

This article was downloaded by: [Ani Sarkissian]

On: 10 April 2012, At: 05:49

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954  
Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH,  
UK



## Democratization

Publication details, including instructions for authors  
and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fdem20>

### Democratization and the politicization of religious civil society in Turkey

Ani Sarkissian<sup>a</sup> & Ş. İlgü Özler<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Political Science, Michigan State University, MI, USA

<sup>b</sup> Political Science and International Relations, State  
University of New York, NY, USA

Available online: 10 Apr 2012

To cite this article: Ani Sarkissian & Ş. İlgü Özler (2012): Democratization  
and the politicization of religious civil society in Turkey, *Democratization*,  
DOI:10.1080/13510347.2012.669895

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2012.669895>



PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes.  
Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-  
licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly  
forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any  
representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to  
date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be  
independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable  
for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages

whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

## Democratization and the politicization of religious civil society in Turkey

Ani Sarkissian<sup>a\*</sup> and Ş. İlğü Özler<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Political Science, Michigan State University, MI, USA; <sup>b</sup>Political Science and International Relations, State University of New York, NY, USA

(Received June 2011; final version received January 2012)

In this article, we explain how the political opportunity structure characterized by official secularism and state regulation of religion has shaped the politicization of religiously oriented civil society in Turkey. The ban on religious political parties and strict state control over religious institutions create constraints for the expression of religious interests. However, due to changes in laws regulating the civil society sector and rule by a religiously sympathetic political party, religious groups use associations and foundations to express their interests. We observe that, in this strictly controlled opportunity structure, religiously oriented Muslims have framed their religious interests in the political realm parallel to those of the dominant political party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP). Through a study of non-governmental organizations we document the rhetoric religious groups use to frame their position on several key issues: religious freedom for the majority religious group, methods of resolving issues related to minority populations, and the Ottoman heritage of charitable service.

**Keywords:** democratization; secularism; religion; Turkey; civil society; Justice and Development Party

### Introduction

Turkey is an officially secular republic, yet in recent years it has been ruled by a party with roots in political Islam, has moved closer to the Muslim world in foreign policy, has seen the growth of individual religiosity,<sup>1</sup> and has witnessed a preponderance of religiously oriented civic associations and charities. At the same time, the political system has become increasingly democratic, and the country continues to seek accession to the European Union. Given the strictly secular political opportunity structure, how can we explain the expanding role of religion in the civic organizational space in Turkey?

---

\*Corresponding author. Email: [asarkiss@msu.edu](mailto:asarkiss@msu.edu)

One of the most interesting developments in the past decades of Turkish politics has been the shape that the civil society sector has taken. While proponents of secularism have traditionally argued that religion should play no role in a developed democracy, more recent work has acknowledged the importance of religion in contemporary politics and the need to understand its effects.<sup>2</sup> Organizations devoted to representing religious interests (primarily for the Sunni Muslim majority) have been growing rapidly in Turkey.<sup>3</sup> Civil society is not necessarily political, but examples of political activities by religiously oriented civil society groups in Turkey abound. One of the most highly publicized events was the aid flotilla to Gaza organized by the IHH, an Islamic foundation, in 2010.<sup>4</sup> Religiously oriented groups regularly organize and participate in public protests and demonstrations in Turkey.<sup>5</sup> Thus, while religion and politics are formally separated in Turkey, religious groups today are able to express their political interests through the realm of civil society in manners not seen in the past.

In this article, we seek to explain the increasing politicization of religious civil society in Turkey – in the form of associations (*dernek*) and foundations (*vakıf*) – by situating religious actors in the structure of state–civil society relations in a climate of official secularism. The political opportunity structure argument proposes that the structure of the political system influences the mobilization of groups in society.<sup>6</sup> The creation of more open democratic systems allows for social groups to function more freely, thus increasing the likelihood of movement activity.<sup>7</sup> In Turkey civil society historically has been restricted in organizing but changes in the political climate in the 1980s and the legal system in the 1990s – including reforms related to the European Union accession process – have enabled greater freedom of civic activity.

Yet, religion is one realm of civil society that is still highly regulated. The strict regulatory framework of the Turkish state shapes the political opportunity structure for the organization of religious social mobilization. Turkish political institutions operate under the ideology of *laiklik* (laicism). The state regulates the majority religion, Sunni Islam, through a state agency, *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* (Directorate of Religious Affairs). Most other religions are restricted from organizing and building houses of worship. Thus, when it comes to religious social mobilization, the mosque is not a place for religious debate or religious organizing, but strictly a place provided for individual prayer. Constitutionally, political parties are also restricted from organizing around religious beliefs and issues. As a result, religious interest representation is pushed outside of the mosque and the political party arena into the realm of civil society, which has undergone liberalization in recent years.

The opportunity structure for religiously oriented groups to become politically engaged has also improved as the Justice and Development Party (AKP), a political party that is sympathetic to the majority religion, took charge of the government in 2002 and implemented a series of reforms aimed at gaining Turkish admission to the European Union. We analyse how religiously oriented groups in civil society frame their demands politically given the limited political opportunity structure created by the strict state regulation around religious affairs.<sup>8</sup>

We use evidence we collected from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) through interviews and documents to analyse how religious civil society, in the form of associations and foundations, is politicized in secular Turkey. We explain how the openings created by reforms in the civil society sector and a sympathetic governing party have allowed religion to occupy a more prominent place in politics. Despite their different aims and organizational structures, we find that religiously oriented groups present a uniform political message, shaped to give them the most leverage in the restricted political realm. We analyse the rhetoric religious groups use to frame their position on several key issues, explaining how the emphasis the groups place on religious freedom for the majority religious group (Sunni Muslims), methods of resolving issues related to minority populations, and Ottoman heritage (especially, charity-based service provision), can be seen as strategically crafted to protect and inflate the importance of religion in current Turkish politics. The expression of religious politics in Turkey through associations and foundations is thus a product of openings in the political opportunity structure for this type of civil society organization under a strict regulatory framework for religion.

### **Finding space for religious organizing in the limited political opportunity structure**

Understanding political opportunity structures can help to articulate the potential for religious movements to participate in the political process. Until relatively recently, secularization theory was the dominant paradigm used to explain the role of religion in public life. According to this theory, religion would lose its importance in public life as modernization brought scientific explanations, secular institutions, and bureaucratization.<sup>9</sup> Events in the 1970s and 1980s, including the Islamic Revolution in Iran, challenged the secularization thesis and eventually forced social scientists to confront the resurgence of religion in politics.<sup>10</sup> There has been increased attention to the effects of religion on political behaviour and institutions, with scholars pointing to the usefulness of studying the behaviour of religiously oriented groups based on their beliefs and the constraints they face from their government.<sup>11</sup> In this section we identify those institutions that create the opportunity structure for religiously oriented groups in Turkey.

### ***The political structure of religious regulation***

Laicism (*laiklik*) in Turkey is intended to impose secularism in the public sphere, but amounts to regulation of religion by the state.<sup>12</sup> While the Constitution guarantees individual religious freedom as long as its practice does not threaten the nation or the secular order, all Islamic institutions are under the control of the state's Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*). The Diyanet is in charge of training imams, approving new mosques, and supervising religious education. The Diyanet was founded in 1924 by the republican elite of the country to allow the

state to control religion and deny it the prominent position that it enjoyed under the Ottoman Empire.<sup>13</sup> According to one of its previous directors, the Diyanet is a 'public, civil and independent' organization created by the state to administer religious affairs.<sup>14</sup> Bardakoğlu characterizes the organization as independent, though final decisions about religious affairs take place under the direction of a government appointee who has been trained in government operated and regulated theological schools. Additionally, the Diyanet limits its direction on religion to Islam, and in particular to the dominant Hanefi sect of Sunni Islam.

