *Fayrap Dergisi*, March-April 2019, 47-48.

¹⁷² It is officially the second issue but the second issue is agreed as the first one by the cadre, which is titled as "This is Turkey and history is recording!".

founding members had been planning to publish a magazine (*Yolcu*) for many years before.¹⁷³ The February 28 process has played a crucial role for the founding authors; they felt an urge to oppose against unjust and undemocratic policies, and develop ideas in this respect. The seven founding members/writers of the magazine have different familial and professional background. All of them have university degree from different universities. Some are middle-class merchants, some are high school teachers in different cities and some are the directors in the Ministry of Education in Ankara. One is an architect and an ex-Marxist. One is a critical Islamist and activist. One has a private business. One teaches religious studies in high school and the other teaches literature. There is no common professional and familial background so to say, except their post-70s Islamist identity, their friendship in Samsun and their will to stand against unjust implementations of the coup administration in Turkey. All these people came to together and established the magazine to respond the happenings in the country.¹⁷⁴

None of the group members have any sectarian or religious devoutness, nor having a Sufi background. From the inception of the magazine up to today, they always opposed to the idea of belonging any traditional (religious) community during 90s, as well.¹⁷⁵ *Yolcu* has had a universal Muslim language¹⁷⁶ in all its issues, which has declared in the section called *Seyir Defteri*¹⁷⁷. The phrases and the words such as 'Being a Muslim', 'being a human', 'Tawhid', 'freedom', 'justice', 'faith', 'geography', 'conscience', 'virtue' and 'revolution' form the fundamental vocabulary used in *Seyir Defteri*. Khalil Gibran¹⁷⁸ has been a key figure of the magazine. There used to be small quotations from him, usually a small story, placed on the first page in the first thirty

¹⁷³ Respondent 5, interview, 3:20.

Respondent 4, interview, 5:45.

Gençoğlu, "Sözün Coğrafyası," 3:00.

¹⁷⁴ Gençoğlu, "Sözün Coğrafyası," 26:40.

¹⁷⁵ Respondent 2, interview, 40:20.

¹⁷⁶ Being Muslim is the essential component of the identity, which covers other features being 'human', 'Just', 'free', and 'virtuous'.

¹⁷⁷ The introductory part titled 'logbook' is written by the Editor, which gives valuable information about the perspective of the magazine.

¹⁷⁸ Gibran is a Lebanese American poet, philosophical essayist, novelist and artist.

issues until thirty-second one.¹⁷⁹ There are certain figures and resistances from all over the world that are important for the magazine. Khalil Gibran, Mahmoud Darwish¹⁸⁰, Nizar Qabbani¹⁸¹, Pablo Neruda¹⁸², and Malcolm X¹⁸³, F. Garcia Lorca and Blas Infante,¹⁸⁴ and Ali Shariati¹⁸⁵ are the figures often quoted in the magazine. The Palestinian resistance, Andalusia, Africa, indigenous people's resistance in America, and Latin American resistance have influenced the style of *Yolcu* and these movements have been stated in the magazine as a poet or photo or manifesto thanks to *Yolcu*'s emphasis on 'freedom' and 'underground literature'.¹⁸⁶ There is an interesting note in forty-eighth issue, for instance. It says: "Abdullah Gül¹⁸⁷ from Kayseri, M. Ahmadinejad from Iran, H. Chavez from Venezuela, F. Castro from Cuba, Evo Morales from Bolivia, Haled Mishal from Palestine, Haris Slajdzic from Bosnia and Herzegovina, H. Nasrullah from Lebanon, Zapatista I. Marcos from Mexico, Dalay Lama from Tibet, Ahmet Igemberdi from East Turkestan are subscribed to *Yolcu* for free!"¹⁸⁸ Displaying a supranational attitude based on freedom¹⁸⁹ has been the most prominent feature of the magazine. Due to this attitude adopted by the magazine, it has drawn a criticism for adopting a leftist language. The writers strongly rejected this charge. This is part of the language of 'resistance' according to them and is rooted in the Muslim civilization in Anatolian region.¹⁹⁰ According to them, it is a duty of a Muslim to stand with the oppressed regardless of their ethnicity or religion.

¹⁷⁹ See the first page of the first thirty two issues. Available at: <http://katalog.idp.org.tr/dergiler/194/yolcu>

¹⁸⁰ *Yolcu*, 13, 2000. *Yolcu*, 25, 2003. *Yolcu*, 26, 2003. *Yolcu*, 31, 2005. *Yolcu*, 37, 2006. *Yolcu*, 51, 2008.

¹⁸¹ *Yolcu*, 18, 2001. *Yolcu*, 22, 2002. *Yolcu*, 23-24, 2002. *Yolcu*, 37, 2006. *Yolcu*, 52, 2009.

¹⁸² *Yolcu*, 26, 2003. *Yolcu*, 40, 2006.

¹⁸³ *Yolcu*, 7, 1999. *Yolcu*, 13, 2000. *Yolcu*, 17, 2001. *Yolcu*, 34, 2005.

¹⁸⁴ *Yolcu*, 54, 2009. *Yolcu*, 70, 2012.

¹⁸⁵ *Yolcu*, 20, 2002. *Yolcu*, 25, 2003. *Yolcu*, 36, 2006. *Yolcu*, 40, 2007. *Yolcu*, 63, 2011.

¹⁸⁶ Gençoğlu, "Sözün Coğrafyası," 9:20.

Respondent 5, interview, 0:50.

¹⁸⁷ Abdullah Gül became the President of Turkey in that time although the secular elites tried to hinder the process.

¹⁸⁸ Anonym, "Dipnot," *Yolcu*, 48, 2008, 19.

¹⁸⁹ Freedom does not refer to a liberal understanding but a Muslim understanding basen on the principle of Tawhid.

¹⁹⁰ Gençoğlu, "Sözün Coğrafyası," 9:35.

The 'first'¹⁹¹ issue of *Yolcu* was published in 1995 with the aim of speaking up. The first issue included philosophical and literary articles, and published in ordinary sizes, smaller than the one published today. A significant moment occurred for the members of the magazine during their attendance at a conference, entitled the Symposium of Islamic Thought in Turkey, in Trabzon. The National Anthem was recited in the ceremony of beginning, a custom still followed in almost every official event in Turkey. Part of this custom is an unwritten rule that when the National Anthem is recited, people stand up. Yet it is not a legal obligation. The representatives of *Yolcu* hesitated to stand up and kept sitting while the anthem started to be recited.¹⁹² At the event, when Mehmet Bekaroğlu, now being a MP and member of Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP), provocatively targeted the representatives of *Yolcu* and the press rushed to take their photo.¹⁹³ The incident was heard by many for the headlines next day was dominated by it. The five members of the magazine were jailed for six months. The imprisonment deeply affected their lives, causing them suffering from the lack of consistency in the coming decades due to the imprisonment, said a writer of the magazine.¹⁹⁴ After the incident, *Yolcu* had to have a break from very beginning. In 1997, a new and more professional cadre published the second issue, which is treated as the first issue of the magazine, with a different and romantic language in today's size.

The incident that I mentioned above is important for two reasons. Firstly, it illustrates the radical Islamist approach to the 'state' during 90s, which were rejectionist and reactive towards the symbols of the 'state'. Secondly, it may give the reader a hint about the political stance represented by the writers to the bureaucratic ceremonies in reaction to the entity of the 'state' before the transformation. Politics, specifically the notion of 'state', represents one of the core themes of the transformation of Islamism. The transformation of Islamism is highly related to their realignment regarding politics and the notion of state.

¹⁹¹ The second issue is officially accepted as the first issue.

¹⁹² The reason can be both that they hesitated to join the ceremony in order to protest the state-wide custom or thinking that it is religiously wrong. It was an Islamist reaction of that time.

¹⁹³ Respondent 5, interview, 1:25.

¹⁹⁴ Respondent 5, interview, 15:37.

There are also certain names that have been often quoted in the magazine. Some of these names include Ali Şeriatî, İsmet Özel, Nurettin Topçu, Cahit Zarifoğlu, Sezai Karakoç, Nuri Pakdil, Cemil Meriç, Alija İzzetbegoviç, Nietzsche, Mustafa İslamoğlu, İbn Atâullah El-İskenderî, and Abdulkâdir-i Geylânî. There are also some specific and famous figures whose poems and writings were published in the magazine. Among these figures are Ahmet Turan Alkan, Murat Kapkiner, Bünyamin Doğruer, M. Önal Mengüşoğlu and Atasoy Müftüoğlu. Although *Yolcu* does not belong to any group or religious or Sufi order, have managed to be periodically published. Being a dervish has been praised in the magazine.

The transformation of *Yolcu* is not sudden but slow one, as it has been the case for Islamism in Turkey. This chapter will cover 81 (eighty one) issues published between the years 1997 and 2017. There are three periods of time that this chapter will mainly concentrate on in order to examine the transformation comparatively. The magazine had a break¹⁹⁵ after thirtieth issue¹⁹⁶ in 2004. The first time interval covers the years between 1997 and 2004. The second period starts the following year. The second time interval covers six years from 2005 to 2010, including 2010. The year of 2010 is significant for having a constitutional referendum in September 2010 in Turkey. It was a milestone in modern Turkish politics since it covers several constitutional amendments of the existing constitution. On April 27 in 2007, chief of the general staff, Yaşar Büyükanıt published a press release on the website of The Turkish General Staff. The statement was called as 'e-coup' (*e-muhtıra*) The statement alleged that laicism was under threat. The statement was released during the election of an ex-Islamist, Abdullah Gül, as the President. The secularist elites had campaigned hard against the election of Abdullah Gül as president and was against having a first lady with a headscarf. AK Party immediately called a snap election and won it in July and Abdullah Gül was elected as the President in August 2007. A sequence of political tension has led AK Party to process a constitutional amendment package, paving the way to a new system through which president was going to come to the power through elections. It was a turning point for Islamists in Turkey as well, since politics

¹⁹⁵ The magazine stopped publishing due to financial reasons.

