SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL CAPITAL OF THE GÜLEN MOVEMENT

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Abstract

This paper examines the Gülen movement from the perspective of social and spiritual capital theory. It argues that, in an increasingly globalised world, this movement has been distinguished by its consistent ability to convert its social network and spiritual capital into creative projects that contribute positively to the transformation of Islamic thought and practice in many different settings and socio-political contexts. In the past, traditional spiritual and religious movements remained largely indifferent to the new forms of transformative agency such as civil society organisations, the media, modern educational establishments, corporations and global networking. Social capital theory is derived from the idea that social networks have both importance and power as civil actors in modern democratic societies. The Gülen movement was able to adapt to the modern conditions and successfully turned its spiritual, intellectual and human resources into effective social capital. Three areas of that adaptive success are examined: education (establishment of institutions from primary school to university level, attracting students of diverse backgrounds); the media (a wide range of products in print and audio-visual communication, from a mass circulation daily to TV and radio channels); and civil society organisations (foundations and associations to promote democratic participation and dialogue among various sections of the society). The paper concludes that the Gülen movement has built up a huge social capital and turns it into a number of transformative agents informed by Islamic spirituality.

Introduction

I would like to begin my paper by pointing to the rationale and significance of employing social and spiritual capital theory in the analysis of social and religious movements. I argue that modern social transformations and developments with a significant bearing on current social, cultural and spiritual movements which are inspired by religiously oriented world view requires us to employ social and spiritual capital theory as analytical tools to understand current trends. In the last two decades, sociologists discovered the importance of what is called "the social capital" which broadly refers to values, beliefs, views, ideologies and common concerns shared by a group, nation or a social movement. Social capital generates alliances, unity, solidarity, trust, networks, power and a transformative force which strengthens collective identities, claim makings, resistance to the hegemony of dominant agents. Strong and well organized social capital may play a significant role in various areas of social, cultural, economic and political domains.

The social capital as a theory and a perspective has emerged as one of the salient concepts in social sciences in various forms and contexts in the last twenty years. Today, there is a growing intellectual interest and enterprise in the concept of social capital. (Lin, 1999: 28) Drawing upon the works of theorists of social capital, social scientists who understand the significance of religion in contemporary societies started to work on spiritual capital theory. Here in this paper I will use both of these concepts as the theoretical framework in analyzing the Gülen movement in its diverse forms and contexts. Before moving on to the parameters and foundational elements of social and spiritual capital theory, I would like to argue that these approaches provide an analytical framework to examine institutional innovations and impacts of the Gülen movement. I would like to underline in the beginning my paper that the Gülen Movement differs from many of its counterparts in turning its social network and spiritual capital into creative projects which contribute to the transformation of Islamic thought and practice in an increasingly globalised world. Traditional spiritual and religious movements largely remained indifferent to the new forms of transformative agents such as civil society organizations, the media, modern educational establishments, corporations and global networking in the past. However, the Gülen movement was able to adapt to the modern conditions and successfully turned its spiritual, intellectual and human resources into an effective social capital.

This paper analyses institutional embodiments of the social and spiritual capital of the Gülen Movement in three broad categories: Civil Society Organizations, Education and Media. In the area of education, the Gülen movement succeeded to open educational establishments from primary school to University levels attracting students of diverse backgrounds. In the area of the media, print and communication, a large number of products and institutions emerged including TV and radio channels, newspapers and magazines in Turkish and in other languages. The Gülen Movement has also mobilized its resources to establish civil society organizations such as foundations and associations to promote democratic participation and dialogue among various sections of the society such as Abant Meetings which successfully brought together many intellectuals and activists from different backgrounds both in Turkey and outside to discuss local and global issues.

