THE PATTERNS OF INTERACTION BETWEEN ISLAM AND LIBERALISM: THE CASE OF THE GÜLEN MOVEMENT[1]

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Abstract

The unprecedented resurgence of religious organisations in the public sphere in recent years has given particular urgency to the old question of the compatibility of Islam and liberalism. Some scholars have argued that Islamic notions of social–political order are not hospitable to democracy and human rights. Others have argued that notions of democracy and human rights are firmly established in the Islamic political discourse but their expression depends on history, social structure and context.

Although this debate has proved fruitful in framing the role of Islam in the public sphere, both sides have generally focused on essential sources of Islam. The debate needs to be extended to the empirical realm through study of particular Islamic movements and their responses to liberalisation trends. Such study should take into account local context, the organisational capabilities of the movement, and the Islamic repertoire that it deploys in mobilising its followers.

This paper looks at the Gülen movement's response to liberalisation processes in Turkey in the 1990s and 2000s. Since liberalism has radically transformed the economic and political system of the country over the last two decades, Turkey is a good example for our purposes. Furthermore, the increased influence of the Gülen movement in Turkey provides rich empirical data of an Islamic movement engaging with liberalisation in civil society and politics. The paper concludes that, while the movement's discourse and practice are compatible with liberalism, its Islamic ethos means that at some points it must engage liberalism critically.

Introduction

To what extent are Islam and liberalism compatible? How have Islamic movements responded to liberalization trends in the last two decades?[2] Some scholars argue that liberalism can flourish in the Muslim world[3] while others contend that developing a liberal economic and political system within the Islamic tradition is almost impossible.[4] I argue that there is no general answer to this question and scholars should instead analyze the Islamic movements empirically. Each group's compatibility with a liberal system depends on some contextual conditions. One should consider environmental factors within which an Islamic movement is located, the organizational capabilities that the movement possesses, and the Islamic repertoire that the movement uses in mobilizing its followers. My objective in this study is to specify certain conditions under which Islamic movements and liberal economic and political systems co-exist peacefully.

In this paper, I aim to reach an answer to this question by looking at the Gülen movement's response to liberalization processes in Turkey in the 1990s and 2000s.[5] Analyzing the Gülen movement in 1990s and 2000s offers many analytical opportunities. First of all, liberalism has transformed the Turkish economic and political system radically in the last two decades. Turkey is a good case at hand to analyze the responses of Islamic movements to the liberalization of social and political life. Second, the Gülen movement is not a political movement; it is a social movement which is active in many spheres of social life. Earlier studies on Islam and liberalism have generally focused on political movements. This study aims to enlarge those analyses toward social movements to get a larger picture of the interactions between Islam and liberalism. Finally, the Gülen movement has become an influential transnational Islamic movement in the last two decades. Analyzing the movement's engagement with liberalism is also instructive in understanding the patterns of interactions between Islamic movements and liberalism at large. The conclusions that we get from this inquiry may contribute to larger debates on democratization in the Muslim world.

I analyze the Gülen movement's engagement with liberalization in two spheres: economic liberalization and political liberalization. In analyzing the movement's engagement with economic liberalization, I look at what normative position the followers have taken against free market economy, which diffused in 1990s and 2000s in Turkey; and in what ways they have implemented the rules of free market economy. Although the movement has run many

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2 Adopting James Beckford's definition of "religious movement," I define an Islamic movement as "formal or informal mobilization of people, material resources, ideas, and feelings in pursuit of objectives dictated by concerns deemed ultimately significant but largely outside the framework of conventional religious activities." See James Beckford, "Religious Movements and Globalization," In *Global Social Movements*, edited by Robin Cohen and Shirin M. Rai (New Brunswick, NJ: Athlone Press, 2000), p. 169.

3 See Khaled Abou El-Fadl, *Islam and the Challenge of Democracy: A Boston Review Book* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), Charles Kurzman, *Liberal Islam: A Source Book* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); and Michaelle Browers and Charles Kurzman (eds), *An Islamic Reformation?* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2004).

4 See Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?: The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (New York, Perennial, 2003); and Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror* (New York: Modern Library, 2003). Many years ago, Max Weber argued that Islam was an obstacle against the development of a capitalist spirit in the Muslim-majority countries. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribner, 1958).

5 For an earlier study which depicts the Gülen movement as a liberal Islamic movement see: Bülent Aras and Ömer Çaha, "Fethullah Gülen and His Liberal 'Turkish Islam' Movement," *Middle East Review of International Affairs,* Volume 4 No 4 (December 2000).

economic activities without any serious contradiction with the liberal economic system, the followers have strived to transform it by adding some components from Islamic teachings. Under the heading of political liberalization, I analyze the movement's response to the expansion of the civil and political liberties which strengthened the democratization process in Turkey in the last two decades. In line with a liberal participatory philosophy, the movement has developed amicable relations with different segments of the society and defended a pluralist understanding in its relations with the others. However, the followers, without interfering the others' preferences, have also developed some communitarian responses to the individualist emphasis of liberal philosophy.

Thus, this paper argues that the Gülen movement has reinterpreted Islamic activism in a way to make it compatible with the liberalization process.[6] This movement has used the opportunities offered by the liberalization process in Turkey and abroad. Moreover, it has strived to transform liberalization processes by re-evaluating them within an Islamic perspective.[7] The conditions which made this possible will become clear after the detailed examination of the Gülen movement's social and political practices within a liberalizing society in the last two decades. Before analyzing the Gülen movement, I will briefly summarize the discussions on Islam and liberalism.

Islam and Liberalism: The Question of Compatibility

We can identify three different approaches on the relationship between Islam and liberalism. The first group of scholars argues that Islam and liberalism are incompatible. These scholars consist of two essentialist camps: those who present Islam as a backward ideology which

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6 Ihsan Yilmaz argues that the inherent pluralistic nature of Islamic jurisprudence allows the emergence of many authorities who eclectically and pragmatically construct their own interpretations of the Islamic law against the challenges of modern times. This results in the postmodern fragmentation of the Islamic legal sphere. The Islamic social movements, which have the capacity to transform the public sphere, may prevent the fragmentation of the Islamic legal sphere by gathering their followers around certain discourses and practices. Yilmaz argues that by its increasing influence, the Gülen movement has the capacity to renew the Islamic discourse and practices so as to empower it to meet the challenges of modernity. See Ihsan Yilmaz, "Ijtihad and Tajdid by Conduct: The Gülen Movement" in *Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement,* edited by M. Hakan Yavuz and John L. Esposito, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003), pp. 208-237. See also: Ihsan Yilmaz, "State, Law, Civil Society and Islam in Contemporary Turkey," *Muslim World*, Volume 95 No 3 (July 2005), pp. 385-412; Ugur Komecoglu, "Kutsal ile Kamusal: F. Gülen Cemaat Hareketi", *İslamın Yeni Kamusal Yüzleri*, ed. Nilufer Göle. Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2000, 148-94; Elizabeth Özdalga, "Secularizing Trends in Fethullah Gülen's Movement: Impasse or Opportunity for Further Renewal," *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, Volume 12 No 1 (Spring 2003), pp. 61-73.

7 Not all of Islamic groups embrace liberalism in Turkey. The recent spread of neo-liberal policies in Turkey produced two diverging outcomes on the identities of Islamic groups. While some Islamic groups embraced liberalism and developed a pro-liberal stance, others took a more nationalist/illiberal position. For example, the Justice and Development Party moved toward a more liberal stance, while the Haydar Baş movement and the Felicity Party leaned toward a more nationalist one. For the transformation of Islamic movements toward a more liberal stance see Ihsan Dağı, "Transformation of Islamic Political Identity in Turkey: Rethinking the West and Westernization," *Turkish Studies,* Vol. 6, No 1 (2005) and Ihsan Dağı, Rethinking Human Rights, Democracy and the West: Post-Islamist Intellectuals in Turkey?," *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol. 13, No 2 (2004). For a comparative study of Turkish Islamic movements' responses to globalization see Ahmet T. Kuru, "Globalization and Diversification of Islamic Movements," *Political Science Quarterly,* Vol. 120, No 2 (2005), pp. 253-74. For a study that compares Turkish Islamic movements' reaction to liberalism, see Ramazan Kılınç, "Transformative Role of Liberalism in Turkey after 1990s: The Case of Turkish Islamic Groups," Paper Presented at the 7th Annual Kokkalis Program Graduate Student Workshop, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 3-4 February 2005.

cannot develop a liberal discourse within its existing set of ideas and institutions; and those Islamist thinkers who see liberalism as an inimical threat to Islam. The second group argues that Islam and liberalism are not inherently incompatible. Two different kinds of studies prevail in this thinking: theological studies that look at the discursive resources of Islam and sociological studies that look at Muslim politics empirically. The final group of scholars argues that Islam gives no hint to understand the fate of liberalism in Muslim countries; social and political context and strategic interactions of actors matter.