¹⁹⁶ "Başlayan Her Şey Biter!" (Everything That Has a Beginning Has an End!) *Yolcu*, 30, 2008.

was to be re-designed by a party that the founders came from the Islamist tradition since the creation of the modern Turkey. The statement, also called as 'e-muhtıra', affected the attitude of *Yolcu* and led them to approach the 'state' through the charismatic leadership of Erdoğan. So, the third period covers the years from 2011 to 2017. This time interval is also important for figuring out *Yolcu's* critiques of AK Party administration.

4.2. From 1990s until Today: How did *Yolcu* Transform?

Ali Shariati has always been a significant figure for *Yolcu* and inspired its language. According to Shariati, there is a distinction between enlightened (*aydın*) people and intellectuals. Although intellectuality is related to wisdom, understanding, consciousness, and cleverness, and intellectuals produce knowledge and thought, they might be disconnected from the society and might be not interested in people's trouble and issues. On the other hand, the enlightened people are those who strive to raise awareness in the society and to set into motion the masses even though the enlightened people might not be intellectuals. According to him, the enlightened people are the prophets of their time and their societies.¹⁹⁷ Their action is to speak up ('*söz söylemektir*'). *Yolcu's* has inherited Shariati's stance, in this regard, and made it part of its mentality.

The first thirty issues of *Yolcu* have a distinct criticism against the status quo and the implementations during the February 28 process. The regime was likened by the Nazi administration¹⁹⁸ and the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia.¹⁹⁹ The first issues of the magazine were designed as a manifesto.²⁰⁰ Verses of the Qur'an were stated in *Seyir Defteri* in the first issues.²⁰¹ Tawhid has been the essence of *Yolcu's* attitude. "For the Muslims, the key point of binding is Tawhid. If Tawhid gave meaning to your

¹⁹⁷ Çağan, *Münevverden Entellektüele*, 1-2.

¹⁹⁸ Anonym, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 4, 1998. Anonym, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 5, 1998.

¹⁹⁹ Anonym, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 13, 2000, 1.

²⁰⁰ "Burası Türkiye ve Tarih Kaydediyor!", "İyiliğimizi İstiyorlar, vermeyeceğiz!", "Dokuz Köyden Kovulduysan Onuncuyu Yak Gitsin!", "İnadına Yaşayacağız... Ve Siz Çıldıracaksınız Bayım!", "Mutedil Düşür Öfkeyi Kalbine!" Available at: <http://katalog.idp.org.tr/dergiler/194/yolcu>

²⁰¹ Anonym, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 2, 1998. Anonym, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 3, 1998. Anonym, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 4,

personality and identity, you would have a door in front of you, which opens to eternity. This door offers the world of freedom, justice and love to you.”²⁰² *Yolcu*'s conceptualization of freedom and justice can be only understood by the concept of Tawhid, which inspired its motto: “Unpretending contribution to the just, free and virtuous society”. Freedom and justice have been the essential concepts of *Yolcu*'s discourse. In that sense, the story of seven sleepers, *Ashab Al Kahf*²⁰³, were mentioned as “the projection of freedom and justice onto their times”.²⁰⁴ Moreover, African-American activist Rosa Parks's fight for freedom was interpreted in that context and Parks was compared with Hajar (r.anha) the wife of Prophet Abraham (p.b.u.h.).²⁰⁵

‘Tewhid,’ ‘faith,’ ‘freedom,’ ‘justice,’ ‘virtue,’ ‘society,’ ‘human,’ ‘the oppressed,’ ‘conscience,’ and ‘hope’ have been major themes and located in contrast to ‘state,’ ‘system,’ ‘pain,’ ‘America,’ ‘capitalism,’ ‘fear,’ and ‘corruption’.²⁰⁶ “Civil disobedience”²⁰⁷ has been promoted as “the most important attitude to develop”²⁰⁸ against the ‘system’ and ‘corruption’ in the country. *Yolcu* declared itself as a platform, “open to everyone who is ready to defend honor and dignity”.²⁰⁹ The idea of ‘brotherhood in the religion and the creation’²¹⁰ was specifically mentioned to demonstrate its universal language under the umbrella of ‘Tawhid’.

²⁰² “Müslümanlar için bağlanma noktası Tevhid'dir. Eğer Tevhid kişiliğinizi ve kimliğinizi anlamlandırıyorlarsa önünüzde sonsuza açılan bir kapı var demektir. Bu kapı özgürlük, adalet ve sevginin dünyasını sunar size.” Anonym, “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 2, 1998.

²⁰³In Cristian and Islamic tradition, the Seven Sleepers is the story of a group of youths who believed in the existence and oneness of Allah in an idolatrous nation declared their faith openly and opposed idolatry; they took refuge in a cave because they feared that they would be stoned to death or that they would be forced to change their religion. The young people who fell asleep there with their dog woke up 309 years later. The eighteenth chapter of the Qur'an, in which the story of Ashab al-Kahf is narrated and is called “Kahf (cave)”.

²⁰⁴Anonym, “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 3, 1998.

²⁰⁵ Anonym, “Yenilgi,” *Yolcu*, 35, 2005.

²⁰⁶ “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 2, 1998. “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 4, 1998. “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 7, 1999. “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 12, 2000. “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 13, 2000. “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 14, 2001, “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 16, 2001, “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 17, 2001. “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 18, 2001. “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 20, 2002. “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 21, 2002. “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 22, 2002. “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 23-24, 2002. “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 25, 2003. “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 26, 2003. “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 30, 2004.

²⁰⁷ Anonym, “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 13, 2000, 1.

²⁰⁸Anonym, “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 13, 2000, 1

²⁰⁹Anonym, “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 02, 1998, 1.

²¹⁰ Anonym, “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 21, 2002, 1.

The term of 'revolution' has a specific place in the discourse of the magazine. Modernity has been strongly criticized, while having "revolutionary conscience" was propagated as an attitude with the literal language of the magazine.²¹¹ "The conclusion of this agreeable and submissive process²¹² is contemptibility and despicableness. Now, straighten up and try to observe the earth with a revolutionary conscience, with a revolutionary and divine conscience!"²¹³ Displaying an oppositional attitude and having 'revolutionary' stance was described as one of the requirements of being a (true) Muslim. Modernity and the modern values that was imposed to Muslims have been criticized from very first issue since it is believed that it ignores human values, sanctity, mercy, and justice.²¹⁴

Second period of *Yolcu* started in 2005. In this period, the issues published were more professional and the language was more hopeful²¹⁵ than previous ones.²¹⁶ The magazine has kept its critical stance also in this period against status quo and secular elites of Turkey. Being against status quo and injustice led the magazine to be on the same camp with AK Party. The 'courageous'²¹⁷ leadership of Erdoğan as well as having similar socio-cultural backgrounds was crucial in this sense. *Yolcu*'s emphasis on 'geography' and civilization distinguishes when the West-East dichotomy is considered. Geography that has been stated from very first issue refers to cultural and historical existence of Muslims including non-Muslims (Christians and Jews) in Anatolia²¹⁸ and other Muslim countries, which also refers to Ummah.

What we call 'Ummah' today should be related to this geography. For me, Ummah includes Muslims and non-Muslims. Armenians, Greeks and Jews

²¹¹ Anonym, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 02, 1998, 1.

²¹² Means domination of modern values here.

²¹³ "Uzlaşmacı ve itaatkâr bir sürecin bizleri getirip bırakacağı kapı, alçalmışlık ve zillettir. Şimdi doğrulun ve devrimci bir bilinçle okumayı deneyin yeryüzünü. Devrimci ve kutsal bir bilinçle!"

Anonym, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 02, 1998, 1.

²¹⁴ "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 13, 2000. "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 14, 2001. "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 17, 2001. "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 18, 2001. "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 21, 2002. "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 22, 2002. "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 25, 2003. "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 26, 2003.

²¹⁵ Political change is also influential factor here.

²¹⁶ "Umut, vardır!," *Yolcu*, 31, 2005. "Uzak Denizlere Açıl, Demiyorum Lakin Bir Kez Açılmışsan Tufandan Korkma!," *Yolcu*, 32, 2005. " Hazır Ol'da Değildik; 'Rahat' Durmayacağız!," *Yolcu*, 34, 2005. "Işık Yükseliyor!," *Yolcu*, 42, 2007. "Özgür Dur; Kalbin Genişlesin!," *Yolcu*, 43, 2007. "Yaklaşıyor Yaklaşmakta Olan," *Yolcu*, 51, 2008. "Kalk ve Uyar!," *Yolcu*, 53, 2009.

²¹⁷ 'Courage' and 'resistance' are the attitudes that the writers of *Yolcu* have being pointing out.

²¹⁸ It covers not legal borders of Turkey but includes both Anatolia and belonging to the East together in terms of values. It refers to ethnic, cultural and religious variety of the region.

are colors of this land and Ummah is a combination of communities, which share a common ground based on justice. For instance, if members of Syrian Orthodox Church had to flee from this land, if Armenians fled from here, it would mean we fade. So to say, Ummah does not mean the unity of Muslims. It was an Islamist description.²¹⁹

The other emphasis is civilization, which has not been intellectually explained well but refers to contemporary use of Islamic civilization. The civilization covers the conceptualization of 'East', and 'modernity', 'secularization', and 'positivism' was interpreted in the same pot under the conceptualization of 'West'. There is also a distinct highlight of 'heart'.²²⁰ 'The march of civilization with the guidance of heart'²²¹ has been preferred to be an alternative to the West. The phenomenon of 'heart' refers to faith and the principle of Tawhid without using terminology of political philosophy of Islam, which makes it romantic but quite open to individual interpretations.