Theorizing Social Capital

Although the notion of capital can be traced to Karl Marx as expounded in his seminal work Das Kapital, theoretical modifications and refinements were made subsequently. Notions of

human capital, cultural capital, social capital and spiritual capital were introduced as variants of classical theory of capital. Here we will focus on social capital first and the spiritual capital second. Debates and clarifications in social sciences concerning the notion of capital suggest that "social capital, as a concept, is rooted in social networks and social relations" and it "can be defined as resources embedded in a social structure which are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions". This definition indicates that the notion of social capital contains three elements: resources in a social structure, accessibility to such social resources by individual members and mobilization of such resources for a purpose. (Lin, 1999: 35) Membership in groups and networks facilitates the formation of social capital to achieve goals by individuals. (Sobel, 2002: 139)

Pierre Bourdieu distinguishes between three forms of capital: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. Bourdieu asserts that social capital can be described as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition." (Bourdieu, 1983:249) For Robert Putnam, who is the author of Bowling Alone and the concept's leading advocate, the notion social capital "refers to the collective value of all 'social networks' and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other". Putnam argues that social capital is a key component to building and maintaining democracy. After Bourdieu and Putnam many other definitions of social capital are made which emphasize different dimensions of the concept. For example, Nahapiet and Ghoshal defines social capital as "the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit. Social capital thus comprises both the network and the assets that may be mobilized through that network" (1998: 243).

For Knoke on the other hand, it refers to "the process by which social actors create and mobilize their network connections within and between organizations to gain access to other social actors' resources" (1999: 18). Fukuyama, however, adopts the following definition: "social capital is an instantiated informal norm that promotes co-operation between two or more individuals. The norms that constitute social capital can range from a norm of reciprocity between two friends all the up to complex and elaborately articulated doctrines like Christianity or Confucianism". (2001: 7)

In the theorization of social capital we come across following elements as far as meaning and the core components of this notion: Social energy, social zone, community spirit, individual's networks and institutional affiliations, various kinds of contacts, social obligations, institutionalized relationships, ability to work together, existence of a set of informal values, norms shared among members of a group, resources derived from social structures and a culture of trust. As the conceptualization and definitions indicate social capital theory is derived from the idea that social networks have both importance and power in modern and democratic societies as civil actors. From a sociological perspective, social capital points to the totality of collective values created by the involvement of people who share similar beliefs, spiritual values and moral concerns with a tendency towards doing positive things for one another in their networks. Broadly speaking three forms of social capital are identified: 1) obligations and expectations which depend on the trustworthiness of the social environment, 2) information flow capability of the social structure and 3) norms accompanied by sanctions. (Coleman, 1988: 119)

At this point one might ask the relevance of social capital theory to the Gülen Movement.

I would like to argue that the social capital theory provides a comprehensive framework to analyze the Gülen Movement as far as local, regional and global networks, educational and media establishments are concerned which are inspired by Fethullah Gülen's views and vision drawing upon intellectual and spiritual legacy of Islam and its modern interpretation. Significance of Gülen Movement as a social movement in modern Turkey can be understood better through social capital theory given the status of democracy and civil society, civil-military relations and empowerment of citizens and recent debates on public sphere in the country. Later in the paper, I will demonstrate the relevance of social capital theory to the analysis of the Gülen Movement based on specific cases which show us that the Gülen Movement displays many of the qualities and components as described above.

From Social to Spiritual Capital

As pointed out earlier, there are several variants of the notion of capital in social science research such economic, cultural, human, social and financial capitals. The concept of spiritual capital can also be considered as one of the variants of notion of capital. In social sciences the concept of "religious capital" is also used by some scholars to indicate the symbols, norms, beliefs and obligations inspired by or derived from religion and religious affiliation. To Stark and Finke, for example, religious capital consists of the degree of mastery of and attachment to a particular religious culture" (2000: 120) Finke (2003) argues that emotional attachment and the mastering of a religion become investments that build up over time and constitute religious capital. However in recent years there is a shift towards replacing this with the concept of spiritual capital because of its supposedly limited meaning.

As Peter L. Berger and Robert W. Hefner point out, the role of religion in economic development and in the creation of democracy has been analyzed not only by contemporary sociologists but also by Max Weber, German theorist of modern economy and society who argues that "religion was the pivotal determinant of actors' rationality and behaviour". Berger and Hefner (2003) define spiritual capital as "a sub-species of social capital referring to the power, influence, and dispositions created by participation in a religious tradition". Woodbery (2003) defines spiritual capital "as resources that are created or people access to when people invest in religion as religion" and argues that spiritual capital differs from other forms of capital. He asserts that like those who have social capital, religiously motivated social groups have also "material resources, skills, trusting relationships, and cultural –valued knowledge-that is financial, human, social and cultural capital". Moreover, religious groups have an additional concern which derives from their stress on their relationship with the Supreme Being. As Woodbery concludes, the concept of social capital does not fully encompass religious groups the spiritual capital they generate.

