

THE RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE MAIN ISLAMIC COMMUNITIES IN  
TURKEY,  
IN THE POST 1980 COUP ERA

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis aims to provide a preliminary investigation and evaluation of the main Islamic Communities' (namely Nurcu, Süleymancı and İskenderpaşa Communities) re-organization during the post 1980 coup era. This thesis argues that these Islamist Communities became more active in this period in the political and socio-economic spheres. Thus, the tendency to link the current political and economic structures of these communities to their early organizations will be questioned. While doing this, their organizations before the coup, during the coup administration, and in the Özal era are going to be analyzed, in chronological order. The organization in this thesis includes these Communities' activities in the political, economic and media spheres. Their re-organizations in the post coup era, in these fields will be analyzed comparatively. Hence, this thesis further aims to find out the possible relations between this increasing level of activities of the Communities and the political and economic policies of the governments.

These aims will be realized through the investigation of the State and Military reports on these Communities, the secondary sources written on them, a close reading of these communities' own journals and Newspapers and an investigation of their economic institutions.

KEYWORDS: Naqshibandis, Nurcu Community, Süleymancı Community, İskenderpaşa Community, Policies of the Özal era .

## KISA ÖZET

Bu tez, önde gelen İslamcı Cemaatlerin (Nurcu, Süleymancı ve İskenderpaşa Cemaatlerinin) 1980 darbesi sonrasındaki yeniden teşekkülleri hakkında bir inceleme ve değerlendirme yapmak amacıyla yazılmıştır. Tezdeki temel iddia, İslamcı cemaatlerin bu dönemde öncesine oranla politik ve sosyo-ekonomik alanlarda daha aktif bir pozisyon aldıklarıdır. Buradan hareketle, bu cemaatlerin halihazırdaki politik ve ekonomik yapılarını geçmişteki organizasyonlarına bağlamak eğilimi sorgulanacaktır. Bunu yaparken cemaatlerin darbe öncesinde, darbe yönetimi sırasında ve Özal dönemindeki organizasyonları kronolojik olarak incelenecektir. Bu tezde organizasyon olarak kullanılan terim, cemaatlerin politika, ekonomi ve medya alanlarındaki aktivitelerini kapsamaktadır. Bu alanlardaki, darbe sonrası yeniden teşekküller ise karşılaştırmalı olarak incelenecektir. Tezin bir diğer amacı da cemaatlerin artan aktiviteleri ile politik ve ekonomik hükümet kararları arasındaki muhtemel bağlantıları ortaya çıkarmaktır.

Bu amaçlar, bu cemaatler hakkında hazırlanmış Devlet ve Ordu raporları, onlar hakkında yazılmış ikincil kaynaklar, bu grupların kendi gazete ve dergilerindeki bilgilerin incelenmesi ve cemaat kuruluşlarının araştırılması ile gerçekleştirilmeye çalışılacaktır.

**ANAHTAR SÖZCÜKLER:** Nakşibendiler, Nurcular, Süleymancılar, İskenderpaşa Cemaati, Özal dönemi politikaları.

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## PREFACE

Islam keeps its importance not only in politics but also in the socio-economic spheres of life. Yet, one of the prominent elements of this issue, that is the concept of Islamic Community, mostly neglected by the scholars. This paper attempted to close this gap by giving a preliminary idea on the organizations of these groups. While doing this, it makes a comparison between the organization before and after the 1980 coup. Definitely, the increase in the level of these groups activities is not a totally new suggestion. Yet, what I am doing here is testing this suggestion with keeping an eye on the new patterns of activities embraced by these Communities. Thus, I argue that these communities' activities can be explained with the socio-political and economical conditions of the day rather than with their tasawwuf tradition.

## INTRODUCTION

A very recent debate on secularism in Turkey functioned as a reminder of frequently rising discussions concerning Islam's place in social and political life, among the politicians as well as the intelligentsia. On 23 April 2006, the 46<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Turkish National Assembly and National Sovereignty and Children's Feast as was attributed by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the chairman of the Parliament, Bülent Arınç, made ambitious claims on secularism in Turkey. He claimed that; "the state is putting restrictions on right of existence and freedom of expression of some beliefs in public sphere and it is accomplishing this in the name of secularism".<sup>1</sup> He further argued that nobody was against the notion of secularism; however, differences of interpretation should be removed according to the conditions of the present day.<sup>2</sup>

What Arınç suggests seems to be impossible as different interpretations of secularism have always been accepted by various people among the Turkish intellectuals, politicians and the masses. In fact Tarık Zafer Tunaya's statement makes it clear that it could not have been- and will not be ever- possible to find a single definition of the notion of secularism on which consensus has been reached throughout the world as well. He argues that secularism, by nature, has a local character which makes its implementation in various countries different according to the circumstances of that particular country.<sup>3</sup>

As the hierarchal power the state has over religion in Turkey is obvious, it is strongly argued by many scholars that it would be just a myth to define secularism

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<sup>1</sup> "Alkışlanmayan Sözler", Sabah, 24 April 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Tarık Z. Tunaya, *Türkiye'nin Siyasi Hayatı'nda Batılılaşma Hareketleri* (İstanbul: Arba Yayınları, 1960), 146.

that sprung up from the Turkish Kemalist Revolution as the “separation of religion and state after the fashion of French laicism”.<sup>4</sup> The establishment of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*) just at the very initial phases of the Republican era<sup>5</sup> and adoption of *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*, gathering of all educational facilities- through a law- together under state’s monopoly, in 1924 display the construction of religion in Turkey under the supervision of the state.<sup>6</sup> And the establishment of these institutions falsifies the arguments that the base of the religious policy of the Kemalist regime was not to destroy Islam but to distinguish it from the state.<sup>7</sup> The second view, mentioned in Tunaya’s work, argues that such kind of a control mechanism on religion might have been necessary during the Kemalist reforms; however, they are not any more. This view, supported by Prof. Ali Fuat Başgil, argues for a secularism defined as the condition of state not getting involved in religious and religion not getting involved in state’s affairs.<sup>8</sup>

The control, the state aimed to establish over religion, is regarded as a tool to create a coherent society under the Kemalist ideas and reforms. Religion’s place at the service of consolidating the nation is apparent in Turkey’s latest constitution. Article 136 of 1982 Constitution, for instance, defined the Ministry of Religious Affairs as a state institution which aims to promote national solidarity and integration”.<sup>9</sup> Article 24, on the other hand, legalizes religious and moral education under the control and supervision of the state.<sup>10</sup> As Murat Akan mentions, “the state

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<sup>4</sup> Murat Akan, “Contextualizing Multiculturalism”, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, vol. 23, no. 2, Summer 2003, 70.

<sup>5</sup> İftar B. Tarhanlı, *Müslüman Toplum, “Laik” Devlet: Türkiye’de Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* (İstanbul: Afa Yayınları, 1993), 41.

<sup>6</sup> Tunaya, *Türkiye’nin Siyasi Hayatı’nda Batılılaşma Hareketleri*, 148.

<sup>7</sup> Bernard Lewis, *Modern Türkiye’nin Doğuşu*, trans. Metin Kıratlı (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basım Evi, 1991), 408.

<sup>8</sup> Tunaya, *Türkiye’nin Siyasi Hayatı’nda Batılılaşma Hareketleri*, 147.

<sup>9</sup> See Suna Kili and Şeref Gözübüyük, *Türk Anayasa Metinleri*, (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları: 1985), 299.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

controls religion, purifying it and suppressing its local forms and then uses this ‘purified’ form to promote a uniform society that is the object of its nation-building reforms”.<sup>11</sup> In controlling and centralizing religion, the state-elite aimed “not only .... to eliminate religion as a rival autonomous source of legitimacy but they also used it to help institutionalize their own legitimacy”.<sup>12</sup>

Binnaz Toprak draws our attention to the other side of this debate, to the Islamists. She claims that the continuous debate on religion taking place in Turkey between secularists and Islamists is not restricted to the moral behavior, but extends to other spheres of life as well.<sup>13</sup> She links this tendency to the very nature of the ideal, the Islamists have:

“... the Islamic ideal stresses the importance of this-worldly activity for the building of a socio-political order on divine principles. In that respect, Islam has attempted to bridge the distance between the sacred and the profane.”<sup>14</sup>

The concept of ‘Islamist’, on the other hand, is quite complex and difficult to define with a singular definition both throughout the world and within Turkey. The Islamists, who most of the time are believed to form a coherent unity among themselves, are situated at the opposite side of the secularists on the same continuum, despite the highly different-and sometimes even contrary- features of them. As Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu mentions; “it should be stated at the outset that one essential feature of Turkey’s political Islam, which is also common in neighboring Islamic countries, is its lack of unity and coherence”.<sup>15</sup> Şerif Mardin’s argument is in line with this idea that it would not be right to speak of a ‘single’ trend named Islamism

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<sup>11</sup> Akan, “Contextualizing Multiculturalism”, 70.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Binnaz Toprak, “Islam and Democracy in Turkey”, in Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin (eds.), *Religion and Politics in Turkey* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 26.

<sup>14</sup> Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1981), 22.

<sup>15</sup> Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, “Parameters and Strategies of Islam-State Interaction in Republican Turkey”, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 28, 1996, 242.

(*İslamcılık*) because of the different characteristics carried by the Islamist movements.<sup>16</sup>

Never considering them as a single and coherent entities, this thesis will talk about Islamist movements, namely Nurcu, Süleymancı and İskenderpaşa Communities- depending on the view that these movements meet at certain points- and their re-organizations in the post '80 period, keeping an eye on their evolution as a result of the developments and the changing the social-economical and political structure in Turkey.

To be more precise; the thesis statement is that “the Islamist communities in Turkey has become more active after the 1980 military coup, especially in the political, economic and media spheres”. Although it is very difficult to collect reliable data about these groups- as the true numbers of the followers are not known and the data they provide becomes unreliable as they have the tendency to exaggerate their numbers to attract the future members with their strength; or to reduce the actual numbers because of their fear from the state-, the Islamist communities are the unit of analysis in this work. The studies on Islam in Turkey have, until now, mostly focused solely on the debate between secularists and political Islamists, especially on the Islamist parties established one after another since 1960s. The examination of the communities; however, may provide a wider perspective on Islam in Turkey as their analysis will also involve various areas of life. Putting the emphasis on the communities, for sure, will not mean to exclude politics. It is very well known that, even the Islamist politicians had close links to these communities and their ideas were highly influenced by the main ideas of the communities they belonged to.

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<sup>16</sup> Şerif Mardin, *Türkiye’de Din ve Siyaset: Makaleler 3* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 1991), 25.

Bernard Lewis's argument on the importance of the examination of Islamist communities, seem to support the methodology of this thesis. He claims that it soon became apparent that the most dangerous resistance towards the secularizing reforms would come from the local religious leaders (*derviş*)-of *tasawwuf*- rather than from the official man of religion (*ulema*). These local religious leaders were benefiting from the trust and loyalty the masses felt for them and they were used to being independent and being in opposition.<sup>17</sup> This oppositional character of these local leaders and hence communities make it highly crucial to examine these establishments to be able to understand the space Islamists were able to have influence on. Examining Islam through the activism of the Islamist communities can be regarded as one way of doing this analysis; however, this is a confidential way of seeing Islam within the wider scene of Turkish society and the power relations in it. An analysis through the communities would not be a theological examination, which in fact is not the aim of this thesis. As it has been argued above, Islam, in this work, will be accepted as a multi-dimensional concept. Most of the time, they have divergence among themselves due to not only individualistic or communitarian but also doctrinal differences.<sup>18</sup>

Although it is widely believed that these communities experienced important differences after 1980, certain critiques may appear to argue that secularism in Turkey has never been as successful as it is believed to be. The major example shown as a supporter of this view is the fact that the religious activism of the local religious leaders (*derviş/şeyh*) has continued to live hidden under the cover of folk religion.<sup>19</sup> This thesis has no argument in contradiction with such a view. What it aims to accomplish is a comparative analysis on the activism of the Islamist

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<sup>17</sup> Lewis, *Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu*, 405.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 402.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 412.

communities in Turkey before and after the 1980 military coup and it aims to show in the end that they have become more active in the post-80 coup era. It is also going to argue that besides the unexpected sympathy the military began to feel towards Islam, especially through the ‘Turkish-Islamic synthesis’, the liberal policies embraced by the Motherland Party government following the military rule and Özal’s personal links with these communities helped to create such a change.

Although their activism can be examined in many different areas of life, this thesis is going to include politics, economy and media as the main spheres of influence for the sake of simplicity. However; this choice, for sure, has not been made randomly. Political and economic spheres are important as they are the instruments to increase the power and influence of these groups in the society. Most of the time, it is difficult to separate these two spheres from one another. The members of these communities mostly use economics to strengthen their organizations; however, an opposite way of linkage between these two is true as well; the political strength becomes a tool to empower these groups financially in certain times.

Media, on the other hand, is the major and most comprehensive tool these communities have to spread their ideas. Through their media institutions they reach a large portion of the society and can share their opinions with so many people through these institutions. Indeed, media is also interrelated with the other two spheres. It is bounded with economics because they support their own financial institutions through the commercials they have on their T.V and radio channels and in their magazines. It can also be considered as related to politics as they can make the propaganda of their own political views in their media channels.

The reason of inclusion of the political sphere is most evident as the highly active status of these communities in politics is very well known. The first leader of the İskenderpaşa Community, Zahid Kotku, is, for instance, famous for his role in the establishment of the first Islamist party in Turkey, National Order Party. A prominent political figure in Turkish Islamist politics Korkut Özal, the older brother of Turgut Özal, is very widely known to belong to this same community as well. With regard to the Nurcu community, Fethullah Gülen's respected position among not only the Islamist but also center right politicians has been apparent, especially after 1990s. Tayyip Erdoğan, the current Prime Minister of Turkey, visited Gülen in the United States before the 2002 elections. Tansu Çiller, one of the recent Prime Ministers in Turkey, had also visited him when she was the Foreign Minister although she was the member of a center right party, the True Path Party, not of an "Islamist" one. The members of the Süleymancı community also have close linkages with politics, especially after the 80 coup. Ahmet Denizolgun grandson of Süleyman Tunahan -the founder of the Süleymancı community- became Minister of Transportation of the Yılmaz government, in 1998. Mehmet Denizolgun, Tunahan's other grandson is a member of the parliament from Justice and Development Party now.

Economics is another arena in which these communities have a wide sphere of influence. For instance, the Nurcu community has their own banks, insurance companies, and private education centers (FEM-Fırat Eğitim Merkezi). The first leader of İskenderpaşa community, Zahid Kotku, is famous for his motivating statements to the members of the community-his *murids*- to take part in financial sector and to add financial strength to their political and social power. Süleymancı

established a strong web between their firms in order to support the yurts of the community.

With respect to the significance these groups have in the media, there should be no doubt. The weekly or monthly magazines and newspapers of these groups are widely circulating all around the country. These groups also have T.V and radio channels. *Samanyolu* is the T.V station of the Nurcu community and *Sızıntı* is their magazine. İskenderpaşa Community has Akra Fm and Ak TV. Süleymancıs have Ufuk and Genç Akademi journals.

Another choice was made among the Islamist communities in Turkey due to the limited space. If the aim was to examine the activities of the whole Islamist communities in Turkey one-by-one, it would not be so hard to find tens of them. However; this work analyzes three most prominent communities in Turkey; İskenderpaşa, Nurcu and Süleymancı Communities, which have been advanced in these 3 spheres.

The significance of the chosen communities can be shown in many respects. The military's interpretation of *Naqshibandis*(Suleymancıs and İskenderpaşa Communities) and Fethullah Gülen's movement as the most important threat the regime has faced since its establishment<sup>20</sup>, for instance, might be just one of these. Further details about the importance of these groups will be mentioned throughout the main text. The only community that could have been added besides these three is the Işık community- which belongs to the *Naqshibandi* sect as well. This work; however, does not include it even though it is the one that follows the first three most closely- it owns means of communication as well, such as the T.V channel *TGRT* and the newspaper *Türkiye*. The line of the Işık community always keeps its distance

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<sup>20</sup> Hikmet Çetinkaya, *Fethullah Gülen'in 40 Yıllık Serüveni* (İstanbul: Günizi Yayıncılık, 2005), 112.

from politics. Another reason is that they do not seem to have as many members as the other three do.<sup>21</sup>

The analyses by this work have been structured in four different sections. The following three sections are organized in chronological order, in order to make a healthy comparison. The first section talks about the organizations of these groups before the 1980 coup. It will help the reader to have brief and relevant data on these groups' activities with keeping an eye on the political and social atmosphere of the day. The second section describes the coup d'état period and re-organizations of these groups during this period. The military government administration headed by Kenan Evren, following the coup d'état, is included in this part as well. The last section grasps a long period of time from the administration of the Motherland Party, following the military rule after the 1980 coup, to the current rule by the Justice and Development Party. The major concern of this section is to show what kind of differences has taken place with regard to the activism of these three religious groups in the three different spheres of life- politics, economy and media.

In examining the post-coup era, the 28<sup>th</sup> February incident- the so-called post modern coup- deserves significant attention as it is considered to be the representative of the strong pressure the military exerted on these groups. The main argument of this work, on this post-modern coup, will be that the pressure by the military succeeded to force the leaders of these communities to run abroad. Fethullah Gülen, the most significant Nurcu leader in Turkey, went to the United States and the by-then leader of the İskenderpaşa community, Esad Coşan, went to Australia. The Suleymancı leaders, on the other hand, stayed in Turkey, most probably because of Ahmet Denizolgun's (grandson of Suleyman Hilmi Tunahan) being a Minister of the

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<sup>21</sup> Mustafa Tekin, "İşıkçılık" in *İslamcılık*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005), 342.

post 28 February government of Mesut Yılmaz. Although the leaders of first two communities felt the pressure on themselves, the military could not have significant pressure on the activities of these groups. The reason for this fact is that after the '80 coup, these groups have been institutionalized in many spheres of the life.

The current Erdoğan government, on the other hand, displays the continuing significance of these groups as Tayyip Erdoğan, similar to Özal, has good relations with all three of them. He, personally, has very close relations with the Nurcu leader Fethullah Gülen. He has members of parliament in his party who belong to Süleymancı community while the establishers of the Justice and Development Party includes the members of İskenderpaşa community to whose activities he has been attending in his youth.

In the first part of the appendix part, under the heading “The roots of religious groups in Turkey” the roots and the structures of these three Islamist communities are analyzed in detail. Moreover a genealogy of these communities is presented in this part. In the second part of the Appendix, some examples of Economic Organizations of these Communities are given.

## CHAPTER 1

### NURCU,SULEYMANCI AND ISKENDERPAŞA COMMUNITIES AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS BEFORE THE 1980 COUP

#### The Pre-80 Period

Since the time of the Second Constitutional Government, religious claims have made up the major opposition to the modernization and Westernization movements both in the Ottoman Empire and in the Turkish Republic.

One of the most significant signs of this opposition- 31 March incident (*31 Mart Vak'ası*) - took place within the first year (13 April 1909) of the Constitutional Government. This was a reactionary movement planned as a response to the establishment of the Constitutional Government.<sup>22</sup> The supporters of this movement believed that separation of the state from the religion was a European act and it should not be even considered in a Muslim state that is built on Islam and that works through Islamic law (*şeriat*).<sup>23</sup> What makes the 31 March incident more crucial for our topic is that its being a rebellion organized by the *Naqshibandis*<sup>24</sup>-a school of *tasawwuf* that was active in the Turkish land for centuries.

