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Creating Cultures of Piety: Secularism, Mobility, Gender and the IHL Schools in Turkey

1951-2010

By

Esra Erdoğan Albayrak

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Raka Ray (Chair)
Professor Ann Swidler
Professor Saba Mahmood

Summer 2016

Abstract

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by

Esra Erdogan Albayrak

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Raka Ray, Chair

This dissertation is a comparative analysis of the trajectory of the relations between state, society and religion in Turkey with a focus on its reflection on religious education. Turkey's Imam Hatip high schools (IHLs) stand out as a key Islamic education institution where a rigidly secular state, religion, and society have encountered one another. This study challenges the existing literature by offering a comparative analysis of the experiences of three generations of IHL graduates between 1951 and 2010. This intergenerational comparative allows capturing the changing socio-economic dynamics of devout Muslims in Turkey.

Comparison among the religious education systems in five countries, France, the United Kingdom, the US, Indonesia, and Egypt, illustrates that relationship between state and religion is a dynamic one. Different interpretations of secularism emerge in relation to sociological changes over time, which assert itself on rethinking systems of religious education around the world. Much of the contemporary debates revolve around crafting secularism such that it helps the deepening of democracy. Turkey's experience with secularism however offers an exceptional case where the state observes a separationist approach to religion, but also controls it. IHLs gained popularity, within this framework, as state schools where the secularist norms of the state and the spiritual values of the devout Muslims in society encountered.

This sociological analysis also illustrates that in a society where Islam is deeply embedded religious education acts as a function of upward social mobility especially for pious women. The findings of the study contributes to our understandings of gender and religious education and suggests new concepts such as "social fusion," "self-making," and "culture of piety" as tools for better analyzing social transformations that took place in Turkey over the last 60 years.

Keywords: Culture of Piety, Social Mobility, Imam Hatip, Secularism, Democracy, Gender, Religious Education, Turkey

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Dedication

To my all-time hero, my father, who taught me to take pride in who I am and to stand up for things I believe in, to be strong, decisive and courageous... A true visionary, a beautiful, humble soul…

To the most gracious person in my life, my mother, who shared the dream of a visionary man and raised her children with a sense of deep social awareness… Always contributing to society with her strong character and attitude…

To my beloved husband who has garnered in me the excitement and joy at the numerous hardships we went through over the years and strengthened my belief in a brighter future. I am honored to raise a family with this young man of ideals.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation started as my way of resisting injustice. Thousands of high school students faced state discrimination following the February 28, 1997 coup in Turkey, which dramatically changed the course of their lives. My personal attempt to at least recognize these experiences and name them as injustice opened up an enormous collective memory shared over three generations. Although I cannot thank them by name, I owe enormous debt to the people I met in the field. Some of them graciously opened their homes and spent hours for conversations and shared very personal memories while others pulled out their photo albums from their IHL years. I am most thankful for the oldest graduates, who are around 80 to 90 years old and enthusiastically shared almost every detail about their IHL years. Reading through the diaries of Kerim[1], who kept them perpetually since the 1950s, will always remain an incomparable experience. Some of the people I interviewed passed away in the course of the study, and I feel honored to have them as part of this study and pray that God blesses their souls.

I cannot express my gratitude enough for my committee chair, Raka Ray, whose faith in me in this project provided strength and energy in times of hardship and stress. Raka's generosity to share insights, time and intuitions has been so precious. Her patient guidance and mentorship truly nourished my self-confidence and raised my enthusiasm for sociological research. I am very lucky to have Saba Mahmood on my committee. Her keen eyes, sharp reasoning, and devotion to a life with ideals have truly strengthened my academic capacities. Her incisive comments and critiques stimulated my thinking along the way and enriched my work. I also thank Ann Swidler, who always supported my academic progress from my first year in the department as the youngest of my cohort to years later as a mother of three children. I learned a lot from Ann's seminars, but maybe more from our casual conversations where she used to amaze me with her command of literature, arts, and history and her creative ways to link them to my research. I need to thank many friends and colleagues who made this work possible, but also enjoyable. Among them, Meryem İlayda Atlas deserves special thanks for reading my work over and over. Her honest criticism, creative attitude, and constructive approach helped me think about my arguments in different ways and articulated them.