Prophesy of Secularization Thesis and Global Rise of Spiritual Capital

The prophesy of secularization thesis regarding the gradual disappearance of religion from social and political lives seems to have failed because the current revivalism and recent events suggest that religious symbols, language, rhetoric and discourse can play an important role in the reconfiguration of the modern world. Recent social and cultural transformations under the forces of globalization also indicate that the traditional secularization thesis seems to have failed to capture the ongoing influence of religion. Proponents of secularization theory such as Bryan Wilson, Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann and Karel Dobbledare established

an unavoidable and casual connection between the beginning of modernity and the decline of traditional forms of religious life.

Many scholars accepted secularization as uncritical dogma and failed "to recognize multiple roles that religion does play in public life" (Bane, Coffin & Higgins: 2005:6). Generally speaking theorists of secularization process argued that religion would lose its influence on social and political life once the society absorbs the values and institutions of modernization For Wilson (1982:149) for example "secularization relates to the diminution in the social significance of religion". Shiner (1967: 209-216) on the other hand, identifies six types or areas of secularization with several predictions about the future of religions. Before we move onto the analysis of whether these predictions came through or not in the real world, it will be a useful exercise to remember the range of prophecies. Shiner's first type of secularization is the decline of religion, which pointed out that "the previously accepted symbols, doctrines and institutions lose prestige and influence. The culmination of secularization would be religionless society". (p. 209). The second type of secularization "conformity with this world" predicted that "the religious groups or the religiously informed society turns its attention from the supernatural and becomes more and more interested in this world" (p. 211). The third type of secularization "disengagement of society from religion" claimed that "society separates itself from religious understanding which has previously informed it in order to constitute itself an autonomous reality and consequently limits religion to the sphere of private life." (p. 212) The fourth type described as "transposition of religious beliefs and institutions" prophesized that functions of religious knowledge, behaviour and institutions would have a world-based outlook. "Desacralisation of the world" as the fifth type of secularization predicted that the world would gradually be deprived of its sacral character and become an object of rationally explained sphere and rationality would replace supernatural beliefs and mysterious approaches. The sixth type of secularization in the form of "movements from sacred to a secular society" on the other hand refers to a social change, which indicates that the secularization will be completed when the all decisions in society are based on rational and utilitarian considerations rather than religious principles. (p. 216)

Contemporary developments in the globe and recent debates in social sciences indicate that such comprehensive claims and predictions of the secularization theory have only limited validity and success, mostly confined to Western Europe which Davie (1999: 76; 2000:25-26) describes it as en exception rather than the rule where the old thesis seem to hold evidencing that in the last two hundred years secularization has made an immense progress. (Rémond, 1999:187)

Although modern societies have by nature a corrosive effect on traditional forms of religious life and lead to decline in the scope and influence of religious institutions and in the popularity of religious beliefs (Bruce, 1996:26), as Bell (1977: 448) notes existential questions of culture remains inescapable and "some new efforts to regain a sense of the sacred point to the direction in which our culture –or its sentient representatives- will move." After observing the global rise of religion, Peter L. Berger (1999: 2), who was once the proponent of secularization theory, admits "that the assumption that we live in a secularized world is false. The world today, with some exceptions.... is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever". He argues that the whole body of literature explaining secularization and its repercussions is essentially mistaken. Modernization did not necessarily lead to the decline of religion. Even in highly modernized societies like European countries, religion succeeded to preserve its presence especially in individual consciousness if not institutionally.