The first group of scholars such as Daniel Pipes, Elie Kedourie, Samuel Huntington, Bassam Tibi, and Bernard Lewis argue that Islamic political values are incompatible with the basic principles of liberal democracy.[8] Pipes, for example, argues that the lack of the distinction between spiritual and secular in Islam is an obstacle for liberal democracy. He states that political participation is an alien concept in Muslim societies.[9] Elie Kedourie, in answering the question of why democracy failed in the Middle East, argues that Islamic models of society and government are in conflict with central elements of European constitutionalism. Popular sovereignty and separation of powers are two most important principles that are in conflict with Islamic political theory. Her conclusion, then, is "the idea of democracy is quite alien to the mindset of Islam."[10] Huntington shares the same conclusion and writes that Islam "has not been hospitable to democracy."[11] He reiterates his position in his later work: "the underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam."[12] Tibi writes that Islamic modernization is impossible unless Muslims embrace cultural modernization along with the instrumental modernization in the technological realm.[13] He identifies the past modernization efforts in the Muslim world as an "Islamic dream of semi-modernity," since Muslims only took the technology of the West and failed to internalize its cultural values.[14] In analyzing the reasons of the democratic backwardness of Middle Eastern states, Bernard Lewis argues that the problem stems from Islam's inability to adapt to the modern age.[15] According to him, Islam and liberal democracy are fundamentally incompatible and the only solution for the Muslim world for democratization is to modernize their systems by denouncing the authentic Islam.[16] Scholars in this vein describe the relationship between Islam and the West as "the contemporary outgrowth of tensions between the secular worldview of secular modernity and the cosmological worldview of Islamic monotheism."[17]

On the other side, there is a group of Muslim thinkers, who also agrees that Islam and democracy are incompatible. Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), who is accepted as the ideologue of

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8   Daniel Pipes, *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1983); Elie Kedourie, *Democracy and Arab Political Culture*, (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1992); Samuel Huntington, "Will More Countries Become Democratic," *Political Science Quarterly,* Volume 99 No 2 (1984), pp. 193-218; Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder* (Berkeley, CA: California University Press, 1998); Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?: The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East,* (New York: Prennial, 2003).

9   Pipes, *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power,* pp. 48-69, 144-47.

10   Kedourie, *Democracy and Arab Political Culture,* p. 1.

11   Huntington, "Will More Countries Become Democratic," p. 208

12   Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 217.

13   Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism,* p. 66.

14   *Ibid.*, p. 66.

15   Lewis, *What Went Wrong?: The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East*

16   For a similar argument see: Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society*, (Glenco, IL: Free Press, 1958).

17   Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism,* p. 68.

the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, sees democracy as a threat to Islam's authenticity. As if concurring the above-mentioned authors, he argues that democracy is antithetical to Islam since it is against the Islamic notion of God's sovereignty.[18] He wrote that "as long as there is a group of people legislating for others, equality and absolute dignity cannot be realized."[19] The followers of Qutb saw democracy as a Western plot against Muslims and considered it a religion and worldview that poses a threat to the Islamic faith instead of a political system.[20]

Abul Ala Mawdudi (1903-1979), founder of the Jamaat-i Islami in Indian subcontinent, is another Muslim thinker who argues that the notion of popular sovereignty that democracy entails is not compatible with the Islamic teachings. Based on this argument, he concludes that Islam is "the very antithesis of secular Western democracy."[21] However, unlike Qutb, he does not deny democracy fully and suggests an Islamic version of democracy, what he calls "theo-democracy." Accordingly, he talks about a system of governance which allows a "limited form of popular sovereignty, restricted and directed by God's law."[22] The Islamic concept of "shura," which means consultation, is much more pronounced in Mawdudi's concept of theo-democracy.[23]

Along similar lines, Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of Iranian revolution, argues that democracy is anathema to Islam. He states that humans are responsible to God and they do not have individual rights. Khomeini's idea of the primacy of the common good is also against the democratic philosophy. He claims that every individual must first think the Islamic community's good. The primacy of the community in Khomeini's worldview allows the violation of human rights if they constitute a challenge to the common good.[24]

The thesis that Islam and democracy are incompatible has been contested by a group of theological or sociological studies. The scholars who contest the incompatibility of Islam and democracy from a theological point of view compare Islamic political discourse with the notions of democracy. They point to the concepts such as *shura* (consultation), *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) and *ijma* (consensus) in the Islamic tradition to provide some basis for their argument. The main argument that repeats itself in the writings of these scholars is that Islam does not impose a specific form of government; and the form of government is left to the human agency, who makes its decision according to the changing historical, social and political conditions. Thus, democracy is one of the alternatives that Muslims can agree on. For example, Anoushiravan Ehteshami writes that "there are simply no single set of canons which can be said to provide a 'blueprint' for Islamic government."[25] Along the same lines, Tassaquq Hussain Jillani argues that the "Quran did not prescribe any particular political system of governance."[26] Rachid al-Ghannuchi claims that the primary focus of the religion

18   Nasr Abu Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), p. 47.

19   Quoted in John L. Esposito and James P. Piscatori, "Democratization and Islam," *Middle East Journal*, Volume 45 No 3, (Summer 1991), p. 436.

20   Azzam Tamimi, "Islam and Democracy from Tahtawi to Ghannouchi," *Theory, Culture & Society,* Volume 24 No 2, (March 2007), p. 51.

21   Quoted in Esposito and Piscatori, "Democratization and Islam," p. 436.

22   Esposito and Piscatori, "Democratization and Islam," p. 436.

23   Hugh Goddard, "Islam and Democracy," *The Political Quarterly*, Volume 73 No 3, (2002), p. 6.

24   Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis*, p. 70.

25   Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "Islam, Muslim Polities and Democracy," *Democratization*, Volume 11 No 4, (August 2004), p. 93.

26   Tassaduq Hussain Jillani, "Democracy and Islam: An Odyssey in Braving the Twenty-First Century," *BYU Law Review* (2006), p. 732.

is not politics but morality. He states that the Islamic contribution to society is primarily in the form of "a code of ethics, a transcendent morality that seems to have no place in today's democratic practice."[27] These points have been elaborated by a number of scholars.

Khaled Abou El Fadl, for example, shares the idea that Qur'an does not specify any particular form of government; but Qur'an identifies a set of social and political values that are central to Islamic political entity.[28] According to him, three values that Qur'an sets for Islamic polities constitute the basis for governance in Islam: "pursuing justice through social cooperation and mutual assistance; establishing a non-autocratic, consultative method of governance; and institutionalizing mercy and compassion in social interactions."[29] He argues that constitutional democracy is the system which suits best to these Islamic social and political values.

Ahmad Moussalli argues that the seeds of the notions of democracy, pluralism and human rights are embedded in many notions of government and politics found in Islamic religious thought.[30] Examining classical, medieval and modern Islamic discourse, Moussalli explores how Islamic concepts of shura (consultation), ikhtilaf (difference) and al-huquq al-shar'iyya (legal rights) are in tune with the notions of democracy, pluralism and human rights respectively. As opposed to fundamentalist thinkers' insistence on God's sovereignty as an obstacle for democracy, Moussalli makes a sharp distinction between "Islam as a divine belief system and the Islamic state as a humanly developed political system" and argues that humanly developed system requires the intervention of human agency.[31] According to Moussalli, the practical implementation of the liberal Islamic theology depends on the existence of pluralistic societies and democratic institutions. He argues that nationalist and socialist tendencies in the Muslim world, which had emerged as responses to oppression by imperial powers, have strengthened the authoritarian secular governments, and prevented the emergence of liberal democratic alternatives.[32]

Abdulaziz Sachedina also argues that democratic pluralism is inscribed into the fabric of Qur'an.[33] For Sachedina, the purpose of revelation is not to govern but to guide humankind.[34] Qur'an has a distinction between the obligations that humans perform as part of their relationship to God and duties they perform as part of their interpersonal responsibility. According to Islamic jurisprudence, human beings are not entitled to interfere God-human relationship; this brings up the opportunities for religious toleration. On the interpersonal responsibility of humans, Qur'an also has a distinction between inter-communal and intra-communal relations. For Sachedina, the vision of inter-communal relations in Islam is "firmly founded upon the diverse communities' sharing in cross-religious moral concern with egalitarianism, peace and justice."[35] For intra-communal relations, Qur'an sets some normative principles which

27 Tamimi, "Islam and Democracy from Tahtawi to Ghannouchi," p. 54.

28 Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Islam and the Challenge of Democracy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). See also Khaled Abou El Fadl, "Islam and the Challenge of Democratic Commitment," *Fordham International Law Journal,* Volume 27 No 4 (2003-2004), pp. 4-71.

