HOW DOES PROHIBITION STOP WORKING?
THE VISIBILITY AND LEGITIMACY OF *MEVLEVİ* CEREMONIES IN MODERN TURKEY

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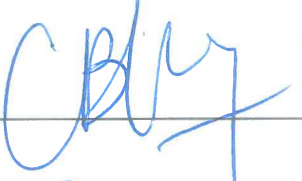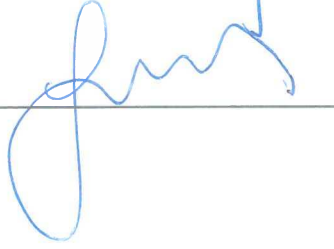OF
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BURCU SAĞLAM

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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology.

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ABSTRACT

HOW DOES PROHIBITION STOP WORKING?

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MA in Sociology

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Sufism has been officially banned in the Turkish Republic since 1925, which includes all Sufi orders, their lodges and rituals, and naturally, the *Mevlevi* order is no exception. Interestingly, however, the *semâ* ceremony of the *Mevlevi* order has turned out to be a cultural and touristic show that supposedly represents Turkish culture. The "whirling dervish" has become an iconic figure, frequently used in national touristic advertisements. Moreover, annual commemorations in honor of Mevlânâ Celaleddin Rumi, the founder of *Mevlevi* Sufi order, are attended by the highest state authorities every year. The research question of my thesis is how legitimacy and visibility of *Mevlevi semâ* ceremonies have been changed after the ban in 1925. I limited my work to the ceremonies in Konya performed in every December since the 1940s, the most popular and central celebration event on Rumi's death anniversary called "*Şeb-i Arus*" (means "wedding night"). Effective actors in this field are; the Turkish Republic's apparatuses including relevant statesmen and institutions, members of the *Mevlevî* order, performers of the ceremonies, people interested in Rumi and *Mevlevîlik* for scientific, intellectual and touristic reasons, especially from the US and Europe, mass media and non-governmental organizations. I explored and discussed both tensions and accommodation between these actors throughout the history of Turkish Republic.

Keywords**:** Turkish Modernization, Sufism, Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, Sema Ceremony, Mevlevi Order, Authenticity

ÖZ

YASAK NASIL İŞLEVSELLİĞİNİ KAYBEDER?
MODERN TÜRKİYE'DE MEVLEVİ AYİNLERİNİN GÖRÜNÜRLÜĞÜ VE MEŞRUİYETİ

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Türkiye Cumhuriyeti yasalarına göre tasavvuf 1925'ten beri yasaktır ve bu yasak tüm tarikatları, onların tekkelerini ve ritüellerini kapsamaktadır. Mevlevî tarikatı da diğerleri gibi bu yasaktan etkilenmiştir. Fakat ilginç bir şekilde, Mevlevî tarikatına ait semâ törenleri Türk kültürünü temsil eden kültürel ve turistik bir gösteriye dönüşmüştür. Semazen figürü ikonlaşmış, Türkiye'yi tanıtan turistik reklamlarda sıkça kullanılmaya başlanmıştır. Öte yandan, Mevlevî tarikatının kurucusu Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rumî'yi anmak için her yıl düzenlenen anma törenleri devletin en üst kademesindekilerin her yıl katıldığı bir etkinliğe dönüşmüştür. Bu noktada, tezimin temel araştırma sorusu Mevlevî semâ törenlerinin meşruiyeti ve görünürlüğünün 1925 yasağından sonra nasıl değiştiğidir. Bu çalışmayı daha popüler, düzenli ve merkezî bir organizasyon olması sebebiyle 1940'lardan beri her aralık ayında Konya'da düzenlenen Şeb-i Arus Mevlânâ anma törenleri ile sınırlandırıyorum. Bu alanda etkili aktörleri şöyle sıralıyorum: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin ilgili devlet adamları ve kurumları dahil müdahale araçları, Mevlevi tarikatına mensup kişiler, törenlerde rol alanlar, Mevlânâ ile bilimsel, düşünsel yahut turistik olarak ilgilenen bilhassa ABD'li ve Avrupalı kişiler, kitle iletişim araçları ve sivil toplum örgütleri. Bu çalışmada, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti tarihi boyunca bu aktörler arasındaki gerilim ve uyum dengeleri incelenmiş ve tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Türk Modernleşmesi, Tasavvuf, Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, Sema Törenleri, Mevlevi Tarikatı, Otantisite

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP: The Justice and Development Party

ANAP: The Motherland Party

CHP: The People's Party

ITTMT: Istanbul Historical Turkish Music Ensemble

KTTMT: Konya Turkish Sufi Music Ensemble

MEKÜSAV: Mevlânâ Cultur and Art Foundation

NGO: Non-governmental organization

UMV: International Mevlânâ Foundation

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Problem and Rationale

The field of Sufism in modern Turkey is in need of a deeper sociological inquiry to understand the religious and cultural history of the country. A wide literature on historical and political dimensions of Turkish modernization is based on the tension between religion and modern secular nation-state, as in the case of many Middle Eastern countries; however, contrary to this received wisdom, we often observe an accommodation of modernity and Islam by the actors of modernization – religious and secular alike – during this complex and controversial process (Ardıç 2012). The case of the Mevlevi-Sufi tradition and its relationships with the secular Turkish state, too, might prove an instance of how complicated this process was. Thus, more studies on religious performances at the micro level in relation to macro processes will contribute to the debates over modernization, secularization, and religiosity in Turkey. This thesis aims to contribute to the Turkish modernization literature via analyzing the case of the transformation of Rumi commemorations, called *Şeb-i Arus[1]*, the commemoration of the most important Sufi figure, Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî, together with the representation of Rumi's *Mevlevi* order's famous ritual of "whirling dervishes", which is historically called "*semâ*".

The case of *Mevlevi* ceremonies in Konya, an Anatolian city where Rumi spent most of his life and is buried, has some peculiarities as well as commonalities to other religious ceremonies. Firstly, it is a public event regularly attended by the highest state authorities today. The Turkish state has officialized the commemoration ceremonies since 1990 and celebrates it almost like a national day. On the other hand, *semâ* as a religious practice is officially forbidden in Turkey since 1925. Despite the ban, however, the *semâ* performance has become a national symbol since the

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[1] A Persian and Arabic term that means "wedding night" or "union night", it represents the death. Sufis celebrate the death of the great Sufis as their reunion with God. In Turkey, the only largest Şeb-i Arus celebrations are Mevlânâ Celaleddin Rumi's death celebrations.

1970s. It has also turned into a touristic show practiced for commercial purposes, especially since the 1990s. Other public religious rituals such as *Alevi-Bektaşi semâh* and *Sufi devran* are also important to notice in terms of their touristic visibility, but they are nowhere near the semâ in terms of fame and popularity, nor do they have a national symbol status as the *Mevlevi semâ* shows do. They have different stories of legitimization and, a comparison between them would be a topic of a further study. This study tries to understand how a religious performance that at some point lost its legality and public visibility has regained its legitimacy and visibility but has also undergone some changes in terms of its content. I will seek answers as to how the perceptions of Sufism and *Mevlevilik* have changed in the course of the re-legitimization of the ceremony in the eyes of the performers of the ritual as well as in the eyes of the audience.

In light of the historical background I present in chapter two, I will analyze the processes of the legitimization and the increasing visibility of *Mevlevi semâ* performances in Turkey. My main research question here is how and why these two processes have occurred. In order to explain the socio-political and cultural dynamics behind this "achievement", I will try to answer the following specific questions: How did the negotiations between the *Mevlevi* leaders and state officials affect the re-creation of the public visibility of the *semâ*? What were the roles played by wider political processes as well as the influential actors in the legitimization of this religious ritual? How did the processes of globalization, rising communication, and economic liberalization affect its popularity and public visibility? Was the *Mevlevi* ceremony turned into a "commodity" as part of the growing tourism industry in Turkey? How do agents engaged with these events define these performances and their positions in it? Do they perceive these events as "authentic" and "original" or do they find them as mere fake representations?

Regarding these questions, I have several hypotheses: First, I hypothesize that the strategies adopted by *Mevlevi* leaders in negotiating with state officials during late 1940s and the 1950s, included agreeing with the political authorities to present *semâ* as a purely folkloric-cultural performance, which enabled the visibility of the *semâ*

ceremony. Second, the rise of the conservative parties since the 1950s has created a political climate conducive to enhance the legitimacy and public visibility of the Sufi rituals in general and the *Mevlevi semâ* in particular. Third, increasing globalization and liberalization of Turkish economy and culture since the 1980s have played an important role in the increasingly more popular and more visible performance of this Sufi ritual. Fourth, I argue that parallel to the liberalization of the Turkish economy and the growing tourism industry as well as the general secularization of Turkish society, the *Mevlevi* religious ceremonies have increasingly been commercialized and turned into a "cultural commodity" to be marketed for consumption particularly by local and foreign tourists in Turkey and abroad. Fifth, not only the national reasons but also the international rise of Rumi's fame contributed to the commercialization and legitimization processes. Finally, however, the popularization of this ritual has also contributed to the increasing legitimacy of the *Mevlevi* order (as well as other Sufi groups) in the eyes of both state elites and the general public. It also plays a role in terms of helping some of its audience maintain their religious attachments and expressing their religious sentiments.

My main argument in this dissertation is, therefore, that the processes of the legitimization and the increasing visibility of *Mevlevi semâ* performances in Turkey were hybrid in character, involving both a dimension of "folklorization" (i.e. turning into a folkloric ritual performance rather than a strictly religious ceremony) and commercialization and that of functioning as a sign of increasing religiosity in the wider society. It is also a symbol of new kind of religiosities and spiritualities. On a more theoretical level, therefore, the case of the *Mevlevi* ceremony shows the twin processes of secularization and de-secularization, both at the level of state-religion relationships and in everyday life, in the modern Turkish society.

Moreover, I do not embrace a pure Marxian commodification theory in this study. For instance, in the first decades of ceremonies, many religious people raised in *Mevlevi* lodges or other Sufi lodges performed as *semâzens*[2] and musicians.

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[2] The whirling dervishes who perform *sema.*

Moreover, I saw in my interviews with some *semâ* performers that, at the micro level, many people involved in these events have religious motivations such as spreading Islam via a good representation of Sufism. I argue that, in this case, authenticity and fakeness of the ritual are more complex than a pure linear commodification theory proposes.

1.2. The Literature and Methodology

In my research I draw on the concepts I derived from disparate theoretical approaches, rather than applying a specific theory to my case. Within this framework, I used performance theories of Erving Goffman (1956) and Jeffrey Alexander (2006) to analyze the *semâ* as a performative event. Here Goffman's discussions on "self" and "stage" are used for the micro theoretical level questions. Alexander's theory of cultural pragmatics and his discussions on authenticity, fusion, and de-fusion are central to my description of *semâ* show-rituals in the context of its background representations, scripts, texts which were historically determined in the context of the relationships between text, actor, and audience. Alexander's model is quite suitable for my case because of its historical and performative cultural sociology approach that takes power relations into account.

In addition, to explore the hybridity and historical transformation of Rumi image and the commemoration performances in terms of meaning, Edward Said's critique of Orientalism (2003), Coronil's Occidentalism debate (1996), Bourdieu's concept of the "principles of vision and division" (1985) and Jusdanis' discussion on "belated modernity" are used as key conceptual tools. I have also used historical sociologist Michael Mann's (1993) theory of the modern state to display power relationships between actors in the field and state's position as an actor in these relationships.

I also draw on the secondary literature on Turkish modernization and secularization, which is rich in content and diverse in perspective (e.g. Kafadar 1992, Gürbilek 2003, Lamprou 2015, Kara 2008, 2011, 2014, Ardıç 2012, Eligür 2010, Cagaptay 2006, Kenanoğlu 2004, Karpat 2001 etc.) as well as the rather thin literature on the Sufi and especially *Mevlevi* tradition in Turkey (e.g. Gölpınarlı 1983, 2006, Kara 2002, 2015, Silverstein 2011, Küçük 2007, Behar 2014, Kılıç 2009, Şahin 2015, Önder 1998,

Köstüklü 2010, Kreiser 2004 etc.) to locate my case in the socio-historical context of modern Turkey and the development of Sufi lodges during the Republican period.

This is an analytical-narrative historical study where I work with analytical categorizations without neglecting the chronological narrative of the events. I have a focus on the history of commemoration of Mevlânâ Celaleddin Rûmi ceremonies, both historical and performative sides, from the 1940s to today. With the neoliberal transformation of Turkey after 1980, the dynamics behind the story have become very complex, so I have had to take into account such dynamics as the rise of New Age and spirituality, reproduction of a national Turkish history, the continuation and the resistance of forbidden Sufi religious identities, Sufi "self" produced in the Republican era, institutionalization of ceremonies, commodification of tradition and the effect of the spread of mass media in the 1970s.

On the other hand, my methods include discourse analysis, document analysis, observation and in-depth interview. I have used both primary and secondary sources. I made use of memoirs and letters of *semâ* performers, conference speeches, and newspaper articles on the events concerning *Mevlevi* ceremonies, as well as the interviews through which I have collected the raw data and produced discursive categorizations.

Because the number of memoirs and letters published is not enough, they require confirmation of other people; thus I have conducted interviews with some *Mevlevis* that had a role in the establishment of ceremonies and attended to ceremonies as performers for many years. Their personal experiences and feelings towards the ceremonies were necessary to have a more informed discussion. The collective memory of performers must be as thick as possible for the purposes of my study. I followed snowball sampling strategy by finding Sufi networks. So I wrote a biography of Sadettin Heper (2015), one of the first leading figures of the ceremonies until his death in 1980, before this thesis so that I have a sense these networks – and get to know some of the actors in this field. I already had some contacts with such Sufi leaders as Cüneyt Kosal, Hüseyin Top, Tuğrul İnançer, and Emin Işık as a result of this

biography work. I did further interviews in Konya and Istanbul with the help of Celaleddin Çelik and Merve Nur Kayhan and my previous interviewees. Moreover, Abdi Coşkun, Nuri Şimşekler, and Muhammet Ali Orak supported me by sharing the digitalized books, photographs, and local newspapers they have in their archives (for which I am thankful to them).

My interviews were in-depth and semi-structured; I prepared some questions to be able to understand their ideas towards the foundation of the commemorations, the state intervention and bureaucratization of ceremonies, and the authenticity and originality of the ceremonies. Also, I tried to give them free space so that I understand what their main concerns are, and see what they prioritize and how they express them. I knew that I was an outsider and not aware of their problems about Mevlevilik and the Rumi commemorations fully; therefore, semi-structured interview type was a better choice than a fully-structured one. Also, I believe that it helped to relieve them because when I listened to their own concerns, they were inclined to speak more and willing to answer more questions which made my interviews more "in-depth". During the interviews, I learned things that I could have never thought of asking, and found new questions. Another problem was the references I used. Many interviewees asked me the persons I made interviews before them and how I had met with my references. They wanted to understand my aim and whether I was a member of a Sufi group or not, and the direction of my opinions on Sufism. In addition, my interviewees were accustomed to answering historical and intellectual questions about *Mevlevilik* and Sufism so that I sometimes had a little problem of going beyond these theoretical issues during the interviews.

I have done fifteen interviews for my study; among my interviewees, Abdüssettar Yarar, Ahmet Çalışır, Fahri Özçakıl, Mustafa Çıpan, Nuri Şimşekler and Selahaddin Hidayetoğlu have served as government officials in the organization of the ceremonies. Cüneyt Kosal, Hüseyin Öksüz, Ahmet Çalışır, Hüseyin Top and Tuğrul İnançer have served in ceremonies as musicians for years. Fahri Özçakıl, Faruk Hemdem Çelebi, and Mustafa Holat were in charge as *semâzens*. I talked to the

current *çelebi*[3] and the head of International Mevlana Foundation (UMV), Faruk Hemdem Çelebi, *çelebi*'s mother Güzide Çelebi and his sister and the vice-president of the UMV, Esin Çelebi Bayru. Five of my interviewees were *postnişins*[4] who hold *icazet* (permission) from the last two çelebis: Emin Işık, Hüseyin Top, Fahri Özçakıl, Mustafa Holat and Tuğrul İnançer.

Now, further information on my interviewees might be useful to explain why I have chosen them. In my first fieldwork in Konya during the ceremonies of 2015, I started with Dr. Nuri Şimşekler, a Persian instructor at a university, and a researcher on Rumi and *Mevlevilik* who is also an active member of the UMV. The second day, I went to see Dr. Selahaddin Hidayetoğlu, a Rumi descendant, a former university professor and the first director of the Konya Sufi Music Ensemble. Then I visited Mustafa Holat, the first official *postnişin* of Konya Sufi Music Ensemble and a retired *semâzen*. The third day, I went to see Ahmet Çalışır (his son, Taha Çalışır helped me reach him), a hafız[5]-musician and the art director of the Konya Ensemble, then saw the director and the current postnişin of the Konya Ensemble, Fahri Özçakıl. In the evening, I visited Hüseyin Öksüz, a calligrapher and a former *ney* player from Konya, who served ceremonies as a musician and also wrote *icazets* of some current *Mevlevi* sheiks. In September 2015, I visited Cüneyt Kosal in Istanbul, a *kanun* player who served in *Mevlevi* ceremonies for years and was a musician of the Istanbul Historical Turkish Music Ensemble. Then, again in Istanbul, in January 2016, I went to see Ömer Tuğrul İnançer, a well-known Sufi, the current leader of *Cerrahi* Sufi order, a musician, and one of the head speakers of the Rumi ceremonies for many years. In the following week, I visited Hüseyin Top, a hafız, the *imam* (prayer leader) of Beylerbeyi Hamid-i Evvel Mosque, a musician who sang in *ayin* ceremonies, a disciple of *Mevlevi* sheikh Midhat Bahari Beytur, and the current *sertarik* (head sheikh) of *Mevlevilik*. Then, we had a meeting with Faruk Hemdem Çelebi (via Celaleddin Çelik), the current head of

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[3] A title used for the descendants of Rumi, and the traditional administrative head of Mevlevilik, who was in charge of managing Mevlevi foundation until the 1925 ban. The Çelebi title is one of the forbidden titles according to the 1925 law, but it is still used and symbolically transferred from one generation to the next.
[4] The sheikh who leads the ceremony, originally means "the person who sits on fur"
[5] Person who has memorized the Quran.

Mevlevis and Rumi descendants after his father Celaleddin Bakır Çelebi's death. Çelebi arranged another meeting for me, with his mother, Güzide Çelebi. Then, I visited Esin Çelebi Bayru, Faruk Çelebi's sister, during my second travel to Konya. In addition, I was able to see two directors of Cultural Affairs, the current director Abdüssettar Yarar (he was not yet in charge at the time), and Mustafa Çıpan (who was the director at that time). Lastly, I talked to another Mevlevi sheikh, Prof. Emin Işık, a disciple of Midhat Bahari Beytur, *hafız* and *imam* similar to his close friend Hüseyin Top.

In addition to the interviews, I used published memoirs and conference speeches, newspaper articles (from Milliyet, Tercüman and Yeni Konya Newspapers), and documentaries as primary sources. I made categorizations by using document analysis and discourse analysis methods. First, I searched the annual Rumi conference speeches. One of them, the first conference in 1942 seemed exciting in terms of Rumi portrayals so I decided to write a section on the discourse analysis of the published speeches of 1942 Rumi commemoration (in Chapter IV). Document analysis is a method of investigating both textually and visually produced documents, such as books, brochures, memoirs, event programs, letters, newspapers, and radio and TV programs (Bowen 2009). Analyzing documents enriched my data, verified my findings, and tracked the change of the events and attitudes of the statesmen by using these documents. I mainly used this method together with discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is a qualitative method "concerned with the ways in which language constructs and mediates social and psychological realities" (Willig 2014: 341). Effectively used by Foucault (1972), this method has been widely applied in textual analysis. I have particularly made use of his concepts of discursive strategy and episteme in my analysis of primary texts and the transcripts of my interviews. To understand the intellectuals' frames of Rûmî, I analyzed the way they defined and contextualized Rûmî by looking at the words they used. This brought basic categories to explain the state-side and Sufi- side legitimizations of Rûmî that brought new frames for defining Mevlevî semâ ceremonies. In the following section of exploring the discourses on Rûmî, I did another discourse analysis on the perception of semâ ceremonies by interviewees and authors in terms of its authenticity.

1.3. Organization

This study consists of five chapters: After the introductory chapter (Chapter I), I discuss the evolution of *Mevlevi*lik and *semâ* (Chapter II), then analyze the negotiation of the Mevlevi semâ and its institutionalization (Chapter III), and rising visibility and debates on its authenticity (Chapter IV) before ending with my conclusion (Chapter V).

The following chapter on "Evolution of *Mevlevilik* and *Semâ*" includes historical background of *Mevlevî* order and *semâ* practice, their origin and terminology. Here, I explore the historical background of the order and its relationships to politics, focusing on the late-Ottoman and Republican periods. I discuss what has changed for Sufi people and for the state with the ban of 1925 under the Kemalist regime.

The third chapter, first of the two analytical chapters, presents my analysis of the legitimization process of the *Mevlevi semâ* after 1925. This chapter consists of two sections on "Actors Negotiating *Semâ*: the State, NGOs and Mevlevis" and "Bureaucratization and Co-optation of *Semâ*," which are organized according to the historical narrative. In the first section, I explore the relational positioning of actors in the field of Sufism in Turkey and how *semâ* performances were discussed and legitimized in the first two decades of the ceremonies, until the 1970s. The second section predominantly covers the dynamics of the ceremonies after the 1970s, which were diversified with the neoliberal politics. In this second section, I focused on the effects of the macro policies, bureaucratization of the ceremonies, and the politicians' attitudes as well as the strategies adopted by Mevlevi authorities under these circumstances. In this chapter, I also discuss the effects of institutional actors in the process of legitimizing the ceremonies and making them more visible and look at the consequences of the process of its becoming a state institution.

The fourth chapter is on the visibility and authenticity of the *semâ* ceremonies. It, too, includes two analytical sections titled "Public Visibility through Tourism and Media", and "Production of Authenticity: the Real and the Artificial". In this chapter, I mainly examine the meaning dimension of the *semâ*, focusing on the intellectual

claims on *Mevlevilik*, the image of *Rumî*, and *semâ* performances. In the first section, I start with a discussion on Rumi's image in the very first *Rumî* commemoration ceremony in 1942, which was a turning point for the whole legitimization and popularization endeavor. (This section includes excerpts from my recently published article, Sağlam 2017). Here, I make a theoretical discussion on the effects of orientalism and hybridity in the intellectual field of early Republican period by using various primary texts written during this period on Rumi. The next section entails the international dimension of rising visibility of Rumi image and New Age movement. Lastly, I examine the popularization process of the ceremonies after the 1970s including its commodification, with the effect of its rising visibility on television and radio. The fourth section is on the authenticity claims and discussions over the perceptions of realness or fakeness of the *Şeb-i Arus semâ* performances.

In the concluding chapter, I summarize my findings and their contributions to the existing literature. Also, I review my questions, evaluate my answers and produce new questions for further studies. I hope to make a contribution to scholarly debates on such topics as performance and ritual, institutionalization and bureaucratization, commodification, legitimacy and authenticity, and in the end, Turkish modernization.

CHAPTER II

EVOLUTION OF *MEVLEVI*LIK AND *SEMÂ*

2.1. Mevlânâ Celâleddîn Rûmî and the *Mevlevî* Order

Rûmî was a 13th-century Islamic scholar, a jurist, a Sufi sheikh, and a poet. According to the historical data available, when he was young he migrated with his family from Balkh to Konya, the center of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum. His father Bahaeddin Veled was a famous Sufi sheikh and Islamic scholar of the time. Rûmî, however, became one of the most influential sheikhs of all times. His writings, especially his magnum opus *Mesnevî* became essential Sufi texts –even annotating *Mesnevî* became a tradition among various Sufi orders (Lewis 2008: 480).

After the death of Rûmî, the *Mevlevî* Sufi Order was established in Konya, by Rûmî's eldest son Sultan Veled and other Rûmî followers. After the fall of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum and the rise of the Ottomans, the order formed strong ties with the Ottoman Palace, being a major Sufi group together with the Bektaşi and Halveti orders. Some sultans, such as Selim III and Mehmed V, and many other statesmen were known as disciples of the order. Some Sufi orders, such as Bektaşi, *Mevlevî*, Halvetî, and Nakşibendîs, were supported by the state and state elites, in return, they supported the state in terms of legitimacy, security, public relief and religious propaganda (Lifchez 1992). The Mevlevi order was one of those that enjoyed the highest level of support, so much so that it almost became a state organization in the 17th century due to its close ties with sultans, viziers, pashas and *beys*, and their financial support (Küçük 2007, Kılıç 2009).

The *Mevlevî* order had an urban and elite character. Çelebi family was a dynasty older than Ottomans in Anatolia. *Mevlevis* were small in number but powerful in terms of closeness to the sultan. Historically, urban Sufi orders functioned as centers of art and culture. Among them, *Mevlevis* were specialized in music and literature. The special musical pieces called "*Mevlevî* âyini" that were designed for the whirling ritual called *"semâ mukâbelesi"* or *"semâ âyini"* are indications of how involved they were

in music. Also, their mastery over the literary works of Rûmî and *Mesnevî* annotation tradition help them enjoy a respected status in the field of literature. Thus the five Mevlevi lodges located in Istanbul were among the most important centers of "high culture" of the empire, which was one of the reasons for their closeness to the Ottoman elite. (Lewis 2008: 426)

As a result of their proximity to the palace, especially in the 19ᵗʰ and early 20ᵗʰ centuries, Mevlevis were actively involved in politics as well. Many Mevlevi sheiks supported the constitutional movement of the Committee of Union and Progress (Küçük 2007, Lewis 2008). Likewise, a Mevlevi sheikh, Osman Selahaddin Dede (1819-1886) was an effective person who helped the rise of both Sultan Abdülhamit II (1842-1918) and Midhat Paşa (1822-1884) (Küçük 2007). Thus, they often tried to be part of the power elite shaping the Ottoman politics in the last decades of the empire (Lewis 2008: 503). In return, the political centre became effective in the appointment of sheikhs and Çelebis (Kılıç 2009: 22-23).

2.1.1. Traditional Transmission and Legitimacy

In all Sufi orders, it is believed that there are *silsiles*, the chains of transmission of esoteric secret knowledge, affection, and ways of establishing intimacy with God. These *silsiles* starts from the Prophet Mohammed and his prominent companions and comes to today. It is argued that their prayers vary according to the type of their *silsile*. While some groups had silent *zikirs* (remembrances) by imagining and whispering mutely, other groups practiced loud *zikirs* in company with hymns and instruments. The silent remembrances are considered as transmitted from Abu Bakr's practices, and loud remembrances from Ali's practices. According to *Sipehsalar*'s treatise, *Mevlevilik* is an order originally coming from the silsile of Ali (Lewis 2008: 247). To this narrative, Rumi derived practices and beliefs from the past predecessors and reproduced them. His followers produced a new order based on Rumi's heritage. In this system, what is legitimate is always historical. Mevlevis rarely appreciated new inventions, as many other orders, they legitimized their practices by arguing that it is the practice of Rumi, or the Prophet, or another important figure in the *silsile*.

This historical legitimacy is indeed full of mythology. First of all, when we look at the sources, we see that the main sources on Rumi's life and practices are two hagiographic books: the treatise of *Sipehsalar* and *Menakıb-ül Arifin* of *Ahmed Eflâki*. Lewis finds *Sipehsalar* soberer than Eflâki (2008: 243), but both are composed of stories about Rumi and his family, transmitted from generation to generation by the Mevlevis. It means the sources are limited and the knowledge about Rumi is mythological. On the other hand, as Lewis mentioned, these sources are accepted as authentic and never criticised by scholars of Rumi and Mevlevilik, such as Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı and Bediüzzaman Fürûzanfer.

Among many other scholars, Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı has a special place. He was a person who saw last Mevlevis of Istanbul, and he wanted to inscribe all he knew about this culture to save the knowledge from being disappear. As a result of the ban, and the museumification of Rumi's tomb and Konya lodge, Mevlevilik became a past history and he registered what he saw in detail to produce "scientific-historical" knowledge. His book on Mevlevi customs and codes (2006 [1963]) became a source for the contemporary Mevlevis. On the one hand, Gölpınarlı tried to enable the transmission of details about Mevlevi customs, manners, and codes, he produced some standardizations open to critique.