In addition to the first period, hard criticisms on modernity, the international system, the US interventions in Muslim countries and the concept of nation-state are prominent in this period.²²² According to the magazine, modernity is the 'other' of the principle of Tawhid and any human being who believes in oneness of Allah has no place in the "modern paradigm".²²³ "Today's world is a world that is full of images and brands, which leaves man to a desert, away from the sacred one, and from meanings and emotions."²²⁴ "Forming our values according to West means to approve a worldview, designed by them. This kind of world is similar to that of a slave's."²²⁵ "Our modern times labels our humanity and makes it meaningless. The values that form our identity lose its meaning due to the 'outbreak' of consumption. Our system of faith is being re-designed according to the modern understanding by secular means." "Yolcu does not agree with modernity, which forces people to

²¹⁹ Respondent 2, interview, 31:20.

²²⁰ Ferhat Kalender, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 31, 2005, 2.

²²¹ Kalender, "Seyir Defteri," 2.

²²² Ferhat Kalender, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 37, 2006, 2. Ferhat Kalender, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 40, 2006, 2. Ferhat Kalender, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 42, 2007, 2. Ferhat Kalender, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 51, 2008, 2.

²²³ Kalender, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 37, 2006, 2.

²²⁴ Ferhat Kalender, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 34, 2005, 2.

²²⁵ Ferhat Kalender, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 52, 2009, 2.

believe in it without having any option. Thought, honor, fidelity, morality, standing against injustice, and being on the side of oppressed constitutes the values that humanity brought out and came to an agreement on them. We are here for them".²²⁶ There is a clear distinction between East and West and between modernity and the Islamic understanding of the world according to *Yolcu*.

There is a resemblance between the transformation of *Yolcu* and the transformation of AK Party's politics in this period. The writings on Kurdish poetry and Kurdish question began to appear in this period as AK Party's attempts during "the peace process" with PKK coincided with this era. An interview with Ayhan Geverî on Kurdish literature in 2008²²⁷ and another one with Bejan Matur on poetry in 2009²²⁸ appeared in the magazine. There was also a series on incidents after the military coup in 1980, which covered torture in the Diyarbakır prison, the story of Ahmet Kaya and other undemocratic implementation of the coup administration.²²⁹ Nationalism, being a Turk, has been intellectually irrelevant themes in *Yolcu*. Although İsmet Özel has been an important figure for the magazine in terms of his inspiring poetry and his critical perspective to the contemporary issues, since the beginning, his conceptualization of Turkishness has been disregarded or promoted in the issues even though founding writers would agree with him on his conceptualization.²³⁰ There has been a tendency of selecting notions. The idea of Ummah, universal stance of being Muslim, the emphasis of geography and civilization without a philosophical

²²⁶ Ferhat Kalender, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 40, 2006, 2.

²²⁷ Behice Çevik, and M. Fatih Kutan, "Ayhan Geverî," *Yolcu*, 51, 2008, 11-13.

²²⁸ İbrahim Tökel, "Bejan Matur," *Yolcu*, 54, 2009, 12-13.

²²⁹ Selçuk Küpçük, "Okuma Eyleminin Araçsallaşmasına İlişkin Kişisel Bir Tarih Anlatısı," *Yolcu*, 51, 2008, 21-22.

Selçuk Küpçük, "Yakın Dönem Tarihine İlişkin Kişisel Bir Hesaplaşma-2," *Yolcu*, 52, 2009, 21-22.

Selçuk Küpçük, "Yakın Dönem Tarihine İlişkin Kişisel Bir Hesaplaşma-3," *Yolcu*, 53, 2009, 21-22.

Selçuk Küpçük, "Yakın Dönem Tarihine İlişkin Kişisel Bir Hesaplaşma-4," *Yolcu*, 54, 2009, 21-22.

Selçuk Küpçük, "Yakın Dönem Tarihine İlişkin Kişisel Bir Hesaplaşma-5," *Yolcu*, 55, 2009, 20-22.

Selçuk Küpçük, "Yakın Dönem Tarihine İlişkin Kişisel Bir Hesaplaşma-6," *Yolcu*, 56, 2009, 19-21.

Selçuk Küpçük, "Yakın Dönem Tarihine İlişkin Kişisel Bir Hesaplaşma-7," *Yolcu*, 57, 2010, 23-25.

Selçuk Küpçük, "Yakın Dönem Tarihine İlişkin Kişisel Bir Hesaplaşma-8," *Yolcu*, 58, 2010, 23-24.

Selçuk Küpçük, "Yakın Dönem Tarihine İlişkin Kişisel Bir Hesaplaşma-9," *Yolcu*, 59, 2010, 23-24.

Selçuk Küpçük, "Yakın Dönem Tarihine İlişkin Kişisel Bir Hesaplaşma-9," *Yolcu*, 60, 2010, 23-24.

Selçuk Küpçük, "Yakın Dönem Tarihine İlişkin Kişisel Bir Hesaplaşma-10," *Yolcu*, 61, 2010, 19-21.

²³⁰ Respondent 2, interview, 38:45. Respondent 3, interview, 26:10. Respondent 5, 44:30. Respondent 6, "Yolcu," interview by Ayşenur A. Ayduran, Ankara, July, 14, 2019, audio, 24:45.

base reveals an 'imagined community' in which practice differs individually and everyday life routines fail thanks to lack of any common tradition. The vulnerable point of such 'imagined community' is intangibility of its existence.

The issues from 2011 to 2017 are strong in voice. Criticism on the 'Arab Spring' took place in the magazine, which is happening in the neighboring countries. The uprisings in Arab countries were criticized for being a tool to international actors and multinational companies that aimed to design the region on the behalf of their interests under the name of the 'Arab Spring'. The 'Arab Spring' was described as 'Frog Revolutions'.

This is the story of two frogs. When they were looking for food, they jumped into a bucket of milk inadvertently. They were unable to get out. They paddled for some time and one of them gave up and drowned. The other one did not give up and kept paddling. After a while, the frog got tired and wanted to give up. Suddenly, the frog felt something solid beneath his feet. He had churned the milk into butter and he was very close to jump out of the bucket. At the same time, the milkman was watching the frog he thought he could use the frog for churning the milk into butter. He liked the idea. Then, the milkman brought five more buckets and he filled them with milk. The frog jumped into a new bucket full of milk. The frog used to think the same. 'Do not loose hope! Keep swimming! Keep paddling! When I churn the milk into butter, I will jump out and be free.' When the frog managed to churn milk into butter, he jumped into a new bucket full of milk. It happened again and again. The milkman was so happy for finding easy way to make butter.²³¹

The uprisings in the Arab countries were compared to this story. The milkman was the West and the 'artificial' slogans in the Arab streets such as 'homeland', 'nation' and 'freedom' were used to re-design the region on behalf of Western interests according to the magazine.²³² Democracy or democratization has never been targeted as a goal or promoted by the magazine. The main theme has always been based on freedom and justice based on not modern values but the principle of Tawhid.

²³¹ Ferhat Kalender, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 63, 2011, 2.

²³² Ferhat Kalender, "Seyir Defteri." Ömer İdris Akdin, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 77, 2015, 2.

The Uludere incident was another issue that the magazine reacted. The incident was condemned, and the AK Party administration was accused of being conservative and bearing a resemblance to the Kemalist statecraft. The name of Uludere was used in the issue instead of Roboski.²³³ The writings on Kurds and on the issues that Kurdish people faced in the region continued.²³⁴ The magazine supported the peace process started in 2009 lasted in 2014, which was carried out by AK Party.²³⁵ According to the magazine, the Kurdish question was the most important and deep-rooted issue of Turkey and it had to be solved even though it requires taking risks. Therefore, a civil platform was formed to declare a manifesto with other NGOs on the issue.²³⁶ In this sense, Diyarbakır was visited by a group of writers in this era.²³⁷ The Kurdish issue was analyzed under the concept of 'colors of the geography' and the Kurds were supported with a motivation to stand together with the 'opposed'.²³⁸ *Yolcu* has attached very much importance to the ethnic and religious diversity of Turkey in the context of 'colors of the land'.²³⁹ The assassination of Hrant Dink was also condemned in this sense.²⁴⁰

The Gezi Parkı protests was another incident that the magazine stated. Having criticized aggressive and unethical language used during the Gezi Parkı protests by the protesters, the editor criticized AK Party administration for being conservative while approaching to the issue and reacting with the nation-state codes to the young masses that are also result of the educational system under AK Party rule.²⁴¹ Political discourse and religious discourse are specifically critiqued in terms of othering masses and inhibiting the idea of living together in harmony.²⁴²

²³³ Ferhat Kalender, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 67, 2012, 2. Anonym, "Dipnot," *Yolcu*, 67, 2012, 27.

²³⁴ Baran Aydın, "Kürtlerin Sorunu Üzerine Aykırı Düşünceler-1," *Yolcu* 66, 2011, 20-22.

Baran Aydın, "Kürtlerin Sorunu Üzerine Aykırı Düşünceler-2," *Yolcu*, 67, 2012, 25.

Baran Aydın, "Kürtlerin Sorunu Üzerine Aykırı Düşünceler-3," *Yolcu*, 68, 2012, 25.

Baran Aydın, "Kürtlerin Sorunu Üzerine Aykırı Düşünceler-4," *Yolcu*, 69, 2012, 23.

²³⁵ Ferhat Kalender, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 72, 2013, 2.

²³⁶ Kalender, "Seyir Defteri."

²³⁷ Anonym, "Dipnot," *Yolcu*, 68, 2012, 27.

²³⁸ Mustafa Öner "Coğrafyamız Her renk İnsan," *Yolcu*, 71, 2013, 3.

²³⁹ Ferhat Kalender, "Seyir Defteri 'Coğrafyam: Her Renk İnsan'," *Yolcu*, 71, 2013, 2.

