The Rise of Political Islam in Modern Turkey, 1923-1980: Trends and Characteristics

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Abstract

Turkey is a Muslim-majority country as well as secular democratic state. Islam as a religion is a political religion. It is difficult to put apart Islam from politics. So Turkish society is divided into two major camps, roughly speaking: Islamists and Secularists. Therefore, political Islam of Turkey, has its history with a tremendous evolution to cope with the secular establishment. This article strives to explore the major trends of the rise of political Islam and its changing mode in Turkey especially from the establishment of Turkish Republic down to 1980.

Introduction

Since the inception of the Turkish Republic in 1923, its history has developed through the tension between secularism and political Islam or Islamism. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1881-1938) established Turkey as a secular or more accurately “laicist” state. But Turkey had been considered and continues to be a Muslim majority country. Religion was considered as an important factor in the Ottoman era. But after the establishment of Turkish Republic, religion was kept apart from political life. But soon after the death of Mustafa Kemal in 1938 and the advent of the multiparty democracy in 1946, religion came back in the politics of Turkey. Different political parties used Islam for their political benefit and political Islam went through a massive evolution. In this article there is a humble attempt to make an overview about the rise and evolution of the political Islam in modern Turkey from 1923 to 1980 because this very period has its own trend and characteristics.

Research Methodology

In this article titled ‘The Rise of Political Islam in Modern Turkey, 1923-1980: Trends and Characteristics’ a qualitative research methodology has been applied where both primary and secondary sources are used in the process of research. Besides primary sources, more emphasis has been given on the secondary sources such as books, international journals, articles of international non-profit organizations, reports, write–up of well-established digital forum and internet sources.

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In this article essentially the historical method has been followed. Turkey has been constitutionally a secular democratic country after the establishment of Turkish Republic. But since 1923 Turkish history is going through the conflict between secularism and political Islam. In recent times political Islam is getting its stronghold in Turkey. So it is important to unroll how political Islam is becoming strong in a secular democratic country like Turkey and for that reason it is also important to unearth the trend and characteristics of the rise of political Islam in modern Turkey for a certain period of 1923 to 1980.

Background

Turkey is a country mostly inhabited by Muslim population. It is also a secular democratic state, a member of NATO, a candidate for membership in European Union and a long standing U.S. compatriot. Turkey has a population of about 80.27 million; the main ethnic group of Turkey include 70-75% Turkish, 19% Kurdish and 7-12% other minorities. Though ethnic Turks constitute a majority of the country’s population, Turkey remains as ethnically diverse society. This country has a complex and extraordinarily rich religious tradition, ranging from pre-Islamic practices to mainstream Sunni Islam, from small minority groups of Orthodox Christian as well as Jews to a range of Alawis, Shias and other sects. Turkey is 99.8% Muslim (mostly Sunni) and minority communities of mainly Christians and Jews account for about 0.2%. Turkey is central to U.S. and Western security interest in a critical and unstable zone where the Middle East, the Balkans and Caucasus intersect. It is the gateway between Europe and Asia. It is important not only for its geopolitical position but also for its co-existence of Islam with secular democracy, globalization and modernity. Turkey’s longtime membership in NATO, its aspirations for EU membership, its unique geopolitical importance and geographically strategic location as the gateway between Europe and Asia enable the nation to play a role in reducing Cold War and post-Cold War era phenomena.

Turkey has a unique position in the Muslim world. It is only the secular democracy among the Muslim majority countries. The foundation for its secularism were laid in the first decade following the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Turkish Republic is the heir of the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman rule lasted for about 600 years. It was a multi-ethnic empire with about 75 different ethnic groups living within its borders. It was also a multi-religious empire with large population of Muslims, Jews and Christians of various denominations.
Its founders were Muslim Turks and its administration of the empire was theocratic. The Ottoman Empire was founded as a theocratic state and remained one to the very end. Islam was dominant force in all areas of the Ottoman Empire. The Sultan was at the same time the Caliph (religious leader of the Muslim World). Thus Sultan was not considered the representatives of the people but of God. From the mid-sixteenth century onwards, the Ottoman Sultan had not only been the Sultan of the Ottoman state but also, at least symbolically, the Caliph of all Muslims. The title of Caliph was claimed by the Ottoman Sultan in 1539 during the reign of Sultan Suleyman I (1520-66), when the last Abbasid Caliph el-Mutevekkil died in Egypt. From then on, Ottoman Sultan began to be referred as the leader and the protector of the entire Islamic community. Although Ottoman Empire was a theocratic state but it had also some secular laws decreed by Sultans. Actually \textit{shari’a} or Islamic law was the basis of political rule but this co-existed with the secular decrees of Sultan. At times, the Empire was governed by a body of traditional law, which didn't necessarily derive from religious law. This traditional law was developed by the Ottoman rulers as a necessity to hold a multi-ethnic and multi-religious empire. Nevertheless, care was always taken not to openly violate religious law. Each religious community was called \textit{millets}. Each \textit{millet} was subject to its own religious law in personal status issues and was given autonomy in its internal affairs concerning the community. The administrative system was successful in keeping peace within the borders of the empire until the advent of nationalism in 19th century.