The 31 March incident is one of the most significant signs to display the politicization of the Islamist movements in the Turkish history.<sup>25</sup> In fact, this incident marks the beginning of the endless clash between the Westernization and modernization attempts of the state and the supporters of an Islamic order. These

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<sup>22</sup> Tarık Z. Tunaya, *İslamcılık Akımı*, (İstanbul: Hürriyet Ofset, 1991), 17.

<sup>23</sup> Tunaya, *İslamcılık Akımı*, 37.

<sup>24</sup> Şerif Mardin, "Turkish Islamic Exceptionalism Yesterday and Today: Continuity, Rupture and Reconstruction in Operational Codes", in Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin, *Religion and Politics in Turkey* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 10.

<sup>25</sup> Tunaya, *İslamcılık Akımı*, 115.

clashes have been present throughout the Republican era as well. The reforms of the Kemalist elite- especially the removal of the office of Caliphate, the gathering of all religious activity under state's supervision (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*) and the closure of dervish lodges (*tekke and zaviye*)- aroused great response among the public.<sup>26</sup> Although the office of Caliphate lost its importance in the last a few decades, its removal received great attention in the empire; as an institution that continued since the time of the Prophet.<sup>27</sup>

Another movement of rebellion by *Sheikh Said*- again from the *Naqshibandi* religious order (*tarikati*) – took place in 1925.<sup>28</sup> A similar *Naqshibandi* movement took place in Menemen, İzmir in 1930.<sup>29</sup> This last incident is considered to be the most prominent and extensive reactionary movement that has taken place since the establishment of the Turkish Republic.<sup>30</sup> Its impact was so great that after this movement, government even abolished the Opposition Party.<sup>31</sup>

These movements that appeared against each and every reform movement were extensions of 'the old opposition'. They constituted a different version- changed under the conditions of the twentieth century- of the revolts that had taken place as a response to reform movements in the Ottoman Empire. However, the essence remained the same. Even the same words were repeated over and over again.<sup>32</sup>

When the transition to the multi-party period took place in Turkey, the Democrat Party that was formed as the opposition to the Republican People's Party,

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 157.

<sup>27</sup> Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey*, 43.

<sup>28</sup> Mardin, "Turkish Islamic Exceptionalism Yesterday and Today: Continuity, Rupture and Reconstruction in Operational Codes", 10.

<sup>29</sup> Şerif Mardin, "The Nakşibendi Order in Turkish History" in Richard Tapper ed. *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics and Literature in a Secular State* (London: I.B Tauris, 1991), 122.

<sup>30</sup> Tunaya, *İslamcılık Akımı*, 174.

<sup>31</sup> Andrew Mango, "Atatürk: Founding Father, Realist, and Visionary", in Metin Heper and Sabri Sayarı (eds.), *Political Leaders and Democracy in Turkey* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2002), 21.

<sup>32</sup> Tunaya, *İslamcılık Akımı*, 165.

the party of the creators of the Turkish Republic, had claims on religion. The members of the Democrat Party aimed to mobilize the masses on its own lines through the references they make on religion- that was still the most important determinant of the identities of the masses. More important than this, the victory of the Democrat Party in 1950 elections was considered as the victory of Islam.<sup>33</sup> Democrat Party strengthened this claim by certain symbolic decisions, such as making the call to prayer Arabic again.<sup>34</sup>

The military coup d'état in 1960 that ended the Democrat Party (DP) rule had the claim to form a neutral administration that was in line with Atatürk's reforms. The military regarded DP's rule as a threat to Kemalist reforms and as a populist type of ruling through the misuse of religion and hence, had the goal to put an end to these dangerous policies. According to the National Unity Committee (*Milli Birlik Komitesi*), the return back to the norms and values of the Kemalist Revolution would mean to leave the populist policies that were based on religious abuse.<sup>35</sup>

#### Naqshibandi School and The Historical Continuity

Mardin made an attempt to find the links, if they have ever existed, between early roots of these Communities and their current activities. He argues that, despite the change in the mode of activities of these groups, their *tasawwuf*, and especially *Naqshibandi* origin had an impact on their current organizations.<sup>36</sup> He puts the emphasis on the impacts of the early *Naqshibandi* Tradition's organization's impact

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<sup>33</sup> Tunaya, *İslamcılık Akımı*, 206.

<sup>34</sup> M. Hakan Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2005), 54.

<sup>35</sup> Tunaya, *İslamcılık Akımı*, 224.

<sup>36</sup> Mardin, "The Nakşibendi Order in Turkish History", 123.

on the modern Nurcus and current *Naqshibandi* Communities.<sup>37</sup> Sencer Ayata makes a parallel argument by asserting that these Communities are not new figures of our political life, but a ‘rejuvenation’ of the traditional *Tasawwuf* tariqats, that constituted the biggest political challenge to the state.<sup>38</sup>

## Naqshibandis and Politics

*Naqshibandi* school is one of the most historical and influential examples of the *tasawwuf* – Islamic mysticism. The *Naqshibandi* tradition in real terms, on the other hand, started to be influential in the Ottomans especially at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with the arrival of the Timur army. Fatih invited some *Naqshibandi* Sheiks to İstanbul and *Naqshibandis* started to become influential in politics.<sup>39</sup> *Naqshibandis* were used for practical purposes, such as against the threat of shi’ite Safavis.<sup>40</sup> Another example was their being favored by the Sultans against the Bektashi sects, who were seen as possible sources of evil as they were betraying the divine law.<sup>41</sup>

The *Naqshibandi* Communities’ influence in politics increased especially during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid. This was due to the fact that Ottoman Empire faced the disintegration in his reign. He saw the pan-Islamism as a cure against this

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>38</sup> Sencer Ayata, “Traditional Sufi Orders on the Periphery”, in *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics and Literature in a Secular State*, 224.

<sup>39</sup> Tayfun Atay, *Batı’da Bir Nakşi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996), 60.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>41</sup> İlber Ortaylı, “The Policy of the Sublime-Porte towards Naqshbandis and Other Tariqas during the Tanzimat Period”, in Elisabeth Özdalga (ed.) *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia*, (İstanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 1999) , 67.

disintegration<sup>42</sup> and had good relations with *Naqshibandis*.<sup>43</sup> The 31 March rebellion of 1909, that was organized by *Naqshibandis* proved their link with Abdulhamid.<sup>44</sup>

During this period, *Naqshibandis* became very strong in terms of their organization and political activities. When İttihad and Terakki came to power, *Naqshibandis* started to criticize Sultan Abdülhamid.<sup>45</sup> As Mardin makes it clear, “throughout its history, the *Naqshibandi* order has always been on the alert for opportunities to use power for what it considered the higher interests of Muslims.”<sup>46</sup>

#### Nurcu Community before the 1980 coup

Nurcu Community was established around Said Nursi’s work, namely *Risale-i Nur*, which they put at the center of their ideology.<sup>47</sup> For that reason, understanding his books would help us in understanding the Nurcu Community’s aspirations and aims.

*Risale-i Nur* gave importance to the education of the masses, and aimed to create its own students (*shakird*) - the students of the “light” (*Nur*). According to Said Nursi, his books were not mere religious books, or just an interpretation of Quran. Instead, they were referring to “the light” that will guide all the Muslims to the right path. Contrary to the tariqat tradition, in *Risale-i Nur* he took the Quran as the tutor and was directly inspired from it.<sup>48</sup> For that reason, for any Muslim these

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<sup>42</sup> Atay, *Batı’da Bir Nakşi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 63.

<sup>43</sup> Fulya Atacan, *Sosyal Değişme ve Tarikat: Cerrahiler*, (İstanbul: Hil Yayın, 1990), 33.

<sup>44</sup> Mardin “The Nakşibendi Order in Turkish History”, 121.

<sup>45</sup> Atay, *Batı’da Bir Nakşi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 63.

<sup>46</sup> Mardin, “The Nakşibendi Order in Turkish History”, 135.

<sup>47</sup> M. Hakan Yavuz, “Bediüzzaman Said Nursi ve Nurculuk”, in *İslamcılık*, 264.

<sup>48</sup> Hamid Algar, *Bediüzzaman ve Tasavvuf*, (İstanbul: Gelenek Yayınları, 2003), 26.

books should mean more than ordinary religious books. They are the books that cannot be neglected.

The books included the explanation of the Quran<sup>49</sup>, where Said Nursi tried to merge scientific knowledge and religious faith into a single work. Despite the antipathy felt against the scientific knowledge in the Muslim world especially during the time of Said- which might be a result of perceiving the modern science as a Christian or sometimes a materialist creation- he was able to separate the scientific knowledge from the scientists' ideologies. According to Said Nursi, that needed to be done because at that time people were living in a modern age, that was different from the previous ones and hence they had to protect Islam by using the weapons that the age required- that was to say, the science. Not the classical education systems of the Muslims.<sup>50</sup>

#### Nurcus and Politics

Nursi and his Community were perceived as a threat to the secular state. During the first years of the Republican period, he was blamed for interfering in the *Sheikh* Said rebellion. This idea was kept during the one party regime. He was jailed several times because of his fundamentalist ideas.

In 1950, when Democrat Party replaced the Republican People's Party, the secularism of the early republican era changed to a certain extent. Said Nursi sent a letter to Celal Bayar, one of the Democrat Party founders and wished their government success from God. Moreover, he sent his close friend and disciple Bayram Yüksel to Korean War, to show his support to the Democrat Party

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<sup>49</sup> Algar, *Bedüzzaman ve Tasavvuf*, 26.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

government.<sup>51</sup> Yet, despite the Nurcus' explicit support to the Democrat Party against RPP, the State did not soften its attitudes towards Nurcus as much as they expected. For instance, in 1952 and 1953 State was inquiring about Said Nursi's speeches that he used in the *Risale-i Nur*.<sup>52</sup> However, Nursi and his community continued their support to the Democrat Party during the 1957 general elections.

The Nurcu community's relation with politics was quite complex, especially after the Said Nursi period. This was due to the fact that, after the death of Said Nursi, Nurcu community divided into several parts. The first thing that these groups did was showing their opposition to the 1960 Military administration. Nurcu communities published a newspaper, *Zülfikar*, in İzmir that strictly criticized the Military administration. The Nurcu communities were opposing them since they thought that, the coup administration was against religion and religious people. Yet, the newspaper was banned by the Coup administration. *Zülfikar* was followed by *İttihad*, which had more offensive attitude towards the secularist state officials. The Nurcu newspaper was banned, this time by 1971 military intervention.<sup>53</sup>

After the military intervention Nurcus started to support National Salvation Party in the 1973 elections. Yet Erbakan's ideas were not appropriate to the Nurcus and this led them draw their support from the party. Erbakan aimed to unite religious communities under his authority and this was not welcomed by Nurcus. Afterwards they started to support Justice Party that was the successor of the Democrat Party.<sup>54</sup> Demirel was seen as a member of the Nurcu community. In order to understand his close relationship with the Community, it would be beneficial to notice that Süleyman Demirel's books on politics and its relation with religion – namely

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<sup>51</sup> Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1990), 81.

<sup>52</sup> Mardin, *Türkiye'de Din ve Siyaset*, 170.

<sup>53</sup> Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar*, 89.

<sup>54</sup> Şerif Mardin, *Bediüzzaman Said Nursi Olayı*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 1997), 251.

*Kalkınmanın Manevi Yönü* (The Spiritual Side of the Development), *İslam ve Demokrasi* (Islam and Democracy) and etc. - were published by the Nurcus.<sup>55</sup>

As mentioned above, the Nurcu community was divided into different groups after the death of Said Nursi. Some of them put more emphasis on the politics, while some others on religious-theological issues. Fethullah Gülen was heading one of these different Nurcu groups.

Fethullah Gülen thinks that it is the State that can protect the Turkish Islamic community.<sup>56</sup> Especially, during the Cold War, Gülen and some of his Nurcu friends (like Mehmet Kırkinci) attributed so much importance to the State, since they were conducting an ideological war against anarchists and communists.<sup>57</sup> The Turkish military was praised because of its attitude in this war against communism.

#### Nurcus and the Economical Organization

Said Nursi did not put emphasis on the economical organization of the community. This may be explained by several reasons. First of all, it is impossible to talk about a free market economy in Turkey in his life time. Moreover, he was mostly busy with the political issues –he was jailed several times because of his writings and speeches on these issues. His disciples were also trying to spread his ideas and they were mostly poor people. This trend continued until the beginning of the Özal period, which we will investigate following chapters.

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<sup>55</sup> Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye’de İslami Oluşumlar*, 94.

<sup>56</sup> Yavuz, *Neo-Nurcular- Gülen Hareketi İslamcılık*, 296.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 297.

It was Fethullah Gülen who led its followers into the market. Yet, Said Nursi's ideas were appropriate to the free market economy and thus, Fethullah Gülen used Nursi's flexible ideas to create a free- market orientated community.<sup>58</sup>

As will be shown, Nurcu community gives special importance to the education and market economy. With regard to the period before the 1980s, it is very hard to talk about any economic organization especially compared to the ones existing today.

Before the coup, Nurcu Community was dependent on the donations of its disciples. There was not any company or any other economic institution established by the community. Yet, there were companies and firms of the Nurcu disciples. Nurcus collected donations from these firms in order to make certain organizations.

The organization of the 1970s was very weak and far away from the complex situation of the 1990s. Yet, there were some similarities in the organizations. Nurcu students stayed in houses called Işık Evleri, which were financed by the donations of the Nurcu disciples.<sup>59</sup> In these houses, students were not only prepared for the high schools or universities, but also taught Nurcu ideas of Said Nursi and Fethullah Gülen. There is a strict hierarchy in these houses. Every house has a brother, *abi*, who is responsible for these students. Usually, he is the older and most respected student of the house.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> "The Gülen Movement" in Hakan Yavuz and John L. Esposito (eds), *Turkish State and Secular State: The Gülen Movement*, (NY: Syracuse University Press,2003) 19.

<sup>59</sup> Çetinkaya, *Fethullah Gülen'in 40 Yıllık Serüveni*, 13.

<sup>60</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 224.

## Nurcu Community and Media

Nurcus started to take part in the written Media with the newspapers mentioned above, namely Zülfikar and İttihad. Yet, they were banned by the administrations because of their highly Islamic ideas. In 1970 a more influential, but a less radical newspaper was established by the Nurcus: Yeni Asya.

The most obvious tendency in this newspaper was that, its support to the Democrat Party-Justice Party tradition. Although the 1960 and 1971 military interventions occurred during these parties' governments, Yeni Asya did not criticize military officials directly. Controversially, they sometimes supported the military interventions of 1960 and 1971. For instance, after the 1971 intervention, one of the most respected names of the Nurcu Community, Bekir Berk wrote an article called "Ordumuzun Sesi" (The Voice of Our Army) and praised the coup administration for their decision. He mentioned his view that the coup was a necessary act against the increasing communist threat. Yet, despite its moderate attitude, Yeni Asya was also banned by the 1980 coup.<sup>61</sup> Nurcu Community decided to establish another newspaper that will take Yeni Asya's place: Yeni Nesil.

### A New Kind of Magazine: Sızıntı

The most influential Nurcu media organ before the coup was *Sızıntı*. It started to be published in 1979.<sup>62</sup> *Sızıntı* reflected Fethullah Gülen's Nurcu Community's ideas. Gülen himself was the editor of the magazine; however he was using a different name.

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<sup>61</sup> Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar*, 90.

<sup>62</sup> See the official site of the magazine: <http://www.sizinti.com.tr/>

The magazine mostly focused on the positive sciences and aimed to use them to prove their faith. To summarize, the main argument in *Sızıntı* was that, both universe and the Quran is the creation of God, and for that reason they must be in coherence. The magazine tries to found out these coherences and interpret them from a religious perspective. One of the articles in the second volume reflects this aim: “Every science talks about Him.”<sup>63</sup>

There is one more point about the *Sızıntı* magazine that is strongly related to this thesis. Although politics never became the main focus of the *Sızıntı*, starting from the first volume, the magazine showed its political stance. The Nurcus were uneasy about the chaotic atmosphere of the 1979. The editor’s first article was aimed to reflect this anti-anarchic and anti-communist stance of the Community. He made a reference to the Goethe’s Faust and asked a kid, who was his Mephisto, who made him cry.<sup>64</sup>

#### İskenderpaşa Community before the 1980 Coup

İskenderpaşa Community belonged to the *Naqshibandi* tradition. It was established by Mehmet Zahid Kotku. He was born in 1897 in Bursa. While he was attending the Bursa Trade School, the First World War broke out and he fought in the army until the end of the war.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> <http://www.sizinti.com.tr/arsiv.sizinti>

<sup>64</sup> See *Bu Ağlamayı Dindirmek İçin Yavru*, written by Fethullah Gülen from <http://www.sizinti.com.tr/arsiv.sizinti>

<sup>65</sup> Korkut Özal, “Twenty Years with Mehmet Zahid Kotku: A Personal Story”, in Elisabeth Özdalga (ed.) *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia*, 165.

After the death of Abulaziz Bekkine Efendi-who was known as the 38<sup>th</sup> *Sheikh* in the *Silsile-i Sadat*<sup>66</sup>, Mehmet Zahid Kotku was asked to be the new leader of the Bekkine- a prominent school among the *Naqshibandi* tradition- followers. Kotku accepted this request and came to Istanbul to start his duty in İskenderpaşa Mosque that would continue till the end of his life.<sup>67</sup>

Kotku's duty was really hard in the beginning, since he became the leader of the Bekkine followers –whose number was taught to be one million. Yet, he had the advantage of being a state official, *Imam*, in the İskenderpaşa Mosque. Working for the State and staying away from the radical discourses favored Zahid Kotku in spreading his ideas among Muslims. While doing this he was never investigated or jailed by any government, including the Military administrations.<sup>68</sup> This advantage will be understood better when the cases of Said Nursi and Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan are taken into consideration.

### İskenderpaşa Community and Politics

Politics was always perceived as an important tool in the İskenderpaşa Community. Mehmed Zaid Kotku was interested in politics and wanted his followers to participate in politics. For instance, when Korkut Özal- a prominent figure in the modern political life of Turkey and former minister of Interior- asked his opinion

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<sup>66</sup> Silsile-i Sadat refers to the chain of the biggest religious authorities, who would follow Prophet Muhammad in faith, and who would be the leaders of the Muslims of their age. There is a common idea that Mahdi will be the last link of this chain.

<sup>67</sup> Mehmet Emin Yaşar, “Dergah’tan Partiye, Vakıf’tan Şirkete Bir Kimliğin Oluşumu ve Dönüşümü: İskenderpaşa Cemaati”, in *İslamcılık*, 327.

<sup>68</sup> Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye’de İslami Oluşumlar* 18.

about an offer that came to him from the National Salvation party before the 1973 elections, Kotku advised him to accept the offer.<sup>69</sup>

### National Order Party and İskenderpaşa Community

Indeed the relation between İskenderpaşa and politics was more intense than that of any other religious community. It is known that it was Kotku who made Necmettin Erbakan establish the first Islamist party in Turkish politics, National Order Party in 1970.<sup>70</sup> Especially, Justice Party's failure in satisfying the Islamists' demands led him to support the establishment of an Islamist Party.<sup>71</sup> For that reason the party was blessed by Mehmet Zahid Kotku.<sup>72</sup> While Nurcus were aimed to be controlled by Erbakan, Kotku had a superior position compared to any leader, including Erbakan. Thus, Iskenderpaşa Community followers supported party, contrary to Nurcus.

The establishment of the party was very critical in the Turkish political life since Islamists -who were operating underground until that time- started to seek their demands directly by actively participating in politics.<sup>73</sup> With the establishment of the National Order Party, the Islamists as a whole not only the İskenderpaşa Community, left their marginal situation and became a contestant for the government administration.<sup>74</sup> Some Communities kept their good relation with the party, while some others preferred new parties (including the center left parties like Ecevit's DSP) and tried to maximize their Community's interest.