Such centralized control of religion assumes homogeneity of religion that does not exist in Turkey. While Turkey's population is 99% Muslim, approximately 12% of Muslim Turkish citizens belong to the Alevi community, a sect related to Shiism and considered heretical by many Sunnis.<sup>15</sup> The Sunni Shafi sect constitutes about 6% of Turkey's population.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, the Diyanet claims to represent all Muslims. This allows the state to quell religion's independent influence while marginalizing minority sects. A small number of non-Muslim communities (Armenians, Greeks, and Jews) are recognized by the state as minorities with the right to practice their own religion in accordance with the Lausanne Treaty, but the rights of other non-Muslim minorities are ambiguous at best. While there is individual freedom of religion, religious organizations have been repressed and restricted in an ad hoc manner by local authorities.<sup>17</sup>

Aside from state control over religious institutions, Turkish secularism includes restrictions against religious political parties. The Turkish Constitution contains articles that prohibit parties from having statutes, programmes, and activities that conflict with the fundamental principles of the republic – including secularism.<sup>18</sup> The law on political parties prohibits parties from being based on or using names of regions, races, persons, families, classes, *cemaat*, religions, sects, or *tarikas*.<sup>19</sup> The Constitutional Court has the power to dissolve a party if it violates those principles. Since 1962, the Constitutional Court has banned 24 political parties for violating the principles of secularism, for religious fundamentalism, and for emphasizing Kurdish ethnic identity.<sup>20</sup> Recent changes have relaxed restrictions, however. The Constitution was amended in 1995 and 2001 to strengthen guarantees for political parties as a part of the series of reforms for Turkey's bid to join the European Union. The ban on political parties from cooperating with and receiving material assistance from associations, trade unions, foundations, cooperatives, and public professional associations was lifted, which opened the way for religiously oriented groups to organize and influence political actors through NGOs. But, other restrictions on religious issues remain intact.

### *Civil society organizations*

Associations and foundations are two types of civil society organizations in Turkey that allow for expression of religious interests. Foundations are defined as privately funded philanthropic organizations, while associations are voluntary membership-based organizations formed in the pursuit of a common interest.<sup>21</sup> These two types

of organizations are regulated under different laws, though both have enjoyed recent reforms. Despite the overall weakness of civil society organizations in relation to political parties in Turkey, and given restrictions on political parties to represent religious beliefs, the civil society realm is one of the only spaces available for religiously oriented expression and debate.

Historically, the development of oppositional civil society in Turkey was stifled by the nation-building goals of the strong state apparatus and especially by several military interventions.<sup>22</sup> Just as there was a desire to regulate religion among the republican elites of Turkey, there was a desire to control and regulate civil society as well. The secular nationalist military, bureaucracy, and judiciary controlled social, political, and cultural development in Turkey.<sup>23</sup> Civil society groups that tried to challenge the central state authority faced marginalization into the periphery of power and suppression by state authorities; this was especially true for the religiously oriented groups. One notable example of this is the Milli Görüş movement, founded by Necmettin Erbakan in 1970. Among its activities the movement organized several political parties. These were shut down by coups in 1971 and 1980.

Religious groups found some space to organize around grassroots civil society after the 1980 coup. The military desired to eliminate what it perceived as a threat from the left by using religion as a tool. The 'Turkish-Islamic Synthesis' was a state policy intended to unify the historically marginalized political groups to help the coup government consolidate its power.<sup>24</sup> The policy was intended to re-introduce Islam as a part of the Turkish nationalist identity but also allowed for the increased activity of certain Islamist civil society organizations throughout the 1980s.<sup>25</sup> Thus the military played an important early role in encouraging religious civil society. Şimşek describes the expression of Turkish-Islamic synthesis as an increase in *Imam Hatip Liseleri* (schools training personnel for religious services), Quranic courses, mosque-building activities, as well as religious foundations and *tarikats* (religious brotherhoods).<sup>26</sup>

Turkey transitioned to electoral democracy in 1983, with further liberalization encouraged by the European Union harmonization and accession process and Turkey's integration into the global economy. These democratic openings have resulted in more space for civic participation and organization. While the numbers of civil society groups increased in the 1980s, their 'impact on and participation in public life [was] relatively trivial'<sup>27</sup> during this period. Many of these associations were organized by local governments run by the Milli Görüş affiliated Welfare Party.<sup>28</sup> These organizations functioned as clients of the political party rather than as free associations in an autonomous civil society sector. Given the Turkish opportunity structure that prevents parties from organizing around religiously oriented issues, the Welfare Party was closed in 1998. This necessitated a change in how religiously oriented associations were organized.

Since the mid-1990s, there have been changes to the laws governing civil society.<sup>29</sup> Associations and foundations have found new freedom of association and organization through several stages of constitutional and other legal

reforms. Yet, the current regulatory framework for associations and foundations still limits their religious expression. According to a recent report on religious freedoms in Turkey, while religious groups do not have to register with the government, 'unregistered religious groups have no legal standing and can face greater harassment than registered groups. Organizations, including religious groups, have the opportunity to register as an association or a foundation, but not on religious grounds'.<sup>30</sup> The process for registering as a foundation is expensive and lengthy; most of the currently existing foundations with religious orientation were formed during the Ottoman Empire. Associations are easier to establish, but have fewer legal rights and are subject to local enforcement. Moreover, associations are not allowed to discriminate based on religion, ethnicity, or race, effectively banning those that support one religious group. Since the Sunni majority is not allowed to organize outside of the official state mosque, organizing communities around religious orders remains illegal, and many are forced to operate underground. Finally, religious minorities face close scrutiny and resistance from local authorities in securing building permits, performing missionary activities, and participating in local events.<sup>31</sup> These regulations force religiously oriented groups to organize around issues other than religion, such as human rights, economic interests, and charity provision.

Following the closure of the Welfare Party in 1998, the Islamist movement splintered into two main factions. The more traditional Islamists formed the *Saadet Partisi* (Felicity Party, SP) under the leadership of Recai Kutan. The AKP was founded under the leadership of Abdullah Gül and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who represented a younger generation of Islamists. The AKP has since presented itself as a 'conservative democratic' party to avoid identification with Islamism and avoid closure by the judiciary.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, religiously oriented associations and foundations frame their concerns in secular language to avoid closure. Thus, the strategic framing of the two sectors has merged, a phenomenon we explore in the following section.

### **Evidence and methodology**

We present qualitative evidence in the form of interviews we conducted with leaders of secular and religious civil society organizations and the country's major political parties as well as analysis of organization documents and media reports on organizational activity.<sup>33</sup> We conducted interviews in İstanbul and Ankara in the winter of 2008–2009, focusing on 12 major religiously oriented NGOs. To compare activities and perspectives on the civil society sector in Turkey, we also interviewed six secular groups dealing with economic development and human rights.<sup>34</sup> Many of these groups were founded after the military intervention of February 1997. As described above, the Welfare Party was responsible for a large portion of Islamist associational life until the mid-1990s, especially on the grassroots municipal level. These newer groups were thus formed in a climate in which close relations with political parties was considered suspect,



especially if those parties were tied to Islamist politics. However, as Pusch writes about the period prior to the victory of the AKP in the 2002 parliamentary elections, in reaction to stricter state-imposed secularism following the 1997 military intervention, Islamic-oriented groups demanded greater freedoms, democracy, and human rights. In particular, they recognized the potential of civil society as a realm in which they could act independently of the state.<sup>35</sup> Although many of the regulations on religious society remained constant over time, the changes to the legal environment for the associations and foundations and the victory of a sympathetic political party in 2002 allowed these groups even greater freedom to pursue their religiously inspired interests.