A quick look at Ottoman period suggest that although the Ottoman Empire may not be considered a fully Islamic state, Islam significantly affected political and social life of the empire’s people as the dominant religion. In the 16th century Ottoman Empire was at the height of its power. Ottoman Empire ruled over lands in three continents of Asia, Europe and Africa. It was the then ‘Super Power’ of the world. But gradually after 16th century it started to lose its power. During 19th century Ottoman Empire went through a massive reformation. It was due to the failure in various military campaigns. In 19th century Ottoman gradually lost their military superiority as science, industry and technology developed in Europe. Ottoman Empire tried to reverse the decline by a concerted effort at westernization. The mid-19th century witnessed large scale reforms in administration, education and law. It is called the ‘Tanzimat Era’ (1839-76) in the history of Turkey. In Ottoman history, the term \textit{Tanzimat} (literally the reforms) designates a period that began in 1839 and ended by 1876. On the other side, Islam’s political
use began with the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r.1876-1908) whose Pan-Islamism policy was aimed at saving the empire from disintegration. So the 19th century had been dominated by the controversies over reform and Westernization. But these all efforts were insufficient to prevent the disintegration of the empire.

By the beginning of the 20th century Ottoman Empire considered to be the ‘Sick Man of Europe’ by the European powers which sought to divide its land among themselves. Final collapse of the Ottoman Empire came at the end of the World War I. Defeat in the War accompanied by the occupation by the western powers of what had remained in its hands, namely, the land area that approximately makes up the present borders of the Turkish Republic. After a nationalist struggle that ended the occupation and a brief civil war between the nationalist and the Ottoman dynasty, the Turkish Republic was proclaimed in 1923. During the late 19th and early 20th century Ottoman statesmen and intellectuals divided into two camps. One was Islamist and another was Reformist or Westernist. It was a soul-searching attempt in Ottoman Empire and finally second camp as reformist won the game. As a result Turkish Republic was established in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal. Since then history of Turkey turns into a different phase and Turkey’s history becomes the history of conflict between Secularism and Political Islam.

**Defining Political Islam and Secularism**

Aforementioned discussion is the backdrop to understand the rise of Political Islam and its evolution in Turkey. Two ideas are important to understand the Turkish politics. One is Political Islam and another is Secularism. For further discussion we should have a clear conception about Political Islam and Secularism in Turkish sense. Politics has always been considered as the central dimension of Islam by many people. As a result of this widespread perception, Islam is easily labelled as the political religion. Islam has been political since its inception. Unlike other mainstream religions, which developed within existing political structures, the divine revelation of the Qur’an to the Prophet Muhammad (SM) resulted in the creation of a discrete political entity defined by belief. Prophet Muhammad (SM) himself served not just as the community's spiritual and political leader, and sole source of its founding scripture and legislation but also as its military leader in war. Actually Islam is a multidimensional phenomenon which includes theology, philosophy, ethics, law and spirituality alongside with politics. So it is possible to say in one sense it is appropriate to label Islam as the
political religion. Converting Islam to a political ideology is a modern phenomenon. Political Islam does not give a central value to human individual rather it constructs society, state and politics in a totalitarian manner, then justifies its construction through Islam and finally creates a political and social activism. Although Islamists emphasize the primary importance of religion, they don't focus merely on religious problem. In a very general sense, supporter of the political Islam believe that Islam is a body of faith has something to say about how society and politics should be ordered in the contemporary Muslim world and implemented in some fashion. But a more precise and analytical definition of political Islam describes it as a form of instrumentalization of Islam by individuals, groups and organizations that pursue political objectives. It provides political responses to today's societal challenges borrowed from Islamic tradition.

