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Islamists on Wire: The View of Islamist Journals Towards Government Policies in Turkey During the 1980s

İslamcı Dergilerin 1980'lerde Türkiye'deki Hükümet Politikalarına Bakışı

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Abstract
This paper aims to extrapolate the different political stances of Islamist actors with respect to their reciprocal interaction with the ANAP governments in the 1980s in Turkey. Based on a selection of Islamist publications, this article analyzes the views of prominent traditional Islamic groups such as Erenköy and İskenderpaşa orders and Islamist authors about government policies during the period between 1983-1991 in which the ANAP governed as the single party. The analysis will take place on three subjects that shaped the aforementioned period as well as the entirety of Turkish-Ottoman modernization. The subject of economy reveals that Islamists benefitted from neoliberal policies while taking a critical position towards it. In terms of culture, as the second subject, Islamists criticized the ANAP governments for encouraging individualist-hedonistic tendencies and invited them to Islamize the realms of education and culture. The subject of international relations, on the other hand, was dominated by Turkey's possible accession to the European Community (EC) on which various Islamist groups tried to have an impact by steering the ANAP's foreign policies.

Keywords
Islamism, Motherland Party, Neoliberalism, Islamic communities, Islamist publications

Öz
Bu çalışma, İslamcılar arasındaki çeşitli politik tutumları, hükümet politikalarıyla karşılıklı etkileşimi hesaba katarak açığa çıkarmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu hedef çerçevesinde, ANAP'ın tek başına hükümette olduğu 1983-1991 arası dönemde, entelektüel-politik tartışmaları içeren seçilmiş İslamcı süreli yayınları temel alarak, belirli başlı İslamcı grupların ANAP hükümetlerinin politikalarına yönelik bakışını irdelemektedir. Önce 1980'lerde İslami çevrelerin politik pozisyonları serimlenecek daha sonra İslami grupların ve İslamcı yazarların yürüttüğü temel tartışmalar ve hükümete yönelik eleştirileri incelenecektir. Bu çerçevede döneme damgasını vuran ve Batılılaşma ekseninde tartışılan üç boyut belirlenmiştir. İlk boyut, ekonomik alandaki gelişmelere dairdir: İslamcıların bir yönüyle neoliberal politikalardan dolaylı olarak istifade ettiği diğer yandan bu politikaları çeşitli yönlerden eleştirdiği gösterilecektir. İkinci boyut kültürel alana dairdir: İslamcı gruplar hükümetin bireyci-hazcı eğilimleri teşvik ettiğini iddia ederken eğitimin ve kültürün İslamileştirilmesi için hükümeti daha fazla adım atmaya davet etmiştir. Üçüncü boyut dış politika alanıdır: İslamcı grupların ANAP'ın dış politika tercihlerini etkilemeye gayret ettikleri, AT üyeliğine dair tartışmalar üzerinden kanıtlanmaya çalışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler
İslamcılık, Anavatan Partisi, neoliberalizm, İslami cemaatler, İslamcı yayınlar

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Introduction

In recent years, there has been a surge in the number of academic works on Islamist political actors in Turkey. However, these studies hardly focus on the diverse positions taken by Islamist actors in relation to government policies in the 1980s, widely known as the "revival period." An analysis of the different political trajectories of Islamist groups throughout the 1980s will not only provide insights into the scope and layers of their relationship with the single-ruling party at the time, namely Motherland Party (ANAP), but also be instrumental in understanding the internal debates and strategies of power of Islamists in the 1990s and 2000s. Islamism gained an advantage over the left/socialism and doctrinal nationalism in terms of both state cadres and organizational capacity in the aftermath of the 1980 coup d'etat in Turkey. That is because the junta regime provided Islamist actors with ample maneuver room as it relied on what is often called "Turkish-Islamic synthesis" in the restoration of the official ideology and mobilized Islamic motives for the purpose of envisioning a solidarist-corporatist society (Şaylan, 1992: 105-114; Yavuz, 1997: 67-70). Islamic groups and Islamist authors in Turkey sought to enhance their social and political influences by using various instruments, primarily publishing, in the second half of the 1980s – a period dominated by ANAP – during which the civilian politics executed the general principles of the "Turkish-Islamic synthesis" (Salt, 1995; Öztan, 2019). As the single ruling party from 1983 to 1991 and the spearhead of the neoliberal transformation in Turkey, the ANAP restructured the positions of all political and social actors within the Turkish political spectrum, including Islamist actors. In that respect, different forms of relations of Islamic circles with the ANAP governments should be taken into consideration in the examination of Islamism in the 1980s.

Based on the intellectual and political debates in the prominent Islamist journals of the era, this study aims to analyze Naksi groups, especially Erenköy and İskenderpaşa orders representing traditional Islamic organization as well as the radical Islamist circles that were anti-democratic system and flourished in the 1970s.

This research concentrates on Naksibendi Sufi orders due to their considerable influence on the right-wing politics since the beginning of multi-party system and particularly during the ANAP governments with respect to their strategy of working "within the system". This research also refers to the Islamist circles that were "anti-systemic" and accordingly kept their distance from the ruling parties. However, on the level of intellectual debates, it is hard to provide a clear-cut separation between traditional Islamic organizations and the "anti-system" Islamist circles that give their converging views on issues like anti-Western skepticism and the place of interest-rate in the banking system. This article aims to explore the similarities and differences between these groups by drawing on the arguments provided in their publications. The content analysis method will be used to examine the view of Islamist journals towards ANAP government policies during the 1980s.