Given these observations, most of the organizations we interviewed expressed the sentiment that the conditions for NGOs have improved since the implementation of reforms to the civil society sector. They find that the regulatory and reporting requirements have been eased, and that they are freer to express their opinions in public. However, these groups also see room for improvement, as they argue that the AKP has stalled on implementing further reforms. Many of the groups we interviewed were founded after the rules and regulations of civil society activities were relaxed. We note that under the Welfare Party government, the party took the lead in politically oriented religious activism given the restrictions surrounding civic activity. Despite the openings around civil society under the AKP government, we find that religiously oriented political discourse is still led by the party due to the opportunity structure limiting religious organizations.

The organizations we interviewed represent a range of ideologies, issues, and sizes. They are locally and internationally active. Their ideological stances were distributed widely as well. We categorized groups as religious based on their stated goals and activities, as well as on analyses published in media reports and academic sources. For example, the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (*Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği*, MÜSİAD) is one of the largest of the groups that represents the economic interests of small and medium-sized enterprises. While not explicitly referring to Islam in its goals, the organization states its desire to 'contribute to the emergence of a society of people who have inner depth' and a 'common business ethics model fed by cultural and spiritual values brought along from past to present'.<sup>36</sup> Founded in 1990, MÜSİAD represents those businesses referred to as the 'Anatolian Tigers' – firms from central and southern Anatolia where inhabitants are religiously devout but society is described as being entrepreneurial.<sup>37</sup> MÜSİAD emphasizes 'the Islamic character of Turkish society...in an attempt both to show the compatibility of Islam with capitalism and to use religion as a resource to foster a sense of solidarity among those segments of national and international business communities'.<sup>38</sup> The organization favours increasing ties with the East, especially other Muslim countries.<sup>39</sup> Another religiously oriented organization we chose was the Association of Anatolian Businessmen (*Anadolu Aslanları İşadamları Derneği*, ASKON), which was founded in 1998. Some of the cultural values the organization lists on its web page are giving importance to national

values, that ‘the trade practices of the Prophet Mohammed are the best model for ASKON members’ and ‘ASKON has a goal to become the best arena for volunteer service’.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to religiously oriented business groups, we also interviewed representatives of religious rights-based associations. One of the largest and most visible groups is the Organization of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People (*İnsan Hakları ve Mazlumlar İçin Dayanışma Derneği*, MAZLUMDER). This organization was founded in 1991 to protect the rights of people to wear the headscarf and practice religion without repression, though their repertoire for human rights has since expanded to include human rights issues broadly. We also interviewed representatives from the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (*İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri ve İnsani Yardım Vakfı*, IHH), which is a charity organization that works on emergency aid to the poor and needy. They stage campaigns all over the world, but their operations are concentrated in Muslim countries. As explained above, the IHH captured international headlines as the lead organizer of the flotilla to Gaza that was intercepted by the Israeli Defence forces in May 2010.

While most of the organizations that we interviewed claimed universality in the interests that they represent, one human rights group – Özgür-Der – did not make this claim. Founded in 1999, this organization is more fundamentalist in its stance regarding Islam, focusing its campaigns on the headscarf issue and the conflict in Gaza. The group’s representative was explicit in expressing its desire to see Turkey ruled by Islamic morals and codes. Yet this was an exception among the organizational representatives we interviewed. Despite the anti-systemic and anti-state attitude of all the organizations, only Özgür-Der openly challenged the secular structure of Turkey.

The goal of the interviews was to understand the aims and activities of the civil society organizations and how they relate to religion and politics in Turkey. We aimed to ‘let the interviewee teach [us] what the problem, the question, the situation, is’ by ‘letting the interviewee introduce to a considerable extent...his notions of what he regards as relevant, instead of relying upon the investigator’s notions of relevance’.<sup>41</sup> We started out with broad questions exploring whether societal expressions of religiosity have influence in politics even when they are structurally separated. Despite our open-ended questions posed toward a seemingly diverse group of organizations, we found common and at times identical framing of the answers from all different kinds of religiously oriented organizations. We present the results of the interviews and our analyses of civil society websites and documents in the next section.

### **The politicization of religiously oriented civil society: research findings**

Strategic framing of religious issues can be understood in terms of ‘specific metaphors, symbolic representations, and cognitive cues used to render or cast behaviour and events in an evaluative mode and to suggest alternative modes of

action'.<sup>42</sup> Brand argues that external changes are important in shaping movements and enabling them to come up with a common frame of understanding.<sup>43</sup> Gamson and Meyer map these findings into how state–society relations interact as a national mood or *zeitgeist* develops in the newly elevated public discourse.<sup>44</sup> The public discourse on issues interacts within the limitations created by the institutional setting while challenging these limitations. A movement infrastructure comes out of the relationship to the state structure. This framework helps us map and understand how political opportunity structure shapes the framing of religious issues by groups in civil society.

In our research we found several overlapping informal connections, ideological consistencies, and intellectual ties that demonstrate a common frame: an understanding and platform of issues throughout Turkey's religious civil society organizations. Despite the country's strict secularism, the associations we interviewed presented a number of issues as important to their members, including religious freedom for the majority Sunni population, a solution to identity politics grounded in Islam, and reference to the Ottoman heritage and Islamic charity as a solution to Turkey's domestic and international problems. We explain each of these issues below. We also note that the framing of these issues strategically fits with the ideological and moral affinities of the AKP – the political party in control of the government since 2002. Thus, the national discourse around religion has been shaped by these organizations in congruence with the political opportunity structure that presents a strong party/weak civil society environment and regulates both regarding religious organization and expression.

### ***Religious freedom in education***

The religiously oriented organizations we interviewed focused on two symbolic religious freedom issues that have become a point of contention between Islamists and secularists in Turkey: overturning the ban on headscarves in public offices and universities and improving the higher education prospects for the graduates of *İmam Hatip* schools. Two organizations, Özgür-Der and MAZLUMDER, were founded for the purpose of fighting for the right of women to wear the headscarf in public institutions, but have since expanded their missions to incorporate other human rights issues related to Muslims. Yet, religious organizations that have economic or charity goals and missions also brought up these two issues consistently and without exception. Among the religiously oriented NGO community, these issues have become the symbol of freedom of religion and expression against the state that one of the business organizations characterized as 'Jacobin' and all religious NGOs mentioned as the source of lack of democracy in Turkey. The state, made up of the military and the judiciary, was identified as the culprit that stands in the way of religious freedom of the majority in Turkey. For example, a representative of the business organization MÜSİAD argued that the liberal focus on the rights of minorities ignores the fact that the majority in Turkey is repressed by restrictions against religion such as the headscarf ban in universities.<sup>45</sup>

Similarly, IHH representatives identified religious freedom as a major human rights issue in Turkey:

Because of the banning of headscarves, there are thousands of girls who cannot go to school or work. There are also different groups that cannot practice their beliefs freely. There has been serious progress due to the work of civil society organizations in pressuring for change. There are serious problems in practice. If we could couple the changes in the legal system with overcoming problems with the judicial system there will be fewer problems – because we cannot overcome the problems with the judicial system, we live in troubled times.<sup>46</sup>