I dedicate this dissertation to my beautiful family. Without their ongoing support and unconditional love, none of this would be possible. I owe many days and nights to my dearest sister, Sümeyye, who took care of my little children while I had to work on the dissertation. I feel lucky for having a colleague and friend, Şule Albayrak, whose intelligence and sincere friendship keeps enriching my life. I am grateful for my mother-in-law's ongoing prayers and encouragements...

My father has always emboldened me to dream big and to work resolutely to make them real. It is his visionary character that made it possible for me to study abroad, as the first girl in my large family to do so. His life full of hardships and achievements, as well as failures, continues to inspire me to always take a stance for that which is right, not the powerful. My mother, who had to leave her educational career before high school, must be the one who is responsible for sowing in me the passion to seek knowledge. Being a self- made woman herself, I always respected her strong character and benefitted from her wisdom.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my husband, Berat, for bearing with me through the most stressful times of my writing and willingly changing the course of his career to accompany my graduate studies. I can only hope that the outcome has been worth it all.

Finally, I am blessed with three precious gifts, Ahmet Akif, Emine Mahinur, Sadık Eymen. They have been patient with me through all these years of work, and indeed have been a source of joy, perseverance, and goodness. I pray that they grow up to become conscientious adults and make us believe that a better world is possible.

[1] All names are pseudonyms.

List of Acronyms
In alphabetical order

AD: Akıncılar Association, *Akıncılar Derneği*

AIHL: Anatolian Imam Hatip School, *Anadolu İmam Hatip Lisesi*

AGH: Anatolian Youth Organisation, *Anadolu Gençlik Hareketi*

ALS: National Anatolian High School Exams, *Anadolu Lisesi Sınavı*

AK Party: Justice and Development Party, *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*

ANAP: Motherland Party, *Anavatan Partsi*

AP: Justice Party, *Adalet Partisi*

CHP: Republican People’s Party, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*

CUP: Committee of Union and Progress, İttihat ve Terakki Partisi

ÇYDD: Association in Support of Modern Life, *Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği*

DİB: Presidency of Religious Affairs, *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*

DP: Democratic Party, *Demokrat Parti*

DSP: Democratic Left Party, *Demokratik Sol Parti*

DYP: True Path Party, *Doğru Yol Partisi*

ENSAR: Ensar Foundation, *Ensar Vakfi*

FP: Virtue Party, *Fazilet Partisi*

İBDA-C: Great Eastern Islamic Raiders' Front, *İslami Büyük Doğu Akıncıları Cephesi*

IHL: Imam Hatip High School, *İmam Hatip Lisesi*

İSMEK: Istanbul Municipality Lifelong Learning Center, *İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Yaşam Boyu Öğrenme Merkezi*

İYC: Organization for Promoting Education, *İlim Yayma Cemiyeti*

KSSGM: Directorate General of Women’s Status and Problems, *Kadın Statüsü ve Sorunları Başkanlığı*

LEA: Local Education Authority [in England]

MEB: Turkey's Ministry of National Education, *Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı*

MGK: National Security Council, *Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*

MGV: National Youth Foundation, *Milli Gençlik Vakfı*

MHP: Nationalist Movement Party, *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*

MMH: National Struggle Movement, *Milli Mücadele Hareketi*

MNP: National Order Party, *Milli Nizam Partisi*

MSP: National Salvation Party, *Milli Selamet Partisi*

MTTB: National Turkish Student Union, *Türk Talebe Birliği*

MÜSİAD: Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association, *Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği*

ONDER: Organization for Imam Hatip Schools' Students and Alumni, *İmam Hatip Okulları Mezunları ve Mensupları Derneği*

ÖSYS: National Student Assessment and Placement Exam, *Öğrenci Seçme ve Yerleştirme Sınavı*

RP: Welfare Party, *Refah Partisi*

SACRE: Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education [in England]

TTK: Turkey's Law of Unified Education, *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*

TÜRGEV: Turkish Youth and Education Foundation, *Türkiye Gençlik ve Eğitime Hizmet Vakfı*

TÜSİAD: Turkish Industry and Business Association, *Türk Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği*

YMMH: Movement for the Revival of National Struggle, *Yeniden Milli Mücadele Hareketi*

YÖK: Council of Higher Education, *Yükseköğretim Kurumu*

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CHAPTER 1
Introduction

"The sociological imagination enables its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals" (Mills 1959: 12)

Following a period of about 30 years of a state ban on religious education as part of a rigid secularization project, the first multi-party elections were held in Turkey in 1950, when Adnan Menderes' Democratic Party (DP) won in a landslide over the Republican People's Party (CHP) – the party of the founding elite. I remember my grandparents' accounts of those days. They described the first real multi-party election was God's grace for Turkey.