²⁴⁰ Anonym, "Dipnot," *Yolcu*, 55, 2010, 27.

²⁴¹ Ferhat Kalender, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 72, 2013, 2.

²⁴² Mustafa Öner, "O Ağacın Altında," *Yolcu*, 72, 2013, 4.

Yolcu, in this period, criticizes AK Party and rising Muslim elites over secularization and cultural corruption. “No one minds that human values are merchandized, communities have individuals, who are becoming more and more selfish, secularity become the essential concentration and religious groups are having protestant perspective.”²⁴³ One of the writers stated in his interview:

Yolcu is continuing its efforts to speak up. We have said to those who declared to eliminate us even though it would take a thousand years that “We will live on, and you will go nuts, mister!” and “If it is not compatible with the colors of our socks, what should change is your laws!”. We will not change. We are expressing this to AK Party governments as follows: “Let also the children who have no money blow a whistle...” Goods and resources should not be allocated within a small group. AK Party has done this. This is a grave crime. This is a very big distortion. “They broke us from where we put our faith...” Islam, religion, ethics, justice and ‘justice and development’... That ‘They broke us where we put our faith’ is a serious objection. This is to say that, it is more serious and heavier than ‘We will live out of spite and you will go nuts, mister’.²⁴⁴

Yolcu’ criticisms on modernity, secularization and positivism continues in this period while Muslims in general and the Turkish Muslims in particular have been criticized and warned. Secularization was seen as a consequence of cultural and intellectual rupture in the society. On the other hand, a universal attitude, which covers faith, human values, justice based on the creation, conscience and virtue of displaying an oppositional stance on injustice is declared as the essential solution.²⁴⁵ Islam has been seen and declared the only power against the Western hegemony today.²⁴⁶

Yolcu had a special issue²⁴⁷ on the July 15, 2016, the defeated coup attempt orchestrated by Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETO). It is called as the ‘revolution’ of July 15 by the magazine. *Yolcu* was also one of the first magazines that took a stand against the coup firstly through the social media and called people out.²⁴⁸ The main emphasis of the magazine on the July 15 ‘revolution’ was ideological, ethnic, and

²⁴³ Ömer İdris Akdin, “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 73, 2014, 2.

²⁴⁴ Respondent 5, interview, 59:07.

²⁴⁵ Ferhat Kalender, “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 66, 2011,2.

²⁴⁶ Ömer İdris Akdin, “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 76, 2014, 2.

²⁴⁷ “Allahuekber! Gerisi Yalan Dünya!” *Yolcu*, 80, 2016. Its visual is available at the Appendix A.

²⁴⁸ Anonym, “Dipnot,” *Yolcu*, 80, 2016, 31.

religious diversity of people who were on the streets to hinder the attempt.²⁴⁹ The magazine had also writings on FETO before the defeated coup in which the writers pointed out its masonic structure and to warn the political elites.²⁵⁰

Although *Yolcu* has preferred a universal language based on the principle of Tawhid regardless of ethnicity, one of the main concerns of the magazine has been to develop a local perspective to the issues inside and outside of the country since the first issues. The magazine attached specific importance to giving a local meaning to their attitude.²⁵¹ Therefore, the magazine has highlighted the phenomena of 'geography' and 'civilization' in that context. The emphasis on Anatolian culture and Muslim geography²⁵² has been essential. Being local has been praised and advocated by the cadre even though a universal language was specifically used and any conservative²⁵³ framework was ignored.²⁵⁴ Examining the section called *istikamet* (direction) is that sense can give the reader hints about it. In the section were quotes from different poets, philosophers, intellectuals and religious leaders. It had given an idea about the names that *Yolcu* has been influenced. These names were both local and universal. Quotes from Irvin Yalom,²⁵⁵ Mihail Nuayme,²⁵⁶ Octavio Paz,²⁵⁷ Rabindranath Tagore,²⁵⁸ Frantz Fanon,²⁵⁹ and American Indians²⁶⁰ have been shared alongside with the quotes from Kemal Tahir,²⁶¹ Nurettin Topçu,²⁶² Sezai Karakoç,²⁶³

²⁴⁹ Ömer İdris Akdin, "Seyir Defteri: Muhtasar Cenk Hikayeleri," *Yolcu*, 80, 2016, 2-3.

²⁵⁰ Aziz Savaş, "Küresel Bir Proje Olarak Gülen Hareketi," *Yolcu*, 73, 2014, 4-6.

²⁵¹ Anonym, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 13, 2000, 1.

²⁵² This also includes non-Muslims living in Muslim communities in the region.

²⁵³ Used with a negative connotation in the issues.

²⁵⁴ Ferhat Kalender, "Seyir Defteri," *Yolcu*, 37, 2006, 2

²⁵⁵ "İstikamet," *Yolcu*, 55, 2009, 2.

²⁵⁶ "İstikamet," *Yolcu*, 16, 2001, 2.

²⁵⁷ "İstikamet," *Yolcu*, 35, 2005, 2.

²⁵⁸ Rabindranath Tagore, "Vur Yüreğimdeki Çoraklık Gitsin!" *Yolcu*, 16, 2001, 16. "İstikamet," *Yolcu*, 67, 2012, 2.

²⁵⁹ "İstikamet," *Yolcu*, 71, 2013, 2.

²⁶⁰ "İstikamet," *Yolcu*, 23-24, 2002, 2.

²⁶¹ "İstikamet," *Yolcu*, 21, 2002, 2.

²⁶² "İstikamet," *Yolcu*, 14, 2001, 2. "İstikamet," *Yolcu*, 48, 2008, 2.

²⁶³ "İstikamet," *Yolcu*, 18, 2001, 2. "İstikamet," *Yolcu*, 48, 2008, 2.

Nazım Hikmet Ran,²⁶⁴ Cemil Meriç,²⁶⁵ Mustafa İslamoğlu,²⁶⁶ Şeyh Galip,²⁶⁷ Mevlânâ,²⁶⁸ Atâullah el-İskenderi,²⁶⁹ Abdulkadir Geylânî,²⁷⁰ and Ibn-ul Arabî.²⁷¹ Being local has been interpreted in a context that includes the Muslim geography regardless of the legal borders, people living on it as “colors of the land”, and the tradition²⁷². The solutions of the internal and external issues should be produced in ‘our land’ and based on ‘our values’. The transformation of Islamism especially after 70s, is also the story of seeking ‘localness’ after realizing that an international understanding of Islam was actually based on the translated books from different cultures and different experiences of modernization. This illusory picture was shattered thanks to the February 28 process, an indirect consequence. Highlighting ‘having a local perspective’ is still part of the attempts that seek ‘localness’ and genuineness for the Islamists in Turkey.

4.3. From ‘February 28’ to ‘July 15’: What Were the Reasons of the Change?

There are several factors that affected the transformation of Islamism in general and the Islamist formation in Samsun in specific. Firstly, it is the negative ‘state’ experience of Islamists during the February 28 process. During the process, the Islamists had a socio-political break and faced severe coercion, which compelled Islamists to re-think of the ‘state’, ‘society’ and their ‘existence’.

The slogans that we believed until the process were baseless. We understood that after the February 28 process. Therefore, Islamist mobilizations went to pieces and withdrew in that period. The Republican period created a space and we started to learn over again. The Islamists

²⁶⁴ Nazım Hikmet Ran, “Davet,” *Yolcu*, 48, 2008, 20. Ferhat Kalender, “Seyir Defteri,” *Yolcu*, 49, 2008, 2.

²⁶⁵ “İstikamet,” *Yolcu*, 52, 2009, 2.

²⁶⁶ “İstikamet,” *Yolcu*, 30, 2004, 2.

²⁶⁷ “İstikamet,” *Yolcu*, 31, 2005, 2.

²⁶⁸ “İstikamet,” *Yolcu*, 32, 2005, 2.

²⁶⁹ “İstikamet,” *Yolcu*, 40, 2006, 2. “İstikamet,” *Yolcu*, 53, 2009, 2. “İstikamet,” *Yolcu*, 64, 2011, 2.

²⁷⁰ “İstikamet,” *Yolcu*, 51, 2008, 2. “İstikamet,” *Yolcu*, 57, 2010, 2.

²⁷¹ “İstikamet,” *Yolcu*, 56, 2009, 2. “İstikamet,” *Yolcu*, 78, 2016, 2.

²⁷² Tradition is interpreted here in a different context which refers to wisdom of Anatolian people and the essential values of Islam in general because the members of the magazine does not have an organic relation with the traditional communities and religious orders in which the traditional values have been transferred from generation to generation.

learnt to 'learn over again' through experiences. That is important. Then, we began to learn developing a local attitude and using own words.²⁷³

The February 28 process broke the Islamist illusion down and pushed the Islamists to re-think of their identity and intellectual seeking.

Islamism in Turkey actually meant to be having 'shortcuts' because Islamists could become Islamist by name. There were Qur'an and basic works of Islam in each house. People somehow heard about the religion and traditional books. So, people could easily be Islamists. But you need to read to be a Marxist or else. You do not have to read to be an Islamist. You needed only a little bit anger. The Anger used to contain slogans in it. So, Islamism was not internalized well.²⁷⁴

The founding writers have rejected and criticized the label of being an Islamist. Rather, they preferred to be called as Muslims. Having the experience of post-modern coup led them to critique their understanding of coup as well.

You may know what happens after a classical coup was staged but when it comes to a post-modern coup, you cannot know. Media, for example, has played a huge role during the February 28 process. Unlike the classical coups, judicial power was used negatively. What is important about the process is that Turkish people realized that civilians were also part of the coup as military officials and people and their homes were under threat of any intervention. It was a coup, which spread into layers of the society in a sense.²⁷⁵

The process not only made a negative impact on the interpersonal relations among the Islamists²⁷⁶ but also caused silence within the Islamist movement owing to post-modern structure of it. It is also another outcome of the process that the Islamists began to question their understanding of 'state'. One of the writers said "I do not think of state as I did before. Can an Islamic state exist? No, we were wrong. Can a state be Islamic? We used to believe before that it could be. But now, I do not think so. State is only a state nothing more. A state cannot pray or fast. No, it cannot. Muslims do."²⁷⁷ One of the factors that prompted the idea of 'state' is the transformation of Islamists' understanding of land/country and tradition.