Another important idea is secularism. Generally secularism means the separation between state and religion. But the exact definition and boundaries of secularism differ across countries. The use of the term ‘Secularism’ in connection with determination of relation between spiritual and temporal authorities. From the middle of the 19th century, the term was used in the West to refer to a specific policy of separating church from state. The word ‘Secularism’ was derived from the Latin saeculum, which meant originally ‘age’ or ‘generation’ but which came to mean in Christian Latin ‘the temporal world’. The word ‘Secular’ has been used with this meaning in all the major protestant countries. The policy of secularism in catholic countries in more often expressed by the term ‘laicism’. The term ‘laicism’ derives from the Greek laos (the people)and laikos (the lay). While the underlying emphasize in the word ‘Secularism’ is on the idea of worldliness, the term ‘laicism’ emphasizes the distinction of the laity from clergy.

Actually there are two types of secularism in western countries. One is French model of laicism and another is Anglo-American model of secularism. The word ‘laicism’ refers to an anticlerical world view and ideology that are based on secular processes. It provides a strict institutional separation of state and religion, i.e., of political and religious authority. Accordingly unlike under secularism, the laicist state keeps completely out of all religious matters. France and Portugal are the constitutionally laicist state in the Europe. French understanding of laicism is very much rigid. No religious symbol or crucifixes may be displayed in public buildings. Laicism is further distinguished from secularism by the fact that no state support provided to religious parties.
Turkish secularism known as laiklik. It is different from the so-called Anglo-American model of secularism based on the principle of separation of religion and state. In the Turkish Republic, understanding of secularism was and to a large extent still is, closer to the French understanding of laicism than to Anglo-Saxon understanding with secularism.  

The position of Turkey on religion is more accurately translated as ‘laicism’, the subordination of religion to the state. The laic state like Turkey controls the education of religious professionals and their assignments to mosques, controls content of religious education and enforces laws about the wearing of religious symbols and clothing in the public space and institution. Actually Turkish laiklik goes even beyond French laicism in its more extensive involvement in religious affairs. In the early Republican period, the state established control of religious affairs and institutions. Although independent religious brotherhoods continued secretly. So Turkish style of totalitarian laicism does not make separation between state and religion but put religion under the control of the state. Turkish laicism as the concept espouses the idea that religion and state are kept distinct and separate, this Turkish version of laicism would appear to be self-contradictory. The Kemalist elite thought that if religion and state are non-separable components in Islam, then the best way to keep Islam out of public and political life would be to place it under the control and supervision of state. Not only does Turkish laicism put religion under state control, but also it does not allow the manifestation of religion in public life. Now the latter discussion will cover the rise of political Islam in Turkey and its evolution after the establishment of Turkish Republic in 1923 to 1980.

Single Party Regime (1923-1945) to Advent of Multiparty Democracy: Turkish Islamic Milieu

Understanding the rise of political Islam in Turkey is important, since Turkey had long been regarded as a model country with secular state, despite its predominantly Muslim population. Upon the demise of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey underwent a crucial transition completely reassessing its national ideology and socio-cultural identity in the newly defined parameters of the Republic of Turkey. Turkish Republic had been founded in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk as the Kemalist, nationalist vis-a-vis laicist state. After the establishment of Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal made some reforms in Turkey. Kemalism was the basis of this reforms. Kemalism refers to the principles of the doctrine
on society and state formulated by Turkey’s founder Mustafa Kemal in 1931. His six principles are republicanism, nationalism, populism, etatism (stateism), laicism and reformism. Immediately after the state’s founding (1923) began the Kemalist Cultural Revolution and educational dictatorship with the goal of westernization. No other Muslim state has experienced such radical changes like - all Quranic schools, religious orders and religious educational institutions were closed; Islamic law was replaced by Swiss civil law, German trade and commercial law, and Italian criminal law; Arabic script was replaced by the Latin script, and the Gregorian calendar replaced the Islamic one; active and passive women suffrage was introduced along with compulsory education; regulations promoting western-style dress were passed and the display of religious symbols in enclosed public places (public schools, universities, hospitals, state buildings, etc.) banned - this is incidentally the only parallel to French laicism.