Following the return to civilian rule, traditional Islamic communities and Islamist intellectuals started to convey their views to the Islamist base and beyond on a variety topic ranging from politics to everyday life in Islamist journals. In addition, they tried to affect government policy with their published views and debates. In his study of Islamist publications, Doğan (1994: 85-86) separates the Islamist journals in the 1980s and 1990s

into two main categories. Journals such as Nurcus' *Sızıntı*, and Kadiris' *İcmal* and *Öğüt* predominantly focus on religious themes of Sufism rather than making concrete political demands or pressing for the revision of the existing regime. *Altınoluk* published by the Erenköy Naksibendi order along with *İslam Dergisi, İlim ve Sanat, Kadın ve Aile* by the Iskenderpasa order, on the other hand, negotiated between the trends of Sufism and more radical political inclinations among Islamists while presenting clearer political demands. These publications also included Turkish-Islamist motives as well as Islamist ideas. In this context, *İslam Dergisi, İlim ve Sanat, Kadın ve Aile,* and *Altınoluk* were addressed in order to observe the views of the main branches of Naksibendis that pursued a politics of balance with the ANAP governments.

Doğan (1994: 83) also enumerated *Mektup, Tevhid, Kararlı Genç Adam, Yeryüzü, Değişim, Taraf, Girişim,* etc. among the journals that embraced radical Islamist theses of the time. Some of them such as *Tevhid, Kararlı Genç Adam,* and *Yeryüzü* were published at the end of the ANAP era; others, such as *Değişim* belonged entirely to the post-ANAP era. *Girişim, Mektup,* and *Diriliş*[1] were long-running journals and published by Islamist authors with no ties to the existing Islamic groups that aimed to influence the government's policies indirectly, on the other hand, they are a part of this study due to their distant stance towards ANAP governments. *Ribat*, a radical Naksi journal that kept its distance from the government was also included in this study.

In recent years, although there are plenty of articles and PhD theses that examined Islamist journals (e.g. Çakır, 2011; Özçetin, 2011; Maviş 2017; Bakacak 2020), these studies rarely elaborate the political views of Islamist journals towards political power in Turkey. This study differs from others in terms of the subject it deals with. The agenda items can be categorized under three headings. The first one comprises Islamist critiques on the economic policies of the era. The second heading is the cultural issues such as the alleged moral crisis, individualism, and hedonism, which were popular subjects among the Islamist intellectuals of the time. Here, these subjects will be handled in the context of consumption culture and the media. The last heading involves different approaches to Turkey's developing relations with the European Community (EC). Each of these topics echoed the long-standing Islamist critique of Westernization and shaped the Islamist literature that was produced throughout the neoliberal transition. This paper claims that Naksi groups, especially İskenderpaşa and Erenköy orders, despite their different opinions and occasional onslaughts on the government, to a large extent, avoided direct confrontation with the ANAP, but rather pursued a politics of balance. Non-affiliated Islamist authors that kept their distance from the government sharply criticized capitalism, modern forms of hedonism, and Westernization but abstained from taking a defiant stand against the ANAP in general. This situation can be explained with reference to the fact that Islamism in the 1980s had not yet shaped its own perspective of attaining the political power in Turkey.

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1   *Diriliş* published by Sezai Karakoç touched upon a large variety of subjects including literary-philosophical debates and more up-to-date issues like inflation rates and accession to the EC. *Girişimi*, on the other hand, occasionally broke away from the strategy of maintaining the politics of balance between Sufi orders and the ANAP governments as the journal deployed a rather "oppositional" rhetoric towards the latter and expressed scepticism towards the notion of democracy

Islamists in the context of the ANAP's Restructuring of Turkey in the 1980s

Although the 1980 coup had its toll on *Milli Görüş* (National Outlook) politics, as some Islamist politicians were imprisoned, most Islamist actors maintained their place and power. Moreover, they saw a political opportunity in the post-coup period in which the left was almost entirely suppressed. Abstaining from criticizing the coup openly, Islamist political actors endeavored to increase their impact on politics indirectly, and yet effectively. Their strategy was to engage with the power struggles among the ruling classes while, at the same time, to step up their efforts in the area of publishing with the goal of building an ideological coherence among different Islamic circles. The absence of *Milli Görüş* in the form of a political party running in the 1983 general elections channeled conservative electors towards the ANAP. Nakşibendi İskenderpaşa order endorsed Özal's ANAP in the 1983 elections and obtained a certain status among groups with Islamic ties in the party. The Erenköy Nakşibendi order, a prominent branch of the Nakşibendis, just like the İskenderpaşa order, supported Milli Görüş in the pre-1980 period and endorsed the ANAP in 1983 (Yavuz, 2003: 144-145). Most decisively, the majority of Nakşibendis threw their weight behind the party and, in return, Nakşibendis would be given a privileged status in the ANAP (Eligür, 2010: 120). Süleymancıs took side with the ANAP in the 1980s while they heavily invested in building student dormitories as a source of recruitment (Şaylan, 1995: 162-163). There was a disagreement among the branches of the Nurcu movement whether to support Özal's ANAP or not. The Yeni Asya group saw the party as a product of the coup d'etat and chose to oppose it while other Nurcu branches were supporting. The Yeni Asya group, on the other hand, sided with the True Path Party (DYP) (Yavuz, 2003: 175; Yükleyen, 2008: 385).

When founded in 1983, the ANAP was largely built upon its leader figure Turgut Özal, who had been an economic technocrat in the 1970s and was from conservative background and Nakşibendi order (Salt, 1995: 17). The party founders were mostly composed of individuals from the private sector and former members of the parties that were closed by the junta regime (Ergüder, 1991: 155). On the eve of the general elections in November 1983, the ANAP laid special emphasis on its economic promises and obtained an indisputable electoral success.

The ANAP stepped into politics at a time when the New Right was on the rise across the world. Özal and his party immediately took on the political stage as the leading actors of restructuring Turkey in accord with the requirements of global capitalism in the 1980s. The ANAP's political program also coincided with that of the junta regime, that is, the claim to start a "clean slate" in politics by erasing the residues of the earlier paradigm. Accordingly, Özal did not miss any opportunities to underline the ANAP's difference from the political parties of the pre-1980 period as he delineated both his party's ideological line and the ANAP cabinets in accordance with the idea of neoliberal transformation. The ANAP developed its own structure as ideologically eclectic by following the examples of the New Right governments around the world, which combined neoliberalism with conservatism as in the cases of Thatcherism and Reaganism.

