

REPRESENTATIONS OF PIOUS MUSLIMS IN NEW TURKISH CINEMA

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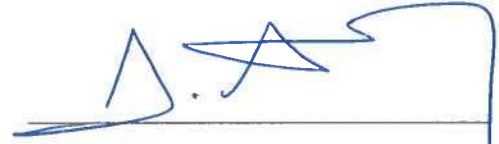
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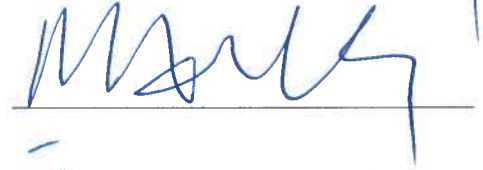
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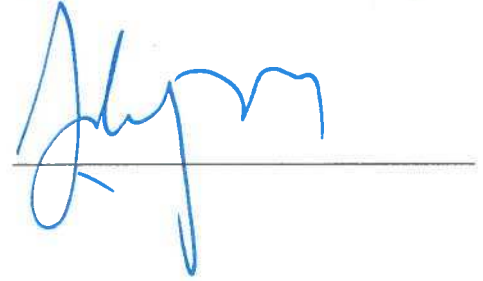
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## **ABSTRACT**

### REPRESENTATIONS OF PIOUS MUSLIMS IN NEW TURKISH CINEMA

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Turkish cinema history is divided into three main periods, while in 1996, with the movie *Eşkîya*, the period of New Turkish cinema began. Alongside the technical improvements in the industry, the styles of the movies changed, leaving behind the cliché approaches of *Yeşilçam* in many subjects, including the approach to religion and pious Muslims. This thesis will discuss the representations of pious Muslims by exploring the relationship of different cinema periods with the politics and sociology of Turkey. The parallel development of the modernization politics of the Turkish Republic, Kemalist ideology and early/traditional Turkish cinema will be discussed for their approach to religion and pious Muslims, as well as the break in this parallelism as a result of the style changes in New Turkish cinema. Partial recovery of representations of pious Muslims in New Turkish cinema, the social changes of pious Muslims and the power of the Justice and Development Party with its pious Muslim members will be brought together in an analytical frame. The approach of Turkish politics to pious Muslims in its journey from the foundation of the Republic to today, as well as the reflection of the secular/pious polarization in cinema's different periods will be researched. In addition, the change in the paradigm of modernization in Turkey, which emerged after the 2000s, will be brought to bear on New Turkish cinema. Despite many



changes in politics and society in Turkey, the resistance in the cultural arena to these changes will be addressed in this thesis.

Keywords: New Turkish cinema, Cinema-Politics-Society Relationships, modernization of Turkey.

## ÖZ

### YENİ TÜRK SİNEMASINDA DINDAR MÜSLÜMAN TEMSİLLERİ

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Türk Sinema tarihi üç ana dönemde incelenmekte olup, 1996 yılında, *Eşkîya* filmi ile Yeni Türk Sineması dönemi başlamıştır. Yeni Türk Sineması ile beraber filmlerin teknik kalitelerinin artmasının yanı sıra, filmlerin üslupları da değişmiş, filmlerin dine ve dindar Müslümanlara yaklaşımı da dahil olmak üzere pek çok konuda Yeşilçam'ın klişe yaklaşımlarından uzaklaşmıştır. Bu tezde, farklı sinema dönemlerinin Türkiye siyaseti ve Türkiye sosyolojisiyle ilişkisi dindar karakterlerin temsili açısından incelenecektir. Cumhuriyetin modernleşme politikaları, Kemalist ideoloji ile Erken ve Geleneksel Dönem Türk Sinemalarının dine ve dindar figürlere yaklaşımlarındaki paralellikleri ele alınarak, Yeni Türk Sineması'ndaki üslup değişikliği ile beraber bu paralelliğin kırılmasından bahsedilecektir. Dindarların temsiline Yeni Türk Sineması'nda nispeten olumlu bir üslupla ekrana yansıtılması, dindar Müslümanların toplumsal değişimleri, dindar Müslüman üyelerden oluşan Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin iktidara gelişi ile birlikte ele alınacaktır. Türkiye siyasetinin Cumhuriyetten günümüze kadar olan yolculuğunda siyasetin dine yaklaşımının, farklı dönemlerde laik-dindar kutuplaşmalarının sinemaya nasıl yansıdığı ele alınacaktır. Yine Türkiye'nin modernleşme yolculuğunda, 2000'ler sonrası ortaya çıkan paradigma değişikliği, Yeni Türk Sineması ile beraber okunmaya çalışılacaktır. Türkiye siyasetinde ve sosyolojinde yaşanan pek çok dönüşüme rağmen, kültürel arenanın bu dönüşüme karşı olan direnci de tezin değineceği konular arasındadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yeni Türk Sineması, Sinema-Siyaset-Toplum ilişkisi,  
Türkiye’de modernleşme.

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## INTRODUCTION

Cinema, besides being a technical production, an industry, and a work of art, is also a communication tool to spread ideas throughout society. The power of cinema in shaping societies is undeniable. Douglas Kellner and Michael Ryan in *Camera Politica* discuss the relationship between Hollywood cinema and politics in the United States and emphasize cinema's nature which leads to the imposition of a certain perspective on the audience due to the on-screen representation of a selection rather than the whole reflection of the real world.<sup>1</sup>

Cinema is a cultural tool as well. The relationship between cinema and culture is two-way: cinema takes its contents from a culture, and reproduces the culture by its representations. In this point, cinema can be considered a reflection of society and a representation of cultures, but these representations are limited by the camera angle, and by the filmmakers' points of view. Despite these limitations, cinema has the power to create acceptance of its representation(s). In this sense, cinematic representations become a problematic source of knowledge. Furthermore cinema due to its techniques creates the sense that its representations are in fact reality. To continue with Kellner and Ryan's *Camera Politica*,

The thematic conventions –heroic male adventure, romantic quest, female melodrama, redemptive violence, racial and criminal stereotyping, etc.- promote ideology by linking the effect of reality to social values and institutions in such a way that they come to seem natural or self-evident attributes of an unchanging world. The conventions habituate the audience to accept the basic premises of the social order and to ignore their irrationality and injustice.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Michael Ryan & Douglas Kellner, *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Film*, p.1.

<sup>2</sup>Kellner & Ryan, *Camera Politica*, p.1.

When we think of cinema as a source of knowledge, and as a tool that shapes society for the Turkish Republic, it is necessary to think about religion in Turkish cinema as well, since the secular Turkish Republic has a problematic relationship with religion that started at its foundation, and has decreased but continues to this day. According to İsmail Çağlar, the political culture of the Republic was elitist and considered different parts of society as its enemies.<sup>3</sup>

One cannot deny that the representation of religion in Turkish movies is a fruitful topic to study. Studies about religion in Turkish cinema usually focus on the early and traditional periods of Turkish cinema. This study mainly aims to research the representations of pious Muslim characters in ‘New Turkish cinema’ and the reasons for creating these ‘different’ representations. I also will examine how religion is represented in early and traditional Turkish cinema in conjunction with the atmosphere of the elitist political culture of the Republic.

In 1996, with Yavuz Turgul’s *Eşkıya* movie, Turkish cinema entered a new period known as ‘New Turkish cinema’. *Eşkıya* merged classical Yeşilçam cinema topics with Hollywood style cinema, and aroused the audience’s interest. *Eşkıya* formulated New Turkish cinema’s techniques for upcoming movies.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, these were the years of constructed fear against religion, which started to increase in the 1990s, made its peak in 1997<sup>5</sup> as a result of the military coup against the political party formed by pious Muslims and started to decrease after 2007, in the second period of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) which was founded by the former Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*) members. In 1995, a religious party, the Welfare Party, won the elections and a religious leader became the president of the Turkish Republic for the first time in the Turkish Republic’s history. The Welfare Party was forced to resign by the military, and was dissolved by the Supreme Court. Prejudices against religion

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<sup>3</sup>İsmail Çağlar, *Good and Bad Muslims, Real and Fake Seculars, Center-Periphery Relations and Hegemony in Turkey Through the February 28 and April 27 processes*, p. 39.

<sup>4</sup>Asuman Suner, *Hayalet Ev: Yeni Türk Sinemasında Aidiyet, Kimlik ve Bellek*, p.34.

<sup>5</sup>The February 28 period will be discussed in depth in upcoming chapters.



highly increased and new fears surfaced in the end of the 1990s, in the first years of the 'New Turkish cinema' period. In 2002, the Justice and Development Party won the elections, and a former Welfare Party member became the president of Turkey - religion became the center of curiosity once again. Religion in New Turkish cinema (mostly after 2002) will be discussed by analyzing pious Muslim characters in an array of chosen movies.

The Justice and Development Party calls itself the voice of the silent masses. In the context of this work, it can be considered as the representative of religious people who before were seen as 'others' in politics. According to Robin Wood, in *Horror, the Film Reader*:

Otherness represents that which bourgeois ideology cannot recognize or accept but must deal with (as Barthes suggests in *Mythologies*) in one of two ways: either by rejecting and if possible annihilating it, or by rendering it safe and assimilating it, converting it as far as possible into a replica of itself.<sup>6</sup>

In this sense, I will question whether the improvement in the representations of pious Muslims in Turkish cinema, who were previously completely absent, is related with their movement from otherness to the political center, and their social transformations as a result of this journey. At this point, Gayatri Spivak's distinction regarding representation should be noted. "Two senses of representation are being run together: representation as 'speaking for', as in politics, and representation as 're-presentation', as in art or philosophy."<sup>7</sup> How can we read representation of religious people in politics, and re-presentations of them in Turkish cinema?

According to İsmail Kara, "Almost all reforms of the Republic are related to religion in Turkey."<sup>8</sup> Religion has always been considered a danger to the Turkish Republic by the state and its secular elites. Following its foundation, the

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<sup>6</sup>Robin Wood, *Horror, the Film Reader*, p.27.

<sup>7</sup>Gayatri Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, p.5.

<sup>8</sup>İsmail Kara, *Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Bir Mesele Olarak İslam*, p.31.

Republic of Turkey aimed to create a westernized/modernized secular society. Westernization politics were followed by the government and related to these practices, an elite class was created after the foundation of the Turkish Republic. This empowered class shaped the public sphere in Turkey, where religion had no room. Religion was imprisoned in the private sphere and was accepted as something individual. In my opinion the status of religious characters in movies and the status of religious people in the public sphere is directly related, and the two need to be considered together since religious people in the public sphere have become sources for movie characters and movie characters have shaped and influenced the former as well.

It is possible to see the reflection of the Republic's exclusion politics on the representation of religion in cinema as well. Turkish cinema history is researched in three periods: the early period of Turkish cinema (1922-1960), traditional Turkish cinema (the *Yeşilçam* era, 1960-1996), and New Turkish cinema (1996-present). Academic works on the relation of Turkish cinema and religion usually focus on the early and traditional Turkish cinema periods, and they emphasize how westernization is dignified in *Yeşilçam* movies. Religion is considered an opposition against modernization and usually does not exist in movies. In the movies that religion exists, it is related with being undeveloped. In these movies pious Muslim characters are represented as bad on purpose and are humiliated. The prejudice against religion that was built after the foundation of the Republic was reinforced in *Yeşilçam* movies. This study will primarily focus on the movies of the New Turkish cinema but will also examine certain works from the early and traditional Turkish cinema.

Unfortunately, as a result of the atmosphere that occurred after the February 28 military coup, there are no movies representing pious Muslims in the first years of the New Turkish cinema. So, movies mentioned in this study were produced after the Justice and Development Party (2002-2015) came into power. Since the rise of the latter, religion became the center of curiosity once again due

to the party's religious leader and its religious members: fears against religion started to disperse.

As mentioned before cinema has an incredible power to lead the masses. According to Ryan and Kellner, "Film is the site of a contest of representations over what social reality will be perceived is being and indeed will be."<sup>9</sup> I will try to understand if this power is being used in New Turkish cinema as a social engineering tool. I will question the changes in the representation of pious Muslim characters in New Turkish cinema and traditional Turkish cinema. How are pious Muslim figures shown by filmmakers in the New Turkish cinema? What are the effects of the Justice and Development Party, which is being managed by former Islamist politicians, on pious Muslim figures on-screen? What is the role of the New Turkish cinema on reforming society? What is the role of religion in New Turkish cinema? To what extent can religion take part in a movie character's life? How are scenes of worship portrayed? What causes the sense of enhanced realism in the rendering of the religious characters in New Turkish cinema? What are these characters' reflections on social life? What is the relation between politics and cinema in Turkey? What is the relationship between political power and cultural power? This thesis will examine the relationship between the periods of Turkish cinema and the politics and sociology of the Turkish Republic.

The methodology that will be used will be mainly film analyses and documentation. The sources of this study will be movies chosen for this thesis, previous works about the relationship between religion and cinema, and studies about politics and cinema. Studies on the debates on Turkish cinema will be used to understand the different movements in Turkish cinema. Horror movies and fantasy movies using religion as their horror tools are excluded from this study since this study aims to show representations of religious people in modern social

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<sup>9</sup>Kellner & Ryan, *Camera Politica*, p.13.

life. Also, for the same reason, movies including historical religious characters will also be excluded even if produced after 1996. In total, there are nine movies discussed in this study. These movies are *The Imam* (2005); *Takva* (Takva: A Man's Fear of God) (2006); *Dondurmam Gaymak* (Ice Cream, I Scream) (2006); *Beyza'nın Kadınları* (Shattered Soul) (2006); *Adem'in Trenleri* (Adam and the Devil) (2007); *Uzak İhtimal* (Wrong Rosary) (2009); *Büşra* (2010); *Eşrefpaşalılar* (2010); and *Selam* (2013). The pious characters in these movies will be researched in depth. New Turkish cinema's approach and portrayal of religious people will be discussed and analyzed. I aim to analyze Turkish cinema and the modernization process of the Turkish Republic alongside as in most periods they have parallel developments. By modernization, I refer to the 'cultural modernization where dependence on secularism and nationalistic ideology is produced.'<sup>10</sup> Also, Theodor Adorno's 'culture industry' term will be used in order to understand the categorizations of Turkish cinema and the emerging of pious Muslim characters in it. Antonio Gramsci's term 'hegemony' will make it easier to expose the problematic relationship of Turkish cinema and pious Muslims. The possibility of transforming the hegemonic discourses will also be discussed in this study.

This work will consist of three main chapters. In the first chapter, the representation of religion in early and traditional Turkish cinema will be discussed. The general relationship of cinema and society will be analyzed in the context of religion and the moral values of Turkish society. The invisibility of pious Muslim characters in *Yeşilçam* movies, and the reasons behind the portrayal of pious Muslim characters as ridiculous, liars or humiliated figures - when religious characters are indeed present at all - will be questioned. How was cinema used as an aesthetic tool to manifest Turkish modernization from the early Republican period to the heydays of *Yeşilçam* cinema? What were the main

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<sup>10</sup>Fahrettin Altun, *Modernleşme Kuramı*, p. 12.

reasons *Yeşilçam* cinema flourished in connection with Turkish modernization and society as a whole?

The national cinema movement (also known as White Cinema) will be discussed in the Chapter One as well. Is it possible to consider the White Cinema movement as an attempt to offer religion a place in movies or was it just a movement against the imitation of western movies in Turkish cinema? What topics did it focus on? What was society's response to the national cinema movement? How is the national cinema movement related with the politics of its time? Did this movement play any role in connecting the Republic and religion? Did it intend to show compatibility or incompatibility of the Republic and religion? How can the Turk-Islam synthesis be thought of in this context? What contradictions can be seen in its relationships with the Republic? How can this movement's effects on transforming religious people in society be considered? How efficient were the examples of the national cinema movement for Turkish society?

Chapter Two will focus on the representations of pious Muslim characters in New Turkish cinema. The representation of Muslim figures in the 'modern' (capitalist secular) world, and their approaches to the difficulties of modern city life such as money, sexuality, and relationships with others will be discussed by the examples of *Takva* (specifically the characters of Muharrem, Sheikh, and Rauf; *Büşra* (Büşra and Ferit); *Selam* (Zehra and Harun); and *The Imam* (Emrullah and Mehmet Hodja). Furthermore, the representation of women with headscarves will be analyzed in the discussion of *Büşra*, *Selam* and *Beyza'nın Kadınları*. Moreover, the representation of imams will be examined by discussing imam characters in the movies *The Imam*, *Uzak İhtimal*, *Adem'in Trenleri*, and *Eşrefpaşalılar*. The relationship between pious Muslim characters and people from other religions will also be analyzed on the basis of *Uzak İhtimal* and *Selam*. The religious symbols shown in these movies will also be mentioned. The change in the representation of pious Muslim characters will be questioned in this

chapter. The continuing uniformity of some filmmakers' points of view on religious characters will also be discussed. The stereotypes of New Turkish cinema will be exposed. How can the essence of Turkish cinema make no progress while the manner of Turkish cinema changes intensely?

Chapter Three aims to understand the reasons that have caused the changes in the representations of pious Muslim characters. Increasing visibility of pious Muslims in city life, the relationship between politics and cinema, the 'conservative art' debate by Turkish columnists, the secular hegemony in Turkish cinema, and the resistance of secular forces against the transformation of the hegemony in the cultural arena will be the main focus points of this chapter. The sense in the audience of the enhanced realism in the rendering of the religious characters will also be questioned in this chapter. What creates this sense? What is the relation between cultural power and political power? Does cultural power shape politics? Does political power shape culture? What are the limits of the connection between cinema and politics? When considering the article "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"<sup>11</sup> by Walter Benjamin in regards to New Turkish cinema, which is more suitable -the aestheticization of politics or the politicization of aesthetic? What are the possible results of the aestheticization of politics or the politicization of aesthetic in Turkey?

To put it succinctly, Chapter One is going to put forth the historical background of the relationship between religion and Turkish cinema; Chapter Two will attempt to answer the 'how' question; and Chapter Three will attempt to answer the 'why' question.

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<sup>11</sup>Douglas Kellner & Gigi Meenakshi Durham, *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*, p. 18.

## CHAPTER 1

### Religion in Early and Traditional Turkish Cinema

Cinema entered to Istanbul, a year after the first screening of Lumiere Brothers' first public screening in Paris on December 1895. At the time, first public screenings used to be made at Pera (Beyoğlu), Istanbul<sup>12</sup>.