Gölpınarlı's parents were *Mevlevis* and he became a *Mevlevi* disciple when he was an 8-year-old boy (Sayar 2013: 93). His books on *Mevlevilik* were the first sources published in Latin alphabet. Many looked at these books to learn the codes and manners of *Mevlevi* order to shape the ceremonies. As I learned from my published memoir sources and interviews, the organizers of the Rumi commemorations in the Republican period always carried a concern of originality and authenticity. On the other hand, Gölpınarlı was not the only source, the oral transmission of the codes and practices was also a significant source of information on the commemorations. For instance, Hüseyin Top, a contemporary *Mevlevi* leader, compared what he learned from *Mevlevis* he saw, such as Midhat Bahari Beytur and Selman Tüzün with Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı's comments while writing his book on *Mevlevi* codes and manners (2007). In terms of practicing *semâ*, Gölpınarlı is not the only source but his

pieces are still effectively used. His works have a more powerful authority in the academic realm, despite the emergence of more comprehensive and critical works done like Franklin Lewis' magnum opus "Rumi" (2008).

2.1.2. Rumi Commemorations: Şeb-i Arûs

Meaning "the night of union", *Şeb-i Arus* is a time of remembering the death of Rumi. Sufi people had celebrated his death anniversary every year on *Cemaziyülahir*[6] 5 for centuries. On these nights, *Mevlevis* gathered in *mevlevihanes* and performed *semâ*. In the Republican period, it started to be celebrated under the title of Rumi commemorations according to the Gregorian calendar, on every December 17. In the Republican period, the first large commemoration of Rumi was held in Konya in 1942. It was attended by many intellectuals, from Mevlevi disciples and sheiks to university professors and statesmen. The Konya Community Center organized these first commemorations, which mainly consisted of mainly academic speeches on Rumî and Mevlevî culture. Muhlis Koner, the mayor of Konya and also a descendent of Rumi and a Mevlevî, was one of the supporters. There were no *semâ* performances or wearing traditional costumes at that time, but at the end of the 1940s, Mevlevî music was added to the program. In 1954, the first public semâ with traditional costumes was performed in Konya. It seems that the end of the single-party regime in 1950 was an important turning point for the commemorations. The Democratic Party leadership was more open to Islamic and Sufi elements; therefore, Sufis and organizers could find enough courage to perform the *semâ* performances publicly with the traditional clothes and headgear. However, these performances were not allowed to be conducted in lodges. Instead, public libraries, cinema halls, and sports centers were the places of the ceremonies. Performers were people raised in lodges, mainly the Mevlevi lodges of Afyon, Kütahya, and also some Rufai and Halveti lodges. They were able to achieve this as a result of a process of complex negotiations.

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[6] Jumada al-Thani, the sixth month of the Islamic calendar

2.2. Turkish Modernization and Sufism

2.2.1. Sufis and the Ottoman Modernization

The relationship between the Sufi circles and the political authority throughout the Ottoman history has been an important topic of discussion. There were conflicts as well as alliances but the accommodation between two entities was in the foreground. There were some reasons to their alliances and conflicts. For the political leaders, besides their personal sympathies, many political leaders behaved respectfully to the popular and influential Sufis of their time to achieve centralization and sustain their political legitimacy in front of people (Ocak 2011: 63). Some Sufi orders, such as Bektaşî, Mevlevî, Halvetî and Nakşibendî orders, were supported by the state and state elites and such orders supported the state in terms of legitimacy, security, public relief and religious propaganda (Barkan 1942). Allying with these prominent orders was important for the Ottoman state against the Safevî religious propaganda of Shi'ism (Ocak 2011: 68). On the other hand, the power relations between Sufis and Ottomans produced some conflicts. Mevlevis, as one of the closest Sufi groups to the state, had some conflicts, too. The Ottoman state took all Sufi orders and their income from their foundations, under control. The state sometimes involved in internal issues of the orders, such as çelebi and sheikh appointments. At the same time, Mevlevi çelebis sometimes used their symbolic and cultural power to act independently and this also created conflicts (Ocak 2011: 69-70).

Sufism has always been a subject of discussion, and sometimes an object of criticism among Islamic scholars. However, criticisms have generally been partial concerning practices or ideas and were not as radical as those of contemporary Islamic-modernist and Salafi intellectuals or groups. The respect many Sufi orders enjoyed in the Ottoman milieu have faced certain changes in the course of time. In the pre-modern period, there was a ban on whirling performances that lasted eighteen years (Küçük 2007) during the *Kadızadeli* movement in the 17th century, which was opposed to certain features of Sufism. However, this was an exceptional period and the criticisms were only partial. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the locus of the criticisms towards Sufism was not music or dance. The central points of the accusations were corruption and "inertia" –i.e. the idea that Sufism led people to

laziness and political inactivism. As Kara (2014) demonstrates, the critique of Sufism centered on its alleged incompatibility with modernity and being a cause of disunity of the Muslim World. According to the intellectuals of the 19th and 20th century who are critical of Sufism, such as Said Halim Paşa (1865-1921), Musa Kâzım Efendi (1858-1920), Halim Sabit Şibay (1883-1946), Ahmed Hamdi Akseki (d.1951), Sufism was corrupt, superstitious, irrational, unscientific, and a major cause of economic backwardness and laziness in the society. For, it was a fatalist ideology suggesting a passive lifestyle and preventing the scientific and socio-economic development of the country. Also, by segregating Muslim people through sects (*tarikat*), it prevented the unity of Muslims (Kara 2014: 350-366). Although "passivity" was previously defined as "frugality", as a social and religious virtue, it began to be identified with "laziness" in this period, which was of course un-Islamic. This change reflects the ideal and psychological consequences of the defeated and relatively underdeveloped Ottoman state vis-à-vis the rise of the Europeans in the eyes of the elite. Intellectuals were trying to see what was lacking in "the East", what was preventing the achievement of "progress". Moreover, these criticisms were based on a stereotypical Sufism explanation, influenced by orientalist studies. According to the context of such studies, Sufi orders were representative of a despotic eastern authority, Sufis were passive and fatalist, and Sufism was religiously and culturally not open to development (Kara 2014). The orientalist literature categorized Sufis as a homogeneous and other-worldly entity:

> Idealised presentations of Sufism as the history of pious mystics and orders more or less separated from society in a world of beautiful poetry and rituals, or as abstract outlines of universalist and essentialist mysticism, have played a vital role in the history of Orientalism. (Raudvere & Stenberg 2009: 2)

The orientalist standardization and portrayal of Sufism became an important source to reproduce the approaches of Ottoman intellectuals to these religious institutions. They found them useless for an anticipated "developed" future. The Ottoman intellectuals were making their arguments according to this new epistemological field, increasing the hierarchical priority of terms such as "growth", "activity", "development" and "progress" as oppose to "frugality".

2.2.2. Sufis and the New Regime

Despite modern criticisms of Sufism, many Sufi sheiks in Istanbul supported modernist movements, including Mustafa Kemal and the new Republican regime established in 1920-23. In fact, many Sufi leaders and Islamic scholars were members of the first National Parliament in Ankara (1920-22). The dominant ideology of the new state was accommodating modernity and Islam at that time. However, though the official religion was declared as Islam in the constitution of 1924, elimination politics became dominant against Islamic institutions and actors starting from the second National Parliament. The abolition of the Caliphate and the Ministry of Sharia and Pious Foundations (1924) was followed by a ban on Sufi Centres and *Tarikats* in 1925, by the Law No. 677 (the translation in Lewis 2008: 465 revised and used):

> Article 1: All of the Sufi lodges in the Republic of Turkey, whether pious endowments, personal property or sheikhs, or by whether other arrangements founded, will be closed and the right of ownership suspended. Those which are being used as mosques may continue in their present form. All religious titles – Sheikh, dervish, disciple, Dede, Çelebi, Sayyed, Baba, Naqib, Caliph, fortune-teller, sorcerer, healer, prayer-writer for helping people acquire their desires, and all manner of occupations of this sort, as well as the wearing of dervish garments, are forbidden. The graves of sultans and the shrines of dervishes are closed and the occupation of shrine custodian is voided. All persons who reopen closed-down Sufi lodges or shrines and allow performing *ayins* or those people who use mystical titles to attract followers or serve them will be sentenced to at least three months in prison and a fine of 50 lira.
> Article 2: This law will take effect immediately.
> Article 3: The government will be responsible to implement the law.

In 1928, the statement that Islam was the official religion of the Republic was removed from the Constitution; instead, laicism was gradually established as the official vision of the state. Some Islamic scholars and Sufi leaders were prosecuted, such as Esad Erbîlî (d.1930) and Said Nursî (d.1960) and even executed as in the case of İskilipli Âtıf Hoca (d.1926). Sufi orders lost their public visibility, legitimacy, and reputation after these changes (Silverstein 2011: 88). However, some of the great historical figures kept their legitimacy and reputation both in the eyes of the political elite and the people. According to this new discourse, Sufism as practiced had been corrupted but the "real" and "authentic" great Sufis of the nostalgic past were innocent. It thus separated these legendary Sufis from their institutionalized legacies

and their followers. One of these great Sufîs, perhaps the most prominent one, was Mevlânâ Celaleddin Rûmî.

According to a memory taken from Sadi Borak's book "Atatürk ve Din" (Atatürk and Religion) (2004), Mustafa Kemal called Mevlânâ a "reformist" who accommodated Islam, which is a "tolerant" and "modern" religion, into "the spirit of Turks" in one of his meetings with the statesmen and intellectuals at the Çankaya Presidential Mansion. This was a new interpretation of Mevlânâ, such adjectives as "reformist", "tolerant", and "modern" came to the fore in the new narrative on Rumi of the modernizing elite in Turkey. The Mevlevis' central lodge in Konya, where Rumî's tomb is located, became a museum, renamed "*Konya Âsâr-ı Atika Müzesi*" (Konya Museum of Historical Works) in 1926. This was the first immediate museumification of the Republic, even before the museumification of Hagia Sophia. The new state interpreted the tomb and the lodge in a novel manner, according to its political and religious strategies. A part of the *Mevlevî* heritage, old books and traditional clothes of Mevlevi people were displayed here. However, the vitality of the lodge ended as it turned to a historical building. As Foucault reminds us, naming something is an exercise of power over it. The state uses its apparatuses and changes names of places, reshapes, orders, and governs the territory. On the other hand, the Turkish Republic was not the only power center, and it did not completely eliminate the historical and structural power of Sufi institutions, which helped shape the religious atmosphere in the country for centuries. For people started visiting a museum and a tomb of a holy sheikh simultaneously. This hybrid character of the lodge/museum is discursively and symbolically functional as an instance of the accommodation between the religious and the secular. The same hybridity could be seen in the intellectual field as intellectuals from different backgrounds had various interpretations about Rûmî.

According to Rüya Kılıç (2009), the approaches of Mevlevis to the ban was various. She examines five prominent Mevlevis of the time: Abdülhalim Çelebi, Veled Çelebi İzbudak, Ahmet Remzi Akyürek, Abdülbaki Baykara and Tahir Olgun (Tahir'ül Mevlevî) (2009: 92). While Abdülhalim Çelebi and Veled Çelebi İzbudak, two prominent *çelebis* were close to the new political center and in accordance with the secularization

politics of the Republic, Akyürek refused to be a parliament member and lived away from politics, as the chief officer of the Selim Ağa Library (. He embraced a silent and moderate opposition to the political situation. Baykara was another opposing figure, he expressed the sorrow he felt after the abolition of lodges and how he could not accustom to this change in his life (Kılıç 2009: 100). Olgun was also uncomfortable with the state policies of reforming Islam. On the other hand, these opposing sheikhs never directly challenged the state itself or its laws. As Kılıç and some other authors (e.g. Kara 2008) expressed, obedience and accommodation were more powerful than the opposition. It was close to their political tradition: sometimes *Mevlevis* had conflicts with the sultans, but their custom of obedience to the Ottoman state was always more dominant (Kılıç 2009: 71-72).

CHAPTER III

NEGOTIATION AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF *SEMÂ*

3.1. Actors Negotiating the Sema: the State, NGOs and Mevlevis

Despite the Turkish Republic's ban on Sufism, the Mevlevi order's *sema* ceremony became a symbol of modern Turkey in the 1970s. In this part, I question how this legitimacy was achieved and how it was negotiated, despite the formal ban on religious ceremonies. I look at the foundation period of the ceremonies, between 1950 and 1970, and examine primary sources from the period to determine peoples' ideas on the meaning of the ceremonies.

There was no *semâ* performances or traditional costumes in the first commemorations, but at the end of the 40s, *Mevlevî* music was added to the program. In 1954, the first public *semâ* with traditional costumes was performed in Konya. It seems that the end of the single-party regime in 1950 was an important turning point for the events. Democratic Party leadership was more open to Islamic and Sufi elements. Sufis and organizers could find enough courage to perform the *semâ* performances publicly with the traditional clothes and headgears. On the other hand, the performances were not allowed in lodges. Public libraries, cinema halls, and sports centers were the places of the ceremonies. Performers were people raised in lodges, mainly *Mevlevi* lodges of Afyon, Kütahya, and İstanbul and also some Rufai and Halveti lodges.

3.1.1. Examining the Turkish State as an Actor

In this paper, I will use Michael Mann's discussions of state theories and his theory of the modern state formation (Mann 1993) to examine the relationship between the Turkish state and the Mevlevi order. Mann critically overviews five existent approaches to the state—class, pluralist true elitist, institutional statist, and foul-up theories, then proposes his own "organizational-materialist" theory of the modern state based on his well-known "four sources of power" theory (Mann 1986). In his account, the state is neither a unitary system with a higher rationality and a full-scale

agency nor a passive apparatus in the service of dominant classes. Nor is it an empty place that reflects various groups in society and their interests through political parties. The state is "both an actor and a place" (of struggle) for state elites. Moreover, the modern state has autonomy but it is never absolute, as different groups penetrate into it to some extent. State elites are also civilians and plural with various social identities and interests – bureaucrats, party leaders, government members or military commanders etc. (Mann 1993: 51).

When I apply Mann's arguments for state autonomy, state elites, and rational interests to the case of the Turkish state and its approaches to Sufi culture and groups between 1950 and 1970, I see that it did act as both a place and an actor. State elites were not unitary, either: they had different backgrounds and social identities. We can argue that on the one hand Sufis were unwanted subjects of state authority given the ban in 1925 and other prohibitions related to Sufi culture such as calligraphy and music. On the other hand, Sufis were also part of the state. For example, Veled Çelebi İzbudak, a Mevlevi sheikh was very close to Kemal Atatürk, and a member of Turkish Parliament for almost 20 years (1924-1943); he also worked for the Turkish Language Association until his death (Korucuoğlu 1994: 19). He was among the first people who wore a modern hat after the "Hat Revolution" of the state in 1925. Sufis were generally obedient (or pretended to be obedient) to the new regime. The Sufi-statesman Hasan Ali Yücel is a good example of the plural character of the state. He was not only the minister of education from 1938 to 1946, but also the founder of the Turkish education system and an influential figure in cultural life in Turkey. He was a member of the state elite with a Sufi background, though – his family was Mevlevî. A committee founded by Yücel made the translations and the publications of some of the Sufi classics such as Kuşeyri Risalesi, Mesnevi, Füsus-ul Hikem, Gülşen-i Raz, Bostan, and Gülistan possible. While the Kemalist state forbade the Sufi lodges, the books of famous Sufis were published in the single party period (Kara 2002: 17), mostly under his supervision. Yücel was thus a part of the state formation and a supporter of the new secularist regime, but he was different in terms of his identity and social background which he brought into the state. Although the official ideology, the state as an actor, did not allow Sufism, the latter was somehow accommodated

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within the state by a portion of the state elite led by Yücel. Also, his support and attendance to the "academic" Rumi commemorations when he was a minister was important for the legitimization of the Mevlevi order in Turkey.

3.1.2. Actors of the Ceremonies

In the following sections, I will explore the actors of the ceremonies as they were involved in three main aspects of ceremonies: organization, performance, and audience. In these parts of the ceremonies, the meaning of the ceremonies was negotiated between different actors. Also, the meaning of the ceremonies was itself negotiated differently during these three processes. In general, they are interdependent and people involved in them often played multiple roles in the construction of these ceremonies.

3.1.2.1. Organization

3.1.2.1.1. Statesmen and State Institutions

The Rumi commemoration ceremonies started under the supervision of a governmental institution, a community center, and the attendance of statesmen and the collaboration of state institutions were always important for their organization. This conscious effort by the Sufis to be appropriated by the state shows us how fragile their organization was. For example, in 1945 the president of the Konya Community Center who was the organizer wrote an article about the second commemoration event in a local newspaper in which he highlighted the permission and support of the governmental institutions: "Our attempt received a warm response and an approval from the Republican government and its Ministry of National Education and the Rectorate of Istanbul University." (Ağaoğlu 2013: 26) [7]

Statesmen's attendance at the ceremonies indeed goes back to the first commemoration in 1942. Hasan Ali Yücel's letter for the event was a beginning. Then, we see in a local newspaper that two ministers, Tevfik İleri and Rüknettin Nasuhioğlu,

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[7] My translation. The original sentence in Turkish reads: "Bu teşebbüsümüz Cumhuriyet Hükümetince ve onun Milli Eğitim Bakanlığınca, İstanbul Üniversitesi Rektörlüğünce çok iyi karşılandı ve uygunluk cevabı verildi."

and a parliament member, Ömer Rıza Doğrul, declared that they would attend the ceremonies. Such a high-level attendance shows that the new government of the Democrat Party, a party closer to religious groups than the People's Party, was quite interested in the Rumi commemoration.

Later in 1954, a committee for the organization of the ceremonies under the supervision of the governor of Konya was established. In the same year, the state press agency made a film of an "authentic" ceremony in the Konya Mevlevi lodge to use as a touristic material (Ağaoğlu 2013: 95). In 1955 Mevlevi and famous journalist Refi' Cevad Ulunay noted that more than a hundred parliament members and ambassadors attended the ceremonies (Ulunay 1955, via Ağaoğlu 2013: 121). In 1956 a parliament member, Osman Turan, made a speech about the importance of the Mevlevi order in Turkish history (Ulunay 1956, via Ağaoğlu 2013: 138). The Minister of Education, Tevfik İleri, was also a supporter of the ceremonies. In 1957, he declared that that year would have to be brighter and larger because thousands of visitors from many countries would not be satisfied with only a brief commemoration (Ağaoğlu 2013: 150). In 1957, more parliament members and a NATO military commander attended the ceremonies. The first military officer who made a speech was General Müslüm Gür, in 1959. The attendance and speeches by ministers became a regular part of the commemoration in these years. After the 1960 coup d'état, the ceremonies of the year became more interesting. Eight members of the National Unity Committee (the military committee of the coup d'état), eleven ministers, and ambassadors participated. The sports hall where the performances were held was sealed off by military forces for the first time. The Chief of the General Staff, Cevdet Sunay, also participated in 1964. Considering the powerful political position of the military until recent times in Turkey, we should view the participation and the approval of the military generals as a form of state support. In these years, also, the Ministry of Tourism kept supporting the ceremonies by publishing the brochures containing information about the program. Moreover, as Minister Ali İhsan Göğüş announced in 1964, the ceremonies started to be performed in September, as the birthday of Rumi, to be able to host the increasing number of guests in better weather conditions, though the December commemorations also continued because

of high demand. Also, it is noted in a newspaper article that Göğüş thanked Konya Tourism Association for organizing the ceremonies in a touristic sense, as it was supposed to be. (Ağaoğlu 2013: 307)

The first prime minister to attend the ceremonies was Süleyman Demirel, who was present in Konya in 1965. The president of the Republican Senate, İbrahim Şevki Atasagun, as well as many other statesmen also accompanied him. A retired major general, Fahrettin Yakal formed a complaint, though to no avail, against Demirel and other statesmen to a prosecutor for attending the Sufi ceremony in the Konya lodge, which he found incompatible with laicism and state laws (Orak 2014: 528). In the same year, the army commander Cemal Tural wrote in the notebook of the Mevlânâ museum: "…You have been given the highest place in God's havens. Our wish is to reach you" (Ağaoğlu 2013: 383).[8] Here, we see the difference between two attitudes implying the plurality of the state elites' identities and strategies.

Mehmet Önder, a former officer and director of the Mevlana Museum, wrote books on Mevlana and Mevlevi order and became a secretary of culture of the Ministry of Education in 1969. Önder was very close to Mehmed Dede, the last Mevlevi sheikh, who lived and served in the Konya Lodge/ Mevlana museum until his death in 1957 (Uz 2004). Önder was also a bureaucrat with Sufi tendencies. Sufism was not a part of the public policy of the Turkish state but there were statesmen with relations to Sufis and even to the forbidden orders.

The participation and the approval of the statesmen, as well as the financial support of state institutions, was important for the survival and the expansion of the ceremonies. There were people who believed that the ceremonies were against the Republican values, especially laicism, which I will explore in the section about media. The marginalization of these anxious people was achieved by the legitimization statesmen brought to these ceremonies.

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[8] The original text: "Sana Tanrı katında en üstün yer verilmiş. Bizden dilek: sana ermek."

3.1.2.1.2. NGOs and Organizers

The first NGO to organize the events was the *Türk Milliyetçiler Derneği* (Turkish Nationalists Association), which was a nationalist and Islamist group. They organized a *mevlid* recitation in the Sultan Selim Mosque in Istanbul with the participation of many famous *hafız*s (Qur'an reciters) in 1951. Their organization was of a more religious character, and it seems that the attitude of the new government by the Democrat Party enabled these public events.

A second NGO was founded in 1959 for the organization of the ceremonies: the Konya Tourism Association. It became the most active institution in their organization starting from 1960. After Feyzi Halıcı became the president of the association in 1962, he became the most dominant figure in the organization of the ceremonies in the next 25 years. During his tenure, international tours were organized to many countries such as the US, Japan, and France; Halıcı led the initiatives to start programs to raise *semazen*s and musicians in Konya, and started publishing the annual periodical "Mevlana Güldestesi." Also serving as the senator of Konya from 1968 to 1977, he was one of the most hotly criticized persons about the commercialization of the events. For instance, in 1970, Halıcı's attitude about not inviting performers outside Konya including *Mevlevi* people such as Sadettin Heper, because of the economic reasons, publicly criticized in Tercüman newspaper (Tercüman 1970, December 17).

The musical organization was handled by Sadettin Heper and Halil Can, two Mevlevi disciples raised in lodges. These two leaders always tried to balance the tensions between people and the state. Friedlander's work shows that Sadettin Heper insisted on adding a Quran recitation to the ceremonies (Friedlander 1975: 112). One of the performers, Nezih Uzel, explained how the recitation was a significant problem:

> I was sitting together with Nezihi Bey, the chief prosecutor of Konya when the Quran recitation had started. He turned to me and said: "Where does this come from?" I said: "Sir, it is the Quran". "Hoca [Heper] is now going too far," he said. … He said "How lucky is your order!" "There is no order Sir, we are performing

a show." I said. "No, you are clearly performing an ayin, Hoca even added the Quran." (Başara 2007)[9]

This shows us that the character of the performances was questioned according to the content of the ceremony. Adding Quran recitation was breaking the perception that the performance was only a touristic show. For it was a manifestation of the religious side of the performances. In the negotiation of the ceremonies, the Sufi leaders of the ceremonies, especially Heper, seem to have been insistent on nourishing the religious meaning of the ceremonies. While they were trying to sustain the religious aspect, they also tried to avoid an open conflict with the statesmen or officers. As in the following example, they sometimes hid what they did:

> During one of the first semas, the police observed that one of the older dervishes was praying as he turned. After the sema, they reminded Sadettin Heper that semâ was supposed to be for the tourists and not for dervishes. "He is an old man," replied Mr. Heper. "He has no teeth and so his mouth moves up and down when he turns. (Friedlander 1975: 113)

3.1.2.2. Performers: Semâzens and Musicians

In the 1950s there was no school teaching the sema performance and Mevlevi rituals in Turkey. Sema was also a forbidden practice. As we can guess, the first semazens were all members of the forbidden Sufi orders, especially Mevlevis. Other orders using sema in their rituals such as the Rufais and Halvetis also sent their dervishes to commemorations. The performers' list of 1954, prepared by musician Selami Bertuğ, had many notes about performers. For example, Hüsamettin Özlü was listed as "Tarikatçı Dede"[10] and it was noted that he was the sheikh of the Çorum Mevlevihanesi. Hulki Köymen was listed as "Aşçı Dede," Arif Çelebi was a "Mesnevi annotator," and Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı was a "Duâhan", the man of prayer. Thus, the Sufi titles were still used to define the positions. According to Bertuğ's notes, seven semazens were raised in Istanbul's Mevlevi lodges, three were from Sivas, and another three from Afyon (Ağaoğlu 2013: 108). In the same year, Ulunay wrote:

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[9] The original speech in Turkish: "Konya başsavcısı Nezihi Bey ile yanyana oturuyoruz. Kur'an okunmaya başladı mutrıptan. Bana dönüp "bu da nerden çıktı?" Dedi. "Efendim, Kur'an." dedim. "Hoca da artık aşırıya kaçıyor", dedi. ... "Ne kadar şanslı tarikatsınız!" dedi. "Ne tarikatı hocam, biz burada gösteri yapıyoruz" dedim. "Hayır bal gibi ayin yapıyorsunuz, Hoca Kur'an bile koymuş" dedi."

[10] "Dede" is a Sufi title, means "grandfather". *Tarikatçı dede* and *aşçı dede* are Mevlevi titles.

All this is nice but I wonder is there a *naathan* to recite Itrî's *naat*? Is there any Mevlevi left to play the *ayin* music? Where are the dervishes to whirl, to open *tennure*? While I was thinking about these, I saw some indicators in Konya that would make me believe that I should not worry about the groups from different cities. (Ağaoğlu 2013: 101)[11]

It is clear that Ulunay had heard that the performers were "true" dervishes trained in the actual Sufi lodges. Moreover, it seems that Ulunay was seeing the ceremonies as religious events performed by real dervishes. In the first years, it seems that performers were generally Sufi people and they had a belief for the "reality" or "authenticity" of the *ayin*s they performed. In the course of time, some of them changed their opinions as a result of some experiences. Kudsi Erguner, a musician from a Mevlevi family, speaks about an event that took place in the commemorations of 1960:

At first musicians, then *semazens* had appeared on *semahane* and began to wait for sheiks with reverence. A moment later, three sheiks solemnly entered, saluted the dervishes and walked toward the goatskin laid in front of the generals. But the press members had entered to the *semahane* and started to take photos of the sheiks from a very close distance. Even it was a sports hall, the place turns into a *semahane* once the ceremony started so that the entrance of anybody except the dervishes was not allowed. While they must follow this rule, the entrance of a crowd of journalists with dirty shoes suddenly destroyed the balance they protected between the *ayin* and the show. One of the sheiks, Resuhi Baykara, could not stand this violation and let all the journalists out angrily… However, it became apparent that dervishes from Istanbul were performing a real *ayin*, not a show as they had promised.[12] (Erguner 2010: 89-90)

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[11] The original text: "Bütün bunlar güzel… Fakat acaba Itrî'nin Nat'ını okuyacak Na't han var mı? Mutrıbı teşkil edecek Mevleviler kaldı mı? Sema' edecek, tennure açacak derviş nerede? Ben bunları düşünürken Konya'da rastladıklarımdan edindiğim malûmata göre muhtelif vilayetlerden gelen ekiplerin bu endişede pek haklı olmadığıma beni inandıracak emareler görür gibi oldum."

[12] The original text: "The original text: Önce müzisyenler sonra semazenler teker taker semahaneye çıkıp, huşu içinde şeyhlerin gelişini beklemek üzere yerlerini almışlar, az sonra birbirinden heybetli üç şeyh, dervişleri selamladıktan sonra, ağır adımlarla generallerin önüne serilmiş olan pöstekiye doğru ilerlemeye başlamış. Ancak orada bulunan basın mensupları semahanenin ortasına dalıp, şeyhlerin burnuna kadar girerek çekim yapmaya başlamışlar. Spor salonu bile olsa, ayin başladığı andan itibaren o mekan bir tekkenin semahanesi addedildiği için sadece dervişlerin girmesi ve bu kurala saygı duyulması gerekirken, ayaklarında çamurlu ayakkabılarıyla bir sürü basın mensubunun semahaneye doluşması ayin ve gösteri arasındaki ince dengeyi de bir anda bozuvermiş.