Regarding the relation between religion and secularization in Europe, Daniéle Hervieu-Léger makes a strong point in her acclaimed book Religion as a Chain of Memory where she argues that a chain connects an individual believer to a community and the tradition (or the collective memory) constitutes the basis of the existence of this community. Hervieu-Léger (2000: 123) contends that "by placing tradition, that is to say reference to a chain of belief, at the centre of the question of religion, the future of religion is immediately associated with the problem of collective memory." Modern European societies, especially France, she argues have experienced a crisis of collective memory to some degree which led to a break in the chain depriving the memory of religion. She (2000: 141-162) concludes however that the chain that connects memory to religion is being re-invented in modern European societies. Recent developments and contemporary social, cultural and political transformations clearly show that religion is an important force today. There is an increasing tendency towards religion in USA, the Middle East, the East Asia, the South America, the Eastern Europe and numerous other places. This means that spiritual capital embedded in and derived from religion is on the increase on a global scale despite the opposite expectations of rationalist discourse of modernity and secularization theory.

All these developments invite us to look religion and its role modern world more closely. At this point in time the notion of spiritual capital may open new theoretical avenues to understand how religiously inspired resources can be mobilized to improve the human condition. It is argued that religion can at least six interrelated roles or functions in a democracy: fostering expression of beliefs and identity; forming identities shaping organizations; creating and sustaining social bonds; shaping moral discourse; enabling participation and civic engagement; and providing social services. (Bane, Coffin & Higgins: 2005:6). The spiritual capital theory in this context provides very useful perspective to test such claims.

The Turkish Context: State and Religion in Public Domain

Modern Turkey is one of these countries where Islam provides a deeply rooted spiritual capital. Yet, neither Islam nor religiously motivated social and political movements have a monolithic structure in Turkey. Taking the variety of religious expressions in Turkey one can see convergences and divergences among these groups inspired by religious rhetoric and discourse. Turkey provides an excellent context and cases for a comparative study of the varieties of spiritual capital and its influence on democracy, economy, education, media, networking and the politics. Despite all modernizing reforms Islam remained as a strong source of shared identity, morality, co-operation, networking, opposition and expression of solidarity.

Turkey occupies a unique place among the modern nation states. Not only from a geopolitical point of view, but also from cultural and religious points of view, Turkey lies at the crossroads between eastern and western interests. The political and cultural identity of modern Turkey emerged under the influence of domestic and external forces that existed in and around Turkey throughout the centuries. The establishment of a modern Turkey based on Western political models was a watershed in Turkey's history. The early republican elite distanced themselves from the cultural and ideological heritage of the Ottoman Empire and laid the foundational elements of modernization and westernization. The establishment of a modern nation-state in Turkey crystallized the ideology orientation of the republican elite aimed at reshaping the state and its institutions on the basis of a secular model inspired by the West. Political, social, and religious developments in modern Turkey were influenced by the ideals of modernism and secularism. Since its foundation, Turkey's political elites voluntarily attempted the most radical secularization among the Muslim countries. The principle of

democracy was secondary to that of state secularism.

Inspired by the principles of modernization, founding political elite in Turkey, introduced sweeping changes in Turkish society. Their main aim in the process of modernization during the early years of the Turkish Republic was to change the basic structure of Turkish society and redefine the political community. The republican tried to remove society from an Islamic framework and introduce society to a sense of belonging to a newly defined "Turkish nation." To achieve this goal, they launched a movement of cultural westernization to provide the Turkish nation with a new worldview that would replace its religious worldview and culture.

The elite treated separation of religion and politics as a prerequisite step to opening the doors to Western values. Therefore, secularism became one of the central tenets of this program to accomplish modernization. As a part of this secularization policy, major campaign was launched against the Islamic institutional and cultural basis of society. This attempt to disestablish Islam as the state religion would prepare the climate for the introduction of secularism in the Turkish Constitution during the single party period of the Republican People's Party (RPP) (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi).

Secularization reforms, which were undertaken during the first decade of the new republic, founded in 1923, aimed at minimizing the role of religion in every walk of Turkish society. The motive behind the secularization program was to reduce the societal significance of religious values and eventually disestablish cultural and political institutions stamped by Islam. Despite the secularization efforts and the restrictions on religious practices, Islam has remained one of the major identity references in Turkey and it continues to be an effective social reality, shaping the fabric of Turkish society. Spiritual capital remained vibrant in Turkey despite efforts to eliminate it from the public and political spheres. (Kucukcan, 2003).