The first movie of Turkish Cinema is considered as Fuat Uzkınay's shooting of the destruction of the Ayastefonos Monument on November 1914. Despite this movie is widely shown as the first Turkish Cinema example, Fikret Hakan strongly objects this idea<sup>13</sup>, since it is a documentary and not a fictional movie, and claims that the first examples of Turkish Cinema are *Himmat Ağa'nın İzdivacı* which was shot on 1914 and screened in 1918, and *Pençe*, which was screened in 1917.<sup>14</sup>

Turkish Cinema History is divided in three major periods. These periods are: the First Period of Turkish Cinema (the Early Period of Turkish Cinema – Muhsin Ertuğrul Period of Turkish Cinema, 1922-1960)<sup>15</sup>, the Traditional Turkish Cinema (the *Yeşilçam* Cinema, 1960-1996)<sup>16</sup> and New Turkish Cinema (1996-...). Fikret Hakan considers between 1914 and 1957 as an 'aimless period', and the years after 1957 as a 'conscious period'<sup>17</sup>. He surveys the history of Turkish Cinema in ten minor periods. (1914-1918, 1918-1923, 1923-1928 (Dark period between Kemal film and İpek film), 1928-1943, 1943-1955, 1955-1976 (Growth and collapse), 1976-1980 (period of sex movies), after 1980 (period of videos), after 1984 (The period of cinema under the effect of colored televisions), after

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<sup>12</sup>Rekin Teksoy, *Rekin Teksoy'un Türk Sineması*, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup>Fikret Hakan, *Türk Sinema Tarihi*, p. 15.

<sup>14</sup>Hakan, *Türk Sinema Tarihi*, p. 21.

<sup>15</sup>Muhsin Ertuğrul Period includes the years between 1922-1950.

<sup>16</sup>In some studies, Early Period of Turkish Cinema ends and Yeşilçam Period starts in 1950.

<sup>17</sup>Hakan, *Türk Sinema Tarihi*, p. 15.

1996).<sup>18</sup>In addition, Ibrahim Yenen made a similar grouping for the history of the Turkish Cinema in his Ph.D. thesis.

Table 1.1: Chronology of Turkish Cinema<sup>19</sup>

Ottoman Empire's Meeting With Cinema	1896-1914
First Movies and Starting Period	1914-1921
Period of Thespians	1921-1939
Transition Period (Independent Filmmakers)	1939-1952
Filmmakers' Period	1952-1960
Records Period and Growth	1960-1974
Period of Erotic Movies and Collapse	1974-1980
Period of video, arabesque and awarded movies	1980-1987
Period of American Cinema and Multiple TV Channels	1987-1996
Rebirth	1996-...

To return the major periods of Turkish Cinema history, the first period of Turkish Cinema was under the effects of thespians. As a thespian, Muhsin Ertuğrul was the only director in Turkish Cinema till 1939, and he is counted as the founder of Turkish Cinema.<sup>20</sup> New directors, who were not thespians, started to emerge between 1950 and 1960. In 1964, the institution of Turkish Radio and Television was founded. After then, cinema started to become an industry in Turkey and as a result the Yeşilçam Era started. Lastly, we can claim that the birth of the New Turkish Cinema in 1996 was mostly based on technical improvements, as analyzed in the upcoming chapters in detail.

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<sup>18</sup>Hakan, *Türk Sinema Tarihi*, p. 16.

<sup>19</sup>Ibrahim Yenen, *Toplumsal Tezahürleri Bağlamında Türk Sinemasında Din, Dindarlık ve Din Adanı Olgusu*, p. 19.

<sup>20</sup>Teksoy, *Rekin Teksoy'un Türk Sineması*, p. 21.



The main aim of this chapter is to analyze the representation of religion in the Early and Traditional Turkish Cinema. This part is mostly based on the previous studies about religion-cinema relationship in the Turkish Cinema.

### **1.1. Nonexistence or Humiliated Existence of Religion in Early and Traditional Turkish Cinema**

In the first years of Turkish Cinema, Turkey was going through a rapid modernization/westernization process, during which religion was being positioned as the opposite of modern by the Kemalist ideology. Furthermore, a committee including scholars of psychology, logic and theology was founded in the leadership of Fuat Köprülü to create a report to modernize the religion under four titles: the form of worship, the language of worship, the quality of worship and the philosophy of worship.<sup>21</sup> In 1939, the law on the control of movies and scenarios was accepted by the cabinet, and according to this law, the movies with propaganda of religion were forbidden.<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, as Serpil Kirel mentions, after the foundation of Turkish Republic, it can be claimed that cinema assumed the mission to be a role model parallel with modernization efforts of the time. Moreover, it became an area in which being westernized is learnt with a way of imitation along with the emerging trends.<sup>23</sup> In this context, the characters of Early Turkish Cinema became more important since they started to teach westernization to the Turkish society.

The first examples of Turkish Cinema were the movies directed by Muhsin Ertuğrul. Ertuğrul embraced the modernization process of the Turkish Republic and reflected his position in his movies.<sup>24</sup> His first movie as a director is named *Boğaziçi Esrarı* (1922). This movie tells the story of a sheikh of the Bektashi order who takes advantage of rich women visiting his dervish convent, and who

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<sup>21</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p. 31.

<sup>22</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p. 32.

<sup>23</sup>Serpil Kirel, *Kültürel Çalışmalar ve Sinema*, p. 101.

<sup>24</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p. 33.

has inappropriate relationships with his female followers. A group of people attacked to the film crew during the shooting, and the movie shooting could only be completed under the police guard.<sup>25</sup>

Muhsin Ertuğrul's another movie named *Ateşten Gömlek* –The Daughter of Smyrna- (1923) is the first movie having a Muslim, Turkish, female actress<sup>26</sup>. In his movie *Bir Millet Uyanyor* (1932), Ertuğrul shows a character by name 'Molla Said' as a reverend cooperates with enemy troops. In 1933, in his movie *Karım Beni Aldatarsa*, women in swimwear are shown on the screens for the first time in Turkish Cinema.<sup>27</sup> All characters in the movie are shown as modern; their appearances and attitudes are the westernized as the same is aimed for the Turkish society. However, the male-female relationships in the movie are extreme loose even for the most modern spheres of Turkey then.<sup>28</sup> Even so, in his movie *Şehvet Kurbanı* (1940), he stepped up the obscenity of his movies.<sup>29</sup>

Ömer Lütfi Akad's first movie named *Vurun Kahpeye* (1949) has a specific importance in the context of the relationship between cinema and religion. In İbrahim Yenen's words, 'the created mentality about religion and reverends is mostly based on this movie'.<sup>30</sup> In the movie, a religious character 'Hacı Fettah' slanders a teacher and causes the lynching of her with sticks and stones. Again 'Hacı Fettah' is a Muslim character cooperating with enemy troops. This movie is also humiliates the religious people in the Anatolia by showing the Anatolians as people who easily believes rumors without any questioning.<sup>31</sup>

As a result of the tax reduction law for the local movies in 1949 in Turkey, and the development in transportation and facilities for electricity in the power of

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<sup>25</sup>Mehmet Akif Enderun, *Beyaz Perdenin Din Algısı, Sinema-Din İlişkileri Üzerine Bir Analiz*, p. 22.

<sup>26</sup>Some studies show that the first movie with a Muslim, Turkish, female actress is *Esrarengiz Şark*, screened in 1922. For detailed information: Hakan, *Türk Sinema Tarihi*, p. 42.

<sup>27</sup>Yalçın Lüleci, *Türk Sineması ve Din*, p. 54.

<sup>28</sup>Enderun, *Beyaz Perdenin Din Algısı*, p. 23.

<sup>29</sup>Lüleci, *Türk Sineması ve Din*, p. 57.

<sup>30</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p. 37.

<sup>31</sup>Enderun, *Beyaz Perdenin Din Algısı*, p. 27.

Democrat Party<sup>32</sup> after 1950, more local movies were able to be produced, and audience started to take more interest on local movies as well. There were 58 Turkish movies screened between the years 1917 and 1947 in total. In 1956, the number of total Turkish movies screened was 359. After 1957, the average production of the Turkish movies became around 100 movies per year and kept on increasing.<sup>33</sup>As a consequence of these developments, different cinema movements emerged in the Turkish Cinema such as the Social Realistic Cinema Movement, the Domestic Cinema Movement, or the Revolutionary Cinema Movement; and different approaches on religion appeared on the screens after the 1960s.

The Social Realistic Cinema Movement (Toplumsal Gerçekçi Sinema Akımı) was the first movement born after the military coup in 1960 in Turkey. Moreover, this movement embraced the Marxist ideology and constituted a Turkish version of the Social Reality Movement in the USA and the New Reality Movement in Italy. This movement was influential between 1960 and 1965, and lost its importance after the victory of the Justice Party (Adalet Partisi), a supporter of center-right politics, in the elections of 1965.<sup>34</sup>This movement defined its purpose as “Making movies show the surface of the realities in the society.”<sup>35</sup>

The main themes of the movies under the effect of this movement are mostly based on the conflicts between modernity and tradition. It can be claimed that the movies under the effect of this movement aim to modernize/westernize the Turkish people living in the rural areas. Modernization is shown as something making the life easier by the specific modern and respectable characters such as doctors, teachers and engineers working in the rural areas. On the other hand,

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<sup>32</sup>Founded on 1946, and won the elections on 1950, ended single-party period in Turkey.

<sup>33</sup>Enderun, *Beyaz Perdenin Din Algısı*, p. 28.

<sup>34</sup>Lüleci, *Türk Sineması ve Din*, p. 66.

<sup>35</sup>Lüleci, *Türk Sineması ve Din*, p. 66.

religious people are shown as characters opposing this modernization and as people who believe superstitions such as magic, amulets and incense.<sup>36</sup>

Secondly, another cinema movement occurring after 1960 was the Domestic Cinema Movement<sup>37</sup> (Ulusal Sinema) could be considered as the first opposition against abovementioned westernized movements in the Turkish Cinema. Halit Refiğ is one the most important directors of this movement. According to him, Turkish is not a word defines ethnicity but a word defines Muslims speaking Turkish.<sup>38</sup> He thinks the intellectuals moved away from society because they have moved away from the religion. Though Halit Refiğ does not define himself as a religious person and has a different perspective on religion, he thought that the intellectuals moved away from the society because they had moved away from the religion. According to him, covering the hair for women is not a necessity of Islam, but a desire to follow Christianity.<sup>39</sup> In his movie named *Bir Türke Gönül Verdim* (1969), it is claimed that Islam is the supreme in the comparison of the East and West civilizations.<sup>40</sup> Halit Refiğ also reproduced the movie *Vurun Kahpeye*<sup>41</sup> in 1973, added some parts relating to religion to the script, and showed that 'a good character' such as a teacher could also be a religious person in the movie.

The next movement in the history of the Turkish Cinema was the Revolutionary Cinema Movement (Devrimci Sinema Akımı). Both the Domestic Cinema Movement and the Revolutionary Cinema Movement emerged from the Social Realistic Cinema Movement. However, the main distinction between them is their positioning on whether there were social classes in Turkey or not at the time. The Revolutionary Cinema Movement claimed Turkey had social classes

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<sup>36</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p. 43.

<sup>37</sup>Ulusal Sinema and Milli Sinema are different cinema movements, for the words Ulusal and Milli, the first translation is National, Domestic is used here to show the difference between two movements.

<sup>38</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p.46.

<sup>39</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p. 46.

<sup>40</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p. 47.

<sup>41</sup>First production of this movie mentioned in page 12.

meanwhile the Domestic Cinema Movement claimed the social classification in Turkey was not the same as in the Western societies

According to Revolutionary Cinema Movement, the Turkish Cinema became a cultural tool to reflect the dominant class. According to Onat Kutlar, founder of the Turkish Film Club Association (Turk Sinematek Derneği), the mission of the artist is not only locating the social reality but also approving or changing it. The aim of the revolutionary art is to transform the lives.<sup>42</sup> Religion is a drug for lower classes to console themselves in the movies under the effect of Revolutionary Cinema Movement. Religion is also shown as a tool serving the injustice order in the Turkish society.

After the 1960s, religious movies became a new trend among the Turkish producers. These movies were mostly considered as a 'trade of religion' as they were cheap, sloppy and their stories were unrealistically epic. The topics of these movies were prophets and dervishes who played an important role in the Islamizing of the Anatolia. With their successive shootings, these movies had an important role in spreading some misinformation about historical figures of Islam. For example, in 1973, 12 movies about religious characters of history were screened. The table of religious movies is given at the end of this part.

Finally, the period of erotic movies in Turkish Cinema should be mentioned. Starting from 1974, erotic and pornographic movies screened in the movie theatres of Turkey till 1980. For example, 131 of the total of 195 movies produced in 1979, on the peak of this period, in Turkey were erotic movies.<sup>43</sup> In this atmosphere, there was only one movie produced under the effect of the National Cinema Movement. More importantly, this period can be considered as one of the reasons for the decreasing interest of religious people to the movie theatres.

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<sup>42</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p. 49.

<sup>43</sup>Enderun, *Beyaz Perdenin Din Algısı*, p. 39.

In conclusion, religious figures or topics related to the religion were visible only in a few examples of the Turkish Cinema while yearly production of Turkish movies passed the number of 200 in some years. Furthermore, in the examples in which religious characters are visible, they are represented as bad characters. In the trend of religious movies, 28 movies were produced between the years 1961 and 1973. Moreover, these movies are also other examples of misrepresentation of religion and one can claim that they were produced only for economic purposes.

Table 1.2: List of religious movies<sup>44</sup>

<b>Title of the Movie</b>	<b>Director</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Category of the Subject</b>
Hız. Ömer'in Adaleti	Nejat Saydam	1961	Caliphs
Mevlid (Süleyman Çelebi)	Mehmet Muhtar	1962	Dervishes and Scholars
Hız. İbrahim	Asaf Tengiz	1964	Prophets
Cennet Fedaileri	Mehmet Dinler	1965	Companions of Prophet Muhammad
Hak Yolunda Hız. Yahya	Muharrem Gürses	1965	Prophets
Hız. Eyüb'ün Sabrı	Asaf Tengiz	1965	Prophets
Hız. Yusuf'un Hayatı	Muharrem Gürses	1965	Prophets
Veysel Karani	Hüseyin Peyda	1965	Dervishes and Scholars
Yahya Peygamber	Hüseyin Peyda	1965	Prophets
Hız. Ayşe	Nuri Akıncı	1966	
Hız. Süleyman ve Saba Melikesi	Muharrem Gürses	1966	Prophets

<sup>44</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p.58.

Table 1.2 : List of religious movies (continued)

Hacı Bektaş Veli	Fikret Uçak	1967	Dervishes and Scholars
İslamiyet'in Kahraman Kızı	Kayahan Arıkan	1968	Dervishes and Scholars
Anadolu Evliyaları	Şevket Aktunç	1969	Dervishes and Scholars
Yusuf ile Züleyha	Türker İnanoğlu	1970	Prophets
Hz. İbrahim	Asaf Tengiz	1972	Prophets
Bilal-i Habeşi	Cetin İnanç	1973	Companions of Prophet Muhammad
Gönüller Fatihi Yunus	Özdemir Birsell	1973	Dervishes and Scholars
Hz. Ömer	Asaf Tengiz	1973	Caliphs
Hz Ömer'in Adaleti	Osman F. Seden	1973	Caliphs
Hz. Yusuf	Nuri Akinci	1973	Prophets
Pir Sultan Abdal	Remzi Jöntürk	1973	Dervishes and Scholars
Rabia	Osman F. Seden	1973	Dervishes and Scholars
Rabia (İlk Kadın Evliya)	Süreyya Duru	1973	Dervishes and Scholars
Sarı Kız (Kız Evliya)	Nuri Akinci	1973	Dervishes and Scholars
Yunus Emre	Özdemir Birsell	1973	Dervishes and Scholars
Yunus Emre Destanı	Çetin İnanç	1973	Dervishes and Scholars
Mevlana	Atıf Yılmaz	1973	Dervishes and Scholars

## 1.2. National Cinema Movement and a New Approach on Religion

Yücel Çakmaklı was the first director who used the phrase 'the National Cinema' in the August copy of the *Tohum* magazine in 1964. In the text, he says

Turkish Cinema can only reach National Cinema character by creating movies reflecting the realities of the Anatolia molded with its peasants and townsmen, as the beliefs of the Muslim Turkish

society prefer moral values its own traditions and national characters rather than materialistic values.<sup>45</sup>

The main purpose of National Cinema Movement was to capture the internal values of the Turkish society and reflect these values on the screens. According to the supporters of this movement, the main debates on religion and the Turkish Cinema were based on the representation of moral values on the screens. Furthermore, some studies claim that the roots of the National Cinema Movement can be found in a text written by Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and published in the *Büyük Doğu* magazine on September 1943:

Cinema is an amazing opportunity and built plan under the order of ideas and spirit. However today, the ability of the elements fulfilling this plan is only showing legs and bodies to charm human desires. The rest is something like small jewelry around the main precious gemstone.<sup>46</sup>

The first movie that can be counted as an example of the National Cinema Movement is accepted as *Birleşen Yollar* -Crossroads- (1970) by Yücel Çakmaklı. Moreover, some movie critics consider this movie as the peak of the National Cinema Movement. In the movie, the modern daughter of a rich family falls in love with a religious university student, and under the effect of him, her approach on religion changes and she becomes a religious woman who raises her daughter as a religious person as well. The movie is directly about the conflict of the religious with the modern. In the same way, another movie of Yücel Çakmaklı with a similar topic, *Zehra* (1972), is about a young westernized woman falling in love with a young man living in a village. She compares the modern and traditional. She realizes how meaningless her modern life is and finds 'the right way'. Likewise, in another movie named *Memleketim* (1974), Yücel Çakmaklı tries to portray a person who prefers the Islamic and Turkish values over the Christian and Western values. To conclude, Çakmaklı's movies were

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<sup>45</sup>Lüleci, *Türk Sineması ve Din*, p. 85.

<sup>46</sup>Lüleci, *Türk Sineması ve Din*, p. 58.



mostly focusing on the conflict between the modernized/westernized and the national/traditional distinction.

Yücel Çakmaklı made seven films between 1970 and 1974, and did not make any other movies since 1989. Therefore, the National Cinema Movement is mostly represented with the movies of Mesut Uçakan in Yücel Çakmaklı's silent years. According to Uçakan, 'cinema is a pursuit, which looks for the purpose of existence of humanity and the nature, reaching the creator's (God's) eternal beauty from the beauty of the created, and revealing the reasons of genesis'<sup>47</sup> and he claims that the main purpose of cinema is to announce the holy words of religion.

As we can see on the detailed table in the end of this part, there is only one example shot by Mesut Uçakan in 1978 during the period of erotic movies in the Turkish Cinema between 1974 and 1980. Moreover, it can be seen that the average film production in the National Cinema Movement is about one film per year.

With a completely different discourse from Yücel Çakmaklı's discourse, Mesut Uçakan says that the movies of Yücel Çakmaklı are not valid enough for the National Cinema Movement. He thinks the characters in the movies of Çakmaklı are chosen from the high-toned sphere of the society and judgments about the society made from their perspective. Furthermore, Çakmaklı's approach on religion is based on unrealistic goodwill, Islam is shown as a system of thoughts and its social and economic superiorities should be mentioned as well, according to Uçakan. Another claim of Uçakan is that the movies of Yücel Çakmaklı are not realistic because the characters in the movies are not realistic and convincing. For instance, in Yücel Çakmaklı's movies, characters choose the way of Islam not because of the superiority of Islam, but they fall in love with religious characters.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Mesut Uçakan, *Türk Sinemasında İdeoloji*, p. 160.