29 El Fadl, *Islam and the Challenge of Democracy*, p. 5.

30 Ahmad S. Mousalli, *The Islamic Quest for Democracy, Pluralism, and Human Rights*, (Tampa: University Press of Florida, 2001).

31 Mousalli, *The Islamic Quest for Democracy, Pluralism, and Human Rights*, p. 6.

32 Mousalli, *The Islamic Quest for Democracy, Pluralism, and Human Rights*, p. 12.

33 Abdul-Aziz Sachedina, *The Role of Islam in the Public Square: Guidance or Governance* (Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2006). See also: Abdul-Aziz Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

34 Sachedina, *The Role of Islam in the Public Square: Guidance or Governance,* p. 9.

35 Sachedina, *The Role of Islam in the Public Square: Guidance or Governance,* p. 8.

bound only Muslims. In sum, the universal message of Qur'an, for him, provides a minimalist and thin description of moral principles for humanity that is very inclusive while the particular Qur'anic message provides a maximalist and thick description of moral language that speaks to only Muslims.[36] This distinction, for Sachedina, opens up the possibilities for democratic pluralism in Islam.

To test the validity of these philosophical/theological views on compatibility of Islam and democracy, some sociological/empirical studies have analyzed the social and political practices of Muslim societies. The main conclusion of these studies is that Islam may facilitate both democratic and totalitarian tendencies depending on which the actors are and in what the social and political conditions they reside.

John Esposito and John Voll, in their seminal study, argue that Islam and democracy are not inherently incompatible, and they can be compatible under certain political conditions.[37] They claim that there are potential democratic resources in the Islamic tradition to develop a democratic discourse. They state that in analyzing Islamic movements, scholars should be attentive to individual political systems and specific historical contexts rather than making broad generalizations. They conclude that moderate Islamic movements, which are more open to compromise with the state, facilitate democratization; and if Islamic groups are allowed to compete for votes, they become integral part of the democratic system and facilitate democratization.

Examining radical and cosmopolitan transnational Islamic movements, Peter Mandaville challenges the widely held idea that "transnational Islam is not conducive to discourses of political civility, pluralism and democracy."[38] In his study, he shows both examples of fundamentalist militant groups (Hizb ut-Tahrir, Al-Muhajiroun, the Jihadis) and cosmopolitan social/educational movements (Gülen Movement, Tariq Ramadan's European Islam). While militant groups centre their attention to the ideal of the Islamic state, moderate groups focus on individual morality and responsibility toward others. For them, the institutional form of the state does not matter if it delivers good governance. He concludes that we observe two kinds of groups side by side: "moderate discourses that produce the kind of social capital that Putnam and others have identified as a cornerstone of civil societies, and groups for whom democratic pluralism represents the greatest of dangers."[39] Although Mandaville successfully presents the diversity of Islamic movements, he does not offer a strong explanation for this variation.

Robert W. Hefner, in his analysis of democratization in Indonesia in 1990s, argues that cultural Islamic discourse in Indonesia, both in intellectual and practical level, contributed to democratization in various ways.[40] He analyzes how the discourses of Islamic intellectuals have influenced the political community in a way to facilitate democratization and to destroy Suharto's authoritarian government. Drawing on Putnam's civic culture approach, Hefner explains the Islamic groups' support for democracy with three factors, which are

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36   Sachedina, *The Role of Islam in the Public Square: Guidance or Governance,* p. 15.

37   John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, *Islam and Democracy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

38   Peter Mandeville, "Sufis and Salafis: The Political Discourse of Transnational Islam,"" In Robert W. Hefner (ed), *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 3. See also Peter Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma,* (London: Routledge, 2001).

39   Mandaville, "Sufis and Salafis: The Political Discourse of Transnational Islam," p. 322.

40   Robert Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

the foundations for a working democracy: abundance of civic organizations through which people can develop habits of voluntarism and tolerance, a pluralistic and democratic public culture, and a state willing to protect the rights of the people. He concludes that in Indonesia, the cultural Islamic tradition made the first two possible while authoritarian state of Suharto made the possibility of the third condition very low.

Vali Nasr argues that there is not a generalized answer to the question of whether Islam is compatible with democracy; the answer lies in the participation of Islamic groups into the democratic political institutions.[41] As along as Islamic movements are allowed to compete in elections, they become integrated into the mainstream political institutions of the country. For Islamic movements to become fully democratized, Nasr suggests two more conditions: (1) the military should withdraw from politics formally even if they are still influential over politicians; and (2) an Islamic middle class which gain from economic liberalization should emerge.

Sharing the theoretical premise of the final group of scholars who argue that Islam and liberalism are not necessarily incompatible, I suggest the analysis of the interaction of both textual sources and social and political structures. A full answer requires an empirical inquiry of how Muslim actors interpret the textual sources in responding to the liberalization process. In this direction, drawing on Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly's effort to develop a synthetic theory of social movements,[42] I argue that the Islamic movements' engagements with liberalism are shaped by economic and political structures, these movements' own efforts to take advantage of these structures, and the normative repertoires that motivate these movements.[43] In the Gülen movement case, economic and political liberalization provided the movement with the opportunities to increase its influence both in Turkey and abroad. However, this would not have been possible if the leaders of the movement had failed to mobilize the followers in contributing to the movement with their money, time, and energy. This mobilization would have been very difficult, if not impossible, if the movement had not revived the normative repertoires that were inherent in the Islamic resources; and the integration with the liberal structures was not beneficial to the interests of the movement. In line with Jose Casanova[44], I argue that the end result of developing a liberalism-friendly Islamic

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41   Vali Nasr, "The Rise of Muslim Democracy," *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 16 No 2, (April 2005), pp. 13-27.

42   Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly attempt to combine three mainstream social movement theories: opportunity structures, resource mobilization, and framing processes. For a work on opportunity structures, see Herbert Kitschelt, "Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies," *British Journal of Political Science,* Vol. 16 (1986), pp. 57-85. For a work on resource mobilization, see John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, *The Trend of Social Movements in America: Professionalization and Resource Mobilization* (Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press, 1973); and John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol.82 (1977), pp. 1212-41. For a work on framing processes, see Bert Klandermans, "The Social Construction of Protest and Multiorganizational Fields," In *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory,* edited by Aldon Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992).

43   Developing a synthetic approach in explaining the variation among Turkish Islamic groups with respect to their responses to globalization, Ahmet Kuru argues that Islamic movements' attitudes toward globalization is determined by two variables: domestic and international opportunity structures, and movements' normative frameworks. Kuru aptly synthesizes structural and cultural approaches, however his analysis lack the mobilizing structures that the movements use in increasing their efficacy. See: Kuru, "Globalization and Diversification of Islamic Movements."

44   Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

interpretation was two-fold: (1) enriching the public sphere and civil society; (2) and integrating the religious people to the political structures of liberal democratic regime.

In the following paragraphs, I will examine the Gülen movement's engagement with economic and political liberalization in Turkey respectively. In each section, I will first describe the structural liberal transformations that the movement was encircled. Then I will show how the movement used these structures in increasing its sphere of influence in Turkey and abroad. Finally, I will explain how the movement used the Islamic repertoire both in organizing its followers and reinterpreting liberalization in the light of an Islamic discourse.

Economic Liberalization

Structural Transformations

Systematic integration of the Turkish economy into the global market started after the 1983 elections when Turgut Özal became the prime minister. Being in close contact with the key international institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Turkey experienced a radical structural transformation in the economic realm.[45] Throughout the 1980s, trade became liberalized, the Turkish lira gained convertibility against the foreign currency after the removal of ban on foreign currency. Liberalization was extended to financial markets in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s.[46] Turkey transferred new technologies in the 1980s and 1990s, modernized its infrastructure especially in the area of telecommunications. The government gradually privatized state-owned enterprises. In the 1990s, the number of privately-owned industrial enterprises, educational institutions, radios, and televisions increased tremendously.

Economic liberalization efforts, especially in the financial realm, continued after Özal's death. Thanks to Turkey's loan agreements with the IMF throughout the late 1990s and 2000s, Turkey adopted an institutional structure, which was integrated into the global liberal economic system. The retreat of the state from the economic life, and incentives for economic investments allowed the emergence of new economic actors from the periphery. These actors, who felt themselves confident to penetrate domestic and international markets, challenged the monopoly of mainstream businessmen who have revolved around Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen Association (TUSIAD). The emergence of new social forces that constituted an alternative to state-supported bourgeoisie opened new opportunities for the building of a new social and economic make-up which constituted more diverse and competitive social and political realm within which civil society can flourish in Turkey.