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<sup>69</sup> Özal, "Twenty Years with Mehmet Zahid Kotku: A Personal Story", 176.

<sup>70</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 191.

<sup>71</sup> Yaşar, "Dergah'tan Partiye, Vakıf'tan Şirkete Bir Kimliğin Oluşumu ve Dönüşümü: İskenderpaşa Cemaati", 330.

<sup>72</sup> Sami Zubaida, "Turkish Islam and National Identity", in *Middle East Report*, April June 1996, 12.

<sup>73</sup> Nilufer Narli, "The Rise of the Islamist Movement in Turkey", in *MERIA Journal*, 1997, Vol. 1, No. 3,1.

<sup>74</sup> Gencay Şaylan, *Türkiye'de İslamcı Siyaset*, (Ankara: V Yayınları, 1992), 158.

Yet the party was closed by the Military intervention of 12 March 1971. Islamists established another Islamist party, which was going to be closed by another military intervention in 1980. Especially the success of the party increased the Community's prestige. In the 1973 elections, National Salvation Party gained 11.8% of the votes and sent 48 MPs into the parliament.<sup>75</sup>

Despite the support of Kotku to the establishment of the Islamist parties, he became critical to the politics performed by Necmettin Erbakan at the end of the 1970s. According to Kotku, Erbakan started to perform radical and marginal politics, which was very dangerous especially in the chaotic atmosphere of the country. For that reason he warned Erbakan many times for his radical attitudes. However Kotku's demands were neither rejected nor accepted by Necmettin Erbakan. Erbakan did not want to oppose Kotku's demands directly. He did not want to challenge Kotku, who was accepted as the Sheikh by many members of the party. The situation became so critical before the military intervention that, Kotku wanted Erbakan to close the party.<sup>76</sup>

The tension between the National Salvation party and the İskenderpaşa Community was delayed for a while because of the military intervention and Kotku's death just after the intervention.<sup>77</sup> The relation between the party and the Community became much more complicated with the new era that would be shaped by the competition between Esad Coşan –the son in law of Kotku- and Erbakan. Coşan did not have the charisma Kotku had, especially in the first years of his leadership. Erbakan used this advantage and directly opposed Coşan's leadership. Although

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<sup>75</sup> M. Emin Köktaş, *Din ve Siyaset* (Ankara:Vadi Yayınları, 1997) , 199.

<sup>76</sup> Yaşar, "Dergah'tan Partiye, Vakıf'tan Şirkete Bir Kimliğin Oluşumu ve Dönüşümü: İskenderpaşa Cemaati", 331.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

İskenderpaşa Community supported for the National Order Party before the 1980 coup, the Community started to support other parties after the coup.

Kotku's pupils were interested in politics during these years and they later came to important positions in Turkish politics. Some of the prominent figures of the Turkish politics that had close relations with İskenderpaşa Community are Turgut Özal<sup>78</sup>, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Necmettin Erbakan and Hilmi Güler.<sup>79</sup> These relations with the politicians will be investigated in detail in the following chapters, since they emerged after the coup and especially during the Özal period.

### İskenderpaşa Community and Economical Organization

İskenderpaşa community aimed to establish “their own economic, educational and communicative networks” in order to increase the primacy of religion in political and social sphere.<sup>80</sup> For that reason, the İskenderpaşa Community gave importance to the expanding their activities among businessmen, merchants and academicians.

Kotku recommended his disciples to be merchants instead of being state officials. He was thinking that, wealth would bring independence and this would increase the disciples' power in the society.<sup>81</sup>

Other than these personal investments, before the 1980 military intervention, there was only one company established by the Community itself. Parallel to the views of Kotku and Erbakan on the heavy industrialization project, Gümüş Motor Company was established by the Community.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 332.

<sup>79</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 192.

<sup>80</sup> Yavuz, “The Matrix of Modern Turkish Islamic Movements: the Naqshbandi Sufi Order”, in *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia*, 137.

<sup>81</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 192.

<sup>82</sup> Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar*, 23.

## İskenderpaşa Community and Media

İskenderpaşa Community discovered the importance of Media after the 1980 coup, starting with the İslam magazine. However, before that the Community did not have any media organ.

## Süleymancı Community Before the 1980 Coup

*Süleymancılık* was established as a community that aimed to teach “reading”<sup>83</sup> Quran. Süleymancıs think that State, especially one during the one party system, ignored religious education and thus prevented people from learning their religion. Süleymancıs, at this point, came to the scene and aimed to teach people Islam. Especially the law that made Quran Courses legal, in 1946, legitimized their activities and helped them to protect their existence.<sup>84</sup>

The Süleymancı Community was established by Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan, a religious personality that was educated in the Ottoman *madrassa* system. Tunahan’s charismatic leadership was very prominent for the community.<sup>85</sup> He was believed to be the 33<sup>rd</sup> and the last link of the noble chain, by his pupils.<sup>86</sup> Like Mehmet Zahid Kotku, Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan worked as an Imam in some of the important

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<sup>83</sup> Here reading refers to a reciting that does not require understanding. Non-Arab muslims, especially in Turkey, learn Arabic letters and then make the sounds in Arabic without grasping the meaning.

<sup>84</sup> Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye’de İslami Oluşumlar*. 127.

<sup>85</sup> Mustafa Aydın, “Süleymancılık” in *İslamcılık*, 308.

<sup>86</sup> See for instance the brochure prepared by the Süleymancı Community. The title of this brochure is “Silsile-i Sadat’ın 33. ve Son Halkası Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan”.

mosques in Istanbul (Sultanahmet and Yenikapı).<sup>87</sup> This was crucial for him, since his name became more popular during this duty. Yet, contrary to Mehmed Zahid Kotku, Tunahan was arrested 3 times. In 1957, he was arrested for preparing a revolt against state, when he was 69. In 1959, he was set free and died one month later.<sup>88</sup>

The community differs from the other religious communities with the lack of a written doctrine produced by the leader of the Community.<sup>89</sup> Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan explains the reason for this fact in the following quotation:

“In a period that the madrasas were closed, the scripture was changed, the religious education started to lose its importance; instead of writing a book, I preferred to educate students that can understand the religious books and live through Islam. In other words I preferred to educate living books.”<sup>90</sup>

Yet, there might be another reason for this tendency. Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan movement, as explained before, was a more practical movement, that was not supported with a great ideal like, fighting against materialism or communism. The aim was, basically, teaching how to read Quran, and increasing number of these students. And, indeed, for this aim, a deep theory is not required.

After, Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan’s death Kemal Kaçar, his son in law, became the new leader of the Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan Community. Yet, until 1971 the community was directed by a group of prominent Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan. Starting from the 1971, Kemal Kaçar increased his power and became the sole authority in the community.<sup>91</sup> However, he never reached the charisma and strength of Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan. This was mostly because of the theological understanding of the Community, which argued

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<sup>87</sup> Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye’de İslami Oluşumlar*, 127.

<sup>88</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 197.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

<sup>90</sup> Ahmet Akgündüz, *Arşiv Belgeleri Işığında Silistrelili Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan*, (İstanbul: Osmanlı Araştırmaları Vakfı, 1997), 98.

<sup>91</sup> Aydın, “Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan”, 312

that Tunahan was the last link of the noble chain. Hence, Kemal Kaçar, in the minds of the Süleymancı, like other religious personalities, would have to be inferior to Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan.

### Süleymancı Community and Politics

Süleymancı Community increased their activism especially in the one party period- a period in which religion's importance decreased in the social and political life. Süleymancı aimed to fill the gap in the religious education. During the Democrat Party period Süleymancı could not find the support that they were expecting from the government for religious education. In 1959, when Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan died and the community wanted to burry him into the garden of the Fatih Mosque, Democrat Party refused this offer and this further increased the tension between them.<sup>92</sup>

In the beginning of the 1960s Süleymancı decided to stop acting in opposition to the State and tried to be close to the government in order to increase their interests. Yet, Süleymancı again became critical of the state during the second half of the 1960s. In 1965, the law that found it appropriate that only the Imam-Hatip school graduates would to be Imam in the mosques, accepted by the government. Before, Süleymancı community members were also had the right to be officials in the mosques. Indeed after this law, Süleymancı not only became critical of not only the government but also of the Imam Hatip Schools and their graduates.<sup>93</sup>

Süleymancı Community's relation with the State went even worse after the 1971 military intervention. Coup government wanted all the Süleymancı and other

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<sup>92</sup> Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar*,129.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

Quran courses to be bounded to *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* (Directorate of Religious Affairs), which is a State institution. Süleymancı tried to handle this problem by changing the names of the Quran courses to student help organizations.<sup>94</sup> Yet, most of Süleymancı Quran courses became state owned and run Quran courses. This, on the other hand, forced Süleymancı to seek alternatives for religious education, as it will be mentioned in the section that deals with economical relations.

After the 71 military intervention, Süleymancı supported Süleyman Demirel (Justice Party) until the 1980 military intervention. Kemal Kaçar, the new leader of the community after Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan, became PM from this party between 1977 and 1980.<sup>95</sup>

## Süleymancı and Economic Organization

### Islam Culture Centers

As it was mentioned above, after the military intervention of the 1971, Süleymancı Community started to search for alternatives and increased its activities in Europe, especially in Germany where the Turkish population was dense.<sup>96</sup> The Community collected money from Muslims in this country, and organized to build mosques there. These mosques later, turned into an organization called Islam Culture Centers (İslam Kültür Merkezleri) which was first established in 1975.<sup>97</sup> Köln became the center of the organization in Europe.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Aydın “Süleymancılık”, 312.

<sup>95</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 198.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>97</sup> Faik Bulut, *İslamcı Örgütler*, (İstanbul: Tümzamanlar Yayıncılık, 1994), 757.

<sup>98</sup> Aydın, “Süleymancılık”, 313.

In the beginning of the 1980s, the Community had 150 Islam Culture Centers, 250 mosques and over 20,000 members in Germany. Moreover, the organization became so influential that, the Community even proposed the German government that they should be considered as the representatives of the Muslim minority in Germany.<sup>99</sup>

It should be noticed at this point that there were several Islamist organizations in Germany that tried to gain from the opportunities offered by the wealth and the liberal atmosphere of the Germany. And this led them to compete over these advantages. For instance, Süleymancı Community's organization Islam Culture Centers were in competition with Nurcu Community's organization in Germany, Cemaat-in Nur. The organization that attempted to unite them failed because of the rivalry between them.<sup>100</sup>

### Süleymancı Community and Media

Like the İskenderpaşa Community, Süleymancı did not have any media tool before the 1980 coup.

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<sup>99</sup> Bulut, *İslamcı Örgütler*, 757.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE COUP D'ETAT AND THE NURCU, SÜLEYMANCI AND ISKENDERPAŞA COMMUNITIES DURING THE COUP

#### The 1980 Coup

The coup of September 12, 1980 was one of the most influential events that have ever been occurred in the history of the Turkish Republic. There was a chaotic situation in the country before the coup. Especially politicians were unable to solve the adversary between the leftist and the rightist citizens.

In September 12, 1980 Turkish army made the intervention by making the following explanation:

“The state and its principal organs had been rendered inoperative; the constitutional structure was full of contradictions, and political parties were intransigent in their attitude and lacked the consensus necessary to deal with the country’s problems.”<sup>101</sup>

The head of the coup, the chief of staff Kenan Evren became head of the state. Evren formed National Security Council with his four commanders. The coup government aimed to combat the political violence above anything else. Thus, they put special emphasis on the secure atmosphere both in their policies and in the Constitution prepared by the coup government.

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<sup>101</sup> Feroz Ahmad, “Military Intervention and Crisis in Turkey”, in MERIP Reports no 93, Jan 1981, 5.

Although the main focus of the coup perceived as the adversary between left and the right segments of the society, the threat of radical Islam was also used as a legitimization tool by the military.<sup>102</sup> Yet, there is still no consensus on the impact of the coup on the relations between the state and the religion.

### New Constitution

According to the Coup administration, the 1961 Constitution was the main responsible for the chaotic atmosphere of the pre-coup era. They confessed that the 1961 Constitution was democratic and liberal. Yet, they claim that, this liberal atmosphere was abused by the associations, Labor Unions and similar groups.

If there is any connection between the constitution and the State's ideology<sup>103</sup>, it would not be hard to imagine the main emphasis in the Constitution prepared by the 1980 Coup administration. As mentioned above, Kenan Evren and his friends aimed to rebuild the secure atmosphere- "*huzur ve güven ortamı*". Thus, the constitution of 1982 was organized in a way that would help them achieve this goal.

When the 1961 and the 1982 constitutions are compared this fact can be understood more easily. In the Introduction part of the 1961 constitution the government's oppression was shown as the reason for the Coup and it was said that this constitution tried to protect the people from the government's arbitrary policies. In the Introduction part of the 1982 constitution, it was claimed that the State's

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<sup>102</sup> Ertugrul Kurkcu, "The Crisis of the Turkish State", Middle East Report, April-June no 199: 1996, 5.

<sup>103</sup> Feridun Kayalı, "Anayasalar ve İdeolojiler", in Türk Kültürü Dergisi, Türk Kültürü Araştırma Enstitüsü, Eylül 1982, no 233, 687.

authority was lost and it should be restructured with this constitution.<sup>104</sup> The constitution aimed to protect “the youth from dangerous ideas and attitudes” and indeed, this aim was open to be abused by the Executive power.<sup>105</sup> As it will be shown, some of the Islamist Communities’ ideas were going to be identified under this category by the military administration.

### The Coup and its Impact on the Relations between the Religion and State

Many people claimed that the coup administration led to a radical turning point in the relations between the military and the Islamists. It is often claimed that, before, the military was stopping the *irticai* movements. Military had always got involved into the politics in order to protect the secular character of the Republic. Yet, with the 1980 coup, as Taha Parla claims, the classical secular Kemalist policies were left.<sup>106</sup>

According to this view, the religion again entered into the political arena and became the prominent element of the political life. These people also claimed that the Turkish Republic witnessed a transition from a synthesis of Kemalism (that is a synthesis of west and the nationalism) towards a National-Islamic synthesis. Before the coup Islam used to be an element of sub-culture however now, after the coup, it became a part of the official culture. For instance the constitution gave the Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı (Directorate of Religious Affairs) the duty to enhance social solidarity.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Bülent Tanör, Necmi Yüzbaşıoğlu, *1982 Anayasasına Göre Türk Anayasa Hukuku*, (İstanbul: Yapı kredi Yayınları-Cogito, 2002), 46.

<sup>105</sup> Taha Parla, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Rejimi, 1980-1989* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1993), 62.

<sup>106</sup> Taha Parla, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Rejimi*, 206.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 209.

Indeed, it is obvious that 1980 coup was different from other coups, in terms of its understanding of religion. The Turkish Islamic discourse had the primary role in this different understanding. To get an idea about the impact of the Turk-Islam synthesis on the political sphere, one can look at the 5<sup>th</sup> 5 years development plan. In that plan the Turkish-Islamic synthesis of Aydınlar Ocağı was included as a part of the National Culture program.<sup>108</sup> This was a very important step since the synthesis is officially mentioned and embraced by the state. (Indeed, even the National Culture program itself was an idea of the head of the coup administration, Kenan Evren)<sup>109</sup>

Another example that shows importance of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis was the statement in the National Culture report which defines Islam as “the essence of our nation’s moral values.”<sup>110</sup> With Turkish-Islamic synthesis, the Turkish soldier became “the defender of the Muslim faith”<sup>111</sup>

### The Religion as a Uniting Tool

Indeed the actors of the coup d’état confessed their aims in taking some pro-Islamic policies. For instance Kenan Evren explained the policy that made religious education compulsory with these sentences:

“I am saying to the parents who do not send their children to the state schools and, instead give them to the care of ignorant people who open clandestine Quranic recitation courses. ‘You do not have the right to do this... Now by a new decision we took, a compulsory course of teaching religion will be put in primary and middle schools, and high schools’ ”.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Bozkurt Güvenç, et. al, *Türk İslam Sentezi* (İstanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi, 1994), 34.

<sup>109</sup> Bulut, *Ordu ve Din*, 75

<sup>110</sup> Güvenç, *Türk İslam Sentezi*, 47.

<sup>111</sup> Sam Kaplan, “Din-u Devlet All Over Again? The Politics of Military Secularism and Religious Militarism In Turkey Following the 1980 Coup”, 2002, *Middle East Stud.* 34, 114.

<sup>112</sup> Osman Taştan, “Religion and Religious Minorities in Turkey Since 1970”, in *Turkey since 1970 : Politics, Economics and Society*, Debbie Lovatt ed. (Basingstoke : Palgrave, 2001), 150.

As the quote displays, military aimed to take the religious education into its hands. Here, the ignorant people who open clandestine Quran recitation courses refer to the Religious Communities' members.

### Religious Education in the Republican Period

As mentioned above, military administration saw the “deficiency” in the religious education absent in Turkey. For that reason they aimed to reform the education system to give a better religious education for the students. In order to understand the coup administration's steps in making these reforms, we should have a brief knowledge on the place of religious education in the Turkish education system.

During the single party regime of Turkey, the study of religion was removed to a certain extent from the education system. Yet, with the introduction to the multi-party system the religion started to take more part in the curriculum. Although the government did not change with the 1946 elections, the policies on this issue changed to some extent as the Republican People's Party, a secular party founded by Mustafa Kemal, initiated the religious education in order to decrease the voters' appreciation towards the Democrat Party. In 1949, religious education started to be provided to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades and Imam Hatip schools were established by the İnönü government.<sup>113</sup> Again, as mentioned above, in this period, Quran Courses became legal and Faculty of Theology was founded by the government.<sup>114</sup>

During the Democrat Party period this transition in the education system continued. More Imam Hatip schools were opened by the government, while new

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<sup>113</sup> Kaplan, “Din-u Devlet All Over Again? The Politics of Military Secularism and Religious Militarism In Turkey Following the 1980 Coup”, 118.

<sup>114</sup> Yetkin, *12 Eylülde İrtica*, 13.

Faculties of Theology emerged. These policies of Democrat Party were strictly criticized by the 1960 coup administration. They claimed that Democrat Party was unsuccessful in protecting the secular characteristic of the Republic.<sup>115</sup>

In 1971, when military intervened into the politics once again, they put an end to the first 4 year education of the Imam Hatip schools. Moreover they limited the Imam Hatip school graduates' options in choosing their departments in the university education. The civilian coalition of Bülent Ecevit and Necmettin Erbakan changed the law again and brought the first 4 years of education to Imam Hatip schools back.<sup>116</sup>

#### Religious Education during the 1980 Period

1980 coup administration made the religion lessons compulsory.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, this action was the main reason behind people's blaming Coup administration for increasing the *irtica* in the country. Yet, a close reading of Kenan Evren's speeches will disclose their aim in making the religious education compulsory. As it can be understood from his speeches, Evren was aware of the potential danger of the Quran Courses if they were controlled by the Communities and thus he aimed to take the religious education under state control.

Another criticism directed towards the military administration was about the Imam Hatip schools. Although the coup administration opened just one Imam Hatip school in 3 years –there were 374 Imam Hatip schools before the coup<sup>118</sup>. The

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<sup>115</sup> Binnaz Toprak, "The State, Politics and Religion in Turkey" in *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (eds), (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 123.

<sup>116</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 171.

<sup>117</sup> Yetkin, *12 Eylülde İrtica*, 11.

<sup>118</sup> See <http://www.meb.gov.tr-stats/Apk2002/64.htm>

criticism in this situation was that, although Evren did not open any Imam Hatip Schools, why did not he close one of them?