On March 3, 1924 Turkish parliament passed an education bill bringing all the schools in the country under the Ministry of Education, including the madrasas and other religious schools which had traditionally been run by the ulama. The Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) was founded in 1924 with the goal of permanently depoliticizing majority Sunni Islam through a state takeover of certain religious functions and integrating it into the Kemalist state-building project. All questions of theology, faith and religious ritual were to be decided upon by the Diyanet. Diyanet was to be solely responsible for overseeing the mosques, for the organization of worship and discussion of religious affairs that exclusively involved matters of state. Diyanet was directly governed by the Prime Minister’s office. On April 8, 1924, parliament passed a law abolishing the sharia courts and unifying the entire judicial system under the Justice Ministry with secular laws and secular judges. As a result the ulama was now stripped of its judicial functions in addition to its role in education. In 1925 religious orders (tariqah or tarikats) were prohibited. Mustafa Kemal’s radical decisions didn’t go unchallenged. This secular activities of Mustafa Kemal and the removal of the judicial and educational functions of ulama had left the tariqah as the only Muslim organization with any influence in Turkish society and it was the tariqah, particularly the Naqshbandi order, which now spearheaded the resistance of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s reforms. The first armed uprising occurred in February 1925, when Sheikh Said (1865-1925), a prominent Kurdish member of the Naqshbandi order, led a revolt in south-east Turkey. Sheikh Said wanted to restore Caliphate. Sheikh Said called for jihad against
Kemal's reforms. But by the end of the March 1925, the rebels had been militarily defeated. Later on December 1930, a member of Naqshbandi order called Dervish Mehmet left his home in the town of Manisa and began to muster support for an armed uprising. On December 23, 1930, Dervish Mehmet entered the town of Menemen, where he proclaimed an Islamic revolution and the restoration of the Shari’a. This Menemen uprising was successfully put down by Mustafa Kemal. Turkey was ruled by the single party, Republican People’s Party (RPP) between 1923 and 1945. This period can be called single party regime in Turkey. During this time Mustafa Kemal was the President of RPP until his death on 1938 and his associate Ismet Inonu was the Prime Minister of the Republic. On February 5, 1937, six principles of Kemalism were incorporated in the republican constitution. Prior to that, in 1928 the constitution was amended and the article stating that “the state’s religion is Islam” was deleted. One thing is important that Kemal was not content with separating Islam from politics, but wanted to remove its power base and subordinate it to the state because of the concern that Islam would become a major nest for resistance against the republican ideology and socio-economic reform he was planning to implement. But the reforms of the Kemal was undoubtedly from the top down and imposed by the single party regime. In Kemal era, religion was not completely suppressed or eliminated. It was simply banished from the public sphere and strictly subordinated to a supervised by the state through the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet). Mustafa Kemal brought a radical change by his reforms in Turkey. But most of this reforms were limited to the urban centers, the countryside remained largely untouched until 1950s. Until 1950s the bulk of Turkish population remained isolated and traditional while the center were modern and secular. As a result two Turkey’s coexisted in uneasy harmony: an urban, modern, secular ‘Centre’ and a rural, traditional, religious ‘Periphery’ with little contact between them. Actually there is no doubt that Ataturk’s reform program transformed a substantial proportion of Turkish society. But its penetration was uneven: deeper amongst the urban educated elite of western Turkey who cloaked their lives in many of the accoutrements of western culture and lifestyles; shallower amongst the uneducated rural masses, who remained steeped in the conservative values of traditional Islam.

After the death of Mustafa Kemal in 1938 Ismet Inonu became the President of Turkish Republic. In the aftermath of Ataturk’s death the ruling Republican People’s Party or RPP continued the Kemal legacy but did so in elitist manner. After Ataturk, RPP became unpopular amongst
the people. Even though there was one party rule during the Ataturk regime (1923-1938), as the liberator of the country from foreign invasion Mustafa Kemal was a national hero in the eyes of public. Unlike RPP Chair Ismet Inonu, Ataturk always emphasized communicating with public during his visits to various cities and villages in order to learn their demands. So after Ataturk, it was not only the RPP’s elitist understanding of secularism but also, even more importantly, its economic policies that made the government deeply unpopular among the large majority of Turkish citizen by the end of the World War II (1939-45). In 1945 the population was 76.5% rural, 80.8% of the population was illiterate. The rural population didn’t see any improvement in their standard of living with respect, e.g., to health, education, infrastructure or communications. Even though Turkey didn't participate in World War II, it carried out a partial mobilization as a precaution, and this mobilization was sustained economically by having the central bank simply print more money, thus leading to inflation. This led to a sharp decline in the purchasing power of wage and salary earners. Because of domestic and external pressures, the RPP government decided to transform country into a multi-party system in early 1946. Actually the final change of regime from authoritarian single party to democracy in 1946 came about partially at the insistence of United States that Turkey accepted democratic rule as a condition for membership in the newly founded United Nations. This led a dissident RPP parliamentarians to form the Democratic Party (DP) in January 1946.