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45 This transformation was not restricted to the economic realm. Özal also had a great impact on Turkey's political and social transformation. See Ihsan Dağı, "Human Rights, Democratization, and the European Community in Turkish Politics: The Özal Years, 1983-1987," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 37, No 1 (2001); and Berdal Aral, "Dispensing with Tradition?: The Özal Decade, 1983-1993," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 37, No 1, (January 2001), pp. 72-88.

46 Özal was a staunch believer in economic liberalization. He went so further as to violate the rule of law in implementing liberal policies; because these policies were difficult to implement in the existence of strong étatism in Turkey. For a balanced evaluation of Özal's economic reforms see Ziya Öniş, "Turgut Özal and His Economic Legacy: Turkish Neo-Liberalism in Critical Perspective," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Volume 40 Number 4, (July 2004), pp. 113-34.

Mobilizing Resources

The followers of the Gülen movement, along with many other Islamic groups, took part in this new economic transformation. Under the favourable conditions of a gradually liberalizing economic environment, they established new enterprises in different economic sectors, from finance to tourism, from media to education.[47] In the financial sector, the followers of the movement established Asya Finans in 1996, which changed its name to Bank Asya in 2006, as a private finance house in Turkey.[48] As of July 2007, it has 117 domestic branches. It was established in accordance with the principles of interest-free banking. In its constitution, Bank Asya states its two fundamental objectives as "to develop new interest free banking products" and "to take products that are already being offered at conventional banks and adapt them in such a way as to fit into the system of interest-free banking."[49] By offering similar services that conventional banks offer, such as internet banking, telephone banking, credit cards, and ATM and POS terminals, Bank Asya competes with conventional banks. However, at the same time, it strives to offer a banking service, which is congruent with the Islamic teachings. Most of its work principles (as declared in its mission statement) are derived from Islamic ethics: honesty, respect, and trust. Even describing "innovation" as one of its work principles, Asya Finans quotes from Prophet Muhammad: "We feel that 'two days spent in the same way' are in loss."[50]

The movement also has enterprises in the tourism sector. Asya Kızılcahamam Resort and SPA is a five-star thermal springs facility owned by Bank Asya. It was opened in 2004 in a small town in the Ankara region. Located in a 100 acres of land, the facility has a five-star thermal hotel, almost 400 luxury condominiums, a cultural and convention centre, a shopping and entertainment centre, a health and beauty centre, and thermal spring pools. It is considered to be the second best in thermal tourism in the world.[51] Asya Hotel attracts many Turkish tourists whose socio-economic level is high enough to have an expensive vacation. Many of the customers of Asya Hotel are religious people; thus Asya Hotel offers an alternative to many other hotels in Turkey. For example, the hotel offers separate swimming pools for women and men.[52] Unusual to other hotels in Turkey, the facility has a mosque. In my interviews, many customers of the hotel told me that they were happy to find a place where they could have a vacation without sacrificing their religious values.[53] This is also what the managers of the facility stated as their objective in running this facility.[54]

In addition to its financial institution and hotel, the Gülen movement also has media outlets.

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47 Although these corporations do not belong to Fethullah Gülen himself or any organization associated with him, the owners of these corporations fund the activities that Fethullah Gülen encourages.

48 "Private finance house" is the name given to the banks that offer interest-free banking to their customers. Asya Finans was not the first of its kind in Turkey. It was established as the 6th private finance house.

49 The objectives of Asya Finans are available http://www.bankasya.com.tr/en/hakkimizda/. Last accessed on September 22, 2007.

50 See http://www.bankasya.com.tr/en/hakkimizda/calisma_prensipleri.jsp Last accessed on September 22, 2007.
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51 "Başbakan: Dünyayı gezdim böyle bir tesis görmedim" ["Prime Minister: I have visited all over the world but never seen such a facility"], *Zaman*, 3 June 2004.

52 There are also some other hotels in Turkey which offers the same opportunities. For a study on Caprice Hotel which is the first of its kind see: Mücahit Bilici, "İslam'ın Bronzlaşan Yüzü: Caprice Hotel Örnek Olayı [Tanning Face of Islam: The Case of the Caprice Hotel," In *İslam'ın Yeni Kamusal Yüzleri* [New Public Faces of Islam], edited by Nilüfer Göle, (İstanbul: Metis, 2000).

53 The author's interviews with Asya Finans customers in Kızılcahamam, Ankara, 30 June-1 July 2005.

54 The author's interviews with Asya Finans managerial team, 30 June-1 July 2005.

Zaman newspaper and Samanyolu television (STV) are the two most important enterprises of the movement in the media sector. Zaman was established in 1986. It is now among top three national newspapers in Turkey with an average of a 500.000 daily circulation. It also has international editions published in more than 15 foreign countries including the United States. STV was established in 1993. Zaman and STV have spread the movement's perspectives on various social and political issues. Through many commentaries and programs, they have validated the movement's conciliatory rhetoric with the state and different social segments.[55] They also aim to promote moral values. Zaman has a number of weekly publications such as Ailem (My Family), Akademi (Academy), and Arkadaşım (My Friend) which aim to increase religious awareness. Along the same lines, STV produces movies that are coloured with religious and spiritual messages. However, these movies are not produced in the format of traditional religious sermons, which generally have transmitted the religious messages in a didactic way.[56] This strengthens STV's competitiveness against other TV stations, which in turn increases its income from commercials.

Probably the most important sector for the Gülen movement is education. The movement started building educational institutions in Turkey in the 1980s. The first educational institutions were tutor centres (dershane) to prepare students for the university entrance examinations. Later on, the movement opened private high schools with English as the language of instruction. Today, the movement has at least one high school in almost each major city in Turkey. Since the 1990s, the movement has opened schools abroad.[57] These schools have offered a quality education to their students; they became among the best schools in many countries. For instance, students of the movement's schools have won several prizes in international science contests.[58] Although many of these schools require their students to pay their own tuition, they are basically supported by Turkish businessmen. The tuitions in many developing countries are very low. Furthermore, many students who are from the less

55 For a study on the roots of Gülen's conciliatory rhetoric see Yasin Aktay, "Diaspora and Stability: Constitutive Elements in a Body of Knowledge," in Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003), edited by M. Hakan Yavuz and John L. Esposito, pp. 131-54.

56 Three series produced by STV are worth mentioning. 1. *Büyük Buluşma* [Grand Meeting]: In this TV series, people are questioned about their life immediately after their death. The conscience questions people's desires, feelings, and the actions in the world and shows the misdeeds. This questioning somehow represents the judgment day. 2. *Beşinci Boyut* [Fifth Dimension]: In Islam it is believed that martyr are not aware of their death. In this series, a martyr helps people to make appropriate decisions when they find themselves in trouble. This series emphasizes the allegiance to God and recommends forbearance against the troubles that peoples confront. 3. *Sırlar Dünyası* [The World of Secrets]: It dramatizes real mysterious stories that have religious and spiritual dimensions.

57 For a comprehensive work on Gülen schools around the world see Toktamış Ateş, Eser Karakaş and İlber Ortaylı, Barış Köprüleri: Dünyaya Açılan Türk Okulları, [Bridges of Peace: Turkish Schools Opening to the World], İstanbul: Ufuk Kitap, 2005. For a study that focuses on Gülen schools in Central Asia see: Bayram Balcı, Orta Asya'da İslam Misyonerleri: Fethullah Gülen Okulları [Muslim Missionaries in the Central Asia: Fethullah Gülen Schools], İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005; Thomas Michel, "Fethullah Gülen as Educator," in Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement, edited by M. Hakan Yavuz and John L. Esposito, pp. 69-84. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003).