The representatives of the Islamist umbrella organization, the Volunteer Organization of Turkey (*Türkiye Gönüllü Teşekküller Vakfı*, TGTV) also identified the headscarf issue as Turkey's biggest problem.<sup>47</sup>

Religious education has also galvanized civil society groups in Turkey. The *İmam Hatip* high schools are trade schools intended to train imams and preachers, though religiously oriented and conservative Turks have preferred to send their children to these schools exclusively. Since the 1970s, these schools have also been producing more graduates than are needed for staffing the mosques.<sup>48</sup> In 1998 the government agency regulating university admissions introduced a differential score for *İmam Hatip* schools on the national university examinations. Treating *İmam Hatip* schools as trade schools, this score differential disadvantaged students seeking to enter the universities, with the exception of theological faculties. Given that most of the nearly 500,000 *İmam Hatip* graduates would not continue their studies at a theological faculty, enrolment numbers in these high schools sharply declined.<sup>49</sup> The university score differentials thus created a movement opportunity to organize around the issue of religious freedom in education, and several organizations have seized on that opportunity to advocate for the rights of *İmam Hatip* graduates.

Secular human rights groups in Turkey have noted that religious organizations focus exclusively on expanding educational and religious freedoms for the Sunni majority without admitting that problems exist on a larger scale. For instance, board members of the pro-secular education focused organization Association for the Support of Contemporary Life (*Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği*, ÇYDD) note that the unequal treatment of girls and the requirement of minorities to receive religious education are two major issues in Turkey.<sup>50</sup> The religiously oriented organizations made up of majority Sunni Muslims fail to couch these issues as a wider problem concerning access to education for girls in general and religious freedom for all groups in Turkey. Similarly, the ruling AKP has also limited its efforts to repealing the headscarf ban and improving the position of *İmam Hatip* school students, while mostly resisting the repeal of compulsory religion courses in public schools or emphasizing education for girls in general. We thus see similarities between the AKP and religiously oriented NGOs in their strategic framing of religious freedom and educational rights.

The fact that education has been a focus for religious civil society organizations can be explained by the political opportunity structure. First, given that the Sunni dominated state – through the Higher Education Board and the Diyanet – maintains control over both secular and religious education, religious civil society groups frame their demands under these constraints, knowing that they are more likely to achieve their aims of greater rights for the Sunni majority that is regulated by these institutions. Education has traditionally been a key battleground of religion–state conflict. Gill and Keshavarzian note that religious officials have an interest in controlling education as a means of teaching religious norms and keeping adherents in the faith for the long term, while states have an interest in education as a means for creating a class of citizens who will be both politically active adults and bureaucrats who can work for the state.<sup>51</sup> In Turkey, a secular state-controlled education system ensured that citizens would receive religious education approved by the state and be trained to work in the secular bureaucracy. The struggle by religious associations and foundations to expand opportunities for headscarved women and graduates of *İmam Hatip* schools reflects the desire to have such religiously minded individuals join the state bureaucracy and thus help promote religious interests in the state.<sup>52</sup> Finally, as members of the Sunni majority, these groups will prefer to have stricter regulation of minorities.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, it is not in their interest to advocate for greater religious freedom for all Turkish citizens. Instead, they continue to lobby for greater rights for the Sunni majority.

We must note, however, that not all religiously oriented groups have focused on the rights of the Sunni majority exclusively, and non-religious organizations have also promoted religious freedom as a key issue in Turkey's human rights struggles. Yet, due to the specific interests of their membership, these attempts have not always been successful. For example, MAZLUMDER was founded to protect the rights of people to wear the headscarf and practice religion without repression. While leaders of the group have expressed a desire to expand their repertoire to reflect that of a universal human rights organization and have made efforts in this direction by having joint campaigns with secular human rights associations, the group has had difficulties convincing its base of the need to fight for the rights of other groups, such as the Kurds.<sup>54</sup> The leader of the group confirmed that the organization had remained narrow in focus because of the demands of its members:

Practically speaking, our base is the Islamic sector. A majority of our founders are from the Islamic sector. We are very sensitive to religion and conscience violations . . . our organization was founded because of this.<sup>55</sup>

Others who have studied MAZLUMDER confirm that despite the leadership's efforts, the organization remains focused on more narrow issues as its membership has a 'moral' stance that is more rigid.<sup>56</sup> As Toumarkine notes in his study of MAZLUMDER in the 1990s, 'Supporters of Mazlum-Der, which has expanded

in the last few years, tend to see human rights much more in terms of a legitimization of their particular goals rather than as values to be defended in their own right'.<sup>57</sup>

### *Minorities and identity politics*

The second human rights issue emphasized by the organizations we studied was the state's relationship with the country's largest and most politically active ethnic and religious minorities, namely Kurds and Alevis. The Kurds are an ethnic minority group representing about 16% of the Turkish population.<sup>58</sup> Kurds, like all other groups, do not have minority status in Turkey. Nevertheless, Kurdish demands include the right to education in Kurdish as well as local autonomy in the southeast region of Turkey, where their populations are concentrated. This region has suffered from political violence as well as problems of economic and social development due to ethnic conflict. Alevis are a Muslim religious minority constituting approximately 12% of the population.<sup>59</sup> Traditionally secularly oriented, Alevis have, in more recent years, called for recognition of their rights as a separate minority.

While Kurds and Alevis have emphasized their identities as minorities and demanded recognition of their rights, the religious NGOs we interviewed failed to address these groups based on the social and ethnic terms they emphasized, instead making reference to common Islamic identity as a means for resolving tensions and conflicts. For example, the MÜSİAD representative we interviewed noted that one of Turkey's biggest internal disputes – the 'Kurdish problem' – could be solved by emphasizing the common Islamic bond between the Kurds and Turks rather than focusing on ethnic differences. Another example of this type of reasoning comes from a report on the Kurdish problem published by the TGTV, an umbrella organization for Islamist foundations formed in 1998. The report argues that separatists are not a majority in the region and that the cultural and religious bonds between the people are strong. It suggests that the solution to the social problems of Kurds in the southeast region should come from civil society – that is, religious foundations should take care of people's needs. The report emphasizes the common Islamic identity of the Kurds and Turks in fighting against the 'Crusaders'.<sup>60</sup> As the dominant political actor, the AKP also uses such rhetoric to address identity politics issues. For example, the party has used images of Kurds and Turks fighting against enemies together historically and Kurdish and Turkish mothers using the same prayers for children lost to civil conflict.<sup>61</sup>

While almost all Kurdish and Alevi activists are organized in secularly oriented groups, the Alevi minority also has a small contingent that organizes around religious interests. Under the political opportunities presented by the AKP-controlled government, religiously oriented organizations representing Alevis have received more political attention by framing their interests around religious rights. The director of a religious Alevi foundation expressed a very positive assessment of the AKP government while being critical of the historical power centre – especially the military – for creating institutions that controlled religion.<sup>62</sup> The director of the

foundation emphasized the common Muslim heritage of all Turks in the interview. In contrast, the traditionally secular Alevi groups often complain of being shut out of the political process. According to the leaders of a secular Alevi organization we interviewed, the AKP understands Alevism under its own religious ideology, choosing to communicate only with Alevi organizations that emphasize religion, despite the fact that these are a minority among Alevi organizations in the country.<sup>63</sup> These examples help to demonstrate how religious civil society organizations have used the opportunity structure to advance the agenda of the religiously oriented public through Turkey's dominant political actor, the AKP. They also point to the weakness and exclusion of civil society groups representing minorities from a secular perspective that emphasizes their separate ethnic identity.