The Gülen Movement and its Social and Spiritual Capital

A number of religious/social/political movements emerged in modern in the last two decades in Turkey which draws upon a social and spiritual capital that leads to wide range of networking, solidarity and co-operation. For example, one can see rise of organizations to address human rights and democratization in Turkey to represent and defend "Muslim" victims, using the spiritual capital for democratization, empowering civil society and strengthening political liberalization. One of the most striking movements drawing upon and mobilizing the spiritual capital in and beyond Turkey is the Gülen movement which is at the core of this paper.

As pointed by Yilmaz (2005:394) the Gülen Movement can be described as "a faith-inspired collectivity" with numerous followers and sympathizers which constitute one of the largest civil movements drawing on Islamic spirituality and teaching. I argue that the Gülen Movement has a potential of generating significant degree of social and spiritual capital as manifested through its national, regional and global networks, various civil associations, the media outlets, educational institutions which are inspired by the teachings of Fethullah Gülen. Effective resource accumulation and mobilization is one of the key methods and means of the Gülen Movement to spread its message. This is done through and for the service (*hizmet*) to the faith. For the Gülen community there is an urgent need for hizmet and resource mobilization. (Bilici, 2006: 10; Yavuz, 2003: 186) Broadly speaking the Gülen movement emphasizes foremost education and therefore invests in schools, networking and volunteering. The second area of emphasis seems to be on the media ranging from national newspapers to TV and radio stations. The third emphasis seems be to be placed on global networking within and

outside the movement through several well established activities.

The Gülen Movement and Democratization

Research on social capital and democracy demonstrates that there is a relationship between social capital and democracy. The vibrant associations help create, consolidate and maintain democracy. Based on testing the impact of social capital on democracy, Paxton (2002:272) argues that social capital promotes democracy, especially connected associations exerts "a strong positive influence on democracy". Fukuyama (2001:7) goes a step further and argues that social capital "is the sine qua non of stable liberal democracy".

As far as religion and democracy are concerned; Fethullah Gülen sees no contradiction between the values of Islam and democratic system. For him Islam and democracy as a political system are compatible. Therefore "Gülen argues that democracy, in spite of its shortcomings, is now the only viable political system, and people should strive to modernize and consolidate democratic institutions in order to build a society where individual rights and freedoms are respected and protected, where equal opportunity for all is more than a dream" (Yilmaz, 2005: 396).

Stevan Voight (2005: 59) draws our attention to a widely circulated claim "that Islam threatens the values and institutions of free societies". In this context he argues that "whether Islamic values are compatible with the institutions of free societies is relevant most importantly for the future of Muslim countries. Yet it is also of immense practical relevance for the West…" In its various institutional forms and intellectual manifestations which form a large social and spiritual capital, one can see that the Gülen Movement demonstrates the compatibility of Islamic values and institutions with the core values and institutions of modern free societies, described as the rule of law, constitutional democracy, civil society, human rights, pluralism and market economy. As far as Turkey is concerned, he stresses that retreat from democracy is impossible for Turkey. (Kuru, 2005: 265)

Civil Society Organizations and the Making of Democratic Culture

In modern times, democratic and free societies have a large room for civil society organizations such as associations, foundations, trade unions and think thanks. These organizations contribute to the consolidation of democracy and improvement of civil liberties and representative political system where transparency, accountability and culture of negotiations are valued and respected. Among the civil organizations contributing to deliberative democratic culture in Turkey, intercultural dialogue within and beyond Turkey through organizing national and international seminars, panels, conferences and workshops, the Journalists and Authors Foundation provides a very good example of how social and spiritual capital of the Gülen Movement are generated and mobilized. The Journalists and Authors Foundation (JWF) was established in 1994 to promote democratic civility in the face of diversity, to facilitate intercultural, intercivilisationnal and interreligious relations, to emphasize cultural richness by challenging and abandoning official and memorized statements that marked previous eras.