Evren thought that these schools were needed to create modern religion teachers and Imams. He, again, mentioned the importance of these people and said that “the place for this (education) is not Quran courses, but Imam Hatip schools.”<sup>119</sup> In order to understand his limits of tolerance for these schools, one should continue reading his speech. “The graduates of these schools should work in jobs that they supposed to work in. If you allow them to be a teacher or soldier... No. This is what I oppose.”<sup>120</sup>

#### Communities in This Period

Although we can talk about certain amount of Islamization in the society during the coup administration, in order to balance leftist movements with a religious-national trend; the same support to the religious groups cannot be observed. The coup was not aiming to create a convenient atmosphere for these groups. It was supporting the Islamic values as long as they serve the interests of the coup. For instance the Süleymancı group’s *yurts* (dormitories) were decided to be taken from the group and given to the Diyanet İşleri.<sup>121</sup> Another policy that shows the Military administration’s aim was that, Necmettin Erbakan –the leader of the Islamist National Salvation Party- was blamed to be acting against the secular republic.

Indeed, the military officers always showed their uneasiness about the increasing popularity and activity of the religious communities. For instance, in

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<sup>119</sup> Yetkin, *12 Eylülde İrtica*, 87.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>121</sup> Aydın, “Süleymancılık”, 313.

1983, the period in which Yaşar Büyükanıt was the Commander of the Kuleli Military School, 80 students were dismissed from the school because of being related to the *irticai* movements. The investigation made by the military claimed that these students were members of the Fethullah Gülen's Nur Community.<sup>122</sup>

Another proof was the fact that Coup D'état Administration's inquiry of Süleymançı Community's leader Kemal Kaçar and Nurcu Community's leader Fethullah Gülen for their discourses.<sup>123</sup>

In a recent interview with Kenan Evren, he confessed that Fethullah Gülen tried to meet him just after the coup. He sent many mediators and wanted them to tell Evren that, Gülen was supporting him. However, Kenan Evren refused to see him:

"I said no. What could I talk with him (Fethullah Gülen), I did not accept... Then they came again, they wanted me to talk to him. Then, one professor came and told me that he (Gülen) liked me a lot. He wanted me to see Gülen's schools... I knew the schools, they were good schools... But they took the smart kids and manipulate them... At the end I accepted to see him. I wanted him to wear a tie and I declared that I was going to call the media to take his photographs. I said this because they knew that Fethullah Gülen does not wear tie. He thinks that it is the symbol of Republic."<sup>124</sup>

### Military Reports

There were also some reports, prepared by the military officials of the coup period about the religious communities' characteristics and their activities. The first report, Türkiye'de Din Eğitimi (The Religious Education in Turkey), which was prepared with Bülend Ulusu's order.<sup>125</sup> In this report, it was claimed that, the

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<sup>122</sup> Emin Çölaşan, "Geçmişten Gelen Kin mi?", Hürriyet, 12 March 2006.

<sup>123</sup> Faik Bulut, *Ordu ve Din*, (İstanbul: Tüzmamanlar Yayıncılık, 1995), 74.

<sup>124</sup> Ali Eyüboğlu, "Gülen Kravat Taksın Görüşeceğim' dedim", Milliyet, 3 March 2006. One day after this interview, Zaman published Fethullah Gülen's photograph in which he wears a tie.

<sup>125</sup> Bülend Ulusu was the Prime Minister of the Coup administration.

religious education was not satisfactory in Turkey. It was further asserted that Nurcu and Süleymancı communities benefited from the lack of religious education and increased their strength (As it was mentioned before, here again, the military administration thought that, increasing the religious education-that would be given by the State- would decrease the need to Religious Communities' and thus their strength ).<sup>126</sup>

In another report, called the "Theocratic State Defenders", which was prepared for the Military, İskenderpaşa Community was defined as a tariqat, which aimed to reinstate the shari'a.<sup>127</sup>

The final report that reflects the coup administration's perception of religious Communities would be "Anarşi ve Terörün Halihazır Tehdit Gücü (The Current Threat of Anarchy and Terror)". It was based on a conference in 1983. In this report, the destructive elements for the regime were divided into 3, namely far left, far right and anti-secular groups. In this report Atatürk's ideas on Islam were used to show the military's orthodox view of Islam. For instance statements like "Turkish nation should be more religious", "Religion is an essential organization, and the nations without a religion cannot survive" were displayed in this report.<sup>128</sup> These quotations taken from Atatürk's speeches had not been used randomly up until then. Indeed the military elites reflect their ideas by using these quotations from him. The message was clear. The religion was necessary and useful, as long as it was not exploited by the religious Communities.

The attitude of military elites towards the religious communities was also perceived by these communities. For instance, one of the prominent journalists of the İskenderpaşa Community, Raşit Küçük confessed that they were aware of the threat

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<sup>126</sup> Bulut, *Ordu ve Din*, 135.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 190.

posed towards them by the military administration. For that reason, even after the coup administration, for a certain period, the magazine of the İskenderpaşa Community focused on the problems of Muslims that live in foreign countries.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar*, 30.

## CHAPTER 3

### ÖZAL ERA AND THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN THIS PERIOD

Özal period, that refers to the times of his being prime minister (1983-1989) and president (1989-1993), was very critical for the Religious Communities in Turkey. Especially the post coup reforms of Özal were highly influential for the organizations of these groups. These reforms can be investigated in two different realms; namely, the political reforms and the economic reforms.

Özal focused on the economic reforms during his first years in the government. Later, in his presidency, he continued to increase the liberties while embracing a neo-liberal economic policy. Both of these liberalization policies increased the influence areas of the religious Communities. These policies were not solely aiming to increase these Communities' activities. Yet, it was mostly certain policies that aimed to favour these Communities.

Özal's personal background was also influential in his support to the religious communities (especially *Naqshibandi* and Nurcu groups). It will also be right to claim that Özal's party, Motherland Party, had a religious-conservatist voter type and this fact also was influential in understanding his policies.<sup>130</sup> For that reason his and his party's background will be explained briefly.

#### *The Özal Era*

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<sup>130</sup> Mustafa Erdoğan, "Liberalizm ve Türkiye'deki Serüveni", in *Liberalizm*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005), 35.

Özal was born in Malatya in 1927. He came from a conservatist and religious family.<sup>131</sup> His father had religious education in a *medrese* for 16 years and after that education he got the right, to teach Islam in a theological school. Turgut Özal and his older brother Korkut Özal's perception of Islam started to change with their arrival into the Istanbul Technical University. Here, they attended the Thursday meetings, in where Islam and its place in the modern life were discussed by the Islamists and the scholars.<sup>132</sup>

Özal's brother, Korkut Özal was also quite interested in the Islamic principles. The first time he read the Quran's Turkish translation he could not grasp all the meaning and more importantly he was worried about how to implement Quran into the modern life. For that reason, he asked one of his friends to help him. His friend guided him to a *Sheikh* who would have close relations –sometimes on issues that were beyond religious affairs - with the Özal family in the future: Mehmet Zahid Kotku.<sup>133</sup>

Özal was a graduate of Istanbul Technical University. He was one of the conservatist politicians and bureaucrats that became members of Demirel's Justice Party in the 1960s. When Demirel became the Prime Minister, Özal was appointed as the Undersecretary of the State Planning Organization.<sup>134</sup> While he held office in this position, Özal appointed many Islamist bureaucrats to this organization. Indeed, this was a very radical attempt, since it was mostly dominated by the secularist bureaucrats before Özal. This was the beginning of a new period, in which Islamists

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<sup>131</sup> Ziya Öniş, "Turgut Özal and His Economic Legacy: Turkish Neo-liberalsim in Critical Perspective", 4.

<sup>132</sup> Korkut Özal, "Twenty Years with Mehmet Zahid Kotku: A Personal Story", 160.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 164.

<sup>134</sup> Öniş, "Turgut Özal and His Economic Legacy: Turkish Neo-liberalsim in Critical Perspective", 5.

would be appointed to crucial positions in many state agencies.<sup>135</sup> During their duty in there, a famous Turkish daily Newspaper Milliyet defined them as “Takunyalı Kardeşler”<sup>136</sup> - an expression that is used to emphasize religiosity.

After working for the World Bank for 2 years, Turgut Özal turned back to Turkey and began working for the private sector between 1973 and 1979. Especially, his position in Sabancı Corporation, one of the biggest conglomerates of Turkey, gave him enough experience about the market economics.<sup>137</sup> During this period, he also refreshed his relations with Mehmet Zahid Kotku’s İskenderpaşa Community.<sup>138</sup>

Despite his attempt to enter to the active politics with Erbakan’s National Salvation Party, he failed to be a PM in the elections. This marked an important turning point in Özal’s political life. Within the Coup administration, Özal became responsible for the economic affairs, because of his knowledge and ability in negotiating with the international organizations.<sup>139</sup> He became the deputy prime minister in this period.<sup>140</sup>

After the military administration, he actively participated in the formation of a new political party (Motherland Party) and became the prime Minister after the 1980 Coup. The important thing in here is that, the coup administration did not want him to be the Prime Minister, because of his Islamic tendencies.<sup>141</sup>

Özal became influential in the Turkish political life, especially between 1983 and 1993. In the first period, from 1983 to 1989 he was the Prime minister, and in the second he was the President. Özal kept his strength in both of these periods. When he

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<sup>135</sup> Feride Acar, “Turgut Özal: Pious Agent of Liberal Transformation”, in Metin Heper, Sabri Sayarı (eds.) *Political Leaders and Democracy in Turkey* , (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2002), 165.

<sup>136</sup> Orhan Tokathı, *Kırmızı Plakalar: Türkiye’nin Özallı Yılları*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık, 1999) , 178. Also see Feride Acar, “Turgut Özal: Pious Agent of Liberal Transformation”, 11.

<sup>137</sup> Öniş, “Turgut Özal and His Economic Legacy: Turkish Neo-liberalsim in Critical Perspective”, 5.

<sup>138</sup> Acar, “Turgut Özal: Pious Agent of Liberal Transformation”, 165.

<sup>139</sup> Öniş, “Turgut Özal and His Economic Legacy: Turkish Neo-liberalsim in Critical Perspective”, 7.

<sup>140</sup> Acar, “Turgut Özal: Pious Agent of Liberal Transformation”, 166

<sup>141</sup> Öniş, “Turgut Özal and His Economic Legacy: Turkish Neo-liberalsim in Critical Perspective”, 7.

became the President, people thought that he would lose his influence on his party and thus on the political affairs. Yet, he interfered into –and sometimes directly organized the issues in- the political agenda during his presidency.

When he became the president, in 1989, he appointed Yıldırım Akbulut as the Prime Minister. Indeed, as Akbulut later confessed that, he had not had such an idea before Özal mentioned him about his decision.<sup>142</sup> This shows Özal’s aim to keep his power in the political arena. Probably, Özal thought that Akbulut was going to support anything Özal wanted. Akbulut’s being replaced by Mesut Yılmaz, after his criticism of Özal on his ideas about the Gulf War<sup>143</sup> proved this probability.

#### Politics

Özal aimed to create a more liberal society especially during his Presidency. He was aware of the anti-democratic atmosphere created by the 1982 Constitution. For that reason he planned to abolish certain laws that limit freedom of speech and thought. The 141<sup>st</sup> and 142<sup>nd</sup> articles of the Penal Code, that limit freedom of thought, were changed in this period. 163<sup>rd</sup> article, which was seen as an obstacle against religious freedoms, was also abolished.<sup>144</sup>

Özal especially emphasized the freedom of religion in his speeches.<sup>145</sup> As a practicing Muslim, he wanted the free exercise of the religious practices by the citizens, without facing any State intervention. Indeed according to Özal, the Religious Freedoms were superior to Freedom of thought. This fact may explain his

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<sup>142</sup> Acar, “Turgut Özal: Pious Agent of Liberal Transformation”, 170.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>144</sup> Tokatlı, *Kırmızı Plakalar: Türkiye'nin Özallı Yılları*, 176.

<sup>145</sup> Ethem Ruhi Fıçlalı, “Değişimci Özal ve Değişim Sürecinde İslam”, in İlhan Sezal, İlhan Dağı (eds.), *Kim Bu Özal: Siyaset, İktisat, Zihniyet*, (İstanbul: Boyut Kitapları, 2001), 215.

perception of the religious communities as non-governmental organizations.<sup>146</sup> Since these groups were defending the religious rights of the society, they were, in Özal's way of thinking, functioning as non-governmental organizations.

#### Economics of Özal's period

1980 marks a crucial turning point for the Turkish Economy. From the beginning of the early 1980s export-led growth started to be the main economic policy in Turkey.<sup>147</sup> The government of 1980, declared their economic reform, which would change the inward looking ISI (Import Substitution Industrialization) strategy of the economy.<sup>148</sup> This change was Özal's idea. He experienced the importance of a liberal economy and saw the increasing liberal trend in the west.

Indeed this was a very crucial action, since the ISI was the dominant strategy in Turkey since the 1930s –except for the period between 1950 and 1953. Another feature of this period was the intensive government intervention. During the period before the economic reform the government was constructing public enterprises and was implementing barriers to trade. By this way the governments were expecting to protect the domestic economy against the foreign competitors.<sup>149</sup>

Özal gave great importance to international trade. He prepared an economic package, in which the economy was opened to international competition, and as mentioned above the Import Substitution System was replaced by an export based growth plan. “The package provided export incentives” and “liberalized the laws

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<sup>146</sup> Muhittin Ataman, “Özal ve İslam Dünyası: İnanç ve Pragmatizm”, in *Kim Bu Özal: Siyaset, İktisat, Zihniyet*, 359.

<sup>147</sup> John Waterbury, “Export-Led Growth and the Center Right Coalition in Turkey” in *Comparative Politics*, Volume 24, Number 2, January 1992, 2.

<sup>148</sup> Utku Utkulu, “The Turkish Economy: Past and Present” in *Turkey since 1970*, 20.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

regarding imports...”<sup>150</sup> The bureaucratic formalities that limit export were abolished.<sup>151</sup> All these reforms activated the capital in the Anatolian cities and led to the emergence of Islamic bourgeoisie.<sup>152</sup> Communities established firms for trade during this period. Nurcus, for instance, established İŞHAD (The Association for Solidarity in Business Life) that mostly consists of firms that operate in the international arena.<sup>153</sup>

In order to understand the importance of this reform, one should look at other dominant parties’ election promises. Neither True Path nor Welfare Parties were offering such a radical change in the economical arena. The left the parties, on the other hand, were even more conservatist, in a way that try to protect the economic tradition of the republic. For instance, one of the major left parties during the 1980s, SHP (the Socialist Democratic Populist Party) was defending the existing barriers to trade and even aimed to strengthen those barriers.<sup>154</sup>

This economic reform policy was mostly appropriate to the Özal’s economic mentality. He was challenging the “classical bureaucracy” and indeed these reforms were resulted in the weakening of the classical bureaucracy. Özal’s reforms were accomplished in a top-down style and this mostly created problems and sometimes conflicts between the classical bureaucracy and Özal.<sup>155</sup> In this period, the Religious Communities started to be more active and occupied some of the important positions of the State cadres. The secularists were criticizing Özal’s increasing number of Islamic cadres in the state. One report prepared by the Military seems to prove the Islamization of the cadres in this period. In the middle of the 90s, according to the

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<sup>150</sup>Bülent Uyar, “Public Finances in Turkey in the 1980s”, in *Journal of Economics and Administrative Studies*, Volume 6, Number 1-2 (1992), Boğaziçi University Publications, 9.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>152</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 135.

<sup>153</sup> [www.ishad.org.tr](http://www.ishad.org.tr)

<sup>154</sup> Waterbury, “Export-Led Growth and the Center Right Coalition in Turkey”, 4.

<sup>155</sup> Öniş, “Turgut Özal and His Economic Legacy: Turkish Neo-liberalsim in Critical Perspective”, 3.

report, 37 governors had connections with Nurcu and Naqshibandi Communities.<sup>156</sup> According to another report, prepared by the Batı Çalışma Grubu (West Working Group), the number of the governors of certain districts that had connections with same communities was close to 300.<sup>157</sup>

One last example will further present the Islamization of the cadres during the Özal era. In 1985, Aysal Aytaç, a bureaucrat who was known as a member of the Nurcu community and trialed for that reason, was appointed to the head of Department of Primary and Middle Education of Ministry of National Education.<sup>158</sup>

The economic and political liberalization process started in this period, continued after the Özal period as well. The reforms that took place in this period led to “irreversible changes in economic expectations and attitudes.”<sup>159</sup> The situation is same for the political liberalization. Especially the standards required to integrate the European Union made the political liberalization unalterable precondition for Turkey.

The liberalization in these two spheres also influenced the religious communities in Turkey. Özal’s politics stressed the importance of “people”. Contrary to the “Statist” nature of the one party governments, he preferred to create a state that serves the interests of the citizens.<sup>160</sup> In other words, the state’s superior position would be reversed.

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<sup>156</sup> “Kamu Yönetimi Dincilerin Elinde”, *Cumhuriyet*, 12-07-1997.

<sup>157</sup> “Ordunun Tarikat Raporu”, *Cumhuriyet*, 21-07-1998.

<sup>158</sup> Uğur Mumcu, “Anavatandaş”, *Cumhuriyet*, 04-07-1985.

<sup>159</sup> Uyar, “Public Finances in Turkey in the 1980s”, 1.

<sup>160</sup> Ömer Çaha. “Ana Temalarıyla 1980 Sonrası İslami Uyanış”, in *İslamcılık*, 481.

## Associations and Foundations

The two important institutions of the post coup era, for the Islamic organizations, are Associations and Foundations. While in the foundations, the profit that is gained from a house, land or shop is used for charity,<sup>161</sup> the associations consist of people with a common aim.<sup>162</sup> Özal gave great importance to the Associations (dernek) and Foundations (vakıf). During this period, the restrictions that limit the establishment of Foundations and Associations were abolished. Foundations were allowed to use their profits to set up Quran courses.<sup>163</sup> During Özal era, no foundation was closed and more than 4000 vakıf was established until 1997.<sup>164</sup> His party ANAP, further supported the establishment of “Unity Foundation” (Birlik Vakfı).<sup>165</sup> This foundation was an attempt to unite the Islamist Communities.<sup>166</sup>

Vakıfs have a very crucial place for Islamist Communities in Turkey. By using them as intermediary institutions, Islamist communities could easily attract money without facing any restriction. Moreover, vakıfs make tax exemption possible for these groups. Instead of giving the money to the state as a tax, they established their own vakıfs and make donations to these vakıfs, and used the money for their own activities.<sup>167</sup> In second half of the 90s Islamist vakıfs’ number reached to 4500<sup>168</sup> while their associations’ number reached to 2541.<sup>169</sup> According to the

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<sup>161</sup> Jenny B. White, *Islamist mobilization in Turkey : a study in vernacular politics*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 200.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 201.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 207.

<sup>164</sup> “MGK’nın Özel Gündemi Vakıflar”, *Sabah*, 25-06-1997.

<sup>165</sup> Mardin, “Turkish Islamic Exceptionalism Yesterday and Today: Continuity, Rupture and Reconstruction in Operational Codes”, 17.

<sup>166</sup> Ali Kemal Erdem, “Tarikatlar Vakıflaşıyor”, in *Haftalık Magazine* 143, (30-December-2005), 19.

<sup>167</sup> “MGK’nın Özel Gündemi Vakıflar”, *Sabah*, 25-06-1997.

<sup>168</sup> “Ordunun Tarikat Raporu”, *Cumhuriyet*, 21-07-1998.