²⁷³ Respondent 1, "Yolcu," interview by Ayşenur A. Ayduran, Manisa, November 17, 2016, audio, 11:05.

²⁷⁴ Respondent 4, interview, 10:35.

²⁷⁵ Respondent 3, interview, 11:10.

²⁷⁶ Gençoğlu, "Sözün Coğrafyası," 8:50.

²⁷⁷ Respondent 4, interview, 15:50.

What changed is that we returned to our land. The wisdom of these lands warned us and we paid attention to it. We learnt how to have good sense about issues and how to be calm. This perspective is the perspective of these lands. We see larger picture than before when we look at the issues through good sense and calmness.²⁷⁸

This change in perspective dramatically influenced the perception of 'state'. Owning the land caused another ownership, which is the state.

I understood that owning state means owning religion. I also understood that a religion without state couldn't be practiced. We did not use to think so. We were enemies of the state before. I have thought for almost 20 years that our social, historical and geographical priority is the state. That was our perception. It was necessary firstly to protect the state.²⁷⁹

Another writer of the magazine also stated, "We did not have a radical rejection of state. It was not a divine thing but it was important for us. It is of course a fact that Muslims in Turkey, not the Islamists, have been brought closer to the state by the administrations of Erbakan and Erdoğan."²⁸⁰ Although there is not an agreement on radicalism of rejecting the state, it is for sure that Islamists have become aware of the fact that the state would behave worse to them and others in the country if the principles of the ruling were not on the basis of freedom and justice. Facing the fact led them to have a complicated perspective of state in which the 'state' is still the 'leviathan' but it has to be ruled by Muslims/Islamists for the sake of people in the country.

The second factor is the charismatic leadership of Erdoğan. Islamic background of Erdoğan and his works in his early political life created a trust between him and people in Turkey. The trust on him also brought Islamists closer to the politics via his leadership. His leadership has somehow been a bridge between Islamists and the 'state'.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is a good leader on average in the Turkish, and even the Ottoman, political history. We support him. I am not actually interested in his mistakes. What I think is the understanding he comes from in general

²⁷⁸ Respondent 2, interview, 40:00.

²⁷⁹ Respondent 2, interview, 1:08:45.

²⁸⁰ Respondent 5, interview, 58:02.

and Erdoğan in specific will be beneficial for Turkey and for the future of the country. Because of this, I vote for him, consequently for the AK Party.²⁸¹

For instance, almost all the writers that I conducted in-depth interviews with articulated that they are not pro-AK Party but pro-Erdoğan (*Reisçi*)²⁸². They did specifically separate these two phenomena.

It is also necessary to open a parenthesis here and to state that the founding writers began to use their right to vote starting from the *Refahyol* administration. Although there were those who were against voting in a secular system, almost all preferred to vote and voted for Welfare Party and then continued to vote for AK Party. They also articulated that they vote for AK Party not for its internal policies but for the Muslim geography or Ummah. It is also remarkable that Erdoğan's courageous implementations in internal politics until 2010 and displaying an insubordinate attitude in external politics have been identical with the disobedient characteristics of *Yolcu*. This similarity is also another factor to mention in this sense.

The third reason is the need of seeking genuineness in practice. The Islamist ideology especially after 60s was based on an activist, reactive, and superficial understanding and discourse. Not having a traditional background is an advantage and disadvantage for the Islamists in this aspect. It is an advantage for constituting a universal, critical and activist attitude, which appealed attention of various readers from different ideologies. It is also disadvantage for having an ideology without a tradition and a common practice, which let people decide their routines individually. Not having a common practice led individuals to seek genuineness in real life. That is why; it is interesting that there is an emphasis on Anatolia and Anatolian wisdom among the writers.²⁸³ One of the writes indicated that:

Yolcu's needed a ground for its ideas. Yolcu is actually a magazine, which belongs to a religion but does not have race and nationality. You do not have a racial and national identity but you have a religion as the essential part of your identity. So, you need a ground to practice your religion and put your ideas, argument into practice. According to the magazine, it is Anatolia.

²⁸¹ Respondent 2, interview, 1:07:28.

²⁸² A spesific call for pro-Erdoğan people.

²⁸³ Respondent 1, interview, 1:22:46. Respondent 6, interview, 1.

According to Yolcu, Anatolia refers to a historical authenticity. The Ottomans, The Seljuks lived in Anatolia. The Caliphate moved to this region and Muslims were ruled from İstanbul. Therefore, this is the common ground of the writers of the magazine and Yolcu want to speak to the Muslims of the world from this point of view.²⁸⁴

The emphasis of Anatolia also refers to a common understanding of justice among the Anatolian people, Anatolian hospitality, mercy and conscience, which are a result of a history and long-term experiences thanks to Muslim past of the region. The new conceptualization still abstains from defining by a specific ethnic, sect, religious order and ideology. The essential component of the conceptualization is a universal identity under “Lailaheillallah!”. “Lailaheillallah” was stated ones in the first page²⁸⁵ as heading of the magazine in order to declare *Yolcu’s* emphasis of Tawhid. Since Islamism rejects any traditional and Sufi belonging, charity organizations, especially IHH, play a key role in this aspect. It is significant for partly filling the gap resulted by the lack a common tradition. ‘How’ to be Muwahhid, ‘how’ to be just, ‘how’ to be wise, and ‘how’ to be virtuous? ‘How’ to practice all? Seeking genuineness in everyday life is vital in this sense since ‘how’ question must be answered in practice. All the vales the magazine articulated are to be learned in person-to-person relations in everyday practices. Islamism, in that sense, does not ironically have the historical/traditional network in order to get the answers from.

The fourth point is the influence of İsmet Özel on the Islamic thought. His sui generis and insubordinate attitude to the issues and his philosophical contribution to the Islamist thinking in Turkey have been of great importance. Almost all the writers, which I conducted the in-debt interviewed with, made quotations from him. The way he challenges modern dogmas, conceptualizes how to be a Muslim today. Besides, his conceptualization of Turkishness have influenced and transformed *Yolcu* as he influenced the Islamist thinking in Turkey. The most noticeable influence of him on the magazine in particular is criticizing popular issues served by international actors

²⁸⁴ Respondent 7, “Yolcu,” interview by Ayşenur A. Ayduran, Ankara, June 25, 2019, audio, 38:40.

²⁸⁵ The issues of 72. Available at: <http://katalog.idp.org.tr/dergiler/194/yolcu>

and gaining a Turkey-based perspective and notion. *Yolcu's* seeking of being local has been also influenced by the ideas of him.

Lastly, the 'revolution' of July 15, is worthy to mention here as both, a reason and as a result in this sense. Although Islamists' perception of 'state' has transformed slowly, the defeated coup attempt in July 15 has been a reason to entirely adopt the 'state' as it was considered as protecting 'religion' at the risk of life. Witnessing an attempt of a coup after years completely persuaded Islamists to protect the 'state' at the risk of life even though it is believed that it is still 'the leviathan' for sure. This is nothing more than a 'double discourse'. Ironically, it has been also a result of the transformation that took years since the February 28 postmodern coup. The transformation has led Islamists to 'be able to' acknowledge the reality of 'state' and to own it.

So, the next chapter will draw a conclusion of the transformation of Islamism, which has been examined comprehensively in the previous four chapters.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Islamism in Turkey is an interesting and complicated phenomenon to study thanks to its vivacity and variability. Even defining what Islamism has been a difficult task. Thanks to genuine works intellectuals wrote on Islamism, we have means to define and to study it. Islamism is and will be a living ideology but transforming since the constituents of the modern world are still valid. It is no doubt that Islamists in Turkey do not prefer being call as 'Islamists' rather prefer to be called simply as 'Muslims'. Definitions of Islamism refer to an ideology based on religion, rather than referring to religion itself. Islamists in Turkey covers everyone who has an Islamic goal for society and politics, briefly. A hardcore secular Muslim might not be an Islamist but a non-Muslim who advocates Shari'a might be an Islamist in this aspect.

Islamism in Turkey has had several periods in its history up to the present. Each period has been re-shaped according to political circumstances of the period, especially by the military coups. Islamism has been transformed in each period due to international, socio-political and intellectual reasons that was explained comprehensively in the second chapter. Islamism has also had a new dimension after 70s with a new understanding of Islam and with the specific emphasis on Ummah by rejecting traditional roots. Translated books from Muslim countries such as Egypt, Pakistan, and Iran have played key role in this intellectual transformation. *Yolcu* was formed by a group of Islamists in Samsun in that period. The members of the group are bound to each other on the basis of Muslim brotherhood under the umbrella of 'Tawhid'. They also had, and still have, an activist and critical approach to the issues inside and outside of the country. Last two periods of Islamism mentioned in the second chapter constitute historical background of this new form of Islamism.

Studying Islamism in Turkey also necessitates classification of the Islamic group in order to comprehend the multiple compositions properly. This is why it was preferred to classify Islamists in four groups; political organizations, religious orders,

intellectuals and magazines. Magazines have been locomotive factor of Islamism. *Sebilürreşad*, *Hareket*, *Büyük Doğu*, *Dergâh*, *İktibas*, *Diriliş*, *Ribat*, *Umran*, and *Beyan* are some examples that influenced the Islamist groups in their periods. So to say, magazines and literature have been essential actors of the Islamist mobilization in all periods since the second half of the 19th century.