In order to achieve its aims and to fulfil its mission JWF has established three main areas of activity. The one which is a well known forum known as the Abant Meetings has been gathering intellectuals, academics, journalists, politicians and representatives of civil society organizations from diverse backgrounds and affiliations to discuss local, regional and

international issues of common concern. Since 1988 the Abant Meetings facilitated the discussion of issues such as Islam and Secularism; Religion, State and Society; Democratic Rule of the Law; Pluralism and Social Reconciliation; Globalization; War and Democracy, Islam; Democracy; Secularism, the Turkish experience and Culture; Identity and Religion during Turkey's European Union (EU) Accession Process with the participation of fairly diverse people. In 2007, the Abant Meetings focused on Islam, the West and Modernization which brought Turkish and Egyptian intellectual together; on Turkey-France Conversations held in Paris; and Alevism and its Historic, Folkloric and Contemporary Dimensions in Istanbul. The 13th Abant Meeting which focused on Alevism, is a remarkable one as far as dialogue among various social groups and freedom of religion are concerned in Turkey. This meeting brought together experts, representatives of Alevi organizations and the Directorate of Turkish Religious Affairs around the table which is a rare event in Turkey given the nature of cultural and religious polarization as a result of modernization project in the country. Range of issues discussed and diversity of participants involved in Abant Meetings and the manner in which these meetings were conducted indicate that Abant Meetings become a noticeable practice in the evolving democratic life of Turkey with increasing connections outside such France, Egypt and the US. One can argue that Abant Meetings contribute to the establishment and dissemination of civil and democratic tradition of discussion and negotiation of contentious issues on the one hand and to the participation of various actors in the making of democratic culture by providing a public forum to represent diverse views. JWF published most of the proceedings of Abant Meetings to disseminate views, discussions and conclusions of the forum.

Similar to that of Abant Meetings, The Intercultural Dialogue Platform as an activity of the JWF also aims at contributing to the development of democratic culture by promoting respect, mutual acceptance and establishing a working dialogue with members of other faith communities. Fethullah Gülen believes that "God wanted to teach Muslims, among other things, to be compassionate and merciful in their relations with fellow human beings." (Saritoprak & Griffith, 2005: 333) For Gülen "tolerance of others and genuine interfaith dialogue are not simply a pleasant ideal that will be fulfilled in some future paradise but is something at the core of what it is to be a Muslim in the here and now". (Kurtz, 2005: 375) Gülen's views on interreligious dialogue led him to establish contacts with leaders of minority religious communities in Turkey and to meet the late Pope John Paul II in February 1998.

This Platform clearly reflects the view of Fethullah Gülen about co-existence of different religious communities in the same social order and a dialogue of world religions. The Intercultural Dialogue Platform works towards regional and global peace through raising awareness among followers and believers of different cultures and religions in an age where some political scientists such as Samuel Huntington prophesizes "clash of civilizations". Muslims, Christians and Jews are encouraged to participate in events organized by the Platform to find solutions to various problems on the basis of common moral values of three Abrahamic religions. Given the scope of the issues and problems that are discussed and the variety of people participating from diverse religious traditions in a conflict ridden era, The Intercultural Dialogue Platform should be considered as an important initiative reflecting social and spiritual capital of the Gülen Movement.

The third area where considerable social and spiritual capital is invested in is the Dialogue Eurasia Platform which emerged from the idea that Europe and Asia, even though two different worlds in history, only have socially and politically constructed borders. The Dialogue Eurasia Platform aims to establish a bridge between the culture and people of Europe and

Asia to foster dialogue, better understanding and mutual appreciation of differences. Several International meetings were organized by this platform in order to increase the level of awareness about the common values and legacies on the one hand and the contribution of Europe and Asia to the world civilization on the other hand.

Gülen witnessed the painful consequences of conflicts in Turkey where more than 30 000 people lost their lives and he himself was imprisoned for his views. He saw that such conflicts damage the very social fabric of the society thus dedicated himself to peace and non-violence and advised his followers to avoid involving in conflicts "even he was killed". (Saritoprak, 2005: 422) All these platforms and activities that contribute to the culture of co-existence, mutual respect and understanding, dialogue among cultures, religions and civilizations are inspired by Gülen's philosophy of peace and non-violence.