<sup>169</sup> “Kamu Yönetimi Dincilerin Elinde”, *Cumhuriyet*, 12-07-1997.

Directorate General for Foundations (Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü), 11,5% of the foundations declared their purpose as a “religious” one. Yet, there are other Islamist community foundations that seemed to function for educational, artistic or social solidarity purposes.<sup>170</sup> Such as, The Writers and Journalists Foundation of Nurcu Community; İstanbul Culture Research Foundation of Süleymançıs and Science and Art Foundation of İskenderpaşa Community.

### Education

Especially the reforms in the educational sphere, led to some changes in the social and political spheres. For instance, Özal increased the number of Anadolu Liseleri (Anatolian High Schools) and increased the educational level in the İmam-Hatip schools. Both of these actions gave the ordinary Turkish citizens the chance to take good education and take part in the state institutions, that were dominated by the state elites before. Another example was the privatization of the education in Özal’s governments.<sup>171</sup> Especially Nurcu groups benefited from these changes and increased their visibility and popularity in the public besides increasing their wealth.<sup>172</sup>

### Media

Especially after the ‘80 coup, media had an important place in the development of the Islamist movements. The improvements in the technology had an

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<sup>170</sup> Davut Aydın, et.al., *Kar Amacı Gütmeyen Sektör Olarak Vakıflar* (Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi, ESAM, 1999), 35.

<sup>171</sup> Çaha, “Ana Temalarıyla 1980 Sonrası İslami Uyanış”, 481.

<sup>172</sup> Bekim Agai, *Turkish Islam and the Secular State The Gülen Movement* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 55.

impact on this. There were 11 newspapers that have an average of 10.000 daily circulations in 1983. This number increased to 32 in 1997.<sup>173</sup>

Yet, the decrease in the state control had also led to this fact. During the Özal's presidency the state monopoly on the media was ended. In 1992 the illegal radio stations started broadcasting. However the constitution was adjusted in 1993 and radio stations became legal.<sup>174</sup> The 133<sup>rd</sup> article, that gave the right to manage a radio channels only to the state was abolished.<sup>175</sup> A similar situation happened for the T.V channels. TRT, the state owned channel, was the only T.V station until the 1990. In 1990, Star 1, put an end to the tradition and started its broadcast by using a satellite. Özal's son, Ahmet Özal, was among the owners of the Channel. After the change in the law, 20 national T.V Channels emerged in 2 years.<sup>176</sup> In the middle of the 90s the Islamists had 124 radio and 41 T.V -local and national- stations.<sup>177</sup>

Islamists figured out the importance of visual media from the very beginning. Despite the claim that the human photograph and thus T.V -that is the exhibition of photographs- is a sin; in four years after the privatization of the T.V channels, the number of the Islamist T.V channels (national and local) reached 19.<sup>178</sup> The strength of T.V is so tremendous that, Islamists again sacrificed some of their Community beliefs.

February 28<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> D.Beybin Kejanlıoğlu, "The Media in Turkey Since 1970" in *Turkey since 1970 : Politics,Economics and Society*, 120.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.,124.

<sup>175</sup> Tanör and Yüzbaşıoğlu, *1982 Anayasasına Göre Türk Anayasa Hukuku*, 54.

<sup>176</sup> Kejanoğlu, "The Media in Turkey Since 1970", 125.

<sup>177</sup> "Ordunun tarikat raporu"*Cumhuriyet*, 21-07-1998, 1

<sup>178</sup> Bulut, *İslamcı Örgütler*, 747.

The reforms of the Özal period have been protected and during this period Communities increased their strength in social, economic and political spheres. Yet, 28th February post-modern coup, influenced the religious Communities to a certain extent. The inquiries toward Foundations and associations increased during this period. However they were not abolished by the State; only some of them stopped their organizations for a short period. The influence of the post-modern coup on groups was mainly psychological.<sup>179</sup>

These groups institutionalized like other secular ones to get involve into these activities. Institutions that established in this way kept their existence even after a coup, that was aiming to stop *irticai* movements. The Communities' high schools, foundations, for instance, were investigated in this period yet not closed by the State.<sup>180</sup>

The most serious influence of the post-modern coup on these communities was the cases of the leaders, regarding their speeches. The speeches that they made in order to attract new followers were broadcasted on T.V and afterwards, Fethullah Gülen went to United States<sup>181</sup> and Esad Coşan went to Australia- where he did as a result of an accident.<sup>182</sup> Yet, later Gülen and Coşan claimed that the records were manipulated by the media. Gülen makes the following argument:

“For instance, in some part of that cassette I said ‘You cannot say, God punish RPP’. They cut the ‘You cannot say’ part...Moreover, certain idioms and words that I used were manipulated. For instance, my words ‘mameleki satma’

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<sup>179</sup> Ruşen Çakır and Fehmi Çalmuk, *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: Bir Dönüşüm Öyküsü*, (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2001), 173.

<sup>180</sup> For the list of the schools related to the religious communities, see <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/1997/10/05/p02.html>

<sup>181</sup> Mehmet Gündem, *Fethullah Gülen'le 11 Gün*, (İstanbul: Alfa Yayınları, 2005), 36.

<sup>182</sup> “Nakşi gruplar: Menzil ve İskenderpaşa”, *Sabah*, 2005/10/17

(selling the property) were changed to ‘memleketi satma’ (selling the country) in the media’’<sup>183</sup>

### Justice and Development Party Period

During the Justice and Development Party period religious communities’ relation with government has been quite unproblematic. As it will be mentioned in this chapter, Erdoğan did not aim to take these communities under his control, as Erbakan did. He defined the Religious Communities as the most important parts of the “civil society”.<sup>184</sup> Moreover, the European Union policies of the government further liberalized the political and social life. These liberties created fertile ground for religious Communities. For that reason, it will be right to see Erdoğan’s government as one that is parallel to Özal’s governments, both in terms of liberties the Communities gained, and in terms of the personal links that they established with the government. Indeed, Justice and Development Party was also aware of this similarity, and showed Özal’s period as a target, at least in the economic sphere.<sup>185</sup>

### Islamist Groups during Özal Period

During this period, Özal used *Tasawwuf* Communities as tools that bind him to the society. He aimed to increase his activation in the society by using these

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<sup>183</sup> Gündem, *Fethullah Gülen’le 11 Gün*, 89.

<sup>184</sup> Çakır and Çalmuk, *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: Bir Dönüşüm Öyküsü*, 175.

<sup>185</sup> Soner Çağatay, “The November 2002 Elections and Turkey’s New Political Era”, 2. MERIA

links.<sup>186</sup> The religious communities benefited from these policies especially in the realms of education, economics and politics.<sup>187</sup>

### Nurcus in the Özal period

Before focusing on the Nurcu Organization in the Özal era one point should be underlined. As it is mentioned above, the Özal era refers to a turning point for the religious groups, in terms of their activities in political, economic and social spheres. In this period, Nurcus for instance increased their activities both in amount and in variety. Yet, while doing this, they were also forced to be more liberal in their attitudes towards non-Nurcus. Nurcus felt that, in order to make these people listen to their community's ideas and in order to persuade them, they have to be tolerant and sometimes even be self-sacrificing in their original thoughts.

A close reading of Gülen's speeches and the interviews with him would reflect his glorification of the secular and global items. For instance, in an interview with him, he harshly criticizes Osama Bin Laden and claims that his actions have nothing to do with Quran and Islam.

“If our criteria are the Prophet Muhammad's and Caliphates' decisions then we cannot take Ladin's decisions into account... Ladin does not look at the Book's and Sunnah's understanding in a broader context. Instead he takes certain parts of them.”<sup>188</sup>

His criticisms towards Iran's Islamic revolution<sup>189</sup>, and highly emphasized concept, tolerance in his speeches are other examples.

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<sup>186</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 109.

<sup>187</sup> Çaha, “Ana Temalarıyla 1980 Sonrası İslami Uyanış”, 479.

<sup>188</sup> Mehmet Gündem, *Fethullah Gülen'le 11 Gün*, (İstanbul: Alfa Yayınları, 2005), 111.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

Another example of this would be the evolutionary change in the *Samanyolu* T.V channel of the Nurcu. In the first years of the T.V channel, only men were working as speakers. It would be impossible to see any women face in this channel because of a *Sunni* belief, which restricts even women's voice to men. Later, in parallel with this channel's increasing popularity, women –with a headscarf - started to take part in *Samanyolu* T.V. Yet, this was not the end of the change. Today, women without headscarves also work in this channel as speakers.

### Politics

Nurcu Community benefited from Özal's policies and reforms that liberate the political and economic atmosphere. These groups' members started to participate in the state positions. Fethullah Gülen's Community had good relations with Özal and state institutions, and this helped Gülen's becoming one of the most influential religious leaders.<sup>190</sup> As a result of these close relations between Özal and Gülen, Özal abolished the ban that prevented Fethullah Gülen from giving religious speeches.<sup>191</sup> In this period, Police Colleges started to be dominated by the Nurcu Community members. In return, Fethullah Gülen's Nurcu Community initiated a war against Özal's biggest opponent, Süleyman Demirel. Yet, after Özal period the Community restored its relations with Demirel. This tendency, to have good relations with the politicians continued during Tansu Çiller, Mesut Yılmaz governments.<sup>192</sup> The interesting thing is that, Leftist leaders like Bülent Ecevit and Hikmet Çetin were

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<sup>190</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar* , 247.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 248.

<sup>192</sup> Çetinkaya, *Fethullah Gülen'in 40 Yıllık Serüveni*, 12.

blamed by the secularist elites for having good relations with Gülen.<sup>193</sup> Indeed, Fethullah Gülen was trying to maximize his Community's interests by using personal links with leaders, no matter what their political thoughts were.

28<sup>th</sup> February Post-modern coup influenced the community's activities to a certain extent. However, after the intervention Nurcus again used politics and politicians to show that they were not against the secular regime in Turkey. Especially Ecevit had the biggest role in this attempt, as a left wing politician.

When Tayyip Erdoğan's AKP (Justice and Development Party) came to power people were speculating about how Gülen's Nur Community's relation with politics would be. Erdoğan was coming from Erbakan tradition, which had close ties with İskenderpaşa Community. Erdoğan has always had respect to Mahmut Esad Coşan, the leader of the İskenderpaşa Community. However, this fact did not influence the relations between Erdoğan and Nurcu Community in a negative way. When Justice and Development Party came to power, Fethullah Gülen was in United States (he went there after the 28<sup>th</sup> February 1997 intervention and still lives there). Before coming to power, Erdoğan visited Gülen in one of his trips to United States, in May 2000 and got his and Nurcu Community's support. Erdoğan's advisor Cüneyd Zapsu's close ties with Nurcu Community, Asya Finans (Nurcu Islamic Bank) General Manager İhsan Kalkavan's financial support to Justice and Development Party are some of the examples of that represent the close relations between Justice and Development Party and Nurcus.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> See Ergün Poyraz, *Kanla Abdest Alanlar*, (İstanbul: Toplumsal Dönüşüm Yayınları, 2003), 352. Ecevit was criticized for his confession that he had met Fethullah Gülen 3 times and influenced by his thoughts on Islam and Philosophy.

<sup>194</sup> Çetinkaya, *Fethullah Gülen'in 40 Yıllık Serüveni*, 28.

## Economics

Nurcu Community's economic organization during the 80s and the 90s based on 3 principles. They are *hizmet*, *himmet* and *ihlas*. Hizmet refers to serving for the Community. Himmet means providing money, and ihlas refers to seeking God's sake in every action. The organization is constructed according to these principles. Rich members provide donations while the organizations, schools, *dersanes* (private education centers) were funded with this money. This principles, also, increases the trust, solidarity between the Community members.<sup>195</sup>

Nurcus actively participated in the market especially starting with the Özal's era. Indeed, Nurcus so actively much participated into the market economy that, they started to be defined as Community that turned into a Holding.<sup>196</sup>

Nurcus became so big during the economic transformation period that, they decided to establish an Islamic bank to support the new, developing Nurcu firms, organizations and schools. Asya Finans was planned to achieve this goal.<sup>197</sup> In 1996, when it was initially established, it was named as Bank Finans. Asya Finans works all around the Turkey and had also provides online banking services.<sup>198</sup>

Işık Sigorta is the insurance company, owned by the Nurcu Community.<sup>199</sup> It was established in 1996. In their internet site, the aim of the company is defined as "to incorporate the people, who are not familiar with the insurance, into the sector."<sup>200</sup> Here the people who are not familiar with the sector, refer to the Islamists who think that insurance is not appropriate to the Islamic rules. They consider

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<sup>195</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 252.

<sup>196</sup> Bulut, *İslamcı Örgütler*, 725.

<sup>197</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 259.

<sup>198</sup> <http://www.asyafinans.com.tr/hakkimizda/tarihce.jsp#>

<sup>199</sup> Ayşe Buğra, *İslam in Economic Organizations*, (İstanbul: Tesev Yayınları,1999), 17.

<sup>200</sup> [http://www.isiksigorta.com/en\\_son/hakkimizda.php](http://www.isiksigorta.com/en_son/hakkimizda.php)

insurance as a kind of gambling, since one pays less and sometimes gets much more than he pays. Yet, Fethullah Gülen's Nur Community opposes this understanding not with any theological justification but with establishing a modern insurance company.

Gülen's Community has also businessmen associations called İŞHAD and HÜRSİAD. İŞHAD (The Association for Solidarity in Business Life)<sup>201</sup> was established in 1993. İŞHAD defines itself as a civil society organization. It aimed to help the Small and Medium Business Enterprises (KOBİ) to reach the standards that are needed to compete in the global market. Moreover, it aimed to help its members to cooperate with foreign enterprises. İŞHAD has more than 420 member enterprises.<sup>202</sup>

HÜRSİAD (Free Industrialists and Businessmen Foundation) was established in Ankara in 1993. It aimed to help the society and State in reaching the modern standards of the day, by increasing the cooperation among firms and enterprises while keeping the importance of social justice in mind. Contrary to the İŞHAD, HÜRSİAD is mainly active in the domestic market. The number of its members is close to 300.<sup>203</sup>

İŞHAD and HÜRSİAD are crucial foundations in understanding the power of the Nurcu Community in the market. It would not be wrong to claim that, their member numbers give, more or less, an idea about the number of the Nurcu companies in the market. And, thus, it presents the approximate power of the Community in the market.

Two more examples would be useful in understanding, how the Nurcu Community performs in different business enterprises. The first one is Asyafin Turizm's Holiday village, that is located in Kızılcahamam, a place famous with

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<sup>201</sup> Ayşe Buğra, *Islam in Economic Organizations*, 19.

<sup>202</sup> <http://www.ishad.org.tr/>

<sup>203</sup> <http://www.hursiad.org.tr/>

thermal tourism.<sup>204</sup> 60 million dollars were spent for the project. The Holiday village was opened by Tayyip Erdoğan.<sup>205</sup> It is often used for the Justice and Development Party's meetings.<sup>206</sup>

The second interesting example would be *Samanyolu* Pazarlama (Marketing). It was established in 1998, and now it sells variety of goods ranging from Digital Quran to Sport equipments.<sup>207</sup>

### Education

The education sector became the engine of the Nurcu Community, starting with the Özal period. As mentioned before, Özal privatized the education, and Nurcus started to establish schools, that range from primary schools to Universities. There are 128 private schools owned by the Community.<sup>208</sup> İzmir Yamanlar College, Fatih College, Fatih University are some of these private schools. These private schools provide variety of funds to successful children and keep their prestigious position among other private schools. For instance İzmir Yamanlar and Fatih Colleges have had many top ranked students in the University entrance exams. These schools also represent Turkey in the International Science Olympics. Fatih College has participated in the Science Olympics every year since 1993, and its students have been awarded with many medals in Biology.<sup>209</sup>

Nurcu Community has the biggest *dersane* web in Turkey. These are mainly preparation courses for the University and High School entrance exams. During Özal

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<sup>204</sup> <http://asyafin.com.tr>

<sup>205</sup> "Kızılcahamam Asya termal tesisleri 2 gün sonra açılıyor" *Zaman*, 31-05-2004.

<sup>206</sup> "Erdoğan: Baskı ile istikrarı bozmak isteyenler var", *Zaman*, 28-09-2004.

<sup>207</sup> <http://www.stvpazarlama.com.tr/>

<sup>208</sup> "Gülen Dosyası", *Tempo*, (December 2005), 32.

<sup>209</sup> Semsinur Ozdemir, "Success is not Coincidental, it Requires Sacrifice", *Ailem*, 22- 07- 2005.

era the number of the Anatolian High Schools was increased as an education policy.<sup>210</sup> This increased the importance of the dersanes in the education system. Among them, Nurcu dersanes has given scholarships to successful students in Anatolia and increased their popularity.

The popularity in these dersanes work in two ways. First, it increases the number of students that attend these dersanes and thus, empowered the dersanes economically. Second, with the success in the high school and university entrance exams, Nurcu dersanes succeed in attracting students from different segments of the society. Nurcus have dersanes in each and every city of Turkey. Sometimes they used the same name Fırat Education Center (FEM)<sup>211</sup> in different cities, and sometimes they establish dersanes with different names. (For instance Körfez in İzmit and Meltem in Denizli). All these dersanes came together and formed Güven- Der- the web of the Nurcu dersanes in all around Turkey.

Nurcus do not limit their education organization with Turkey. In 1989, after Fethullah Gülen's visit to Azerbaijan and Georgia, he decided to open schools in abroad.<sup>212</sup> The Community opened schools in Europe, especially in the countries that have large Turkish population, namely Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Austria and France.<sup>213</sup> Yet, Europe is just a small part of this school project. Gülen's Community opened schools in Africa, Far East Asia, Russia and Balkans. In these schools Turkish is taught to the students. The graduates became fluent in Turkish<sup>214</sup> and learn about the Turkish culture.<sup>215</sup> Although the students are mainly the citizens of that country, the teachers are mostly Turks. The teachers are mostly educated in Turkey

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<sup>210</sup> Çaha, "Ana Temalarıyla 1980 Sonrası İslami Uyanış", 481.

<sup>211</sup> See <http://www.fem.com.tr/>

<sup>212</sup> Kemal Karpat, "Yurt Dışındaki Türk Okullarının Değeri", in *Barış Köprüleri: Dünyaya Açılan Türk Okulları*, (eds.) Toktamış Ateş, Eser Karakaş, İlber Ortaylı, (İstanbul: Ufuk Kitap, 2005) , 62.

<sup>213</sup> Çetinkaya, *Fethullah Gülen'in 40 Yıllık Serüveni*, 18.

<sup>214</sup> İlber Ortaylı, "Globalleşen Dünyada Aletnatif Türk Okulları", in *Barış Köprüleri: Dünyaya Açılan Türk Okulları*, 48.

<sup>215</sup> Eser Karakaş, "Büyük Devlet Olmak", in *Barış Köprüleri: Dünyaya Açılan Türk Okulları*, 76.

and know foreign languages. Math, biology, chemistry, physics, social sciences and foreign languages are some of the courses that are being taught in these schools.<sup>216</sup> The education does not include religious education. All these properties of these schools created sympathy for them in Turkey, not only among the Nationalists, but also among the Islamists and Seculars. In an interview with Bülend Ecevit, former Prime Minister of Turkey, he confessed that he offered these schools as a NGO project in Davos.<sup>217</sup> Today, the teachers in these schools and the businessmen that finance them are the main parts of the Nurcu organization.<sup>218</sup>

### The Media

*Samanyolu* T.V is the national T.V channel that belongs to the Nurcu Community.<sup>219</sup> It can be watched all over the world with a satellite. Especially in the Middle Asia this channel is very popular. In this channel, women voice and face are not taboos anymore. The programs are a mixture of religious and modern life. While a Hollywood film or a European League match is being shown on this channel, an advertisement of the next program, which is Fethullah Gülen's speech, can be seen for a few seconds. Indeed, the Community does not try to hide its pragmatic aims in showing these modern films or European League matches anymore.<sup>220</sup>

Fethullah Gülen's Nur Community has radio stations, that broadcast all over Turkey. Burç FM is one of these popular radio stations. It was established in 1993.