They explained how they faced hardships during the period of single-party rule and how they could only learn Islam's holy book, the Qur'an, secretly in the barns of their village on the Black Sea coast. They were wary of being caught by the gendarme. They said it felt so bitter when in 1932 the CHP banned the recitation of the daily calls to prayer in the original Arabic format only to replace it with the Turkish version.

These stories had little resonance for me until the secondary section of the school at which I was enrolled was shut down as part of the February 28 National Security Council (MGK) decisions in 1997, a set of regulations imposed on the elected Necmettin Erbakan-Tansu Çiller government with claims to protect the constitutional principle of *laicité*. At that time I was a student at the Kadıköy Imam Hatip High School (IHL), a religion-based vocational high school. This was the same year some of our teachers who wore headscarves were forced to remove them at school. Those who did not comply were fired. We would gather to protest our teachers' forced departure. We did all eventually graduate amid all this hardship. The lower coefficiency factor[2] which significantly affects a student's final score from the central university entrance exams and the headscarf ban at universities prevented some of the highest achieving students from continuing their education any further. Others found sponsors to either attend private universities or study abroad. Some remained in Turkey as a "symbolic diaspora" as Yasin Aktay[3] would put it, while others struggled with, in İsmail Çağlar's[4] words, a "physical exile", in countries with which they had little cultural or linguistic acquaintance.

From the accounts of my grandparents and my personal experience in high school, I came to see the Turkish state as an overarching, powerful, all-knowing entity presented by a secular military and bureaucratic elite that dictated to society what was right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate, sacred and profane, Turkish and non-Turkish as well as myriad

[2] According to Turkey's higher education policies, high school graduates are placed in university degree programs based on their score of the central university placement exam combined with their high school GPA multiplied with a co-efficiency factor. In 1999, the Ministry of National Education adopted a new measure that aimed at directing students to university degree programs in compliance with their fields of study at high school. High school education in Turkey is organized in different tracks – verbal, math and science, and vocational among others. Technically, students' GPAs are multiplied by a coefficiency factor of 0.8 if they chose a degree program within their field of high school study, and that would be added to their exam score. If they chose a degree program outside of their high school field of study, then their GPAs are multiplied by 0.3. The same measure applied to vocational school students, including IHL graduates, and as such, significantly decreased their chances for placement in university degree programs other than in theology departments. Until then, IHLs functioned as a form of public school option for those who wanted to receive religious education in addition to a general education in order to lead a pious life and not so much to gain a career as a religious functionary. While the differentiated coefficiency measure aimed for a more efficient system of university placement that would correspond to the developmental needs of the country, in the long run it created a rigid system in which students have to make lifetime career decisions very early in life and with little self-discovery. This measure was abrogated in 2010 when all students were given equal opportunity to access university degree programs regardless of their high school track.

[3] Yasin Aktay developed the term "symbolic diaspora" in his doctoral dissertation as a conceptual tool to address the way Islamists in Turkey experienced themselves, which was a product of Turkish modernization. He argues that "a strong theme of diaspora among the Islamists of Turkey, leading themselves to conceptualize the existing political power as a foreign element in their sense of body politic, and then, making them feel themselves as exiled in their own land." See (Aktay 1996: 10).

[4] See (Çağlar 2013).

other dichotomies. While I kept questioning what really went on, I have to confess, as a 15-year-old girl I had little grasp of what it was all about. This study is my attempt to move from what felt intimate and personal to me at that time to a more analytical framing of the issue. It is an attempt to show "how our individual biographies intertwine with the history we share with human beings (Bauman 1990: 7). [Sociology is] the capacity to shift from one perspective to another. The capacity to range from the most impersonal and remote transformations to the most intimate features of the human self – and to see the relations between the two of them" (Mills 1959).While my personal experience has been the locomotive of this study, I move beyond my own experience by relating it to the experiences of other IHL graduates from different cohorts and schools to try to figure out why these schools have been a focal point for political contention in Turkey for so long. I ask three questions: 1) how do we understand the role of Imam Hatip Schools in Turkey? 2) how did generations of students in these schools experience the tensions between religion and secularism, and 3) what kinds of political subjectivities/subjects did these schools create?