<sup>48</sup>Uçakan, *Türk Sinemasında İdeoloji*, p. 166.

After a while, the movies of the National Cinema Movement started to focus on the difficulties in the life of religious characters, while they were usually mentioning modern and not religious characters finding the way of Islam. Especially, the returning of Yücel Çakmaklı with the movie *Minyeli Abdullah* (1989) re-activated the National Cinema Movement, as half million people went to movie theatres to watch the movie.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, *Minyeli Abdullah* can be considered as the second most popular movie of the National Cinema Movement (First one is *Birleşen Yollar*, shot in 1970).

*Minyeli Abdullah* starts with a warning text: ‘Events in this movie happens in Egypt that is under the control of England.’ In the movie, the main character Abdullah lives his life as Islam suggests, and tells about Islam to people around him. He gets arrested for reactionary activities and he is exposed to torture. In the court, he defends himself by saying that he is ‘a Muslim who tries to learn and teach Islam by making religious conversations.’

He continues to teach Islam in the prison. No matter what happens. In short, the movie shows the difficulty of living as a pious person and suggests religious people to defend their ideas under any circumstances.

In the following year, Mesut Uçakan's movie *Yalnız Değilsiniz* (1990) was screened. This movie is another sensational example of the National Cinema Movement. 189.240 people watched the movie in the theatres.<sup>50</sup> The movie is about a woman who wears a headscarf, and who is under the pressure of her environment because of her religious believes.

On those days, a smear campaign started about against *Yalnız Değilsiniz* in the Turkish newspapers. The pictures of the leading actress in the movie, who played the woman in a headscarf, in bikinis was published in the newspapers with the title ‘Scarfed actress not wearing a head scarf’, what is more, it was written in

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<sup>49</sup>Burçak Evren, *Yücel Çakmaklı, Milli Sinemanın Kurucusu*, p. 76.

<sup>50</sup>Evren, *Yücel Çakmaklı*, p. 76.

the newspapers that, the leading actress in the movie swims topless and lives a crazy life.<sup>51</sup>

The movies of the National Cinema Movement shot between 1989 and 1993 were different than the ones shot in its first years. In the beginning of the movement, the main subjects of the movies were the conflicts between the modern and traditional; and the characters were eventually finding the way of Islam. However, after 1989, the National Cinema Movement focused on the difficulties that religious people are living through. For example, the movies *Minyeli Abdullah 1* (1989) and *Minyeli Abdullah 2* (1990) are about the struggle of a religious man living in the modern times; the movies *Yalnız Değilsiniz* (1990) and *Sonsuza Yürümek* (1991) are about the headscarf problem in Turkey; *Çizme* (1992) is about the debate of the azan in Turkish; and *Sürgün* (1972) is about a teacher whose workplace is consistently changed by the authorities because of his religious beliefs.

As we can see in the table given in the end of this part, there are 43 movies shot under the effect of the National Cinema Movement during its period of 40 years. Nevertheless, some of the directors of the movement, who were only six, were not considering their movies as complying with the National Cinema Movement. For instance, Mesut Uçakan says 'Today, Salih Diriklik, who defines himself as a filmmaker of the National Cinema Movement, says he is no longer under the effect of the National Cinema Movement, so do I'<sup>52</sup> According to Salih Diriklik:

National Cinema is something exciting us, something we support passionately, something debate for and something we think we are doing well in 1970s. But it is also the name of the movement, no one talked about it and no one shoot a movie according to rules of it after 1980.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Evren, *Yücel Çakmaklı*, p. 85.

<sup>52</sup>Lüleci, *Türk Sineması ve Din*, p. 96.

<sup>53</sup>Lüleci, *Türk Sineması ve Din*, p. 96.

Another director, İsmail Güneş stated that he is a movie director and uncomfortable of being under any type of categorization.<sup>54</sup>Therefore, we can claim that Yücel Çakmaklı, the name founder of the National Cinema Movement, can be considered as the only director consistently adhering to the National Cinema Movement. Considering the directors' excluding themselves from the National Cinema Movement, we can claim that it is not possible to say the movement still exists.

The National Cinema is also mentioned as 'White Cinema'- which is a good name choice to define the National Cinema, and it is a connective name for many movies with same sensitivities according to Yücel Çakmaklı-<sup>55</sup>, 'Green Cinema', 'Islamic Cinema', and 'Films with Islamic Sensitivities' in some studies. Salih Diriklik says the National Cinema does not exist after 1980, but there are 'Films with Islamic Sensitivities'.<sup>56</sup>Moreover, the name of National Cinema Movement is not true but it is possible to talk about 'Films with Islamic Sensitivities according to İsmail Güneş.'<sup>57</sup> In addition, the name 'Green Cinema' is used by the seculars to point pious Muslim directors since 'green' is something to point pious Muslims in their mindsets.

The birth of National Cinema Movement is in the same period of the birth of National Order Party, which is the first party founded by Necmettin Erbakan in 1970. This movement began as an opposition to westernization politics of Turkish Republic, while the main topics of National Cinema Movement was against westernization/modernization of Turkish Cinema. The movement started in politic arena by Necmettin Erbakan is also known as 'National Vision' (Milli Görüş). Also, timings of the growth for both National Cinema and National Vision are parallel in the beginning of 1990s. After the power of Welfare Party in 1995, prejudices about religious people started to increase and polarization of

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<sup>54</sup>Lüleci, *Türk Sineması ve Din*, p. 96.

<sup>55</sup>Evren, *Yücel Çakmaklı*, p. 183.

<sup>56</sup>Lüleci, *Türk Sineması ve Din*, p. 96.

<sup>57</sup>Lüleci, *Türk Sineması ve Din*, p. 97.

secular/religious in Turkey got sharp. And in 1997, after the military coup, the atmosphere for filmmakers under the effect of National Cinema Movement became very difficult. In my opinion, Yücel Çakmaklı's last cinema movie *Son Türbedar* (1996) ('Emir Sultan' (1997) and *Cumbadan Rumbaya* (2005) are TV movies directed by Yücel Çakmaklı) can be counted as the last movie of National Cinema Movement. After 2002, Justice and Development party won the elections and started to rule the country, the polarization of secular/religious changed in their period of power, and the modernization process of Turkish Republic is completely changed as it will be discussed in the following chapters.

Table 1.3: List of the movies of National Cinema Movement<sup>58</sup>

	<b>Movie Title</b>	<b>Director</b>	<b>Year</b>
1	Birleşen Yollar	Yücel Çakmaklı	1970
2	Çile	Yücel Çakmaklı	1972
3	Zehra	Yücel Çakmaklı	1972
4	Oğlum Osman	Yücel Çakmaklı	1973
5	Kızım Ayşe	Yücel Çakmaklı	1974
6	Diriliş	Yücel Çakmaklı	1974
7	Memleketim	Yücel Çakmaklı	1974
8	Gençlik Köprüsü	Salih Diriklik	1974
9	Lanet	Mesut Uçakan	1978
10	Rahmet ve Gazap	Mesut Uçakan	1980
11	Öc	Mesut Uçakan	1984
12	Sessiz Ölüm	Mesut Uçakan	1985
13	Yapayalnız	Mesut Uçakan	1986
14	Zeynep Ölmeyin	Mesut Uçakan	1987
15	Reis Bey	Mesut Uçakan	1988

<sup>58</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p. 73-83-84.

Table 1.3: List of the movies of National Cinema Movement (continued)

16	Minyeli Abdullah 1	Yücel Çakmaklı	1989
17	Sahibini Arayan Madalya	Yücel Çakmaklı	1989
18	Minyeli Abdullah 2	Yücel Çakmaklı	1990
19	Yalnız Değilsiniz	Mesut Uçakan	1990
20	Sonsuza Yürümek	Mesut Uçakan	1991
21	Çizme	İsmail Güneş	1991
22	Çöküş	Mesut Uçakan	1992
23	Sevdaların Ölümü	YücelÇakmaklı	1992
24	Bişr-i Hafî	Yücel Çakmaklı	1992
25	Mümin ile Kafır	Yücel Çakmaklı	1992
26	Sürgün	Mehmet Tanrısever	1992
27	Siyah Pelerinli Adam	İsmail Güneş	1992
28	Kelebekler Sonsuza Uçar (İskilipli Atıf Hoca)	Mesut Uçakan	1993
29	Veysel Karani	İsmail Güneş	1993
30	Ahmet Bedevi Hz.	İsmail Güneş	1993
31	Canperdesi	İsmail Güneş	1993
32	Beşinci Boyut	İsmail Güneş	1993
33	Bize Nasıl Kıydınız	Metin Çamurcu	1994
34	Ölümsüz Karanfiller	Mesut Uçakan	1995
35	Son Türbedar	Yücel Çakmaklı	1996
36	Gülün Bittiği Yer	İsmail Güneş	1998
37	Gönül Dosta Gider	Mesut Uçakan	2004
38	Otel Istanbul	Mesut Uçakan	2004
39	Anne Ya da Leyla	Mesut Uçakan	2005

Table 1.3: List of the movies of National Cinema Movement (continued)

40	The Imam	İsmail Güneş	2005
41	Anka Kuşu	Mesut Uçakan	2007
42	Sözün Bittiği Yer	İsmail Güneş	2007
43	Hür Adam	Mehmet Tanrısever	2010

### 1.3. Reflections of Turkish Politics on Early and Traditional Turkish Cinema

Istanbul met cinema just a year after the world did in 1896. However, the first film production was made in 1914 (It is made between 1917-1918 according to some different studies.<sup>59</sup>) Studies about the history of Turkish Cinema starts from 1922 and researched in three major parts: Early Turkish Cinema (1922-1960), Traditional Turkish Cinema (1960-1996) and New Turkish Cinema (1996-...). From 1922 to 1939, Muhsin Ertuğrul was the only director of Turkish Cinema, therefore many clichés about the representation of religion and pious characters created by him.

At the time, Muhsin Ertuğrul was the single man of Turkish Cinema while Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was the single man in Turkish politics. They were both supporting a rapid westernization for Turkey and they were both using their powers to perform westernization on the Turkish society. Therefore, we can claim that Muhsin Ertuğrul has an important role on modernization process of the Turkish Republic since he normalizes the sudden politics of Republic for modernization. Moreover, it should be noted that Muhsin Ertuğrul is a man of ‘the west’<sup>60</sup> and some of his movies were adaptations of some western movies. Also, the representations of religion in Muhsin Ertuğrul’s movies can be understand better along with his own words about religion, and his religious society:

<sup>59</sup>Mentioned on page 9.

<sup>60</sup>Worked for several theaters in Paris and Berlin, for detailed information: Teksoy, *Rekin Teksoy’un Türk Sineması*, p. 16.

We are a backward nation. If we search for the one main reason besides millions of others, we can find that the reason is the fact that we do not serve to knowledge as a religion. There is only one religion in the world, which is 'knowledge'. Studying to reach that knowledge is the biggest worship and the biggest reward. There is only one holy thing in the world, which is a 'book' that teaches. People should have one weapon, which is a pen...<sup>61</sup>

After 1939, a few more directors started to make movies. With the improvements in technical facilities between 1950 and 1960, film production in Turkey started to increase, under the power of the Democrat Party, as well. And after 1960, the period of the Traditional Turkish Cinema, also known as the Yeşilçam Era, started. Different cinema movements emerged after 1960s, too.

The first cinema movement was started in 1960 and it was named as 'the Social Realistic Cinema Movement. Two other cinema movements, named the Domestic Cinema Movement and the Revolutionary Cinema Movement, born from this movement as a result of the polarization of the right wing and left wing in the Turkish politics. The Domestic Cinema Movement, which can be correlated with the right-wingers of Turkey, and the Revolutionary Cinema Movement, which can be correlated with the left-wingers of Turkey, emerged after 1965

The parallelism between Turkish Cinema and Turkish Politics continued after 1960s as well. For instance, the movie *Umut –Hope-* (1970), directed by Yılmaz Güney, who is the most important director of the Revolutionary Cinema Movement, was banned by the council of censor and reasoned in ten entries under the power of the Justice Party. Despite religious values were humiliated in many examples of the Turkish Cinema, there were entries about humiliating religion in banning reasons. Entries related to religion are given below:

8- Fajr Prayer is performed by the Imam during the sun rise, and the movie humiliates the imam. There is no pray performed during the sun rise in our religion

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<sup>61</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p. 36.



9- The imam has jinn, fairies and angels, they would tell where the treasure is, this imam is not like the imams you know' with this sentence, this character is shown as a real reverend and all reverends are humiliated in behalf of this character.

10- After performing an ablution, the legend of finding 101 stones and circling around the treasure is something superstitious and irrational, but shown as a realistic ritual of religion.<sup>62</sup>

Religion and religious people were represented as reactionary obstacles against modernization/westernization, which was blessed by Turkish Republic. Nevertheless, in Early and Traditional periods of Turkish Cinema, moral values of the Turkish society were ignored, and misrepresented on purpose generally. For example, in the movies of Muhsin Ertuğrul, women in swimwear were shown for the first time, while the Turkish society was not familiar with anything like this. Moreover, the male-female relationships in the movies were represented in ways far from the general moral norms in the social life of the Turkish Republic.

The abovementioned misrepresentations started with the movies of Muhsin Ertuğrul and continued in the Traditional Turkish Cinema afterwards. Religion and religious characters were ignored or humiliated also in the Traditional Turkish Cinema, and the gap between moral values of the Turkish Cinema and moral values of the Turkish society widened. Then, after 1974, the period of erotic movies started and even pornographic movies kept being screened in Turkish movie theatres till 1980.

In the beginnings of 1970s the trend of religious movies became more popular. However, religion was used to trade on the religious Anatolian people as these movies were mostly cheap and sloppy productions; they had many technical mistakes related to religion despite their subjects were religious figures from history.

In 1970, as a result of the general approach of the Turkish Cinema on tradition and religion, a new cinema movement emerged: the National Cinema

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<sup>62</sup>Enderun, *Beyaz Perdenin Din Algısı*, p. 37.

Movement. The movement was started by Yücel Çakmaklı, and continued with the movies of several other directors, as a result, there are about 43 movies that are classified under the National Cinema Movement in several studies today. However, considering that the average film production in Turkey hit the number of 200 those days, we can claim that the examples of the National Cinema Movement were just drops in the bucket. Moreover, the examples of the National Cinema Movement could not become very popular except some examples like *Birleşen Yollar* (1970) and *Minyeli Abdullah* (1989). It should also be noted that, in the words of Ayşe Şasa: 'The Domestic and National Cinema Movements were never supported by the intellectuals of the Turkish society.'<sup>63</sup>

In conclusion, it is possible to see the reflections of modernization process in the Turkish Republic on the Early and Traditional Turkish Cinema, as modernized and westernized characters used in the movies correspond to the westernization of Turkey and the ideal westernized figure it requires.

Even after the multi-party system in the Turkish Republic, the parallelism between the Turkish Cinema and the Turkish Politics continued and the debates on religious people and religious symbols reflected on movies as well. Nevertheless, the Turkish Cinema ignored Islam and moral values of the Turkish Society insistently on purpose in its examples except for a few examples mentioned above. In sum, we can claim that from its beginning with Muhsin Ertuğrul in 1922 until the beginning of the New Turkish Cinema in 1996, the Turkish Cinema served the ideology of the Republic, which sees the religion and religious people as enemies against the Republic.

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<sup>63</sup>Sasa, *Yeşilçam Günlüğü*, p. 22.

## CHAPTER 2

### Religion in New Turkish Cinema

The 1990s were the years of change in Turkey, as a new middle class including religious people was starting to emerge in those years. Pious people were becoming more and more visible in the public spheres of the cities, and they were getting citified,<sup>64</sup> and their existence in the public spheres was an unpleasant but unavoidable situation for the elites of the cities.

According to Serpil Kirel “Cinema basically is a city entertainment”<sup>65</sup> and “Cinema teaches how to become a citizen while it speaks to the mass audience in cities.”<sup>66</sup> In this context, this chapter discusses the relationship of pious Muslim people with the modern city life in Turkey. The main question is how the New Turkish Cinema took part on modernizing pious Muslim people who were becoming more visible day by day.

Asuman Suner points the year 1996 for the beginning of the New Turkish Cinema<sup>67</sup> and bases the formation of the New Turkish Cinema on technical improvements:

*Eşkıya* created the new formula of New Turkish Cinema for upcoming movies. The formula is to blend traditional local subjects with the formal characteristic of Hollywood Cinema and reproduce by using dynamic cameras, fast-moving fictions, intense uses of light and filters, and special audio visual effects.<sup>68</sup>

Suner subcategorizes cinema as ‘popular cinema’ and ‘art cinema’. According to her *Eşkıya* is the first example of the New Turkish Cinema as an example of

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<sup>64</sup>Esra Özyürek, *Modernlik Nostaljisi, Kemalizm, Laiklik ve Gündelik Hayatta Siyaset* p.132-133, Suner, *Hayalet Ev*, p.23.

<sup>65</sup>Kirel, *Kültürel Çalışmalar ve Sinema*, p. 14.

<sup>66</sup>Kirel, *Kültürel Çalışmalar ve Sinema*, p. 57-58.

<sup>67</sup>Suner, *Hayalet Ev*, p. 34.

<sup>68</sup>Suner, *Hayalet Ev*, p. 34.

'popular cinema' and *Tabutta Rövaşata* is the first example of the New Turkish Cinema as an example of 'art cinema'.

Although the formula of the New Turkish Cinema was mostly technical, its starting period makes us think about its theoretical content deeply as well. In those years, different identities such as pious Muslims and Kurds were becoming more serious problems for the state and for the elites of the country as well. The political power and media of the time were aiming to show how 'dangerous' those identities could be to the public.<sup>69</sup> In the middle of different identity discussions a new Turkish identity was defining according to Asuman Suner:

In fact, in 1990s' Turkey beyond different identity debates, there was a new identity construction process subtly ongoing. This is not pointed by any difference, modern, westernized, citified, upper-middle class Turkish identity.<sup>70</sup>

At this point, we may discuss the role of the New Turkish Cinema on building this new Turkish identity or the results of this new Turkish identity on the New Turkish Cinema. The next section discusses if there are any religious codes in this new Turkish identity based on the religious characters of the New Turkish Cinema. Considering the power of cinema on transforming societies and the religious characters of the New Turkish Cinema together, the role of the cinema on modernizing pious Muslim people and this Turkish identity should be thought together.

### **2.1. Pious Muslim Figures in Modern World from the Point of View of New Turkish Cinema**

Considering the relationship of religion and cinema, there are notable differences between the Traditional Turkish Cinema and the New Turkish Cinema, as pious characters were not only visible but also subjects in the New Turkish Cinema. In this section, the representation of pious Muslim characters

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<sup>69</sup> This period will be discussed in depth on upcoming chapters.

<sup>70</sup>Suner, *Hayalet Ev*, p. 23.

will be discussed in the context of their compatibility with the modern life. It will be shown how the conflicts between the lives of religious people and modern social life are represented, how religious people responded in these conflicts, and how the movies showed Muslims living in this 'modern' life with lots of sins in it. In this chapter, the movies named *Takva*, *Büşra*, *Beyza'nın Kadınları* and *The Imam* will be analyzed in the context of relationship between allegedly pious Muslims and the modern city life.