58 See Ahmet T. Kuru, "Fethullah Gülen's Search for a Middle Way between Modernity and Muslim Tradition," in *Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement,* edited by M. Hakan Yavuz and John L. Esposito,(Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003), p. 120. Some scholars criticize these schools as offering a heavy science curriculum while ignoring social sciences and humanities. For an example, see Süleyman Seyfi Öğün, "Türk Okullarına Dair Gözlem ve Tespitler [Some Observations and Points on Turkish Schools]," In *Barış Köprüleri: Dünyaya Açılan Türk Okulları,* [Bridges of Peace: Turkish Schools Opening to the World], edited by Toktamış Ateş, Eser Karakaş and İlber Ortaylı, (İstanbul: Ufuk Kitap, 2005), pp. 99-104.

developed regions in their countries are financially supported by these schools. This provides the integration of lower social groups into the political system in those countries. In purely economic terms, many of these schools do not make a profit. The motive that mobilizes the sponsors of these schools is a mixture of patriotism and religious pietism. These schools generally offer Turkish as a secondary foreign language along with English and the native language. Islam is not taught in these schools, but the teachers educate the students with universal moral and ethical values.[59]

Normative Repertoires

Although the Gülen movement has benefited from the opportunities that economic liberalization offered, it has also tried to transform it in at least two ways so as to make it congruent with the Islamic worldview. First, the movement has used market forces not only for capital accumulation and profit maximization, but also to create a new social and economic environment for Muslims who wanted to practice their faith in an era of rapid globalization. The movement created new social milieus where religious piety meets with modern capitalist economic system. For example, Bank Asya's modern banking services are both compatible with religious teachings and contemporary economic principles. Private hospitals that the movement owns pay a special attention to religious sensitivities in providing their service.[60] The movement's schools have focused on science and thus contributed to bridging the gap between religion and science in Turkish society.[61] The businessmen running these economic enterprises have found innovative ways to reconcile Islamic teachings and liberal market rules within the domestic legal framework as in the example of Bank Asya. The movement has also invented new entertainment and socialization patterns that meet Islamic ethical standards. As previously noted, Asya Hotel's five-star facilities, for example, watch for the religious demands of their customers while offering a first class vacation service. Moreover, the movement's firms have produced[62] new forms of TV and radio programs,[63] drama performances,[64] literary works,[65] and music CDs.[66] The movement also produced an alternative social environment among university students for the purpose of reconciling mod-

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59   See Bekim Agai, "The Gülen Movement's Islamic Ethic of Education," in Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement, edited by M. Hakan Yavuz and John L. Esposito, pp. 48-68. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003); and Michel, "Fethullah Gülen as Educator.".

60   Author's observations at Konya Vakif Hospital in June 2001.

61   Ali Bulaç sees these schools as Turkey's sole contribution to the globalization process especially for two reasons: upbringing of a new elite who is in peace with religion and the expansion of Turkish language worldwide. See: Ali Bulaç, "Küresel Bir Açılım Olarak Türk Okulları [Turkish Schools as a Global Opening]," In *Barış Köprüleri: Dünyaya Açılan Türk Okulları,* [Bridges of Peace: Turkish Schools Opening to the World], edited by Toktamış Ateş, Eser Karakaş and İlber Ortaylı, (İstanbul: Ufuk Kitap, 2005), pp. 181-98.

62   In my interviews, many followers emphasized Said Nursi's point that there was enough legitimate room in Islam for joy. See Said Nursi, *Sözler* [Words], (İstanbul: Sözler Publications, 1977), p. 30.

63   STV and the movement's radio stations (such as Burç FM and the Dünya Radyo) feature music and entertainment programs that watch for the religious sensitivities of the audience.

64   Ankara Sanat Evi (Ankara Art House), for example, is a drama group which performs its plays in different cities both in Turkey and abroad. The group was in the US during 10-15 January 2006. They performed dramas in different cities of the US including Phoenix, Seattle, San Francisco, and Denver. The play was both amusing and colored with spiritual messages (Author's observation in Phoenix, Arizona on 14 January 2006 during the group's performance).

65   For example, *Yağmur* is a literary journal published by Journalists and Writers Foundation.

66   For example, a number of musicians produced music CDs from Fethullah Gülen's poems. They include Reşit Muhtar, Bilal Ercan, Ahmet Özhan, Ertuğrul Erkişi, and Metin Haboğlu.

ern science, religious pietism, and social activism.[67] The movement has also striven to create its own intellectual elite.[68]

Some scholars see the creation of new entertainment and socialization patterns as a secularization trend in the movement. For example, Hakan Yavuz argues that in the existence of alternative public spaces, the Islamic movements in Turkey experience a process of "internal secularization of Islam."[69] However, it should be noted that these new entertainment and socialization patterns are efforts to meet the modern challenges with an Islamic orientation. The motive that propels the followers to open alternative sites is "religious" rather than "profane." Furthermore, Gülen, when talking about the activities of the movement, generally emphasizes the religious sources of its world-wide activism.[70]

Second, the Gülen movement has embraced the capitalist system without necessarily being capitalist. Two concepts are particularly important in the movement's effort to transform the "homo economicus" of capitalism: aspiration (*himmet*)[71] and emigration (*hicret*). From the beginning, Gülen has encouraged his followers not to be passive subjects; instead, he has encouraged them to do their best for the spread of the Islamic message. He has consistently reminded followers that they have to use all of their potential to spread the Islamic message. In mobilizing his followers in this regard, the concept of aspiration (*himmet*) has played an important role. Gülen defines aspiration (*himmet*) as follows:

"Aspiration (*himmet*) is the attitude of a passenger of the Right (*Hak yolcusu*), who dedicates all the moments of his life to acquire for the sake of God. He is ready to renounce his material, even his spiritual expectations, and career goals for this aim. He thinks only of Him [God], watches for His forgiveness, and prefers His sake over all other attainments. […] Aspiration (*himmet*) also means to strive, to endeavour, to work hard, and to struggle for the fulfilment of a duty."[72]

The discourse of aspiration motivated the followers to give their property, time, and energy to the activities of the movement. In his speeches, Gülen weaves this concept with examples from Islamic tradition up to modern times. Stories about the Prophet Muhammad and his companions have an important mobilizing force among the followers of the movement. Businessmen among the movement's followers finance the establishment of the schools abroad, pay the salaries of the teachers, and finance the establishment of new institutions. Not only do the businessmen but also other followers and even students contribute to the

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67   The author's observations and interviews in Ankara in 2001 and in Istanbul in 2002.

68   *Zaman* daily, *Aksiyon* weekly, forums like Journalists and Writers Foundation, and the movement's print houses (such as Nil Publications), all have contributed to the creation and performance of this new elite. For a study on the Gülen movement and the emergence of a new elite see Yilmaz, "Ijtihad and Tajdid."

69   Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*.

70   Fethullah Gülen's recent speeches can be reached at http://www.herkul.org. For one of his recent talks that elaborates this point see: Fethullah Gülen, "*Himmet*: Teveccüh, İnfak ve Gayret [Assiduity: Favour, Charity, and Perseverance]," Herkül, 12 December 2005, available at: http://www.herkul.org/kiriktesti/index.php?article_id=2720. Last accessed on September 22, 2007.

71   A note on the translation of the word "*himmet*": It is difficult to find an exact word in English that reflects the meaning of "*himmet*." The meaning of "*himmet*" includes concentrating on a cause with an extreme energy and zeal; giving one's property for the realization of that cause, etc. I thank to Alan Godlas who suggested me "aspiration" for the translation of the word "*himmet.*"

72   Fethullah Gülen, "*Himmet*: Teveccüh, İnfak ve Gayret [Assiduity: Favour, Charity, and Perseverance]," Herkül, 12 December 2005, available at: http://www.herkul.org/kiriktesti/index.php?article_id=2720. Last accessed on September 22, 2007.

movement financially. For the followers, the motive to earn more is not to accumulate personal wealth but to give more charity in the service of God.[73]

The concept of "emigration" (*hicret*) is another resource for the mobilization of the followers in transforming the image of "homo economicus." Gülen has strongly recommended his followers to emigrate from one city to another or to other countries. For him, he/she who emigrates for the supreme cause will feel more responsibility for the cause; and will arrange his/her life according to his/her spiritual principles.[74] He argues that emigration has historically been a precondition for the establishment of great civilizations. He reminds his followers that Islam's early expansion became possible after early Muslims migrated from Mecca to Medina.[75] Many followers of the movement have moved to different places around the world without knowing what would meet them there. Teachers for the schools abroad are recruited from the graduates of Turkey's most prestigious universities.[76] Although many of these graduates can find well-paid jobs in Turkey, they often choose to immigrate to other countries, including poor and undeveloped ones, working under very difficult conditions.[77]

The activities of the followers demonstrate that they have transformed the image of the self-interested capitalist individual within the movement. Is it irrational to sacrifice one's own interests for the cause and community? Gülen's answer to this question is "absolutely no." He argues that the activities of his followers "stem from the differences between the world of our values and of theirs."[78] Altruism for Gülen makes believers happy both in this world and hereafter. It not only helps to get a better place in the hereafter, it also ties them to the world.[79] In short, the movement constructs a different form of rationality than the one developed within the liberal tradition.

Throughout this section, I have attempted to show how the Gülen movement succeeded in forming new kinds of social and economic practices and ethics, which are compatible with economic liberalization, while at the same time being faithful to Islamic principles.