Üç Mevlevi şeyhinden biri olan Resuhi Baykara yapılan saygısızlığa dayanamamış ve tüm gazeteci takımını büyük bir öfke içinde kolundan tuttuğu gibi semahanenin dışına atmış. … Buna ek olarak, İstanbul'dan gelen dervişlerin söz verdikleri gibi gösteri değil, sahiden ayin yaptıkları ortaya çıkmış."

Also, Friedlander tells the same event and notes that "Resuhi Baykara then broke from the Konya dervishes claiming that it was not a real *sema* but a show for the tourists" (Friedlander 1975: 113).

This incident shows that the meaning of the ceremonies, whether religious or folkloric, was under question. Resuhi Baykara first let the photographers out of "*semahane*," because he believed that what they did was a violation of an *ayin* and the rules of the *semahane* at that time. Then, he lost his belief in the ceremony finding it too commodified, that is, "fake."

Young musicians were also anxious about the organization and the commodification of the ceremonies. Ney players Selami Bertuğ and Niyazi Sayın and some others reacted by not attending the commemorations in 1958, 1959 and 1960. Halil Can tried to persuade Bertuğ by saying that these events are serving Mevlânâ (Ağaoğlu 2013: 166). Here, we see that Can, as a Mevlevî disciple, was attributing religious meaning, a mission to the ceremonies. On the other hand, Bertuğ and Sayın were criticizing the organizations by being touristic and commercialized in their letters (Ağaoğlu 2013). They were absolutely suspicious about the "authenticity" of the ceremonies. There were various opinions about the ceremonies which are discussed privately and also publicly through newspapers.

3.1.2.3. The Audience
3.1.2.3.1. Media
There was a variety of representations of the Mevlevi ceremonies in the media, including both sympathetic as well as anxious reflections towards them. One of the most anxious responses was written in 1954, the year the sema was for the first time performed with traditional clothes. In the pro-RPP *Akis* periodical, published by Metin Toker, the son-in-law of President İsmet İnönü, the ceremonies and the clothes performers wore were found "incautious" and incompatible with the Republican reforms. Also, *Akis* celebrated the reactions from the *Cumhuriyet* and *Zafer* newspapers, which had also found the ceremonies dangerous (Ağaoğlu 2013: 105-107). The *Tercüman* newspaper was supportive because Refi' Cevad Ulunay, Nezih

Uzel and Sadettin Heper were writing for this newspaper. Especially Ulunay was a very powerful and effective writer. *Tercüman* also published a special issue about Mevlana and the Mevlevi order in 1964. The negative reactions were marginalized and gradually lost their effect during the 1970s.

3.1.2.3.2. Tourism

One of the triggering events of the start of the ceremonies was a trip by the US ambassador McGhee and his wife to Konya in 1952. They visited the Mevlana museum and wanted to know more about the Mevlevis and Mevlevi culture. A group of musicians from Ankara and Istanbul was then charged with the task to give a concert composed of the Mevlevi music. This proved to be a turning point for the ceremonies, because for the first time Mevlevi culture was served as a touristic material representing the country, by the state.

Tourism was an effective legitimization strategy for the *ayin* ceremonies. The Turkish state had always supported these events within a folkloric framework describing them as a "show." On the other hand, the state authorities and the organizers needed to sell this product as an "authentic" event for tourists. As mentioned earlier, an effort was made for the organization to take place in September to benefit from better weather conditions. The rising number of tourists who wanted to see Rumi's whirling dervishes also brought legitimacy to the ceremonies. Also, they created some interesting dualities. Nezih Uzel comments: "They turn to our foreigner friends and say 'Look, these are real *Mevlevi*s, they make *ayin*.' Then they turn to us and say "There is a law, do not make *ayin*, this is a show." (Başara 2007)[13] Tourist demands for the ceremonies gave Mevlevi people an opportunity to perform their rituals publicly, but under the risk of commodification from their perspective.

As the above discussion demonstrates, the commemoration ceremonies were founded on dualities and hybridities. The ambiguity the ceremonies carried was both

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[13] The original text: "Yabancı dostlara dönüp, 'Bakın bunlar gerçek Mevlevi'dir denir, bakın ayin yapıyorlar' denir. Bize dönüp 'Kanun var, sakın ayin yapmayın bu gösteridir' denir."

an opportunity and a danger for Sufi people. It was an opportunity because they could perform and keep their ritual alive and they could get more followers, as similar to the *ayin* performances before the ban. It was a danger because the commercialization and the commodification through selling objects or gifts about Rumi or tickets for the ceremonies were creating a purely touristic atmosphere which breaks the belief of "authenticity" or "reality" of the ceremonies. The meaning of the ceremonies, secular or religious, *zikir* (remembrance) or show, was a question negotiated consciously or unconsciously by the actors in the field, at both macro and micro levels. The actors' beliefs, social backgrounds, and experiences were decisive in making sense of, and their attitudes toward, the ceremonies.

3.2. Bureaucratization and "Co-optation" of the *Sema*

In this section, I will concentrate on the approaches of certain *Mevlevi* leaders and other actors in the field of Rumi commemorations to the state, on the one hand, the state's action to the *Mevlevi* order and the *semâ* by explaining the inclusion of the commemorations by the state, on the other. To this end, first, I will give a brief background information on the adoption process of the Rumi commemoration events by the state. The second section will contain *Mevlevis* and their followers' views concerning this process of state inclusion. I will look at how they legitimize re-establishing the relationship with the state despite the ongoing ban on Sufism. Third, I will examine the view of the state actors, and the discrepancy between protecting the "authentic" *ayin* and the law. Lastly, I will look at today's power and legitimacy balances in relation to the rising visibility of *Mevlevi semâ* and state inclusion.

3.2.1. The Inclusion Process: Adoption of *Mevlevi Semâ* by the State

The *Mevlevi* order, as a non-governmental institution with its own foundation (*vakfiye*), lost its economic and symbolic power, legitimacy and visibility in 1925, as discussed above. With the launching of secularist reforms, the government excluded and erased Sufism from the public sphere. Decades later, however, a Sufi practice, *semâ* entered the scene as a public show in the 1950s. Under the secular Republic of Turkey, commemoration of a religious figure and practice of a religious ritual became

public and official events for the first time in the history of Sufism. Now, let us take a closer look at this process chronologically.

The state inclusion started with the "museumification" of the Konya *Mevlevi* Lodge where the Tomb of Rumi is situated in 1927. As Önder noted (1998: 261), the new museum administration destroyed some parts of the Konya lodge to change its religious image and recreate the place as an archaeology and ethnography museum. On the other hand, we see that people maintained performing the same traditional pilgrimage behaviors and gestures (see e.g. Ağaoğlu 2013: 70) despite the new shape and changed the title of the place. This reconfiguration and the ensuing response explain a lot about the process of inclusion of the *Mevlevi* elements by the state. Likewise, *Mevlevis* aceved the adaptation of the ritual by articulating *semâ* ritual to the commemoration ceremonies. At the same time, some parts of the ritual were destroyed in this process of adaptation as in the case of the museumification of the lodge. Due to the official ban, *Mevlevis* fragmented the ritual according to the secular commemoration form. First, they started adding the *Mevlevi* music to the commemorations in the late 1940s, then various elements of *semâ* performance were integrated into the ceremony gradually: musicians (*mutrıb*), *naat*, four *ayin* parts (*selam*), garments, then a speech on *Mesnevî*, the book of Rumi. In time, they changed the content of the ceremonies when the political atmosphere allowed. There are still missing requirements such as the congregational prayer (namaz), a commentary on Quran, and *Mevlevi*hane (*Mevlevi* house) when we compare with the classical *ayin-i şerif* performances (Gölpınarlı 2006, Önder 1998).

Konya *Halkevi* (People's House) was the first organizer of Rumi commemorations in the 1940s. These houses were indirect state institutions and were active from 1932 to 1950. They were built and financially supported by the People's Party, which was the single ruling political party and used the state budget (Karpat 1963: p.60). These houses were places of education and indeed ideological indoctrination for the general public. "In a sense, the *Halkevi* seems to fulfill in the realm of culture what the single party had accomplished in the political sphere…" (Lamprou 2015: p.50). *Halkevi* was an ideological state apparatus, a "juncture of state and society"

(Lamprou 2015: p.9), aimed to establish and maintain the hegemony in the cultural and ideological field, the superstructure of the society in Marxist terms. Karpat observes that:

> …now, the government was proclaimed to be working for the people, this was separation between ruler and ruled. Later, in 1940, however, the commemorating anniversaries for "great men" in the Houses were limited to people who had distinguished themselves in science, art and literature. (Karpat 1963: 64)

Mentioned in the previous section, different interpretations on Rumi made possible the consideration of Rumi under this project of commemorating the "great men of Turkish history". Rumi was a poet, a "man of science", and his pieces were "artistic" so that he could take his place among the "great men" of the Republican ideology.

After the abolition of People's Houses in 1951, Milliyetçiler Derneği (Nationalists' Association), a non-governmental institution organized the event in 1951. Then, the political and intellectual elite of Konya decided to maintain organizing the events after the visit of the American Ambassador Mc Ghee and his wife, which indicated for them the developing interest for Rumi on an international scale. They started planning to establish a non-governmental association in 1952 (Ağaoğlu 2013: p.71), in order to improve the touristic image of Konya, including organizing Rumi commemorations in a more "professional" and institutionalized manner. A committee formed by the Konya Municipality organized the commemorations until the establishment of Konya Tourism Association in 1960. Under the administration of Tourism Association, the commemorations were organized more professionally and became well-known. Many international tours were organized beginning with the 1967 France tour (Önder 1998: p.270). For the next three decades, the Turkish state stayed in a supportive position. The highest state authorities, especially ministers of culture and sometimes the right-wing political leaders such as Süleyman Demirel and Turgut Özal attended these ceremonies. In 1990, the commemoration ceremonies finally became "official", as the Ministry of Culture and the Governorate of Konya began to organize the events (Önder 1998: p.270). All the staff of commemorations became civil servants and two Sufi music ensembles, one in Konya (Konya Turkish Sufi

Music Ensemble-KTTMT) and one in Istanbul (İstanbul Historical Turkish Music Ensemble- İTTMT) were established as state organizations. The secular Turkish state started to assign *semâzens* and *postnişin*s despite the ongoing ban. Following this policy change, more statesmen attended the commemorations and new non-governmental institutions were also established by those who had been left or excluded from the commemorations. Among them, İstanbul *Semâ* Group was founded by journalist and *kudüm* player Nezih Uzel and *semâzen* Ahmed Bican Kasapoğlu in 1979. Besides the official state institutions, they also conducted performances in various places from concert halls to *mevlevihane*s, especially in Galata *Mevlevi*hanesi, after its opening as the "Divan Literature Museum" in 1975. Another effective organization, MEKÜSAV (Mevlânâ Culture and Art Foundation) was founded by ney players Doğan Ergin and Andaç Arbaş in 1990.

Following the "officialization" of the Konya ceremonies, more and higher-level statesmen started attending ceremonies. Sometimes, Rumi commemorations were turned into a political arena to pull votes before elections, as Tansu Çiller did in 1995 (Figure 3.1). Sometimes it became a place for quarrels, such as the tension between a military officer and a mayor who was a Refah Partisi (the Welfare Party) member after the closure of RP in 1998 (Durak 1998), and moreover, the quarrels between two political leaders, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Deniz Baykal, especially in 2006 (Karakuş 2006).

Figure 3.1. Tansu Çiller was in Konya on December 17, 1995. She blamed Necmettin Erbakan for making separatism. (Yeni Konya Newspaper, 18.12.1995)

In 2008 and then in 2016, Turkish Ministry of Culture issued a circular on *Mevlevi*lik and *semâ* ceremonies (Günay 2008), according to which, *semâ* was to be performed and transmitted to the next generations without distorting its technical aspects and its integrity and authenticity. To do this, *semâ* was to be performed in appropriate places, with traditional *Mevlevi ayin* musical pieces, and as complete ceremony with explanations, and performers should be aware that they were engaged in a "transcendental" performance (Günay 2008). In addition to the irony of protection of originality and authenticity of *semâ* despite the continuing ban, this circular meant that state became a dominant actor in the organization of *Mevlevi*lik and *semâ*. Although the state circular was ineffective and the state could not fully implement it, publication of the circular was still very important in terms of explaining the ambiguity of the state view. It was In the following sections, I will focus on both *Mevlevi*-side and state-side explanations of this inclusion and adoption process of *Mevlevi*lik and *semâ* by the secular Turkish state.

3.2.2. Mevlevi Approaches to the State and the Ban

The prohibition of Sufi lodges in 1925 resulted in loss of social, economic, cultural and symbolic power of Sufis in Turkey. They had a few options: stopping Sufi gatherings and personalizing the beliefs and practices; maintaining Sufi gatherings, belief and practices secretly by ignoring and/or circumventing political pressure; or struggling to regain their status, social and economic rights by finding new ways of negotiation with the state. Mustafa Kara (2015: 100) argues that there was a profound but silent protest by Sufis against the ban. They did not reclaim their confiscated properties, unlike the Armenians, who did for their confiscated foundational properties in the early Republican Turkey, nor did they establish a movement to challenge the state for their lost rights. Thus, Sufism ban did not create an identity politics of Sufism as a matter of freedom of belief. There were certain legal, ideological, cultural, and economic concerns behind this dominant attitude by the Sufis. According to İsmail Kara (2008: 2011), the ideological and cultural causes were more decisive. Now, I will discuss these causes producing this dominant attitude by drawing on my interviews. There were three basic discursive strategies to justify their current attitude: the historical code of *Mevlevilik*, historical code of Islam and the practical reasons based on legality and state coercion.

First of all, my interviewees had a tendency to historicize *Mevlevi*s' situation and reactions to the ban after 1925. For them, *Mevlevi*s maintained their traditional good manners (*edep*), and they acted according to what they had learned from their forefathers. Sufis and many Sufi-followers felt that they should behave with *edep* toward the state and the statesmen. This is a central element in the construction of their attitudes toward the state. According to Esin Çelebi Bayru, the sister of current head, *çelebi*, of the Mevlevi order, and the vice-president of the International Mevlana Foundation: "This is an issue of *edep*. They [Mevlevis after 1925] took refuge in this *edep*. They made an effort to maintain this path [*Mevlevi*lik] with *edep* they had obtained."[14]

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[14] The original text: "Bu bir edep meselesi. O edebin içine sığındılar. Aldıkları edeple bu yolu devam ettirmeye gayret ettiler."

According to many contemporary *Mevlevis*, what is legitimate is historical and traditional. They legitimized the existing attitudes and manners of contemporary Sufis by using historical examples from *Mevlevis*' relationships with the Ottoman Empire. Many of them shared the following idea of Nuri Şimşekler, the director of Selçuk University Mevlana Research Institute and an active member of International Mevlana Foundation: "*Mevlevis* never rebelled against Ottomans. Bektaşis rebelled, they defeated sultans. They had economic relations [to the political authority]. *Mevlevis* never had such things"[15]. This implies that today's *Mevlevis* should be out of political tensions, they must be loyal to the state. Faruk Hemdem Çelebi, the current *çelebi*, said that "We [*Mevlevis*] have respect for the laws of Turkish Republic. It is not appropriate to abuse the laws"[16]. A *Mevlevi* identity was produced through a selection of historical data. If we look at the history of the *Mevlevi* order, we see that though they were generally obedient to the Ottoman Empire, they had some conflicts. Contemporary *Mevlevis* framed their identity with their traditional loyalty to the Turkish state and did not embrace the conflictual side of the story. In their discourse, Turkey assumed to be the continuation of Ottoman Empire; therefore, they have to be obedient to the new Turkish state as they obeyed the Ottomans. One indication of their loyalty is the change of the blessing part named "*duâ-gû*" at the end of the *semâ* ceremony, where religiously important figures were mentioned. Here is a section of today's *duâ-gû* prayer from Hüseyin Top's book (2007: 123): "[We pray for] the well-being of Hazreti Çelebi Efendi and Dede Efendis. The continuation of the state of Turkish Republic. The well-being of the head of the state and government and ministers of the nations"[17]. In the Ottoman version, the prayer was for the well-being and permanence of the Ottoman Empire. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı and the Baykara family were maintaining the prayer for the Ottoman state in the 1960s, who discussed the matter among *Mevlevis* and came up with today's version (Holat, December 12, 2015).

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[15] The original text: "Mevleviler Osmanlı'da hiç isyan etmemiş. Bektaşiler kazan kaldırmış, padişah devirmiş. Para ilişkisi de var. Mevlevilerde bunlar yok."

[16] The original text: "Bizde Türkiye Cumhuriyeti kanunlarına saygı vardır. Suistimal etmenin alemi yok."

[17] The original text: "Selâmet-i Hazreti Çelebî Efendi ve selâmet-i Dede Efendirâ. Devâm-ı ömr-i devlet-i Cumhûriyyet-it Türkiyye. Selâmet-i reîs-i devlet ve hukûmet ve vükelâ-i milletrâ."

The obvious question here is, if it was only a folkloric performance or a representation, why did pr*aying* for Ottomans as in the original version create a problem? If it was updated according to the current situation, why do they still pray for current *çelebi* and *dedes*, which are officially void and even forbidden titles by Turkish state which they pray for its continuation in the next sentence. This example tells a lot about the ambiguity of the *semâ* programs and *Mevlevis'* relations to the Republic. This modus operandi entailed not stopping pr*aying* for their current *çelebi* and *dedes* but adding the Turkish Republic to their prayers. It was Hopçuzade Şakir Çetiner (1903-1988), one of the last kudümzens of Galata *Mevlevi*hanesi and a son of a Kadiri sheikh, was one of the more frequent beadsmen of the ceremonies, who, as we learn from Top (2007: 123-124), negotiated the content of the prayers with Celaleddin B. Çelebi, who together decided on the current form. They accommodated their religious tradition with new Turkish state not only to survive in the new order, but also probably as a result of their feeling of attachment to the state, be it the Ottoman Empire or the Turkish Republic.

At this point, we should remember that the grandfather çelebi, Abdülhalim Çelebi, had played a certain role in the foundation of the Republic. *Mevlevis*, and many Sufi groups in general, do not think that Turkish state is *tağut* (religiously false) unlike what many Islamist movements, especially the new Salafi movements believe. The hard laicism of the Turkish state and the oppression of Sufi identity under laicist politics did not motivate them toward this belief. Sufi groups mostly believed that the state was their own, but it was in the hands of "strangers and unbelievers" (Kara 2011: 53). Though many are against the continuation of this ban, wrong actions of the state do not make them directly challenge the state. Thus they look conservative in terms of their understanding of the state. For they assume that state is an organic entity with its own spirit and own monolithic history, and the Turkish Republic is their own state in terms of this spirit, and the occupation of state did not change the fact that they are the real possessors of it.

Prof. Emin Işık published a book named *Devleti Kuran İrade* (The Will to Found the State) when he was a new *Mevlevi* dervish in 1971 (he is a *Mevlevi* since 1966), where

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he stated that it is necessary to divide the essence of state and its form or regime. He considered the essence of the state as a divine being, but its regime might be imperfect. To him, the national willpower improves the faults of the regime (Işık 1988: 13). Therefore, he believed that when Muslim national will captured the state, the regime would be perfectly legitimate, too.

Sufis were thus hopeful about improving their relations with the state, which they felt attached to. As a result of this feeling, they did not involve in political struggles against the state to gain their legal rights. Again, Emin Işık emphasized that: "A religious person should be obedient and respectful to state and state laws as he/she is loyal and respectful to the religion" (Işık 1988: 197). This comment parallels the former *Mevlevi* leader Celaleddin Çelebi's attitude towards the Rumi commemoration ceremonies, as described by his daughter, Esin Çelebi Bayru (2002: 27):

> Celaleddin Çelebi was very respectful of the laws. Every year on December 10-17, while Rumi weeks were celebrated in Konya, he did not want to be there to avoid any rumor. However, when the guests of Konya left on the 18th of December and it became silent, he went to Huzur-u Pir [the tomb of Rumi] and secluded with his ancestor, Rumi. Çelebi was rewarded due to this sensitivity and in 1978 he was invited by the state as a speaker to Rumi Union Anniversary Commemoration Ceremonies.[18]

Moreover, as part of the *edep* code towards state and their historical relations to the new Turkish state, I did not encounter anything against Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in their writings or during my interviews. In the Konya office of the International Mevlânâ Foundation, there is a photo of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk together with the former *çelebi,* Abdülhalim Çelebi, on the wall of Esin Çelebi Bayru's room. Many of the interviewees also mentioned that Atatürk was not in fact against Islam or Sufism, and the ban was necessary at that time due to the historical circumstances.

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[18] The original text: "Celaleddin Çelebi yasalara çok saygılıydı. Her yıl 10-17 Aralık tarihlerinde Konya'da Mevlânâ haftası kutlanırken herhangi bir söylentiye neden olmamak için orada bulunmamaya özen gösterirdi. Ancak her 18 Aralık'ta Konya misafirlerini yolcu edip etraf sessizleşince, mutlaka Huzur-u Pir'e gider ve adeta ceddi Hz. Mevlânâ ile halvet olurdu. Çelebi bu hassasiyetinin mükafatını gördü ve 1978 tarihinde Hz. Mevlânâ Vuslat Yıldönümü Anma Törenleri'ne konuşmacı olarak devlet tarafından davet edildi."

Based on this assumption, my interviewees legitimized Atatürk's politics of Sufism and Islam in different ways. Nuri Şimşekler said for example that Atatürk loved Rumi and wanted to exclude *Mevlevis* from the ban but he could not do it. This is also what the Çelebi family believes. Güzide Çelebi, the current *çelebi*'s mother, spoke about the speculations about Abdülhalim Çelebi's death. He had died by falling down from his hotel room's balcony in Istanbul and many argued that it was either a suicide or a political assassination. Güzide Çelebi quoted from what she heard from the family that, "Abdülhalim Çelebi was carrying a briefcase full of jewelry of *Mevlevi* family to give to Atatürk to help him reconstruct expenditures of the state." After the death of Çelebi, jewels were lost together with Çelebi's new assistant. The Çelebi family believe that he was murdered by this assistant who stole the jewelry. This is one of the stories reflecting their loyalty to, and even possessiveness of the new Turkish state. Moreover, Güzide Çelebi proudly stated about her days in Aleppo that, *Mevlevis* never accepted Syrian nationality and Syrians saw them as the "Turkish order", adding that they were obliged to turn back to Turkey due to Arab nationalist movements. This reflects *Mevlevis'* certain sense of nationalism and their attachment to the Turkish state. Esin Çelebi Bayru stated during my interview that *Mevlevi*lik is "not a part but the core" of the Turkish culture. Moreover, in the conference speech she made about her father Celaleddin Çelebi, she said that Celaleddin Çelebi perceived the televising of his speeches and *semâ* demonstrations in foreign countries as serving to the Turkish culture (Çelebi Bayru 2002: 28) adding:

> Here my friends! Celâleddin Bâkır Çelebi spent his life in the service of his ancestors, nation, and his religion. In other words, he considered being a *Mevlevi*, Turk and Muslim an invaluable gift given by Allah to himself, and tried to share this gift with everyone, regardless of the language, religion and race [19] (Çelebi Bayru 2002: 29)

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[19] The original text: "İşte dostlar! Celâleddin Bâkır Çelebi ömrünü soyuna, milletine, dinine hizmetle geçirmiştir. Bir başka deyişle, Mevlevi, Türk ve Müslüman olmayı Allah'ın kendisine verdiği paha biçmez bir hediye saymış, bu hediyeyi dil, din, ırk gözetmeksizin, herkes ile paylaşmaya çalışmıştır."

Figure 3.2. Mustafa Kemal, Abdülhalim Çelebi and Mevlevis, at Konya train station (source: Konya Municipality Cultural Affairs)

Here we clearly see an instance of the nationalism of Mevlevi elites. For them, religion, state and nation are not separate domains of life, as was the case with Emin Işık's discourse.

On the other hand, many contemporary *Mevlevis* frame *Mevlevi*lik as a non-political identity. During my interview, Mustafa Holat argued that Rumi himself did not involve in politics and did not seek his own benefit, implying that this is the most appropriate way for today's *Mevlevis* too. Esin Çelebi Bayru stated likewise that "We (*Mevlevis*) were never involved in politics. We were above politics"[20] However, when we consider the political engagements of Çelebis and sheikhs of Istanbul in the late Ottoman times, as in the case of Osman Selahaddin Dede, it is hard to confirm this argument for apolitical *Mevlevis*. This shows that contemporary leaders embrace an apolitical identity to be able to go beyond political tensions in Turkey. They do not want to attract attention in the political field because the ban is still in place and this apolitical standing suits the *Mevlevi* interests. Also, possibly the protection of this political balance was one of the reasons for the careful speeches of some interviewees concerning Atatürk and the ban. Tuğrul İnançer for example refused to

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[20] The original text: "Biz hiçbir zaman siyaset içinde olmamışız. Siyaset üstü olmuşuz."

give a full answer to my question concerning how the *icazet* (permission) system is maintained after 1925, and said: "It is not possible to maintain the *icazet* system after 1925. I would say only this much in respect for the law"[21]. Esin Çelebi also highlighted that "Not being illegal was more important than protection by the state... That's why it [the order] enjoys so much respect."[22]

They thus categorically rejected the option of challenging the state authority on the grounds of their concern for legitimacy. Esin Çelebi Bayru stated that rebelling was not an option for them because *semâ* would be prohibited again. They also could not request their assets and rights back because they were not officially recognized by the state. However, Faruk Hemdem Çelebi complained about state's attitude towards them by comparing it with politics of Alevism:

> Today's Alevi-Bektaşi *cem* houses are Bektaşi lodges. They cannot write lodge so that they prefer *cem* house, but it is same. Why do you give permission to others while you are depriving us of our lodges and banning them? ...The state should give us back our authority. *Mevlevi*hanes must be considered the same as *cem* houses. They might want to call it *Mevlevi* houses, or whatever they want.[23]

Therefore, *Mevlevis* want at least some of their rights back but they will wait till the state will give them voluntarily. Faruk Hemdem Çelebi also said:

> What can we do if the state does not help? The state should give us our authority… All in all, every December 17 there is a *semâ ayini,* and the President, the Prime minister, even Kılıçdaroğlu [CHP leader] go there. Everybody goes. It means you accept this. I don't like them, but even an HDP deputy said on TV that: "There is the legal ban on lodges, but they all go, they call it *ayin-i şerif*. I will discuss this in the Parliament". [24]

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[21] The original text: "1925'ten sonra bunun işlemesinin mümkün olmadığını kanuna saygı bakımından, ben bu kadar söylerim."

[22] The original text: "Devletin sahiplenmesinden ziyade bunun kanundışı olmaması mühimdi bizim için... Zaten bugün bu kadar saygıyı bu yüzden görüyor."

[23] The original text: "Bugü Alevi-Bektaşilerin cem evleri dedikleri Bektaşi tekkesi... Kapıya tekke yazamıyorlar cem evi diyorlar, ama yapılan iş aynı. Bizim elimizden tekkeleri alıp sen niye yasaklıyorsun da başkalarına müsade ediyorsun? Devletin bizim yetkilerimizi vermesi lazım. Cemevleri nasılsa, Mevlevi dergahı da aynı Şekilde olması lazım. Mevlevi evleri mi derler, ne derler bilmiyorum..."

[24] The original text: "Devlet sahip çıkmazken biz ne yapalım? Ya devlet bize yetkilerimizi verecek… Sonuçta 17 Aralıkta semâayini oluyor ve Cumhurbaşkanı, Başbakan, Kılıçdaroğlu bile oraya geliyor. Herkes geliyor. Demek ki siz bunu kabul ediyorsunuz. Ben sevmem ama HDP vekillerinden biri TV'de 'Tekke ve zaviye kanunu var ama hepsi gidiyorlar. Ayin-i Şerif diyorlar. Mecliste yarın gensoru vereceğim' dedi."