The DP had established itself as the center of political opposition to republican understanding of secularism. The DP was led by Celal Bayer, a former RPP Prime Minister and Adnan Menderes, the son of a wealthy land owner. The establishment of a multiparty system in 1946 was an important turning point in the rise of political Islam in Turkey. At the same time, the RPP which had ruled unopposed for more than two decades, was forced to adopt a more tolerant attitude toward Islam. In 1946 election, RPP won a comfortable majority, taking 390 seats in the 465 member assembly. The DP won 65 seats. The election results serves as a warning to the RPP that it would need to be more responsive to public opinion if it was to retain its success at the next election, particularly as it was coming under attack from the DP from being anti-Islamic. At the RPP National Congress in November 1947, Conservatives in the Party called for a relaxation of restrictions on religious education, arguing that Islam would serve as a force for social cohesion and as a bulwark against the spread of communism.
February 1948, RPP deputies in parliament agreed to allow optional religious education in schools, provided that it remained under strict state control. In February 1949 religious lessons were introduced into the syllabus for the last two years of elementary school. On January 1949, the government introduced “Imam-Hatip” Courses consisting of ten -month training courses for Islamic prayer leader and preachers run by Directorate General of Elementary Schools. On 4 June 1949, parliament passed a law providing for the establishment of a Faculty of Theology at Ankara University.\(^{33}\) The RPP’s educational reforms were accompanied by a relaxation of the restrictions on religious instruction outside the state system. Members of Tariqah who had been providing Qur’an courses now able to emerge into the open and expand their activities. On 29 March 1950, the RPP restructured and expanded the Diyanet appointing 941 new personal. In 1940s explicitly Islamist political parties began to emerge. Between the years 1945 and 1950, twenty-four political parties were founded, and at least eight had explicit references in their party programs to Islamic themes.\(^{34}\)

**Democratic Party (DP) in Power and Islamization**

It was not until 1950, 27 years after the establishment of the Republic and 12 years after Mustafa Kemal’s death that the ruling secularist struck out in another direction. They felt confident enough to stage a multiparty election. The election was a turning point of the history of political Islam in the republican period. A new group, the DP under the leadership of Adnan Menderes, a conservative farmer and land owner, came to power and began to move away from strict secular control of religion towards what was more comfortable for most people of Turkey. As opposed to Mustafa Kemal’s revolutionary RPP, the DP reflected and emphasized tradition the new ruling party quickly received great support from majority. Anatolian peasantry and small townspeople who had a hard time to digest the Kemalist reforms and the “Westernization”. Consequently, a softer attitude was adopted by the state toward religion. The Democrats promised changes in the understanding. In the first month after they came to power, they began to implement some of these changes. For example, devout Muslims who wanted to make the pilgrimage to Mecca were allowed to make transfer of Turkish liras to foreign exchange; the call to prayer (ezan) was permitted in its original Arabic version; the tombs of holy saints were reopened for visits; the state radio could now broadcast prayers during religious holidays; the budget of the Presidency of the Religious
Affairs was increased; a number of religious schools and religious program at the university level were opened to train religious personnel. All this activity had been restricted in the single party years. Religious classes were made mandatory in public schools. In short, the rigidity of the nationalist republican program began to subside.

In January 1951, the DP announced that it would replace the Imam-Hatip courses initiated by the RPP with full-fledged Imam-Hatip schools. In October 1951, seven Imam-Hatip schools were opened in different provincial centers across Turkey. By 1958, when the first 193 students graduated, the number of Imam-Hatip schools had risen to 19 and the students to 3,476. The DP began to increase the funding of Diyanet. Between 1950 and 1951, the Diyanet budget increased from 2.9 million to 7.8 million Turkish Lira. The DP also embarked on a mosque building campaign. In the period 1950-60, a total of 15,000 new mosques were built in Turkey the equivalent of more than four new mosques each day. Tariqah was freer to operate its activities. The DP actively courted Islamist with a substantial popular following. The most prominent was Said Nursi (1876-1960). At the time of 1950 election, Nursi was being held in preventive detention. But when DP came to the power it announced an amnesty and Nursi was released. From then Nursi became a strong supporter of DP. Not only that, DP forged an alliance with the Nurcus in exchange for their electoral support. This led to a resurgence of the Islamic brotherhood, their increased influence on politics and relaxation of DP policy in secularism.