Political Liberalization

Structural Transformations

In the 1980s and 1990s, Turkey's liberalization reforms also penetrated the political realm. Significantly, a number of political restrictions which were enacted after the 1980 coup were

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73 The author's interviews with the followers in Ankara in 2001 and in İstanbul in 2002.

74 Fethullah Gülen, "Mukaddes Göç [Sacred Emigration]," *Sızıntı*, Volume 7 No. 81 (October 1985).

75 Gülen brings examples from the Islamic history. The most sacred emigration for him was Prophet Muhammad's emigration from Mecca to Medina. He also adds that other prophets had to emigrate to spread their message. See Gülen, "Mukaddes Göç."

76 The most prominent ones are Boğaziçi and ODTÜ universities. The author's interviews with the followers in Ankara in 2001 and in İstanbul in 2002.

77 Fethullah Gülen, "Bu hareket devlete alternatif mi? [Is this movement an alternative to the state?]," Herkül, 14 November 2005, available at: http://www.herkul.org/kiriktesti/index.php?article_id=2418 Last accessed on September 22, 2007.

78 Fethullah Gülen, "Fedakarlıkta Mantığın Ölçüsü [The Limits of Rationality in Altrusim]," *Zaman*, 10 February 2006.

79 Gülen asserts that the real rationality is the one that considers both this world and the hereafter. Paying attention to the difference of this kind of rationality, he quotes from a previous Islamic scholar, Hasan Basrî: "If you had seen the companions of the Prophet, you would think that they were mad. If they had seen you they would doubt that you were Muslims." See Gülen, "Fedakarlıkta Mantığın Ölçüsü."

abolished. In the Özal years, the parliament abolished the 141st, 142nd, and 163rd articles of the Turkish penal code, which forbade ideological advocacy of communism and religious movements. The global surge of liberalism after the Cold War had a remarkable impact on Turkey. Although Turkey had statist politicians in the 1990s, liberalization still continued. Along with other global influences, Turkey's bid for European Union membership has also promoted liberalism in the country.

Under these circumstances, Turkey implemented several liberalizing reforms throughout the 1990s: Some restrictions on the use of Kurdish language were removed; private broadcasting companies have ended the state's monopoly over broadcasting; limitations on the political participation by trade unions, academicians, and students were eased; and a Parliamentary Human Rights Commission were established.[80] Liberalizing reforms reached its culmination point between 2002 and 2005 when Turkey worked towards getting candidacy status from the European Union.[81]

These structural changes led the emergence of a vibrant civil society in Turkey in the last two decades. Although civil society organizations were mostly under the control of the state until then, they got an autonomous position in 1990s and 2000s and they represented various social groups which had not been represented in the civil society earlier. As Augustus Richard Norton argues, the civil society constituted a public space "where a mélange of associations, clubs, guilds, syndicates, federations, unions, parties, and groups come together to provide a buffer between state and citizen."[82] Norton assumes that "a vital and autonomous civil society is a necessary condition for democracy;"[83] because it counterweights the power of the state, dilutes state control over society, and advances societal interests against the dominant elites.

Mobilizing Resources

The political liberalization of Turkey has offered new opportunities to the Gülen movement. The movement picked up these opportunities in at least three ways. First, the movement found a medium through which it could spread its message to the masses. Both Zaman and STV have been instrumental in this regard. The movement has also founded the Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF) to get involved in the public debates.[84] Founded in 1994, the JWF has three platforms through which it involves in the public debates: the Abant Platform[85], the

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80 Ergun Özbudun and Serap Yazıcı, *Democratizing Reforms in Turkey*, (İstanbul: TESEV Publications, 2004).

81 For a comprehensive analysis of the democratization reforms in this period see: Özbudun and Yazıcı, *Democratizing Reforms.* The reforms implemented in this period not only increased the opportunities for political participation of Islamic groups, but also they granted new rights to non-Muslim religious groups. The third reform laws package which went into force on 9 August 2002 recognized the right of community foundations (meaning non-Muslim foundations) to own immovable properties and to dispose of them freely. The sixth reform package which went into force on 19 July 2003 recognized the right of non-Muslim communities to build places of worship subject to the approval of the competent administrative authorities (Özbudun and Yazıcı, *Democratizing Reforms in Turkey*).

82 Augustus Richard Norton, "Introduction," In Augustus Richard Norton (ed), *Civil Society in the Middle East, Volume 1,* (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1995), p. 7.

83 Norton, "Introduction," p. 9.

84 See Etga Uğur, "Political Culture, Civil Society, and Public Religion: Musings on the Gülen Movement" Paper Presented In *Second Middle East and Central Asia Politics, Economy, and Society Conference (MECA),* University of Utah*,* (September 2004); and Etga Uğur, "Civic Islam in the Public Sphere: The Gülen Movement, Civil Society, and Social Capital in Turkey," Paper Presented In *Second International Conference on Islam*, University of Wisconsin-Madison, (March 2006).

85 "Abant" is a city in Northwestern Turkey. The Foundation organized workshops first in this city.

Dialogue Eurasia Platform, and the Intercultural Dialogue Platform. The Abant Platform organizes annual workshops[86] in which leading intellectuals are invited to debate certain political and social issues. Since 1998, the JWF has organized nine workshops on several topics including Islam and secularism; religion, state, and society; pluralism and social compromise; and war and democracy.[87] The Dialogue Eurasia Platform aims to increase the interactions between the peoples of Eurasia, particularly Turkey and the former Soviet Republics. This platform publishes a bilingual quarterly journal, DA, in Russian and Turkish. The platform also organizes annual workshops known as "Dialogue Eurasia Meetings" through which writers and journalists of Eurasian countries get together.[88] The Intercultural Dialogue platform aims to increase interaction and dialogue between different faiths in Turkey as well as in the world. It also organizes events, which bring representatives of different religions together. In sum, through involvement in the public debates, the Gülen movement has increased its influence in both domestic and international realms.

Second, within the democratic environment in Turkey, the Gülen movement has gained the support of certain politicians to obviate the bureaucratic elite's efforts to inactivate the movement. Although it has not openly supported any specific political party, the competitive nature of democratic politics provided the Gülen movement (which has a few millions followers) with an opportunity to gain the support of several political parties since 1994. Gülen himself met with several politicians including former Presidents Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel, former Prime Ministers Tansu Çiller, Mesut Yılmaz and Bülent Ecevit, former Ministers Hikmet Çetin and Deniz Baykal. In his meetings with the politicians, Gülen found the opportunity to express his views and also gave the message that his movement had nothing to do with any activity that was against the state. Gülen met with all sorts of politicians who represent different views. Many of these parties have shied away from taking a hostile attitude towards Gülen and his movement.

For example, when the secular mass media in Turkey launched a major attack on Gülen in June 1999, accusing him of possessing a hidden agenda to take over the state, many politicians during these days refrained from speaking out against the movement. Furthermore, several politicians including the president, the prime minister, several ministers, and the leaders of opposition parties gave support to Gülen at a time when it would be easier to criticize him.[89]

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86   The foundation organized two workshops in 2004.

87   For more information about the activities of the foundation see its website at: http://www.gyv.org.tr/. The themes of the nine Abant workshops were as follows: Islam and secularism in 1998; religion, state, and society in 1999; democratic rule of law in 2000; pluralism and social compromise in 2001; globalization in 2002; war and democracy in 2003; Islam, secularism, and democracy; The Turkish experience in 2004; Culture, Identity, and Religion in Turkey's EU Integration Process in 2004; New Perspectives on Education in 2005. The Abant workshops gained an international character since 2004. In 2004 JWF organized the workshops in Washington, DC, and Brussels; and the 10th workshop will be organized in Paris in March 2006.

88   For further information see the platform's website at: http://www.daplatform.org/default.asp?caid=78 Last accessed on September 22, 2007.