Imam Hatip High Schools and Political Subjectivities

The relationship between state, religion, and society has been one of contention throughout Turkey's republican history. Especially, religious education is one of the most contested fields where this contention can be closely observed. IHL schools stand out as a key institution where state, religion and society clashed. This study focuses on these schools, as they allow us to critically analyze the trajectory of the state-religion relationship in Turkey's democracy.

Turkey is a democratic nation-state formed by a firm secularist regime that has undertaken radical steps like the revolution of attire, the switch from the Arabic-Ottoman to Latin alphabet, the closure of all traditional religious schools – *medrese* – following the unification of education under the Ministry of National Education (MEB) to consolidate a Western-style, secular, democratic republic since 1923. The secular state, however, has been the sole authority in the direction of religious affairs, including the provision of religious education through one of the following three channels: the IHLs, the compulsory religious studies at regular public schools, and the Qur'anic courses run by the Presidency of Religious Affairs (DİB). IHL schools, the focus of this study, are state schools that also provide religious education for their students, with 60% of the curriculum allocated for general education and 40% for religious studies. The MEB prepares both the general education and religious studies curriculums for IHLs and also appoints their teaching staff.

The IHL form of religious education addresses the exceptional nature of Turkish secularism in that it reflects the state's desire to simultaneously attend to a firm secularist ideology while also sparing an exceptional budget for religious education in an attempt to control its educational content. I argue that understanding the peculiarities of the IHL system and the political subjectivities that grew out of it promises to expand our evaluations of the relationship between secularism, democracy and pluralism in Turkey.

Following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the new republican elite founded a secular nation-state and advocated a rapid modernization in the form of Westernization. Understandings of Westernization in Turkey evolved in two competing ways: the Kemalist synthesis and the Ottoman synthesis. The Kemalist synthesis promoted a radical break from the past and a top-down transformation of society through 1) Western advancements in science and technology as well as Durkheimian solidarism, 2) Turkism with reference to linguistic and cultural nationalism, and 3) Islam, which was never rejected totally but continually excluded from public life (Ertunç 2005: 142). The opponents of Kemalist modernization in the late 1920s represented by the Liberal Republican Party also promoted

Westernization, but as an Ottoman synthesis that entailed gradual change and stressed the need to import Western technology and science while retaining cultural norms and values especially with respect to Islam and opposed exclusion of religion from public life. While the Ottoman synthesis approach reflected an effort to reconcile Islam with modernism, the Kemalist synthesis, unlike the long struggles between secularist and religious thought in the West, evolved through practical political concerns (Mert 1994: 68) that guided the new institutions of the Republic, which included institutionalizing a national educational system.

While the function of education has been subject to much intellectual debate, nation-states tend to establish national educational systems in order to control the extent and content of knowledge their citizens are exposed to. Education also shapes the ways a state's citizens are formed into a collective whole. The Kemalist elite also pragmatically prioritized nationalizing the educational system and stressed the Durkheimian view of educational institutions as the most effective instruments that "[focus] exclusively upon the socialization of the individual child, developing in him traits required by the political society as a whole as by the special milieu for which he is specifically destined" (Durkheim1982: 22). They ascribed the duty of transmitting the values of the new nation-state within society to public schools, which would raise citizens whose bodies and consciences are, in a Foucauldian sense[5], submissive to the characteristic features of the new Republic of statism, populism, nationalism, republicanism, secularism and democracy. Thus, the form and content of Turkey's national education system was firmly directed by the founding elites' imagination of the new nation-state. This institutional system later reproduced and strengthened those imageries and perceptions of the new Turkish nationalism while at the same time marginalizing periphery-based and religiously informed popular Turkish nationalism. Upgrading the status of state bureaucrats to a status of state intellectuals who would devise the new nationalist ideologies ended up excluding all other groups that did not fit the new scheme. Religiously observant groups had to struggle to maintain their religiosity and participation in the public sphere, including defending their right to a religious education. Ethnically Kurdish citizens had to struggle to maintain their linguistic and cultural identity, and Alevis demanded that the state recognize their community and religious culture.