These experiences also illuminate the ideas of citizenship that exist among secular and religious actors in Turkey. While Kemalist notions of citizenship reference the common Turkish national identity, religious actors frame their ideas of citizenship based on the Ottoman notion of the *millet*. Under this system, only non-Muslims were considered to be minorities, and were thus given autonomy over their internal affairs. Muslim minorities were not considered to be separate, and dissenters within the Muslim community were punished as heretics.<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, both secular and religious actors reject Kurds and Alevis who wish to emphasize their ethnic identity. The secularist Turkish state – through the institution of the Diyanet – treats these groups as part of the Turkish Muslim majority by not differentiating among Muslim groups. Religiously oriented Turks deny these groups their identities by holding on to Ottoman notions of the millet system that do not recognize Muslim minorities.

### ***The Ottoman heritage and the role of government in social service provision***

A final common area of interest among religious NGOs is the conception of *hizmet* and attitude of pride for the Ottoman heritage of Turkey. Religious organizations frame their purpose and activities according to these religiously tinged concepts, with parallels in the AKP's rhetoric. Like the civil society leaders interviewed, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and others in the AKP associate their ideology of conservatism with the concept of *hizmet*, which means rendering social services in the name of Islam and implies a move away from state-provided social welfare. In our interviews of party officials from the AKP and representatives of religiously oriented foundations and associations, interviewees repeatedly hearkened back to Ottoman history and used Islamic ethics and morality as a guide to public policy rather than reliance on abstract political ideologies. Vorhoff notes this phenomenon in the strategic framing of MÜSIAD's identity in the late 1990s.<sup>65</sup> Thus conservatism in Turkey has a unique meaning, with a stress on morality and orderly change, giving religion an important role in defining the public good and how it should be achieved. As Yavuz describes it, Turkish conservatism is 'not anti-statist but rather pro-nation, pro-state, and especially pro-Ottoman Islam'.<sup>66</sup>

A shared Ottoman history and identity has been used by Islamists to counter the secularist version of Turkish identity.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, according to public opinion

surveys, many Turks feel an obligation to give to charity because of their religious beliefs and requirements.<sup>68</sup> According to a systematic study of Turkish civil society, religious organizations such as mosque-building associations have the largest volunteer and donor base.<sup>69</sup> Religious foundations throughout the country also provide scholarships and housing to students and aid to the needy. While charitable giving does not have to be politicized, the activities of religiously oriented foundations and associations demonstrate how religiously inspired charity can be used to further political interests.

Religious NGO leaders interviewed focused on encouraging what they referred to as ‘a social type of Islam’ instead of a ‘political’ one by constantly emphasizing that during Ottoman times there existed a society in which the religious foundations took care of providing for education, food aid, cultural preservation, building and maintenance of infrastructure, and other services. They argue that this is a way of keeping the government secular while allowing religion to play a larger role in society. The president of TGTV articulated their vision of what the Ottoman foundational culture is:

For example, in health and education, during the Ottoman Empire, it was all civil society organizations that provided these things. Foundations have reached those areas that even the government has been unable to reach, as you know. We fulfil a role that government cannot.<sup>70</sup>

While it is not uncommon for such faith-based organizations to play a role in public service provision in Western democracies, our interviewees favour religious foundations to be the sole provider of services. Thus, they can be seen as promoting a conservative political ideology that advocates a smaller welfare state. While these groups claim that their activities are not political, the policies they advocate are strikingly similar to the ‘conservative democratic’ ideology professed by the AKP.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, proponents of this view neglect to acknowledge that religious groups may have conditions attached to the charity they provide, potentially posing problems for minorities or those people who do not want to abide by religious rules.

The Gülen Movement is another important actor in Turkish civil society that has been instrumental in advocating this vision of *hizmet* or Ottoman charity. The movement is organized around the self-exiled religious leader Fethullah Gülen and is comprised of moderate Islamists who stress inter-cultural dialogue and tolerance as part of their ideology.<sup>72</sup> The movement runs several media outlets, including a major newspaper (*Zaman*) and television stations. Scores of affiliated foundations and associations exist to disseminate the group’s message to Turkish citizens as well as politicians and academics abroad. For example, one of the many volunteer-based charity organizations of the movement, *Kimse Yok Mu?* [Is There Anybody Out There?], had 635,790 people contribute over 13 million dollars in 2007, and the organization has repeated this kind of performance consistently throughout the 2000s.<sup>73</sup> Gülen supporters are also successful businesspeople organized in their own association, the Confederation of



Businessmen and Industrialists of Turkey (*Türkiye İşadamları ve Sanayiciler Konfederasyonu*, TUSKON), founded in 2005. The movement has been politically influential though it has remained mostly non-partisan.<sup>74</sup>

The movement's approach to providing educational resources to the poor and needy on a large scale in Turkey has been in line with the understanding of *hizmet* embraced by religious civil society. In addition, Gülen provides spiritual leadership and guides followers on how to practice social and economic Islam. Thus, the Gülen Movement emblemizes the strategic framing of religiously oriented civil society that operates in the restricted space of Turkish politics. Some have proposed that the Gülen Movement has been building a strong presence in the Turkish bureaucracy, but we argue that the movement does not have to be incorporated officially into the bureaucracy to have political importance.<sup>75</sup> Even without direct political connections, religiously oriented NGOs are still able to frame their issues parallel to the dominant actors in the political structure and generate a strong national political discourse around religious demands.

The political opportunity structure created by the AKP's 'conservative democracy' ideology has created openings for religious civil society to become involved in social service provision in Turkey. This necessarily politicizes these groups, as they become complicit in the ruling party's conception of the reduced role of the state in providing welfare to its citizens. However, religious civil society groups also participate in this politicization by framing their activities as being in line with Ottoman Islamic conceptions of charity and foundational society. This is a strategic framing, as a conception of Turkish society being based on Ottoman values accentuates the importance of religious civil society.

Finally, the strategic framing of civil society's interests can also be seen to be a result of the AKP's shift in foreign policy agenda since taking power in 2002. Öniş and Yılmaz note a rupture in foreign policy orientation taking place in the middle of the first AKP government, with the party moving away from a strong focus on European Union accession towards a 'loose Europeanization' or 'soft Euro-Asianism' which involves friendlier relations with the Arab world.<sup>76</sup> Reflecting the party's neo-Ottoman orientation, some religious organizations – such as İHH and MAZLUMDER—included the situation of Palestinians in their platforms. The concern with the plight of fellow Muslims in foreign countries reflects the AKP's discourse that asserts Turkey's position as a leader in the Middle East, in part based on its inheritance of the Ottoman legacy.<sup>77</sup>

## Conclusion

In this article we have argued that laws regulating the expression of religion in politics in Turkey create constraints for the expression of religious interests. Because of bans on religious political parties and strict state control over religious institutions, members of both the Sunni Muslim majority and religious minority groups face restrictions in trying to articulate their religious interests in the public realm. However, due to recent changes in laws regulating the civil society sector and rule by a religiously

sympathetic political party, religious groups have been able to use civil society to their advantage. Yet this sector is not free of restrictions either. To bypass regulations prohibiting NGOs that support a single religion, religiously oriented groups have formed organizations around human rights, education, and economic issues. They thus use these organizations to further a religious agenda and affect public policy. While religious civil society does not necessarily need to be political, in Turkey it operates as such due to the opportunity structure created by regulations and the current political climate.