Nurcu means the follower of the light. Said Nursi was the leader of the Nurcu. Nursi began his religious training in the 1880s. In the first years of Turkish Republic, he developed large following. Nurcus were the strong opposing of the Kemal's reform. They strove to protect the cultural role of Islam. But they grew as a powerful political force only in the DP’s rule in 1950s and later in the 1960s. In the election of 1957, the DP won only 48.6% of the vote-down nearly 10% points on 1954 but still enough to give it 428 of the 610 seats in parliament. The RPP increased its vote to 41.4% and took 178 seats. In 1959 DP established “Higher Institute of Islam” at Istanbul University. But the DP appears to have been more concerned with courting the religious vote than introducing Islamist politics. Through 1959 and early 1960, the DP became more authoritarian, tightening press censorship and attempting to curb the activities of the RPP. The DP’s increasing authoritarianism galvanized the Turkish military. Through the 1950s,
many in the Turkish military had been alarmed by what they regarded as the DP's erosion of Atatürk’s secularist legacy. Although Atatürk had removed the military as an institution from the political arena, many in the officer corps still regarded themselves as the guardian of the nation.

**Explicit Rise of Political Islam in the End of 1960s**

On May 27, 1960, Turkish military staged a coup against the DP government. The aim of the 1960 coup was to preserve the secular Turkish state from a variety of ideological threats: leftist, ultranationalist and specially Islamist. Under military rule, a constituent assembly was formed; it prepared a draft of the liberal 1961 constitution, which was ratified by a referendum in the same year. The 1961 constitution guaranteed civil liberties, such as freedom of association and the press, worship and religious belief and education along with the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike. Actually the 1961 constitution expanded the scope for associational freedom, which led to the proliferation of autonomous groups, including religious groups. Religious groups that had resurfaced in the 1960s and mushroomed in the 1970s. 

Besides, the 1961 constitution had reaffirmed the secular nature of the Turkish state. According to Article 19 of the constitution, “no individual can exploit religion in order to change the social, economic, political or legal structure of the state according to religious principles, neither can he use religion to further his personal or political interest.” A constitutional court was established in the post-coup period, with the power of judicial review over the decisions of the parliament and cabinet. In addition, a national security council (NSC) was formed. Under the 1961 constitution, both the judiciary and military gained greater autonomy. After the military coup of 1960 the DP was outlawed and its leadership was tried by a mixed civilian-military tribunal. Prime Minister Adnan Menderes and some other top leaders of DP were sentenced to death.

In February 1961, the Justice Party (JP) was founded which inherited the legacy of the DP as a party representing rural interest against the military-bureaucratic alliance. JP continued the same “soft” policy with respect to religion and religiously based political ideologies began to proliferate. JP formed as a center-right party. JP had its origin from DP. Many of the DP leaders and supporters joined the newly formed JP. In the October 1961 general elections, RPP secured 36.7% of the votes and 173 seats in the parliament. Despite of being a newly formed party having only eight months experience JP stood the second position with
the 34.8% of the votes and 158 seats. This is owing to the reason that JP got the former DP vote and vote from the religious conservatives. However, the RPP led four different coalition governments between 1961 and the 1965 general elections. The coalition government continued the DP policy of allocating substantial state resources for religious institutions (mosques) and prayer leader and preacher (Imam-Hatip) school. The RPP led governments continued to build new mosques at around 15,000 per year the same rate as the DP and opened another seven Imam-Hatip schools, taking the total to 26. The aim of the RPP-led coalition government was to produce “enlightened men of religion”. RPP-led coalition government implemented a number of policies designed to propagate enlightened Islam: the Diyanet started publication of enlightened sermons to be delivered in mosques; the Qur’an was published in Turkish translation; and sociology, economics and law courses were added to the curriculum of the prayer leader and preacher school in order to educate secular Imams. Enrollment in Imam-Hatip schools was more than doubled during the four years following the military intervention of 1960. At that time enlightened Islam was considered as the bulwark against communism and religious fanaticism. During the election of 1965, religion reemerged as one of the main instruments in interparty competition. After the death of JP’s leader Gumuspala in 1964, the JP was led by Suleyman Demirel. He was born in 1924 and son of a religious family. His father was a poor peasant from the western Anatolian province of Isparta. In the 1965 and 1969 general elections the center-right JP became the governing party by securing 52.9% and 46.6% of the vote consecutively. JP maintained its alliance with leaders of prominent Islamic brotherhoods, the Nurcus and the Naqshbendis in order to cultivate rural conservative votes. In turn, the Islamic brotherhoods tried to infiltrate into the state bureaucracy. In the period between 1966 and 1968 the JP opened 43 Imam-Hatip schools; compared with total of 26 that had been opened in the previous 15 years.