In line with its ideologically eclectic organization, the ANAP's claim to involve all four major political inclinations in Turkey, namely nationalism, conservatism, liberalism, and "social justice", had two advantages: the veiling of possible crises triggered by the

neoliberal transformation and engulfing the social base of the political parties closed by the junta regime. However, these four political inclinations were not represented equally within the party. According to Feroz Ahmad (1985: 219), it was not clear to what extent the ANAP embraced the legacy of the Justice Party (AP), the dominant center-right party in the 1960s and 1970s. In addition, the influence of the National Salvation Party (MSP) and partially the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), respectively the Islamist and nationalist parties in the pre-1980 Turkish politics, was more tangible in the party cadres. In addition, the role of social democracy within the party was considerably weak. This inequality of representation of different political inclinations reflected itself in the first ANAP cabinet as its conservative character was quite visible (Ahmad, 1985; 218-219). Yet, Özal not only was able to hold together conservatives and liberals until the early 1990s, but also made the traditional networks of Naksi orders compatible with the social fabric of cities, hence contributed to the legitimization of emerging views about the role of Islam in urban life (Yavuz, 2003: 75).

In this context, except some Nurcu groups and radical Islamists, Naksi groups generally found Özal's policy of "combining the four political leanings" reasonable and largely supported the coalescing of the neoliberal strategy of capital accumulation with the ideological tenets of neo-conservatism. There were three major factors for the Islamist support. The first factor was economic and related to the incentives given to conservative business circles in Anatolian towns to invest and accumulate capital in the new growing markets. The second factor was socio-cultural. The ANAP governments' frequent references to the Ottoman heritage lay the ground for the rise of Islamist publishing and rendered conservative actors more visible in the domains of culture and education. The third factor was directly political, and it entailed the welcoming of Islamists to the party and state cadres, as Şimşek (2004: 121) points out: "Turgut Özal's Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi, ANAP), given its strong Islamist/conservative faction, started to place more and more conservative people in state cadres."

Naksi political actors, who actively participated in the ANAP, climbed up the stairs in politics and bureaucracy by virtue of their relations with sufi orders during the ANAP governments (Güney-Ayata & Ayata, 2001: 95). According to Metin Heper, a significant number of ultra-nationalists and militant-Islamists took on crucial roles and responsibilities in the party bureaucracy. However, for Heper, this situation derived from the lack of deliberation in recruiting members to the party due to time shortage (Heper, 1990: 332). Our argument, on the other hand, is that, instead of being an unintended consequence, this was a deliberate choice that aimed at gathering all constituents of the right-wing politics under the banner of the ANAP and absorbing the potential of "anti-parliamentarian" politics.

Naksi cadres partaking active politics in the ANAP declared their loyalty to parliamentarian democracy throughout the ANAP's consecutive electoral victories. Leaving aside some of their reservations, Islamic groups were careful not to directly get in conflict with center-right politics or their promises of political and social change. On the contrary, the political actors from Islamic background usually contributed to the consolidation of conservative-populist discourse, which was built upon economic growth and wealth increase, with religious motives. However, they also made maneuvers in

alliance with the nationalist party cadres in order to balance the influence of liberals within the ANAP and to make conservative views dominant especially in educational and cultural policies of the ANAP governments (Ergüder, 1991: 160). Islamist circles that were more skeptical towards the ANAP, on the other hand, remained suspicious of the structural and cultural transformations accompanied by the policies of "opening up" and "democratization" that were associated with Özal. These circles assumed a critical stance towards the ANAP governments on a wide range of subjects such as foreign relations and economic policies. Among them were groups and individuals that remained loyal to the *Milli Görüş*, writers who proclaimed to be independent Islamist intellectuals, and spokespersons of the Islamist circles that did not openly endorse the ANAP. These actors decried Özal's pragmatism in the political field and criticized the ANAP governments' policies of encouraging consumption culture in Turkey. In the following sections, these variety of Naksi groups and Islamist authors' views were examined thematically.

The Economic Dimension: Economic Governance and the Neoliberal Transformation

As advocates of the economic decisions announced on January 24th, 1980, Özal and the ANAP claimed that protectionist economic policies had made the Turkish industry inefficient and uncompetitive. Accordingly, the ANAP made it top priority to replace the model of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) with an economic model that relied on export-oriented growth and the establishment of competitive market rules. Being a follower of a certain notion of "industrial Darwinism," Özal invested on the idea that large segments of the Turkish society would benefit such economic reconstruction, and consequently the Turkish population would have access to products of better quality and at cheaper prices (Ahmad: 1985: 221). In this process, some measures were introduced to liberalize foreign trade and capital transactions, and new fiscal policy was carried out step by step (Brown 1988: 69).

Islamic groups kept careful tabs on these promises and at first thought that the government would take positive steps towards economic recovery (e.g. *Hilal*, 1984: 2). They considered the enabling of "Islamic banking," [2] which excludes the collection and payment of interest, as one of the positive steps on the account of the government. However, despite such developments, it later became clear that the traditional Islamic emphasis on "less consumption, more saving" was at clear odds with the ANAP's policies of incentivizing consumption, especially in the years following 1987.