Yolcu is an interesting case in order to portray the transformation of Islamism through a local example. The copies of magazine were followed and read by the readers from each part of Turkey. More importantly, the writers of *Yolcu* have roots in countryside but migrated to cities and received university education. Although they have roots in countryside, they developed an urban perspective to the issues of Turkey and of the world, which makes them romantic and intellectual at the same time. These Islamists used to have a 'return-to-the-sources' assumption for the Islamist thinking and do not have any traditional, sectarian and Sufi background.

Studying *Yolcu* to analyze the transformation of Islamism in Turkey is important for examining a different and critical perspective on the politics and intellectual transformation of Islamists in Turkey. To this end, eighty one (81) issues of the magazine, especially *Seyir Defteri* sections in which the editor has made statements on the current issues and declare their criticisms and warnings; *Yolcu'nun Heybesi* where the letters of readers are answered; and *Dipnot*, which contains hints about their changing attitudes were analyzed. Transformation of the magazine was studied in three time intervals. The first period covers the first thirty (30) issues of the magazine from 1997 to 2004. Second era includes twenty-five (25) issues after the break from 2005 to 2010 and the third period covers the issues from 2011 to 2017. The findings of this analysis have indicated that the transformation is not sharp at all, but rather the can be found between the lines. Having a universal language based on the principle of Tawhid in all issues until today, the critical attitude to 'state' and unjust implementations of the Kemalist elites before AK Party coming to power turns to advocating AK Party's rights in the second period with the same reasons, justice and watching the opposed. 'E-Muhtıra' and the presidential elections in 2008 are crucial incidents in which *Yolcu* displayed a distinct attitude on the behalf of Abdullah

Gül and the AK Party. Criticisms of the Kemalist elites, for their attempts to block the ruling of AK Party governments, and criticisms on modernity have continued in this era. Besides, the magazine adopted a more hopeful attitude and tone in the issues. AK Party's coming to power was perceived as the victory of resistance. The last period is important to in which *Yolcu* published a wide range of critiques of the world system and secularization within the country, and warnings on the governance, unqualified educational system, neoliberal policies and being conservative meantime. A human-centered governance has been declared as a solution in this era. The human-centered attitude meant for them, as not having positivist-humanist approach but a Muslim perspective based on 'Tawhid' and justice.

Semi-structured in-debt interviews were conducted in order to find out the characteristics of the transformation. There are interesting results that were not targeted but found out on the way. First reason of the transformation is severe experiences of Islamists during the February 28 process. The process led them to question their attitude of 'country', 'state', and 'ideology'. The second reason is the charismatic leadership of Erdoğan influenced Islamists' perception of power and 'state', and transformed it on the behalf of AK Party. The third reason is the need of genuineness in practice. Creating a universal attitude under the roof of 'Tawhid' without any common tradition led the members to seek a philosophical base. Anatolianism and Anatolian wisdom were among the concepts stated by the writers of the magazine as a framework. The fourth reason is the philosophical influence of İsmet Özel. His inspiring and critical attitude affected the way Islamists approach to the notions and incidents. The fifth reason is was the July 15 defeated coup attempt, which truly convinced the Islamists to own the 'state' since there is no other refuge in such socio-political and international circumstances.

Studying *Yolcu* and Islamism to understand their transformation to a striking question asked long before by İsmet Özel: "Are we to create a strong society and then make it a Muslim one, or to create a Muslim society and then make it a strong one?" This question appears to be crucial because the Islamist thought today, especially after the dramatic transformation after the AK Party rule, might come up with this

differentiation. Islamism in Turkey is intellectually and practically separated into two groups. One is demanding 'Islamic' governance and a Muslim society, and the other is for a strong Turkey regardless of neoliberal and secular policies implemented in the country. AK Party's influence has been phenomenal for the second group. Studying *Yolcu* has showed me that Islamists are demanding an Islamic rule from 'ex-Islamists' after 2010 while they used to resist the Kemalist elites for the same reason. What I believe is that Turkey will witness ruling the office by the Islamists and having an Islamist opposition at the same time in the coming decades. In other words, Islamism is the only ideology in Turkey that is able to give birth to its own opponent.

Another significant point to make is Islamists' seeking of localness. It has been one of the unintended results of the February 28 process that Islamists began to learn how to have a Turkish-centered attitude to the issue inside and outside of Turkey. The Islamists in Turkey tries to have a local framework and to have 'local' solutions to the issues of Muslims even though the essential component of Islamism is modernity. It is the difficult part of the transformation. Islamism in Turkey in a way tries to find a combination of Islamism and tradition understanding of Islam even though the Islamist codes are not compatible with the latter. It is crucial to study Islamism in that sense through its interaction with tradition in the local. It is also vital to examine how Islamists in Turkey who do not have any organic relation with religious communities and the Sufi path perceive the tradition in the region.

This study on the transformation of Islamism in Turkey aimed to explore the transformation of Islamists in a local example. The study has had limits since *Yolcu* is a case from one metropole of Turkey and does not reflect the entire transformation of the Islamists in Turkey.

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APPENDIX

IMAGES OF YOLCU

SEYİR DEFTERİ

• "İlahî kuvvetimin zaafa uğradığını, pek çaresiz kaldığımı yalnız sana şikâyet ediyorum. Ey merhamet bol olan Rabbim! herkeşin hor görüp de dalına bindiği çaresizlerin Rabbi sensin. İlahî huysuz ve yüzüstü bir düşman eline beni bırakmayacak kadar kerimsin. Hayatımın özgenlerini eline verdiği akrabadan bir dostla muhtaç olmeyecek kadar beni esirgersen. İlahî gazaba uğramayayım da çektiğim minnetlere, beisalara, musibetlere aldırman. Fakat senin af ve mağîretin, bana bunları göstermeyecek kadar geniştir. İlahî gazabına uğramaktan hoşnutsuzluğuna çatmaktan senin o kararlıklarını aydınlatan nuruna sığınırım. Dünya ve ahiret yolunu aydınlatan sensin. İlahî sen razı oluncaya kadar affımı diliyorum. Senden başka güçlü ve kuvvetli yoktur."

O, insanlann en güzeli idi. O, ancak Rabbinden indirileni söyledi. Karanlığın sahipleri O'na ve Onun gibilere tarih boyunca hep aynı tepkiyi gösterdiler; "yalancı, büyüdü, sihirbaz, deli, mecnun, meczup, sapıklık, küstah, çarpılmış vs." konuşurlardı; konuşursa da dinlemediler. Dinle, dilersen de aleya aldılar. Vazgeçmedilerse tehdit ettiler, tehdit işe yaramadıysa işkenceye tabi tuttular. İşkence ile susturamadıysa öldürmeye çalıştılar ve hatta dostlarını şehit ettiler de. O ve inananları Allah'a vericileri sözden geri dönmедiler. Hiç bir zaman ve zemine dönmeyecekler de.

O'nun davet için gidip de taşınarak çıkarıldığı Taif şehrinde dönüşünde ve yol kenarında yaptığı duayı yürekleri-mize yazıyoruz.

• Her inanış bir anlamlar dünyası örgüsüne ulaşır insanı. Yine inanmak, ikdia sahibi olmayı getirir beraberinde. Anlam dünyalarını insanlarla paylaşmak ve topluma ses vermek, dahası karşılık görmek, hayatın tek düzeliğine bir işaret koymak demektir. Anlamın erdemine ulaşmak için önmümüzde kadim bir işaret var: "Onlar, sözü dinleler ve en güzeline bağlanırlar."

Müslümanlar için bağlanma noktası tevhid'dir. Eger tevhid, kişiliğimizi ve kimliğimizi anlamlandırmıyorsa önmümüzde sonsuza açılan bir kapı var demektir. Bu kapı, özgürlük, adalet ve sevginin dünyasını sunar size. İşte yol tam da buradan başlamaktadır. Yani yüreğinizden.

Aklın egemenliğinde ve hakemliğindeki insan ilişkilerinin zamanı ne hale getirdiğini belki de en iyi yüreğinin sesini dinleyenler bilebilir. Çizgisinden sapsız ve çelimsiz bir zihnin merhamet, şefkat ve erdemliğe tahammülü dahi yoktur. Sanal ve yapay olgular dünyasında varlıkların en genel ve yüceliğine erişebilecek varlıklar nasıl da illüzyonk yaratıklar haline getirilebilir? Anlaşılmasız, eğer sonsuzluk nehrinden yudulanmışsa, lolebojilerin karmaşasından inancın ritmine ulaşabilmek için, söz dinler ve en güzeline uyulur: "(İnsanları) Allah'a çağırın salih/doğru ve adil davranışlarda bulunan ve 'şüphesiz ben, Allah'a teslim olanlarımdan' diyenden daha güzel sözü kim vardır!" (41:33)

• Ülkemizin çetin geçecek bir kış mevsimi içerisinde olduğunu bildiriyor haber bültenleri. Soğuk ve karanlık aynı anda çöküyor üzerimize. Uzun bir zamandan beri bu toprakların üzerinde yaşayanların kanlarını donduracak derecede olaylar meydana gelmekte. Onlarca yıl halkın kaderinde tek belirleyici güç oldukları vehmine kapılan egemenler, çıkar hesaplarının bozulması endişesine kapılarak baskı ve tehditlerin yoğunlaştırdıkları. Cemil MERIC'in deyişle "düşüncenin kuduz köpek gibi kovalandığı" menzillerden geçmekteyiz. İnsanlar dini kimliklerinden "ben müslümanlardım" dediklerinden dolayı aşağılanıyor ve zulme maruz bırakılıyor. Adeta bir firavun gölgesi doluyor laiklik adına. Karanlık bir ses "biz izni vermeden mi iman ediyorsunuz?" uđultusuyla müminlerin kalplerine korku salmaya çalışmakta. Kurdukları örümcek ağına benzer tuzaklarla, inançlı kesim kısır ve zifiri bir kusatmanın altında zaptedilmeye uğraşıyor.