The movies *Takva* and *Büşra* focus on the incompatibility of religious people to the modern life. In fact, the main theme of *Takva* is the conflicts between religious life and modern social life. Both *Büşra* and *Takva* show there are many sins and disturbing situations in modern city life for religious people. On the other hand, *The Imam* intends to show religious people can live in a modernized way, but whether the film achieves its aim or not is a matter of debate.

The movie *Takva* tells us the story of a member (Muharrem) of a religious order. Muharrem is a very religious person in his forties who lives alone and far from worldly life. He dedicates his life to his religious order. One day, the sheikh of his religious order assigns Muharrem to collect the rents for the estates belonging to the religious order. Muharrem falls into a feeling of emptiness while he tries to accomplish his mission given by the Sheikh. Since Muharrem has no interest on worldly things, the henchman of the Sheikh, Rauf, cannot understand Sheikh's decision. Therefore, Sheikh explains his decision to Rauf saying that to make worldly things, an open heart is necessary, not intelligence, as intelligence may get the demon involved in one's work.<sup>71</sup>

This sentence summarizes the main message of the movie. Openness of heart symbolizes religious part of the life, and intelligence symbolizes the secular part of the life. Furthermore we can see this distinction between pray and money; while pray symbolizes the religious part and money symbolizes the secular part of

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<sup>71</sup>*Takva*, 2006, (0:04).

the life. The movie claims that religion and modern world are two opposed things, and as long as you involve in the modern world, you sin more often and you eventually move away from your religious life. This incompatibility and impossibility of living as a religious person in modern world cause Muharrem to lose his mind in the end of the movie.

Many other specific examples can be shown from the movie in this context. For example, in one scene, we see Muharrem taking the rent from a drunk man, which disturbs Muharrem a lot. When Muharrem tells this problem to Rauf and his Sheikh, their response in view of the facts are also thought provoking. For the drunk man, Rauf says, “May God forgive him.”<sup>72</sup> There is no problem for him and for the Sheikh since he pays his rent on a regular basis. On the other hand, in another scene, we see the sadness of Muharrem when he sees a religious family cannot afford their rent. For the needy religious family, Sheikh and Rauf get panic and ask, “Cannot they pay the rent?”<sup>73</sup> When Muharrem insists for a solution, Sheikh tells him that he is going to select the student to leave if they cannot afford him because of this rent. At this point, the movie shows us the relation of religious orders and money. We see Sheikh and Rauf refuse to help this family even with ‘the offering’ as Islam suggests. The only important thing for them is their community.

Just after this scene we see another conflict that Muharrem lives through: He suggests using banks for the bills or queue up for the payments. However, Rauf rejects them both saying that banks are using interest to make money, and interest is forbidden in Islam; and he says Muharrem should not wait in the line, because his time is precious, he is using his time on God’s wish and it is a religious duty for him.

Throughout the movie *Takva*, Muharrem moves away from his religious life as long as he focuses on worldly things. His whole life changes in this period:

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<sup>72</sup>*Takva*, 2006, (0:52).

<sup>73</sup>*Takva*, 2006 (1:01).

The religious order gives him a mobile phone, a car, new clothes; his appearance, his talking style, his priorities changes. Moreover, he forgets the Friday prayer one day, another day he cheats in his trade and lies to the customers and to his boss as well. He regrets, but he cannot step back, and continues to lie. These predicaments cause confessions on Muharrem and he loses his mind in the end of the movie because of the conflict between his modern life with many sins around and his religious life.

To continue with another movie named *Büşra*, we can see another example of a character that moves away from her religious life as long as she gets modernized. In the movie *Büşra*, we can see the incompatibility of religion and modern life as well. Despite its superficial approach to the religious people, the characters named Büşra and Ferit are important to discuss as the results of a perception of the pious Muslims. They are both children of religious, rich, and modernized families: we see *Büşra* playing guitar in her home; she knows how to dance, but never does; she has modern, secular friends, and their lives are enviable to her.

In the beginning of the movie, she accepts her family's ideas since she thinks it is mandatory for her. After spending more time with Yaman who is a secular, cool, super smart writer; she refuses the marriage with Ferit arranged by her family, and she opposes her family. In the first half of the movie, Büşra says her secular friend Selen that her family is different than Selen's, and they don't let Büşra to be with anybody before marriage.<sup>74</sup>

On another scene, Büşra tells Selen that she has not the luxury to choose and Selen objects her: "Choosing is not a luxury."<sup>75</sup> These scenes help planting the idea that women have no right or will to choose in pious Muslim families in the minds of the Turkish society.

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<sup>74</sup>*Büşra*, 2010, (0:39).

<sup>75</sup>*Büşra*, 2010, (0:42).

The movie shows the modernization of the main character Būşra with her intellectual interests, her increasing interaction with the ‘city’ and her love to Yaman. On the other hand, the modernization of Ferit is shown with his successful business life makes him very rich and the modernization of their families with their attention on fashion shows, in which conservative dresses are presented. In these scenes, the movie shows us the contradiction of attending to a fashion show for religious people. Before this scene, we see mothers of Būşra and Ferit saying that they watch the fashion show from the front lines; and that “ there are fabrics with smells of orange, mint, vanilla, and there are the best designers on the fashion show.”<sup>76</sup>

On this scene, we see other scarfed woman protesting this fashion show. They say, “Don’t fall for, ornaments make you infidel, fashion is the temple of demon”<sup>77</sup> and they carry posters in which sin, time for penitence etc. are written. The families’ modernization is between contradictions, and they are used to live in those contradictions, which cause them to sin. According to the movie, they are modern, but twofaced to their religion.

On the other hand, Ferit is a successful, rich businessman, but he is a parvenu. His business is international, he can speak foreign languages, he is very kind around other upper class people, he is very religious around his family but a monster comes out of him when he is on his own. He curses on people endlessly. For example, he tells to a valet for no reason, “Be careful, you cannot afford this car even if you sell both of your kidneys.”<sup>78</sup> In the end of the movie, we see Ferit drinking alcohol with Yaman, he says “at your peril” to Yaman. The movie shows us Ferit’s religious life is faked up. He is just another twofaced Muslim.

The relationship of religious people with money in New Turkish Cinema is another important point to discuss. In the new Turkish cinema rich Muslim characters are shown in a negative way; they are opportunist, and their religious

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<sup>76</sup>*Būşra*, 2010, (0:14).

<sup>77</sup>*Būşra*, 2010, (0:38).

<sup>78</sup>*Būşra*, 2010, (0:16).



views are fake. The Sheikh and his religious order in *Takva*, Ferit, Büşra's and his families, Büşra's scarfed friends are examples of rich, capitalist, pious Muslim characters. In *Takva*, we see how a religious order manages their cash flow; we see the calculations based on the inflation they make to arrange the raises for the rents, and resources they give to Muharrem. They get panic when Muharrem tells about a needy religious family may not afford the rent for the upcoming month. For example, Rauf tells Muharrem that they take the man out who pays his rent just because he drinks, but they don't take the rent from the family who cannot pay just because they are religious, and he says Muharrem to solve this problem if he can.<sup>79</sup>

This conversation is just another example of contradiction between modern life and religious life. They refuse bank because banks manage interests; but they have no problem to do many things forbidden by religion such as taking someone else's line. They are twofaced, fake, opportunist Muslims and religion is a tool for their opportunist wishes for their religious order according to the movie. For instance, in another scene of *Takva*, we see the scarfed daughter of the Sheikh in a jewelry store while she is paying hundreds of dollars. Or, in the movie *Büşra*, we see Büşra's scarfed friends getting out of an expensive jeep while talking about their new houses, and the sales in a shop.

Furthermore, we see the relationship of Muharrem with money: After he starts wearing elegant clothes, driving a car, managing the money of the religious order; his behavior to others changes substantially. He starts yelling to the servant in the inn, or to his apprentice. He sells the bags for nine billions which should have been three billions, and tells his boss that he sold them for seven billions. His boss, another pious Muslim character, is very happy at that situation and tells, "Working for the religious order not only opened your heart, also opened your mind."<sup>80</sup> Muharrem regrets but does the same thing again. Religion becomes a

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<sup>79</sup>*Takva*, 2006, (1:04).

<sup>80</sup>*Takva*, 2006, (1:11).

tool for him as well. In the abovementioned scene, the customer's main purpose is not to buy bags indeed, but to meet with Muharrem. Next time, the same customer comes with two other building owners; and again, their purpose is also meeting with Muharrem. The expensive deal between them is just a reason to meet him; they are using their economic power to get close with the religious order.

Muslims getting rich are especially mentioned in these movies. The customers comes to meet with Muharrem are building owners, same as the fathers of Büşra's scarfed friends. Ferit makes international deals, drives luxury cars. Büşra's scarfed friends wear luxury dresses; drive luxury cars. Families of Büşra and Ferit live in luxurious and big houses and attend fashion shows.

In two movies, Büşra and Muharrem are shown as true Muslims, and the other Muslim characters are shown as fake Muslims. These movies base this argument mostly on the characters' relationship with money: Being rich for a Muslim is a default contradiction from the point of view of these movies. In *Büşra*, in the fashion show scene, we see a conversation between Büşra and Ferit in this context:

Ferit: "Of course, we get rich, we adopted their systems, entered their societies. So we will turn into animals. Look! What are we doing here? "

Büşra: "Should Muslims be poor and tasteless? "

Ferit: "World is not for pleasure, it is for examination."<sup>81</sup>

However, Ferit's question is not a reflection of his real character, but his 'fake' pious character. The movie tries to show the positive relationship of Muslims with the capitalism, same as *Takva* did while Sheikh and Rauf calculates the rise in the rents depending on the inflation. On the other hand, Ferit's answer to Büşra strengthens the idea that Muslims are living their religious lives in a fake way.

On the other hand, the movie *The Imam* is made to show the compatibility of religion with modern life. The movie is about a man named Emrullah, who has

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<sup>81</sup>*Büşra*, 2010, (0:38).

studied in a religious high school, and who comes back his village as an Imam after the death of his Imam friend. Despite graduating from a religious high school, Emrullah is a modern man; he continues his studies in England and starts a business in Turkey with a secular friend. As a result of the general approach on religious school graduates, he hides his religious views and religious educational background in his social life; he changes his name to 'Emre', since Emrullah connotes with Islam. One day, his friend Mehmet from high school, the Imam of the village, comes to the city for his illness and visits Emrullah, and he reminds Emrullah of his past. Mehmet, in his deathbed, is upset because the village needs an Imam in his absence. Emrullah goes to the village to become the new Imam of the village for a month with a sense of guilt due to his previous secularized life. The peasants of the village find it difficult to get used to this modern Imam who has long hair and who drives a motorcycle. In sum, the movie focuses on the conflicts between traditional and modern with another religious character named Hacı Feyzullah, and his harsh reaction against Emrullah, and by doing so, it claims that the conflict is not between modernity and religion. Emrullah is just a sample of modern pious Muslims according to the movie.

However, when we consider Emrullah's life, his 'modernization' period is the time when he is out of step with his religious life. As we hear from his secular friend: Emrullah does not drink alcohol, finding excuses for not to dance, and he never tells his friends that he graduated from a religious high school. While talking with Mehmet, Emrullah says: "I lost my liberty, became a slave of the market."<sup>82</sup> Despite the movie tries to show modernity and religion are compatible -the conflicts are not the result of religion but the tradition-, to be modernized, urbanized, the character goes into a secular life.

Since 2002, Justice and Development Party with its religious sensibilities, is in power in Turkey, therefore we may also mention the political connotations in the movies. In the movie *Takva*, we see the religious order has the power to turn

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<sup>82</sup>*The Imam*, 2005, (0:04).

an illegal building to a legal one as Muharrem has a very good relationship with the mayor of the district. In another scene, some men from Ankara (the city which directly points politicians) ask for an extra dhikr night, and the religious order accepts it. Or, in the movie *Büşra*, Büşra's scarfed friend talks about their house in a 'public domain'.<sup>83</sup> In another scene Yaman tells Büşra that "their men is ruling the country."<sup>84</sup> We may claim that, here Yaman points the Justice and Development Party but if we consider the 'your man' is including Büşra's family, friends and the whole religious society, and how corrupted this society is shown in the movie; Yaman may point out the corruption of religious people both in modern world and in the political area. This can be read together with the movie *Takva*, since a corrupted religious order has corrupted relationships with the politicians. Pious Muslim characters are insistently considered as the Justice and Development Party supporters in the both movies. In another scene in the movie *Büşra*, a guy in the Halloween party shouts at Büşra: "Isn't it enough, you ruined the whole country."<sup>85</sup> Here, 'you' has the same meaning with 'your men', and this approach on Büşra is important to show secular point of view on religious people.

Last but not least, the scenes with sexual connotations should be discussed. In *Takva*, we see Muharrem's sexual dreams with a sudden cut after a dhikr scene and we see his dreams again, this time just after his praying scene. That is to say, sexual scenes and religious scenes come successively in the movie. Likewise, in *Büşra*, we suddenly hear the call to prayer while Büşra and Yaman are kissing. Büşra stops and feels regretful, same as Muharrem does after his dreams. Moreover, it is possible to see same cuts in another movie named *Beyza'nın Kadınları*.<sup>86</sup> Beyza, the main character, has the multiple personality disorder. Dilara is a scarlet-woman sub character of her, and Rabia is a religious sub character of her. While Beyza becomes Rabia, and she is praying, she suddenly

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<sup>83</sup>*Büşra*, 2010, (0:42).

<sup>84</sup>*Büşra*, 2010, (0:28).

<sup>85</sup>*Büşra*, 2010, (1:03).

<sup>86</sup>This movie will be analyzed in the upcoming chapter.

switches to Dilara and says, “I slept with everybody.”<sup>87</sup> Or, in another scene, she switches from Dilara to Rabia and she looks for a scarf to cover her hair. Many other switches between those two characters can be seen throughout the movie.

Back in *Takva*, Muharrem’s sexual dreams are shown more than twice in the movie. When Rauf tells him, the Sheikh wants to find a girl for Muharrem to marry. He refuses this offer by telling he is there to pray not to find a girl to marry; but he continues to have sexual dreams. Every time he dreams, he wakes up as he committed a big sin. (According to the director of *Takva*, Özer Kızıltan, having these sexual dreams are sins, and marriage is an obstacle for praying.) In another scene Muharrem sees women underwear on figures of a shop, in final scene his eyes focuses on the legs of a woman who gets out of a cab. As a result, Muharrem is shown as a man, who cannot help constantly having sexual thoughts, but he knows that it is a sin; he ‘suppresses his emotions’. At the same time, in the fashion scene of *Büşra*, the stage collapses after the protests. Ferit, his father and Büşra’s father sees half naked models behind the stage with a smile on their faces, and with a greedy look on their eyes as they do not want to spend a minute of this accidental show. In sum, the ‘suppressed emotions’ becomes visible in the scenes mentioned above.

When we consider Muharrem’s sexual dreams in the movie *Takva*, the reaction of ‘pious’ men to half naked models and behaviors of Büşra while she was under the effect of an inebriant drink; it is possible argue that both movies are trying to show things forbidden by the religion are in the nature of human being, they are claiming stealthily Islam is in conflict between human nature.

## **2.2. Religious Symbols in New Turkish Cinema**

Another comparison between the traditional Turkish cinema and the new Turkish cinema can be made about the way they represent religious symbols and

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<sup>87</sup>*Beyza’nın Kadınları*, 2006, (0:26).

worships. In the new Turkish cinema, worship scenes are more accurate, and religious symbols are more visible. Characters can perform ablution and they can pray correctly, we can see women wearing a headscarf not only as walk-on characters but also as leading characters. For instance, the movie *Büşra* is about a woman wearing a headscarf, who falls in love with an atheist man. Likewise, in the movie *Selam*, one of the three main characters is a scarfed woman. Or, in the movie *Beyza'nın Kadınları*, one of the personalities of Beyza is a scarfed woman. We can see scarfed woman in other movies as well, but these main characters will be focused on in this chapter.

The movie *Büşra*, tells us the love story of a scarfed woman. She is the only daughter of a rich religious family, therefore her family wants her to marry with the son of their friends who is also rich, religious but rude. Büşra accepts to marry him since she does not have the right to choose her spouse according to the movie. However, after she meets Yaman, she falls in love with him, and then she interacts with the city life more, and she notices her free individuality, and as a result she opposes her family.

Büşra is portrayed as a scarfed woman, but a different one than other scarfed women in her society in the movie. She is a modern girl, she enjoys intellectual activities, and she does not like fashion and shopping like her other scarfed friends. Although all those scarfed women are shown in a negative way, and the movie asserts they are typical capitalist characters assuming themselves as religious people, the main character Büşra is a positive example. We see her paradoxes with the religion as well, but her obvious sins are not shown in a negative manner: Her sins are shown as the natural results of modern 'city' life in the movie. At this point, a citation from Serpil Kirel should be recalled, “Cinema teaches how to become a citizen while it speaks to the mass audience in cities.”<sup>88</sup>Büşra is an example of an urbanized character. As long as she gets ‘urbanized’, religion loses its priority in her life. For example, in a scene, when

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<sup>88</sup>Kirel, *Kültürel Çalışmalar ve Sinema*, p. 57-58.

she is at the Halloween party with Yaman, there is an interesting conversation between Yaman and Büşra:

Yaman: “So, having fun is a sin?”

Büşra: “Sometimes not.”

Yaman: “What about now?”

Büşra: “Having fun is nice now, all of them are parts of the city.”<sup>89</sup>

The movie *Büşra* shows us Büşra at the different settings of the ‘city’. Since Büşra enjoys with the secular parts of the ‘city’, the character is shown in a positive manner. ‘The city’ accepts her with her headscarf, but she must accept the different parts of the city as well.

In the movie *Beyza'nın Kadınları*; Rabia, Ayla and Dilara are fictional sub-characters of the main character Beyza. Rabia is a scarfed, religious woman, Dilara is a scarlet woman and Ayla is a small child. However, Rabia is shown as a frightening figure: Her voice, her looks terrify others, she looks terrifying even when she prays and the scenes gets darker when we see her.



Image 2.1: Captures of character named Beyza from *Beyza'nın Kadınları*<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>*Büşra*, 2006, (0:59).

<sup>90</sup>*Beyza'nın Kadınları*, 2006, (0:39) - (0:56).

These captures are taken from *Beyza'nın Kadınları*. The first capture above is from the scene when Rabia visits Serap and tells her to stop prostitution for the last time, and witnesses see her as shown in the capture and the second capture is the police sketch drawn by the witnesses. In the police sketch, her jawbones, cheeks and forehead are covered; even her eyebrows are not visible. As clearly seen, it is completely different from what she really looks like in the previous scene. Despite she wears a white scarf; she is shown as she wearing a leopard-patterned scarf: In the police sketch, the scarf is shown as something funny, unpleasant, and even as something that makes the work of the police more difficult.