The Mevlevi leaders try to negotiate with the state but laws are still restrictive for them despite the high degree of popularity and legitimacy *Mevlevi* culture and *semâ* enjoy. For, on the one hand, UNESCO accredited Çelebi family's official institution, International Mevlânâ Foundation (Uluslarası Mevlânâ Vakfı) as responsible for protecting *Mevlevi* culture since 2009. Thus, the foundation is recognized as an authority over *Mevlevi*lik by an international institution. On the other hand, they need to collaborate with the Ministry of Culture but officialization of their authority over *Mevlevis*m is in contradiction with the ongoing ban. Esin Çelebi Bayru made a comment on the effects of law:

> Our culture has been entrusted to the Ministry of Culture! This [the Sufism ban] makes us helpless [in terms of preventing *semâ* in irrelevant places]. Possibly a clarification and extension will come from [high] levels of the state so that it may regain its real meaning. [25]

Çelebi Bayru added that his father Celaleddin Bakır Çelebi led the negotiations with the Ministry of Culture to establish two official Sufi music and *semâ* ensembles in Konya and Istanbul. Çelebis all followed the strategy of selling it to the state to legalize the organization. Likewise, Feyzi Halıcı, the president of Konya Tourism Association for many years, invited and collaborated with state officials to be able to prevent any legal repercussions of the ban. As a result of this policy of selling the organization to the state, now they are able to ask why the state does not legalize something of historical value, which the state in turn sells all around the world. In this context, Abdüssettar Yarar, current director of the cultural affairs of Konya (he was not yet in charge at the time of the interview) stated that:

> What do we speak about while the ban is still in place? We actually commit a crime. In the time of Mustafa Kemal, it was necessary. Does this necessity still continue? When I get sick, the doctor gives me a medicine. When the illness ends, you stop using the medicine. Is it necessary to keep taking it? Why do we take the same medicine since 1925?[26]

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[25] The original text: "Kültür Bakanlığı'na emanet edilmiş bir kültürümüz! Bu biraz beli büküyor. Devletin o kademelerinden de herhalde bir açıklık, bir ilave gelecektir ki gerçek değerine kavuşsun."

[26] The original text: "Tekke ve zaviyeler kanunu ortada iken neyi konuşuyoruz? Suç işliyoruz... Mustafa Kemal zamanında bu tekke ve zaviyelerin kapatılmasının lüzumu var idi. Bugün o lüzum devam ediyor mu etmiyor mu? Ben hastalandığımda doktor bana antibiyotik, ağrı kesici birşeyler veriyor, hastalık geçti, kutu bitti. Yeniden ilaç içmeme gerek var mı yok mu? Niye bize 1925'ten beri bu ilacı içiriyorsunuz?"

Çelebis, dedes, state officials are generally not very content with the 1925 ban and the authority problem it brought. Çelebis want their authority back by using state apparatuses but no one expressed any disturbance about the state authority over Şeb-i Arus ceremonies, except Emin Işık. He expressed his disturbance by asking ironically that "Is the Ministry of Culture a *Mevlevi* sheikh? Do they have an *icazet* (permission)?"[27] In this statement, he drew on the history, the traditional *icazet* system of Mevlevilik and delegitimized the authority of the state over Mevlevi practices. He is not an "official" *postnişin* appointed by the state but a Mevlevi with *icazet*, and he does not recognize the state authority as a *Mevlevi* authority. On the contrary, Mustafa Holat, an "official" *Mevlevi* appointed by the state as the *postnişin* of the Konya Turkish Sufi Music Ensemble of the Ministry of Culture, made a statement that legitimizing and prioritizing the state authority as superior to the traditional power of *çelebi* and sheiks:

> They would not appoint sheikhs in terms of the Caliphate law. They appointed me as *semâzenbaşı* (head of *semâzens*), I sat on the pelt and became a sheikh. It is still my chair, now vacant, someone sits on it, but it is not official, I am still the holder of the official position. This happened two times in the history of Mevlevism. First, Ottoman sultan appointed the sheikh in Istanbul, and second, I am appointed by the Turkish Republic as sheikh.[28]

Mustafa Holat expressed his pride of being appointed as a sheikh by the Republic. He recognized the state as a *Mevlevi* authority (even a superior one than Çelebi and sheiks) while Emin Işık, a famous *Mevlevi* dede (sheikh), but "unofficial" in terms of state recognition, claimed that state is not the real authority over *Mevlevilik* and *semâ*. On the other hand, Fahri Özçakıl, the current *postnişin* of Konya Turkish Sufi Music Ensemble, thinks different from his predecessor Holat. He acknowledges his ensemble as an organization trying to perform *sema* as true to its original version. He stated that state do not interested in Mevlevilik but only *sema*. He assumes the traditionally educated Mevlevis as superior to himself by saying that "If they were

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[27] The original text: "Kültür Bakanlığı Mevlevi Şeyhi midir? İcazeti var mı?"
[28] The original text: Hilafet kanunu bakımından şeyh atamaları olmazdı. Beni *semâ*zenbaşı olarak atadılar, ben posta oturdum şeyh oldum. Hala benim o makamım boş duruyor, emekli oldum, birisi geçip oturuyor işte, resmi sıfatı yok onun, resmi sıfat bende. Bu Mevlevilik tarihinde iki kez oluyor. Biri Osmanlı'da şeyh atıyor padişah İstanbul'da, ikincisi de, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti beni atadı şeyh olarak.

alive, we had to give them the sheikh place". To him, the *semâzens* of the ensemble including himself may not be Mevlevis but they try to perform *sema* by imagining Rumi's feelings during his *sema*. To him, their performance is not a mere cultural representation but they are not superior to the classical Mevlevis. The status of the Mevlevis sometimes informs their discourse on the relationship between Mevlevilik and state but even people sharing the same status think different in terms of their way of legitimizing or delegitimizing the state intervention. While Holat legitimized state power as an historical and traditional authority, Özçakıl appreciated state's policy of preserving *sema* practice as a cultural asset by dividing it from Mevlevilik and Sufism. That means he legitimized state power as a protector of a cultural and traditional performance. Their perspectives on the state authority are not similar.

Some of the *Mevlevi* actors, including Çelebi family and official performers, do not believe that being tied to the Turkish state, bureaucratization, and selling tickets for entrance to the events spoil the essence of *Mevlevi semâ* performed in the *Şeb-i Arus* ceremonies. For instance, *Postnişin* Mustafa Holat expressed his content with the current situation:

> From 1925 to 1958, *it* was covered by dust. Now there are conservatories, musical departments, Mevlânâ institutes, international symposia... Music festivals are held, too. Some criticize, but these are gradual improvements. Of course there will be those who make money out of this.[29]

Many interviewees prioritized the "proper" transmission of the practice of *semâ* to the new generations, i.e. teaching traditional customs and rules (*adap erkan*) to "proper" young *semâzens* who cares about religious and moral values, and the background representations of the ritual. They are not against change, but they want to protect the "traditional customs and rules" under the existing circumstances. Also, they expect to broaden of their authority when they find available conditions in the political atmosphere without pushing the envelope too much in terms of the

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[29] The original text: "Küllenme olmuŞ, 1925 ten 58 e dek... Şimdi konservatuarlar kuruldu, müik bölümleri var, Mevlânâ enstitüleri var, uluslararası sempozyumlar düzenleniyor… Müzik festivalleri yapılıyor. Bazıları eleştiriyor. Bunlar bir aşamadır! Dışarıda elbette bundan istifade eden para yapanlar olacak."

secularists' concerns and being perceived as "reactionary". At this point, it is important to look at how the state elites have approached to *Mevlevi ayins.*

3.2.3. The State's Perception of the Commemoration Ceremonies

3.2.3.1. Politics and Sufism in Turkey: Nonpolitical or Political, Moderate or Radical

Terms such as "Islamism", "political Islam" and "Islamic state" are modern terms describing the political movements with Islamic emphasis emerged during the decolonization period of the Muslim societies (Ayoob 2008), following the two world wars and the dissolution of Ottoman Empire, caused by the domination of European powers in North Africa, East and South Asia. For many, political Islam is represented by the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, Jamaat-i Islami of Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hamas of Palestine, and Islamic Salvation Front of Algeria and so on. History of Islamic political thought included many intellectuals and many perspectives for centuries before these modern movements.

On the other hand, Sufis generally defined their position outside or in the periphery of "political Islam". Although Sufi *tarikat*s led the resistance movements in North Africa and Caucasus, and many dervishes were involved in politics in Syria, Morocco, Egypt, Turkey etc., today Sufism is generally defined within the realm of nonpolitical moderate folk Islam because of its spiritual and other-worldly connotations (Heck 2009). According to Annemarie Schimmel (1975: 24), Sufis have two broadly different tendencies, one asserts rejecting the world and being outside of worldly affairs, another involving the worldly issues like politics in order to assist people to create a better world and society. In the history of the Turkish Republic, some Sufis have preferred the latter; others have been waiting for better conditions. Both sides have tried to find new legal ways for survival, such as establishing or attending political parties and NGOs. *Mevlevis* also carried political and nonpolitical tendencies in their history but their main tendency in the Turkish Republican period was waiting for the opening of the door of the state, finding legal and legitimate ways of survival, such as establishing an NGO, the International Mevlânâ Foundation.

The Nakşibendi order is known as the most politically engaged Sufi order in Turkey. While Nakşibendis' attitude was "political" and sometimes "radical", other groups such as *Mevlevis* were considered "moderate" and "nonpolitical". On the other hand, the state and media have often perceived, whether political or not, the *tarikat*s in general as dangerous for the nation, and disfigured them as "odd" superstitious groups especially when Islamism was on rise. However, *Mevlevi*lik has usually been an exception. This has been a result of humanist and nationalist discourses over Rumi, the tomb and whirling dervishes tourism in Konya, Ürgüp and Istanbul, state cultural policies of producing an original and authentic marketing image since late 1980s, and *Mevlevis* embracement of these policies and attitudes for the sake of legalization and legitimization that made *Mevlevi* order a part of "our cultural heritage", while other Sufi groups remained as potential reactionary groups with superstitious beliefs that could be harmful for the society. Two *Mevlevi* lodges, Konya and Galata turned into museums by the state, while no other order's lodges served as state museums. This proves that the state adopted only *Mevlevilik* and continued to exclude other orders.

Eligür (2010) argues that political Islam in Turkey emerged as part of politics in the 1970s, and gained more power since the 1990s. According to this definition, Turkish "political Islam" was framed together with the Welfare (Refah) Party lineage, and then the Justice and Development Party (AKP). The Democratic Party, the Justice Party, the Motherland Party, the True Path Party are generally defined as center-right parties, the "more moderate" ones, instead of their high level of transaction between the *Milli Görüş* movement. *Mevlevis* as a religious group are never directly associated with "political Islam", which was rather associated with some branches of Nakşibendi Sufi order, Nurculuk and new Islamist movements emerged in 1960s.

On the other hand, we see that the state's internalization of the *semâ* ceremonies as a process was parallel to the rise of Islamism in Turkey. More conservative center-right politicians were more frequent attendees of the ceremonies. Süleyman Demirel was the first prime minister attended the ceremonies in 1965 (Ağaoğlu 2013). CHP's Sadi Irmak became the second Prime Minister; attended in 1974, as a Konya deputy who had an interest in Sufism (he also gave speeches in several commemorations).

Turgut Özal's first attendance as a prime minister was in 1987 and he followed the commemorations of 1989 and 1990 as the President of the Republic. Erdal İnönü, as the leader of the CHP and vice prime minister, was in the 1992 *Şeb-i Arus*. Süleyman Demirel attended the ceremonies in 1993 and 1995. Prime Minister Tansu Çiller also attended in 1995 and turned the commemorations into a place of quarrel as it was the election time. Her rival Mesut Yılmaz attended frequently since the 1980s as the Minister of Culture and Tourism and then as ANAP leader. In 1996, the Welfare Party leader Necmettin Erbakan attended the ceremony as the PM.

Figure 3.3. "Politics by the leaders through Rumi analogy", Erdoğan and Baykal's polemic during 2006 Şeb-i Arus ceremony with references to Rumi. (Milliyet, 19.12.2016)

High-level official attendance ceased during 1996-2004, probably due to the "February 28th" process, and the AKP's weakness in its initial years. Then, beginning from 2004, the Justice and Development Party increased the political importance and visibility of the ceremony. Except 2011 and 2016, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan always followed the last days of the ceremonies, *Şeb-i Arus*. The Mevlânâ Cultural Center building was finished in 2004 as a result of the direct intervention of Erdoğan (from my interviews). Republican Party leaders Deniz Baykal and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu also became more visible in the ceremonies. Both parties used Rumi"s life and words in

the polemics against other leaders (Karakuş 2006). Although some leftists were also present, we see that right-wing party leaders, Demirel, Özal, Çiller, Erbakan, Yılmaz were always more visible actors. I have not seen any news confirming that Bülent Ecevit and Ahmet Necdet Sezer, known as Kemalist politicians attended the ceremonies.
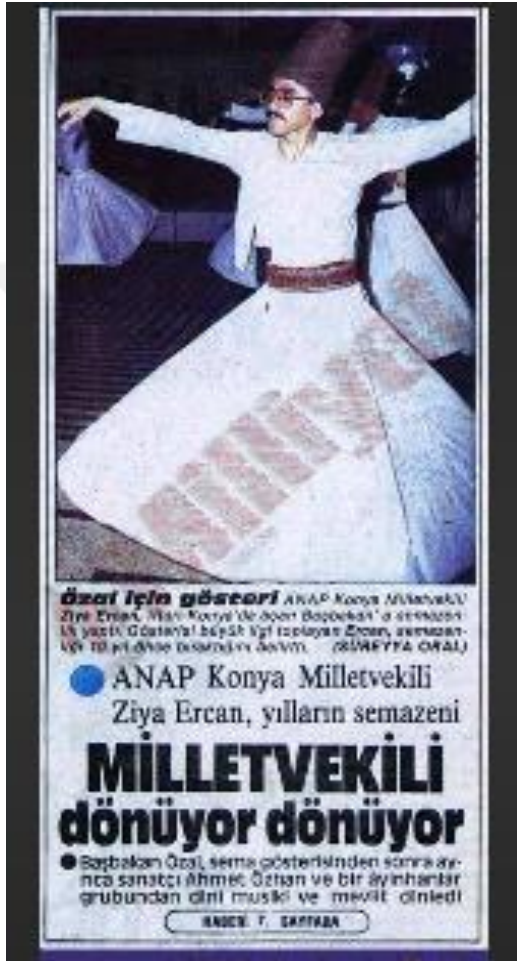
Figure 3.4. Ziya Ercan, ANAP Konya deputy performing semâ. (Milliyet, 10.06.1985)

At the local level, Konya Municipality has been an important actor in the organizations. Konya mayors were always right-wing conservative politicians. The Welfare Party and its followers ruled this municipality for decades until the establishment of AKP, except ANAP rule between 1984 and 1989 (Toruk 2003). I argue that this was one of the causes of the centralization of the ceremonies. Rumi and *semâ* became a symbol of Turkey since the 70s, and in the hands of "Islamist municipalities," there was the danger of politicization with an emphasis on its

religious background and the oppression of Sufism by the official ideology, Kemalism. *Mevlevi çelebis* did not want to politicize the events and it was not hard to convince the Minister of Culture, ANAP's Namık Kemal Zeybek because it was parallel to ANAP government"s cultural policies, as I will discuss later. Also, a Rumi descendant, Işın Çelebi was a Minister of Government, a parliament member and an ANAP member at this time. This would create a favorable link between *Mevlevis* and the ANAP government. Some Rumi descendants were involved in politics after Veled Çelebi and Abdülhalim Çelebi: Hulki Amil Keymen, who was also an active person in the organization of the commemorations, and sat on the *postnişin* fur as a *Mevlevi* sheikh during ceremonies for many years, was a parliament member from the Democratic Party from 1957 to 1961, and Işın Çelebi, a member of International Mevlânâ Foundation, was an MP and a minister. Another ANAP MP Ziya Ercan was himself a *semâ*zen from Konya, who kept performing *semâ* during his term as well (Oral 1985).

Klaus Kreiser argues that the cultural heritage of *Mevlevi* order in the field of literature, music or art was never rejected by the Turkish state (Kreiser 2004: 99). Although this is true, it was not a very easy synthesis for the "secular" Turkish state to internalize the *Mevlevi* culture. Despite the rapid museumification of the Konya lodge and Atatürk"s positive comments on the Islamic understanding of Rumi (Borak 2004), *Mevlevî* costumes and *semâ* carried "reactionary" connotations especially until the 1980s. For instance, the presence of the man in *Mevlevî* costumes in the photograph of the president Sadi Irmak (see Figure 3.5) was not considered an appropriate image at the time. Örsan Öymen recalls early elections by using this image and famous "come, come whoever you are" line attributed to Rumi, transformed by Öymen as "Come from wherever you want, come to the early elections" (Öymen 1974). Moreover, Öymen wrote that: "After Irmak turned back from Rumi commemorations, the dervishes' tours started in the capital city" (Öymen 1974). This is an implicit critique of Irmak's visibility with whirling dervishes. On the one hand, Rumi had a positive image for the new state as Rumi's works were translated and published under state sponsorship. Beginning from the time of Hasan Ali Yücel, as I will discuss in the beginning of the next chapter, Rumi turned into a symbol of humanism, tolerance, and love. Rumi's legitimization in the cultural field

did not, however, immediately convince everybody that *sikkes* (headgear) and *tennures* (wide skirts) were apolitical cultural garments. People were aware that these garments were forbidden, and *semâ* was a religious ritual beyond a humanistic show.

Figure 3.5. Örsan Öymen's ironic comments on the Prime Minister Sadi Irmak's visit of Konya Mevlânâ ceremonies. (Milliyet, 11.12.1974)

In modern Turkish history, the state always wanted to control the religious field by creating, in spite of its secularist policies, the Religious Affairs Directorate (Diyanet) and making religion courses compulsory. The State did not leave the religious field to the NGOs or other civil groups for several reasons. First, politicians knew that Sufi brotherhoods had an impact on its believers, they were afraid of their radicalization and ability to mobilize their believers. Second, especially the larger Sufi groups were vote holders and means of influence, and many politicians visited the leaders of these powerful religious groups to gain their electoral support. As a result of mutual accommodation politics, sheiks get to be called " public opinion leaders" and invited to the officially organized conferences on religion in the 1990s (Kara 2011: 53,60). Sufi leaders' social and symbolic power has turned into a legitimizing political power,

which is also a danger for Sufis in terms of over-politicization and radicalization. Their re-recognition by the state is also dangerous for them because if they are accepted by one government, they may have problems when another government came to power. It is possible for Sufi groups to be harmed between the political struggles of rival parties, when we consider the fragile situation of them as a result of the ban. Now, let us look at how *semâ* conformed to the state interest and how it legalized through cultural policies.

3.2.3.2. The Legalization of *Semâ* Ceremonies

A few steps in the way of cultural policy formulations since the 1970s were significant in terms of effectively (albeit not on paper) legalizing the *semâ* and *Mevlevîlik*. To explore this process, I will examine cultural policies through the quinquennial development plans and a book published by the Ministry of Culture in 1998.

In the second quinquennial plan of development (BYKP) for 1968-1973 prepared by DPT (State Planning Organization), cultural policies were included under the economy subtitle (DTP 2017). In this report, studies on the old arts and folklore are encouraged by the state. This report prepared the political and legal ground for the support of Rumi commemorations. *Semâ* was justified as an artistic and folkloric performance, which enabled actors to surpass the 1925 ban which had mentioned *semâ* specifically. The third plan of development (1973-1977) includes an independent section on culture for the first time but it was not much different than the previous one. The fourth plan (1977-1983) has a larger section on culture, which highlights the "cultural heritage" of Turkey and how it should be utilized for democratization, globalization, and modernization. This plan paved the way for the cultural policies after the 1980 coup. The Ministry of Culture is separated from the Ministry of Education in 1978, and cultural policies became an important political domain after the 1980 coup.

In 1998, when there was a hightened tension between religion and the state due to the "February 28th process"; two university professors did a study on cultural policies of Turkey, which was published by the Ministry of Culture (Erkan & Erkan 1998). Titled

"The Dimensions of Our Culture Policy", it represents the official perception of Sufism, which involves the humanist and nationalist discourses on Rumi which I will discuss in the next chapter. They define "Turkish Sufism" as a synthesis of Turkic shamanic culture and Islam. To them, this "Turkish Islam" was never politicized or became power-oriented (Erkan & Erkan 1998: 115). Moreover, the professors offered updating and developing the idea of "tolerance" and the human-centered view of Rumi in Turkish Sufism, as part of Turkish cultural politics (Erkan & Erkan 1998: 144).

3.2.3.3. The Privatization Policies, Commodification and *Semâ*

The 1980s marked the beginning of the era of globalization, glocalization, and neoliberal policies in Turkey, which are characterized by entrepreneurship, private property, free market economy, deregulation, privatization and decreasing state intervention to the economic field (Harvey 2005). Cultural and religious fields have also been affected by these transformations. Commodification, commercialization and consumer culture are some of the hallmarks of this process.

> The commodification of sexuality, culture, history, heritage; of nature as spectacle or as rest cure; the *extraction* of monopoly rents from originality, authenticity and uniqueness (of works or art, for example)—these all amount to putting a price on things that were never actually produced as commodities. (Harvey 2005: 166)

Semâ is an example of the commodification of culture, history and heritage with its "authenticity" and "originality". The iconization of Rumi and *semâ* as national symbols obviously brought commodification of these symbols, parallel to the rise of Turkish neoliberal policies in the 1980s. Parallel to the US and British examples, Turkey also gave way to the privatization policies in the field of culture in the 1980s (İnce 2010: 97). Prominent Turkish investors, Koç, Sabancı, Eczacıbaşı and others entered the cultural market by establishing foundations, museums, and music ensembles since the 1970s. On the other hand, the story of *semâ* performances is not a privatization but on the contrary, it is an example of commodification through bureaucratization in the middle of the privatization politics. No private company adopted and sponsored this ceremony as a cultural investment but the state took the commemorations from the hands of an NGO and Konya municipality and established

two official ensembles to preserve and support Sufi music and *semâ*. As I mentioned, the state wants to govern the religious domains of life by "co-optation" of religious institutions and practices. The state adopted Diyanet despite its laicist policies, and similarly, it adopted *semâ* ceremonies despite its privatization policies. While governing, adopting it, the state enabled the commodification of the ritual without the help of private intervention.

Commodification of culture and the flourishment of cultural tourism in the neoliberal world are interrelated processes. Cities, as places of attraction, became brands. "Nation branding" and destination image became key issues of cultural policies of countries. Certain cities were promoted with their distinctive features such as the sea, cultural activities, landscape, natural sources, historical remains and religious sites. Cities with their "unique identity" attracted more interest as a result of campaigns, advertising, public relations and international fairs (Alvarez 2010).

Turkish brand building led by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, in a centralized way, tried to go beyond sun, sea and sand tourism, aiming the differentiation of tourism products (Alvarez 2010: 126). In this respect, "mosaic" image of Turkey was promoted from the 1990s onwards. What is local was a material to sell and integrate into globalization, unlike the Tanzimat and early Republican binary thinking between local and international, which had resulted in the rejection of historical and local culture and embracing the global western "civilization" values, as discussed in the texts of Ziya Gökalp (Gökalp 1970). While constructing Turkish "unique" and "authentic" identity and image, Rumi and *semâzens* were always used with their theoretical and visual contributions. The values of tolerance, cohabitation, multiculturalism were linked to Rumi, making him a representative of the Turkish "marbled-mosaic" image of Anatolia, which claims to be "a bridge between the East and the West". As an Islamic image known and accepted internationally, Rumi was a perfect symbol of Turkish national brand building in this time of globalization and glocalization. According to Alvarez (2010: 131), the international thematic campaign for the 800th birth of Rumi was an opportunity that increased the awareness of Turkey's rich history. Rumi thus offered an opportunity for developing tourism and

improving Turkish national brand as a political and historical power waiting for EU membership (see Figures 3.6 & 3.7 below).

Figure 3.6. 800th birth of Rumi as an opportunity for Turkish "nation branding": sema ceremony in UN Geneva building (Milliyet, 16.11.2007)

Figure 3.7. Sema ceremony in the European Parliament (Milliyet, 28.11.2007)

Rumi has been naturally an image of city branding of Konya, too. According to the Turkish Tourism Strategy report of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2007), Konya is considered as one of the fifteen "brand cities with a cultural theme" in Turkey. It is obvious that Rumi's tomb and Rumi commemorations were one of the reasons for this preference. Konya Mevlânâ Museum where his tomb is situated is one of the top museums in Turkey in terms of number of visitors (third in 2015, first in 2016. see museum statistics on kulturvarliklari.gov.tr)

There seem to be three main reasons for state adoption of Mevlevilik as a national symbol. First, the increasing use of *Mevlevi*lik as a part of nation branding required, a better and larger organization for the *Şeb-i Arus* ceremonies, which necessitated state intervention in terms of planning and expenditures. For it seems that private cultural investors did not volunteer to adopt and sponsor the events, possibly due to its fragile position with religious links. Second, through sponsorship, the state became able to control the image of *Mevlevi*lik, which contains important branding symbols for the state itself. Politicians knew that it was still an Islamic performance and deregulation of the performances might create problems for the nation branding project. Third, Çelebis and some other *Mevlevis* wanted the state to enter this field and adopt the *Mevlevi* culture because they sought legality and legitimacy in the eyes of the state. They were also afraid of being marginalized, thus they founded an NGO to be able to legalize their authority and organizations and to negotiate with politicians in a more comfortable and safer manner.

3.2.3.4. Rumi Commemorations Today: Power and Legitimacy

There are several problems in terms of authority in the contemporary *semâ* rituals, such as the management of ceremony space, time, money as well as inclusion and exclusion of performers and audience. As many historians of the *Mevlevi* order note (Gölpınarlı 2006, Önder 1998, Lewis 2008), the time and place of the *Mevlevi semâ* were normally determined by the *Mevlevi* authorities before the ban: the *Çelebi Efendi* and the sheikhs. *Mevlevi* titles of sheikh, *dede*, *meydancı*, *derviş*, *aşçı* were also given by this *Mevlevi* authority. Although there was some political intervention in the appointment of the Çelebi Efendi, it was limited during the Ottoman times.

Conducting a good and balanced relationship with the state and statesmen was desirable for *Mevlevis* but they had autonomy within their domestic religious affairs. However, since 1925, the traditional authority has been limited. When the Aleppo lodge was closed by the Syrian state in 1944 (Küçük 1998: 92), the *çelebis* lost much of their control over the *Mevlevi* lodges outside of Turkey. When they turned back to Turkey in 1958, the commemorations were already established. Faruk Hemdem Çelebi attended as a *semâzen* for the first time in 1960, when he was a 10-year-old boy but his father Celaleddin Çelebi did not attend until he officially invited in 1978 to avoid possible problems about laic concerns.

Instead of their obedience to the law, *çelebis* remained as an authority through using their traditional right of giving *icazet* (permission). They maintain some of their authority, enabling inclusion and exclusion processes by giving *icazet*. For instance, Esin Çelebi Bayru and B. Reha Sağbaş (2008) give a list of *postnişins* with an *icazet* after the ban, under the title of "the custodians and the practitioners of the *Mevlevi* tradition". The list Çelebi Bayru prepared does not include the people without an *icazet* from the Çelebi. For instance, Hasan Çıkar, who claims to be a *Mevlevi* sheikh-dede, and criticized bureaucratization by arguing that "*Mevlevis* with a salary cannot be with us" (Erbil 2002), is excluded from the list. During my interview, Güzide Çelebi said that Çıkar was not knowledgeable enough to become a sheikh and blamed him for causing trouble within the community. Fahri Özçakıl commented on the current authority of çelebis thus: "They are in charge of *postnişins*. They have no direct relation to the institution. We have a separate art committee and a chief executive. But we have personal connections by heart with Çelebis. They contribute by giving *icazet*name, they also gave me one"[30].