Özal considered the curtailing of power of the traditional bureaucracy as imperative in order to establish a new economic and political hegemony because, in his view, the traditional bureaucracy would not approve the ANAP's objectives or could not keep up with the neoliberal transformation (Heper, 1990: 326). In order to resolve the grievances of domestic and foreign capital-owners, Özal devised legal mechanisms that allowed the government to bypass the established bureaucratic procedures in line with the purported requirement for quick decision-making mechanisms (Ahmad, 1985: 219). Initially, Naksi groups and Islamist authors were ambivalent towards this transformation. On the one

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2   The first "interest-free" bank, Albarak Türk Finance Institution Inc., was founded in Turkey in 1985. During the same period, articles applauding banking without interest were published. See. Sevilgen, 1985: 23-29; Gürdoğan, 1985: 30-33.

hand, they were content with the diminishing power of the old Kemalist bureaucracy, which had often acted as a political rival to Islamist politics. On the other hand, the influence of Islamic circles in these newly assigned cadres remained insignificant and that caused disappointment within the Islamist politics.

In general, Naksi political actors were not discontent with the erosion of the traditional bureaucracy as a result of the neoliberal economic transformation in Turkey in the 1980s. Nevertheless, this trend raised significant concern among Islamist writers regarding the possible detrimental effects of technocratization on social sphere and the possible takeover of economic governance by the growingly asymmetrical relations with global capitalism. Anti-imperialist motives, especially the Third-Worldist Islamist theses, came to the forefront particularly among Islamist writers and scholars who cautioned against the tendency to fetishize economic growth in the ANAP governments. Within these circles (such as *Girişim, Mektup, Ribat, etc.*), the distinction between center and periphery countries, relations of dependency caused by the capitalist system, and Turkey's unequal relations with the capitalist centers were among the topics that were frequently discussed, provided that they were formulated in Islamist framework (Özdür, 1986). Herein, *Girişim* quoted from economist Beşir Hamitoğulları who attended the session with unionist. Hamitoğulları (1988: 50) claims: "Turkey has been implementing a wild, underdeveloped capitalist model that has been dependent on Western countries. for seven years. Both military regime and following civilian regime were founded for this purpose. This is a model, therefore nothing would change whether master or apprentice take power".

The critique of capitalist economy was so sharp in the Islamist journals such as *Girişim*, *Mektup,* and *Ribat*. For example, Sabiha Ünlü (1987: 3-4) from *Mektup* claims that capitalist ethics was not in accordance with the Islamic ethics. Adil Ünlü (1986: 11) implicitly criticized Islamist actors with business ties to the ANAP for using Islam to legitimize their capitalist ambitions. Nevertheless, the Islamist critique of industrialism and free market economy in the 1980s did not lead to the acknowledgment of the structural conflict between capital and labor. On the contrary, several pieces published in Islamist journals suggested that there was no distinction between the capital owner and the worker in Islam (e.g., Taha, 1982: 17-18). In these writings, authors offer prescriptions such as that the employer should pay fair wages to the worker on time (e.g. *Mektup*, 1985: 7; 1987: 14) while the worker was to bear the responsibility of protecting the means of production of Islam.[3] Such configuration relied on the imagined relations of productions that were shaped around the shared Islamic beliefs, community ties, and relations of fellow-townsmenship. Therefore, it defined the newly flourishing capital of the towns in Anatolia in the 1980s.

The rapidly surging inflation in the years after 1985 became one of the chronic problems that the ANAP could not deal with. Islamist journals touched upon the issue in varying manners. However, all these journals underlined the government's failure to fight with inflations by referring conservative scholars (*İslam*, 1986a; *Altınoluk*, 1989;

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3   Taha, for instance, writes: "The logic of *laissez faire* in capitalist economic system has no currency in Islam. Concepts such as slow-down strike, strike […] and lockout are the products of *jahiliyyah* systems and they are the gravestones of an area of exploitation at the root of which lie injustice. In Islamic standards, there are notions like working for Allah and earning honest living. Pious workers know that they are responsible for employers' properties" [my translation] (1983: 14).

Panel, 1989, etc.) Islamist writers that wrote on economic issues in Islamist journals, pointed at the rising inflation as an outcome of the flaws within the free market system (e.g., Gürdoğan, 1986a: 8) and affected only "true Muslims" in a negative way (Ünlü, 1988: 5-6). While some of these pieces involved elaborate analyses of inflation, others reduced inflation into an inevitable outcome of the existing relations of production.[4] Market actors, and particularly executives of private finance, resorted to liberal theses to explain the ongoing high levels of inflation rather than associating it with the risks inherent to global capitalism (e.g. Akın, 1985: 45-46). A number of authors, on the other hand, laid emphasis on the political and cultural character of inflation, in addition to its economic dimension, in order to draw attention to the increase of consumption as a major source of the problem.

Anti-Western Islamist writers, such as Yılmazer (1988) and Keçeli (1989), asserted that economic dependency and culture of consumption were two sides of the same coin. According to them, the United States and European countries had transformed the Muslim populations in Third World countries into consumption societies and prisoners of inflation. As they argued, such processes were carried out by the secular subjects in those countries, these Islamist actors located the main social fault line between the "pious" and "secular" segments of the society (e.g., Yılmazer, 1988: 46). Their analyses of the Turkish economy were reflections of this general overview.

The free flow of imported goods in Turkish market in the second half of the 1980s caused concerns among Islamists especially with regard to its potential psychological effects – overcoming the feeling of deprivation and the rise of mass consumption – on the wealthier segments of the society with enough purchasing power to afford these goods. Conceiving of consumption incentives by both the government and market forces as a form of "Westoxification," Islamist journals often depicted the rise of inflation as an outcome of "alienation," a substitute term for "being like Westerners." In an interview with the journal of *İslam*, Ersin Gürdoğan, for instance, stated that "people in different regions where alienation is widespread consider consumption as an act of faith. The rise of prices gets out of control where everyone wants to 'purchase'" (*İslam*, 1985: 44).