"Allah'ın mesajlarını hiçbir delilleri olmadan sorgulayanlara gelince; onların içinde hiç bir zaman tatmin edemeyecekleri küstahça bir kendini beğenmişlikten başka bir şey yoktur. Oyleyse sen Allah'a sığın; çünkü her şeyi işiten ve gören O'dur." (40:55-56)

• Sevgiyle okur! Elinde tuttuğın bu dergi, özgürlük, adalet ve erdemli bir toplum oluşturmak gayretine mütevazi bir katkı olsun amacıyla yayınlanmaktadır. Kâbus ve vehim tacirlerine karşı onurdan ve vakardan yana saf tutmuş herkes için bir platform olma uğraşısında olacağız. İnanıyoruz ki geleceği 'iki kardeşlik dünyası' oluşturacaktır; Dinde ve yaradılıştaki kardeşlik. Bu bağlamda yapılacak her türlü samimi ve içten katkıya açığız. Şafağın bereketi, karanlığın rahminden saklıdır. Vesselam.

Şubat - Mart 1998

yolcu

BURASI TÜRKİYE VE TARİH KAYDEDİYOR



Son dönem ülkenin içine çekildiği olağan dışı durum, bir kaç açıdan anlamlı bulunmaktadır. Her şeyden önce bu ülkenin düşüncenin, erdemli, özgürlük ve adaletten tarafa saf tutmuş insanları şunu iyice görmüşlerdir ki statükonun entelektüel ve bilimsel tüm refleksleri kilitlenmiştir. Sistemin zihni inşaatları olan "yazar - çizer" mesabesinde kodlanmış aydınlarımızın postal renkli söylemlerine bakıldığında aczin kimlik ve kişiliklerde açtığı derin yaralar kolayca fark edilebilir. Öteden beri, özgürlük ve asaletten ziyade batıl değerlerin üçüncü dünyaçı kopyacısı olmaktan başka bir meziyeti olmayan, sırtını sisteme ve kompradora dayandırdığı müddetçe ayakta durabilen bu "ucube aydın" tipi, tüm zamanların sorunu olarak bu ülkenin önünde durmaya devam ediyor. Bu Plaza - Men türü, çarpık modernleşmenin dayatması ve buyurgan, aynı zamanda ötekine karşı sözcüğü karaktarı ile yaşadığımız günlerde olduğu kadar hiç bir zaman kendini böyle alenen ortaya dökmemişti. İçinde bulunduğu halkı plazalardan seyredip, ne düşündüklerini öğrenmek için batıl haber ajanlarına başvuran bu kişilerden oryantalistlerin cürm-ü meshud durumu ibretle izlenmektedir.

(Devamı 2. Sahifede)

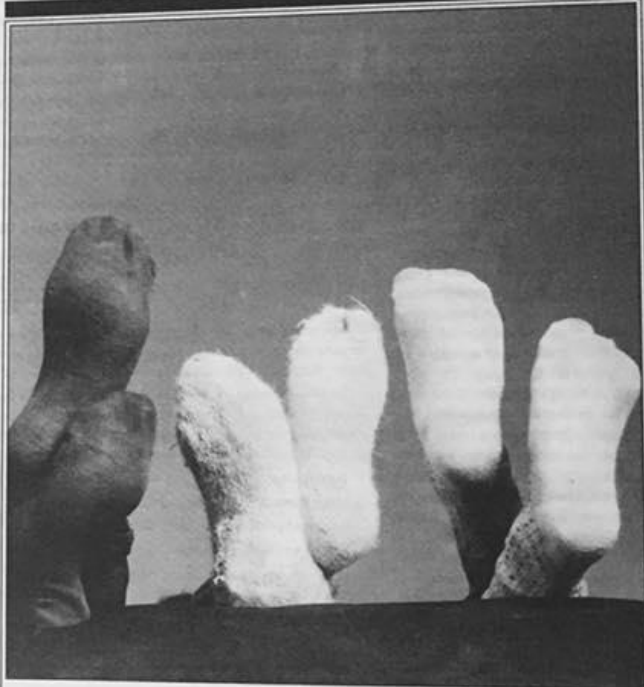
Figure 1: The first issue of Yolcu. "This is Turkey and History is Recording!"

y o l c u

Bu zamanlar, yeni tepelerin üzerinde bir müzavi yaşanı. Ruhun tamiz, yüreği apaktı. Ve karınca gibi hayvanlar ve havada sim hayvanlar gibi diğer oca kurban, o da onlarla konuşmuş. Olu zevkle dinlenir, sonra sokakları ve oradan ayrılmazlar, ta ki gece olup da o onları kutlayarak nazar ve umutlara emziret edimiyse de. Bir akşam, savgiden söz ederken, bir leopar basını kaldırı ve müzaviye dedi, "Bize savgiden söz ediyorunuz. Söyleyin Elanım, sizin emziret nerede?"
Ve müzavi dedi, "Benim emim yok."
Ve hayvanlar ve kuşlar arasında bir başlık vavevleler ki koplu, ve aralarında konuşmaya başlarlar. "Kanıt bu konuda bir şey bilmekten biraz nasıl sevdiğin ve anlayışından söz edebilir ki?" Ve salsızca ve köçümlemeye yerinden ayrılıp gittiler.
O gece müzavi döğüne yürütöyün uandı ve göğsünü yumruklayarak öcü öcü ağladı.
H. C.

SEYİR DEFTERİ

- Bildik ve bir kez daha boyun eğdik "Her zorluktan sonra bir kolaylık vardır; Mutlaka her zorluktan sonra." Amenna. Ülkemiz çetin bir sınavın tam ortasında buluverdi kendini. Apansız yakalandık. Bayağılığı ve umarsızlığı yaşam tarzı haline getirmişiz, zulme rıza gösterip sineye çekmişiz yeryüzü isyan etti sonunda. Toprağın künhüne varanlar ve toprağın dilini bilenler için jeolojik, sımsıkı dahası bilimsel söylemlerin ne kadar değeri vardır ki? Dünyayı yalnızca kısa bir konaklama yeri olarak algılayanlarla bir yeryüzü cenneti yaratmak iddiasında bulunanlar arasındaki uçuruma işaretler dehpette izlenen fay hattı: En yoğun kırılma bu ki düşünce dünyasının hangisinde kendini hissettirdi acaba Görüldü ki hesapların üzerinde bir hesap vardır!
- Bugün çarpık modernleşmenin ve körü körüne batı öykünmeçliğinin ceremesini çekiyor ülkemiz. Tarım alanlarını yerleşim merkezleri olarak cazip hale getirmenin, sanayi dar bir alana hapsedmenin fotoğrafıdır Marmara. Geniş Anadolu topraklarına, bu topraklar üzerinde yaşayan insanlara güvensizlik ve tepeden bakış bir devlet projesi olarak uygulanageldi yıllar boyunca. Anadolu insanının elbirliği ile bu makus talihi bozma girişimleri hakir görüldü ve hatta bizzat devlet tarafından ezilmeye çalışıldı. Süreci hala işliyor. Tek rengine iman etmiş otoriter mantık, topluma, güdülecek yönleri anlayışıyla çeki düzen vermeyi dayatmakta. Böyle bir mekanizmanın imanı korku, ibadet baskıdır. Devletin açıkça acız kaldığı bir durumda halkın her türlü özveriyle yardıma koşması sistem kenelerinin yüzünü buruşturdu. İktidar ve ikbalinlerin sarılacağına düşünenler emirleri altındaki soy-tarıyı bir kez daha meydana saldılar. İşte karşınızda medya!
- Gün bu gündür ki süslü kavramlar ve efsunlu kelimelerle yüceltilen modernleşme projesi adlı paçavrayı parçalayıp fırlatmalı tarihin dehlizlerine. Modern olanın yanı batının, kendinden kabul etmediğine atıldığı bir kemik parçasından başka bir şey değildir modernizm. Bizim gibi ülkelerde modern olmayı amaç edinmek, aşığılanmayı peşin olarak kabul etmek demektir.
- Saygıdeğer Okurlar!
Dergimiz baskından yeni çıkmıştı, buğusu üzerindeydi sıcak. Ağustosun onaltısı; "Hey Orada Kimse Var mı?" diye soruyorduk, bir sonraki sabahın yüreğimize düşüreceği ürperten habersiz. Oysa biz, orada kimse var mı derken üstümüze çöreklenmeye çalışan ideolojik - diktatöryal kasvete karşı her özgürlük tutkunu gibi tutunacak bir el ve ipinden umut ırmakları: akan bir pift göz olsun murad etmişik. Ne var ki yıkıntı ve enkaz arasında yaşam çağrısı olarak dolaşmayı tercih etti bu cümle.
Tüm uğlaşılarımız rağmen bazı abonelerimizden haber almış değiliz. Adapazarı'ndan Cafer Tayyar Çiçek, Cafer Özdemir isimli dostlarımızı ulaştırmayıyoruz. Bu dostlarımızla ilgili bilgi sahibi olanlar lütfen



**ÇORAPLARIMIZIN
RENGİYLE UYUMLU
DEĞİLSE EĞER;
DEĞİŞMESİ GEREKEN
KANUNLARDIR..!**

- sayıda
- Ömer İ. AKDİN • Atasoy MÜFTÜOĞLU
 - M.Varol ÖZTÜRK • A. Baki AKYÜZ
 - Mustafa KARAOŞMANOĞLU • Yaşar BEDRİ
 - Ahmet USTA • Nevzat ONMUŞ

Figure 2: The sixth issue. "When the law does not match the colors of our socks, it must be amended!"

YIL YEDİ SAYI OTUZDÖRT İKİBİNBEŞ



YOLCU

'hazır ol'da değildik;

'rahat' durmayacağız!