The primary goal of Turkish national education, as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk stated, was "[to] raise the new generations with loyalty to the Turkish nation and state as well as to prepare them for struggle against the enemies of the nation and the state" (Genelkurmay Başkanlığı 1998: 296). The ideal political subject for the Kemalist elite then was loyal and obedient to the ideals of state ideology and uninterested in ideologies other than Kemalist nationalism; they would be intoxicating, dedicated to positivism, and disciplined to work toward realizing the national goals. The political subject of the new nation and state would be educated and trained at compulsory public schools and nationwide People's Houses, which the Kemalist elite viewed as a key channel to disseminate the cultural norms and values of the revolution (Karpat 1963: 55-67).

The Kemalist elite prioritized the "de-sacralization of school knowledge based on secular positivism, which maintains that reality is experienced only through rational observations, not through a preset, otherworldly cosmology" at the free, compulsory, secular public schools from which clerics were forbidden (Kaplan 2006: 42). Sam Kaplan also illustrates how clerics were systematically "branded as enemies of science and scholastic obscurantists" and were "dismissed as incapable and unwilling to prepare the youth to deal with the complexity of the contemporary world" (Kaplan 2006: 43). The Kemalist elite has

[5] Foucault argues in *Discipline and Punish* that "Our society is one not of spectacle, but of surveillance; under the surface of images, one invests bodies in depth; behind the great abstraction of exchange, there continues the meticulous, concrete training of useful forces; the circuits of communication are the supports of an accumulation and a centralization of knowledge; the play of signs defines the anchorages of power; it is not that the beautiful totality of the individual is amputated, repressed, altered by our social order, it is rather that the individual is carefully fabricated within it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies." (Foucault 1977: 217)

always been anxious about religion and religious education, in part due to a fear that religion would feed dogmatic mysticism as opposed to the scientific rationalism that they promoted as the best way to reach the socio-cultural and economic standards of Western societies. They constantly situated religiosity and religious knowledge in opposition to rational knowledge in their writings and in popular culture products like movies, novels, and other modes of popular expression. Mehmet Saffet's articles in *Ülkü* in 1933, for instance, described villagers as "90% illiterate, and the sad truth is that they are under the corrupt influence of superstitious, religious traditions" (Saffet 1933: 424). Given that religion was assumed to be corrupt and superstitious, secularists claimed that the educational system had to be "disenchanted" in the Weberian sense. Baloğlu, who prepared reports on religious education and economic development since 1975 for governments and non-governmental organizations like the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD), linked Turkey's "political destiny with inexorable progress and a commitment to dynamic change" and stressed that Islamic educational institutions and forms of knowledge arrested Turkey's economic and political liberalization" while also advising that IHL graduates "confine themselves to mosques" (Kaplan 2006: 50).

Such disenchantment was in turn expected to change the daily religious routines of the masses and their political preferences in favor of the revolutionary elite. However, Islam is deeply embedded in the daily lives of a majority in Turkey, which makes it an indispensable component of Turkish culture. The perception of religion as a threat to the Kemalist hold on political power constituted another axis of anxiety about religion in Turkey. The religion-free, or at times anti-religious nature, of the national educational system until the multi-party system in 1946 aimed in a way to channel "thought and actions [in society] to conform to a secular positivism which never came about" (Kaplan 2006: 43).

The electoral success of the DP over the Kemalist CHP in the first multiparty elections in 1950 created a political environment in which the state could recognize social demands. The foundation of seven IHL schools in 1951 was a direct outcome of this expanding political environment as a response to popular demand for religious education[6]. As such, IHLs have stood at the crossroads of secularism and democracy over the last 60 years.

This dissertation investigates the role of the IHL system in Turkey through a sociological analysis that will encompass questions such as: How did IHLs relate to the secularization debates in Turkey and elsewhere? What kind of subjectivity comes out of these schools? What are the dynamics of change and continuity for these subjectivities over generations? Do IHLs provide a shared worldview for their students? Do these schools promote association with certain political parties and ideologies? What are the socio-economic characteristics of IHL students and how have they changed over time? How have they interacted with changing socio-economic and political conditions?