By the end of the 1960s, the JP government was unable to deal with the worsening political polarization of the radical left and the ultra-national and the growing political violence - including murders, kidnappings, bank robberies and bombings between the two groups. Furthermore, there was also a polarization within the military between the left and the right, which led to second military intervention on March 12, 1971. Actually religiously based political ideologies began to proliferate towards the end of the 1960s. Explicitly in 1969, political Islam emerged in Turkey. In 1969, Necmettin Erbakan founded the National View
Movement (*MilliGorus*) and formed the National Order Party (NOP) in January 1970 with the support of the leading figure of the *Naqshbendi* religious order and the head of the related Iskender Pasa congregation Mehmet Zahid Kotku. Erbakan’s *MilliGorus* movement proposes a national culture and education, industrialization and social justice based on the principles of Islam.  

Actually by the *MilliGorus* movement, political Islam emerged as an independent political force. *MilliGorus* movement is far more radical than it commonly assumed. Led by Erbakan, this movement had its origin in the *Naqshbendi* religious order, which has gradually become a dominant social force in Turkish Islamic circles. *Naqshbendi* is a Sufi order but different from most Sufi orders. Sufi orders are known for their esoteric nature, in contrast to orthodox Islam. This has often implied an emphasis on the mystical experience at the expense of strict following of *Shari’a*. However, it would be a mistake to view the *Naqshbendi* order through this lens. Indeed, the order stands out among Sufi orders for its compatibility with orthodoxy, official Islam. *Naqshbendi* differs from most Sufi orders. *Naqshbendi* order had the strict adherence to the *Shari’a* with mysticism only being a “second story” on top of the fulfillment of formal Islamic duties.

Mehmet Zahid Kotku was the informal leader of Turkish political Islam, promoting the *Naqshbendi* doctrines. He was born in 1897. He took over the Iskender Pasa mosque of Istanbul in 1958 and remained there until his death in 1980. Kotku was influenced by anti-colonialist thinking. He supported the acquisition of modern science and technology as much as he opposed the cultural value of the West. Kotku's ultimate goal was worldly. Kotku directly encouraged a generation of pious Muslim to take position in the state bureaucracy, strictly the process of infiltration and takeover of state institution that would help political Islam dominate Turkey.

*MilliGorus* movement emerged in the mid-1960s when a group of Islamic rooted intellectuals and members of parliament within the ruling JP became alienated from the party’s modern and secular elite. Necmettin Erbakan was the founder of Turkish first Islamist party, the National Order Party (NOP). NOP’s ideological counterpart was the *Milli Gorus* movement, which was built on the ideological foundation of *Naqshbendi* order (more accurately *Naqshbendi-Khalidi* order) adding to its anti-western views, anti-Semitic, Pan-Islamic and totalitarian strands it drew from global trends in political Islam in the 1960s and 1970s particularly in Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Actually the emergence of political Islam in Turkish scene is not an isolated phenomenon. In fact it was part and parcel of the global emergence of political Islam. The
Muslim Brotherhood emerged as the primary international group advocating Islamism. Formed in Egypt in 1928, its most influential thinker has been Sayyid Qutb, whose seminal work of 1969, *Milestones*, laid out both a grand strategy and tactical plan for Islamist to seize political power and replace secular governments with Islamist states by generating a critical mass of followers in government and society at large. Erbakan was heavily influenced by the writings of Sayyid Qutb. In the 1960s Erbakan emerged as a crucial conduit of the Muslim Brotherhood into Turkey. Erbakan believed Turkey was in a moral decay due to western influences. He advocated purifying society by restoring Islam’s predominant role in it. Erbakan and his parties were also influenced by Islamist writers like Hassan-al-Banna (1906-49), Abu-Ala-Maududi (1903-79) whose work was translated into Turkish in the 1970s. However, after the military intervention in 1971, the NOP was closed down by the constitutional court in the same year for using religion for political purposes. It re-emerged before the 1973 national elections under the name of the National Salvation Party (NSP) and gained a position such that no parliamentary majority could form on either right or left without its support, giving it considerable leverage. In 1974, Erbakan joined the coalition government of Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit. In the four years between January 1974 and January 1978, the NSP was in power as a partner in a coalition government for a total of forty months out of forty eight months. Erbakan was not only a decision maker of NSP but also a sole ideologue. In 1975 he published a booklet named *Milli Görus* (National View) detailing party’s goals. The booklet included a mixture of general principles and specific proposals. This booklet or manifesto decried the de-Islamisation of Turkey and called for the return of Islam to a predominant position in determining national identity and organizing society. This manifesto also defended the right of women to work insisting that their primary role was in the family as mothers. Actually this relegates women to secondary status. In foreign policy Erbakan advocated a close ties with Muslim world and a withdrawal from NATO.