In the current regulatory structure, the AKP cannot be an overtly religious party. They must frame their religious demands in the language of democracy, human rights, and the role of charities in social service provision. As described above, an example of this strategic framing is their use of the term ‘conservative democracy’ to characterize their ideology. In the same way, religiously oriented associations and foundations are restricted from registering on religious grounds. They thus use the concepts of religious freedom, common identity, and Ottoman charity to describe their interests. This framing of religious interests in non-religious language creates a national mood or *zeitgeist* that reinforces the important place of a very specific set of religious interests in the public discourse.

Our article points to the importance of studying non-governmental associational activity to understand politics in Turkey. The Turkish example also demonstrates the importance of studying religious civil society under situations of strict state control over religion. Throughout the Muslim world, religious organizations form a large segment of the associational sector, yet their activities and effects have not been extensively studied. Further research into these groups can help us to understand how they influence the direction of political change in these countries and whether they are likely to aid or hinder the democratization process. Yet we cannot observe these effects without situating them in the structures of society in order to understand how they interact with state regulations, social mores, and the political climate.

## Notes

1. In 1999, those that identified themselves as religious or very religious made up about 31% of the population. In 2006 this number was 59%. Moreover, between 1999 and 2006 there have been increases in those who identify themselves as extremely religious as well as those who identify first as Muslim before other identities, such as Turkish. When asked to rank themselves on a 0–10 scale (0 representing ‘Secularist’ and 10 ‘Islamist’), 20% of the people surveyed identified themselves closer to the Secularist side of the spectrum (0–4 on the scale), while about 49% identified closer to the Islamist end of the scale (6–10). There is also a close relationship between religiosity and political orientation. In 2006, respondents who voted for the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) placed themselves, on average, at 7.1 on the same scale, while voters for the strongly secular Republican People’s Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) placed themselves at 2.8. Thus, AKP voters considered themselves to be more ‘Islamist’ than those who voted for other parties. See Çarkoğlu and Toprak, *Değişen Türkiye’de Din*, 41–2.

2. Berger, *Sacred Canopy*; Wald and Wilcox, 'Getting Religion'.
3. İcduygu, Meydanođlu, and Sert, 'Civil Society in Turkey', 29.
4. Schleifer, 'Turkey-Israel Crisis'.
5. İcduygu, Meydanođlu, and Sert, 'Civil Society in Turkey'.
6. Eisinger, 'Conditions of Protest Behavior'; Meyer, 'Protest and Political Opportunities'; Tarrow, *Power in Movement*; Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*.
7. Dalton, *Citizen Politics*; Meyer and Tarrow, *Social Movement Society*; Tarrow, *Power in Movement*.
8. Snow and Benford, 'Ideology'; Snow et al., 'Frame Alignment Processes'.
9. Berger, *Sacred Canopy*.
10. Berger, *Desecularization of the World*; Marty and Appleby, *Fundamentalisms Observed*.
11. Gill, 'Religion and Comparative Politics'; Wald and Wilcox, 'Getting Religion'; Gill, *Rendering Unto Caesar*; Iannaccone, 'Voodoo Economics'; Stark and Finke, *Acts of Faith*.
12. G6zaydın, 'Diyanet and Politics'; Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy*.
13. G6zaydın, 'Diyanet and Politics', 218.
14. Bardakođlu, "'Moderate Perception of Islam'", 367–8.
15. Carkođlu and Toprak, *Deđiŝen T6rkiye'de Din*, 37.
16. Carkođlu, *T6rkiye'de Din*.
17. US Department of State, *International Religious Freedom Report*.
18. See Articles 2 and 68 of the Turkish Constitution.
19. *Cemaats* are lodges used by Sufi religious orders, while *tarikas* are religious social orders.
20. Human Rights Watch, 'Turkey: Party Case'.
21. Bikmen and Meydanciođlu, *Civil Society in Turkey*, 37–9.
22. Erdođan Tosun, *Demokratikleŝme Perspektifinden*; Toprak, 'Civil Society in Turkey'; Turan, 1972–1996 D6neminde İstanbul'da Derneksel Hayat'.
23. Mardin, 'Center-Periphery Relations'.
24. Toprak, 'Religion as a State Ideology'; Yavuz, 'Political Islam'.
25. See K6c6kcan, 'State, Islam and Religious Liberty', 489, for a discussion of how being Muslim has been 'a hallmark of Turkish identity'.
26. Őimŝek, 'New Social Movements in Turkey', 121.
27. Őimŝek, 'The Transformation of Civil Society in Turkey', 48.
28. White, *Islamist Mobilization*; Navaro-Yashin, 'Uses and Abuses'.
29. İcduygu, Meydanođlu, and Sert, *Civil Society in Turkey*, 26–7.
30. US Department of State, *International Religious Freedom Report*.
31. Ibid.
32. Akdođan, 'Meaning of Conservative Democratic'.
33. To select the organizations, we carried out extensive research in three major Turkish news sources: *Zaman*, *H6rriyet*, and *Bianet*. *Zaman* is a conservative and Islamist daily newspaper, while *H6rriyet* has a nationalist and secularist perspective. *Bianet* is an internet news site funded primarily by the European Union which emphasizes independent reporting, human rights, and multiculturalism. We searched the archives of these three sources for references to civil society during presidential elections and following civilian constitutional change initiatives in 2007–2008. From this research we selected a non-random sample of organizations that repeatedly received coverage in all three of the papers in order to conduct elite interviews with their leadership (see Appendix 1 for a list of the organizations).
34. We conducted a total of 18 interviews with associations and foundations. We also interviewed eight key party officials who are in charge of public and civil society relations from the top three parties in Parliament.

35. Pusch, 'Stepping into the Public Sphere', 481.
36. See <http://www.musiad.org.tr/> (accessed June 1, 2011).
37. Turgut, 'Anatolian Tigers'.
38. Buğra, 'Class, Culture and State'.
39. Vorhoff, 'Businessmen and their Organizations' .
40. See <http://www.askon.org.tr> (accessed June 1, 2011)
41. Dexter, *Elite and Specialized Interviewing*, 5.
42. Zald, 'Culture, Ideology and Strategic Framing', 262.
43. Brand, 'Cyclical Aspects'.
44. Gamson and Meyer, 'Framing Political Opportunity', 281.
45. Interview with organization representative, December 26, 2008.
46. Interview with organization representatives, December 24, 2008.
47. Interview with organization representatives, December 25, 2008.
48. See Aksoy, 'Orta Okul', for a detailed discussion of the increased number of students in the religious schools in relation to other technical schools in the 1970s and 1980s.
49. Çakır, Bozan, and Talu, *İmam Hatip Liseleri*.
50. Interview with organization representatives, December 23, 2008. According to the US Department of State, *International Religious Freedom Report*, mandatory religious education in public schools is supposed to teach about religion and morals generally, but the curriculum is mainly focused on the majority Sunni Muslim religion as the basis for understanding religion.
51. Gill and Keshavarzian, 'State Building and Religious Resources'.
52. Regulations concerning the ban on headscarves in universities continue to change. In 2010, the head of the Turkish Higher Educational Council announced – in opposition to a 2008 Constitutional Court decision affirming the ban – that university instructors would not be allowed to take action against students wearing headscarves. Thus, most universities now allow students to wear headscarves on campus. This is not a formal change on the headscarf ban in civil service positions but there seems to be lax enforcement in some of those offices as well. It will be interesting to see how civil society groups respond to the changes in their platforms in the future as these issues become less pertinent politically.
53. Gill, *Political Origins of Religious Liberty*, 232.
54. Interview with organization representatives, January 3, 2009.
55. Ibid.
56. Kadioğlu, 'Civil Society, Islam and Democracy', 35–7; Toumarkine, 'Human Rights Organizations', 467–8.
57. Toumarkine, 'Human Rights Organizations', 468.
58. This number is a very rough estimate, as the Turkish government does not ask citizens their ethnic origin in the census. According to a survey conducted by Çarkoğlu and Toprak, the number of people who spoke Kurdish or Zaza to their parents and/or know the languages is 16.1% of the population. See Çarkoğlu and Toprak, *Değişen Türkiye'de Din*.
59. Çarkoğlu and Toprak, *Değişen Türkiye'de Din*, 37.
60. TGTV, *TGTV'nin Kürt Meselesine*, Section A3.
61. The framing of Islam uniting all citizens in Turkey, especially in reference to Kurdish and Alevi citizens, can be found in many of Prime Minister Erdoğan's speeches (see <http://www.akparti.org.tr>, accessed March 22, 2011).
62. Interview with leader of foundation, December 25, 2008.
63. Interview with organization representatives, January 2, 2009.
64. Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 156–7.
65. Vorhoff, 'Businessmen and their Organizations', 166.
66. Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy*, 87.