As mentioned in the previous sections, in the movie *Beyza'nın Kadınları*, Beyza mostly switches between her fictional characters Dilara and Rabia. And sometimes, we see discussions between Dilara and Rabia in the movie many times apart from the main subject of the movie. In one scene Rabia prays saying “In the name of Allah, most gracious, most merciful. Guide us to the straight path. The path of these upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked anger or of those who are astray.”<sup>91</sup>

Then, with a sudden cut, Dilara starts talking and a conversation between Dilara and Rabia starts:

Dilara: “I have slept with everyone.”

Rabia-with her terrifying voice:- “How will you explain your sins? They put you to the same with that woman. At the day of reckoning, let whole world watch your sins, let your screams to cover whole sky while you lie under men!”

Dilara –listlessly:- “So be it, (while touching her vagina) you know what that is, this is the power rules the world. Go and live at your hell!”

Rabia: “I will face to my God blameless. You will not make me sin more, dirty whore, devil.”<sup>92</sup>

And she tries to destroy her vagina with a broken glass of the mirror.

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<sup>91</sup>*Beyza'nın Kadınları*, 2006, (0:26).

<sup>92</sup>*Beyza'nın Kadınları*, 2006, (0:27).



In another scene from *Büşra*, we see Büşra and Selen discussing. Selen tells, “Call me a whore, I call you bigot and lets end this friendship.”<sup>93</sup>In both movies, we the contrast between scarfed women and scarlet women. They seem like two edge points of the modern life. However, the edge point comes with the connotation that both of them are not the ‘ideal’ woman figures. The ‘ideal’ woman is in somewhere between this two edges according to these movies. In *Beyza'nın Kadınları*, this message is more obvious, in the scene when Beyza escapes from her fictional characters; we see four characters on a boat in the middle of the sea. They fight for a while and then Beyza throw all three fictional characters to the sea.<sup>94</sup>Finally there is only Beyza left in the boat that is the symbol of the ‘ideal’ woman.

Yet, it is possible to see some changeovers in this opposition and other sexual associations about scarfed women. In the movie *Büşra*, Selen calls Büşra a 'whore' and Büşra calls Selen a 'bigot' after they reconcile and they both laugh. On the other hand, In *Beyza'nın Kadınları*, Dilara calls Rabia a 'sneaky whore'. In *Büşra*, a guy tells Selen about the men who likes scarfed woman because their covered body makes some men curious. In *Beyza'nın Kadınları*, Serap's customer asks when he sees Rabia at Serap's house: “Is she a whore too, a scarfed whore?”<sup>95</sup>

If we compare *Büşra* and *Beyza'nın Kadınları* in terms of apparent nudity in the movie, we can say that in *Büşra*, even though Selen cheats on her boyfriend and Yaman and Alara have sex, neither a sexual scene nor nudity is shown in the movie. We only see Büşra and Yaman kissing. However, in *Beyza'nın Kadınları*, when Rabia argues with Dilara and tries to destroy her vagina, while she is playing Rabia, and we clearly see her vagina although she wears a scarf.

Another important point to discuss is the questioning scenes from the movies *Takva* and *Beyza'nın Kadınları*. In these scenes, the existence of God and

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<sup>93</sup>*Büşra*, 2010, (1:18).

<sup>94</sup>*Beyza'nın Kadınları*, 2006, (1:28).

<sup>95</sup>*Beyza'nın Kadınları*, 2006, (0:39).

the existence of the hell are questioned and the religious characters cannot answer the questions when asked about them. They get mad, or get sad, their faiths are shaken and the question is left unanswered, as it has no answer.

In *Takva*, while Muharrem and his pupil discuss about the donation for Kosovo, Muharrem says he prayed during the war in Kosovo. The boy replies saying that “Praying does not save them. Tiny kids were killed. You cannot imagine how many women I heard screaming. They all asked for help from the God. Where was he?”<sup>96</sup> His pupil’s speech questions the existence of the God and claims there is nothing with the God for the villainy in the world as well. However, Muharrem who is a very pious member of a religious order cannot make any explanations to him to prove the existence of the God.

Likewise, in *Beyza’nın Kadınları*, in the scene when Beyza gets rid of from her fictional characters, Dilara and Rabia discuss, and Rabia tells to Dilara: “What if there is a hell really”, Dilara shouts to her: “There is not! Where was the God, when Pakize puts her finger inside her.”<sup>97</sup> Rabia has no answer to her, and the question spoils her mood. Moreover, in another scene in the movie, Doruk tries to convince Beyza to kill a child molester but Beyza hesitates. Doruk asks Beyza: “Do you really think these men go to hell?”<sup>98</sup>

If we continue with worship scenes in the new Turkish cinema, we can claim that worship scenes are more visible in the new Turkish cinema as a result of visibility of Muslims in it. Unlike the traditional Turkish cinema, these scenes are more accurate in the new Turkish cinema as filmmakers at least truly showed how Muslims pray. Nevertheless, there are some disturbing scenes. For example, in *Takva*, there is no problem in showing basic worships but there are two dhikr scenes on the movie. Existence of an dhikr scene is an important phase on its own if we compare with the traditional Turkish cinema, but the second dhikr scene which is made after the request of some ‘friends from Ankara’, the dhikr is shown

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<sup>96</sup>*Takva*, 2006, (1:20).

<sup>97</sup>*Beyza’nın Kadınları*, 2006, (1:26).

<sup>98</sup>*Beyza’nın Kadınları*, 2006, (1:53).

as some kind of funny dancing. Fuat suddenly stands up, starts to clap his hands and then jumps around inexpressively. Likewise, in *Büşra*, we see Ferit performing ablution after he manages an international business. We only see him washing his feet in this performing ablution scene in a public restroom and after that we see him walking with slippers without socks while his shoes are in his hands.<sup>99</sup> This scene is another example of the conflict of modern life and religious life with its unpleasant demonstration of performing ablution.

Lastly, the relationship of those pious Muslim characters between secular characters and non-Muslim characters will be discussed. In *Takva*, Muharrem wants a tenant to leave the religious order's estate because he sees the tenant drinking alcohol. On the other hand, in the end of the movie, when Muharrem gets mad and starts to run in the streets, we see the tenant again. He is the only character asks Muharrem if he is fine. Accordingly, in *Büşra*, whole movie is about the relationships of Büşra with both her religious society and with her secular society. The secular side is more alluring for Büşra for the whole movie, and the religious side is always shown in a negative way. Selen, a secular girl, is the best friend of Büşra. They do not approve each other's lives but respect mutually. Büşra's mother is not happy about that friendship as well, as Selen is someone who may influence her daughter in a bad way. Büşra's scarfed friends look to the Selen with judgmental eyes. Moreover, Yaman, who Büşra falls in love with, is another secular character shown as a perfect character. Another greeting place for Büşra and secular figures is the Halloween party place. At first, they think Büşra's scarf as a costume for Halloween and congratulate Büşra for her successful costume choice. At the moment they understand Büşra is not wearing scarf as a Halloween costume, they get mad and start to shout: "You start to come these places too, you want us to turn the music down, should we turn to Iran, should we have fun secretly?"<sup>100</sup> This scene is important to show a secular

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<sup>99</sup>*Büşra*, 2010, (0:20).

<sup>100</sup>*Büşra*, 2010, (1:02).

point of view on religious characters. Movie shows these figures in a negative way but not because of their thoughts on religious people but their attitudes on Büşra specifically, since Büşra is an urbanized, modern character that adopted the secular lifestyle.

In the movie *The Imam*, we can see another secular-religious friendship as we see in the movie *Büşra*. Emrullah and Mert are close friends and business partners. They both criticize each other lives, but respect. It is a different version of the friendship we see between Büşra and Selen. Emrullah relies on Mert so much and asks him to stay in the hospital with imam Mehmet. On a scene, when Emrullah returns to the city to visit Mehmet, he calls Mert jestingly as an unbelieving person. Mehmet responds: “If I do somebody that much favor, I would count myself destined for heaven.”<sup>101</sup>

In sum, *Büşra* and *The Imam* are the movies in which we see urbanized, modern and positively shown religious characters, as both characters’ closest friends are secular characters. This shows us the existence of religious character in ‘modern’ social life is accepted by seculars; religious people accepted seculars in their social life to be accepted by them as well.

On the other hand, in the movie *The Imam*, we see there are people in the village migrated from another village, and their religious views are different than locals of the village. The migrated group represents Alawi people, and locals represent the Sunni sect of Islam. Traditional religious character Feyzullah does not like them, while modern religious imam Emrullah tries to create good relationships between two groups. Interestingly, Imam Mehmet explains this Alawi people to Emrullah with sentence with more moral points than religious points: “Some of them use alcohol, sometimes they pray, but they never lie.”<sup>102</sup>

Correlatively, in the movie *Selam*, we see the relationship between a Muslim pious character, and a Christian character. In the movie one of the main

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<sup>101</sup>*The Imam*, 2005, (1:20).

<sup>102</sup>*The Imam*, 2005, (0:12).

characters, Adem, is a teacher in Bosnia. There is also a Christian teacher, Irina, in the same school. In a scene, the movie shows us a positive response from Christian teacher on Islam; Irina holds Adem's hands and says: "Your fathers came here with greetings, you can send away whoever comes with a sword, but whoever comes with a greeting, you can only greet back."<sup>103</sup>

After Irina's speech, Adem holds her hand as well. In another scene, we see a positive response from Muslim teacher on Christianity. Adem hears the death of Irina when he was about to return Turkey for his baby's birth. He talks about the favors that Irina has done for the school and stays for the funeral. After the funeral, another teacher asks Adem to leave for his baby's birth. Adem replies:

There is a sentimental scene on the movie 'The Message', when the king of Ethiopia draws a line to the floor with his staff and says, the difference between you and us is as this line; the difference between Irina and us is as that line. I cannot and will not pass by that line.<sup>104</sup>

Adem, as a pious Muslim attends to Irina's funeral, and speaks about how close he feels about her in a religious context. Lastly, the scene ends with the view of the graveyard behind a cross and a crescent symbolizing Christianity and Islam.

Another character from the movie *Selam*, the father of Harun –the teacher who goes to Senegal- is shown as a negative character. He criticizes his son's decision about going to Senegal and keeps criticizing his wife's economy for saving more money to help deprived people; he cannot understand his wife and his son, since he is not a member of the religious order his wife and his son relate. Although he criticizes the whole steps done by this religious order during the movie, in the last scene, we see him watching the Turkish Language Olympiads organization by the religious order with the donations he criticized.

Although the traditional Turkish cinema's point of view against Imams was so harsh, the New Turkish Cinema shows them not only as government officials

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<sup>103</sup>*Selam*, 2013, (0:22).

<sup>104</sup>*Selam*, 2013, (1:10).

but also as religious leaders. In other words, according to Ibrahim Yenen's categorization in his Ph.D. thesis, the typology of Imams in the New Turkish Cinema can be considered as 'embraced imams'.<sup>105</sup>

Another movie, *Adem'in Trenleri* is about an Imam who married with a woman, Hacer, who is abandoned by her extramarital boyfriend with her daughter. The imam, his wife and his wife's daughter settle and the imam starts to work in a small village. The Imam figure is shown as a harsh character who makes the other people afraid of himself. His wife stands at attention when he says something; she walks a few steps behind him. On the other hand, the reason why Imam's marries this lonely abandoned mother is to protect her from dangers at first since she is still young and beautiful. As movie goes on, we see that the Imam is actually in love with her, such that when her ex-husband comes to the village and asks for her forgiveness, Imam gets mad and attacks both her and her husband. Here we can claim that it is an important detail to see an Imam physically attacking to a vulnerable woman on the screens. Moreover, in another scene, Imam sees Hacer while she was getting dressed and seeing her half-naked makes him crazy. In this scene, we see the relation of religious men with nudity or sexual subjects as shown in the Traditional Cinema and can be considered as a cliché.

In the movie, *Uzak İhtimal*, the main character Musa is assigned to a mosque in Istanbul. He starts to live in a house next to the mosque and falls in love to his neighbor Clara who is a Christian and wants to be a female priest. Musa is involved in social life and his social life is shown in the movie: He challenges with one of the most difficult situations in modern city life; he falls in love with a non-Muslim woman but manages to live as a religious person despite the difficulties of the modern city. He is also represented in a realistic way in the movie.

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<sup>105</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p. 126.

In another movie named *Eşrefpaşalılar*, we see another example of a religious person living his religious life compatible with the modern city life. Imam, the main character is also represented as a leader in his neighborhood. He is a charismatic character answering all the questions of the society and he also solving the problems in the neighborhood. With his charisma and wisdom, he easily persuades the neighborhood to follow the way of Islam.

To consider the movie, *The Imam*, there are two imam examples in the movie. The first Imam, Mehmet Hodja is an example of traditional imams but not shown in a negative way; on the other hand the main character, Emrullah, is a representation of a ‘modern Imam’. He was not working as an Imam since Mehmet Hodja gets sick, and the village needs an Imam. He has long hair, his dressing style is western and he uses a motorcycle. In other words the movie challenges with the idea of pious Muslims being retrogressive and tries to prove that a religious imam can live as a modern man, too. Nevertheless, Emrullah causes a conflict between peasants. In a scene, he takes a girl to his motorcycle to save her from a rainstorm. It is ‘normal’ in his modern life but peasants criticize his act. When he asks Hasan, who is his supporter since he comes to the village, for his support, Hasan says: “Mehmet Hodja would not do so.”<sup>106</sup>

In the movies of the new Turkish cinema, mosques or other prayer places are usually shown as dark, repulsive, frightening places and they are always traditionally decorated even in the movies Imams are shown in a positive way. Moreover, sexuality is a continuing cliché used on representing imams. Sexual topics in *Takva* are mentioned above. Both in *Adem’in Trenleri* and *Dondurmam Gaymak*, imams answer questions related to sexual topics of children. In *Dondurmam Gaymak*, the lecture is given both girls and boys, and the Imam could not answer the questions and he gets laughed at. In *Adem’in Trenleri*, the Imam informs a little boy about the menstruating in a horrifying way.

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<sup>106</sup>*The Imam*, 2005, (1:02).

Anyhow, the cliché approach on imams of early and traditional Turkish cinema gave place to different kinds of Imams in new Turkish cinema. The polyphony on representing Imams in new Turkish cinema is studied under different categories in İbrahim Yenen's thesis.<sup>107</sup> According to him Adem Hoca from *Adem'in Trenleri* is an example of 'Bigot Imam'<sup>108</sup>, Musa from *Uzak İhtimal* is an example of 'Contemporary Imam'<sup>109</sup>, Emrullah from *The Imam* is an example of 'Modern Imam'<sup>110</sup> and the imam from *Eşrefpaşalılar* is an example of 'Visionary Imam'<sup>111</sup>

### 2.3. Changes in New Turkish Cinema

The new Turkish cinema not only shows pious Muslim characters on screens but also takes them as the subject of movies. This representation is different than their representation in traditional Turkish cinema: The behaviors of characters are not shown in the context of good and bad directly as it is done in traditional Turkish cinema. The new Turkish cinema focuses on the pious Muslim character in the context of their compatibility on modern social life. It shows how pious Muslim characters respond on daily situations of modern life, which can be considered as conflicts between modern life and religion, and it does that mostly from a secular point of view.

The movies of the new Turkish cinema mostly claim that it is impossible to live a religious life in modern city life. Of course there are examples of modern, pious Muslim characters in the movies but when we look at these characters, we see they get modernized by making a concession to their religious lives: Although religious people get rich, get modernized, get citified, they inevitably move away from their religion by doing so. In other words, the new

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<sup>107</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p. 126.

<sup>108</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p. 126.

<sup>109</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p. 133.

<sup>110</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p. 135.

<sup>111</sup>Yenen, *Türk Sinemasında Din*, p. 138.



Turkish cinema has no problem with Muslims as traditional Turkish cinema has; but it has problems with pious Muslim characters living in modern social city life.

The new Turkish cinema addresses religion with some common topics, and the most notable topic is their relationship with money. Being a rich pious Muslim in modern city life is a default conflict as it is forbidden by the religion to get rich according to the new Turkish cinema. Rich and pious Muslims are shown in a negative way and shown as they use their religion and their religious societies to get richer and richer. Furthermore, these rich and pious Muslim characters do not care about needy people; and we even see them yelling at lower class people; that is to say, a pious Muslim should not be rich and should spend all his/her money for needy people according to the new Turkish cinema.

Moreover, in the new Turkish cinema sexuality is shown in a cliché way as another conflict between religion and modern life. In the movies, when pious Muslim characters encounter sexuality, their reactions are shown in a funny way; i.e. this conflict is shown as the biggest weakness of pious Muslim characters. For example, pious Muslim men are shown as characters keep thinking about sexuality, we see the reflection of 'suppressed emotions' argument of secular thought on pious Muslims in the new Turkish cinema.

On the other side, the scenes relating to sexuality are shown consecutively with religious scenes usually. Therefore, it is a disturbing situation for the religious audience besides being a disturbing problem for the pious Muslim character in the movie. The New Turkish Cinema shows the sins or other disturbing situations for Muslims are normal in the daily routine of modern city life; religion is something respected but only if it is lived as the way pointed by secular elites of Turkey. One can conclude from the messages that the movies give, in modern life, it is impossible to live a religious life far from sins in modern city life according to the New Turkish Cinema.

Asuman Suner, wrote “New wave Turkish films, popular and art films alike, revolve around the figure of a ‘spectral home’<sup>112</sup>and defines the word ghost in her book *New Turkish Cinema: Belonging, Identity and Memory*:

Ghost is a word used to express the phantom returns back to the world after his/her death usually. It is an uncertain figure, a living dead, a soul without body, and a specter with no physical existence. In its present form, the word has uncanny, ghastly, disturbing connotations. In the stories with ghost figure in their center usually dead people become an innocent victim of injustice returns to the world for revenge. In this sense, ghosts are the shadow objects to being forgotten, keeps reminding itself, carrying the past to the present; or they are the return of the repressed.<sup>113</sup>

In the context of this text, these ghosts can be correlated with pious Muslim characters in the movies, as they reappeared in the new Turkish cinema since they were dead back in the traditional Turkish cinema. They exist but their existence is not strong, they are between the religious life and modern life, dealing with conflicts, and this existence still disturbs the secular modern figures. When they speak, they are using Arabic and Ottoman words, which remind of the moderns the traditional. Moreover, these conversations are mostly about terrifying topics and make others scared. In the movies, pious people are elements of fear for modern and secular people.

In conclusion, the main difference of the new Turkish cinema from the traditional Turkish cinema is its acceptance of the existence of pious Muslims in the modern city life. Still, we can claim that the existence is accepted in the New Turkish Cinema, but it is still something problematic, as the problem is not being a Muslim but being a pious Muslim. For example, Büşra is a character who is shown in the most positive way from secular point of view: She takes her scarf off if she needs to, and she lives a life as a secular person lives; that is, her religion is not a problem since she adopts the modern city life, and has no

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<sup>112</sup>Suner, *Hayalet Ev*, p. 15.