When NSP came to the power with a coalition government in 1974, it reopened the *Imam-Hatip* middle schools which was closed by military-backed technocrat government in 1972 and launched a massive expansion program. At the beginning of the 1971-72 academic year there had been 72 *Imam-Hatip* middle schools. This increase to 101 in 1974-75, 171 in 1975-76, 248 in 1976-77 and 334 in 1977-78 an increase of 464% in four years. NSP undoubtedly regarded the *Imam-Hatip* schools as a mean of raising religiosity in the society. It also sought to increase
The influence of pious Muslims in the state apparatus by attempting to fill the bureaucracy with party supporters. Attempting to make the society more religious did not go in vain but it was more visible by wearing headscarves in a good number by women. During the late 1970s not only did women wearing headscarves becoming increasingly visible on the streets of towns and cities they were also appearing albeit in still very small numbers amongst the skilled workforce and in the Universities as students. Violence and Political chaos continued throughout the 1970s with Islamists and leftists repeatedly clashing with right-leaning nationalist. In 1980, the Turkish military launched another coup and since then political Islam in Turkey entered in a new phase which called the state- led Islamization and Turkish - Islamist synthesis.

Conclusion

On the basis of preceding discussion it can be deduced that the rise of political Islam has its roots in the reform undertaken in the late Ottoman period and in the nature of the political transformation undertaken after the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923 by the Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. Particularly, after the foundation of Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal carried out a series of reforms that took the Islam out of political life. But most of reforms were limited to the urban centers. The rural areas were largely untouched until 1950s. So a large number of Turkish people remained traditional and isolated which urban centers were modern and secular. In Kemal era religion was not completely eliminated. It was simply banished from the public sphere and strictly subordinated to a supervised by the state. So earlier on the advent of multiparty democracy in the 1950s, Islamism had no expression in the political system of Turkey. With the transition to democracy and multiparty system in 1946 also began the competition for votes and thus the exploitation and politicization of religion from below. Actually the establishment of the multiparty system in 1946 was an important turning point in the rise of political Islam in Turkey. At first RPP adopted a more tolerant attitude towards Islam. It was because of gaining more rural votes. Later on, after coming to power DP in 1950 it religitimized Islam and traditional rural values. This can be reckoned as the beginning of the Politicization of Islam from below or marginal level. After the coup of 1960, tolerance towards religious force was going on. In this less restrictive environment, religious force were able to form their own separate political party. From Necmettin Erbakan in 1969, political Islam emerged as an independent force. In 1969 he started his MilliGorus movement. Religious based political
ideologies began to proliferate towards the end of 1960s. He first established an Islamic party in 1970. In the 1970s religious right or political Islam emerged as a separate political movement under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan. Since then Turkish political Islam became the supporter of anti-western, anti-Semitic and pan-Islamist view. In 1980 the third military coup took place in the political scene of Turkey. From the period of 1923 to 1980 Turkish history of political Islam was the politicization of religion from below. But after that politicization of religion started from above which is called state-led Islamization. That is the different part of the story of political Islam in Turkey which does not fall within the ambit of this paper.
Notes and References


2. Ibid.


6. Binnaz Toprak, op.cit, p.28


10. Ibid. p.118


14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.


17. Ibid. p. 8

18. Binnaz Toprak, op.cit. p.32


22. Cemal Karakas, *op.cit.* p. 9


30. Banu Elİgür, *op.cit.* p. 50


32. Gareth Jenkins, *op.cit.* p. 115


34. Banu Elİgür, *op.cit.* p. 52

35. Binnaz Toprak, *op.cit.* p. 34

36. Gareth Jenkins, *op.cit.* p. 118


40. Gareth Jenkins, *op.cit.* pp. 122-23

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42. Banu Elİgür, op.cit. p. 60
43. Gareth Jenkins, op.cit. p. 126
44. Banu Elİgür, op.cit. p. 61
46. Banu Elİgür, op.cit. p. 63
47. Gareth Jenkins, op.cit. p. 128
49. Banu Elİgür, op.cit. p.66
51. Ibid. p.14
52. Ibid. p.15
53. Ibid. p.16
54. Zeyno Baren, op.cit. p.32
56. Zeyno Baren, op.cit. p. 35
57. Gareth Jenkins, op.cit. p. 136