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<sup>216</sup> Karpat, "Yurt Dışındaki Türk Okullarının Değeri" ,61.

<sup>217</sup> Bülent Ecevit, "Türk Okullarının Türk Dili ve Türkiye'ye Katkısı", in *Barış Köprüleri: Dünyaya Açılan Türk Okulları*, 25.

<sup>218</sup> Uğur Kömeçoğlu, "Kutsal ile Kamusal: Fethullah Gülen Cemaat Hareketi", in *İslam'ın Yeni Kamusal Yüzleri* ed. Nilüfer Göle, (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2000), 151.

<sup>219</sup> Ayşe Buğra, *İslam in Economic Organizations*, 17.

<sup>220</sup> See [www.stv.com.tr/](http://www.stv.com.tr/)

Other than Islamic programs, Fethullah Gülen's speeches are also broadcasted in this channel.<sup>221</sup>

One of the most influential Nurcu media organs is Zaman Newspaper. Zaman is currently the third best selling daily in Turkey. Most of the time it is used actively against the Nurcu Community adversaries. For instance after Star- a Turkish daily-made news on the meeting between Abdullah Gül and Nurcu Community leaders, Zaman blamed Star for provocation.<sup>222</sup> Zaman is now published in 13 countries.<sup>223</sup> It can be read on Internet in English and in Turkish.<sup>224</sup>

Nurcus have a foundation that is called The Journalists and Writers Foundation. It was founded in 1994, and continues its activities in various spheres. First of all it organizes Abant Platform, a conference that has subjects like World politics and economics. This year 11<sup>th</sup> meeting will be held on the subject "Global Politics and the Future of the Middle East". Nurcus give great importance to this conference and thus try to attract popular figures of the domestic and international political life. This year, Abdullah Gül (Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister of Turkey), Rachid Mohamed (Minister of Trade and Industry of Egypt), Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu (Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference), Eser Karakaş (Vice-Chancellor of Bahçeşehir University), Ömer Bolat (The president of MUSİAD), and Mehmet Altan are going to attend the conference as speakers.<sup>225</sup>

The Foundation also organizes special nights in which they give awards to the scientists, politicians and artists. Finally, Foundation organizes Dialogue

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<sup>221</sup> Umut Azak, "İslami Radyolar ve Türbanlı Spikerler", in *İslamın Yeni Kamusal Yüzleri*, 96.

<sup>222</sup> Çetinkaya, *Fethullah Gülen'in 40 Yıllık Serüveni*, 94.

<sup>223</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 258.

<sup>224</sup> See <http://www.zaman.com/> for English and <http://www.zaman.com.tr/> for Turkish.

<sup>225</sup> <http://www.gyv.org.tr>

Euroasia Program, a program that focuses on poverty and war, by organizing think tanks and conferences.<sup>226</sup>

## Süleymançıs

### Politics

Süleymançıs' perception of the state as an enemy was changed with the new era that started with Özal era. During this period Süleymançıs tried to establish links with state and use them in gaining support, especially, for their economic activities.

In 1983 they started to support Özal, like Nurus. Özal was aware of the strength of the community, especially in the Western and Southern Anatolia and tried to strengthen his relations with Kemal Kaçar during his governments. Kemal Kaçar had bad relations with Demirel during this period. Özal used it and wanted to use Süleymançı votes against the referendum that would help Demirel to turn the politics again.<sup>227</sup>

The Süleymançıs support to the ANAP continued until Özal's death. In 1994 they started to support Erbakan. In 1998, Ahmet Denizolgun, the successor of Kemal Kaçar, became the Minister of Transportation. The government of that period, and especially Ecevit was criticized for this decision.<sup>228</sup> Indeed this decision is very vital, especially when its time taken into account. During this period, the government, which replaced the Refah-Yol government after the 28<sup>th</sup> February post modern coup, was in action. In such a critical period, the new leader of the Süleymançı Community

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<sup>226</sup> <http://www.da.com.tr>

<sup>227</sup> Nazlı Ilıcak, Mehmet Canıatlı, "Siyaset ve Süleymançılar 2", in *Dünden Bugüne Tercüman*, 26-07-2005, 14.

<sup>228</sup> "Cindoruk: İnsanları tasnif etmek istemem", *Sabah*, 1998/08/06.

became the Minister of Transportation. Indeed this may explain, why the Süleymancı leaders did not left Turkey contrary to the İskenderpaşa and Nur Communities' leaders.

In the last elections, the two successors of Kemal Kaçar, Ahmet Denizolgun and Mehmet Denizolgun became PM candidates from two different parties. While the former one, who was a candidate from ANAP and could not be a PM, the latter, a candidate from Justice and Development Party became a PM.<sup>229</sup> In the Süleymancı community the community leaders actively participate in politics. Nurcu community, on the other hand, tried to establish links with the government not by actively participating into the politics.

Economics

Education

Süleymancıs became the community that has the biggest student dormitory organization, especially after the post coup era. The estimated number of these yurts are 2000 and with 250.000 students.<sup>230</sup> Most of these students are attending high schools and Universities, and indeed this fact increases the importance the Süleymancıs.

Supplying their yurts (student dormitories) occupies an important place in Süleymancı economic organization. These yurts are different from the Nurcus dersane organization especially with its two features. First of all, Süleymancı yurts do not give preparation courses for university and high school entrance exams. They,

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<sup>229</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 202.

<sup>230</sup> Nazlı Ilicak, Mehmet Canıatlı, "Siyaset ve Süleymancılar 1", in *Dünden Bugüne Tercüman*, 25 June 2005, 14.

mainly, fund students from lower class families during their education. The educational success or career does not constitute the main target of these yurts. Second, since the yurt organization does not aim to and thus does not reach the success in the entrance exams, the popularity of these yurts are very low compared to the Nurcu dersanes. Hence, these yurts could not attract students from different segments of the society.

Süleymancı in the post coup era, found the appropriate market conditions to supply the students in their yurts. During the Özal period the Community used personal networks with important politicians including Özal and got support for its yurts. These personal links became so important that yurts started to be opened by important figures of the politics such as former Prime Minister of Özal government, Mesut Yılmaz.<sup>231</sup> And even some of these yurts were opened with state ceremonies. For instance, Özal government's minister of Tourism Mükerrerem Taşçıoğlu opened the yurt in Sakarya with a state ceremony.<sup>232</sup>

The increasing prestige of the Süleymancı's for their good relations with the state influenced their organization in Europe. Turkish workers in abroad were, now, more willingly supported the Community's yurts. In these yurts, the money coming from abroad and Turkey are used to supply the students' requirements. Increasing level of conditions in these yurts make them more attractive for the students coming from poor families.<sup>233</sup>

Süleymancı Community's former leader Kemal Kaçar had strong transportation companies.<sup>234</sup> Most of the Süleymancı have middle sized companies

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<sup>231</sup> Nazlı Ilıcak, Mehmet Canıatlı, "Siyaset ve Süleymancılar 2", in *Dünden Bugüne Tercüman*, 26 June 2005, 14 .

<sup>232</sup> Nazlı Ilıcak, Mehmet Canıatlı, "Siyaset ve Süleymancılar 3", in *Dünden Bugüne Tercüman*, 27 June 2005, 14.

<sup>233</sup> Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar*, 135.

<sup>234</sup> Bulut, *İslamcı Örgütler*, 736.

such as Hisar Intercontinental Hospital, Armine Eşarp and Ferpa Markets. Other than these companies, Süleymancı have established some Foundations (vakıf) to support their organizations. Most important of these is the İstanbul Culture Research Foundation. It was founded in 1992. It operates on economical, cultural issues.<sup>235</sup>

Süleymancı economic organization is simpler than that of Nurcus and mostly based on middle sized companies. Besides, they do not have any businessmen association that organize these companies, like Nurcus' IŞHAD and HURSIAD.

One final point regarding the Süleymancı and their economic organization would be on their interpretation of “interest”. As it is known, receiving interest is a sin according to Quran.<sup>236</sup> However, according to the former leader of the Süleymancı Community, Kemal Kaçar, receiving interest is not a sin, since Turkey is not a country ruled by the *Sheria* law.<sup>237</sup> Most of the Süleymancı for that reason do not hesitate to use interest in their economic activities.

Süleymancı Community established good relations with the conglomerates like Sabancı and Koç especially during the post coup era, in parallel with the Süleymancı increased economic activities. Sakıp Sabancı and Vehbi Koç visited their yurts and appreciated the organizations of the Community.<sup>238</sup> These visits, of course, are enhancing the popularity and prestige of the Community in the eyes of the State and society.

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<sup>235</sup> Ali Kemal Erdem, “Tarikatlar Vakıflaşıyor”, 20.

<sup>236</sup> See Sura Bakara, verse: 275.

<sup>237</sup> Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye’de İslami Oluşumlar*, 137.

<sup>238</sup> Nazlı Ilıcak, Mehmet Canıatlı, “Siyaset ve Süleymancılar 5”, in *Dünden Bugüne Tercüman*, 29 June 2005, 14.

## The Media

Despite the Süleymancı community's adaptation to the urban life, they have not been interest in radios and TVs as much as Nurcu Community.<sup>239</sup> Instead, they are interested in the written media. The Community has Ufuk<sup>240</sup>, Genç Akademi journals and Anadolu<sup>241</sup> newspaper. The controversy at this point is that, despite the Community stays away from T.V and radio which are known as sin; they published magazines and newspaper. These are also known as sin, not because of the type of the media organ, but because of the human photos shown in them.

The community has a publishing house called Fazilet (Virtue) Neşriyat that mostly publishes religious books. The community also has an official web site. It is a simple site compared to that of the Nurcus and İskenderpaşa Community- about Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan's life, the list of noble chain and Arabic teaching methods.

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## İskenderpaşa Community

### Politics

Esad Coşan wanted his Community members to actively participate in political activities.<sup>243</sup> Many of his disciples took part in the establishment of Özal's ANAP. Yet, Coşan became critical of Özal's certain policies. Especially, Özal's interest in European Community forced Coşan to support Erbakan's Refah Party.

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<sup>239</sup> Aydın, "Süleymancılık", 321.

<sup>240</sup> Bulut, *İslamcı Örgütler*, 736.

<sup>241</sup> Aydın, "Süleymancılık", 322.

<sup>242</sup> See <http://www.tunahan.org.tr>.

<sup>243</sup> Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar*, 36.

However this support continued for a short time. Erbakan was accepting the superior position of the charismatic leader Kotku. Yet, Coşan was a theology professor and had a more modern and this-worldly character. Erbakan, thus, rejected the superiority of Coşan over him. This competition between Coşan and Erbakan ended the İskenderpaşa Community's alliance with Welfare(Refah) Party.<sup>244</sup>

Despite the decrease in the active participation of the İskenderpaşa Community into the politics in Coşan's time, their relation with politics never ended. The politicians were aware of the Community's strength in the political arena and thus, even after Esad Coşan, politicians tried to keep their relations smooth with the community. For instance, in 2001, the Deputy Prime Minister of the time, Mesut Yılmaz criticized President Ahmet Necdet Sezer and blamed him for being unjust. The reason was that, President Necdet Sezer rejected Esad Coşan's burial to the prestigious Süleymaniye mosque- where Mehmet Zahid Kotku had also been buried.<sup>245</sup>

Another example comes from the Felicity (Saadet) Party. The minister of Sincan- a district of Ankara- built a park and gave Esad Coşan's name to the park, despite the criticisms came from the secularists.<sup>246</sup>

İskenderpaşa Community's relation with politics once again enhanced with the establishment of Justice and Development Party. Erdoğan had too much respect for Coşan - and this relation was used by the secularists (mainly by RPP) to support their accusations concerning Tayyip Erdoğan. After Coşan's death, many prominent figures that had connections with İskenderpaşa Community took part in the Justice and Development Party.<sup>247</sup> Another important figure of the current government, that

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>245</sup> "Sezer'inki Eşitsizlik", *Sabah*, 2001/02/10.

<sup>246</sup> "Sincan'da Nakşi Şeyhi Coşan'ın adı parka verildi", *Sabah*, 10-08-2002.

<sup>247</sup> Çakır and Çalmuk, *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: Bir Dönüşüm Öyküsü*, 176.

have strong ties with İskenderpaşa Community and Coşan was Kemal Unakıtan, the minister of Finance. The picture, in which Tayyip Erdoğan, Kemal Unakıtan and Esad Coşan had come together, was shown by Republican People's Party's prominent figure Haluk Koç, in order to question government's relation with İskenderpaşa community.<sup>248</sup>

### Economics

İskenderpaşa Community also had strong economic motivations during the Özal period. The Community members have gained profits from finance, trade, construction and petroleum industries. For instance, Korkut Özal, a disciple of Kotku became the general manager of the Al-Baraka Turk during this period.<sup>249</sup>

According to Coşan, the leader of the İskenderpaşa Community, the members should be busy with trade.<sup>250</sup> Among these members a web is formed and the aim to be reached through this web was the employment of the Community members.<sup>251</sup> Yet, the İskenderpaşa Community's relation with economics is not limited with its members' activities. The community, itself, also established some foundations. The first one of these is Hizmet Vakfı, established by Esad Coşan, in 1986. It aims to supply student dormitories. The second was İlim ve Sanat Vakfı, again established by Coşan, in 1986, in İstanbul.<sup>252</sup> This had a larger scale of activities, such as cultural activities, language courses and etc. The Community had also some associations in

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<sup>248</sup> "CHP'nin Kozu Coşan'lı Fotoğraf" Sabah, 16-02-2006.

<sup>249</sup> Uğur Mumcu, *Tarikat Siyaset Ticaret*, (İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1988), 151.

<sup>250</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 194.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>252</sup> Erdem, "Tarikatlar Vakıflaşıyor", 20.

Anatolia, such as Simin Women Association in İzmir and Basic Rights and Freedom Association in Adana.<sup>253</sup>

The Community has Asfa Eğitim, an education company established by Coşan.<sup>254</sup> İskenderpaşa Community, also have a private high school, Ferda Lisesi. Yet, compared to Nurcu and Süleymancı groups, İskenderpaşa activated less in the education sector.

İskenderpaşa Community established a tourism agency called İspa-tur (İskenderpaşa Tourism). The agency organizes tours not only to holy places of Muslims such as Kabe and Madina, but also to favorite sea side resorts of Turkey such as Alanya and Çeşme. The agency organizes tours for foreigners too.<sup>255</sup>

İskenderpaşa Community's economic organization is a mixture of that of Nurcu and Süleymancı Communities. It includes both big firms and small sized ones. Like Nurcus they had a web between their companies. These web is realized when the companies were united under the Server Holding.<sup>256</sup>

The dormitories do not occupy important place in the İskenderpaşa Community's organization. They do not use their dormitories to attract new members as in the case of the Nurcu dersanes and Süleymancı Yurts.

After the death of the Esad Coşan, his son Nurettin Coşan established a new vakıf that carries his dad's name (Mahmud Esad Coşan Eğitimi Kültür Dostluk ve Yardımlaşma Vakfı)<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Bulut, *İslamcı Örgütler*, 739.

<sup>254</sup> Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar*, 43.

<sup>255</sup> <http://www.ispa.com.tr/>

<sup>256</sup> Ayşe Buğra, *İslam in Economic Organizations*, 17.

<sup>257</sup> "Nakşibendi liderine vakıf", *Sabah*, 19-12-2005.

## The Media

After the Coup, Coşan wanted to participate in media, by creating the community's own organs. The first one was *İslam*, a magazine that is started to be published in 1983. In the first volume of this magazine, Coşan explained their mission as the education of the masses. Here with education, he meant religious education. And according to him, *İslam* would help them in this duty.<sup>258</sup> *İslam* was followed by *İlim ve Sanat* and *Kadın ve Aile*. Community enhanced its tools in spreading its views and shared them with a larger population. During this period, *İslam* reached a circulation of 150.000.<sup>259</sup>

Contrary to the Nurcu journal, *Sızıntı*, İskenderpaşa Community's journal *İslam* was not aiming to merge scientific laws with religious knowledge. Instead the political and social issues are at the center of the journal.

Coşan thought that radio stations were very useful tools in sharing his ideas with people who did not live in İstanbul. Besides, the radio would increase the solidarity within the Community. For that reason İskenderpaşa Community has established Akra FM in 1993, in İstanbul, a radio that broadcasts in the major cities of Anatolia; and Akra TV in 1997 a TV channel that broadcasts in West Anatolia. Similar to the practice of the Nurcu radio, on Akra FM and Akra TV the speeches of Esad Coşan are broadcasted.<sup>260</sup> Yet, in this channel the women voice is not heart in the songs. Akra FM managers claim that, this is due to the "respect for the Islamic values". The lyrics of the songs are also investigated carefully.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar*, 25.

<sup>259</sup> Aydın, "Süleymancılık", 334.

<sup>260</sup> Azak, "İslami Radyolar ve Türbanlı Spikerler", 96

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

The community also has an official web site. In this site, the speeches by Mehmet Zahid Kotku, the articles of Esad Coşan and Nureddin Coşan are available. Moreover, it has links to the Community's companies such as Burak tourism, Server İletişim and radios of the Community.<sup>262</sup> İskenderpaşa Community has Sefa and Vefa Publishing Houses.<sup>263</sup>

İskenderpaşa Community's use of media is again followed an evolutionary process. Kotku did not want to establish and magazines, or newspapers. Coşan, on the other hand defined the media as the main weapon.<sup>264</sup> In the beginning the magazine Islam did not show his photos. However, after his competition with Erbakan for obtaining the authority began, he wanted the magazine to show his photos in every volume.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> See [www.İskenderpaşa.com](http://www.İskenderpaşa.com) .

<sup>263</sup> Bulut, *İslamcı Örgütler*, 739

<sup>264</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 144.

<sup>265</sup> Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar*, 39.

## CONCLUSION

Any person living in Turkey will undeniably agree that many things have changed in all spheres of life in Turkish society since 1980. The 1980 coup and the distinguishable and unique Özal era- in terms of its liberalization policies- following it resulted in serious transformations. The re-organization the major Islamist Communities in Turkey lived through during these two consecutive periods is the main focus of this thesis.

The examples that have been provided in the main text display clearly that the activism of the Islamist Communities has increased considerably in the Özal period. A comparison between the pre-1980 coup period and the post-coup era demonstrate the significance of the change that has been experienced after 1980. In this work, the focus has been on three major Islamist Communities in Turkey, namely the Nurcu, Süleymancı and İskenderpaşa Communities. The vast number of their institutions such as the Nurcu *dersanes* and Süleymancı *yurts* and the size of the companies established by the members of these Communities must be displaying the importance of these three groups in Turkey and hence must be explaining the reason behind the choice made by the author.

What the author aimed to be too careful during the analyses made for the preparation of this work was to be aware of the differences between Communities while noticing the similarities among them. Still, all these Communities' activism increased in politics economics and media. These three spheres were included in this work because these are the main areas through which these Communities aimed to provide both political and socio-economic strength for themselves. They used these

spheres for reaching masses easily in order to transmit their messages and to make money for their more “religious” tasks.