67. Çınar, *Modernity, Islam, and Secularism*.
68. Çarkoğlu, 'Trends in Individual Giving'.
69. Bikmen and Meydancıoğlu, *Civil Society in Turkey*, 44.
70. Interview with organization representatives, December 25, 2008.
71. Akdoğan, 'Meaning of Conservative Democratic'.
72. See [www.fethullahgulen.org](http://www.fethullahgulen.org) (accessed March 22, 2011)
73. Koç, 'Generating an Understanding'.
74. The Gülen Movement broke tradition with its non-partisan stance by openly supporting the AKP in the 2007 national election. See Kuru, 'Changing Perspectives on Islamism', 143.
75. Çağaptay, 'Behind Turkey's Witchhunt'.
76. Öniş and Yılmaz, 'Between Europeanization', 7–10.
77. Criss, 'Parameters of Turkish Foreign Policy', 13–14.

### Notes on contributors

Ani Sarkissian is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan. Her research focuses on the relationship between religion and politics in Eurasia and the Middle East.

Ş. İlgü Özler is an Associate Professor of Political Science and International Relations at SUNY New Paltz. Her research focuses on the relationship between comparative political institutions and civil society in Turkey and Latin America.

### Bibliography

- Akdoğan, Yalçın. 'The Meaning of Conservative Democratic Political Identity'. In *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti*, ed. Hakan M. Yavuz, 49–65. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006.
- Aksoy, Hasan Hüseyin. 'Orta Okul Düzeyindeki Din Eğitimi Okulları ve Diğer Meslek Liselerinin Sayısal Gelişmeleri (1978–1987 Dönemi)'. *Edebiyat Bilimleri Fakültesi Dergisi, Ankara Üniversitesi* 23 (1990): 145–62.
- Bardakçıoğlu, Ali. "'Moderate Perception of Islam" and the Turkish Model of the Diyanet: The President's Statement'. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 24 (2004): 367–74.
- Berger, Peter L., ed. *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1999.
- Berger, Peter L. *The Sacred Canopy*. New York: Anchor, 1967.
- Bikmen, Filiz, and Zeynep Meydancıoğlu, eds. *Civil Society in Turkey and Era of Transition, CIVICUS Report*. Istanbul: Third Sector Foundation of Turkey, 2006.
- Brand, Karl-Werner. 'Cyclical Aspects of New Social Movements: Waves of Cultural Criticism and Mobilization Cycles of New Middle-class Radicalism'. In *Challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies*, ed. Russell J. Dalton and Manfred Kuechler, 23–42. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Buğra, Ayşe. 'Class, Culture and State: An Analysis of Interest Representation by Two Turkish Business Associations'. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 30 (1998): 521–39.
- Çağaptay, Soner. 'Behind Turkey's Witch Hunt'. *Newsweek*, May 16, 2009, International edition.
- Çakır, Ruşen, İrfan Bozan, and Balkan Talu. *İmam Hatip Liseleri Efsaneler ve Gerçekler* [Imam-Hatip schools: legends and realities]. Istanbul: TESEV Yayınları. 2004.

- Çarkoğlu, Ali. Trends in Individual Giving and Foundation Practices in Turkey. In *Philanthropy in Turkey: Citizens, Foundations and the Pursuit of Social Justice*, ed. Filiz Bikmen and Rana Zincir, 95–161. Istanbul: TUSEV Publications, 2006.
- Çarkoğlu, Ali. *Türkiye’de Din, Toplum ve Siyaset*. Istanbul: TESEV Publications, 1999.
- Çarkoğlu, Ali, and Binnaz Toprak. *Değişen Türkiye’de Din, Toplum Ve Siyaset*. Istanbul: TESEV Publications, 2006.
- Çınar, Alev. *Modernity, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey: Bodies, Places, and Time*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.
- Criss, Nur Bilge. ‘Parameters of Turkish Foreign Policy Under the AKP Governments’. *UNISCI Discussion Papers* 23 (2010): 9–22. <http://www.ucm.es/info/unisci/UNISCI-Review.htm> (accessed November 23, 2011).
- Dalton, Russell J. *Citizen Politics in Western Democracies*. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publishers, 1988.
- Dexter, Lewis A. *Elite and Specialized Interviewing*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970.
- Eisinger, Peter K. ‘The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities’. *American Political Science Review* 67 (1973): 11–68.
- Erdoğan Tosun, Gülgün. *Demokratikleşme Perspektifinden Devlet-Sivil Toplum İlişkisi*. Istanbul: Alfa Basın Yayın, 2001.
- Gamson, William A., and David S. Meyer. ‘Framing Political Opportunity’. In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, ed. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, 275–91. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Gill, Anthony. *The Political Origins of Religious Liberty*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Gill, Anthony. ‘Religion and Comparative Politics’. *Annual Review of Political Science* 4 (2001): 117–38.
- Gill, Anthony. *Rendering Unto Caesar: The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Gill, Anthony, and Arang Keshavarzian. ‘State Building and Religious Resources: An Institutional Theory of Church-State Relations in Iran and Mexico’. *Politics and Society* 27 (1999): 431–65.
- Gözaydın, İstar B. ‘*Diyanet* and Politics’. *The Muslim World* 98 (2008): 216–27.
- Human Rights Watch. *Turkey: Party Case Shows Need for Reform*. London: Human Rights Watch, July 31, 2008. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4896c48f.html>
- Iannaccone, Laurence. ‘Voodoo Economics? Reviewing the Rational Choice Approach to Religion’. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 34 (1995): 76–89.
- İçduygu, Ahmet, Zeynep Meydanoglu, and Deniz Ş. Sert. ‘Civil Society in Turkey: At a Turning Point’. CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) Project Analytical Country Report for Turkey II. Istanbul: TUSEV Publications, 2010.
- Kadıoğlu, Ayşe. ‘Civil Society, Islam and Democracy in Turkey: A Study of Three Islamic Non-Governmental Organizations’. *The Muslim World* 95 (2005): 23–41.
- Koç, Doğan. ‘Generating an Understanding of Financial Resources in the Gülen Movement: “Kimse Yok mu” Solidarity and Aid Association’. Paper presented at the Islam in the Age of Global Challenges: Alternative Perspectives of the Gülen Movement meeting, Washington, DC, November 14–15, 2008.
- Küçükcan, Talip. ‘State, Islam and Religious Liberty in Modern Turkey: Reconfiguration of Religion in the Public Sphere’. *Brigham Young University Law Review* 2 (2003): 475–507.
- Kuru, Ahmet T. ‘Changing Perspectives on Islamism and Secularism in Turkey: The Gülen Movement and the AK Party’. In *Muslim World in Transition: Contributions of the Gülen Movement*, ed. İhsan Yılmaz, Eillen Barker, Henry Barkey, Muhammad Abdul Halleem, and George Harris, 140–51. London: Leeds Metropolitan University Press, 2007.