<sup>113</sup>Suner, *Hayalet Ev*, p. 15.

problems with normalized sins of modern city life. To conclude, we can claim that the process came from non-existence to existence with conflicts, and will continue with integration of pious Muslim characters to the modern city life in the Turkish Cinema as long as pious Muslims continue their modernization.

## CHAPTER 3

### **Interaction Between Turkish Society and New Turkish Cinema**

Focusing on the examples of problematic representation of pious Muslim characters in the new Turkish cinema, the previous chapter has argued the differences between the traditional Turkish cinema and the new Turkish cinema in the representation of pious Muslim characters. This chapter argues the reasons of those problematic representations and the change of the representation, well.

The change in the representation of pious Muslim characters with the coming of the New Turkish Cinema is obviously not a result of technical or theoretical improvements of the Turkish Cinema, as the starting period of the New Turkish Cinema was one of the most difficult times for pious Muslim people in the Turkish Republic's history<sup>114</sup>. In this context, the changes in representation of pious Muslim characters should be approached as a direct result of the changes in social, political and economic life of pious Muslims. Not only the change in the lives of pious Muslims in Turkey, but also the change in the interaction between pious Muslims and secular elites of Turkey will be discussed and its effects on the New Turkish Cinema will be analyzed in this chapter. Moreover, the journey of the approach that the secular minds have on pious Muslims -from a dangerous group who want religious law to a group who do not live their religion- will be discussed in detail.

The representation of pious Muslims on the screens is important not only because the power of cinema to transform societies but also its role as a source to understand societies for future studies. When looking from future to these days, the movies will be considered as representations of social life: Studies in the future will use these movies as their sources to understand today. Therefore, we can claim that false representations will cause misleads for these studies. In the

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<sup>114</sup>This period will be discussed in depth in the upcoming chapters.

future, from a religious perspective, these movies may give the message that religious sensibilities are almost absent for a specific period.

### **3.1. Social Changes of Muslims and its Reflections on New Turkish Cinema**

İsmail Kara claims that, “Almost all reforms of Republic are related to religion in Turkey.”<sup>115</sup> Islam has been considered as the biggest enemy in the modernization of Turkey. As we see in the traditional Turkish Cinema, many elements relevant to Islam are shown in a negative way. In the new Turkish cinema, this direct disparage against Muslims has been lost. However, as mentioned in the second chapter, the representations of pious Muslim characters in the social life can be considered problematic despite the change in the language of the cinema. In the light of these, this chapter questions the reasons of this change, relevant to the modernization of Turkey.

Considering the modernization of Turkey and the Turkish Cinema together, as shown in the first chapter, it is fair to see the Traditional Turkish Cinema as a tool for modernizing the politics of the Turkish Republic. Religion does not exist usually, and is shown in a negative way when it exists in the Traditional Turkish Cinema. Furthermore, the first years of the New Turkish Cinema were the years when the conflict between the Turkish society with its religious codes and modernization of Turkey became visible evidently. The Welfare Party, which was criticizing westernization/modernization politics of the Turkish Republic, won the elections in 1995. The mainstream media consistently published manipulative news about religious people, and prepared the society for the military coup that was going to happen on February 28, 1997. As a result of the military coup, the Supreme Court closed the Welfare Party in 1997. The members of the Welfare Party were banned from politics. The New Turkish

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<sup>115</sup>Kara, *Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Bir Mesele Olarak İslam*, p. 31.

Cinema was born in an atmosphere occupied by these conflicts. Moreover, according to Asuman Suner:

In 1990s' Turkey, beyond discussions about other identities, another latently ongoing identity construction process was being come through. This is not tagged by any difference, modern, urban, westernized, upper-middle class Turkish identity.<sup>116</sup>

In other words, the birth of the new Turkish cinema should be thought along with this identity construction, and political atmosphere of the years as well since cinema is one of the most important tools to affect the thoughts of the society. On the other hand, these years were the years when cold war ends, and a rapid globalization process has been started. In those times, the modernized religious part of Turkish society is started to articulate to the global world.

In the 2000s, the social status of religious people in Turkey started to change, and they started to have important positions in the state mechanisms and in the private sector as well. As a result, the reflections of their socioeconomic status such as their expensive dresses and expensive cars started to distress secular elites of Turkey. For example, the Turkish newspapers published articles titled 'scarfed women driving jeep', 'How does Islamic Society live?'<sup>117</sup>, etc.

At this point, it may be also useful to remind the opinions of Robert Bellah on modernization and the modernization of Turkish Republic specifically. According to Bellah:

Modernization of Turkish Republic could not create an ideology which achieved legitimacy throughout the society. The reason for that is ignoring the cultural basis provided by the ruined traditional constitutions by Turkish elites modernizing Turkey.<sup>118</sup>

By continuing with Fahrettin Altun's analysis on Robert Bellah:

Bellah suggests that it is not necessary to remove all traditional elements appear in the society by the modernization process but it is

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<sup>116</sup>Suner, *Hayalet Ev*, p. 23.

<sup>117</sup>İslami Sosyete Nasıl Yaşıyor. (2006, September 25). Retrieved from <<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/index/ArsivNews.aspx?id=5148593>>.

<sup>118</sup>Altun, *Modernleşme Kuramı*, p. 115.

possible to benefit from them [...] According to Robert Bellah, a new religious attempt, a movement which has a religious basis contention only for its own can challenge to the old belief system and its religious basis. By doing so, social change, modernization in other words, can be legitimized and can provide a cultural basis to the modernizing society.<sup>119</sup>

The birth of Justice and Development Party can be read together with the ideas of Robert Bellah. Justice and Development party was born from the legacy of Welfare Party; therefore, it already had the traditional and religious codes. On the other hand, in the on-going conflict atmosphere, the leader of Justice and Development Party, and a former member of Welfare Party, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, had to say that he ‘has changed’<sup>120</sup> and the Party defended and applied westernization politics and also exposed its traditional codes. From top to bottom, this change process continued. Same as Bellah suggested, Turkey entered a new modernization process with Justice and Development Party, a modernization process has traditional codes and has welcomed pious Muslims as well. The change of representation of pious Muslim characters in New Turkish Cinema should be read with the ‘change’ from Welfare Party to Justice and Development Party.

As mentioned above, while secular elites were feeling uncomfortable about social lives of pious Muslims who were getting rich; there were some points that they were right. A desire for vanity started to spread in pious Muslim society. At this point representations of pious Muslims on screens become more important since cinema has the power to transform societies.

Due to all abovementioned reasons, religion and pious Muslims were compelled to be isolated from public sphere from the foundation of the Turkish Republic till 2000s by the state and by the secular elites of the Turkish Republic, as they couldn't be represented in the upper classes. On the other hand, the

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<sup>119</sup>Altun, *Modernleşme Kuramı*, p. 114-116.

<sup>120</sup>Erdoğan: Ben Değiştim (2002, January 8) Retrieved from <<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/index/ArsivNews.aspx?id=47259>>.

transformation of Turkey in the political and socioeconomic dimension could not trigger a cultural transformation in the same format. As a result of having no example in the social life and having no true representation for pious Muslims become members of upper classes, they started to imitate secular members of these classes who they have seen and have known. The movies *Büşra* and *Takva* can be given as examples to this situation: The rich, pious Muslim, upper class members of the movie *Büşra* live like secular people and Büşra is mixed up between his religious life, her family and her social life, therefore, her dreams, her lifestyle and her religious views create a conflict for her. On the other hand, Ferit -Büşra's fiancé-, Büşra's family and her friends are other absurd examples of rich pious Muslims; they are arrogant and living an extremely luxury life. However, Muharrem from the movie *Takva* is directly showing the process of his class change: As long as his relationship with money increases, he starts to be confused more. In short, *Takva* gives the message to the audience that it is impossible to be a pious Muslim and a member of modern city life.

Suggesting that pious Muslims should manage to separate their social life and their economic life, the movies analyzed in this work focus on the conflicts between religion and modern city life. From their point of view, religion is something completely personal, and can only be lived correctly as long as the distinction between the social and religious life is protected. Therefore, they usually use the absurd examples of pious Muslims and reproduce them. At this point, it could be useful to remind Serpil Kirel's discussion about Robin Wood:

Robin Wood states that bourgeois ideology exposes the things that it cannot define or accept but has to deal with in two ways; by refusing and destroying if possible, or by making it safe and assimilating it, by transforming it to a copy of bourgeois ideology itself if possible.<sup>121</sup>

In this context, we can relate the movies analyzed in this study with Robin Wood's ideas because for a very long period in the Turkish cinema, from its

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<sup>121</sup>Kirel, *Kültürel Çalışmalar ve Sinema*, p. 377.



beginning until the 2000s, religion was something to be ignored and damaged by the mainstream filmmakers. Moreover, when we consider the examples of the New Turkish Cinema, we can claim that the movies are trying to make religion and pious Muslims safer to the bourgeois ideology by focusing on the conflicts and incompatibility between modern city life and religion. In other words, these movies suggest holding separate religious views and social life to get away from these conflicts and incompatibilities.

The interest of Turkish society on cinema and the power of Turkish cinema are increasing every year. The number of the Turkish movies screened in movie theaters in Turkey is increasing as well. As you can see on the table below the interest of Turkish society on cinema in general highly increased. Furthermore, Turkish movies' audience has tripled in the last ten years, while the increase in number of Turkish movies screened more than this.

Table 3.1: Number of movies, and tickets sold in movie theatres in Turkey<sup>122</sup>

<b>Year</b>	<b>Tickets Sold For Turkish Movies</b>	<b>Total Tickets Sold</b>	<b>Number of Turkish Movies Screened</b>	<b>Number of Movies Screened</b>	<b>Number of Movie Theatres in Turkey<sup>123</sup></b>
2014	35.781.568	61.248.837	112	359	-
2013	29.042.078	50.295.757	88	326	2.102
2012	20.857.220	44.339.549	60	290	1.998
2011	21.226.563	42.294.040	75	291	1.917
2010	22.185.976	41.534.146	66	247	1.834
2009	18.850.366	36.904.345	70	254	1.647
2008	22.882.355	38.414.342	51	266	1.514
2007	12.144.256	31.151.309	43	256	1.140
2006	18.066.487	34.866.233	34	236	1.045
2005	11.461.246	27.801.041	29	223	987

<sup>122</sup>Data is derived from <www.boxofficeturkiye.com>.

<sup>123</sup>Data is derived from <www.tuik.gov.tr>.

Despite increase in the interest of the Turkish audience in the Turkish movies and the increase in the number of the Turkish movies, religion and pious Muslim characters are included only in a few movies in the New Turkish Cinema. Moreover, we can claim that the topics related to religion are mostly used in horror movies as elements of horror in the New Turkish Cinema. When those horror movies are excluded, we have only nine movies, which have pious Muslim characters.

The interest of Turkish audience on the movies mentioned in this text is not as high as their interest on New Turkish Cinema generally as we can see in the table given below. Still, considered with their rescreening on television channels and the critics made by popular names, their power on transformation society cannot be ignored. Furthermore, if we consider the new Turkish identity built process as Asuman Suner mentioned for late 90s in Turkey, we can claim these examples of New Turkish Cinema are trying to have a role for this identity built process.

Table 3.2: Number of tickets sold for the movies reviewed in this work<sup>124</sup>

<b>Movie</b>	<b>Producer</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Tickets Sold</b>
Selam	Eyüp Sabri Koç	2013	2.145.545
Dondurmam Gaymak	Eyüp Boz, Yüksel Aksu, Tankut Kılınç, Bülent Helvacı	2006	636.823
Eşrefpaşalılar	M. Yusuf Kulaksız	2010	487.478
Takva	Fatih Akin, Andreas Thiel, Önder Çakar, Sevil Demirci	2006	349.530
Beyza'nın Kadınları	Mehmet Altıoklar, Elif Dağdeviren, Cüneyt Ortan	2006	272.560

<sup>124</sup>Data is derived from <www.boxofficeturkiye.com>, <www.sinematurk.com>, <www.beyazperde.com>.

Table 3.2: Number of tickets sold for the movies reviewed in this work (continued)

The Imam	Mustafa Cihat	2005	110.228
Adem'in Trenleri	Cengiz Ergun, Ozan Ergun, Metin Soltay, Serkan Çakarer	2007	81.475
Uzak İhtimal	Tülin Çetinkol Soyarslan, İsmail Kılıçarslan, Tarık Tufan, Mahmut Fazil Coşkun	2009	33.020
Büşra	Alper Akman	2010	30.104

In conclusion, not only the representation of pious Muslim characters changed with the New Turkish Cinema; but also pious Muslims became modernized in the same period. Although directly humiliated representations of pious Muslims has give its place to stealthy negative representation of pious Muslims, these representations are still not referring the same pious Muslim society. Moreover, the Muslim society changed as well while their representation in the New Turkish Cinema was changing. The binary opposition between modernization and religion has been lost, and the conflict in the New Turkish Cinema is based on the opposition between religion and secularism despite it is shown in the context of modernization. As a result, the word 'modern' is becoming suitable for both sides from each point of view as the modernized religious people and the representation of pious Muslim characters strengthen the new modernization process of the Turkish Republic mutually.

### 3.2. Secular Hegemony in Turkish Cinema

Westernization with the Tanzimat Era, the westernization politics of the Ottoman Empire, formed into a Jacobin movement by the foundation of the Turkish Republic and created a Jacobin elite class as a result. This class was the center of power in economics, politics and art. When we came to the 1980s, the

balance of power in politics and economics in Turkey started to change as a result of global changes in the world and Turgut Özal's liberalization policies in the 1980s such as import-substitution policies and free market. After all, a new upper middle class started to emerge and started to be more visible in public with their religious backgrounds and they got involved in the westernization process of Turkey.

The economic visibility of the traditional Anatolian middle class was not independent from the increasing social participation of conservative actors. Rather than arising as independent social, economic and political processes, these processes emerged synchronously out of a shared set of causes. When conservative actors began participating in social life, their economic activity increased, and vice versa.<sup>125</sup>

As for the 1990s, pious Muslims became more visible in social life.<sup>126</sup> As a result of free market, religious symbols appeared in the stores. People started to see religion outside of their houses<sup>127</sup>. Moreover, in 1995, the Welfare Party with its pious Muslim members, won the elections, and pious Muslims became the leading partners of the power for a year (June 1996-June 1997). However, in 1997, after the post-modern military coup on February 28, the Welfare Party resigned. During this process, religious people and religion were the most dangerous enemies of the Turkish Republic for the elites of Turkey. Being born through this unsteady process, the new Turkish cinema mostly didn't give place to pious Muslim characters in its first examples.

As for 2002, the Justice and Development Party, which had many pious Muslim politicians in its lead team, won the elections. Since 2002, Justice and Development Party rules Turkey. In this period, many prejudices have been changed. Although the 1990s were the years to appear in market for pious Muslims, they reappeared in political life and more powerful this time after 2002.

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<sup>125</sup> Çağlar, *Good and Bad Muslims*, p. 52.

<sup>126</sup> Özyürek, *Modernlik Nostaljisi*, p. 132.

<sup>127</sup> Özyürek, *Modernlik Nostaljisi*, p. 133.

As a result, the power of the Justice and Development Party, and the social changes of the pious Muslims created new networks of relationships and pious Muslims became the center of the curiosity for the seculars of Turkey. On the other hand, as a result of their economic improvement, religious people started to deal with art and cinema themselves. Therefore, the manner of the New Turkish Cinema became substantially different from the Traditional Turkish Cinema. As a result of these, the movies analyzed in this work emerged and became the subject of this thesis.

“New Turkish Cinema creates its financial environment not by the dynamics of film industry but by other branches of culture industry such as television, advertisements, music etc.”<sup>128</sup> The New Turkish Cinema's relationship with other branches of culture industry is intertwined since it takes its financial resources from other branches of the culture industry. In this context, the importance of pious Muslims getting rich and taking positions in different branches of culture industry increases, and one of the reasons that pious Muslims become more visible in the new Turkish cinema is this intertwined relationship. Furthermore, as Serpil Kirel touches:

Considered the film production, the side that makes it inevitable for the capital on having new marketing tactics and formulas to get more profit; and the network of relationships creates the cultural productions as a result of these formulas and tactics need to be read carefully. Based on this, it can be concluded that the necessity for stars and the content of movies are being formed to support the ‘power’ are signs of the dependency on the network of relationships.<sup>129</sup>

In the light of these, it can be said that the economic development of pious people, created a new chain of relations and some pious people have entered the network of relations. On the other hand, pious people become customers of cultural work as a result of their social transformation.

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<sup>128</sup>Suner, *Hayalet Ev*, p. 36.

<sup>129</sup>Kirel, *Kültürel Çalışmalar ve Sinema*, p. 344.

The abovementioned developments are some of the reasons that have made pious Muslim characters more visible in the new Turkish cinema. Still, when we look deeply to these pious Muslim characters as mentioned in chapter two, same secular codes of traditional Turkish cinema can be seen on these representations. At this point we can talk about a secular hegemony in Turkish Cinema.

“Hegemony in the Gramscian sense is not only the state power, but also the manipulation of how people understand the world and everyday life.”<sup>130</sup> Differently from Gramsci’s civil society / politic society distinction<sup>131</sup>; in the context of this study, cultural hegemony and political hegemony will be considered separately. It will be tried to understand how the hegemonic language used in politics and culture.

From the foundation of Turkish Republic since last decades, the secular elites of Turkey have the hegemonic power in politics, economics and culture. Turgut Özal’s liberal economic politics gave the Anatolian cities and the new middle class -with its religious codes- access to the international market. Hegemonic power of the elites of Republic started to change in economics in this period. Furthermore,

...By hegemony, Gramsci refers to a type of control, which does not exclude coercion and/or possibility of using coercion at some points during the realization process of hegemony. Moreover, at the same time, hegemony is beyond the level of coercion because it now depends on consent, which automatically makes coercion unnecessary.<sup>132</sup>

As a result of hegemonic power of secular elites of Turkish Republic, the ideas of the newly emerging middle class about capitalism, banking system and interest have changed over time without a direct coercion. On the other hand, “as a consequence of the absence of their own terminology and language, the subaltern

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<sup>130</sup> Çağlar, *Good and Bad Muslims*, p. 31.

<sup>131</sup> Çağlar, *Good and Bad Muslims*, p. 22.

<sup>132</sup> Çağlar, *Good and Bad Muslims*, p. 28.

classes interpret the world in harmony with the language and terminology of the leading classes.”<sup>133</sup>

While hegemonic power in economics was changing in Turkey, the new middle class adopted the terminology of the elites as a result of the absence of their own language. For instance, an organization named as Independent Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association, MUSIAD<sup>134</sup> (Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği) founded by the emerging middle class on 1990. At this point, MUSIAD can be considered as a different version of Turkish Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association, TUSIAD (Türk Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği) founded on 1971.