A common feature of all Islamic circles is to describe banking interest itself as not only the cause of inflation, but also the source of all economic and social problems (e.g., Canbaz, 1987; Döndüren, 1989, Nurullah, 1989). Therefore, Islamist publications often prescribed Muslims to avoid charge interest in their business transactions (e.g. *Ribat*, 1990: 25) and criticized the ANAP governments' policy of high interest rates. Naksi circles, who underpinned a kind of "domesticated capitalism" from Islamic perspective, underlined the significance of banking without interest, tax reformation, and the furthering of economic relations under the body of Islamic foundations and cooperatives (e.g. Ak, 1984: 41; Akın, 1985: 46-47; Oğuz, 1988-47-49). Those who believed that inflation derived from cultural "alienation" put emphasis on the merits of a simple and waste-free life (*İslam*, 1985: 44). All these different levels of analysis and recipes revolved around the establishment of "a new economic system" in the hands of Muslims and the reorganization of the existing economic field (Çakan, 1989: 9). The authors from *Altınoluk*, such as Gürdoğan (1986a)

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4   In an article series published by *Diriliş* (1988a: 15) for instance, the mechanization of production and the fact that most machines are imported are shown to be the sources of the inflation in Turkey.

and Kıllıoğlu (1986a) noted that an economic system in which consumption was limited by moral standards could only be achieved under the guidance of Islamic values.

The authors that embraced radical Islamist theses advocated the foundation of an Islamic state as the only possible condition for a truly meaningful economic transformation while they were criticizing neoliberal capitalism. The idea that economic activities should be organized by the principle of halal earning and rightful share was predominantly emphasized in *Mektup*, *Ribat* and *Girişim* (e.g. Gümüş, 1986; İşgör, 1986). As they foresaw, the private property would be respected in this Islamic state on the condition that economic activities could be restricted in areas designated by the Islamic principles (Cabıoğlu, 1983: 55). These debates evolved into discussions about the recently established Islamic economic organizations in the early 1990s. As a result of economic policies in Özal period, Islamist business circles were endowed with a new capacity to bypass the state control (Yavuz, 2003: 10).

The Cultural Dimension: Moral Crisis, Obscenity, and the Media

One of the most referred subjects among Islamic groups has been the cultural and moral crisis that emanates from breaking away with the "essence of Islam." This concern was echoed by both nationalist-conservative actors and Islamist ones in the aftermath of the 1980 coup d'etat in Turkey. During the junta regime and the ANAP governments, Islamic leaders and Islamist authors gave priority to the issues of family and the reconstruction of education along conservative principles[5] with the intention to provide a solution to the moral crisis that allegedly affected young people the most. However, the neoliberal transformation brought about unforeseen circumstances.

The authors writing in Islamist journals throughout the 1980s were surprised and suspicious in the face of the swift change of social dynamics (e.g. *İlim ve Sanat*, 1989). They argued that immorality peaked in the West, and that reflected in Turkey in the form of increasing individualistic and secular practices (Çelikkol, 1986: 6-7). Topics such as sexuality, nudity, and tabloid headlines were widely addressed in both Islamic circles and the press. Meanwhile, Islamist journals associated these issues with the consumption culture and cultural decay caused by Westernization, which, for them, affected the secular segment the most.

According to Islamist intellectuals, an "Islamic revival" was in the making while at the same time traditional norms and values were being destroyed. These two seemingly contradictory observations can be explained with reference to the quantitative and qualitative change that was taking place in the domain of culture, particularly in popular culture. On the one hand, we witness the proliferation and multiplication of Islamist publications in line with the approval of official policies (Duman, 1994: 83-88). On the other hand, there was a dramatic increase in tabloids that contained celebrity gossip and sexuality. Both Naksi leaders and Islamist writers designated the latter as the underlying cause of the moral crisis while some others characterized it as its symptom. The ANAP's encouragement of individualistic pleasures and consumption as well as the role of media and advertisement in that was at the center of Islamist criticism during this period (e.g., Özdür, 1986: 23, Çiftçi, 1986: 6; Özdenören, 1987: 22-23).

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5   For more information on the role of conservativism and Islamism in educational and family policies in the aftermath of the 1980 *coup d'etat*, see Yavuz, 2003: 75; Öztan, 2019: 12-40; Çağlı, 2019: 41-61.

The ANAP governments increased public investments in advanced communication networks, which led to the expansion of the media infra-structure and the significant rise in the number of media outlets and products in the 1980s. In time, a culture that prioritized entertainment, scandals, and sports became dominant in print and visual media (Kaya and Çakmur, 2010). Given this situation, Islamic circles and especially Islamist authors often depicted the mass media with its far-reaching capacity to address large segments of the Turkish society as the hotbed of cultural decay, *decadence*. (e.g., Aktürk, 1985: 14-15; Kıllıoğlu, 1986b: 16). Raşit Küçük (1988: 46), a conservative scholar, for instance, states his impression that "the majority of current media outlets are given the task to displace and destroy public morality, national and religious values, moral traits, and holy notions". National broadcasts were not the only concern for Islamic actors who were also uneasy about the free circulation of foreign TV broadcasts and publications that contained obscene elements in the Turkish market.[6] Naksi writers pointed at the dissolution of the family as the main threat while they linked purportedly immoral actions such as prostitution and alcohol consumption to such publications and broadcasts (e.g. Maraşlı, 1987: 6). Herein, Esad Coşan (1986: 6), the leader of Iskenderpaşa order, wrote that fighting against obscene publications should be among the top priorities of pious Muslims. *Kadın ve Aile*, the women's magazine of abovementioned order, published a special issue that included the opinions of Islamic scholars and authors such as İsmer Özel, Rasim Özdenören, and Lütfi Doğan (*Kadın ve Aile,* 1986: 8-15).