Besides these similarities, these Communities have divergent tendencies about which sphere to focus on more. It is, for instance, vastly clear that all three of these Communities have been interested in politics; however, they used different methods. While Süleymancı and İskenderpaşa Community leaders directly participate in politics, Nurcu Community has always preferred establishing links with the governments in power; Fethullah Gülen tried to do this even with the leader of the military administration- Kenan Evren- after the 1980 coup.

These Communities have all regarded education sector crucial to take place in as it would be highly beneficial in spreading their messages to the masses. Nurcu *dersanes* and Süleymancı *yurts* are used extensively by these two Communities to attract young people in their organizations or at least to train people who are sympathetic to these organizations. In fact, Süleymancı *yurts* are not the same with the Nurcu *dersane* organizations. While the main aim of these *yurts* is to fund children of lower class families during their educations, the Nurcu *dersanes* have educational success as the main target. This way, they increase the popularity of these organizations as various students from very different segments of the society attend these *dersanes* to be successful in the university or high school entrance examinations. This fact helps the Nurcu Community in reaching a broader range of young people. Yet, compared to the Nurcu and Süleymancı groups, İskenderpaşa Community has been less active in the education sector. Although they also have dormitories, İskenderpaşa Community does not attribute too much importance to these organizations. They do not use their dormitories to attract new members as is done by the other two through their *dersanes* and *yurts*.

In terms of economic organization, Nurcu Community seems to have the most complex structure. They own not only big companies functioning in various areas but also business organizations that organize these companies. Süleymançıs' economic organization; however, is much simpler in comparison to the Nurcus' that is mostly consist of middle sized firms. İskenderpaşa Community, on the other hand, has an economic organization that is like a combination of that of Nurcus and Süleymançıs as it involves firms in various sizes. They, similar to the structure in the Nurcu Community, have a network between their companies.

The data represented in the main text displays clearly that all three of these Communities realized the importance of the media in spreading their views. It must have also been understood that these media organs helped them financially through advertisements and politically through propaganda. Once the private T.V and radio channels became legal in Turkey during Özal era, as a result of his liberal policies, these Communities add these means of communication to the newspapers and the magazines they had owned since very early times; even before 1970s.

The tendency to search for the current economic and sociological organizations of these groups in the early roots of them is suspected when the new patterns of activities embraced by these Communities are evaluated carefully. Şerif Mardin is one of the scholars who support this tendency as he argues that their *tasawwuf* origins influenced the current organizations of these Communities considerably. However; a closer examination of the re-coup period and Özal's era comparatively makes the major underlying motive behind the change experienced by these communities clearer. Especially, in the economic and media spheres, these communities have been seeking the most available conditions to increase their strength and popularity in the socio-economic life under the liberal athmosphere that

started with Özal. Some of these new patterns of activities are TV stations, hospitals, foundations, banks and etc. Despite, the existence of political activation of these communities in the history, their level of influence on politics and techniques they used to influence have changed depending on the political atmosphere of the age. These Communities do not follow static, traditional strategies; they instead adapt the conditions and requirements of the socio-political and economic atmosphere. The discontinuities in the origins of the communities- displayed throughout the analysis within this thesis- prove that focusing on the socio-political and economic environment of the time these communities are being analyzed is more beneficial than searching for traditional and historical roots.

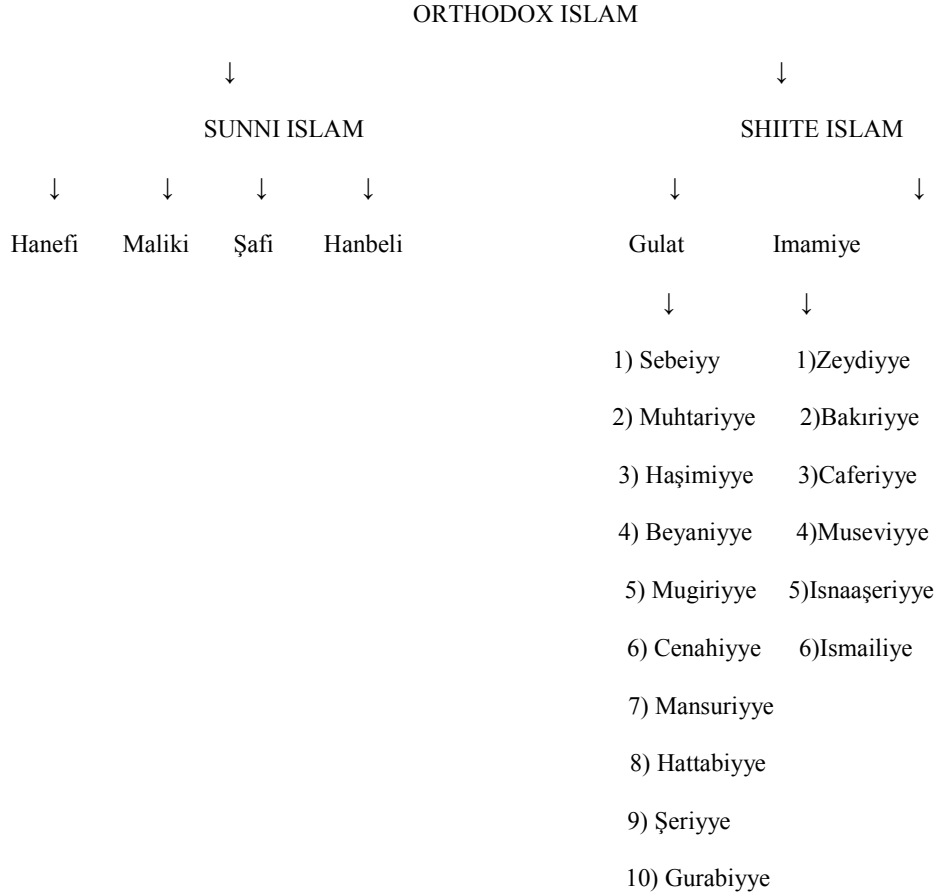
Obviously this thesis could not have explained everything concerning these Communities' post-coup organization. For instance, all these Communities consist of followers and the followers differ in their dedication to the Community. It may, sometimes, be hard to differentiate someone who just feels sympathy to the Community from a devoted follower. In that case, the question "whose activities will be evaluated as the Community's activity?" comes to mind. If it is the devoted follower's activities, where can we draw the line that distinguishes him from a sympathizer? In order to solve this problem further investigation –a survey that asks for their position in the Community, for instance- should be made.

Especially with the Özal era, these Islamist Communities started to become more integrated into the Turkish political and economic system. Political leaders' relationship with these Communities, and the alliances between them, are, most of the time, perceived as ordinary actions of the Turkish political culture. This truth further increased these Islamist Communities' importance in Turkish politics especially today. As mentioned in the text, Erdoğan, like Özal, has given special

importance to these Communities. Thus, besides the political and economic liberal policies required to be a member of the European Union, his personal ties with them may help these Islamist Communities to keep their important place in Turkish politics, at least, in the near future.

## APPENDIX 1

### The Genealogy of Islamist Communities<sup>266</sup>



<sup>266</sup> See Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Türkiye'de Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar* (İstanbul: İnkılap Kitapevi, 1997) and Yaşar Kutluay, *Tarihte ve Günümüzde İslam Mezhepleri* (İstanbul: Pınar Yayınları, 2003) for further information on the genealogy of Islamic Communities.

THE MYSTICAL ISLAM(TASAWWUF)

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Kadiri Rıfai Bedevi Desuki Sa'di Şazili Halveti Mevlevi Bektaşî Bayrami Celveti Naqshî

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Khalidiyah Mucaddidiyah

Nurcus<sup>267</sup>

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Suleymancıs

İskenderpaşa

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<sup>267</sup> See the next part for Nurcus position in the tasawwuf tradition.

## The Roots of the Religious Groups in Turkey:

### Tasawwuf and Tariqats

In order to understand these communities, one should have brief information on their roots in the Islamist tradition. The Süleymancı and İskenderpaşa communities are part of the famous *Naqshibandi* School. It is one of the most historical and influential community of the Islamist mysticism. Nurcu community, on the other hand, had close relations with the *Naqshibandi* School. Now the historical roots of these communities will be focused on, as well as some of the differences between them.

#### Tasawwuf

These Communities are a part of the *tasawwuf*- the mystical Islam. Here the word “mysticism” comes from the Greek and means “to close”.<sup>268</sup> In the same way, *tasawwuf* tries to find out the realities by using senses of heart (*qalb*) rather than eyes, ears and etc. Other than that, *tasawwuf* includes certain features of mysticism such as secrecy-certain issues are not shared with people that have a lower rank in the hierarchy. There are hierarchical positions and stages<sup>269</sup>, and finally the organization has a crucial place in the tradition.<sup>270</sup>

*Tasawwuf* claimed to strengthen and complete the Sharia<sup>271</sup>, especially by putting heart (*qalb*) near the mind, yet, in time, it became an alternative to the

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<sup>268</sup> Mustafa Kara, *Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar Tarihi* (İstanbul:Dergah Yayınları, 1999), 11.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>271</sup> Atay, *Bati'da Bir Nakşibendi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 193.

Islamic orthodoxy-the judiciary and norm system.<sup>272</sup> Especially starting with the 9<sup>th</sup> century the Sufi movements turned into a reaction against the official theology and the Divine Law.<sup>273</sup>

*Tasawwuf* explains the meaning of life by giving an emphasis on the religious sources such as Quran, hadiths<sup>274</sup> and etc. Besides explaining the meaning of life, it also tries to deepen about the issue and lives it and shows the possible ways to share the meaning of life with others.<sup>275</sup> In other words, *tasawwuf* tries to create a link between the Creator and the man.<sup>276</sup> “Contrary to the ‘community ethos’, which is emphasized by the orthodox Islam, the Sufism puts the individual in to the center”<sup>277</sup>

Another important concept in the *tasawwuf* belief, that differs Sufism from the orthodox Islam is the *zuhd*. It is defined as staying away from the pleasures, and praised in the *tasawwuf* belief.<sup>278</sup> It has been seen as an educator that enlightens people, show them the right path and finally by doing these taking them to the *haqiqa*- the Reality. While enlightening the masses the *tasawwuf* aims to make people like the religion, instead of threatening them with the hell.<sup>279</sup> The Sufis did this by giving importance to the concept of *magfirat*<sup>280</sup> –that is the mercy of God.

Although it is asserted that the *tasawwuf* dates back to the Ali-the fourth caliphate after Prophet Muhammad- and this mission was given Ali by the Prophet; the term *tasawwuf* first used in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>281</sup> However, as it is mentioned above, the *tasawwuf* tries to search its roots in the main sources of Islam. Despite the fact

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<sup>272</sup> Atay, *Batı'da Bir Nakşibendi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 31.

<sup>273</sup> Atacan, *Sosyal Değişme ve Tarikat: Cerrahiler*, 23.

<sup>274</sup> *Hadith* is the saying or deed that attributed to the Prophet Muhammad.

<sup>275</sup> Kara, *Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar Tarihi*, 18.

<sup>276</sup> Atay, *Batı'da Bir Nakşibendi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 31.

<sup>277</sup> Atacan, *Sosyal Değişme ve Tarikat: Cerrahiler*, 23.

<sup>278</sup> Süleyman Uludağ, *Tasavvuf Terimleri Sözlüğü* (İstanbul:Kabalıcı, 2001), 389.

<sup>279</sup> Cemaleddin Server Revnakoğlu, *Eski Sosyal Hayatımızda Tasavvuf ve Tarikat Kültürü* (İstanbul: Kırkambar Kitaplığı, 2003), 24.

<sup>280</sup> Atay, *Batı'da Bir Nakşibendi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 35.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

that Sufis seek the *tasawwuf*'s roots in the Quran, hadith and etc. the roots of *Tasawwuf* is a complicated issue<sup>282</sup>. The influence of non-Muslim mystical traditions on *tasawwuf* is always debated.<sup>283</sup> Christianity<sup>284</sup>, Budism, Gnostisizm, Neo-Platonism and Zerdust beliefs also seen as sources of *tasawwuf*, other than its Islamic sources.<sup>285</sup> The Sufis-people of *tasawwuf*- take the Prophet's life as a model by claiming that he stayed away from the worldly pleasures.<sup>286</sup> (Indeed even the word *tasawwuf* comes from the word *suf* that means "wool"<sup>287</sup>, which represents "the lack of concern for the things of this world"<sup>288</sup>, in the first years of Islam.) The *tasawwuf* tradition, that started with belittling the pleasures and aimed to concentrate on the prays, started to spread the entire Islamic world in a century.

The *tasawwuf* tradition was never welcomed by the *ulema*- the official elite of the *Sharia*. This can be because of their interpreting Quran, or the dervish way of living.<sup>289</sup> As a result, *tasawwuf* created its own elite: the *awliya*. These new religious elite are believed to be very close to God, sometimes as much as the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>290</sup> In Islam, there would not be any more prophets, yet the way to be *awliya* is open. According to the *tasawwuf* leaders, *awliya* are hierarchically have a higher status than the *ulema*, by having the knowledge and right to forgive people. Moreover they think that one can read, study and learn to be an *alim*(singular for *ulema*), however these are not enough to be a *wali* (singular for *awliya*). All these

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<sup>282</sup> Reynold A. Nicholson, *İslam Sufileri* (İstanbul: Ataç Yayınları, 2004), 12.

<sup>283</sup> Atay, *Batı'da Bir Nakşibendi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 33.

<sup>284</sup> Nicholson, *İslam Sufileri*, 12.

<sup>285</sup> Atacan, *Sosyal Değişme ve Tarikat: Cerrahiler*, 23.

<sup>286</sup> Atay, *Batı'da Bir Nakşibendi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 33.

<sup>287</sup> Şihabuddin Sühreverdi, *Gerçek Tasavvuf* (İstanbul: Semerkand, 2005), 73.

<sup>288</sup> Dale Eickelman, *The Middle East and Central Asia* (N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2002), 274

<sup>289</sup> Atacan, *Sosyal Değişme ve Tarikat: Cerrahiler*, 24.

<sup>290</sup> Atay, *Batı'da Bir Nakşibendi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 35.

increased the antipathy that *ulema* felt against the *tasawwuf*. They perceive the *tasawwuf* as a threat to their unchallenged authority.<sup>291</sup>

Another group that perceives the *tasawwuf* and its leaders was the rulers. The charismatic leadership of the *tasawwuf* leaders created political suspicions among the ruling elite.<sup>292</sup>

The tension between *tasawwuf* and the orthodox Islam continued in this way until their relation was re-theorized by Imam Gazali. Gazali had a unique position in this debate, since he was both a Sufi and an *alim*. With this new “intellectual formation” of Gazali *tasawwuf* became more of a complementary of orthodox Islam rather than an alternative to it.<sup>293</sup> “The knowledge Sharia was seen as an essential step to get the Sufi knowledge (the knowledge of heart(*qalb*))”.<sup>294</sup>

Still, Imam Gazali’s even new formulation could not put an end to the debate. Especially, Imam Arabi’s doctrine of 'Oneness of Being' (*wahdat al-wujûd*) prevent a consensus between these two traditions. *Ulema* finds the Sufis ideas and explanations about the *Tawhid* (oneness of God) very disrupting.<sup>295</sup> His ideas were perceived as pantheistic ones while he was defined as the *Sheikh* of the infidels.<sup>296</sup> He, on the other hand, blamed the *Ulema* by calling them the pharaohs of the ummah.<sup>297</sup>

## Tariqats

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<sup>291</sup> Atacan, *Sosyal Değişme ve Tarikat: Cerrahiler* , 35.

<sup>292</sup> Eickelman, *The Middle East and Central Asia* , 275.

<sup>293</sup> Atay, *Batı'da Bir Nakşibendi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 36.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.,37.

<sup>295</sup> Kara, *Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar Tarihi* ,23.

<sup>296</sup> Atay, *Batı'da Bir Nakşibendi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 38.

<sup>297</sup> Kara, *Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar Tarihi* ,23.

The *tasawwuf* tradition cannot be thought without the *tariqats*. *Tariqats* are the institutionalized versions of the *Tasawwuf* tradition.<sup>298</sup> As it is mentioned above the organization is very crucial for the mystic movements and *tariqats* fills this gap in the *tasawwuf* tradition. They are not only the centers in where *tasawwuf* knowledge is shared but also centers of socialization and even centers that function as security mechanisms-especially in today's metropolitans.<sup>299</sup>

The word *tariq* means the "path".<sup>300</sup> Here the path refers to the tool that guides people to Allah by being loyal to a guide and following his orders.<sup>301</sup> The *tariqats* are known as the communities that aimed to spread the *tasawwuf* tradition and its elements (especially the 'Oneness of Being' (*wahdat al-wujûd*))<sup>302</sup>. They were very successful in spreading Islam, for instance the spread of Islam into the Anatolia was mostly happen as a result of the *tariqats* and their activities.<sup>303</sup>

Throughout the history of the *tariqats*, new branches emerged from the prominent *tariqats*. These diversions are mostly stem from a new interpretation or a change in the perspective of the *tariqat*.<sup>304</sup>

Similar to what the Sufi theoreticians did for *tasawwuf*, *tariqats* also sought their roots in the early days of the Islam. The main *Sunni tariqats* take Abu-Bakr (the first caliphate after Muhammad) as their first leader, while the Shi'ite *tariqats* take Ali (the fourth caliphate after Muhammad) as their spiritual pioneer.<sup>305</sup> This will, obviously an attempt to legitimize their position in the eyes of the masses.

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<sup>299</sup> Atacan, *Sosyal Değişme ve Tarikat: Cerrahiler*, 18.

<sup>300</sup> Revnakoğlu, *Eski Sosyal Hayatımızda Tasavvuf ve Tarikat Kültürü*, 37.

<sup>301</sup> Atay, *Batı'da Bir Nakşibendi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 40.

<sup>302</sup> Atacan, *Sosyal Değişme ve Tarikat: Cerrahiler*, 18.

<sup>303</sup> Atay, *Batı'da Bir Nakşibendi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 44.

<sup>304</sup> Kara, *Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar Tarihi*, 236.

<sup>305</sup> Baki Öz, *Çağdaşlaşma Açısından Tarikat ve Tekkelerin Kapatılma Olayı*, (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 2004), 65.

Today many items concerning the inner organization of *tariqats* have changed. The main pillars of classical *tariqats* have either changed or adapt into the new circumstances.<sup>306</sup> Sometimes these changes were results of the modernization. Sometimes they were results of the government policies. Yet, *tariqats* keep their importance in influencing the social life.

Now, we briefly focus on the main items that generate this organization. Since the *tariqat* activities mostly occurred in a *Sheikh*-murid relationship and they occurred in a place called *tekke*<sup>307</sup> (lodge) which is the center of the *tariqat*, here we are going to focus on these two concepts: *Tekke* and the *Sheikh*.

Tekke (Dervish lodge)

*Tekke* means “the place to lean on” in Persian language. The dervishes were used to not only pray, but also live in these places. They were more than a temple for them. Indeed their other functions such as social, economical, ethical and also, maybe more importantly, the political ones prove this claim.<sup>308</sup>

“Close to the end of the 12th century, the *tasawwuf* centers started to turn into schools”<sup>309</sup> and *tekkes* emerged as metaphysical education centers<sup>310</sup>. As it mentioned above *Tekke* is an organ of the *tasawwuf* philosophy and for that reason, at least at the beginning their official duty was practicing, maturing and sharing their *tariqats*’ ideas with the masses.<sup>311</sup> Yet, their strength on society was perceived by the political institutions and they were started to be used for military and political purposes. For

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<sup>306</sup> Atacan, *Sosyal Değişme ve Tarikat: Cerrahiler*, 17.