Additionally, considering the political level, Welfare party with its religious statements won the elections and taken down by the military coup as mentioned before. Afterwards Justice and Development Party won the elections with its democratic and westernized statements, it followed politics accepted by hegemonic power in Turkey in the first years, and gained power over time. Moreover, in the period of Justice and Development Party many common senses<sup>135</sup>, which are directly related with the hegemony, have been changed.

Within the 13 years of the rule of the Justice and Development Party, social transform of pious Muslims have continued rapidly, and the religious beliefs of pious people have get away from being backwards symbols. For example, it was impossible to study in universities with headscarf or to work in any state position before. Moreover, scarfed parliamentarian (Merve Kavakçı) of Welfare Party was taken out from the Turkish Grand National Assembly by force in 1999. Today, it is possible to study in universities and it is possible to work for state for women with headscarf, there are parliamentarians wearing headscarf in the Justice and Development Party. Moreover, there are candidates wearing

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<sup>133</sup> Çağlar, *Good and Bad Muslims*, p. 28.

<sup>134</sup> The first three letter of MUSIAD, ‘MUS’ are considered as an abbreviation for the Word ‘Muslim’ due to religious affiliations of members of the organization.

<sup>135</sup> For detailed information on Common Sense; Çağlar, *Good and Bad Muslims*, p.29.

headscarf in different political parties for the upcoming elections (on June 7, 2015). In sum, the Justice and Development Party has managed to change the hegemony in the Turkish politics in its 13 years period. Today, it is impossible to be powerful in politics by excluding religious values, whereas being against religious values was the first necessity of legitimacy.

On the other hand, despite the changes in political hegemony and social transformation of pious Muslims, there is still a resisting hegemony in cultural field. From the beginning of Justice and Development Party period till these days, especially after the years Justice and Development Party got stronger (after 2007), anyone finds anything positive about Justice and Development Party or anyone criticizes Turkish Republic's approach on religion in past labeled as advocates of Justice and Development Party by the mainstream media. There are indefinite examples of this situation, but in the context of this thesis, only a few examples, which are about people in the cinema industry, will be mentioned.

On May 2012, actor, director and scriptwriter Yılmaz Erdoğan criticizes Turkish Republic's language reform and westernization politics in an interview. In the end of the interview he says "although people stop five times because of the azan, wait for it, drink a cup of tea, think about beloved Allah on a set in Turkey; the voice of the azan cannot be heard in the movie."<sup>136</sup>

His sentence started a lynching against Yılmaz Erdoğan. Famous *Yeşilçam* actor Tarık Akan said: "He is doing this kind of speeches to strengthen his economical relationships with Justice and Development Party."<sup>137</sup> President of Cinema Writes Association Tunca Arslan blames him for not knowing the concepts and same as Tarık Akan, he said: "I think this kind of words are the efforts to look pleasant to the Justice and Development Party."<sup>138</sup> Additionally, Ertuğrul Özkök wrote about the confusion of Yılmaz Erdoğan in a deprecating

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<sup>136</sup> Retrieved from <<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/kultur-sanat/haber/20512964.asp>>.

<sup>137</sup> Retrieved from <<http://www.sabah.com.tr/Sinema/sinema/2012/05/09/ezan-tartismasi-buyuyor>>.

<sup>138</sup> Retrieved from <<http://www.sabah.com.tr/Sinema/sinema/2012/05/09/ezan-tartismasi-buyuyor>>.



way in his column.<sup>139</sup> In the same newspaper Ahmet Hakan wrote: “he can even be called as a sycophant”<sup>140</sup> for Yılmaz Erdoğan in his column. There are many more examples joint this lynching against Yılmaz Erdoğan such as Rahşan Gülşan and Ümit Ünal. Moreover, famous director and producer Sinan Çetin be subjected to a lynching same as Yılmaz Erdoğan, after he declared he voted for the Justice and Development Party.

To understand the existence of secular hegemony in Turkish Cinema, film festivals should be discussed as well. Therefore, in upcoming paragraphs, a few examples from film festivals will be mentioned to show the resistance of secular elites, with their hegemonic power in culture arena, on Justice and Development Party because of its religious background.

To begin with, in 2011, famous actor Rutkay Aziz made a speech in the opening of International Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival. His speech was built on a criticism against Justice and Development Party. He said: “There is an unjust development in my country”, and continued with a citation from Goethe: “There is nothing more frightful than ignorance in action.”<sup>141</sup> We can claim that he was pointing members and voters of Justice and Development Party with the word ‘ignorance’. Everyone in the ceremony stood up, and started to strongly applaud this speech.

Additionally, in 2012, after the screening of the movie ‘Hadisa için Savaş’ (Battle for Haditha) in the International Istanbul Film Festival, a banner, on which ‘Occupant USA, comprador AKP (Justice and Development Party)’ was written, has been shown in the casting screen.<sup>142</sup> In 2014, a documentary movie, ‘Yeryüzü Aşkın Yüzü Oluncaya Dek’ (Love will Change the Earth), was removed from the International Antalya Golden Orange festival because of a direct curse against leader of Justice and Development Party Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Then, 13 of 15

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<sup>139</sup>Retrieved from <<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/20513280.asp>>.

<sup>140</sup>Retrieved from <<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/20520522.asp>>.

<sup>141</sup>Retrieved from <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=My6-oh3TMSo>>.

<sup>142</sup>Retrieved from <[http://www.medyatava.com/haber/istanbul-film-festivalinde-issgalci-abd-isbirlikci-akp-slogani-ortaligi-karistirdi\\_30615](http://www.medyatava.com/haber/istanbul-film-festivalinde-issgalci-abd-isbirlikci-akp-slogani-ortaligi-karistirdi_30615)>.

documentary movies withdrew from the festival, and the documentary competition of the festival has been cancelled.<sup>143</sup> Menderes Türel, mayor of Antalya, interpreted this situation: “It was like a planned and strategic practice to prevent the festival made by a municipality of Justice and Development Party”<sup>144</sup>

In the same year, in the same festival, the banner of a building of Justice of Development Party was shown in a movie. This small detail created a disturbance for the audience, and the director of the movie tried to convince the audience that was only a coincidence.<sup>145</sup> Then, in 2015, a movie was removed from the International Istanbul Film Festival because of some bureaucratic reasons. After this, some movies and the jury of the festival withdrew from the festival as a reaction, and all competitions and closing ceremony of the festival were cancelled.<sup>146</sup> As a final example, in 2015, in the opening speech of Ankara International Film Festival a banner, on which ‘censor AKP (Justice and Development Party) will be demolished coming soon...’ (Sansürcü AKP Yıkılacak Coming Soon...) was written.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>143</sup>Retrieved from <[http://www.radikal.com.tr/kultur/belgeseller\\_cekilince\\_yarisma iptal\\_edildi-1217686](http://www.radikal.com.tr/kultur/belgeseller_cekilince_yarisma iptal_edildi-1217686)>.

<sup>144</sup>Retrieved from <<http://www.internethaber.com/menderes-turelden-bomba-altin-portakal-iddiasi-746274h.htm>>.

<sup>145</sup>Retrieved from <<http://www.karsigazete.com.tr/kultur-sanat/altin-portakalda-akp-tabelasi-gerginligi-h11786.html>>.

<sup>146</sup> Retrieved from <<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/kelebek/keyif/28725793.asp>>, <<http://www.yenisafak.com.tr/hayat/istanbul-film-festivalinde-sansur-tartismasi-buyuyor-2118902>>.

<sup>147</sup>Alatan, Y. (2015, April 24). Sansürcü AKP Yıkılacak-Coming Soon. *Sözcü*. Retrieved from <<http://www.sozcü.com.tr/2015/gundem/sansurcu-akp-yikilacak-comingsoon-813030/>>.

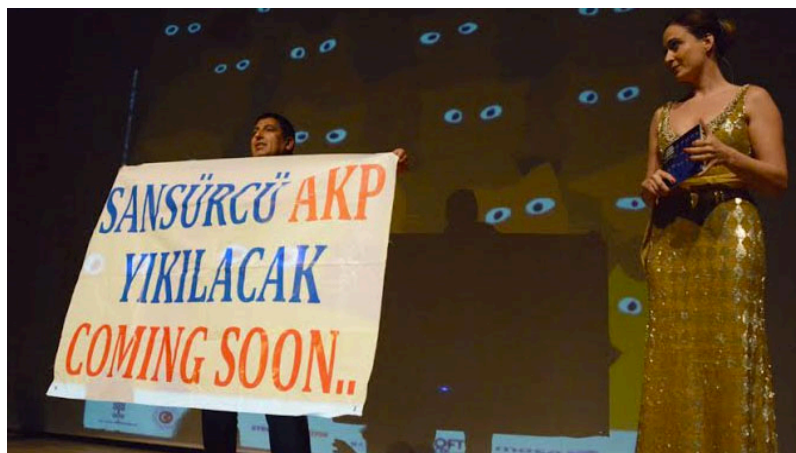


Image 3.1: From opening speech of Ankara International Film Festival<sup>148</sup>

Last but not least, the conservative art debate another important argument in the context of this thesis. In this part, conservative art debates on Turkish newspapers in 2012 will be discussed. After Secretary General of Presidency Prof. Mustafa İsen's statement: "conservative aesthetic and art norms are needed to be created"<sup>149</sup> on March 2012, a debate about this statement started between columnists of Turkish Newspapers. For example, İskender Pala wrote 'Manifest of Conservative Art' in his column.<sup>150</sup> Despite he defines how he uses the word 'conservative' ("not as someone who sees everything from religion's perspective or only refer to the religion, but someone bounded to his national, moral values and wants to protect, sustain and keep those values alive"), his manifest considered as the manifest of Islamic art. The word 'conservative' is used to refer religious people for many years, but as Yalçın Çetinkaya pointed out in his column that he couldn't think the religion of the prophet who says two days of a men should not be same, suggests a conservative person.<sup>151</sup>

<sup>148</sup>Retrieved from <<http://i.sozcu.com.tr/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/24/sansurcu-akp-371.jpg>>.

<sup>149</sup>Muhafazakar Sanatın Yapısını Oluşturmalıyız. (2012, March 16). *Habertürk*. Retrieved from <<http://www.haberturk.com/polemik/haber/728209-muhafazakar-sanatin-yapisini-olusturmaliyiz>>

<sup>150</sup>Pala, İ. (2012, April 10). Muhafazakarın Sanat Manifestosu. *Zaman*. Retrieved from <[http://www.zaman.com.tr/iskander-pala/muhafazakar-in-sanat-manifestosu\\_1271265.html](http://www.zaman.com.tr/iskander-pala/muhafazakar-in-sanat-manifestosu_1271265.html)>.

<sup>151</sup>Çetinkaya, Y. (2012, April 15). Sanata Muhafazakar Normlar Koymak. *Yeni Şafak*. Retrieved from <<http://www.yenisafak.com.tr/yazarlar/yalcincetinkayapazar/sanata-muhafazak%C3%A2r-normlar-koymak-31949>>

Ahmet Hakan joined the debate to criticize Justice and Development Party and said that art was revolutionist and its production was not related with winning elections, and conservative dignity could not be ruler in a handful area like that.<sup>152</sup>

Considering all the examples given above, it can be claimed that there is a secular hegemony of the elite class, who has the power in cultural arena since the foundation of the Turkish Republic. We can even argue this elite class is disconnected from the society, and going after the society despite they blame the society for being backwards. Their approach on religion in political arena came to the level of the society years later. But for the cinema industry, hegemonic power of the secular elites still exists, the reasons created the National Cinema Movement are still exist, still the content of the many movies are disconnected from the values of the Turkish society. Moreover, this can be considered as one of the reasons for the weak relationship of Turkish society and Turkish cinema. Despite the increase in the last decade, in average, one person in Turkey watches 0.38 movies in a year<sup>153</sup>, while this number is 3.93 for the USA.<sup>154</sup>

In Çağlar's words, "The production of truth and discourse is very central in the functioning of hegemony as it makes it more and more difficult for the subaltern groups to produce their language."<sup>155</sup> As also mentioned in the previous part of this chapter, pious Muslims getting rich had the difficulty on producing their own language in social life. As long as their social class was changed, they copied the previous members of the class they have entered and this caused for some pious Muslims to be mixed up in an affair between their religious lives and their social city lives. This is one of the reasons for the problematic characters mentioned in chapter two, and these characters are causing problematic examples in social life vice versa.

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<sup>152</sup>Hakan, A. (2012, April 17). Pis Zenci Meselesi. *Hurriyet*. Retrieved from <<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/20359908.asp>>.

<sup>153</sup> Retrieved from <<http://boxofficeturkiye.com/yillik/>> and <<http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=18616>>.

<sup>154</sup> Retrieved from <<http://www.the-numbers.com/market/>> and <<http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/us-population/>>.

<sup>155</sup> Çağlar, *Good and Bad Muslims*, p. 27.

In the cultural arena, the readings and criticisms for the movies mentioned in this thesis raise the difficulty for the pious Muslims in social life. As a result of the lack of their own language against the secular hegemony in cultural arena, movie tastes and film readings became similar between the usual critics and pious Muslim critics. Reviews and criticisms about the two movies *Takva* and *Büşra*, which are the movies saying directly it is impossible to live as a pious Muslim in modern city life, will be shown below.

For the movie *Büşra*, Ahmet Hakan wrote the character should be considered as one type of scarfed woman in many other types.<sup>156</sup> Uğur Vardan wrote: “This is the story shows people with different appearance can be together.”<sup>157</sup> According to Kerem Akça, *Büşra* is over attached to her religious views.<sup>158</sup> Asu Maro, in *Milliyet* daily, thinks the movie is objective to the secular and religious sides.<sup>159</sup> Same as her, Ali Murat Güven, in *Yeni Şafak* daily, thinks the movie *Büşra* is ‘surprisingly objective in its ideological approach on headscarf.’<sup>160</sup> Nazlı Ilıcak thinks ‘the message of the movie is tolerance to each other and being able to live together.’<sup>161</sup> Lastly, doyen movie critic Atilla Dorsay finishes his analyze on *Büşra* as: “Thus, the movie recommends dialog and mutual understanding”<sup>162</sup>

For the movie *Takva*, Bünyamin Yılmaz from *Milli Gazete* daily finds the movie very realistic, and thinks ‘the movie is not insult religious orders and religious people.’<sup>163</sup> Ahmet Hakan considered the movie as ‘a milestone for

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<sup>156</sup>Hakan, A. (2010, March 23). Başbakanı Açık Çağrı. *Hurriyet*. Retrieved from <<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/14187620.asp>>.

<sup>157</sup>Vardan, U. (2010, March 19). Teoride ve Pratikte Büşra. *Radikal*. Retrieved from <[http://www.radikal.com.tr/sinema/teoride\\_ve\\_pratikte\\_Büşra-986528](http://www.radikal.com.tr/sinema/teoride_ve_pratikte_Büşra-986528)>.

<sup>158</sup>Akça, K. (2010, March 19). Maskeyi Çıkartmak Kolay Mı. *Habertürk*. Retrieved from <<http://www.haberturk.com/kultur-sanat/haber/501842-maskeyi-cikartmak-kolay-mi>>.

<sup>159</sup>Maro, A. (2010, March 20). Eninde Sonunda Hepimiz Yalnızız. *Milliyet*. Retrieved from <<http://cadde.milliyet.com.tr/2010/03/20/YazarDetay/1213429/eninde-sonunda-hepimiz-yalniziz?ver=59>>.

<sup>160</sup>Retrieved from <<http://www.yenisafak.com.tr/yazarlar/AliMuratGüven/sinema-sanatina-yonelik-ilgi-bilgi-ve-algimizin-son-turnusol-kagidi-Büşra/21675>>.

<sup>161</sup>Retrieved from <[http://www.sabah.com.tr/yazarlar/ilicak/2010/03/23/Büşra\\_bir\\_ask\\_hikyesi](http://www.sabah.com.tr/yazarlar/ilicak/2010/03/23/Büşra_bir_ask_hikyesi)>.

<sup>162</sup>Dorsay, *Sinemamızda Değişim Rüzgarları*, p. 42.

<sup>163</sup>Yılmaz, B. (2006, December 1). Ezber Bozan *Takva*. *Milli Gazete*. Retrieved from

Turkish cinema'. He finds the movie extremely realistic, and says 'the movie is very careful on reflecting religious rituals on the screen'.<sup>164</sup> Same as Ahmet Hakan, İsmail Kılıçarslan thinks the movie is 'a milestone for Turkish Cinema'; and says 'the movie is the best religious movie of the Turkish cinema'. He writes that the movie and the story is exceedingly realistic.<sup>165</sup> Atilla Dorsay wrote about the honesty and objectivity of the movie as well.<sup>166</sup> Haşmet Babaoğlu in Vatan daily<sup>167</sup>, Özlem Albayrak in Yeni Şafak daily<sup>168</sup> and M. Nedim Hazar in Aksiyon magazine<sup>169</sup> found the movie mostly realistic despite they did not like the movie in general.

As shown with examples above, many criticisms on the movies from many critics from different ideological background approaches on the movies in a similar way; and most of the criticisms insistently focus on the reality of the movie. By doing so, we can claim that the sins of the modern city life shown in the movies are being become ordinary and being normalized. Moreover, we may debate that this is the result of the power of the hegemonic language in cultural arena. Even the technical mistakes about pious Muslims that are analyzed in Chapter Two are ignored in the movie criticisms. Therefore, confused religious members of social life and the absurd examples in the movies keep feeding each other mutually.

On the other hand, the gap between the society and the secular elites is becoming valid between intellectuals with religious background, who are trying to be powerful in cultural arena, and religious members of the society as a result of the hegemonic power, or in other words, as a result of being captured by the

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<[http://www.milligazete.com.tr/haber/Ezber\\_bozan\\_TAKVA/37219#.VWx3LIyeDGc](http://www.milligazete.com.tr/haber/Ezber_bozan_TAKVA/37219#.VWx3LIyeDGc)>.

<sup>164</sup>Hakan, A. (2006, November 29). Turk Sinemasında Bir Devrim: Takva. *Hürriyet*. Retrieved from <<http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=5521045&yazarid=131>>.

<sup>165</sup>Retrieved from <<https://yenisinemacilar.wordpress.com/takva-filmi/Ismail-Kilicarslan-cemaatcom-2/>>.

<sup>166</sup>Dorsay, *Sinemamızda Değişim Rüzgarları*, p. 132.

<sup>167</sup>Retrieved from <<https://yenisinemacilar.wordpress.com/takva-filmi/merak/>>.

<sup>168</sup>Albayrak, O. (2006, December 12). Takva'yı Ben De İzledim. *Yeni Şafak*. Retrieved from <<http://www.yenisafak.com.tr/yazarlar/OzlemAlbayrak/takvayi-ben-de-izledim/2891>>.

<sup>169</sup>Hazar, M.N. (2006, December 11). Dervisin Nefsiyle İmtihani Mi. *Aksiyon*. Retrieved from <<http://www.aksiyon.com.tr/m-nedim-hazar/dervisin-nefsiyle-imtihani-mi-519494>>.

culture industry as Adorno used<sup>170</sup>. We can conclude that as a result of the gap between the intellectuals and Turkish society, these intellectuals cannot lead the society.