The supervision and regulation of the use of obscenity in Turkish publications and broadcasts were among the playgrounds on which the conservative faction had the most weight within the ANAP.[7] The conservatives tried to legitimize their interventions into the cultural sphere with the pretext of protecting the public morality while their ulterior motives were to demonstrate their strength within the party and to ensure the loyalty of the conservative and Islamic base to the ANAP. The motion of Ata Aksu, who was an ANAP MP at the time, for the amendment in the Law of Protecting Children from Obscene Publications [*Küçükleri Muzır Neşriyattan Koruma Kanunu*] in 1986 was such an example. With that amendment, a council of eleven under the prime ministry was authorized to supervise newspapers, magazines, etc. with respect to their detrimental effects on minors. The council was also given the authority to provide expert views on obscenity-related offenses in courts according to the articles 426, 427, and 428.

Opposition parties objected to the amendments on the basis that the process of assigning council members would reflect the caprices of the government the true intention of which was to establish control over the media (*TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 1986: 538-539). During the parliamentary debates on the law amendment, MP Aksu took floor and stated that the amendment was not "a step back but ahead towards virtue and righteousness" (*Milliyet*, 06.03.1986: 12). Subsequently, Özal himself confessed the role of the conservative faction in the introduction of the law amendment and that it was in conflict with the ANAP's stance on rights and freedoms (Uluç, 2014: 131-132). Following the promulgation of the

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6 News that focuses on the claim that Turkish newspapers with wide circulation had the distribution rights of imported "obscene" publications triggered criticisms against media outlets. See *İslam*, 1986b: 11.

7 For example, Mehmet Keçeciler, the prominent deputy of the ANAP and member of Naksibendi order said that there was no relationship between proliferation of obscene publications and government policy, they did not pay for this (See *Milliyet*, 17.01.1986: 6).

amendments, discussions about obscenity did not fade out but, on the contrary, continued to rage on (e.g. *Altınoluk*, 1986).[8]

In general, Naksi orders expressed their content regarding the amendment and were optimistic about the results of legal arrangement (e.g. *İslam*, 1986c: 31) while other Islamist writers who took a more critical stance towards the ANAP noted that the amendment was merely a populist move with inner contradictions.[9] Radical Islamist writers, who were not satisfied with the legal arrangement, sought to use the issue of "obscene" publications as a leverage to mobilize the conservative base to boycott the mainstream media.[10]

For those who assumed "revelation" to be the sole source of morality, the only possible way to get rid of the "worldly diseases" such as fashion was directing the entire society towards religion (*e.g.* Necatioğlu, 1985: 4). Even though these figures implied that the ANAP governments had turned blind eye to "immoral" publications and broadcasts (Gündoğan, 1986: 6-7; Küçük, 1988: 46), they did not abstain from imploring the government to eliminate obstacles before the organization of religion in public life in order to solve the crisis of morality. It can be argued that different conservative circles found common ground in pressing for the supervision of the media and cultural sphere in congruence with moral/Islamic standards.

The Foreign Policy Aspect: Discussion of Accession to the European Community (EC)

Upon coming to office, Özal and his party assumed that they could use Turkey's accession to the EC as a leverage to repair the severed ties with Europe in the aftermath of the 1980 coup and to make way for their neoliberal development strategy. The fact that Spain and Portugal, which had been ruled by authoritarian regimes for decades, became members of the EC in 1986 encouraged the ANAP regarding the accession process. [11] Furthermore, the ANAP's intention to push back the traditional bureaucracy, increasing popular support, and the goal of consolidating free market economy were also of primary importance in making the decision to apply for the EC membership.

Conceiving of the EC first and foremost as an economic unity, the ANAP governments supposed that carrying out economic reforms[12] would be sufficient for Turkey's accession. However, the issues of democracy and human rights started to become more

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8   There were different views as to why "obscene" publications and broadcast were on the rise. Ersin Gürdoğan, for instance, drew attention to the capitalist greed for more profit (*Mavera*, 1987: 34). For İ. Özel, on the other hand, socialists were responsible for this surge and the censuring of "obscene" elements in the media was the demand shared by the Muslim majority in Turkey (*İslam*, 1986d: 12).

9   In an interview made by Cihan Aktaş, İhsan Işık remarked that obscenity concerns true Muslims very closely whereas the ANAP government reduced the issue into a short-term conflict of interest between the tabloid media and the government as an insincere and banal investment for the elections (Aktaş, 1986a: 21).

10 Even though many media outlets were fined for breaching the Law of Protecting Children from Obscene Publications (Uluç, 2014: 13), Islamist writers, who believed legal measures to be insufficient, called the Muslim public to take initiative and boycott the mainstream media categorically (Üzmez, 1987: 20).

11 Yılmaz (2011: 191) presents the strengthening of democratic-civilian governments in Greece, Spain, and Portugal during their accession process to the EC as a motivation for the ANAP to start Turkey's accession to the EC. Similarly, Yavuz (2003: 75) argues that Özal considered the accession to EC as a way to undermine the "authoritarian position" of the Kemalist establishment.

12 As Müftüler (1995:85-98) points out, the economic reforms in Turkey were carried out within the purview of harmonization with the EC.

emphasized in the EC's agenda during that period, but the EC's demands of Turkey to make improvements on these headings were seen as intervention in Turkey's domestic affairs by the Turkish bureaucracy (Balkır, 2001: 199).

Turkey's initial application for the EC membership on 14 April 1987 came as a surprise for the institutions and members of the Community (Kahraman Elgün, 2000: 5) while it also triggered multifaceted discussions both in Turkey and Western countries. Often treated as something more than a foreign policy move, the accession process occupied the domestic agenda in Turkey over the following years. Herein, Turkey's accession affected the way in which right-wing political actors, including Naksi orders, positioned themselves *vis-à-vis* the ANAP government.[13]

The center right (DYP) and center left (SHP, DSP) parties announced their support for the accession, albeit for different reasons. The *Milli Görüş* movement, stand out as the leading political actor that raised the harshest objections from the outset (Güneş-Ayata, 2003: 216).[14] In the same vein, throughout the accession process, Naksi groups among those that more actively partook in the debates around the EC accession, aside from the mainstream politics. Naksi media outlets released exclusive stories (e.g. *İlim ve Sanat*, 1988; *Dış Politika*, 1988) consisting of comments of various opinion leaders, former ambassadors, and scholars (e.g. Kuneralp, 1988; Kuran, 1988, İnan, 1988).