Contribution of the Study to the Existing Literature

In her book *Politics of Piety*, Saba Mahmood criticizes functionalist feminist analysts for explaining "the motivations of veiled women in terms of standard models of sociological causality (such as social protest, economic necessity, anomie, or utilitarian strategy), while terms like morality, divinity, and virtue are accorded the status of the phantom imaginings of the hegemonized" and paying "so little attention to Islamic virtues of female modesty or piety,

[6] Mustafa Öcal explains that at the 7th Convention on December 2, 1947, some of the members of the Republican People's Party (CHP) insisted that the party take these popular discomforts about religious life seriously and change its approach on these issues. The party administration assigned a commission for further evaluating the matter. The commission too advisory decisions like the establishment of Imam Hatip Schools to raise religious functionaries and the addition of religious courses at primary school curriculum etc. (Öcal 1998: 245). Indeed the records of the 7th Party Convention of the CHP draw the full picture of the public demand for religion. For further reading see: CHP Yedinci Kurultay Tutanağı, Ankara, 1948.

especially given that many of the women who have taken up the veil frame their decision precisely in these terms" (Mahmood 2005: 16). In the case of IHL graduates, too, academic studies have often paid little attention to how IHL students made their school choice and how they framed their experience and aspirations. Instead, secularist groups' anxieties, which they justified by pointing to the rise of Islam as a mobilizing force in other countries around the world, have shaped academic discourse in Turkey on religious education and the kind of personhood it contributed to. I suggest that we need to leave aside the universalistic claims about religion and religious education and instead focus on the ways people constantly make themselves by engaging with the available cultural tools and institutional opportunities, assuming that "the terms people use to organize their lives are not simply a gloss for universally shared assumptions about the world and one's place in it, but are actually constitutive of different forms of personhood, knowledge, and experience" (Mahmood 2005: 16). Each chapter in this study will elaborate on different aspects of IHL graduates as political subjectivities.

Existing studies on IHLs can be analyzed in four broad categories: 1) Studies that describe the account of the historical and political development of IHLs (Akdeniz 1971, Öcal 1994, Ayhan 1995, Tarhan 1996, Cebeci 1996, Dinçer 1998, Özdalga 1999, Ünsür 2005, Gökaçtı 2005, Zengin 2005, Özcan 2012). These studies tend to focus on the historical and political debates and environment within which IHLs developed over time. Although they are quite informative for their descriptive quality, they tend to lack the analytical link between politics, society, and religion. 2) Quantitative studies based on survey research (Erkan, et al. 2003, Çakır, et al. 2004, Bozan 2007), which are valuable for they provide comprehensive data about IHLs. However, there are still very few quantitative studies focusing on IHLs and the existing studies offer data in a very limited scope. 3) Qualitative work based on data collected from ethnographic observations and interview materials (Reed 1955, Akşit 1991, Pak 2004a, Pak 2004b, Kaya and Tecmen 2014, Akşit and Çoşkun 2004, Shively 2008). Although they tend to provide rich analyses of different aspects of IHLs as experienced on the ground, I detected a general pattern in these studies to treat the IHL community as a homogeneous totality and only minimally capture the internal experiential differentiations IHL graduates through time and space. Space is dissociative for IHLs based on where these schools are located, for example, if they are urban, suburban, or in a village. And this spatial differentiation, along with other characteristics, ended up differentiating IHL graduates' experiences. Finally, 4) Biographical accounts of people involved in the IHL community as a student, supporter, parent, or politician (Kara 2000, Düzdağ 2007, Karaman 2015, Altıkulaç 2012, Kutluoğlu 2013), which carry immense value for introducing the *zeitgeist* within which different generations grew up. Yet for very obvious reasons, these accounts are subjective and reflect the spirit of the day through that one individual's experience.

This study contributes to the existing literature in three ways. First, it situates Turkey's IHL religious education model within the context of other secular state models and how they are reflected in a country's religious education system. This allows us to better comprehend the particularities of the Turkish case as well as its similarities with other secular states. Second, I designed this research as a qualitative study comparing the experiences of three generations of IHL graduates between 1951 and 2010. This new design by itself is rather authentic and helped me overcome the frequent bias found in the literature that treats IHL students and graduates as a homogeneous group in socio-economic, cultural and political terms. Interviews and family backgrounds, cultural and political observations of graduates from three generations have provided me with enough data to analyze the effects of Turkey's socio-economic and political transformations on the IHL community. Third, the generational comparative nature of the study allowed me to capture the dynamics of rapid acculturation among graduates as well as that of social mobility, especially in reference to gender.

This dissertation further argues that unless the sociological salience of religion for Turkish society[7] as a whole is properly understood, any analysis we make about the educational and political endeavors of religiously devout groups in Turkey will fall prey to culturally reductionist, hegemonic generalizations, and an illusion about the cause and effect relations we claim between political parties led by religiously minded leadership and the institutions of religious education.