<sup>307</sup> Atay, *Batı'da Bir Nakşibendi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 40.

<sup>308</sup> Ethem Cebecioğlu, *Tasavvuf Terimleri ve Deyimleri Sözlüğü* (İstanbul:Anka Yayınları 2004), 646.

<sup>309</sup> Atay, *Batı'da Bir Nakşibendi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 40.

<sup>310</sup> Sühreverdi, *Gerçek Tasavvuf*, 43.

<sup>311</sup> Kara, *Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar Tarihi*, 265.

instance, during the establishment period of the Ottomans, *tekkes* were also places for socialization, reconstruction, housing and charity.<sup>312</sup> The new conquered areas were given to Sufi dervishes to construct a *tekke* there and by this way the Islamization of the area was accomplished. Furthermore, Muslims were sent these areas and they settle down the area around the lodge.<sup>313</sup>

The Authority: Sheikh

*Tariqats* are very hierarchical organizations and being loyal to the leaders is a must in this organizations. *Sheikh*- that means leader in Arabic<sup>314</sup>- is the head of this organization, who is believed to be given *ilm-i ledun*- that is a special knowledge which led the *Sheikh* to see the inner realities that cannot be perceived by the common people.<sup>315</sup> Indeed, this knowledge is very crucial for us to understand how the *Sheikh*-murid relation is shaped, and the absolute submission of the murid towards his *Sheikh*. There is not any possibility to discuss or refuse Sheik's orders; his words are "laws" for his murids<sup>316</sup>. For that reason, as explained in the thesis, if *Sheikh* desires a radical change in the organization of the Community, no one refuses it.

Another term that emphasizes the loyalty of the murid to his *Sheikh* is the *Rabita*- which means "bound" in Arabic.<sup>317</sup> According to this belief, murid should left anything that is related to this world, and should concentrate on his *Sheikh* and

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<sup>312</sup> Atacan, *Sosyal Değişme ve Tarikat: Cerrahiler* , 27.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>314</sup> Cebecioğlu, *Tasavvuf Terimleri ve Deyimleri Sözlüğü* , 609.

<sup>315</sup> Kara, *Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar Tarihi* , 60.

<sup>316</sup> Nicholson, *İslam Sufileri*, 28.

<sup>317</sup> Uludağ, *Tasavvuf Terimleri Sözlüğü*, 285.

bound his heart to his *Sheikh*<sup>318</sup>. Since, according to the *Tasawwuf*, *Sheikh* is an intermediary between God and Murid<sup>319</sup> and he makes the people love God and also makes God love the people<sup>320</sup>, being loyal to him is perceived as being loyal to God.

In the *tasawwuf* education system, someone that tries to find out the right way without a guide (*Sheikh*) is criticized and blamed to be a murid of Satan<sup>321</sup>. *Sheikhs* were students of other Sheiks until they get matured. According to the *Tasawwuf* belief, in this education the student does not have to see or meet his *Sheikh*.<sup>322</sup> This education is sometimes given by the Sheiks that lived hundred years ago-especially by the ones that were respected by all the *tariqats*. This is called the *unwise* kind of leaning. According to the general belief, Ways al-Quran a well known Islamist figure was educated by the Prophet Muhammad although they never saw each other<sup>323</sup>.

Especially, during the reign of Ottomans, new conquered lands were given to *tariqats* to establish *tekkes* and they were supported to continue their functions there. The Sheiks of these *tariqats* started to give these lands to their children and as a result *Sheikh* families emerged.<sup>324</sup>

Despite the social power of the *tariqats* in the Ottoman society, they hardly came together and created a strong opposition against the State. This may be a result of lack of unity between these groups. Every *Sheikh* perceives himself independent and refused to be under the authority of someone else. No *Sheikh* wants to share the opportunities offered by his leadership.<sup>325</sup> As it is going to be mentioned later, this attitude has a strong connection with the *Mahdi* belief of the *tariqats*.

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<sup>318</sup> Kara, *Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar Tarihi*, 238.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>320</sup> Sühreverdi, *Gerçek Tasavvuf*, 102.

<sup>321</sup> Nicholson, *İslam Sufileri*, 28.

<sup>322</sup> Kara, *Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar Tarihi*, 234.

<sup>323</sup> Cebecioğlu, *Tasavvuf Terimleri ve Deyimleri Sözlüğü*, 678.

<sup>324</sup> Atacan, *Sosyal Değişme ve Tarikat: Cerrahiler*, 25.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid., 34.

## Naqshibandi School

Among these tariqats, The *Naqshibandi* School has been and still is the most influential *Sunni* Tariqat in the Turkish history.<sup>326</sup> It was created by Bahaeddin Naqshibandi in the 14<sup>th</sup> century as a re-interpretation and re-birth of the Hacegan Sufi tradition<sup>327</sup>. Two ideas stand behind the word *Naqshibandi*: naqsh means “engraving and suggests engraving the name of God in the heart”; band refers to a “bond and indicates the link between the individual and his Creator”.<sup>328</sup>

Especially, the movements that had important impacts on the political and social life of Turkish Muslims are either *Naqshibandi* Sects or have close links with *Naqshibandi* School. The *Naqshibandi* Groups’ interest in participating politics distinguishes them from other *Tasawwuf* Schools. “Throughout its history, the *Naqshibandi* order has always been on the alert for opportunities to use power for what it considered the higher interests of Muslims.”<sup>329</sup>

The *Naqshibandi* tradition had crucial duties other than giving the religious services to the Ottoman citizens. For instance, it helped the preservation of the unity of the Ottoman land. Moreover it is used in educating the masses.<sup>330</sup>

Mardin claims that the *Naqshibandi* order kept its importance during the Republican period.<sup>331</sup> It has the ability “to capture and to use the connotations of prestige that the secular intellectualistic discourse evoked in modern Turkey.”<sup>332</sup> The masses in the Ottoman land experienced a dramatic events and changes during the

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<sup>326</sup> Ziya Nur Aksun, *Siyasi ve Sosyal Açıdan Mezhepler Tarikatlar* (İstanbul:Marifet Yayınları,2004), 105.

<sup>327</sup>Necdet Tosun, *Bahaeddin Nakşibend, Hayatı, Görüşleri, Tarikatı*, (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları,2003), 415.

<sup>328</sup> Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Naqshbandi Sufi Way* (Chicago: Kazı Publications,1995), 4.

<sup>329</sup> Mardin, “The Nakşibendi Order in Turkish History” , 135.

<sup>330</sup> Aksun, *Siyasi ve Sosyal Açıdan Mezhepler Tarikatlar*, 107.

<sup>331</sup> Mardin, “The Nakşibendi Order in Turkish History” , 134.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., 135.

replacement of the old institutions by the new ones. The traditional Ottoman Islamic bonds started to vanish and this situation created a “fertile field for religious influence at the individual level”.<sup>333</sup>

*Naqshibandi* tradition’s most important branches are the Mucaddidiyah and the Khalidiyah traditions. Mucaddidiyah branch was established by Imam Rabbani.<sup>334</sup> Khalidiyah tradition was also a part of the Mucaddidiyah tradition before its establishment by Ziyauddin bin Ahmad bin Huseyn.<sup>335</sup> Khalidi Branch kept its importance even today by being popular among the masses in Anatolia.<sup>336</sup>

#### The Tariqats in the Ottoman Period

*Naqshibandis* have good relations with the Ulema-official religious elite-, compared to the other Schools of *Tasawwuf*. This is mostly because of their being loyal to the praying methods of Orthodox Islam<sup>337</sup>. For that reason, the Ottomans embraced the *Naqshibandi* belief easily.<sup>338</sup> Most of the time the State had good relations with the Sufis, and in particular with *Naqshibandis*. Yet, the State protect its dominant position in this relation.<sup>339</sup>

The *tasawwuf* had an important place in the history of Ottomans starting with Osman Gazi- the first leader of the Ottomans. According to a narrative he saw Mawlana Jalaladdin Rumi in the Seljuk palace and Mawlana prayed for him claimed

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<sup>333</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>334</sup> Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *100 Soruda Türkiye’de Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar* (İstanbul:Gerçek Yayınevi, 1969), 219.

<sup>335</sup> Gölpınarlı, *100 Soruda Türkiye’de Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar*, 220.

<sup>336</sup> Kara, *Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar Tarihi*, 295.

<sup>337</sup> Tosun, *Bahaeddin Nakşibend, Hayatı, Görüşleri, Tarikatı*, 416.

<sup>338</sup> Mardin, “The Nakşibendi Order in Turkish History” ,129.

<sup>339</sup> Hür Mahmut Yücer, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf -19.Yüzyıl* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2003), 635.

that Ottomans would be the new power after the Seljuks.<sup>340</sup> Orhan Gazi-the son of Osman Gazi- educated with *tasawwuf* tradition by his grandfather, *Sheikh* Edebali.<sup>341</sup> The *Naqshibandi* tradition in real terms, on the other hand, started to be influential in the Ottomans especially at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with the arrival of the Timur army. Fatih invited some *Naqshibandi* Sheiks to İstanbul and *Naqshibandis* started to become influential in politics.<sup>342</sup>

Ottomans most of the time encouraged *Naqshibandis* for practical purposes, as in the case of the threat of shi'ite Safavis.<sup>343</sup> Yet, the Ottomans were also aware of the destructive side of the tariqats.<sup>344</sup> However, this further increased *Naqshibandis'* influence among other tariqats. For instance, Bektashi groups were seen as possible sources of evil by betraying the divine law and were suppressed while the *Naqshibandis* were favored by the State.<sup>345</sup> Indeed, the Sultans' suspicion was not limited with this; they even had some anxieties about the power of Ulema. For that reason, the *Sheikhul* Islam-the highest official Alim- did not have any political authority in the Imperial Council.<sup>346</sup> In a parallel way, in 1863 Assembly of the Sheiks was established to control the tariqat decisions and actions.<sup>347</sup>

The tariqats increased their influence in politics especially during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid. This was due to the fact that Ottoman Empire faced the disintegration in his reign. He saw the pan-Islamism as a cure against this

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<sup>340</sup> Hasan Alakese, *Mutasavif Hükümdarlar* (İstanbul :Okul Yayınları, 2004), 58.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>342</sup> Atay, *Batı'da Bir Nakşibendi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 60.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>344</sup> Mardin, *Türkiye'de Din ve Siyaset*, 87.

<sup>345</sup> Ortaylı, "The Policy of the Sublime-Porte towards Naqshbandis and Other Tariqas during the Tanzimat Period", 67.

<sup>346</sup> Mardin, *Türkiye'de Din ve Siyaset*, 88.

<sup>347</sup> Ortaylı, "The Policy of the Sublime-Porte towards Naqshbandis and Other Tariqas during the Tanzimat Period", 70.

disintegration<sup>348</sup> and had good relations with tariqats.<sup>349</sup> The 31 March rebellion of 1909 also had close links with *Naqshibandis*.<sup>350</sup>

Despite their support towards Abdulhamid, the *Naqshibandi* tariqats relations with the Union and Progress (Ittihad ve Terakki) administration were not clear. After Abdulhamid lost the administration of the Empire, *Naqshibandi* groups started to criticize him<sup>351</sup>-which means having the same enemy with the Union and Progress party. Yet, there was one thing obvious; with their increasing level of activities both in Anatolia and in Istanbul, coming to the end of the Ottomans, *Naqshibandis* gained an important position in the Empire's politics.<sup>352</sup>

#### The Tariqats in the Republic Period

The Republican period marks a turning point in the State's relation with the religious groups. Especially, "the *Naqshibandi* Sufi order became an important target" for the republican elites during the first years of the Turkish State.<sup>353</sup> The legal code of 4 March 1924 put an end to the caliphate<sup>354</sup> and banned the religious groups and their institutions<sup>355</sup>. These were seen as the centers that work against the modernization of the Turkey. In order to transform from an *ummah* into a modern nation, Turkey had to make these reforms. Moreover Atatürk might have thought that Islam was not an efficient tool in uniting the nation for a common end.<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> Atay, *Batı'da Bir Nakşibendi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 63.

<sup>349</sup> Atacan, *Sosyal Değişme ve Tarikat: Cerrahiler*, 33.

<sup>350</sup> Mardin, "The Nakşibendi Order in Turkish History", 121.

<sup>351</sup> Atay, *Batı'da Bir Nakşibendi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 63.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>353</sup> Yavuz, "The Matrix of Modern Turkish Islamic Movements: the Naqshbandi Sufi Order", 129.

<sup>354</sup> Atacan, *Sosyal Değişme ve Tarikat: Cerrahiler*, 35.

<sup>355</sup> Yavuz, "The Matrix of Modern Turkish Islamic Movements: the Naqshbandi Sufi Order", 135.

<sup>356</sup> Mardin, *Türkiye'de Din ve Siyaset*, 96.

The reactions against these policies of the state were highly severe. Especially *Naqshibandi* groups became the main opposition after these policies.<sup>357</sup> Their name is often announced with *Sheikh* Said rebellion of 1925, the Menemen incident of 1930, the rebellion of Bursa against the Turkish call to prayer (*ezan*) in 1933 and Iskilip rebellion of 1936.<sup>358</sup> Indeed, these rebellions were quite enough for the republican elite to feel uneasy and suspicious about the religious groups in Turkey.<sup>359</sup> The tariqats' and other religious groups' claim that they were just fighting to increase faith, and that they were non-political units<sup>360</sup> was not embraced by the State elite. The fight between these two groups continues by adapting the political and social atmosphere. These relations will be analyzed in detail in the following chapters.

#### The Three Movements (and their Relation with Tasawwuf)

Nurcu movement was established by Bediüzzaman Said Nursi (1873-1960)<sup>361</sup> and became the biggest and most influential religious group in contemporary Turkey. His ideas were seen as a threat by the State and he was found guilty because of his support to the *Sheikh* Said revolt in 1925. Said Nursi's importance originates from his re-interpretation of Islam and Quran, in accordance with the changing conditions of the day. Instead of discussing on how the religious practices should be done, he focused on the preservation of the faith.<sup>362</sup>

Another important point that differs Nurcus from other religious groups is that, they preferred to put the *Risale-i Nur Külliyyatı* (the writings of Said Nursi) at

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<sup>357</sup> Atay, *Batı'da Bir Nakşibendi Cemaati: Şeyh Nazım Örneği*, 64.

<sup>358</sup> Yavuz, "The Matrix of Modern Turkish Islamic Movements: the Naqshbandi Sufi Order", 135.

<sup>359</sup> Mardin, "The Nakşibendi Order in Turkish History", 122.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Mardin, *Türkiye'de Din ve Siyaset*, 31.

<sup>362</sup> Yavuz, *Neo-Nurcular- Gülen Hareketi İslamcılık* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005), 295.

the center.<sup>363</sup> As it will be explained in the following paragraphs, this was mostly because of the fact that, Nurcu community was not a tariqat, and for that reason gave the priority to the written material rather than just fetishism of the leader.

Nurcu group's relation with *Tasawwuf* and *Naqshibandi* School is more complicated than the other two movements. Sometimes its leader defined as a Naqshibandi *Sheikh* and the movement was defined as a tariqat<sup>364</sup>. Yet, this idea is far from Said Nursi's own ideas concerning his movement's difference from the tariqats and the tariqats being replaced by his Risale.

Said Nursi was influenced by the *tasawwuf* tradition, especially because of his being educated by the *tasawwuf* *Sheikhs*. This education was especially given by the Khalidi *Naqshibandis*.<sup>365</sup> Besides, he had connections with the *Naqshibandi* and Kadiri Sheiks because of the fact that, in where he had born and lived (Nurs village of Bitlis), these Sheiks were highly influential.<sup>366</sup> For those reasons, he had many references from the prominent Sheiks (such as Abdurrahman Tami<sup>367</sup> Fehim Arvasi<sup>368</sup> ) of the *Tasawwuf* in his books. Moreover, he claims that he had metaphysical relations with the famous leader of the Kadiri School, Abdul Qadir al Jilani.<sup>369</sup> For instance, despite hundred years between them, he asserted that, Jilani saved him from the Russian Prison in the First World War.<sup>370</sup>

Despite his respect to the *tasawwuf* tradition, Nursi refused to be a member of a tariqat. Instead he claimed that his books, and himself, were students of Quran.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>363</sup> Yavuz *Bediüzzaman Said Nursi ve Nurculuk* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005), 264.

<sup>364</sup> Gölpınarlı, *100 Soruda Mezhepler ve Tarikatler*, 228.

<sup>365</sup> Mardin, "The Nakşibendi Order in Turkish History" ,133.

<sup>366</sup> Algar, *Bediüzzaman ve Tasavvuf*, 14.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

Besides, he thought that, his books were explaining Quran.<sup>372</sup> And finally, in a period that Islam was attacked by the materialist movements, there was no need to the tariqats in his thinking<sup>373</sup>.

Süleymancı took their name from the *Naqshibandi* leader Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan (1888-1959). The community differs from Nurcu and İskenderpaşa Communities, with its emphasis on the preservation of the religion rather than modernization of it.<sup>374</sup> Süleymancılık also differs from Nurcu and to some extent from the İskenderpaşa community by its lack of any written discourse written by its leader.<sup>375</sup>

Süleymancı Movement is a part of the *Naqshibandi* tradition.<sup>376</sup> It was highly influential in the political arena. For instance its leader after Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan, Kemal Kaçar was a PM from the Justice Party of Demirel before the coup. Besides, the “Rabıta” tradition is still very common in the Movement.

İskenderpaşa Community is an important part of the *Naqshibandi* School. Its leader, Mehmet Zaid Kotku (1897-1980). Kotku had a prominent place in Turkish history since he was respected and seen as an advisor by politicians like Erbakan, Özal<sup>377</sup> and Erdoğan<sup>378</sup>. After Kotku, Esad Coşan became the leader of the community. Both Kotku and Coşan supported the modernization processes especially in the technological sphere.<sup>379</sup>

The İskenderpaşa Community was established by a *Naqshibandi Sheikh*.<sup>380</sup> Kotku witnessed the ban’s impact on the religious orders and formed its sect in

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<sup>372</sup> Ibid.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>374</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 196.

<sup>375</sup> Aydın, *Süleymancılık*, 309.

<sup>376</sup> Mardin, *Türkiye’de Din ve Siyaset*, 30.

<sup>377</sup> Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 191.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>379</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>380</sup> Mardin, *Türkiye’de Din ve Siyaset*, 30.

İskenderpaşa mosque.<sup>381</sup> The movement, especially with its interest in politics, includes the basic features of the *Tasawwuf* (and particularly *Naqshibandi*) tradition.

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<sup>381</sup> Mardin, “The Nakşibendi Order in Turkish History”, 133.

## Appendix 2

### Some Examples of the Economic Organizations of these Communities

#### Nurcu Community

Asya Finans

Aydınlı Giyim

Memorial Hospital

Işık Sigorta

Güvender Yayınları

Proçelik Ltd. Şti

Cihan Ajans

#### Süleymancı Community

#### Merkez Gıda Malzemeleri Limited Şirketi

Arslan Nakliyat

Şahlan Denizcilik

Hisar Intercontinental Hospital

Hilal Denizcilik

Armine Headscarves

Nurşah Headscarves

Ödemiş Giyim

Fakiođlu Yoghurt

İskenderpařa Community

Vefa Yayıncılık

Al Baraka Türk (Bank)

Hayrunnisâ Hospital

Esmâ Hatun Hospital

Afiyet Hospital

Deha Printing House

Ahsen Printing House

Seha Printing House

Asfa Education Center

İřpa Tourism

Burak Tourism

Server Communication

řah-inn Otel

Clup Familia Otel

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