- Kymlicka, Will. *Multicultural Citizenship*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Mardin, Serif. 'Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?'. *Daedalus* 102 (1973): 169–90.
- Marty, Martin E., and R. Scott Appleby, eds. *Fundamentalisms Observed*, vol. 1. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Meyer, David S. 'Protest and Political Opportunities'. *Annual Review of Sociology* 30 (2004): 125–45.
- Meyer, David S., and Sidney Tarrow, eds. *The Social Movement Society: Contentious Politics for a New Century*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998.
- Navaro-Yashin, Yael. 'Uses and Abuses of "State and Civil Society" in Contemporary Turkey'. *New Perspectives on Turkey* 18 (1998): 1–22.
- Öniş, Ziya, and Şuhnaz Yılmaz. 'Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era'. *Turkish Studies* 10 (2009): 7–24.
- Pusch, Barbara. 'Stepping into the Public Sphere: The Rise of Islamist and Religious-Conservative Women's Non-Governmental Organizations'. In *Civil Society in the Grip of Nationalism: Studies on Political Culture in Contemporary Turkey*, ed. Stefanos Yerasimos, Günter Seufert, and Karin Vorhoff, 475–505. Istanbul: Orient Institut, 2000.
- Schleifer, Yigal. 'Turkey-Israel Crisis: Why the Formerly Obscure IHH is Playing a Key Role'. *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 4, 2010.
- Şimşek, Sefa. 'New Social Movements in Turkey Since 1980'. *Turkish Studies* 5 (2004): 111–39.
- Şimşek, Sefa. 'The Transformation of Civil Society in Turkey: From Quantity to Quality'. *Turkish Studies* 5 (2004): 46–74.
- Snow, David A., and Robert D. Benford. 'Ideology, Frame Resonance and Participant Mobilization'. In *From Structure to Action: Social Movement Participation Across Cultures*, ed. Bert Klandermans, Hanspeter Kriesi, and Sidney Tarrow, 197–217. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1988.
- Snow, David A., E. Burke Rochford, Jr., Steven K. Worden, and Robert D. Benford. 'Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation'. *American Sociological Review* 51 (1986): 464–81.
- Stark, Rodney, and Roger Finke. *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*. Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000.
- Tarrow, Sidney. *Power in Movement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- TGTV. *TGTV'nin Kürt Meselesine İlişkin Tespit ve Önerileri*. Istanbul: TGTV, 2007. <http://www.tgtv.org> (accessed June 1, 2011)
- Tilly, Charles. *From Mobilization to Revolution*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1978.
- Toprak, Binnaz. 'Civil Society in Turkey'. In *Civil Society in the Middle East*, vol. 2 *Social, Economic and Political Studies of the Middle East*, ed. Augustus R. Norton, 87–118. Leiden: Brill, 1996.
- Toprak, Binnaz. 'Religion as a State Ideology in a Secular Setting: The Turkish-Islamic Synthesis'. In *Aspects of Religion in Secular Turkey*, ed. Malcolm Wagstaff, 10–15. Durham, NC: University of Durham, Center for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1990.
- Toumarkine, Alexandre. 'Human Rights Organizations: Defending the Particular or the Universal?'. In *Civil Society in the Grip of Nationalism: Studies on Political Culture in Contemporary Turkey*, ed. Stefanos Yerasimos, Günter Seufert, and Karin Vorhoff, 433–73. Istanbul: Orient Institut, 2000.
- Turan, İlder. '1972–1996 Döneminde İstanbul'da Derneksel Hayat'. In *Tanzimattan Günümüze İstanbul'da Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, eds. Ahmet Yücekök, İlder Turan, and Mehmet Alkan, 197–227. Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1998.
- Turgut, Pelin. 'Anatolian Tigers: Regions Prove Plentiful'. *Financial Times*, November 20, 2006, Electronic version.

- US Department of State. *International Religious Freedom Report*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148991.htm> (accessed November 25, 2011).
- Vorhoff, Karin. 'Businessmen and their Organizations: Between Instrumental Solidarity, Cultural Diversity, and the State'. In *Civil Society in the Grip of Nationalism: Studies on Political Culture in Contemporary Turkey*, ed. Stefanos Yerasimos, Günter Seufert, and Karin Vorhoff, 143–95. Istanbul: Orient Institut, 2000.
- Wald, Kenneth D., and Clyde Wilcox. 'Getting Religion: Has Political Science Rediscovered the Faith Factor?'. *American Political Science Review* 100 (2006): 523–9.
- White, Jenny. *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002.
- Yavuz, M. Hakan. 'Political Islam and the Welfare (Refah) Party in Turkey'. *Comparative Politics* 29 (1997): 63–82.
- Yavuz, M. Hakan. *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Zald, Mayer N. 'Culture, Ideology and Strategic Framing'. In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, ed. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, 261–74. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

### Appendix 1: list of organizations interviewed

1. ASKON, *Anadolu Aslanları İşadamları Derneği*, Association of Anatolian Businessmen
2. *Birlik Vakfı*, Unity Foundation
3. ÇYDD, *Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği*, Association for Support of Contemporary Life
4. *Dünya Ehl-i Beyt Vakfı*, World Ahlul Bayt Foundation
5. GYV, *Gazeteciler ve Yazarlar Vakfı*, Journalists and Writers Foundation
6. IDSB, *İslam Dünyası Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları Birliği*, The Union of NGOs of the Islamic World
7. İHD, *İnsan Hakları Derneği*: Human Rights Association
8. İHH, *İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri ve İnsani Yardım Vakfı*, The Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief
9. MAZLUMDER, *İnsan Hakları ve Mazlumlar için Dayanışma Derneği*, Organization of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People
10. MÜSİAD, *Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği*, Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association
11. Özgür-der, *Özgür Düşünce ve Eğitim Hakları Derneği*, Freedom of Thought and Educational Rights Association
12. *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği*, Pir Sultan Abdal Cultural Association
13. STGM, *Sivil Toplum Geliştirme Merkezi*, Civil Society Development Centre
14. TBMM-OÇG, *Ortak Çalışma Gurubu*, Working Group Between Parliament and Civil Society
15. TGTV, *Türkiye Gönüllü Teşekküller Vakfı*, Turkey Voluntary Agencies Foundation
16. TÜSİAD, *Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği*, Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association
17. TUSEV, *Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Vakfı*, Third Sector Foundation of Turkey
18. TÜSKON, *Türkiye İşadamları ve Sanayicileri Konfederasyonu*, Confederation of Industrialists and Businessmen of Turkey