While a number of academic studies describe the dynamics of liberal democratic politics, they tend to use the Western liberal democratic tradition as a benchmark and then judge different actors in different contexts according to this framework, which portrays European culture, which has a complex identity as secular and Christian at the same time, as progressive and an inherent part of liberal democratic politics. As Casanova argues:

> The most interesting issue sociologically is not the fact of progressive religious decline among the European population, but the fact that this decline is interpreted through the lenses of the secularization paradigm and is therefore accompanied by a "secularist" self-understanding that interprets the decline as "normal" and "progressive", that is, as a quasi-normative consequence of being a "modern" and "enlightened" European. (Casanova 2006: 66)

This perception, in turn, informs the categorization of which societies are compatible with a liberal model and which are not. Casanova questions the European Union's concerns about Turkey's accession on this very ground when he criticizes that the EU is basically having difficulty in accepting a country with an overwhelming Muslim-majority population represented in its democratic governance.[8] Turkey's secular elites also assumed this approach and utilized it effectively to trivialize the democratic representation and demands of conservative[9] and religious groups, which constitute the majority of the population[10]. For instance, demanding the right to wear religious clothing in the public sphere, freedom to pray at school, and the provision of elective religion classes at public schools were often framed as reactionary politics, Islamization of society, and a swing away from democratic moderation. Pluralist democratic governance, however, necessitates responsiveness to the demands of the

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[7] Indeed, Richard Burkholder of Gallup stresses that despite its rigid secularist state policies, Turkish society is firmly grounded in religion referring to the following survey data: "Roughly four in five describe that having an enriched religious and spiritual life is either very important (37%), or as something that is 'essential and you cannot live without' (41%). Similarly, a quarter of all Turks (27%) say religion is 'the single *most* important thing' in their lives, ranking ahead of immediate family, extended family and community, country and self. A similar proportion (26%) places it second in this hierarchy, and only one in eight (13%) rates it as least important of the five. More than half of all Turks (53%) say that prayer 'helps a great deal to soothe my worries,' while just 6% say that prayer offers little assistance in this regard" (Burkholder 2002). A 2008 PEW research also indicates that more than 80% of the Turks expressed that religion was very or somewhat important to them," (Pew Global Attitudes Survey 2008). For further reading on religion in Turkey see (Mardin 2004), (Mardin 2011).

[8] He poses the very crucial question: "The still Muslim, but officially no longer Islamist party in power has been repeatedly accused of being 'fundamental' and of undermining the sacred secularist principles of the Kemalist constitution which bans 'religious' as well as 'ethnic' parties, religion and ethnicity being forms of identity which are not allowed public representation in secular Turkey. One wonders whether democracy does not become an impossible 'game' when potential majorities are not allowed to win elections, and when secular civilian politicians ask the military to come to the rescue of democracy by banning these potential majorities, which threaten their secular identity and their power?" (Casanova 2006: 73)

[9] The use of the term "conservatism" in this dissertation generally refers to a commitment to traditional values and ideas sometimes, but not always, in reference to religion and an inherent belief in gradual rather than radical change in society. Mehmet Vural argues that conservatism is a secular, political philosophy that arose in response to the developments of the Enlightenment in the West and criticized Enlightenment ideology not for its gains, but for the values and institutions it destroyed, all of which were support mechanisms for social stability and trust. As such, there have been liberal, atheist, and religious supporters of this philosophy in the West. However, conservatism is usually used mistakenly in Turkey as interchangeable with religiosity. See (Vural 2003) for further reading. As such, when I refer to conservative people it is usually in order to make a distinction that these people are not necessarily practicing religious people, but are supportive of the role of religion in society as a binding force. On the other hand, there is the conservative political thought tradition in Turkish political history, which is usually examined as political conservatism and traces the ideas developed by late Ottoman intellectuals and political figures.

[10] A 2014 WIN/Gallup International poll indicates that 78% of the Turks describe themselves as religious (http://www.wingia.com/en/news/losing_our_religion_two_thirds_of_people_still_claim_to_be_religious/290/). TESEV's 1999 study on religion, society and politics also indicates that about 80% of Turkish people describe themselves as very religious or somewhat religious (Çarkoğlu and Toprak 2000: 42).

electoral majority while protecting the rights and freedoms of the electoral minorities. Ahmet Kuru supports this argument when he points out that the consolidation of democracy in Turkey necessitates either a transition from assertive to passive secularism, where the state allows for the visibility of religion in the public sphere, or a decline in religiosity, which would potentially make religion irrelevant in politics, as "in Turkey, there has been a tension between the ideological dominance of assertive secularism in state institutions and the highly religious nature of society" (Kuru 2009: 200).