Orta Sayfa

ENDÜLÜS'E AĞIT

Salih B. Şerif

[İstikamet | Ferhat Kalender | Mustafa Karacasımanoğlu | Mehmet Çelik | Yasar Bedri |
[Müsteher Karakaya | Münir Ar-Rıza | Faik Karacaoğlu | İbrahim Ünlü | Mustafa Vitoz |
[Vedat Aydın | Hikmet Kızı | Mustafa Şurur | Nurattin Sakin | Salih B. Şerif | Akif Çelik |
[Ayşe Ayvapkoca | İstök Akbayır | Ahmet Balık | Hilal Küçük Döndeme | M. Zahir Ertekin |
[A. Vahit Erkan | Fatma Çelik | Hüseyin Abacı | A. Vehap Bekkiç | İbrahim Sökel |
[Behçet Yarı | Mahmut Vayır | Yahya Ayrıkaya | Cem Arıoğlu | Sincir Arıcı]

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Figure 3: The 34th issue.

YOLCU

GELECEK İÇİN ÖZGÜRLÜK
“lailaheillallah”



Figure 4: “Freedom for the future ‘Lailaheillallah!’”



Figure 5: A photo taken by a prisoner.



Figure 6: The 94th issue.

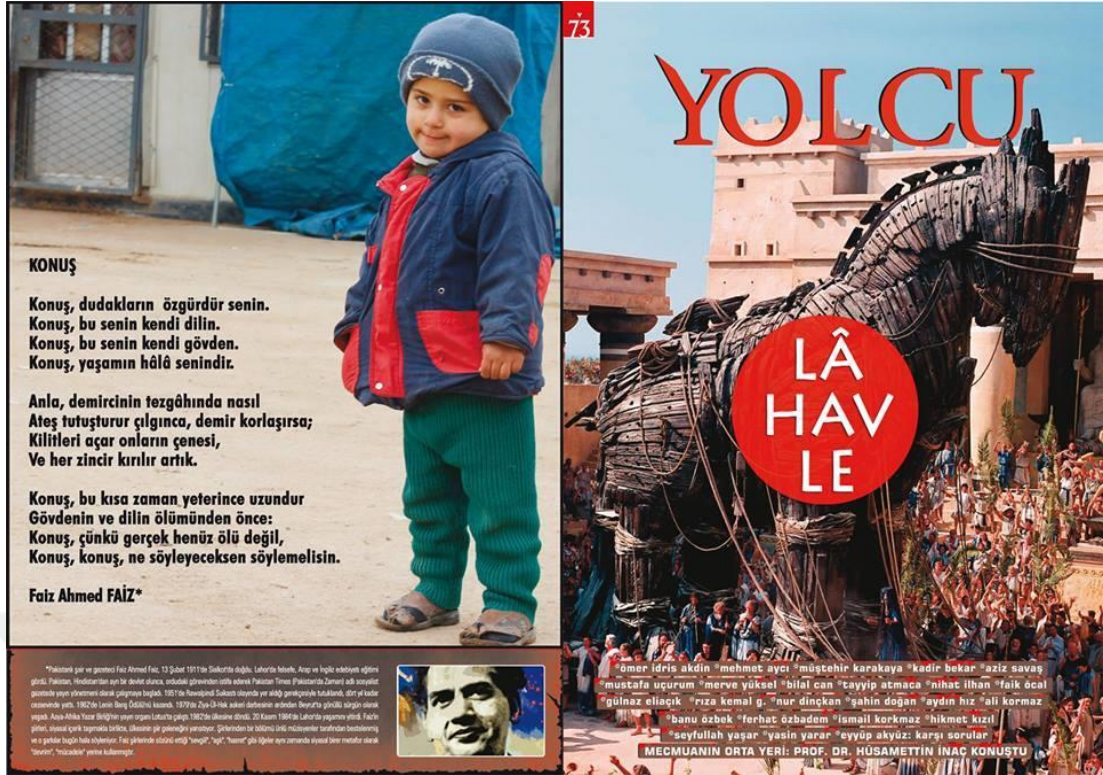


Figure 7: The 73th issue. "Lâ Hav Le"



Figure 8: The 79th issue. "Swerve!"

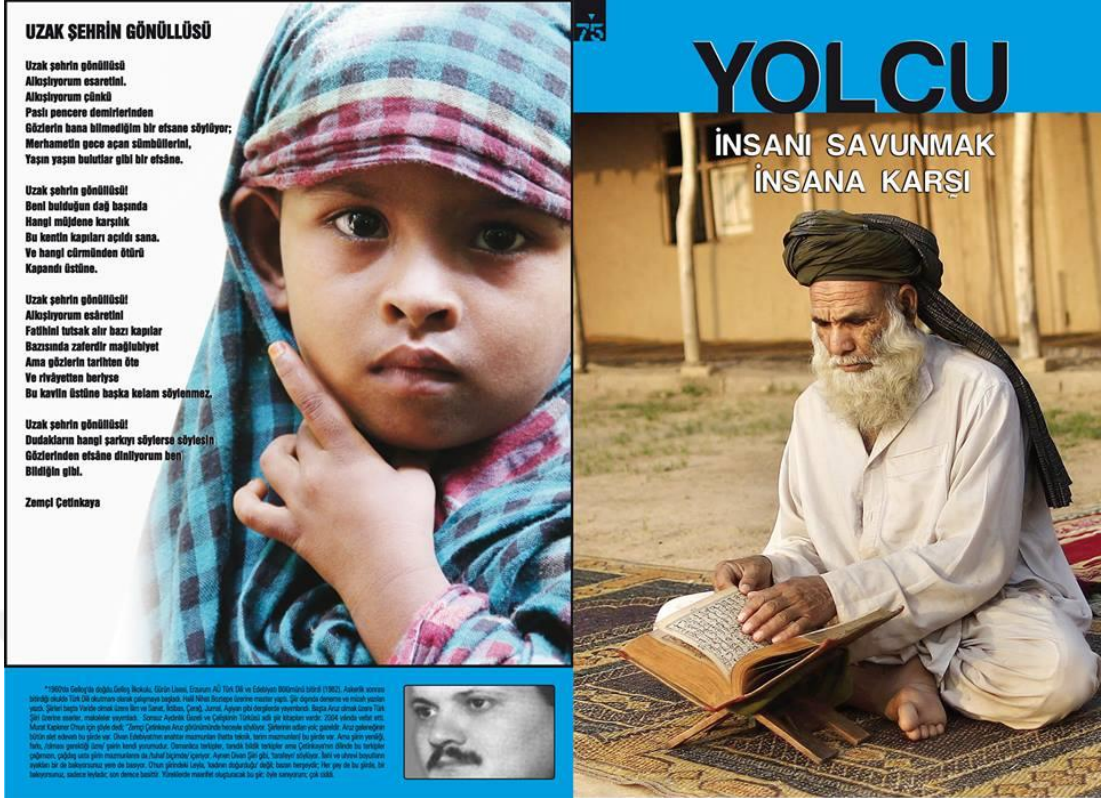


Figure 9: The 75th issue. "Defending man against man!"



Figure 10: The 77th issue.

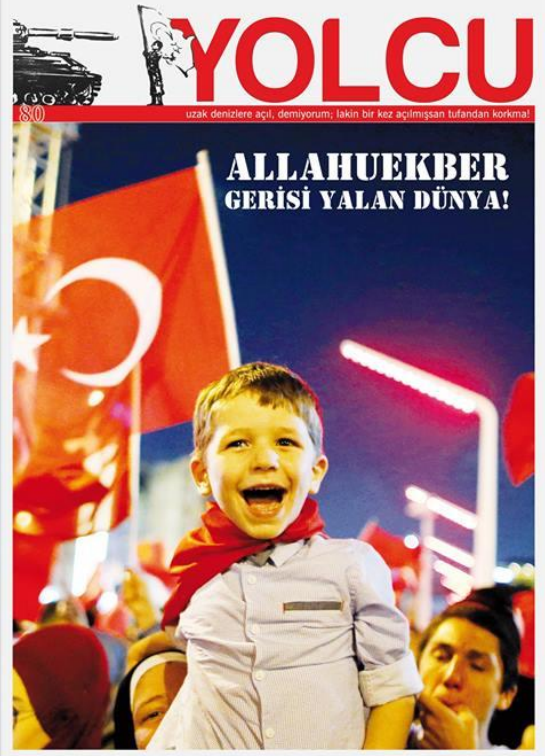


Figure 11: The 80th issue on the July 15 coup attempt.

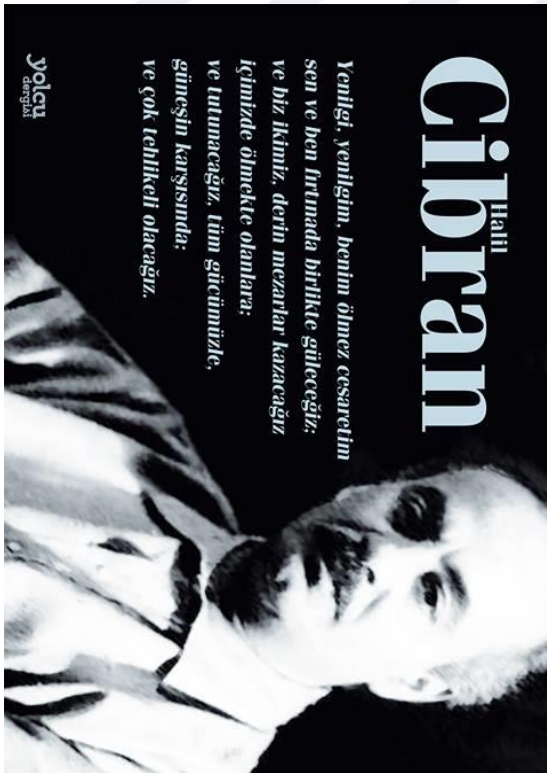


Figure 12: The 93th issue.