At this juncture, we can designate two types of Islamist responses to the issue of Turkey's accession. The first consists of authors (such as Karaman (1987) and Seyidoğlu (1989)) who did not directly oppose the accession process and even cautiously endorse Turkey's membership to the EC. The main argument of these authors was to benefit from the "opportunities" of the already Westernized life in Turkey. They looked at the EC membership in a "positive light" as long as it entailed wealth and economic progress.[15] The Islamic figures who suggested that Turkey's involvement with the EC was irreversible and that political positions should be taken in line with that fact. Mahmut Bayram, a writer of the Nakşibendi Erenköy's journal, wrote: "[…] since we could not stop this process, as Muslims we should come together and look for ways to prevent our own liquidation" (1987: 27).

The other inclination that was more dominant especially among İskenderpaşa branch of Naksibendis was standing up to the EC membership process. Coşan (1988: 3), forthrightly opposed to Turkey's membership of the EC and denounced pro-Western politicians and intellectuals. As well as Iskenderpaşa order, some Islamist authors that wrote on this issue at *Girişim*, *Mektup,* etc., were uncompromising in their rejection of the EC membership of Turkey, which, for them, meant complete submission to the West and secular forces (*e.g.,* Yavuz 1989). In addition, these publications embarked on refuting the claims that membership to the EC was a necessity as introduced by government spokespersons and mainstream intellectuals.

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13 For example, Coşan himself explained the reason why the İskenderpaşa order endorsed the RP in the 1987 elections was the fact that it was the only party that countered Turkey's accession to the EC (Çakır, 1995: 36).

14 During the accession process, N. Erbakan visited several cities in order to share his opposing views. See *Milliyet*, 1987: 7.

15 For more articles that rely on similar arguments in *Altınoluk*, see Karaman, 1987: 23. As another writer of the journal, Seyidoğlu (1989: 43) pointed at the traces of the Islamic message in Europe and argued that the accession process would complete that message.

On the one hand, ANAP government presented the EC membership as the next step towards the objective of Turkish modernization, while, on the other hand, the party spokesmen preferred to limit the issue to its potential economic benefits. Özal himself described the EC as an economic unity and claimed that Turkey's membership to the EC would contribute to the country's economic stability (Akçay, 2016: 47-48). Both the authors writing in the journals of Naksi orders and the writers from *Girişim* and *Mektup* typically begged to differ from Özal's view of the EC. In their viewpoint, the Community "was more a political and ideological alliance than an economic one" while some even argued that it was either already a Christian union or on its way to become one (e.g., *İslam*, 1986e: 33, Ayhan, 1988: 20; Yavuz, 1989: 42-43). To substantiate this claim, these authors drew attention to the double standards of European countries towards Turkey especially in relation to the issues of democracy and basic human rights, the depiction of the purported "Islamist revival" in Turkey as a threat by Western intellectuals, and the cases of discrimination against Muslims in Europe (Kahraman, 1987: 27, Varol, 1989: 38-39, *Altınoluk*, 1990: 42). Therefore, for Islamist publications, it was not realistic to rely on the EC membership for improving the human rights and pushing back the traditional bureaucracy.[16]

Both traditional Islamic groups and Islamist writers, in general, tend to conceive of the accession to the EC as the continuation of Westernization process, which originated from *Tanzimat* reforms and peaked during the early republican era (Yazar, 1987: 14; *İslam*, 1987).[17] In that respect, they postulated that the EC membership would encourage and benefit the secular forces. Among the Islamist circles, it was widely believed that both the ANAP government, on the one hand, and the bureaucracy and the intelligentsia, on the other, were in total consensus as to the issue of accession to the EC (e.g. Karakoç, 1988: 3). In this view, the lack of public consultations and debates was linked to the assumption of such "consensus" (Şan, 1989: 27-28). What we see in the Islamist publications of that time is implicit criticisms of the government for reducing Islamic groups as mere audience rather than political actors (Yazar, 1987: 14-15).

Those who directly opposed Turkey's membership to the EC, on the other side, believed that confronting with the West on this level was full of perils. Authors who emphasized the political and economic risks of accession to the EC were both of the origin of Islamic tradition and the Turkish-Islam synthesis (e.g.. Akdeniz, 1987; Necatioğlu, 1988). In addition, there were theses that Turkey was not ready to be a part of the EC due to the shortage of competitiveness of its economy, and therefore, it could economically turn into a European colony in Islamist journals (Akyazılı, 1986: 46-47, Kerim, 1987: 31-32; Ayhan, 1988: 22, Karakaya, 1988: 19). However, cultural anxieties appeared as the driving force of the anti-EC articles. Accordingly, assimilation and the "loss of identity" – the condition of being neither European nor Muslim – were among the most alluded threats by Islamist authors (e.g., Gök, 1987: 17; Tabakoğlu, 1987: 27). For them, being part of Europe would amount to nothing if Turkey had "no theses left for the World" (Taşgetiren,

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16 One of the clearest expressions of this perspective was made by T. Karamollaoğlu in an interview. As a former member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Karamollaoğlu (1988) claimed that the West cannot play a part in the progress of human rights in Turkey.

17 This is why it is possible to come across articles that criticize the Tanzimat reforms along with those that criticize the EC. See Kar, 1989; Özbilgen, 1988.