Education and Democratic Citizenship

The Gülen Movement invests in education more than any other social movement in Turkey informed and inspired by Islamic spirituality. Education is seen as the most influential agent of inculcating a sense of responsible citizenship, cooperation and dialogue among individuals, groups and nations. The Gülen Movement has a diverse interest in educational establishments which range from primary to secondary schools and from high schools to universities both in Turkey and beyond. Moreover, followers of this movement have also considerable steak in preparatory courses for college and university exams as well as in language teaching courses. Instead of engaging in daily politics the followers of Fethullah Gülen "successfully mobilized material and human resources, and built schools and colleges both in Turkey and abroad." (Şimşek, 2004: 122) Especially after 1983, Yavuz (2003: 183) notes, "the privatization of the education system opened it up to competition, and the movement capitalized on the need and desire to establish a better education system". Today, in almost every town and city in Turkey, there are such educational establishments. These schools and courses provide jobs for hundreds of people generating economic income for both the employers and the employees. Educational establishments create a large network of students and teachers all over the world adding substantial human capital to the movement.

The rational behind establishing courses, schools, colleges and universities cannot be reduced to economic interests only. Financial institutors established by the followers of Gülen generate employment and large economic capital. In addition to such powerful financial institutions, investing in education has more than economic motivation. It is reported that by 2003, followers of the movement also known as entrepreneurs have established 149 schools with more than 27 000 students, employing 3209 teachers outside Turkey. (Balci, 2003: 157) In addition to high schools, seven universities were established (Yavuz, 2003: 193), one in Turkey, the rest in Turkic-Muslim republics. The current figure is even higher because more schools were opened in the US, Europe and Africa. As far as schools outside Turkey are concerned, it is claimed that "special importance is given to areas where ethnic and religious conflicts are escalating, such as Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, the Philippines, Banda Aceh, Northern Iraq". These schools are believed to "have played remarkable roles in decreasing levels of conflict in these areas" (Saritoprak, 2005: 423) These observations demonstrate that social and spiritual capital invested in educational establishments lead to changes in perceptions and attitudes of people involved as envisioned by Fethullah Gülen who advocates peace and non-violence as important elements of democratic political order. As far as history of modernization, nation-state formation, social, economic and political problems that emerged in the formative period of Turkey and continued until today are concerned, the

Gülen Movement provides intermediary networks that contribute to the integration of individual citizens to state which the latter has not been able to do so. (Özdalga, 2005: 433)

The Media and Representation of Diversity

As I have argued before, one of the most important institutions of a sustainable democracy is the existence of free and diverse media which provide a forum for the critical analysis of government policies as well as for the reflection of various voices, including the dissidents' ones, in an open society.

In order to disseminate their message and provide an extensive forum, followers of Fethullah Gülen mobilized their economic and human resources and successfully established nationwide media institutions. Broadly speaking these media institutions range from magazines (Sızıntı, Aksiyon, Yeni Ümit, Diyalog Avrasya and the Fountain)) to radio stations (Burc FM) to newspapers (Zaman and Today's Zaman) to TV stations (Samanyolu and Mehtap TV). Publication houses such as DA Publications and Ufuk Books and Cihan News Agency should also be added to the range of media outlets of the followers of Fethullah Gülen.

Among these media institutions, Zaman newspaper deserves a special mention which has more than half a million daily circulation in Turkey. The newspapers is also printed and distributed globally including in the US, Europe and Eurasian region. Zaman provides an important forum for the discussions that aims at contributing to democratization of the Turkish political system. Hence, most of its columnists and commentaries seem to support reforms to join the European Union and preparation of a civil constitution, a project of the ruling Justice and Development Party. As a sister institution, Today's Zaman in English started to be published in 2007. Today's Zaman has columnists from various political and ideological backgrounds yet with a seemingly common ground based on defending democracy, human rights, civil society and critically engaging in social and political developments in Turkey and abroad. The columnists include, Turkish authors such as Beril Dedeoglu, Cem Ozdemir, Dogu Ergil, Etyen Mahcupyan, Ihsan Dagi, Ibrahim Kalin, Murat Yulek, Omer Taspinar, Suat Kiniklioglu, and non-Turkish contributors such as Hugh Pope, Nicole Pope, Charlotte McPerson, Amanda Akcakoca and Pat Yale. The newspaper supports a democratic and liberal agenda such as Turkey's accession to the EU, improving human rights record, democratizing the state in Turkey with accountability and transparency and replacing its constitution which is the legacy of the 1980 military coup with that of a civil constitution.