In sum, the interest of Turkish society to the cinema is not very high<sup>171</sup>. So, it is hard to claim that these movies are transforming the religious society; but it can be claimed that these movies are aiming to transform pious Muslims when we consider the criticisms and reviews about these movies together. On the other hand, cinema is a source to understand societies. These movies may be used as sources when work about the Turkish society in future studies. So, the misleading religious characters are not only important for today, but also important to prevent misleading in future works.

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<sup>170</sup>Kellner & Durham, *Media and Cultural Studies*, p.41.

<sup>171</sup>Detailed numbers are given in several parts of the Chapter 3.

## CONCLUSION

Cinema is not just a technical production where images flow on the screen, but also an important cultural tool to reshape societies and redefine their norms. The power of cinema in reshaping societies has been analyzed in the context of its relationship with religious characters, which appeared in different cinema productions in an array of political backgrounds during the modernization process of the Turkish Republic.

The Turkish Republic sharply increased the modernization/Westernization politics inherited from the Ottoman Empire. The unexpected and abrupt politics of the Republic created an elite class. “Turkish modernization, from its beginning in 19<sup>th</sup> century until now, developed as a sudden and unexpected project in which the common benefits of the citizens were defined by the elite’s rulings of modernization.”<sup>172</sup> Moreover, the elites and the politics of the Republic considered religious people as a drawback against the modernization/westernization of Turkey.

Especially after the foundation of the Turkish Republic it can be claimed that cinema assumed the mission of a role model parallel with the modernization efforts; along with emerging trends it became an area where being westernized is learned by imitation.<sup>173</sup>

The Turkish Republic even intervened in the attire of its citizens. People were forced to dress like they did in the West. At this point, cinema became a place for people to learn how to look western and modern, as Serpil Kirel has mentioned. Cinema kept serving the modernization politics of Turkey, from its beginning in 1922 to this day.

Muhsin Ertuğrul was the only director of Turkish cinema between 1922 and 1939, while Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was the single man of Turkish politics.

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<sup>172</sup>Özyürek, *Modernlik Nostaljisi*, p. 123.

<sup>173</sup>Kirel, *Kültürel Çalışmalar ve Sinema*, p. 101.



Ertuğrul embraced Kemalism with its secularity and positivism. As a result of the only director's loyalty to the ideology of the Turkish Republic, cinema and politics proceeded in parallel in these years. Ertuğrul used Muslim, Turkish female actresses for the first time: going to the cinema, however, was not a pleasant activity for a woman in these years. A woman in swimwear was shown for the first time in Turkey in one of his movies. Moreover, in his movies male-female relationships were presented far from the realities of Turkish society in those years. Even the most modern parts of society considered his representations of these relationships as excessive. Religious characters also appeared in Ertuğrul's movies. Pious characters were shown in a negative way, as enemies of the modernization/westernization of Turkey. Mullahs and sheiks appeared as liars, traitors and sometimes as having inappropriate relationships with women. After 1939, more directors started to make movies but they followed the precedent of Ertuğrul; Ertuğrul himself started to use more obscenity in his movies. Pious characters and topics related to religion were mostly ignored, or were shown in a negative way.

In 1949, the tax discount law for Turkish movies was accepted by the cabinet, and between 1950 and 1960, under the power of the Democrat Party, transportation and electricity facilities were improved. These improvements resulted in more Turkish movies being produced and more movie theaters being opened. Also the interest of the audience in Turkish movies increased in this period. Movies created in this period were the last movies of the early Turkish cinema period, and opened the way to the traditional Turkish cinema period.

In 1960, the first cinema movement of Turkish cinema emerged: the social realistic cinema movement, and the period of traditional Turkish cinema, also known as *Yeşilçam* Era, began. The social realistic cinema movement emerged after the military coup in 1960, and embraced the Marxist ideology as a result of the period's political atmosphere. It became the only cinema movement until 1965. Movies under the effect of this movement focused on the

modern/traditional conflict, and modernity was presented as making life easier. Religion, on the other hand, was shown as in opposition to modernization. In 1965, the Justice Party, which was supporting center-right politics, won the elections, and the distinction between right and left politics in Turkish society became more evident in the years to follow. As a result, the social realistic cinema movement lost its importance after 1965, but two other cinema movements emerged from it: the domestic cinema movement and the revolutionary cinema movement. The main distinction between these two movements is whether they accept the existence of social classes in Turkey or not. The domestic cinema movement accepted religion as a cultural reality of Turkish society; however the director's approach to religion was still different from that of society's. On the other hand, the revolutionary cinema movement considered religion as a drug to console the lower classes. It should also be noted that between 1960 and 1973 religion was used as a commodity in certain movies. There was a trend of religious movies, which were cheap, sloppy, unrealistic, and often presented inaccurate information on Islam.

Starting in 1974 and until 1980, a new trend emerged in Turkish cinema: the period of erotic movies. The gap between the moral values of Turkish society and Turkish cinema increased in this period, and naturally religion became invisible once again. For example, there is only one movie produced in this period under the effect of the national cinema movement by Mesut Uçakan in 1978.

Considering the relationship between Turkish cinema and religion, the national cinema movement is the country's most important cinema movement. The main purpose of this movement is capturing and reflecting the values of Turkish society. Yücel Çakmaklı used the words 'national cinema' for the first time in 1964 and produced its first movie *Birleşen Yollar* in 1970, thus starting the national cinema movement. *Birleşen Yollar* (1970) and *Minyeli Abdullah* (1989)

are the most important movies of the movement and they are both directed by its founder, Çakmaklı. According to Çakmaklı,

Turkish cinema can only achieve a national cinema character by creating movies reflecting the realities of Anatolia molded with its peasants and townsmen, the belief that Muslim Turkish society prefers moral values rather than materialistic ones, its traditions and national characters.<sup>174</sup>

Çakmaklı compared modern and traditional values in the first examples of national cinema movement, and supported the traditional side in his movies. He mostly represented modern characters that find the way of Islam in the course of the movie.

Çakmaklı did not make any movies between 1974 and 1989. Mesut Uçakan continued the national cinema movement in this period. His approach, however, to cinema is different from Çakmaklı's whom he criticizes. According to Uçakan, cinema should be used as a tool to spread Islam.

It is possible to think of the national cinema movement in Turkish cinema and the 'national vision movement' in Turkish politics in parallel. They both emerged in the same period. In the first years they both dealt with comparing western/modern values and traditional/Islamic values and supporting the side of Islam; after 1990, they started to focus on the difficulties of a religious person's life. For instance, the headscarf became a popular topic for directors under the effect of the national cinema movement while it was a popular debate topic in politics as well. After 1995, as a result of prejudices against religious people, it became hard to make movies under the effect of national cinema movement. In my opinion, Çakmaklı's last cinema movie *Son Türbedar* (1996) is the last movie of the national cinema movement. In certain studies, the national cinema movement is considered to be continuing. However, it is my opinion that it is not

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<sup>174</sup>Lüleci, *Türk Sineması ve Din*, p. 85.

fair to categorize movies and directors under a movement when they exclude themselves from it.

As discussed in Chapter One, religion is usually ignored in Turkish cinema where religious characters and religion are humiliated and shown in a negative light. The movies where religion is shown in a positive way are few and far between. There were 43 movies produced by the national cinema movement in 40 years, while annual movie production exceeded 200 in certain years. So, it is fair to say that early and traditional Turkish cinema ignored the moral values of Turkish society, and served with all its might the modernization politics of Turkey in an effort to transform Turkish society.

According to Asuman Suner, Turkish cinema should be researched in two subcategories: ‘popular cinema’ and ‘art cinema’. The period of New Turkish cinema began in 1996 with the movies *Eşkuya* in popular cinema and *Tabutta Rövaşata* in art cinema. Suner believes that New Turkish cinema emerged as a result of the merging of Hollywood technology and *Yeşilçam* melodrama.

Furthermore, these years were the years of change in Turkey, not only for cinema, but also for Turkish politics. As mentioned before, in 1997, the Supreme Court closed the Welfare Party after a military coup. Prejudices against pious Muslims, which had started at the foundation of the Turkish Republic, were now at their peak. New Turkish cinema was born in this atmosphere, while the first examples of movies including religious characters were produced after the 2000s.

In Chapter Two *The Imam* (2005), *Takva* (2006), *Beyza'nın Kadınları* (2006), *Dondurmam Gaymak* (2006), *Adem'in Trenleri* (2007), *Uzak İhtimal* (2009), *Büşra* (2010), *Eşrefpaşalılar* (2010) and *Selam* (2013) have been analyzed in the context of the compatibility of a religious person's life to modern city life, the appearance of religious symbols such as the headscarf, and the movies' approach to imams.

The movies *Takva* and *Büşra* focus on the conflicts between modern city life and the lives of religious people. There are natural sins in social life, and

religious people sin naturally if they are living in a modern city according to these movies. Modern city life causes religious people to move away from their religious views. Muharrem, the main character of 'Takva', cannot handle the conflicts between his religious life and modern city life and loses his mind in the end of the movie. Büşra, the protagonist of *Büşra*, handles this conflict by living like a secular woman and by removing her headscarf at the movie's end. On the other hand, *The Imam* aims to show that it is possible to live as a religious person in a modern city; still, however, the protagonist's modernization process is in accordance to the period's beliefs, which see him move away from his religious views and live as a secular person.

The economic status of religious people is portrayed in a negative light in New Turkish cinema. Most of the religious characters are shown as greedy and willing to sin in order to earn more money. Pious rich Muslim characters ignore the poor segments of society, and live a luxurious life in the examples of New Turkish cinema. This approach to the economic status of pious Muslims categorizes them as either fake or true Muslims. According to New Turkish cinema, the Muslims who become rich, live a luxurious life, and embrace modern city life are fake Muslims. There are also quotes pointing to the relationship between fake pious Muslims and the Justice and Development Party in examples of New Turkish cinema.

Sexuality is another point discussed in this work. Certain choices of scenes are disturbing for pious Muslims. In *Takva* sexual scenes and *dhikr* scenes appear repeatedly. In *Büşra*, Büşra stops kissing Yaman in the street when Azan begins. In *Beyza'nın Kadınları*, Beyza, who has multiple personality disorder, switches between the scarlet woman Dilara and the religious woman Rabia. Sexuality is shown as one of the biggest weakness of religious people. Muharrem keeps dreaming about sexual topics, but refuses insistently to marry. In *Büşra*, Ferit and Büşra's father stare excitedly at the half-naked women behind the stage. In *Adem'in Trenleri*, Hasan Hoca loses himself when he sees his wife while she is

getting dressed. The reflections of the ‘suppressed emotions’ argument of secular people are evident in these scenes. Furthermore, the staging of the scarlet women in opposition to the women in a headscarf can be seen in *Büşra* and *Beyza’nın Kadınları*. There are many scenes where Rabia and Dilara are arguing in *Beyza’nın Kadınları*. Also in the movie *Büşra*, Büşra calls his friend a ‘whore’ while her friends call him a ‘bigot’. In New Turkish cinema scarlet women and women in headscarves are shown as occupying two opposing ends. By doing so, they are both portrayed as removed from ‘normal’.

There are also scenes when the religious characters of New Turkish cinema question the existence of God. Both Muharrem from *Takva* and Rabia from *Beyza’nın Kadınları* cannot answer this question. They get mad, or keep silent, and, although it is not shown directly, they even question the existence of God in their inner worlds.

The status of pious Muslim women is another point to discuss in regards to New Turkish cinema. In *Takva*, the daughter of the Sheikh is represented as an object. Her father arranges a marriage for her without even telling her. In *Büşra*, when Büşra complains about the pressure of her family to her friend Selen, she responds by saying, ‘Choosing is not a luxury.’ In *Adem’in Trenleri*, Hacer, the wife of the imam, cannot say a word against her husband. Pious Muslim women are represented as objects that cannot choose how to live in New Turkish cinema.

Last but not least, the representation of imams and worship changed in New Turkish cinema. Worship scenes became more accurate and present fewer inaccuracies about religion. But still we can claim that secular filmmakers do not know pious Muslim people and topics related to Islam well enough to represent them accurately on-screen. There are also examples in New Turkish cinema of imams involved in modern social life, who can handle living as religious people despite the conflicts between social life and religious life mentioned insistently in the movies.

If we make a comparison between early/traditional Turkish cinema and New Turkish cinema, the most important change is that pious Muslim characters become the leading characters in mainstream movies for the first time since examples of the national cinema movement never became mainstream. Movies directly humiliating pious Muslim people give place to movies trying to understand pious Muslims. In my opinion, though, this humiliation still exists in the subtext of the movies. Also religious characters in cities are starting to be represented in New Turkish cinema- religion was related to the village in early and traditional Turkish cinema. Pious Muslims become characters in Turkish cinema after the 2000s while before they were only figures in a movie.

In short, we can say religion and religious characters are finally accepted as members of Turkish society in Turkish cinema. But still, this acceptance is conditional. Turkish cinema only accepted the pious Muslim characters that embraced modernization in the way they defined it and who were ready to move away from their religious lives, if modern city life asked them to do so.

In the third and final chapter, I analyzed the reasons pious Muslim characters have been accepted by Turkish cinema. In my opinion, the social changes of pious Muslims, the long-running political power of the Justice and Development Party and the hegemonic transformations of Turkey are the main reasons for this acceptance.

As a result of Turgut Özal's economy politics, the economic status of pious Muslims in Turkey started to improve and they became more visible in the public sphere. Also, their political movement, the Welfare Party, won the elections in 1995. In these years social polarization between secular and religious people in Turkey reached its peak. The Welfare Party resigned after a military coup in 1997 and was closed by the Supreme Court in the same year. After 2002, the Justice and Development Party, which was considered as the successor of the Welfare Party, won the elections and has been ruling the country to this day. But the politics of the Justice and Development Party must be differentiated from the

politics of the Welfare Party. The Welfare Party was against westernization and joining the European Union, while the Justice and Development Party promised to join the European Union and had the support of western countries. Under the power of the Justice and Development Party, Turkey entered a new modernization period, which includes pious Muslims while the Republic's approach to modernization before the Justice and Development Party promoted their exclusion. According to Robert Bellah, excluding pious Muslims was the main reason for the failure of modernization in Turkey.<sup>175</sup>

Under the power of the Justice and Development Party, the social change of pious Muslims continued rapidly. Pious people in Turkey started to be modernized and westernized in this period. The secular/religious polarization started to decrease after 2007. Improvements in the economic status of religious people created new commercial relationships. Rich religious Muslims became potential movie sponsors. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Culture, which is determined by the Justice and Development Party, is still the main sponsor of Turkish cinema. On the other hand, religious people as a result of their economic development started to show more interest in going to movie theaters. This, in turn, made pious Muslims a new market for filmmakers. Also, in this period, pious Muslims become an area of curiosity for secular people in Turkey.

Despite the hegemonic discourse of the political arena substantially changing under the Justice and Development Party, the old hegemonic discourse resisted in the cultural arena. Movies representing pious Muslim characters in the New Turkish cinema seem to be objective about religion at first glance, but upon closer examination, it is possible to discern certain secular codes from the era of *Yeşilçam* movies. New Turkish cinema insistently tells its audience it is impossible to live as a pious Muslim in a modern city. Religion is something accepted and respected in the private lives of people, but in the city, a pious Muslim should accept sinning as part of the nature of modern city life.

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<sup>175</sup>Altun, *Modernleşme Kuramı*, p. 114.



As mentioned in Chapter Two, the religious characters of New Turkish cinema are confused, and I think they represent absurd examples. Still, critics with different ideologies have written about how realistic these movies are- a result, I believe, of the power of the hegemonic discourse in the cultural arena. Intellectuals become involved in the cultural arena, start to have same movie tastes and offer the same opinions. Of course there are real examples of these absurd characters in Turkish society. But pious Muslims who become members of the upper classes do not have any examples to follow, and try to live as religious people who follow the norms of their social classes set before them by the secular elite. In this context, while cinema can be an extremely important tool in creating new religious norms for different social classes, criticisms of these absurd examples by religious writers, do not have any positive influence on religious people in Turkey, but rather cause their normalization.

Also, film festivals are another place where the hegemonic discourse of the cultural arena continues to resist change. Most film festivals turn into marginal political shows against the Justice and Development Party. The Justice and Development Party, and even its voters, are humiliated in speeches in certain film festivals. The Justice and Development Party changed the modernization process of Turkey, as well as the hegemonic discourses in the political and economic arenas, but failed to address the hegemonic discourse in the cultural arena. To use Gayatri Spivak's distinctions for representation, pious Muslims are being represented in the political arena, since there are politicians speaking for them, but they are not being represented in the cultural arena where no filmmakers speak for them – only about them.

In conclusion, Turkish cinema embraced the founding ideology of Turkey, Kemalism, and reflected its perspective on pious Muslims on-screen. From the start of Turkish cinema to the emergence of the New Turkish cinema, the parallel development of Turkish cinema and Turkish politics continued. New Turkish cinema started in 1996, but it produced its first examples related to religion after

the Justice and Development Party came into power in 2002. In the beginning the atmosphere made it very difficult to show pious Muslims in a non-clichéd way. Despite the changes in the manner Turkish cinema approaches religion, examples from New Turkish cinema still maintain certain secular codes for representing pious Muslim characters. We can claim that Turkish cinema aestheticizes Turkish politics and has served the modernization period of the Turkish Republic up to the 2000s. With the Justice and Development Party, however, the modernization process changed and Turkish cinema started the politicization of aesthetics in order to resist the new type of modernization, which included pious Muslims. The stylistic approach to religion and religious characters changed with the New Turkish cinema but in essence nothing truly changed.

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**Movies:**

The Imam, (2005, Director: İsmail Güneş, Cast: Eşref Ziya Terzi, Ahmet Yenilmez, Mete Dönmezer)

Takva, (2006, Director: Özer Kızıltan, Cast: Erkan Can, Güven Kıraç, Meray Ülgen)

Beyza'nın Kadınları, (2006, Director: Mustafa Altıoklar, Cast: Demet Evgar, Tamer Karadağlı, LeventÜzümcü)

Dondurmam Gaymak, (2006, Director: Yüksel Aksu, Cast: Turan Özdemir, Ulaş Sarıbaş, İsmet Can Suda)

Adem'in Trenleri, (2007, Director: Barış Pirhasan, Cast: Cem Özer, Nurgül Yeşilçay, Derya Alabora)

Uzak İhtimal, (2009, Director: Mahmut Fazıl Coşkun, Cast:Nadir Sarıbacak, Görkem Yeltan)

Büşra, (2010, Director: Alper Çağlar, Cast: Mine Kılıç, Tayanç Ayaydın, Çiğdem Batur Güzel)

Eşrefpaşalılar, (2010, Director: Hüdaverdi Yavuz, Cast: Sinan Albayrak, Savaş Bayındır, Sermin Hürmeriç)

Selam, (2013, Director: Levent Demirkale, Cast:Burçin Abdullah, Yunus Emre Yıldırım, Emre Karakoç)