89   For example, when asked his views about the issue, President Süleyman Demirel said that "I do not want to make any comment without any verdict of the court." "Cumhurbaşkanı Süleyman Demirel: Yargısız İnfaz Yapmayın [President Süleyman Demirel: No comment without verdict]," *Zaman*, 21 June 1999. Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit said that "The government officials who has the these kinds of documents should have given them to the Premiership Prosecution and Coordination Committee or their ministries instead of infiltrating them to the media. This situation is not compatible with the solemnity of the state ("Başbakan Ecevit: Nerede Ciddiyet? [Prime Minister Ecevit: Where is solemnity]", *Zaman*, 23 June 1999). The leader of the Grand Union Party Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu stated that some

Furthermore, several politicians supported the Gülen movement's international activities, especially its schools abroad. Presidents Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel wrote credentials to the leaders of the countries abroad to facilitate the opening of new schools.[90] Turgut Özal visited Turkish schools in Central Asian countries during his official visit.[91] Süleyman Demirel also visited the schools in Central Asia; he opened the Süleyman Demirel University, which was founded by the initiatives of the movement's followers, in Kazakhstan with his Kazak counterpart Nursultan Nazarbayev.[92] Former Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, after his visit to movement's schools in Albania, even went so far as to say that "I know they [implying anti-Gülen groups within the state] will get angry at me but I would like to congratulate these schools."[93] In sum, liberal political reforms that have strengthened Turkey's democratic structure favoured the Gülen movement. The movement had the opportunity to gain the support of the politicians. In the absence of a democratic liberal environment, it would have been more difficult for the movement to have amicable relations with the governments.

Finally, the liberalizing environment in the 1980s and 1990s provided the Gülen movement with the opportunities to expand its influence globally. The spread of English learning in the 1990s through newly-formed high schools,[94] communication technologies, private radio and television stations eased reaching to the international opportunities.[95] The collapse of communism and its global effects in the 1990s also facilitated this process. The Gülen movement now is a transnational movement, which has about 500 high schools in more than 90 countries. The movement leads several worldwide interfaith dialogue activities, as well.[96]

Normative Repertoires

Although the Gülen movement has embraced political liberalization, its understanding of such notions as democracy and liberty is somewhat different from that the liberal philosophy suggests. This difference comes from the movement's interpretation of Islam, the movement's

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people within the state wanted to press over the Prime Minister Ecevit to get concessions from him; these concessions for Yazıcıoğlu would be used to press over religious groups in Turkey ("Ecevit'i sıkıştırıp taviz koparacaklar [They will press Ecevit to get concessions]", *Zaman*, 23 June 1999). The Minister of Public Works and Settlement Koray Aydın said that "Gülen's ideas should live. If Gülen is to be punished, who would not?" ("Bayındırlık ve İskan Bakanı Koray Aydın: Gülen Çizgisi Yaşamalı [The Minister of Public Works and Settlement Koray Aydın: Gülen's ideas should live]", *Zaman* 25 June 1999).

90 To see two examples written by former Presidents Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel see: Ateş et. al., *Barış Köprüleri,* appendix.

91 Hulusi Turgut, "Özal son gezisine okullar için çıktı [Özal's last visit was for the schools]," *Yeni Yüzyıl*, 16 January 1998.

92 Hulusi Turgut, "Fethullah Gülen ve Okullar [Fethullah Gülen and Schools]," *Yeni Yüzyıl*, 22 January 1998.

93 Bülent Ecevit, "Türk Okullarının Türk Dili ve Türkiye'ye Katkısı [The Contributions of Turkish Schools to Turkey and Turkish Language]," In *Barış Köprüleri: Dünyaya Açılan Türk Okulları,* [Bridges of Peace: Turkish Schools Opening to the World], edited by Toktamış Ateş, Eser Karakaş and İlber Ortaylı, (İstanbul: Ufuk Kitap, 2005), p. 25.

94 In the Özal years English instruction became widespread in Turkey. Özal led the establishment of new high schools which specialize on English language instruction. Before the establishment of these schools, English language was thought at a number of high schools established by the foreigners. These new schools were called as Anatolian High Schools, implying the spread of English language instruction throughout Anatolia.

95 Ahmet T Kuru contends that English instruction and synergy between educators and businessmen are the two resources that have helped the Gülen movement to benefit from the international opportunity structures. See Kuru, "Globalization and Diversification of Islamic Movements," p. 262.

96 For example Rumi Forum is a Washington-based organization which works for interfaith and intercivilizational dialogue. See its website at: http://www.rumiforum.org/.

motive to expand the Islamic message of tolerance and morality, and the socio-historical conditions of Turkey where the movement has matured. Three of these differences deserve to be mentioned: (1) extensive emphasis on dialogue and reconciliation, (2) enriching democracy by adding a spiritual dimension, and (3) the idea of restrained individualism.

First, the Gülen movement's emphasis on dialogue and reconciliation have some differences from the notion of pluralistic society that liberal democracy suggests. Gülen's conception of politics sees the society as an organism, and this approach aims to achieve harmony among different segments of the society. Dialogue and reconciliation are used to eliminate conflict in society. While identifying the virtues of the individuals that would constitute the ideal society, Gülen writes that in the ideal society individuals would "treat the others so gently so that they search for the paths to the universal peace. They do not fight with others; rather they fight with their own flaws, their own dilemmas so that they clean themselves."[97] Gülen believes that treating others in a good manner will contribute for the elimination of conflicts: "Approach unbelievers so gently that their envy and hatred melt away. Like a Messiah, revive people with your breath."[98] Liberal democracy does not aim to eliminate the conflicting issues; rather it focuses on the ways to manage these conflicts.[99] However, the movement's dialogue activities since the mid-1990s show that the notion of reconciliation has not been perceived in ignoring differences; dialogue activities since 1990s have aimed at living together with the existing commonalities and differences. The movement gradually changed its discourse from reconciliation to tolerance, which is much more compatible with the liberal understanding of pluralism.[100]

Second, Gülen thinks that democracy should be enriched in a way to meet the needs of believers. On the one hand, he makes a distinction between religion and political regimes: "One should remember that the former [Islam] is a divine and heavenly religion, while the latter [democracy] is a form of government developed by humans."[101] For him, the principles that are related to the state administration constitute only 5% of the religion while the remaining 95% are related to the articles of faith, the pillars of Islam, and the moral principles of religion.[102] His view on democracy is shaped by this distinction. Gülen says that "In Islam, which is based on the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet, there is neither absolute monarchy nor classical democracy as known in the West."[103] Thus, the type of government in Islam is determined by the historical, social, and political conditions. Democracy, for Gülen, is the best possible system in the contemporary era.[104]

On the other hand, however, he contends that there are many different types of democracies, such as social democracy and liberal democracy; and that Muslims should develop a kind of

97   Fethullah Gülen, "Buhran Ufku ve Beklentilerimiz [The Scope of Crisis and Our Expectations]," *Işığın Göründüğü Ufuk* [The Horizon that Light Appears], (İzmir: Nil, 2000).

98   Quoted in Ali Ünal and Alphonse Williams, *Advocate of Dıalogue: Fethullah Gülen*, Faırfax, VI: Fountain, 2000), p. 193.

99   For example see: Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition (*New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971)

100   I owe this point to Mustafa Özgür Tuna.

101   Fethullah Gülen, (translated by Zeki Sarıtoprak and Ali Ünal) "An Interview with Fethullah Gülen," *Muslim World*, Volume 95 Number 3, (July 2005), p. 451.

102   Ibid., p. 451. Having such a view on Islam and political life makes the Gülen movement less political. Gülen states that the exaggeration of the political dimension of Islam is very harmful to the religion. Ibid., p. 452.

103   Ibid., p. 450.

104   Fethullah Gülen, "A Comparative Approach to Islam and Democracy," *SAIS Review*, Volume 21 No 2, pp. 133-38.

democracy which would support them in reaching spiritual satisfaction. Such a democracy, which he calls "democracy with spiritual dimensions" (mana boyutlu demokrasi), respects human rights and freedoms, watches for religious liberty, prepares necessary conditions for its citizens to experience their beliefs, and helps the citizens to fulfil their spiritual needs.[105]

Finally, although Gülen movement's understanding of individual liberty approves of the basic rights that classical liberal theory emphasizes (namely, liberty, life, property), Gülen criticizes liberal individualism in two respects. First, according to Gülen, having an unrestricted individualism in Islam is impossible. Individualism gains a negative connotation along the lines of selfishness and lack of care for social matters.[106] In his writings, Gülen depicts a typology of an individual who is restricted by moral values.[107] Gülen argues that "humans are either both free with no acceptance of any moral values and rebellious with no moral criteria, or they are servants who are dependent on God and seriously obedient to His commands."[108] Individuals that are servants of God should not be enslaved by worldly belongings, considerations of selfish interests, greed for more material earnings, and different kinds of material desires that destroys morality.[109] Gülen's followers are self-disciplined individuals who follow very strict rules in their daily life. Their difference from others can easily be noticed in their consumption behaviours, entertainment habits, commitment to religious practices, and involvement in community services.[110] Although the Gülen movement criticizes absolute individualism and idealizes a moral-based individual, this attitude does not translate into limiting other individuals' lifestyles in the society.[111]

Second, the movement does not agree with liberalism's preference of the individual over the collectivity. Gülen has an organic view of society; according to which humans should dedicate themselves to the well-being of the community. However, as Mücahit Bilici states, Gülen's view on the state is anti-anarchist rather than statist.[112] This leads Gülen to attach

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105   Fethullah Gülen, "Demokrasi Yokuşu [Acclivity of Democracy]," Herkül, 2 January 2006, (Online portal to which Fethullah Gülen's speeches are posted), available at: http://www.herkul.org/kiriktesti/index.php?article_id=2846 Last accessed on September 22, 2007. Gülen's suggestions to enrich democracy with spritual elements do not conradict liberal ideals. However, if these elements are thought within the context of only one religion, and if the spiritual elements go deeper, then there is a danger for democracy to become sacralized. Making democracy sacralized is as dangerous as relegating religion to a narrow ideology.