As mentioned above, the Mevlânâ Cultural Center was opened in 2004 after waiting for decades. Esin Çelebi Bayru and Abdüssettar Yarar said in the interviews that it was not built according to *kıble* (direction). The places of postnişin and musicians were

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[30] The original text: "Postnişinlik makamıyla ilgileniyorlar. Kurumla bir bağlantıları yok. Ayrı sanat kurulumuz var, genel müdü var. Ama ferdi olarak bir gönülbağıyla Çelebilerle iletişim var. Çelebiler vermiş olduğu icazetnameyle, tarafıma verilen bir icazetname de var, o şekilde katılıyorlar…"

also wrong as a result of this architectural mistake. Both of them, one is a Çelebi and an NGO leader, the other is the director of cultural affairs at the time, argued that nobody asked for their opinions and their involvement was refused by the builders. Çelebi Bayru was very critical of this process: "UNESCO accredited us. We (International Mevlânâ Foundation) are the only institution accepted as a *Mevlevi* authority all over the world but in our place, they do not even ask what we think"[31]. They have limited authority as an NGO despite their effective international relations. For example, they are not able to prevent *semâ* performances in inappropriate places, such as weddings, restaurants, fashion shows or opening ceremonies. They encouraged the Ministry of Culture to issue a circular to prevent this obvious commercialization (Günay 2008) but it did not work well. Emin Işık stated that a *müftü* asked him why *Mevlevis* do not prevent such absurdities, to which he answered: "Nobody asks or cares about my opinion in democracies… I asked him, Adnan Hoca (Oktar) claims to be a prophet, why don't you [Diyanet] prevent this?"[32] Işık as a Mevlevi sheikh with an icazet unable to claim authority over Mevlevi practices not only as a result of the ban but also the current "liberal" social structure that enables people entitling themselves as whatever they want. In terms of the organization of ceremonies, many authorities are involved according to Mustafa Çıpan, the previous Konya director of cultural affairs:

> It is very normal that state organizes the ceremonies. We mentioned state support but, for instance, as the Directorate of Cultural Affairs under the governorate, we work together with the relevant units of the municipality, NGOs, and universities. The state assumes the coordination and monetary support. The city governor leads the organisation committee. We prepare the program draft according to the discussions in meetings. Then, we talk about it again and again. When it became clear, it gains an official feature.[33]

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[31] The original text: ÜNESCO tarafından akredite edildik. Mevlevilik konusunda kabul edilmiş tek kuruluşuz dünya çapında. Ama kendi yerimizde ne yapalım ne dersiniz diye sormuyorlar bile."

[32] The original text: "Kimsenin kimseyi taktığı yok demokrasilerde… Peki dedim, Adnan hoca peygamberlik yapıyor, siz müftüsünüz, niye engel olamıyorsunuz."

[33] The original text: "Programın devletin desteğiyle yapılması kadar tabi bir şey olamaz. Ama biz devlet desteğiyle yapılıyor derken, mesela Kültü ve Turizm Müdürlüğü Valiliğe bağlı olarak, Büyükşehir Belediyesinin ilgili birimleri, STKlar, üiversitelerimiz, hepsiyle beraber çalışıyoruz. Devlet koordinasyonu ve maddi katkıyı üstleniyor. Vali beyin başkanlığında bir tertip komitemiz var. Toplantıda konuşulur, biz program taslağı haline getiririz, sonraki toplantıda tekrar konuşulur, tartışılır, netleşir, resmi bir hüviyet kazanmış olur."

On the other hand, Esin Çelebi Bayru said that the organizers do not ask them. Their policy here is attending the ceremonies. She said:

> The cause of our attendance… If you do not attend, they ignore you. We are here for the service. Eventually, it is a ceremony in the name of our ancestor, Hz. Mevlânâ. It is unimportant whoever does it. We are working to make it in the right way as possible by attending. Even though the place of the *post* (fur) in the cultural center is wrong, we should be there to make at least the rest of the ceremony accurate.[34]

Here, we see that Çelebis and sheiks have limited authority over postnişinlik but they are not recognized in other issues of the ceremonies in spite of their efforts and engagements at the international level. Their symbolic and social powers survive to a degree, for instance, Esin Çelebi Bayru is one of the key figures in the opening ceremonies and Faruk Hemdem Çelebi makes the last prayer of the ceremonies, their presence is still important, but they are deprived of political power to be cared as an authority.

To conclude, we see that *Mevlevis* and Turkish state politics are in the direction of accommodation despite the ongoing ban on Sufism. The governments and *Mevlevis* embraced each other with different and shared motivations. Instead of the ambiguity over the legality of the ceremonies, *Mevlevis* achieved being legitimate by establishing good relations to the state center and benefiting from the more tolerant governments' and macro-scale processes in the political field.

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[34] The original text: "İştirak etme nedenimiz… İştirak etmezseniz sizi yok sayı yorlar. Burada biz hizmet için varız. Neticede bizim ceddimizin, hz. Mevlânâ'nın adına yapılan bir tören. Kim yaparsa yapsın. Mümkün olduğunca içinde olup en doğru şekilde yapılmasına çalışıyoruz. Kültür merkezindeki postun yeri yanlış da olsa orada bulunmalıyız ki en azından törenin kalanı doğru olsun."

CHAPTER IV

THE VISIBILITY AND AUTHENTICITY OF SEMA

4.1. Public Visibility of Rumî's Image and *Semâ* Ceremonies[35]

Nation-states and their intellectual power reproduce historical elements in new ways. The Turkish Republic also followed this path, reproducing elements from Turkish and Islamic history, even from the history seemingly rejected by the Republican ideology: Sufi Islam. Karpat (2001: 353) notes:

> Turkish official nationalism in the Republic rejected Ottomanism and Islamism but, when necessary, made extensive references to the Turks' Islamic and pre-Islamic past – seen now in ethnic terms – to lend that vital historical support to its claims.

The dominant intellectual character of the late Ottoman period and early Republican Turkey, in terms of religious issues, was mainly characterized by hybridity and ambiguity. For instance, the dominant ideologies of the late Ottoman period, which were Islamism, Ottomanism, and Turkish nationalism, were associated with one another, because Islam, the Ottomans, and Turks were interrelated historical representations in the minds of many Ottoman citizens. These representations began to diminish with the processes of modernization and new affinities were produced among different ideological inclinations producing hybrid perspectives.

The hybrid character of the intellectual field continued to exist during the course of the construction of modern Turkey. Under the effects of the tension between the Islamic past and the zeal to establish a secular state, the inside–outside mechanisms worked towards determining what was "national/us" and what was "foreign/them". The statesmen under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, together with a few other intellectuals, wanted to produce a Turkish nationalism that would keep Islam intact but under control, and at the same time claim to be secular. Despite many secularist reforms such as the abolition of the Caliphate and other Islamic official

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[35] This section includes excerpts from my recently published article: Sağlam, B. (2017). A Discussion on the Myth of Mevlânâ in Modern Turkey. Journal of Intercultural Studies, 38(4), 412-428.

institutions, the "secular" state established a new religious institution, the Department of Religious Affairs (1924). Also, Mustafa Kemal appointed Muhammed Hamdi Yazır (1878–1942), an Islamic scholar opposed to the secularist politics of the state, to write a commentary of the Qur'an, which was an important Islamic contribution to the state enterprise in the Republican period (he produced a 35-volume commentary). Yet, the secular republic put pressure on Islamic religious actors (scholars, intellectuals, and sheiks), and in so doing it opened new fields, and produced new religiosities. Both accommodation and confrontation politics took place in the relationship between religion and the state during the early Republican period (Ardıç 2012).

Sufism was the area most exposed and affected during the process of suppression and abolition in Turkey: all Sufi orders and lodges have been outlawed since 1925. Also, the abolition of traditional clothes and headgear, bans on calligraphy and even music, which bore Islamic-Sufi influences, led to a loss of cultural and psychological prestige on the part of Sufism. Eventually, the vitality of the Sufi orders was dealt a serious blow (Kafadar 1992: 310). On the other hand, some historical Sufi figures continued to be viewed as holy in the eyes of many Muslims in Turkey, and unlike these famous Sufi figures' contemporary followers, the members of the orders called tarikat, the Sufi figures themselves and their spiritual guide remained prestigious. Among them was Mevlânâ Celâleddîn Rûmî (1207–1273) who was a Sufi respected by many people, including certain segments of the political elite in the Ottoman Empire, and who continued to be viewed as a prestigious figure in Republican Turkey in terms of his intellectual and religious contributions to the Turkish history. In the following pages, I examine the different approaches to Rûmî and his doctrines by utilizing speeches delivered at the first large-scale Rûmî commemoration held in 1942. My aim is to explore various tensions between the religious and the secular, arguing that these cultural-ideological positions on Rûmî in history have a relational-hybrid character that means each positioning is a relationally and historically determined association of different ideas with references to various sources. In this case, Rûmî as a mythical character became an object of the formation of the modern Turkish identity through new interpretations.

4.1.1. (Di)vision, Orientalism, and Hybridity in Turkey's "Belated Modernity"

The main theoretical context of this sub-section is the relationship between the production of knowledge and power. I draw upon Foucault's concepts of "discourse" and "episteme" to understand the relationship of knowledge to power, which is, according to Foucault, a central phenomenon in modern society (Foucault 1972). In this analysis, knowledge and the sciences figure as very important domains that shape our minds, dominate our perceptions, and produce subjectivities. This notion is also closely related to what Bourdieu (1985) calls the struggle over the imposition of "principles of vision and division".

> In the struggle to impose the legitimate view of the social world, in which science itself is inevitably involved, agents yield a power proportionate to their symbolic capital, i.e., to the recognition they receive from a group. The authority that underlies the performative efficacy of discourse about the social world, the symbolic strength of the views and forecasts aimed at imposing principles of vision and division of the social world, is apercipi, a being-known and being-recognized (this is the etymology of nobilis), which makes it possible to impose a percipere. Those most visible in terms of the prevailing categories of perception are those best placed to change the vision by changing the categories of perception. But also, on the whole, those least inclined to do so. (Bourdieu 1985: 731)

In this part, I discuss an example of a struggle to impose a legitimate view of the social world among different actors and their discourses. Turkish modernization has always had many problems with historically produced traditional and religious objects and myths. New visions and divisions emerged during the modernization experience and the struggle over the legitimacy of new discourses became an issue. Here, I focus on the case of Rûmî and the struggles over defining his role in the "new" Turkish culture. Three groups (see below), humanists, traditionalists, and nationalists, produced separate but related discourses on Rûmî and his place during these struggles.

These actors and their discourses produced a field of struggle characterized by relativity and hybridity, which might be best understood in the context of the knowledge-power relationship. Foucault famously argued that all discursive knowledge is governed by an episteme that is the "total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures,

sciences, and possibly formalized systems" (Foucault 1972: 191). This episteme refers to the "underlying set of rules governing the production of discourses in any single period" (Sheridan 1980: 207). In this view, power holders decide on the limits of an episteme, leaving no room for non-coercive knowledge. On the other hand, Gramsci and Said were suspicious about the absolute dominance of power structures, as they assumed the existence of relatively autonomous knowledge (Guhin and Wyrtzen 2013). A significant aspect of the Turkish debates on Rumi was the influence of (self-) orientalism. In fact, this style of thought, which is based on "an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" (Said 2003: 2), was one of the dominant features of the discourses produced by virtually all actors on Rumi. Foucault's "objectification" is a keyword to discuss Said's orientalism. According to Foucault, there are three modes of objectification that transform human beings into subjects: scientific inquiry; dividing practices into opposite pairs such as normal and abnormal; and objectification through the human's recognition of themselves (Foucault 1982: 777–778). Said problematizes the objectifications of the East relationally: the objectification of the East through scientific inquiry, the Easterners' objectification of themselves through recognition and the dichotomy produced between the East and the West. To Said, the Orient and the Occident are not stable entities, for they produce and reproduce each other reciprocally. As Said remarks, orientalism refers not only to politically produced data, but also to a diffusion of an episteme into different fields as discourses. These debates also contained several instances of self-orientalism, reminding us that "orientalism is not simply the autonomous creation of the West, but rather that the Orient itself participates in its construction, reinforcement and circulation" (Yan and Almeida Santos 2009: 297). East is not entirely passive in this construction, Easterners' definition of the self is still shaped by Western terminologies. The history of the Orient is thus objectified by both intellectuals and states. In this way, traditional visions become objects of the modern nation-state as symbols. The history of Ottoman-Turkish modernization also witnessed the transformation of traditional symbols becoming symbols of the nation-state as a consequence of epistemological ruptures and differentiations.

In this context, I have identified three main discourses that shaped the Rumi debates in Turkey: traditionalist, nationalist, and humanist discourses. All three were represented at the 1942 commemoration ceremony. The traditionalist discourse was the religious/Sufi interpretation of Rûmî, which was not state-sponsored at this time, for the ban was in its heyday. It had enjoyed a high level of legitimacy and had been powerful under the Ottoman Empire for many decades, for it was the only legitimate view supported by the state power.

With the emergence of new visions and divisions as a consequence of power shifts and encounters, new discourses legitimizing Rûmî emerged and were then imposed by the new order. As Bourdieu stated (1985: 732), there are a variety of strategies used by power holders to impose the vision of the divisions of the social world, from insult (idios logos) to official nomination. The two newly emerging discourses of humanism and nationalism used the nomination strategy. The minister of culture was a theorist and a passionate defender of the humanist approach. Many defenders of the nationalist discourse, on the other hand, were state-sponsored university professors, who represented the symbolic power and violence of the state. The strategy of idios logos was used by all agents. Traditionalist figures, especially two Sufi sheikhs, still held symbolic power despite the ban: Sufi orders were weakened and illegal, but their visions and divisions of the social world were still significant and enjoyed a relatively high level of legitimacy, as evidenced by the fact that they were invited to the commemorations held by the government.

Finally, hybridity and relativity were an important characteristic of these discourses on Rumi. For the humanist and nationalist discourses were not mere products of Turkey's Westernization process. As Fernando Coronil (1996: 78) argues, Western dominance is always partial and "every society represents other societies as part of the process of constructing its own collective identity, but each does so in ways that reflect its unique historical trajectory and cultural traditions". In the context of Rûmî interpretations, the three discourses are located in the same episteme, and are not totally separated, but part of a hybrid symbolic field. This hybridity is not a mere consequence of Westernization, or an essentialist self-other polarization. For

hybridities are a historical result of the ephemeral representations produced reflexively in the course of the fluid histories (Coronil 1996: 53). Therefore, no discourse is autonomous, as they are historical and relational: "there is no such thing as an immaculate representation. Since all representations are saturated with history, the issue is to recognize the implications of their involvement in history" (Coronil 1996: 73).

The historical and cultural experience of Turkish modernization has produced a kind of hybridization, which is often manifested as a problem of "lack" due to "lagging" or being "belatedly modernized" (Jusdanis 1991), which is particularly the case in the making of the humanist discourse. As Turkish literary critic Nurdan Gürbilek (2003) argues, criticism of a lack constitutes the quintessential topic of modern Turkish intellectuals who try to explain the belatedness of Turkish modernization. To them, Westerners are superior because "they" (the West) have something "we" do not have.

> Belated modernization, especially in nonwestern societies, necessarily remains "incomplete" not because it deviates from the supposedly correct path but because it cannot culminate in a faithful duplication of western prototypes. The imported models do not function like their European counterparts. Often they are resisted. (Jusdanis 1991: xiii)

Admiration and hostility, "snobbish arrogance and provincialist pride" (Gürbilek 2003: 601) are the two basic strategies adopted by Turkish intellectuals to deal with the trauma of belatedness. In the case of humanists, we see both: they have the arrogance to disregard the traditional discourse of Rûmî by holding the traditionalists as diachronically opposite to the Western view, and at the same time they demonstrate the pride of having a historical figure like Rûmî, whom they hold as comparable with Western philosophers. Likewise, nationalists have the pride of having Rumi as a Turkish figure, while traditionalists were proud of Rûmî as a great Sufi leader. All visions, therefore, have their own "others" to dismiss or embrace: They interact with, and reproduce, each other in the context of the changing dynamics of history and culture.

We can thus argue that these three groups are produced through new visions and divisions, sometimes accommodating other visions and at other times conflicting with them. Intellectuals have relatively autonomous agencies for creative solutions to the problem. As we will see, some of the actors in my cases chose to accommodate two or even three of the discourses (i.e. M.B. Beytur), while others chose to oppose rival visions (i.e. Yücel, Olgun, and Milaslı). Before turning to the analysis of Rumi's "reception" from these divergent perspectives, let me present a brief historical background on him and the fate of Sufism during Ottoman-Turkish modernization.

4.1.2. Three Discourses on Rumi

4.1.2.1. The Humanist Discourse

A "humanist discourse" that constructed Rûmî as a universal thinker rather than as a "sacred" religious figure was very much in line with the modernizing and secularizing policies and Western-oriented direction of the early Republic. Philosophically, humanism is a perspective based on the centrality of human beings and uniqueness of human capabilities as opposed to the centrality of a divine order with supernatural features. The roots of the idea of humanism go back to the discovery of classical Latin and Greek texts in the Renaissance period. It was deepened in the European Enlightenment and affected the whole of European philosophy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Audi 1999: 396–397).

In the 1930s and 1940s, a group of "humanist" intellectuals, led by Hasan Âli Yücel, the Minister of Education, dominated the cultural politics of Modern Turkey. These intellectuals began to search for the "old" rituals and beliefs of the "dead" Sufism. In the 1940s, studies on Sufism increased in number with the encouragement and contributions of Hasan Âli Yücel and Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, under the control and patronage of the Ministry of Education. It was objectified as a dead culture, and was nevertheless interpreted in new ways. I will examine mainly Yücel's view of Rûmî as a representative of the Turkish humanists and their discourse. The Turkish humanists were a group of intellectuals who rejected the separation of Eastern Turkey from Western Europeans. They embraced Plato, René Descartes, William Shakespeare, Fuzulî, and Rûmî together in the same framework. The movement was very significant

in terms of the translations published via the Ministry of National Education Press. The translation project of Greek, Latin, French, German, English texts, and a few Eastern classics in Persian and Arabic into Turkish was led by Hasan Âli Yücel. The Minister of Education of Turkey between 1938 and 1946, he acted as the chief the ideologue of modern Turkish politics of education and culture, as well as being the most prominent figure of the humanist movement. Also involved in this movement were professors of the Faculty of Language, History and Geography in Ankara (DTCF).

Himself from a *Mevlevî* family, Hasan Âli Yücel had also studied philosophy, visited France and Britain, and was able to read French. He was well aware of the orientalist perception of Islam as "anti-humanist" in the West, and wanted to accommodate Sufism and humanism. At that time, humanism was a dominant, incontestable, discourse of the episteme in Europe. In Yücel's view, Anatolian Sufis such as Rûmî and Yunus Emre were as good humanists as Enlightenment philosophers were. Rûmî and Yunus Emre were thus turned into symbols and presented as followers of Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. Turkish humanists' idea of "Islamic humanism" was a synthesis of Islamic tradition and the Greek-Latin civilization (Sezen 2005). He stated that:

> I do not see any difference between the East and the West. If there is an essential distinction, it results from the adopted styles and the manners, though works, desires, concerns and fears of humankind change according to time and space. If we did not feel through the methods of the Western mind, we could not have found the same essence in the East. For instance, I read Mevlânâ's book Fihi ma fihi as if I am reading Goethe's conversations with Eckermann. (Çıkar 1998: 62)[36]

Yücel thus did not reject Sufism; on the contrary, he attributed importance to its philosophical and artistic background. To him, the literary works of the Sufis were precious in terms of their artistic value. In the preface he wrote for the translations of classics, he said: "The first understanding and feeling phase of the spirit of humanism starts with embracing works of art which are the most concrete

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[36] The original text: "Ben Doğu ve Batı diye bir ayrılık görmüyorum. İnsan eseri, insan ruhunun iştiyakları, kayguları, korkuları zamana ve zemine göre değişse de özünde bir ayrılık varsa o, tutulan yol ve usuldendir. Garplı kafasının metoduyla duymasak Şarklıda bu özü bulmamız güç olurdu. Mesela Mevlânâ'nın Fihi ma fihi kitabını Goethe'nin Eckerman'la Konuşmaları gibi okuyorum."

expressions of human being"[37] (Çıkar 1998: 83). Yücel's aim was originally to help create a "Turkish Enlightenment". In fact, he is the writer of the first article on the enlightenment philosophy in Turkey (Kaynardağ 2002). He had read about European humanists and believed in development and westernization, assuming that catching up with the European nations would only be possible by learning the European culture as well as the Turkish one. He expressed this in one of his speeches: "…To highlight the national culture and the spirit of humanism within the national culture in the Republican Turkey, wishing to be a prestigious part of the community of Western culture and thinking…" (Yücel 1993: 4)[38]. He was an idealist and was under the effect of a linear and "progressive" conception of history. To flourish a renaissance in Turkey, literature and printing were basic means, as in the case of European Enlightenment. He was able to make the idea of humanism a dominant discourse in Turkish cultural politics during his tenure as minister. According to this discourse, the roots of humanism, which was Greek philosophy, had originally flourished in Anatolia (Sezen 2005). In this respect, the humanists had a certain affinity with nationalist thought; one might even argue that this was a version of secular Turkish nationalism that was the official ideology at time. On the other hand, the Humanists also problematized the dichotomy of the East and the West (Sezen 2005) by associating Anatolia with the Greek philosophers, but this questioning was absolutely different from that of Said (2003). The motivation was defining Turkey as part of the Western civilization, which assumed that religion was not a determining factor; what was decisive was the enlightenment values and rationalism. If Turkish people followed the European experiences of enlightenment and rationalism, which were not alien to Anatolian civilizations, development would be possible. Within this framework, Sufism was once again a source of laziness; however, it was not the great Sufis such as Yunus Emre and Rûmî, but the institutionalized corrupt lodges that emerged after the great Sufis that were responsible for this "inertia".

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[37] The original passage: "Hümanizma ruhunun ilk anlayış ve duyuş merhalesi, insan varlığının en müşahhas şekilde ifadesi olan sanat eserlerinin benimsenmesiyle başlar."
[38] The original passage: "Garp kültür ve tefekkür camiasının seçkin bir uzvu olmak dileğinde ve azminde bulunan Cumhuriyetçi Türkiye'de milli kültürün ve milli kültür içinde hümanizm ruhunu öne çıkarmak"

Returning to our case, Yücel sent a letter to the Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî commemoration in 1942, in which he wrote:

> Recognizing and knowing Mevlânâ's place in our cultural history is a pressing need. It is necessary to appreciate him first and foremost as essentially and fundamentally a human figure rather than as a sacred figure. We have not been able to do this. Foreigners translating and publishing his works in their own languages, however, have. And by means of this humanist perspective they have been able to understand Mevlânâ better than we do. (Yücel 1943: 9)[39]

On his assumption that orientalists were better at understanding Rûmî than the Mevlevi sheiks and traditional annotators, he argued that it was necessary to understand Rûmî through Western methods and perspectives as a universal humanist, rather than an Islamic saint or a Sufi sheikh. He complained about the traditionalist-religious interpretation, which could not be adjusted to the universal thought of Yücel. He thus helped construct a new, secularized Rûmî myth.

Another speech delivered at the convention was by the president of the Konya Community Centre and a lawyer, Hulki Karagülle, who referred to Rûmî as a universal "genius" on par with his Western equivalents such as Aristotle, Victor Hugo, and Immanuel Kant. He said: "Mevlânâ passed beyond the defined limitations of religion and nation. One can say that his ideology is a wholesome humanism" (Karagülle 1943: 7)[40]. For Karagülle, Turkish people should follow Westerners in terms of recognizing and respecting the "classics" of their culture, by promoting Turkish geniuses such as Avicenna, al Farabî, Sinan the Architect, Ali Shîr Nevâî, and Mevlâna Celâleddin Rumi. Karagülle's distinctive emphasis on Rûmî was based on his "genious" and Turkishness.

These examples show that Foucault's first type of objectification exists in the case of Rûmî as a subject of inquiry. "Subject" is defined by Foucault in a dialectical way: it is both dependent and controlled by someone else, and at the same time tied to his

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[39] The original text: "Kültür tarihimiz içinde Mevlânâ'yı tanımak ve bilmek birinci işlerden biridir. Onun, kişiliğinin kutsal tarafını bir yana bırakarak, tam İnsan varlığı ile görülüp gösterilmesi bu bakımdan çok lüzumludur…. Hümanist bir anlayışla eserini henüz bizim yapmaya muvaffak olamadığımız mükemmeliyette kendi dilinde yazıp basan yabancılar, bizim daha varamadığımız bu muvaffakiyete bu anlayış yolundan varmışlardır."

[40] The original passage: "Esasen Mevlâna da muayyen din ve milliyet sınırlarını çoktan aşmıştır: 'Onun ideolojisi tensiksiz bir Ümanizm'dir' denebilir."

own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge (Foucault 1982). Subjects are produced via objectification, they in turn reproduce human consciousness and self-knowledge. When one takes Yücel's perception of Sufism and the translations under his administration together, one sees a practice of the production of knowledge. Conceptions and categories he used, as I mentioned earlier, were new interpretations as the products of a modern episteme based on the ideas and values of enlightenment, universalism, and rationalism. Yet unlike the Western humanists, Yücel and his followers rejected the East and West distinction, and they incorporated the religious figures into their humanist ideology.

4.1.2.2. The Nationalist Discourse

The Nationalist discourse that presented Rûmî as a distinctive Turkish intellectual with a universal outlook fit well with the early Republican regime's main ideological orientation; secular Turkish nationalism. As mentioned above, Rûmî was one of the historical referents for the new secular regime. During the conference too, there were some speeches delivered to highlight the ethnic "Turkishness" of Rûmî in line with the nationalist discourse of the time. Although Rûmî was known to have been born in Balkh and wrote in Persian, he was objectified as a Turkish thinker, and his Turkishness was centered and given even more significance than his ideas. More than half of the lectures and texts included discussions about his ethnic identity, to whether he was Persian or Turkish. Moreover, sema, too, was considered as a practice originally transmitted from Turkish shaman rituals. A Mevlevi musicologist, Rauf Yekta Bey also supported this claim (Rauf Yekta 1939).

The nationalist discourse on Rûmî was connected with both humanist and traditionalist ones. Anatolian humanism reflected, as mentioned, the desire to create a philosophical background for Anatolian Turks to show that Anatolian Turks were as civilized as the Europeans. According to Turkish humanists, Turks had also been affected by Greek philosophy and were a part of the "civilized world". This manner included the effects of occidentalism as well as nationalism, which we can see in Yücel's words. He problematized the language preference of Rûmî, which was Persian rather than Turkish, and then solves this problem immediately: "If (Rûmî) could get

free of the effects of his time and recite Turkish, his of the speech and the content …so that one can perceive his Persian as a specific dialect of Turkish" (1943: 9)[41]. The traditionalist and the nationalist discourses are historically interrelated. The term *millet* is frequently translated as "nation" into English, although it does not completely carry the same meaning, as it originally refers to "religion" itself and religious entity as well. The Ottoman millet system divided the population according to religious membership (Kenanoğlu 2004; Cagaptay 2006). Turkish secularism to some extent accommodated Islam as a basis for justification, selectively and often instrumentally employing various religious in its overall discourse (Ardıç 2012). In fact, secularist and nationalist ideology of the Turkish Republic used the "Turkish nation" (*Türk milleti*) as a term to define all members of the previous Muslim millet, as can be understood from the religious-based selection of Turkish non-Muslims in Turkey and non-Turkish Muslim communities in Greece for the population exchange in the 1920s. As Cagaptay (2006) highlights, the Turkish nationalization process had Islamic roots. Many Turkish nationalists believed Islam positively affected the power and glory of the Turkish nation, as exemplified by the power and durability of the Ottoman Empire as a Muslim-Turkish empire. Reciprocally, Turks served Islam for many years, and being Turkish was seen as an honour. Returning to our case, for example, Midhat Baharî in his speech, defines Rûmî as "an international Turkish scholar" and glorifies Turkishness as "a fertile fruit tree that receives life from its roots…and spreads everywhere, including to the West" (1943: 25).

Likewise, Mehmet Ali Ayni, a bureaucrat, and a professor of philosophy and Sufism who wrote books on "Turkish Moralists", "Turkish Logicists" and "Turkish Saints" where he examined Sufi biographies (Ayni 1993), claimed in his speech on Rumi that the Islamic civilization is the common civilization of all Muslim people in the world. He added:

> In the emergence, spread and expansion of this [Islamic] civilization, we see that Turks are the prominent nation among others. In fact, the greatest Qur'an commentators, hadith scholars, scholars of Islamic law, lexicologists,

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[41] The original text: "Devrin edebî tesirlerinden tamam sıyrılıp Türkçe söyleseydi, eseri, kabuğu ile de bizden olurdu. Fakat, gerek kendi deyişleri, muhtevası, itibariyle okadar Türkdü ki;… onun Farscasını, ona mahsus bir Türk diyeleği gibi görmek hatalı olmaz."

literary figures, philosophers and mathematicians of the Islamic civilization were from amongst the Turks. Similarly, one of the most prestigious personalities of Islamic Sufism [Rûmî] is also a member of Turkish nation. (Ayni 1943: 14)[42]

Ayni's emphasis on Turkish nationality defines him as "nationalist" but he is more than a nationalist. He also made a comparison between philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Leibniz, Spinoza, Descartes, Hegel, Comte and Hamilton, and the Sufis such as Rûmî. He found them comparable and similar in terms of the depth of their thought, and highlighted the distinctiveness of Rûmî's thought, which is based on love unlike rationalist thought. Ayni simultaneously adhered to the humanist and traditionalist discourses: for him, Rûmî was a philosopher and a Sufi sheikh at the same time. More importantly, he was a member of the Turkish nation.