1990a: 5). Islamist circles resorted to the traditional harbors of anti-Westernism as they were unable to manipulate the accession process to their own advantage.[18]

It is possible to designate a consensus among Islamist writers from *Girişim*, *Diriliş,* etc. in the speculations about the Turkey-EC relations. They deemed impossible the furthering of Turkey's integration into Europe due to political, economic, and particularly cultural factors (Kerim, 1987; Karakoç, 1989), For the dominant position that can be observed in Islamist journals including the İskenderpaşa order, the EC would admit Turkey only with the objective to exploit the resources of the country. In the same line, the most popular claim among Islamists was that the EC would admit Turkey as a member with the aim to prevent the formation of an economic or political union to be formed by Muslim countries (e.g., Gürdoğan, 1988; Karamollaoğlu, 1988).

The process of accession to the EC also re-energized the discussions of establishing an Islamic union, which was popular in the 1960s, alternative to the Western counterparts. Gürdoğan advocated for "The Union of Muslim Countries" whose members had been parts of the Ottoman Empire (1986b: 8-9, 1988: 10-11). *Diriliş* (1988b) and Mustafa Kemal Şan (1989: 28), an Islamist sociologist, presented an organization of Islamic countries akin to the EC as the best viable option. Karakoç, on the other hand, maintained that the EC would not be a long-term guarantee for Turkey and a "union" needed to be formed by Turkey itself (1988: 3). Characterizing Turkey as an essential part of the Muslim world, which was substantiated with certain geostrategic and historical theses, became a prominent point of reference in the discussions of modernization and identity.[19]

Coda: Islamism at Crossroads in the 1980s

Islamists underwent a rapid change and experienced disagreements on various issues throughout the process of neoliberalization in the 1980s. There were not sharp differences of opinion concerning the major social, political, and economic issues between systemic and anti-systemic Islamists actors that had undergone similar political socializations. The former, i.e., *İslam* and *Altınoluk*, perceived this change as an opportunity to enter into an alliance with the ruling party and to steer it towards a more Islamic direction. The latter, e.g., *Girişim*, *Mektup,* and *Diriliş*, considered open criticisms of the ANAP as the safeguard of their autonomy. Yet, the main concern of Islamists, be them pro- or anti-government, was the possibility of a new Westernization wave, which they saw as a form of break from the "Islamic essence," to be triggered by the neoliberal transformation. That is why they tasked themselves to warn the government against the dangers of the "Westernized currents."

Especially during its first term in government, the ANAP MPs of conservative or Naksi origins tried to limit the libertarian agenda and the impact of the liberal wing within the party with the support of Islamic groups and Islamist intellectuals. As in the case of amendments made in the Law of Protecting Children from Obscene Publications, such attempts proved to be effective. Moreover, a process of restricting the education

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18 The following statement of Baykan Sezer presents an instance of this view: "Europeans ask us to make some changes to become Westerners. In case that there are no objective measures of being Westerner, they might even demand us to change our names" (1987:34).

19 For example, Ahmet Taşgetiren (1990b: 3-5), Naksi opinion leader, claims that Turkey should not stay at limbo and be a part of the Muslim world in order to overcome the identity crisis of modernity.

in line with conservative values was underway during the junta regime and the ANAP governments. In spite of these gains, however, radical Islamist circles demanded the government to ground its conservative policies with Islamic principles and to increase the visibility of Islam in the public sphere on the pretext of a widespread moral crisis in Turkish society. They also launched onslaughts against the liberal wing of the ANAP for encouraging individualism and introducing policies to increase secular practices.

The economic transformation during the ANAP period was the driving force that diversified the economic activities of Islamist circles. Advantages given to Islamist capital-owners prepared the ground for the significant organizational capacity of Islamist capitalist groups in the early 1990s. Nevertheless, as we see in the cases of *İslam* and *Altınoluk*, Naksi intellectuals, including those who assumed a balanced attitude towards the ANAP, were not content with the economic and social problems caused by Turkey's engagement with global capitalism. The ANAP's inability to tackle inflation made Islamists, who penned down articles on economy such as Ersin Gürdoğan and Cihangir Akın, concentrate on this problem. In lieu of their demand to domesticate capitalism with Islamic principles, Islamist publications with a balanced relationship with the ANAP endeavored to incentivize the governments to embrace banking without interest rates and forms of solidarity based on Islamic foundations. However, their impact on the economy remained limited in comparison to the areas of education and culture. The handing of the economy over to Western educated technocrats played an important part in that outcome. It is possible to witness such criticisms in the publications aiming at the general public along with journals, e.g., *Kadın* and *Aile*, which predominantly targeted women. Journals like *Girişim*, on the other hand, consisted of harsh criticisms of the economic policies of ANAP governments that involved high interest rates and consumption along with growth oriented development goals. Even if Islamist circles applauded the ANAP governments' effort to improve relations with Muslim countries, they continued to be suspicious towards Turkey's ties to the EC in the context of which their capacity to steer or supervise any processes would be insignificant. The anti-Western inclinations in *Girişim* and *Mektup* translated into negative views of Turkey's accession to the EC. Including those who did not reject Turkey's accession to the EC, e.g., *Altınoluk*, a large majority of Islamist actors agreed on the fact that they were far from being ready to shape this process. While the idea of establishing a union of Muslim countries under Turkey's leadership was revived with the debates about Turkey's possible membership to the EC, it would be far-fetched to argue that this idea was re-fashioned or updated in line with the political and intellectual realities of the time.

In conclusion, Islamists in general, including circles that were close to *Milli Görüş* line and figures who proclaimed themselves as "outside the system," aspired to keep a certain political balance with the ANAP governments. The underlying reason for this position was that Islamists deemed their chance to come to power impossible notwithstanding the phenomenon of "Islamic revival." In this context, Islamist actors rarely targeted Özal and other cabinet members whereas they problematized issues such as Westernization, consumption culture, and morality crisis. When the liberal faction became dominant within the ANAP, Islamist circles started to endorse other parties, namely RP and DYP. With the foundation of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2001, most Islamist circles gave their support to this party.

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