106   Many Christian groups think along the same lines. This reminds us the fact that the question of the compatibility of religion and liberalism is not restricted to the Muslim world. The question of the compatibility of religion and liberalism can be asked in other contexts. I owe this point to Carolyn Warner.

107   See for example: Fethullah Gülen, *Ruhumuzun Heykelini Dikerken*, (Izmir, Nil Publications, 1998).

108   Gülen, "An Interview with Fethullah Gülen," p. 447.

109   Ibid., p. 447. See also Fethullah Gülen, "Hür Yaşadım, Hür Yaşarım… [I have lived free and I will live free]," Herkül, 15 August 2005, (Online portal to which Fethullah Gülen's speeches are posted), available at: http://www.herkul.org/kiriktesti/index.php?article_id=2061 Last accessed on September 22, 2007.

110   The author's observations and interviews with the followers in Ankara in 2001 and in Istanbul in 2002.

111   Berna Turam, "National Loyalties and International Undertakings: The Case of the Gülen Community in Kazakhstan;" in *Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement,* edited by M. Hakan Yavuz and John L. Esposito, pp. 184-207. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003). See also Berna Turam, "The Politics of Engagement between Islam and the Secular State: The Ambivalences of 'Civil Society'," *The British Journal of Sociology*, Volume 55 Issue 2 (2004), pp. 259-281. See also Elizabeth Özdalga, "Following in the Footsteps of Fethullah Gülen: Three Women Teacher's Tell Their Stories," in *Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement,* edited by M. Hakan Yavuz and John L. Esposito, pp. 85-114. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003).

112   Mücahit Bilici, "The Fethullah Gülen Movement and Its Politics of Representation in Turkey, The Muslim World, Volume 96, (January 2006), pp. 1-20.

a special importance to the concepts of "order" and "stability." Gülen says that "The worst state is better than statelessness; because statelessness brings anarchy."[113] While explaining the motives behind establishing schools abroad, Gülen emphasizes the importance of serving humanity and the local communities where schools are established.[114]

Conclusion

Turkey has experienced a liberal transformation in the last two decades. The Gülen movement's response to this liberalization process created new forms of social and political practices that are compatible with both Islam and liberalism. The Gülen movement used the opportunities offered by economic and political liberalization to raise its domestic and international sphere of influence. The followers established businesses, media corporations and schools in this environment. They also gained the support of the politicians and involved in worldwide educational and interfaith dialogue activities. At the same time, the movement transformed liberal principles and practices so as to align them with the Islamic teachings. This transformation, by increasing the legitimate room for Muslims, increased the followers' involvement in social and economic life and made their smooth integration to liberal economic and political structures possible. The movement in this process applied the normative repertoire in mobilizing its followers. Aspiration (*himmet*), emigration (*hicret*), dialogue and reconciliation, and spirituality have been the most-emphasized concepts in this process.

This analysis shows that it is impossible to reach generalisable conclusions on the compatibility of Islam and democracy. Scholars on Islam should examine this relationship by conducting in-depth studies on each Islamic movement. They should examine each movement within its own context that includes the environmental conditions, the organizational capabilities of the movement, and the movement's ability to communicate with the Islamic repertoire. The Gülen movement's experience is instructive in thinking about the institutionalization of liberalism in contemporary Turkey and Muslim world at large. For democracy to emerge in the Muslim world, economic and political liberalization should be adapted to the local contexts. For this to happen, liberalization should offer a number of opportunities to domestic groups, and the domestic groups should find innovative ways to make it compatible with the local conditions. The Islamic groups can mobilize their followers by using their Islamic normative repertoire.

Fethullah Gülen's theological answer to the question of the compatibility of Islam and liberalism is positive. Along with other scholars (such as Abou El Fadl, Mousalli, Sachedina), Gülen also argues that the interpretation of Islam which can best fit the needs of the modern times is possible since Islam leaves the type of government to the human reason. He doe not see any contradiction between Islamic teachings on governance and liberal democracy. However, what make the Gülen movement unique are the social and political practices that the followers have produced in a challenging liberal environment. These practices, which fitted both with Islamic teachings and the liberal philosophy, provided the movement with the opportunity to integrate in the global system. This integration is important with respect to the interactions between Islamic movements and liberalism in two ways. First, it transformed the

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113   Fethullah Gülen, "Bu hareket devlete alternatif mi? [Is this movement an alternative to the state?], Herkül, 14 November 2005, available at http://www.herkul.org/kiriktesti/index.php?article_id=2418 Last accessed on September 22, 2007.
114   Gülen, "Bu Hareket…," For a study that analyzes Gülen's position toward the state see Aktay, "Diaspora and Stability: Constitutive Elements in a Body of Knowledge."

social and political practices of Islamic groups to make them compatible with the dominant discourses. Islamic renewal (tajdid) and interpretation (ijtihad) became the main instrument of these groups in this process. Second, these movements also influenced the transformation of social and political structures through becoming public. These two dynamics increased the level of compatibility between Islam and liberalism by making them much closer to one another. A few points can be made to characterize the conditions under which Islamic groups develop a peaceful rhetoric with liberalism.

First, the institutional environment is a very important factor in explaining Islamic movements' responses to liberalization. As the institutions liberalize, the Islamic movements adopt their discourses and strategies so as to integrate into liberalizing social, economic and political system. Gülen movement's liberal friendly social and political practices cannot be explained without any reference to economic and political liberalizing reforms that Turkey has experienced in the last decades. A survey of Muslim societies can be instructive to see the validity of this claim. Liberal Islamic groups are generally found in those countries where we see a liberalizing and/or liberalized economy and politics. The Indonesian and Turkish examples are very illustrative in this regard. The democratic practices of those Muslims living in Western liberal societies can also shed light on this argument. When judging the compatibility of Islam and democracy, it is analytically problematic to see the Islamic movements in the countries where authoritarian institutions prevail. A nuanced analysis should compare the political behaviours of Muslims living under authoritarian and liberal regimes.

Second, institutional environment cannot explain the patterns of Islam and liberalism alone; one should also analyze whether or not liberalization is beneficial to the Islamic groups. The Gülen movement's integration with the market economy created huge opportunities for the followers. Economic liberalization led the emergence of a new bourgeoisie, which had been less influential in the past when the market was not competitive and the state supported only certain business groups. Political liberalization also enhanced the manoeuvre room for Islamic groups so that the number of Islamic civil society organizations increased tremendously. A viable policy which aims the incorporation of Islamic groups to the liberal economic and political system should be attentive to the interests of Islamic groups as well. The Islamic movements under authoritarian systems should be autonomous from the state to develop a liberal-friendly discourse. The Islamic groups which have close links with the authoritarian state apparatus are less likely to have a liberal-friendly discourse since their interests depend on the maintenance of authoritarianism.

Finally, if an Islamic group has a cooperative normative repertoire, it is more likely to develop liberal-friendly discourse. Even when the interests of Islamic groups coincide with liberalization, it may be difficult to develop a liberal-friendly discourse if a group embraces a conflict-ridden political and social discourse. The Gülen movement, through its moderate and reconciliatory rhetoric, contributed to Turkey's civic life. If a movement has a reconciliatory rhetoric, its involvement in the public debates strengthens democracy.[115] The Gülen movement, by entering into the public sphere, is forced to confront and possibly come to terms with liberal normative structures, while it also influenced the formation of social and political practices at large. This, as Casanova argues, activates the potential role of religious norms and institutions in the formation of civil society and the process of democratization.[116] The

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115   Jose Casanova, "Civil Society and Religion: Retrospective Reflections on Catholicism and Prospective Reflections on Islam," *Social Research*, Volume 68 No 4, (2001), pp. 1041-1080.

116   Casanova, "Civil Society and Religion: Retrospective Reflections on Catholicism and Prospective Reflections on Islam," p. 1074.

rise of moderate Islamic groups in the Muslim world is, then, a good start for a democratic future.