İsmayıl Hakkı Baltacıoğlu (1886–1978), one National Parliament member, the first university rector in the Turkish Republic, a pedagogue and a dramatist, considered Rûmî as an important person because he did not imitate other Sufi orders, but created a new one that specifically fit to Turkish cultural character. For him, producing a new order meant a break from religion and nationalization (Baltacıoğlu 1943). He argued Rûmî enabled the Turkification of Islam by saving it from Arab traditions, via Turkish dances, music, literature, ethics, and philosophy. He concluded that Rûmî was primarily a religious Turkish nationalist and a producer of the Turkish national philosophy (Baltacıoğlu 1943: 28). He imagined a Turkish culture free of relations with other nations. Likewise, a sociology professor, Ziyaeddin F. Fındıkoğlu (1901–1974), devoted his entire speech to scientifically proving that Rûmî was a Turk. He claimed Rûmî would bring Turkish "volkgeist" from the old Turkish homeland (Central Asia) to the new one (Anatolia) (Fındıkoğlu 1943). He asked, "Did *semâ* [whirling] and ney [flute] come from Great Turkestan's ancient spirituality via Bahaeddin and his son Celâleddin, to Turkestan [Anatolia] as the sophisticated form

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[42] The original text: "Bu medeniyetin kurulmasında, yayılmasında, büyümesinde hizmetleri geçen milletlerin başında Türkleri görüyoruz. Filhakika İslâmın büyük müfessirlerini, muhaddislerini, fakîhlerini lûgatçılarını, ediplerini, filozoflarını, riyaziyecilerini…hep Türkler yetiştirmişti. Bunun gibi islâm tasavvufunun en mümtaz bir siması da necib Türk kavmına mensuptur."

of popular Turkish aesthetics?" (1943: 31)[43]. He interprets Rûmî as the carrier of the old Turkish culture, rather than a religious figure. Both Fındıkoğlu and Baltacıoğlu do not speak of Rûmî as a Sufi sheikh; for them his significance lies in him being as a Turkish philosopher who nourished and spread Turkish culture. Thus their discursive construction of Rûmî's image is secularist, unlike that of Aynî.

4.1.2.3. The Traditionalist Discourse

Unlike the first two, the traditionalist discourse defines Rûmî as an Islamic scholar and a sheikh, and accepts his image as presented in the Sufi sources called *menâkıbnâme* (hagiographic books). This view holds that Rûmî's spiritual-intellectual lineage and sources do not come from Plato or Socrates; but from the prophet Mohammed and other Sufi sheiks, and Islamic scholars. This discourse was clearly articulated by Midhat Bahârî Beytur, a *Mesnevî* commentator, and one of the last *Mevlevî* sheiks who was granted his icâzetnâme (license to lead the order) one year prior to the ban in 1925 (Beytur 2009), spoke of Rûmî's lineage and sources in the convention. He stated Rûmî received the highest education of his time; his ancestors were a wisdom and knowledge dynasty full of glory. He explained that Rûmî's main sources of inspiration were his father Bahaeddin Veled, his teacher Burhaneddin Muhakkık Tirmizî and his companion Şemsüddin-i Tebrizî. Moreover, he stated Rûmî examined the works of poet Hakim Senayî and Sheikh Feridüddin Attar of Nishapur (Beytur 1943). Beytur established these connections drawing on the oldest sources of the *Mevlevî* order such as *Risale-i Sipehsalar* (1312) and *Menâkıbü'l-Ârifin* (1360). He claimed Rûmî was influenced by these people and established his own school with divine inspiration (Beytur 1943).

During the conference, an important *Mesnevî* commentator and *Mevlevî* sheikh, Tahir Olgun (aka Tahir'ül *Mevlevî*), could not attend but sent a letter. Olgun's letter was precise in terms of his approach to Mevlânâ, which bears traces of the previous traditional Sufi discourses defining Rûmî as a Sufi sheikh. He highlights a sentence in

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[43] The original text: "*Semâ*" ile ney, aceba "Türkistan-ı Kebir"in ezelî maneviyetinden kopup Bahâeddin Veled ve oğlu Celâleddin vasıtasıyle Türkistan'a gelmiş olan Halkvari Türk estetiğinin incelmiş, billurlaşmış istihaleleri midir?"

the middle of his letter: "Rûmî was not a Philosopher, he was a Sufi" (Olgun 1943: 46)[44]. He obviously rejected the Turkish Humanists' (and some nationalists') perceptions of Rûmî as a secular thinker, as he was apparently one of the targets of the above-mentioned criticisms by Minister Yücel concerning the deficiencies of the traditionalist-religious interpretation. Olgun's letter continues:

> Recently it has become fashionable to seek philosophy in everyone and everywhere and to compare men of the East to those of the West. This fashionable trend has led some to call Sufis, who had nothing to do with philosophy, philosophers. While my knowledge could never aspire to such lofty heights, I do know that philosophy and Sufism are two separate domains, with the source of philosophy being reason and that of Sufism being revelation. (Olgun 1943: 46)[45]

Feeling uncomfortable with the new epistemological field that gave rise to a new interpretation of the myth of Rûmî, Olgun denied the modernist episteme by showing its differences from the traditional one that he learnt from his sheikhs. His challenge was a product of self-realization and "dividing practices" (Foucault 1982). He objectified both of the interpretations by dividing them into "reason" and "religion".

Mesnevî annotator Midhat Baharî Beytur was not as clear as Olgun in his speech, in which he complained about the lack of interest in Rûmî. He said the underdevelopment of the Eastern civilization was a consequence of the lack of adoption and application of its own cultural and religious values and wisdom (Beytur 1943). In another work, Beytur criticized in a polite manner the well-known English orientalist Nicholson's comparison of the Mevlânâ-Shems duo with Socrates and Plato (Beytur 1965). Beytur used the term "philosophy" while defining Rûmî's doctrine, but in a different sense than humanists: "Some people say that Mevlâna resembles this or that thinker, his philosophy is like this or that other philosopher's.

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[44] The original sentence: "Mevlâna Feylesof değildi, Sofi idi"
[45] The original text: "Yakın zamanlarda herkeste ve her şeyde felsefe aramak ve şarkın ricalini garbın adamlarile ölçmeye davranmak moda halini aldı. Bu moda, yahut bu merak ilcasile felsefeye hiç münasebeti bulunmıyan Sofiye hazaratına da feylesofluk isnat edilmeye başladı. Bendenizin öyle yüksek bilgilere aklım ermemekle beraber felsefe ile tasavvufun ayrı iki meslek olduğunu ve felsefenin menşei akıl, tasavvufun me'hazı nakil bulunduğunu biliyorum… "

I laugh at these words. …For Mevlânâ's philosophy is unique" (Beytur 1965: 14)[46].

Beytur's way of expression was different from that of Olgun, but the stress on Rûmî not being in the same category with Western philosophers was shared by both writers. Though Olgun rejected the title of "philosopher" for Rûmî, while Beytur did not see that as a problem, they agree on Rûmî's religious significance and identity as a more fundamental quality in his discursive construction. We see that Beytur and Olgun's Mevlevi backgrounds, the Sufi religious doctrine they learned in the lodges influenced their position in the field.

The special issue includes an article of İsmail Hakkı Milaslı (1870–1938). He was a medical doctor who also penned several books on Islamic history. We can call him as traditionalist in terms of his interpretation of Rûmî. He stated: "*Mesnevî-i Şerif* is a treasury of wisdom and knowledge entirely based on the Quran" (Milaslı 1943: 34)[47]. He stated that Rûmî rejected sources other than the Qur'an and Prophet Mohammed's words. To prove this, he gave examples from Rûmî's poetry and claimed what he wrote in his poetry was the stages of the self: *şeriat* (law), *tarikat* (orders), and *hakikat* (the truth), which is a well-known formula in Islamic circles. Milaslı's article was a defense against the new secular interpretation of Rûmî and his works. He used the old canon of Sufi Islam and embraced the lineage that goes back to the Prophet, and he did not even discuss Rûmî's Turkishness, as it was insignificant in the traditional discourse.

The three discourses discussed above were situated in the same intellectual field, a convention on Rûmî attended by many intellectuals with various backgrounds. Different discourses overlapped on explanations of Mevlâna Celâleddin Rûmî's identity. One can see that nationalism was widespread with its religious and secular forms. Humanist and traditionalist discourses were situated as opposed to each other, but often had consistent elements such as the use of adjectives "philosopher"

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[46] The original text: "Bazıları Mevlâna'yı şuna buna benzetiyor. Güya Mevlâna'nın felsefesi, onların felsefesi gibiymiş. Ben bu sözlere, bu benzetişlere gülerim…Mevlâna'nın felsefesi, gene Mevlâna'nın kendinin felsefesidir."

[47] The original sentence: "Hasılı *Mesnevî-i Şerif* tamamile Kuran'a dayanan bir ilim ve irfan hazinesidir."

and "genius". The main difference between them was priority – many humanists did not reject the religious side of Rûmî but made it secondary. Also, few traditionalists such as Beytur treated his philosophical side as secondary, after his religious side, while some traditionalists such as Olgun and Milaslı rejected the philosophy and only accepted a religious interpretation.

Turning to the theoretical discussion, as Foucault stated, episteme is "a certain structure of thought that the men of a particular period cannot escape" (1972: 191). Episteme is something hybrid; the collection of all legitimate discourses of the time. Power shifts in history produce new visions and divisions with new conceptions and interpretations. As Coronil (1996) stated, unique historical and cultural traditions that reflect legitimate visions of the past have a decisive role in the production of new visions and divisions as well as new outside influences. On the other hand, traditional visions can survive such power changes and we can find their traces in new discourses. These new discourses, produced by various objectifications, adopt strategies to deal with legitimate visions of the past. Hybridity is an inevitable outcome of these epistemological shifts. These shifts create feelings of being powerful, weak, or "belated" as a result of political and historical changes. These feelings manifest themselves in the episteme by creating hybrid visions.

Everyone is affected by the new discourses; intellectuals and groups may prefer to follow these new interpretations emerged through new discourses in some respects but also may oppose them in others. In the case of Turkish intellectual history, orientalism and self-orientalism also operate together as forms of objectification defining the episteme of the time. As a consequence of the newly emerging and continuing discourses in the episteme of early Republican Turkey, allegedly one of the spiritual founders of the Ottoman Empire, Rumi was reinterpreted under the influence of new ideas, and once again, he became the myth of the new Turkish Republic, ultimately signifying the fact that historical myths and figures might be re-imagined, re-worked, and represented in novel ways, and re-framed with new discursive strategies within a new episteme conditioned by a novel configuration of power relations.

Humanist and nationalist discourses opened the door to the public commemoration ceremonies and the traditionalists could enter by using this door. They could be visible and express themselves in a public conference and book. The new discourses enabled the public visibility of the traditionalists. There are other reasons and justifications provided the popularization of these events after the 1950s. Let us look at these reasons now.

4.1.3. "Postmodern" Justification: The Effect of New Age, Publications and International Interaction

Throughout the last century, Mevlânâ Celâledin Rûmi has become the center of interest, especially for European and American researchers and, for those who seek for a spiritual pursuit probably more than he has been in Muslim-majority countries. Franklin Lewis mentions that as much as people devoting themselves to Sufism, New Age followers and those with other religious or mystic inclinations have developed a remarkable interest in Rumi (Lewis 2008: 1). In what follows, a variety of religious or non-religious interpretations of Sufism arose in European countries, such as Germany or France and in the United States, as well as the ones in Turkey. Considering that the opinions emerged around the places I have mentioned, are in direct relation to the discourses in Turkey, it is necessary to evaluate the New Age style as another factor in the way it represents a non-institutionalized spirituality. These divergent discourses can be divided into two categories; the first is the cultural/ spiritual approach, and the second is the religious approach.

Rumi is an Islamic figure in religious/conventional discourse. Following the contribution of the Sufis who have migrated to other countries, and the translations of the texts of Rumi made by Reynold A. Nicholson (1868-1945), Annemarie Schimmel (1922-2003), Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch (1909-1999), Coleman Barks (1937-) and Robert Bly (1926-), the fame of Rumi and *Mevlevîlik* have widely spread. The Threshold Society was founded in California, and formed on Islamic grounds, by the American followers of Süleyman Hayati Loras (died in 1986), who was one of the last Mevlevi sheiks raised in a Mevlevi lodge. There have been a number of Mevlevi centers, that were founded in the West coast towns of United States, mainly as a

result of Süleyman Dede's visit to North America in 1976. The Threshold Society can be identified as the institutionalization of American Mevlevis. The head of the foundation, Kabir Helminski (1947-), states that he became a Mevlevi dervish of Süleyman Dede in 1980 and afterwards in 1990, that he was assigned as a sheikh by Celâleddin B. Çelebi (Helminski 2012: 56). The legitimacy acquired by a Mevlevi group in the USA through a non-governmental organization has remarkable importance for Mevlevis in Turkey, too. As well as the foundations established by various Mevlevi communities in Europe, the Threshold Society is also affiliated with the International Mevlana Foundation, which Çelebi family (Rumi descendants) founded and still has been managing since its establishment in 1996.

New age was a non-institutional, non-dogmatic movement, that offers an eclectic mixture of many conventional and religious practices and ideas. Particularly during the 1970s, it appealed the masses with its exclusion of dogmatic views. Rumi became an icon for New Age spirituality in the course of time (Lewis 2008). However, I should underline the fact that the first appearance of Rumi in a spirituality without an emphasis on Islam dates back to George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (1872-1949) who was one of the pioneers of the New Age movement. The meditative dance performed by him and his followers in the USA and France in the 1920s onwards contains moves that remind of *Mevlevilik* (Lewis 2008: 513). Many students of his, then, participated in the New Age Movement.

The other outstanding figure, who should be mentioned, is Idris Şah (1924-96). Without aiming to refer to Islam or to a certain cult, he was teaching a kind of Sufism to people in England from the 1960s onwards, by frequently giving references to Rumi. Franklin Lewis offers that there might be two reasons for this: the first, is that South Asian Muslims' particular interest in Rumi, and the other, is the increasing reputation of Rumi after the translations by Nicholson and Arberry in England (2008: 516). Seyyid Hüseyin Nasr, who can be identified as a traditionalist person, criticized the books written by Idris Şah for not including any direct Islamic reference (Lewis 2008: 517).

Figure 4.1. The sema ensemble visited the Turkish Embassy in Washington. People from left to right: Kani Karaca, Mrs Esenbel, Selman Tüzün, Nihat Doğu, the Ambassador Melih Esenbel, Sadettin Heper, Abdi Coşkun, Mustafa Holat, Münevver Ayaşlı and semazens (source: Abdi Coşkun)

As part of the cultural/ spiritual movement, there were a number of modern dance, aerobic and yoga groups in the USA and Europe since the 1990s, which mainly took inspiration from *Mevlevilik*. In addition to these groups, the increasing demand in the sales of poetry cassettes of Rumi's poems, and *sema* performances that were organized with groups from Turkey widened the influence of Rumi. Notwithstanding that, indeed, this influence has a bilateral characteristic. That is to say, the international demand expanded the scope of legitimacy for *Mevlevis* in Turkey who had already found an opportunity to raise new *semâzens* on a legitimate basis thanks to the Rumi commemoration ceremonies made since the 1950s despite the existence of the official ban. Since the first performance outside Turkey given in Paris in 1966 (Erguner 2010, 2013), Sema groups that have held performances abroad by receiving support from big organizations like UNESCO, have started to be considered as the

representative of Turkey. Mevlevis also received an increasing degree of attention from the Turkish representatives abroad, the embassies and the NGOs.

The growing interest and popularization abroad towards Rumi notably affected the institutionalization process of *sema* groups and its entering under the state patronage. Before the first ceremony organized in Paris in 1966, there were held a movie screening, which mainly aimed to encourage Turkish Tourism (Erguner 2013). This clearly demonstrates that the role of these ceremonies has been assigned to be the touristic and cultural representative of Turkey. To put it another way, the legitimation of the cultural/ spiritual attention was what enabled these performances. Erguner expresses this portrayal as follows (2013: 71):

> Since the proclamation of the Republic, the state had used our orchestras, composers, violinists, pianists in order to prove that we have succeeded to be European in such a short span of time. However, for the first time, it was defeated by the intensive mystic interests of Western intellectuals.[48]

The fame of Mevlevi rites has significantly increased, both domestically and internationally, after UNESCO declared the years of 1973 and then 2007 as Rumi years, and added *sema* ceremonies to the UNESCO intangible cultural heritage list in 2008. Following these developments, the state took *sema* ceremonies under preservation with the circular number eight declared by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on October 22, 2008, which includes four articles concerning how and where to hold these ceremonies.

4.1.4. Popularization: Tourism and the Media Representations

I mentioned briefly above the increasing interest and international demand for Rumi and *Mevlevilik* and how their popularization ended up providing a space for their legitimacy. In this section, I will discuss the touristic value of Rumi Museum and Şeb-i Arûs activities and try to analyze how the various ways of visibilities in media affected the popularization of Rumi and *Mevlevilik*. I will also aim to investigate how

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[48] The original text: "Cumhuriyetin ilanından beri, ne kadar kısa zamanda Avrupalı (!) olduğumuzu ispat etmek için, orkestralarımızı, bestecilerimizi, kemancılarımızı, piyanistlerimizi tanıtmaya çalışan devlet, ilk kez Batılı aydınların yoğun mistik ilgilerine yenik düşüyordu."

Rumi Commemoration ceremonies on December 17 was presented in media, both in audial and visual publications, under another sub-heading. Additionally, I will follow by questioning the ways that Mevlevi rites took part in these public spaces as a musical form.

4.1.4.1. Touristic value

Though there was a current official ban, sema ceremonies continued to hold a notable place in public space as a folkloric activity due to their spiritual, cultural and nationalist legitimizations from the 1960s onward. These rituals have attracted more tourists over the years. This can also be comprehended by focusing on the spatial changes, that is, the diversity of places where the ceremonies were being held. The first ceremony was conducted in the conference hall of Konya People's House, and it was followed by the ones in Municipality Public Cinema and the conference hall of Konya Library. Since the 1960s, the ceremonies have been held in the Sport and Exhibition Palace for a long time. Since 2004, the "Indoor Sema Hall" of Mevlana Cultural Center with the capacity of three thousand people, has been used for the ceremonies. However, the Sports and Exhibition Hall which holds ten thousand people has been still being used for hosting the huge crowds on weekend evening sessions and the last session on the 17th of December. The construction process of another building in Konya, Islamic Culture Center, which is planned to have a lodge in it, is still continuing. In 1957, the commemoration ceremonies were performed as 7 sessions in 4 days whereas the duration rose to 12 sessions in 7 days in 1959 and 22 sessions in 17 days in 1973 (Ağaoğlu 2013). In 2016, on the days between 7-17 December, 14 sessions were organized in total (Canbolat 2016).

The most significant event in the early years of the commemoration ceremonies was the visit of the US Ambassador to Turkey, George C. McGhee and his wife to Konya in 1952. This was a turning point in the way that it brought in a touristic character to the ceremonies, as a symbol of Turkish Republic. The musicians coming from Istanbul and Ankara played instrumental classical pieces and excerpts from *Mevlevi ayins* for ambassador's wife who wanted to listen Mevlevi music (Erguner 2010, Ağaoğlu 2013). The general director of press, Refik Ahmet Sevengil, was personally involved

in the organization of the event in order to please the ambassador and his wife (Ağaoğlu 2013: 69). Konya Tourism Association was founded in the same year. The *sema* performance has been given with *tennure* (wide skirt) and *sikke* (headgear) for the first time in the ceremony of 1952. The ceremony as a whole took place in 1956. Until this year, musicians played with suits or sometimes tail suits (Uzel 2011).

Konya Tourism Association which has played a crucial role in the organization of the ceremony for a long time, was founded in 1959. After Feyzi Halıcı became the head of the Association in 1962, his influence on the organization increased and it has continued for the following 25 years. There were various circuits arranged in the USA, Japanese and France. From the 1960s onwards, along with the new chairman, there were a number of controversial discussions about the financial issues, which was also projected in newspapers. Ref'i Cevad Ulunay (1890-1968), who was a descended of Rûmî, wrote an article titled "Commemoration or Fair?" in Milliyet newspaper in 1960. He was angry and frustrated with the organization committee for charging 250 Turkish *kuruş* entrance fee for entry into the gorges, yet, criticized them for not covering any expenses of the band of musicians and the Sema team still (Milliyet 6.10.1960, via Ağaoğlu 2013: 194,195).

In 1960, we encountered a travel agency which organized a tour and gave an advertisement for Mevlana commemoration for the first time. Again, in a newspaper report, the annual balance sheet was given:

> The ceremonies have been watched by 25 thousand people. 4308 of them were foreign tourists. 36 thousand people visited Mevlânâ Museum during the week. According to calculations, Tourists spent 2,5 million Turkish Lira in Konya.[49] (Yeni Sabah, 18.12.1960, via Ağaoğlu 2013: 201)

A composer from Konya, Ali Doğan Sinangil (b. 1934) who composed a Mevlânâ Oratorio wrote an article for the New Konya newspaper, dated 18 March 1963, and it was particularly important for the perspective it offered on the ceremonies. He

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[49] The original text: "Törenler, 25 bin kişi tarafından takip edilmiştir. Bunlardan 4308'i yabancı turisttir. Hafta müddetince Mevlânâ Müzesi 36 bin kişi tarafından ziyaret edilmiştir. Turistlerin Konya'ya bıraktıkları para 2,5 milyon lira olarak hesaplanmıştır"

asserts that "we should keep the visitors in Konya as long as possible and empty their wallets by pleasing them." To do this, he offered some suggestions: (1) the duration of the ceremony should be diminished by featuring Sema performances at the center of the organizations, (2) Activities and concerts publicizing Mevlevi music should be organized, (3) The ideas and art of Mevlana should be discussed in conferences (4) The exhibitions which introduces Turkish arts of adornment and painting should be held, (5) Turkish theatrical productions should be staged, (6) The orchestrates should give concerts in Ankara, (7) The conferences in which Turkish culture and art will be discussed should be held, (8) These all of the activities should be planned by a committee through receiving support from hotel-keepers and restaurant owners (Sinangil 1963, March 18, Yeni Konya).

According to Sinangil, there should be season tickets for the ceremonies and a reservation system should be arranged for the sales. Besides, there should be brochures for introducing the program prepared and published for the audiences. Ref'i Cevad Ulunay rigorously responded to the words and advice of Sinangil with an article titled "Those who don't understand Mevlana" in his column in Milliyet newspaper. Afterwards, they had a row about the issue. Ref'i Cevad Bey represents the traditionalist view which acts sensitively towards the risk of the commodification of the ceremonies. Ulunay asserted that "...these people (who take charge of commemorations) serve for the sake of Rûmî's love, without expecting any financial benefit. However, if this commemoration would be made in order to empty the wallets of the visitors, then, we are done!" He also underlined that tourists have not come to visit a thinker's or an artist's grave, rather, Mevlana signifies much more than that (Milliyet, 26.3.1963). In his following answer, his critic remarked the idea of the conference which put the ceremonies in a cultural and scientific form clearly indicates his conventionalism:

> We, as Mevlevis, accept that the conference, which will be held about Mevlâna, should only be the elucidation of Mesnevi. I took the courses of Mesnevihan Sıtkı Dede (a person who is capable of explaining Mesnevi to people) in Konya

for a short time. Then, I believed that the way to understand Mevlâna can be learned and taught only by elucidating Mesnevi.[50] (Milliyet, 8.4.1963)

Although the advice of Sinangil was contested in that period, in time, a part of his advice was actualized. We do not encounter any kind of traditionalism, offering elucidation over conference today, especially in a newspaper with wide circulation. The support of Ulunay for a religious frame in such an easy manner through his column was related to both his background and charisma in addition to already softened rigid secularist politics of the 1930s and 1940s.

The opening of exhibitions, which was advised by Sinangil, started in 1964. We learn, through the letter written by Feyzi Halıcı to Selami Bertuğ, that the souvenirs and remembrances started to be produced and sold in these times (Ağaoğlu 2013: 290-291). Today, in the foyer area on the ground floor of Mevlânâ Culture Center, various handicraft exhibitions have still been held and also sales of various goods, such as books and accessories have been made during the commemoration ceremonies.

In the interview I made with Ahmet Çalışır (b.1966), who has taken charge in Şeb-i Arûs ceremonies for years as a hafiz and musician on 13 December 2015, Çalışır tells that these ceremonies are conducted for the audiences, and because there was a limited participation to the performances made at noon in 2014, these were not held in 2015 any longer. On the other hand, he thinks that the ones who started the ceremonies, started with the intention of "perforation on the wall", and they used music as an instrument to reach their purpose. He also adds that "today, if the cults have been freer than before, the ceremonies have a notable contribution in this picture". Taking into account the viewpoint of Çalışır, it can be said that the popularization and touristification of the ceremonies have expanded the legitimacy of the religious rhetoric. Although there were criticisms about Sufism during the modernization process which suggested that it is far from being scientific or it directs

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[50] The original text: "Biz Mevleviler, Mevlâna hakkında verilecek konferansın yalnız Mesnevi'nin şerhinden ibaret olduğunu kabul ederiz. Konya'da Mesnevihan bir Sıtkı Dede vardı ki kısa bir müddet onun derslerinde bulundum. Ve Mevlâna'nın konferansla değil, Mesnevî'yi şerhetmekle öğretilir ve öğrenilir olduğuna inandım."

society to the laziness, the criticisms were tried to be invalidated by emphasizing the cultural and artistic aspect of some components of Sufism. This cultural and artistic legitimization includes the musical and dancing content of the ceremony the above-mentioned non-religious interpretations about Mevlana.

4.1.4.2. Media

4.1.4.2.1. Mevlevi *ayins* as part of Turkish Music corpus

The musical dimension of the *Mevlevi ayins* is one of the fundamental elements which extends the field of its legitimacy. Onur Güneş Ayas describes the form of *Mevlevi ayini* as "the highest and the most artistic form of our musical tradition" (2014), which is a commonly acknowledged perspective that has been repeated since Rauf Yekta Bey. This artistic legitimization enabled to publish 13 fascicles and 41 Mevlevi ayins in the Corpus of Darülelhan between the years of 1933 and 1939 (Erguner 2003).

Hafiz Kâni Karaca (1930-2004), who came to İstanbul in 1950, studied the works of Sadettin Kaynak. Then, he learned many other works, including Mevlevi *ayins* from his teacher Sadettin Heper who was a Mevlevi dervish and the head of Konya Commemoration Committee. Every year on 17th December, he read pieces from the ayins in the special organizations for Rumî on the Istanbul Radio. He made important contributions to the area of religious music with his chant of Koran, his performance of Mevlid and *ayin*, and especially his performance of *naat* in *Rast* which is read at the beginning of the ceremony (Stokes 2010: 21). He also served as the head of the ayins and naats in Konya Commemorations for long years. As a well-trained performer of religious music, he revived the religious music in a state institution like Istanbul Radio, which can be evaluated as a significant development with regard to the extension of legitimacy for *Mevlevî ayins*. In 1964, he recorded Dede Efendi's *ayin* in *Saba makamı*. (Ağaoğlu 2013: 289, 298).

Münir Nurettin Selçuk, sang the *ayin* in Bayati to the phonograph record, on the request of Darülelhan Depository Council. Additionally, he organized Rumi Commemoration concerts with the *İcra Heyeti* (Performance Group) of Istanbul

Municipality Conservatoire, where he was the conductor, on Decembers from the 1960s onwards. In these concerts, various pieces from the *ayins*, hymns, and *duraks* were being performed. [51]

In time, the popularity of *ney*, which is one of the most significant elements of Mevlevi *ayins*, increased and, there had been several initiatives in order to open ney courses in Konya in 1964. (Ağaoğlu 2013: 289). We can say that today, *ney* is the most commonly taught Turkish music instrument. In this regard, it is important to note that Rumi's mentioning *ney* in his Mesnevi, along with the role of Rumi's adoption a religious, national and philosophical figure, have been significantly effective in the increasing demand for *ney.* It should also be added Neyzen Niyazi Sayın's efforts to bring a new style to the *ney* in the 1970s, and Rûmî commemoration ceremonies have been remarkably effective.

4.1.4.2.2. Mevlana Commemoration Ceremonies in visual media

The first time an entire Mevlevi *ayin* has been recorded visually from beginning to end was on 25 December 1954, a ceremony in Konya lodge (called Asitane), held by the General Directorate of Press. This film was shown to the public for several times in the following years, within the schedule of the ceremonies. In 1961, a French television company filmed the ceremonies. In addition, Nezih Uzel informs us that a full ceremony filmed in a studio by producer Mel Trovart during the US tour in 1972. (Ağaoğlu 2013).

In 1968, we begin to observe a process in which *sema* experienced a transformation from a religious ritual, into an element of popular culture. Zeki Müren, who played the leading role in the movie "Katip/Clerk" (1968), wore costumes of whirling dervishes and whirled around for the film. Even though these scenes were removed from the movie in the editing process, probably for the fear of any future reactions, his poses as a whirling dervish were figured in the newspapers. This simply portrays that the current political circumstances were available for Zeki Müren, one of the

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[51] The record of the program in Şan Cinema on 24 December, 1967 can be accessed from youtube

most famous singers of the period, to perform a Mevlevi character, which also signifies that the cultural-artistic discourse had been successful in political terms. Another remarkable case at this point was that Hamiyet Yüceses, who was a famous vocal artist, demanded to make a rite program with whirling dervishes at the casino during the same year. Upon this news, Ref'i Cevad Ulunay seriously criticized this manner in his column. Following the reply of Yüceses for his article, Ulunay answers in accordance with the traditionalist perspective: "Miss Hamiyet! This is an entirely different universe, so that, all of us yearn for the shrine of Cenâb-ı Pîr, for a year. If you had reached the happiness of being in Konya in Şeb-i Arûs, then, you would not dare to put those sikke (which we call Fahr-i Mevlânâ), on a bunch of people's heads and make them figurants for your show."[52] (Milliyet 1968, March 18, via Ağaoğlu 2013: 453-54).

In 1973, Atıf Yılmaz directed a documentary called "Mevlana", which narrates the life of Rumi, with the support of Konya Tourism Association. This movie was based on an adaptation of Mehmet Önder's work. After a year, in 1974, TRT produced another documentary in the Galata Lodge, which later, was broadcasted on the national television, and sent to the Russian television. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı took part in this movie as narrator. This film was one of the three films that TRT General Director İsmail Cem İpekçi chose and presented as the representative records for Turkey's promotion, in the meeting of the European Broadcasting Union on 15 February 1975. Additionally, after TRT archive has been accessible as online[53], we have the information that, in 1978, TRT had filmed Şeb-i Arûs ceremonies as a documentary titled "Alive Mevlana", which was broadcasted on television. As it is plausible to see in these examples, in the 1970s onwards, Rumî and whirling dervishes became to be presented as the showcase of Turkey as representative symbols.

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[52] The original text: "Hamiyet hanım! O başka bir alemdir, öyle bir âlem ki hepimiz bir sene Cenâb-ı Pîr'in türbesinin hasretini çekeriz. ... Şeb-i Arûs'da Konya'da bulunmak saadetine erişmiş olsa idiniz bizim (Fahr-i Mevlânâ) dediğimiz sikkeleri şunun bunun başına giydirip, figüran yaptırmağa kalkmazdınız."

[53] www.trtarsiv.com

4.2. Production of Authenticity: The Real and the Artificial

In this part, I argue that *semâ*, as a ritual activity of the past, is a hybrid performance today, carrying both authentic and artificial character. The image of Rumi, as well as the meaning of semâ in the Turkish Republic, has differentiated and hybridity has emerged out of this transformation. In the following, I will explain my argument in four phases: First, I will discuss the main theoretical problems of the transformation of "classical" *Mevlevi semâ* events into contemporary *semâ* performances in terms of meaning, action, performance, and frame. Second, I will analyze these contemporary *semâ* performances by using the social performance theory of Jeffrey C. Alexander (2006) as an account. The third stage will be the discussion of fusion, de-fusion and re-fusion terms of Alexander which will help to make the fourth part more sensible. In this last phase, I will categorize different interpretations through *semâ* into two: revivalist and mimesis frames. These two perspectives will support my main argument by representing the "authentic" and "artificial" sides of this hybridity.

4.2.1. Understanding the *Mevlevi* Ceremony: Theoretical Framework

4.2.1.1. Meaning, Action and Performance

The story of modernization of whirling dervishes ceremonies has some basic questions concerning the relationship between meaning and social action. The ritual, as a symbolic action, has multiple sets of meanings behind it, described by many Sufis. One of them, Midhat Bahari Beytur (1875-1971) explains his understanding of *semâ*:

> Enraptured lovers do not whirl in vain
> Entranced by the beloved, they leave their minds
> Hearing the sound of the creation from *ney*, sighing
> They do *semâ* by embracing God [54]

A student and a follower of Midhat Bahari and, in his words, a *Mevlevi* since 1966, Prof. Emin Işık described certain aspects of *semâ*, during my interview as:

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[54]The original version:
Sanma beyhude döner vecde gelen âşıklar
Mest-i cânân olarak akla veda eylerler
Nâydan bâng-i elestîyi duyup, âh ederek,
Hakk'ı âgûşa sarar, öyle semâ eylerler

> *Semâ* is turning around ourselves and also one another. It seems like the solar system. Firstly, you should be one. This is signet (he showed this position by standing). This represents aleph (the first *letter* of the Arabic alphabet), the number one. We express the unity of God with our bodies. [55]

Mevlevis have a wide range of explanations from symbolization of Solar system and the oneness of God to the expression of the love of God. These are the theoretical motivations of their actions. In Weberian terms, it carries the features of value-oriented-rationality that means striving for an ethical, religious or philosophical value, and affective action that is the actions based on the emotional state of people, as a religious ritual. In addition, it is traditional because it is systematized and repeated for many years since the foundation of the ceremony. Finally, it is a goal-oriented rational action, an instrument to get Sufis together, foster solidarity and excite their emotions, as Durkheim defined as "effervescence" effect (1912), to attract the interest of non-Muslims, non-Sufis, and tourists and to gain money and reputation (Weber 1978). *Semâ* performances have thus multiple meanings in their background representations. These various layers of meaning can exist simultaneously during a performance. A *semâ* performance can include value-oriented and goal-oriented motivations at the same time, implying a "double performance" (Dayan & Katz 1988, s. 178). Many modern religious ritual ceremonies with economic, national and religious aspects have the same "double performance" issue. Korom and Chelkowski's study on Islamic Muharram ceremonies in Trinidad (1994) is a close example to my *semâ* case with its religious and national sets of meanings. They conclude their analysis with this observation:

> Audience/performer interaction in a public space, imbued with an aura of both sacred and profane meaning, defines this event and opens up the possibility of many levels of interpretation. By doing so, the event is a double performance of sorts: esoteric, *sacred*, and ethnic on the inside; exoteric, profane, and national on the outside. (Korom & Chelkowski 1994: 170)

Semâ performances are also open to the manifold levels of interpretation, both sacred and profane. On the other hand, what make contemporary *semâ*

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[55] The original text: "*Semâ* hem kendi etrafımızda hem birbirimizin etrafında dönmektir. Güneş sistemini andırır... Evvela bir olacaksın. Bu mühür... Elif oluyor böyle. Bir rakamı oluyor, Allah'ın birliğini vücudumuzla ifade etmiş oluyoruz."

performances in Turkey intriguing are the official restrictions and the political tension over Sufism throughout the Turkish Republican period.

Interpreting the human action is a central topic of sociology since its foundation. Kenneth Burke developed the concept of "symbolic action" where he highlighted the cultural character of activities, which is "expressive rather than instrumental, irrational rather than rational and theatrical performance rather than economic exchange" (Alexander& Mast 2006: 2). Burke influenced another important sociologist of symbolic interactionist school, Erving Goffman.

4.2.1.2. Self and Frame

At the micro level of the actions of the individuals and meanings attributed to actions, Erving Goffman can provide some useful insights to deepen the discussion. To Goffman, reality is not fixed; the world is full of subjectivities that constitute realities. Beliefs for these subjective realities change the meaning of actions. He uses the term "performance" to explain human action "which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers"(Goffman 1956: 13). To Goffman, "self" is a product of performances of actors in social situations, especially the publicly validated and organized ones. Self-constrains and fashions the performances at the same time. Social validation of the dominant culture, the legitimacy of the performance is a central element that must be achieved (Lemert & Branaman 1997: xlvi).

> A correctly staged and performed character leads the audience to impute a self to a performed character, but this imputation—this self-—is a product of a scene that comes off, and is not a cause of it. The self, then, as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is whether it will be credited or discredited (Goffman 1959: 252-253).

Actors perform roles defined in interactions in different contexts according to different "settings" which are "the scenic parts of expressive equipment" (Goffman 1956: 14). There are "masks" people wear in social situations, which are important

components of a human self. One may be "sincere" or "cynical" about his/her roles in different contexts but this is a function of social situation. Although there is a "self-as-performer" behind the mask, the socialized self, or their "self-as-character", is the self of human beings in society. The self is constrained by the society and open to manipulation through "impression management". Goffman suggests not investigating the distinction between real/honest and contrived selves because the difference is contingent, not measurable, and both performances have the same techniques of staging. He defines the interpretation of the performance in the mind of the observer as "frame" (Goffman 1974). The spectators are active, and may have different frameworks of appearances than the performers they watch do.

Turning back to the *semâ* ceremonies, the setting of a *semâ* ceremony has many props as expressive equipment: *semâzens* and special clothes for performers such as *tennure (skirt), hırka* (coat) and *sikke* (headgear), a rounded place to perform *semâ,* and musicians with their instruments. The performers wear the appropriate masks of the performances: they act according to the script of the ritual. As a requirement of the script, they adopt a decent, silent and reserved attitude during *semâ*. In addition, the audience should listen and watch the *semâ* silently. There is a special moral code for the ceremony, composed of many rules. As Branaman noted: "Morality does not reside within us or above us but rather is manufactured through performances and interaction rituals designed to affirm human dignity" (1997: xlvi).

Semâzens and musicians are expected to behave in line with the moral code, but they can be sincere or dishonest in their behaviour according to how they believe in and adopt the moral and symbolic values in the ceremony. There is a "*semâ*zen mask" they have to wear during the ceremonies, which represents one of their selves, just as "Goffman depicts the individual as the manager of a 'holding company' of multiple selves" (Branaman 1997: Hi). The various roles individuals play help create multiple selves. So the self is a social product that the visible "frames" of the performances in the eyes of both performers and audience are important. The audience's framing may be different than that of the performer, for:

There is a relation between person and role. But the relationship answers to the interactive system—to the frame—in which the role is performed and the self of the performer glimpsed. Self, then, is not an entity half-concealed behind events, but a changeable formula for managing oneself during them. (Goffman 1974: 573)

4.2.1.3. Cultural Pragmatics

Jeffrey C. Alexander develops the theory of cultural pragmatics, which entails text, actors, and the audience, and defines them analytically in interaction as mechanisms of fusion and de-fusion. In his model, producing a successful, "fused" performance, which is framed by the audiences as "authentic", is related to the perfect function of the mechanism composed of actors, audience and text.

In his Durkheimian historical perspective, Alexander argues that all rituals are performative, but in simpler societies, performance is not the same as in complex societies. Rituals were more integrated parts of daily routines, and today they have become contingent and personal. In simpler societies, participation was obligatorily determined in hierarchies. In complex, differentiated societies, participation in rituals is based on individual choices with various motivations such as cognitive observation (Alexander 2006, p.39).

As the pioneer of the neo-functionalist cultural sociology, Alexander derived his ideas from both Goffman's dramaturgical approach and anthropologist Victor Turner's work on rituals, symbols, and rites of passage that highlight the liminality and communitas in ritual processes. This theoretical framework helps to see "how social performances, whether individual or collective, can be analogized systemically to theatrical ones" (Alexander 2006, p.29), as opposed to two existing reductionisms in cultural study: the structuralist approach (e.g. Saussure 1985, Barthes 1972) that takes meaning as text and not sufficiently considering the importance of action, and the pragmatist theories such as Marxist and postmodern approaches (e.g. Althusser 1971, Baudrillard 1994) that see cultural patterns as consequences of power and material interests, attributing to them almost no autonomy.

The recent work of Nevin Şahin (2015) on *Mevlevi semâ*, is an example, of a structuralist-Marxist approach. She defines contemporary *Mevlevilik* by using Althusser's terms of state's ideological apparatuses and subjectification. To Şahin, *Mevlevi*lik went beyond being an ideological apparatuses of state, becoming a music-power field of struggle between multiple actors (2015, p.260). In this study, she used her own observations of Rumi commemorations in three different places: official state organization in Konya, a non-governmental organization in Ankara and an organization of a private enterprise in Istanbul. The political speeches and remonstrations in the organizations, the attendance of political figures, advertisement dimension of the events and the ticket prices were among the elements of her discussion and evaluation. Although she saw some independence from power in the case of Ankara, she argued that the Sufism-related NGOs are the inheritors of the Sufi lodges, and that many actors in the field of *semâ* ceremonies are in the struggle for power. She did not reject a possibility of "sincerity", but she did not attribute importance to the individual beliefs, and the assumption of authenticity by the individuals. Concentration on power is also an element in the analysis of cultural performance by Alexander, explained as:

> Cultural performance is the social process by which actors, individually or in concert, display for others the meaning of their social situation. This meaning may or may not be one to which they themselves subjectively adhere; it is the meaning that they, as social actors, consciously or unconsciously wish to have others believe. (2006, p.32)

According to this approach, power is a necessary but not sufficient factor to explain a cultural performance. Instead, a multi-dimensioned and more complex perspective should be employed. In Alexander's account, there are six elements of a cultural performance: systems of collective representation, actors, observers/audience, means of symbolic production, *mise-en-scéne* and social power. When these elements evenly flow during performance, there will be a successful "fused" performance, which is a necessary condition to achieve authenticity. A failed "de-fused" performance must be "re-fused" to become convincing again. Below, I will analyze *semâ* performances with reference to these elements.

4.2.2. Analyzing the elements of contemporary *semâ* performances

4.2.2.1. Systems of collective representation

There are always systems of collective representations in the background of a performance which consist of existential, emotional, and moral concerns, motivations, and meanings. When we move on to the foreground of a performance, there will be a script and a text. Script includes immediate referents for action. Cultural text is the performance that displays meaning to the audience (Alexander 2006, p.34). "Collective representations, whether background or foreground, can be evaluated for their dramatic effectiveness" (Alexander 2006, p.33). Thus, the text is the practical side of the performance staged, which enables the transaction of meanings.

The background representations of *Mevlevî* rituals are various, ranging from the representation of the day of doom to the astronomical explanations of circulation of planets, the cosmos (Rauf Yekta 1939, Gölpınarlı 1983, p.384-85). Gölpınarlı argues that these are all mystified, romanticized, and willful interpretations. It seems that scholars attributed different layers of meaning to the ritual. The ceremony also seems to be related to existential concerns of human beings, such as trying to reach self-realization and God. As an Islamic mystical order, *Mevlevîlik*'s objectives that are self-purification, being a good Muslim, following the Sunna of the Prophet Mohammed, transcending the levels of self to reunite with God, etc. are very similar to the other mystic orders of Islam. The script includes the immediate referents for actions (Alexander 2006, p.33), such as the stories about how Mevlânâ started performing *semâ* and how it became a *Mevlevi* ritual. The text is the act of whirling according to a choreography with special musical compositions together with Qur'an recitations, annotations of poems of Rûmi, remembering the name of God, prophet and the saints and prayers. The text is related to the practical aims of the performance. One important pragmatic aim of the ritual is to gain new followers (İnançer 2014, p.126) or cultural extension. Moreover, another practical aim is producing solidarity and energizing people, creating effervescence effect through the love of the Prophet and God, by producing psychological identification.

As I mentioned in the previous chapters, there are new background representations of Rumi image and sema. Now, sema is not only a religious practice, it is also a cultural expression of tolerance, humanism, and a symbol of "Turkish Islam", a component of "cultural mosaic" of Turkey. This diversification of background representations is a challenge for the fusion of the performance and transmission of meaning to the audience.

4.2.2.2. Actors

The actor generally decodes the symbols and meanings and interprets the background representations and scripts. Cultural extension expands from the script through actors to audience (Alexander 2006: 34). The actor as performer is interrelated to textual patterns via cathexis, through emotions. "While performers must be oriented to background and foreground representations, their motivations vis-à-vis these patterns are contingent" (Alexander 2006: 34). Actor's knowledge about background representations and script is not a sufficient element to produce a successful performance; emotions through these representations are also an important factor.

In the classical *Mevlevi mukabelesi* ceremonies before 1925, participation as an actor was regulated according to hierarchies and social power. The ceremony was organized due to the *Mevlevi* codes called "*Adab ve Erkân*". There was a very clear exclusion and inclusion process: only the dervishes of the order were able to perform *semâ*. They were distinguished by the education they received in the lodge. *Mevlevi dede*s taught the codes of whirling only to their disciples. These *Mevlevis* hold the "cultural capital" (Bourdieu 1986) inherited from the previous *dede*s, on the regulation of the ceremony. The hierarchy was crucial in the ceremony. The status of the dervish, whether newcomer or more experienced, determined the position of the *semâzen* in the ceremony (Gölpınarlı 1983: 372). Dervishes and sheikhs were intended to become emotionally attached to the performance. This emotional attachment is called "vecd", a state of ecstasy. They learned the background representations, script, and the text of the ceremony from their sheikhs to be able to produce *vecd* during their performance.

Today, the authority of Mevlevi sheikhs and the Çelebi has dissolved. They still have cultural and symbolic capital, but not every people in the field recognize them. For instance, Mustafa Holat stated that he finds some of the sheikhs Çelebi gave *icazet* incompetent. On the other hand, *icazet* from a Çelebi is still prestigious as Fahri Özçakıl proudly stated Hüseyin Top proudly gave place to his *icazet* at the end of his book (Top 2007). Emin Işık said that he has no authority to prevent people who make money out of sema performances in restaurants and weddings, which means they are not effective enough to control inclusion and exclusion of actors in the field. In addition, the variety or authorities in the field produced new inclusion and exclusion concerns. For instance, Ahmet Çalışır, the art director of Konya Sufi Music Ensemble, indicated that there were semazens having alcohol and not doing daily prayers in the past, but today's semazens are devoted to the Islamic laws. Fahri Özçakıl's statement about their fastidiousness in choosing semazens for the ensemble is also noteworthy. As he affirmed, they take account of not only their physical abilities and beauty, but also their appropriate manners in terms of Mevlevi codes of moral. He said they do not want to disappoint the audience in terms of their moral and religious attitudes when they see semazens outside of the performances. He did not deny that they look at semazens' physical talent and beauty but he highlighted that this is secondary.

4.2.2.3. Audience/Observers

The second interpretation and decoding occur in the course of communication between the actors and the audience, in variable ways. The audience defines themselves in a process of psychological identification during the performance. The audience may attach itself to the performance, or be distracted or may become uninterested and sleepy. Even if the relationship between text and actor is successful, audiences may not be persuaded, and there may be a gap between the two related communications. Moreover, the existence of an audience is not obligatory for a performance, and performers are observers at the same time.

In the architectural design of the *Mevlevi* lodges, there is a visitors' gallery called *züvvar mahfili* for guests, and an imperial gallery called *hünkar mahfili* reserved for the use of sultans and other statesmen. Gölpınarlı reports that *Mevlevis* scheduled

the *Mevlevi* mukabeles because of frequent visitations of the sultans (1983: 371). Cem Behar highlights the spectacular nature of *Mevlevi mukabelesi* since the sixteenth century, arguing that:

> In Ottoman times (that is, from the sixteenth century onwards) the audience was indeed required and sought after for the *Mevlevi* ceremony, and both the ritual and its paraphernalia were structured very much as performance. Nevertheless, and looking at it from another viewpoint, we will see that the audience itself was, in a variety of ways, incorporated into the ritual and made an integral part of it, so that the insider/outsider distinction was often blurred. Moreover, there were always certain limits that the *mukabele* would never transgress and that prevented it from becoming a mere public show. (Behar 2014: 518)

Although the *Mevlevi* rituals were welcoming the audience, their performance was not dependent on the presence of an audience. On the other hand, it was an "aural and visual performance" in addition to its religious meaning, and the musical concert-like feature of the *mukabele* promoted the show side of the performance (Behar 2014: 523). As Gölpınarlı pointed out, the visitors, *züvvar*, consisted of people with different motivations, such as watching the ceremony, listening to *Mevlevî* music, looking for religious enlightenment, or for investigation (Gölpınarlı 2006: 57). There were also *muhib* people, the sympathizers of the order, who are generally well-informed ones generally seeking a mystical experience (Behar 2014: 525). In the ritual, visitors, generally *muhib* people were not passive; they could pay donation called *niyaz* to the musicians (*mutrıb*), and the performers played an extra *niyaz mukabelesi* part (Gölpınarlı 1983: 379-80). They were able to change the ritual, and directly interact with the performers.

Today, the audience is even more effective in the construction of the commemoration performance. The organization sells tickets and the number of performances, and of days the *Şeb-i Arus* commemorations will last are determined according to the statistics of attendance. They try to maximize the energy spent and the money gained. As radically different from the classical *Mevlevi* mukabele, today, if there is no audience, there will be no ceremony organization. Audience has become a necessary factor, not an extra one. For instance, the director of cultural affairs, Mustafa Çıpan stated that they fixed the date of the ceremonies as 7-17 December

to ease the organization of travel agents, culture and art calendars, tour operators, and attendees.

Audience behaviors have also diversified. I observed many times in Konya and İstanbul that the audiences were continuously taking photos and videos. Despite the warnings not to applause the semazens, people applauded in Konya. In addition, many people left and entered the hall during the ceremonies. Cüneyt Kosal and Esin Çelebi Bayru both said that these never happened outside Turkey, foreigners are more aware of the religious background of the ceremony and they behave in a more respectful manner. That the audience in Turkey do not act in consonance with Mevlevi codes indicates that they do not share the same motivations. The audience applause what they watched because it seems like a theater; they are not sure about its religious content. The religious background representations are not convincing to them because of their lack of knowledge, the physical atmosphere of the hall, tickets etc.

4.2.2.4. Means of symbolic production

Material elements are an integral part of the theory of cultural pragmatics. Actors need standardized material objects to reflect symbols and meaning that Goffman defined as "standardized expressive equipment" (Alexander 2006, p.35). Physical and verbal gestures are important for putting the text into the scene successfully. Furthermore, place is very effective to construct a perception of reality and transmission of the performance.

The classical *Mevlevi mukabelesi* also had standardized expressive equipment such as *sikke* (headgear) and *tennure* (wide skirt). Dervishes had a special type of whirling with special gestures such as the positioning of the hands. Lastly, rituals were performed only in the *mevlevihane*s, which are Mevlevi lodges. These were the basic material components of the rituals.

During the Republican era, the configuration of the performances changed. Mevlana commemorations started to be publicly performed in cinema halls, sports halls,

cultural centers, and sometimes in lodges. Fahri Özçakıl said that he feels a different spiritual pleasure when he performed in a traditional lodge. The place is always an important material factor for the actors and the audiences. The ritual was thus forced out of its material context. Moreover, as discussed before, the ban on Sufism in 1925 outlawed the entire Sufi garment. In the first years of commemorations, sema performance did not take place, and after the reintroduction of sema, the organizers and performers of the commemorations hesitated to wear Sufi clothes and numerous components of the traditional ceremony were gradually added (Uzel 2011, Ağaoğlu 2013).

New means of symbolic production were included in the ceremonies as the background representations diversified. New meaningful actions were created by the productive authorities such as a procession with mehter band, oratorios and theaters, concerts, conferences and contests (Çıpan, 18 February 2016). It almost became a festival of Rumi. For instance, the staff of the organization wore Sufi vests called *haydariye*, as a substitution of festival t-shirts to identify who are in charge. Moreover, during sema, spotlights used to signify *postnişin* and *semazens*, to produce a more impressive visual quality.

4.2.2.5. Mise-en-scéne

It describes the organization of a dramatic action, how people put the text into the scene, how people perform both physically and verbally during the event. The choreography, gestures, time and space managements are all included in this category (Alexander 2006: 36). The performance as a composition is recreated according to time and space by the various actors.

In the classical *Mevlevi mukabelesi*, the choreography was more or less determined socially and historically, instead of some controversial details. For instance, the way semazens open their arms was a controversial issue among *semazens*, as we know from Gölpınarlı's discussions (2006: 103). Some Mevlevis touched the headgear *sikke*, some others would not lift their arms above the shoulders' level etc.

The political change as well as the alteration of space transformed the mise-en-scéne of the performance. Although four main *sema* parts are included in the Republican-era version, there are missing practices when we compare with the classical version, especially in the backstage of the performance. For instance, collective prayer, *namaz*, which was a regular component of the classical ceremony, is not included (Gölpınarlı 2006; Şimşekler 2015; İnançer 2016). This absence is related to the space and the dominant show dimension of the performance. Commentaries on the Quran and Mesnevi are also absent. A short speech on Mesnevi by Tuğrul İnançer was affiliated to the program in the 2000s (Şahin 2015; Yarar, 18 February 2016) as a substitution of Mesnevi commentary tradition before the ceremony. One of the organizers, Abdüssettar Yarar, the current director of cultural affairs of Konya, claimed that they aimed to regenerate the Mesnevi recitation and commentary part by adding the speech on Mesnevi. In addition, the speeches of political leaders, which used to take hours before the sema ceremonies, are in recent years restrained by the organizers because of the time management of the event. For the same reason, Esin Çelebi argued that some organizers proposed shortening the ritual by cutting *Devr-i Veled* part but Mevlevis did not let them do this.

There are also invented traditions (Hobsbawm 1983) in the Republican era Rumi commemorations, such as *kandil uyandırma* (candle waking) event and love and tolerance procession ceremony (Canbolat 2016), which did not exist in the classical *mukabele* or *Şeb-i Arus*. These ceremonies were invented to announce the beginning of the commemorations. Extractions as well as the insertion of new inventions thus took place due to contextual factors.

There are changes in audience and performer expressions in the Republican period. There were spectators and semazens who were yelling, calling the name of God, and crying, as Hüseyin Öksüz commented. When state involvement increased, performers started to exercise self-restrictions. Esin Çelebi Bayru said: "Of course, when it was started to be done officially, they were prevented by a certain boundary even if they wanted to exclaim enthusiastically 'Allah' or tried to display different feelings".

Engagement with power brought new limitations in terms of not only authority of actors but also the physical appearance and mise-en-scéne.

4.2.2.6. Social Power

Referring to the theory of power of Michael Mann (1986), Alexander states that "Power establishes an external boundary for cultural pragmatics that parallels the internal boundary established by a performance's background representations" (2006, p.36). He combines the internal structure of the performance at a micro level with the external, historical, and macro-level power contexts. To him, the legitimacy of performances is under the effect of power relations, but power is not the one determinant factor; he also emphasizes the micro-level positions, perceptions, and actions of individuals. A performative text may be considered as illegal by the state, a section of the performance may be banned or can be disturbing to the power holders. The existence of an interpretive power that is different from the productive power changes the quality of the performance. Social power is a determinant factor that constitutes performative action.

Until the suppression of the Sufi lodges in 1925, Sufi rituals were done as legitimate prayers, sometimes sultans attended rituals, and few of them, such as Selim III and Mehmed V were "*muhibs*" (sympathizers) of the Mevlevi order (Köstüklü 2010: 20,65,66). This means there was no gap between interpretive authority and productive authority, and they had the required social power to legitimize the ritual. After the ban; however, all Sufis were forced to perform the rituals secretly, they continued as underground organizations (Turner 2013: 217), and Sufi rituals became illegitimate in the secular Turkish Republic, implying a gulf between "productive" and "interpretative" authorities. This paved the way to new politics of accommodating state and Sufism without violating the laws. Ahmet Çalışır said "the first initiators did this (the commemorations) to open a hole in the fortification wall"[56]. To him, Şeb-i Arus organizations helped legitimizing other Sufi activities and rising visibility of Sufi figures. It is true that the legitimacy of Rumi and sema ceremonies contributed to the

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[56]The original text: "İlk başlatanlar surda bir delik açmak için yaptılar"

mitigation of the image of Sufism. The political social power of the state was effective but the historical social power of Sufism and Sufi figures was still powerful.

4.2.3. Fusion and De-fusion

Alexander offers to analyze all cultural practices as social performances, and to demystify them. The historical transition from ritual to performance is central in his theory. To him, rituals are the earliest forms of human social organizations (Alexander 2006, p.30). Births, leadership ceremonies, healings, weddings, and war preparations all occurred through rituals, as Durkheim proposed (Durkheim 1985). They were fundamental opponents of life conduct. As a social organization, rituals are manifestations of a mutual belief that energize the participants and connect them. In the liminal moments of a ritual, people experience re-enchantment. Alexander interprets "liminality" of Victor Turner (1991) as follows:

> Through liminality we may return to an idealized state of simple humanity, a community of equals; the dissolution of structure will initiate the erosion of our socially constructed selves, thus allowing us to explore the potency of our "unused evolutionary potential". (Alexander & Mast 2006: 11)

In contemporary societies, people generally do not share common beliefs. Does this mean that rituals are not anymore central in our lives? In this more interactional, differentiated world, how does our "unused evolutionary potential" find a way to emerge? Alexander rejects the one-sided secularization theory, which takes secularization as a linear decrease of religion. To him, secularization means differentiation; it does not mean the disappearance of the cultural meaning in human life (Alexander & Mast 2006: 8). Despite this differentiation, need for meaning exists and is still important, but new meanings and symbols are constructed as a result of this change and people began to believe and perform accordingly. Alexander opens the concept of "authenticity" to discussion at this point. According to the theory of cultural pragmatics, "authenticity is an interpretive category rather than an ontological state" (Alexander & Mast 2006: 7). In a Durkheimian and Goffmanian sense, collective belief determines the authenticity of a cultural event. If people had lost their beliefs in a ritual's realness, then it becomes "fake". A ritual becomes artificial when a normative repulsion has occurred. Alexander makes a critique of

Marxist and postmodern approaches, finding their view essentialist in terms of the distinction of "real/authentic" and "fake/artificial". Rituals are both real and artificial at the same time. The relationship between representation and authenticity is historically and culturally constructed. "Yes, we are 'condemned' to live out our lives in an age of artifice, a world of mirrored, manipulated, and mediated representation. But the constructed character of symbols does not make them less real" (Alexander & Mast 2006: 7).

Durkheim (1912) argued that differentiation process would result with disappointment and de-fusion of society. His perspective was incomplete because there was another option: conflict and "re-fusion". To Alexander, de-fusion and re-fusion are both characteristics of modern societies, and social roles are under the effect of these processes. De-fused performances are failed ones that seem artificial to the actors and the audience; they need a project of re-fusion to become effective and convincing again (Alexander 2006: 32). A fused performance is successful in terms of the transmission of meaning, a meaning that "social actors, consciously or unconsciously wish to have others believe" (Alexander 2006: 32). In a differentiated society, a performative strategy's success depends on "belief in the validity of the cultural contents of the strategist's symbolic communication and on accepting the authenticity and even the sincerity of another's strategic intentions" (Alexander 2006: 31). Contemporarily, he argues, a common identity in many collective ritual-like performances can be observed. This belief in the authenticity of a performance, an actor or material conditions is produced according to the elements of a cultural performance I explained above.

Organizing *sema* out of *mevlevihanes* created a de-fusion and destroyed the audience's perception of *sema* as a religious action. On the other hand, many actors in the field try to surpass this problem. Fahri Özçakıl (13.12.2015) stated, "Of course it is possible to remember God in places that are appropriate since there is no place God is not mentioned"[57].Tuğrul İnançer (16.01.2016) shares same ideas with Özçakıl:

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[57]The original text: "Uygun olacak yerlerde Allah'ı zikretmek tabii ki mümkün. Çünkü Cenab-ı Allah'ın zikredilmediği hiçbir mekan yoktur."

> Of course, there is a place problem, but this is today's condition. …You can remember God everywhere that has no impurity perceived by five senses. Wherever prayer is done, remembrance can be done. You can clean yourself, pray, and do your *ayin* ritual.[58]

They knew that it is ahistorical and against traditional Mevlevi codes. They wanted to avoid acrimony with state authorities, so they used the place given to them, be it a concert hall or a sports hall. They de-fused this situation by using the Islamic code. Performing *sema* outside of *mevlevihane* was against Mevlevi codes but it was legitimate according to the Islamic laws when the place was clean.

4.2.4. Authenticity of *Semâ* Performances: Revivalist and Mimesis Frames

Contemporary *sema* is a differentiated, hybrid performance and there are two opposing "frames" showing this hybridity: revivalist and mimesis. Revivalist frame is the re-fused interpretation of the performance, while mimesis frame implies the failure, de-fusion of the performance.

The beginning of the Rumi commemorations with *sema* ceremonies in the 1950s was defined by those who are involved in the debates over Mevlevi ceremonies including some intellectual members of the audience as well as the Mevlevis themselves in two ways; the first was "canlanma": revival and vitalization period, whereas the second interpretation claimed that it was a "canlandırma": the period of representation, imitation, and mimesis. The first was the result of the belief in the authenticity of commemoration ceremonies, the second that of its fakeness. The ideas on the authenticity and sincerity of performances differed according to the elements of a cultural performance as mentioned above. Whether actors and audience believe in the background representations, the personal biographies of the actors, the type of audiences the actors addressed, material conditions, time and space configurations, historical and social processes are all determinant factors influencing the sense of authenticity and sincerity. Let us now analyze these two frames.

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[58]The original text: "Mekanla ilgili sıkıntı elbette var ama bugünün şartları böyle gelmiş… Beş duyuyla algı lanı r bir pislik olmayan her yerde zikrullah yapı lı r. Namaz kı lı nan her yerde zikrullah yapı lı r. Temizlersin, namazını da kılarsın, ayinini de yaparsın."

4.2.4.1. Revivalist Frame

Revivalists are the actors and the audiences of the contemporary sema ceremonies who have a belief in the religious authenticity of the ceremonies. To them, even though there are main spatial and organizational differences from the performances before 1925 law, the Mevlevi culture is currently not dead and these shifts are due to the political and social necessities that is forced results of the ban. In spite of the state ban and "distortions" of the tradition in terms of absence of a Mevlevi authority and official mevlevihane, sema ceremonies limitedly continued to be religious events in the eyes of people with a revivalist frame. The revivalists are of three sorts: First are the Sufi-inclined people who knew that most of the performers at that time were people raised in lodges or the followers of these people. The second type are audience members who know the background representations and have a sense of authenticity through their belief in these representations. The third group entails those who find the ceremonies "real" and also dangerous due to their secularist concerns. As I mentioned in the negotiation part, there were journalists writing against *sema* ceremonies during the 1950s and 60s. In 1966, retired general Fahrettin Yakal lodged a complaint against Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel's attendance to the ceremony. The second group is probably the largest one while the first group, which I will concentrate on here, is the smallest.

Refi' Cevad Ulunay (Ulunay 2003), Nezih Uzel and Shems Friedlander (Friedlander 1975) were among the first type of revivalists. They attributed religious background to the ceremonies and they were against commodification. Although Ulunay defined the ceremonies as "ayin show", he wrote every year about how much he took religious pleasure from the ceremonies (2003). In the book, they wrote together (1975), Uzel and Friedlander used a *perruque* (De Certeau 1984) explanation for the first decades of the ceremonies. To them, performers were Muslim and Sufi people who perform for the sake of God, but they had to hide this due to the existing ban. They argued that Sadettin Heper (1900-1980), a Mevlevi disciple raised in Mevlevi lodges of Istanbul and the head of the ceremonies from the beginning until his death (see Özcan 1988, Sağlam 2015), tried to add the Quran recitations (1975, p.112),

which implies that these founding fathers of the ceremonies were seeking to augment the religious side of the events.

UNESCO declared 2007 as the Rumi year for a second time, the first one being 1973. The International Mevlana Foundation founded by the descendants of Rumi produced a project titled "The Conservation and Preservation of the Traditional Mevlevî Semâ Ceremony" and submitted it to UNESCO. With the support of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, *Sema* was included in the intangible heritage list of UNESCO in 2008. In the project, they mention some people as "the custodians and the practitioners of the Mevlevi tradition" (Çelebi Bayru & Sağbaş 2008: 376-77). To the UNESCO agreement signed, people in this list would serve as an authority on Mevlevi order and sema, acting as a board "in order to consult and negotiate aesthetic and ethical issues, especially the moral code which UNESCO desires" (Çelebi Bayru & Sağbaş 2008, p.376). We see the names of Faruk Hemdem Çelebi and Esin Çelebi Bayru on the top of the list as descendants of Rûmî. They are followed by those labeled as *"postnişin":* "This means pelt-sitter, holder of skin. The sheikh of the lodge who wraps himself in the sash (*destar*) of authority is called *postnişin*" (Çelebi Bayru & Sağbaş 2008: 431), such as Emin Işık, Hüseyin Top, Fahri Özçakıl and Tuğrul İnançer. Although they made a distinction between traditional *postnişins* and sema group leaders at some point (2008: 262), they preferred to use *"postnişin"* for these contemporary leaders. Moreover, Faruk Hemdem Çelebi said in my interview that: "Today, there are about twenty sheikhs alive who gathered round a sheikh and have an *icazet* (permission) signed by me or my father. Most of them are above fifty. Also, there are people around these sheikhs who continue with respect."[59] Here we see that the moral authority of the Çelebi is still recognized by the people in the field, in spite of loss of their economic and political privileges in 1925. They continued to regulate the *icazet* system.

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[59]The original text: "Bugün belli bir şeyh efendi etrafında toplanan, benim veya babamın icazet verdiğimiz aşağı yukarı 20-21 tane şeyh var. Çoğu elli yaşını geçmiştir. Onların etrafında olanlar var. Belli bir saygıyla devam ediyorlar."

Because of the UNESCO agreement, an official state circular was announced in 2008 on the protection of Mevlevi culture and sema ceremonies. Despite the fact that this circular was ineffective and was not fully implemented, it is interesting that the state issued a circular to protect a religious ceremony that is still forbidden by the laws, one of Turkey's abundant ironies in the spheres of religion and secularism. There are four terms in the document. First, sema should be performed in appropriate spaces, second, no music other than Mevlevi music must be used; third, sema must be fully performed and explained; and fourth, performers must be educated and aware that they perform a "transcendent practice with Sufi characteristics" (Günay 2008). Here, the Ministry of Culture argues that the performance is more than a mere cultural expression; it has a religious "authentic" side, and the state has a role to protect it.

In addition to this circular, the Turkish state has its own official *postnişin*s since the early 1990s, with the establishment of two official Sufi choirs in Konya and Istanbul; it became a profession. One of them, the retired *postnişin* of Konya ensemble, Mustafa Holat (12.12.2015) said that:

> They (state) appointed me as *semazenbaşı* (the head of the *semazen*s), I sat on the pelt and became a sheikh. It is still my chair, now vacant, someone sits on it, but it is not official, I am still the holder of the official position. This happened two times in the history of Mevlevism. First, Ottoman sultan appointed the sheikh in Istanbul, and second, I am appointed by the Turkish Republic as sheikh. [60]

He argues that he took his permission, *icazet*, from the Turkish state and is proud of it. He considers "secular" Turkish republic as an authority over Mevlevism that gave him the title of "sheikh". He attributes a sense of authenticity to the contemporary ritual performances. The existing official *postnişin* of Konya, Fahri Özçakıl said that:

> We may not see as Rumi saw the things but, today's semazens performs conforming to how Rumi felt and performed sema, and they try to reach an enlightenment. Rumi was enlightened in a way, performed sema after he experienced it in a state of ecstasy. We perform sema with the expectancy of

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[60]Original text: "Beni semazen başı olarak atadılar, ben posta oturdum şeyh oldum. Hala benim o makamım boş duruyor, emekli oldum, birisi geçip oturuyor işte, resmi sıfatı yok onun, resmi sıfat bende. Bu Mevlevilik tarihinde iki kez oluyor. Biri Osmanlı da Şeyh atı yor padişah İstanbulda, ikincisi de, Tükiye Cumhuriyeti beni atadı şeyh olarak."

feeling the same things. I hope that some of our friends experience it, all our objectives and wishes are for this. [61]

Similar to Özçakıl, calligrapher and ney player Hüseyin Öksüz who attended the ceremonies as a musician between 1970-80 highlighted the "real" side of the events:

> There was always someone from the *Mevlevi* path in the making of the commemorations, as in today's ceremonies. For instance, there was Bandsman Hasan Bey—Niyazi (Sayın) knows him better—was a very spiritual man. Performers are diverse as well as the audience. Some for money, some with spirituality... There were spectators who were touched, who cried and shouted during the commemorations.[62] (13.12.2015)

A disciple of Midhat Bahari, who is one of the last sheikhs having earned *icazet* before the ban, Prof. Dr. Emin Işık (26.2.2016) says: "There are of course insiders. Dedes perform consciously. I know it, we have already learned from them (*dede*s), we did not invent it. It has to be said to everyone that this is a prayer, a whirling with the love of God."[63]

To Işık, there is a distortion in the tradition, but there are real, authentic sheikhs who learned from the previous ones. He sees himself as a continuation of the tradition and his belief in the authenticity of rituals dependent on the actors, according to their adequacy, especially *icazet* from a Mevlevi authority. He does not see legitimacy in the effectiveness of the state power in the organization of ceremonies through Sufi choirs.

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[61]The original text: "Biz Hz. Mevlânâ kadar göremiyor olabiliriz ama Hz. Mevlânâ nasıl neyi hissederek hareket etmişse, sema etmişse günümüzdeki semazenler de aynı düşünceyle hareket ederek acaba birşey yakalayabilir miyiz, oradan bir feyiz alabilir miyiz o düşünceyle sema ediyorlar... Yani Mevlânâ hazretleri bir şeyden feyiz almış, vecd halinde onu gördükten sonra sema etmiştir, biz de görebilir miyiz düşüncesiyle sema ediyoruz. İnşallah gören arkadaşlarımız vardır mutlaka, amaç ve temennimiz o yönde."

[62]The original text: Hep Mevlevi yolundan birileri olurdu ihtifallerde, Şuan da vardı r. Niyazi (Sayı n) Bey daha iyi tanır, Bandocu Hasan Bey vardı mesela, çok maneviyatlı biriymiş. İzleyenler çeşitli olduğu gibi icra edenler de çeşitli. Kimi para için, kimi maneviyatıyla... İhtifallerde izlerken duygulanıp ağlayan, bağıranlar olurdu.

[63]The original text: Bilenler var tabii. Dedeler bilerek yapıyor o işi. Ben biliyorum, onlardan öğrendik zaten biz bunları, kendimiz icad etmedik. Herkese bunu söylemek lazım, bu bir ibadettir. Allah aşkıyla dönüştür.

4.2.4.2. Mimesis Frame

Contrary to the revivalists' views, there are comments taking Şeb-i Arus ceremonies as secular and fake performances, not religious, or authentic. They generally have three arguments while explaining their idea: economic, nostalgia and art explanations. The adherents of the mimesis frame highlight the economic and cultural dimensions of the contemporary ceremonies. They make more clear distinctions, assuming more radical change between before and after 1925 law.

A scholar interested in Mevlevi culture, Dr. Nuri Şimşekler clearly differentiated representation, mimesis period and the traditional-classical period, and situated Midhat Bahari Beytur as a sheikh who saw both (Beytur 2009, p.11). He does not think it is a religious ritual anymore because the ceremony is incomplete, the place is not *mevlevihane* and they sell tickets. Similarly, Ahmet Çalışır stated that audience's existence and attendance have a decisive role in the organizations; the organizers calculate the economic efficiency and the profit of the tradesmen of Konya. He stated that Mevlevism is alive but it is not in Konya ceremonies. As a distinct revivalist, Emin Işık interpreted it in a similar manner to how Şimşekler and Çalışır did, saying the organizers care the number of tourists, and they try to show the tourists that Mevlevism is alive in Konya, but they also fight for their interests and reputations. Mainly, the economic concerns of the organization avoiding de-fusion in these people's minds.

In the first documentary about Rumi broadcasted on the Turkish television in 1978, *Yaşayan Mevlana Belgeseli* (Rumi Alive Documentary), the speaker made this remark on Şeb-i Arus ceremonies: "The spirit of the real old Mevlevi rituals is sought to keep alive"[64]. According to this comment, nothing could be "real" in the eyes of the state television producers. The ceremonies can only be a mere nostalgia, not the original and authentic one.

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[64] The original text: Eski gerçek Mevlevi törenlerinin havası yaşatılmaya çalışılır.

Feyzi Halıcı, the long-term president of the Konya Tourism Association, an important person to the organization of the commemorations for decades, made a speech for TRT television program *Kervan* (caravan) in 1981 (TRT 1981):

> For many years, we organize Mevlana commemorations in a sense of cultural tourism. Scientists, artists, and true friends from all over the world come to Mevlana commemorations. Following the "Come, come again" call of Rumi, around 700 thousand native and foreigner tourists visit our Konya and its museums.[65]

Feyzi Halıcı gave an economy-centered explanation for the ceremonies by mentioning how much tourists it attracts and how it contributes the national economy. During his speech, he highlighted the touristic, artistic, and scientific sides of the ceremonies rather than the religious side. This can be interpreted in two ways: He thought that the ceremonies are in fact no more than this or he did not want to give a religion-oriented speech on the state TV due to his political concerns. As a member of the audience, a TV producer, Adam Isenberg, visited Mevlana commemorations in 2009, and he shared his feelings about it on his TV program, *Adem'in Seyir Defteri* (Adam's Logbook) (Tüzen 2009): "The *sema* we watched is rather in a format of a show. It seems to me that it has nothing to do with a religious prayer but it is still impressive. I am glad that I had the chance to see it." [66] Isenberg's opinion on the performance was folkloric, artistic, and nostalgic. In the 7th episode of Kervan of TRT television in 1981, the commentator stated: "Following the call of "come" and the human love Rumi developed with an artistic sensibility, people all around the world come and visit Mevlana museum. This wealth of culture and art serves peace and fraternity as well as the national tourism."[67]

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[65]The original text: Yıllardan beri Mevlana Anma törenlerini bir kültür turizmi esprisi içinde ve imajı içinde yapmaktayız. Dünyanın dört bir köşesinden Mevlana anma törenlerine bilim adamları, sanatçılar ve can dostları koşup gelmektedir. Hz. Mevlahı n Gel, yine gel'eğrı sı na uyarak Konyaını za ve Konya müzelerine, Konya Mevlana müzesine yılda 700 bin civarında yerli ve yabancı misafir gelmektedir.

[66] The original text: İzlediğimiz sema daha çok bir seyirlik gösteri formatında. İbadet olmaktan çıkmış sanki ama yine de çok etkileyici. İzleyebildiğim için mutluyum.

[67] The original text: Mevlana'nın bir sanatçı duyarlılığı içerisinde işlediği insan sevgisine gel çağrısına uyanlar dünyanın dört bir köşesinden gelerek Mevlana müzesini ziyaret ediyorlar. Bu kültür ve sanat varlığımız barışa ve kardeşliğe olduğu kadar ülke turizmine de hizmet ediyor.

Here, the artistic value of *sema* is in the foreground. In all these comments, touristic-economic, humanistic, artistic, and nostalgic values of Rumi and Mevlevi sema are highlighted, yet religious values are generally not mentioned because these commentators generally believe in the clear distinction between pre and post-1925 situation. On the other hand, for revivalists, the periods are not that separate, the religious side of the ceremonies is still speakable.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmi has been identified as sheikh, poet, artist, and philosopher within the frame of diverse religious or non-religious interpretations in Turkey. He has also been a national figure of the nation-state for many decades. Moreover, the increasing interest in him abroad due to diverse reasons has also sustained these images domestically. Consequently, although the law of Sufi orders and lodges that officially outlawed Sufism have prevailed, Rumi and Mevlevilik eventually became acceptable and "legitimate". An important factor making this possible was the fact that sema ceremonies as an element of Mevlevilik have acquired a considerable amount of visibility and popularity in the public sphere thanks to its musical and artistic dimension. While acquiring this legitimacy and visibility, sema was interpreted in religious or non-religious terms in conjunction with the image of Rumi. Depending on the social context or political and cultural influences, sometimes religious elements have been featured while at other time non-religious aspects were emphasized more. In the meantime, while the process of semâ's commodification has accelerated with the new symbolic values to be loaded to Mevlânâ and his teachings, at the same time, a space was opened for religious discourses. Hence the complexity and hybridity of the thesis' topic.

At this point, the significance of the historical conditions cannot be overemphasized. For the opportunities given by the multiparty system begun in 1950 and the relationship of the prevailing political authority with religion, which were very different from the politics of the 1930s, were extremely important in terms of the legitimacy and visibility of Mevlevilik and sema. However, actors' agencies should also be taken into account, for they also shaped, as well as being shaped by, the social structures creating these historical conditions. Thus, the personal charisma and strong networks of intellectuals coming from a Mevlevi background like Hasan Ali Yücel and Ref'i Cevad Ulunay played an important role in the *Mevlevilik*'s increasing popularity and legitimization. Yücel, in particular, mobilized both material and non-

material resources that he had derived from his political-bureaucratic position (he was an influential politician and Minister of Education with a vast network in the Turkish state) and his family background (where he had a long list of Mevlevis) to make this legitimization process possible. In addition, international developments were an important factor as well: The welcoming acceptance of Mevlânâ and Mevlevî culture as a world-cultural heritage to be protected by large and influential international organizations like UNESCO created pressure on Turkish political and cultural elites thereby facilitating the process of the former being adopted by the secular state. It is thus safe to argue that both the transformation of the political structures and personal efforts, as well as the international context, have been influential on the evolution of Mevlevilik, Rumi's image and sema within this period.

In this thesis, I have explored the process of the accommodation of *sema* performances to the existing conditions of secular politics of Turkish Republic and the embracing of sema by the state as a symbol despite the legal prohibition since 1925. I discussed it at both macro and micro levels by looking at political, historical, religious and cultural dimensions of the topic. I have organized my discussion in terms of four distinct themes: (i) the legitimization of sema (and Mevlevilik) through a negotiation between state actors and Mevlevi leaders, (ii) the institutionalization or bureaucratization of sema performances, (iii) their increasing visibility and popularization, and (iv) discourses of the production of authenticity of sema performances. I have also initially presented a conceptual map of the Mevlevi Sufi path and discussed the historical evolution of Mevlevilik in the context of the Ottoman-Turkish modernization before embarking upon my analysis of the above-mentioned processes.

In terms of the first theme, I have analyzed some memoirs, newspaper articles and a documentary (e.g. Başara 2007, Ağaoğlu 2013, Friedlander&Uzel , to see the main actors negotiating the extent to which Mevlevilik and sema were to be legitimate (and tolerated) and how these negotiations took place in the first two decades of the ceremonies (1950-1970). I listed the actors in the field of Mevlevi ceremonies to display the complexity of their approaches to the ceremonies. I have argued that

there were hybridities and dualities on the meaning of the ceremonies, and the involvement of the state is achieved from the beginning as a result of touristic concerns. On the other hand, the state gave permission to Mevlevis raised in lodges to organize the ceremonies during this period because nobody could stage sema except them, and in return, Mevlevis hid their religious view of semâ to continue the performances without any legal problem. In addition to the state motivation of tourism and national branding, Mevlevis' motivations were achieving the spread and transmission of semâ, and Mevlevilik, strengthening the image of Rumî in Turkey and spiritual satisfaction (they were not paid in these years so that there was no material concern).

Secondly, I have argued that the institutionalization of sema performances mainly took the form of bureaucratization and even a kind of "co-optation" by the Turkish state since the 1970s. For my analysis of primary sources (newspaper articles, official documents, observation and interviews) shows that state wanted to institutionalize these events due to the danger of giving the ceremonies to the "radical Islamist" municipalities of Konya because since 1970s semâ became a very frequently used image of national branding, which means the state needed to control the content of this image. Although the state legitimized sema as a folklore and a touristic show, they were aware of the religious content in it and in secular Turkey, religion and religious groups have always been something must be controlled due to their political and voting potential, as in the case of Diyanet, as an institution to control and balance the religious field.

Thirdly, I looked at the public visibility of semâ performances from 1942 to today, to be able to see the effects of Rumi image, international interest in Rumi and finally the tourism and media. I used state-sponsored publications (e.g. the *Konya Halkevi Kültür Dergisi*), biographical and memoir sources, as well as the media sources of films and music. Here, I argue that three discourses to define Rumi; humanist, nationalist and traditionalist discourses created a public space for semâ performances on the intellectual level in 1940s and the process of popularization continued with the contributions of New Age movement, popularization of musical aspect of Mevlevi

culture, and famous public figures' interest on using Mevlevi garments in their films and shows. Here, I also mentioned the discussions over commodification of rituals. I have looked at the effect of media and tourism on the perceptions of people about *semâ* events and also how it lead to diversification of *semâ* performances with the rise of its everyday visibility.

Finally, I analyzed the Mevlevi ceremonies according to the models of Erving Goffman and Jeffrey Alexander in terms of its authenticity, by mainly looking at my interviews. After a discussion on the meaning problem of semâ ceremonies as a result of hybridity, modernization and other historical experiences brought, I did theoretical discussions of self, frame, and cultural pragmatics. Then, I analysed the performances according to six elements offered by Alexander (2006), which are systems of collective representation, actors, audience/observers, means of symbolic reproduction, mise-en-scéne and social power to be able to how people re-fuse or de-fuse these performances, in which part they face problems so that they are not able to achieve de-fusion. Here, I argue that semâ had many changes in terms of every performative aspect and its authenticity was challenged but not destructed at all. There are still revivialist and mimesis frames, two opposing discourses reflecting the opinions of "authenticity" and "fakeness" on the ceremonies and one of these frames is not dominant although I saw the revivalist frame more in my interviews. It is the result of the doubleness of the performance. It means the negotiation is still continuing and the content and the meaning of the ceremonies are not issues performers and organizers agree on.

In the beginning of the research, I had a problem of duality in my mind: I was aware of the gap between performers and the public representation of the ceremonies, as a result of my work on Sadettin Heper's biography, and due to this, I was not satisfied with the commodification-sided explanations. Now, I feel more comfortable with my multi-sided explanation which does not reject commodification process but locates it as one of the dynamics. During the study, I learned a lot about orientalism and hybridity issues, as well as analyzing social performance.

As with all academic studies, my study has its own limitations. First of all, my data on state approaches to the ceremonies were not as solid as my interviews and memoirs explaining Mevlevi approaches. As I mentioned in Michael Mann's discussions on modern state (1993), the state is both an actor and a place. Due to its nature, there are changes in state attitudes when the governments and policies changed, and there are unchanging (or hard to change) approaches and policies. The approaches of the Republic are multiple and there is no direct data on it, I had to make interpretations drawing on pieces of information in official reports, statesmen attendances, and media materials. I tried to avoid overinterpretation here, and this was an obvious challenge. Another limitation was the audience opinions. I did not ask the opinions of observers with different backgrounds who watch these ceremonies. Obviously, this was out of the limits of my work, because it requires a questionnaire and organization. This can be a topic of a further study.

However, perhaps the significance of this study lies in the fact that it is one of the first academic works explaining the puzzle of how semâ as a performance is legally forbidden on the one hand, and has achieved to be a symbol of the secular Turkish state, on the other. Already an under-studied topic in the sociological literature, Mevlevilik and sema ceremonies were the main subjects of this study, which analyzed them from the perspectives of historical and cultural sociology, addressing the above discrepancy between the legal situation and the actual position, and focusing on power relations and discursive struggles as well as performances and interactions among state and Sufi actors. Thus, this study may contribute at macro and micro levels to the literature on "ritual performance" and "authenticity," and both the Turkish modernization literature in terms of the relations between the state and religion, particularly Sufism, as well as the study of religious change in contemporary Turkey.

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