By way of focusing on why supporters attribute significance to IHLs, this research project develops our understanding of how these schools have influenced the way secularism works in Turkey from a close analysis of personal experiences of IHL graduates and their families.

I hypothesize that IHLs continue to be popular in Turkey despite recurrent political pressure because they help resolve two disarticulated components of the Turkish modernization project: a strongly religious society on one hand and an assertive secular state on the other.

This study further illuminates how IHL experiences have played a role in cultivating a subjectivity that reconciled religion and secularism in daily life for its graduates. It indirectly traces the evolution of the contemporary political discourse on inclusive secularism in Turkey. Instead of explaining the development of the current political discourse through the dynamics of the political sphere, it address how political and socio-economic changes all inform and are informed by meaning-producing institutions –IHLs in this case.

Devout Muslims' participation in secular politics presumes a cultural action plan that already exists in the minds of these people as social agents (Swidler 1989). IHLs have unintentionally become institutions where religious people from very different backgrounds come together and construct a cultural mindset that enables their participation in political, social and economic fields more confidently. What I mean by this cultural mindset, or template, is not a static agenda, but rather an open-ended and constantly evolving discussion about the boundaries for observant Muslims' participation in secular politics, economics, and culture among the IHL community. When the political opportunity structure became favorable, IHL graduates actively used that template to participate in secular politics and social life. While the Turkish state intended to provide vocational religious education at IHLs in a rather structured manner, the creative social agency of their students transformed the goals aimed at in these schools. Over time, IHLs became a space where students and their families reconciled the secularist state ideology with their everyday lives, in which patterns of behavior and organization of time and space were ingrained with religious sentiments and habits.

Turkey's IHL experience may also contribute to our understandings of the processes through which a moderate, grassroots, pro-democratic political subjectivity emerged in Turkey. Özgür argues that "Imam Hatip schools and their communities constitute one of the key institutions from which Turkey's Islamic movement in general, and the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) in particular, draw their strength and resilience" (Ozgur 2012: 4). Such arguments, however, ignore the complex relationship of Turkish political culture and Islam and, in a way, marginalize Islam in society. Indeed, there are a number of ways the relationship between the state and religion are formulated in different countries. These formulations are generally rooted in the role religion has played for a society, societal perceptions of religion and the elite's perceptions of an ideal state model at the time of the state-building processes of each country. In England, for instance, despite a rigorous Puritan regime trying to rule society following the English Civil Wars (1642- 1651), over time, religious tolerance was enshrined as a core principle and religion became a part of the national culture that even a non-Anglican citizen needs to learn in order to adapt to the cultural aura.

This perception brought about cooperation rather than confrontation between religion and the state. In Indonesia, religion is confessionalized in the constitution to serve the interests of the public, for if religion were excluded, religious factions would be prone to radicalize. In France, however, religious institutions were blamed for the inequalities in society and thus excluded from the new *laïque* regime, which addresses religion strictly as a private matter.

The strong relationship between the fate of IHLs and the fate of democratization in Turkey also confirms the above claims. These schools opened and flourished with public support, and about 66% of them are still funded by non-governmental philanthropic organizations (Kuru 2009: 196). The fact that a large segment of the IHL students come from neighborhoods with lower socio-economic status situates IHLs as bufferzones[11] where suburban populations are better integrated into urban life without conflicting with their traditional norms, values, and practices. It is also important to consider the issue of gender in trying to assess why people choose these schools and why IHLs are closely related to democratic consolidation in Turkey. Kuru says that "female students started to attend these schools in 1976, and their ratio reached to 44% of total students in the 1997-1998 academic year" (Kuru 2009: 196). On the other hand, half of the female students noted that their parents would not have sent them to school if they had not attended an IHL (Kuru 2009: 196).

In the wake of the Arab awakening in the Middle East since 2011, Turkey has come center stage as a model country that has struck a balance between democracy and secularism. The AK Party's[12] religiously minded leadership's adoption of the European Union's Copenhagen criteria "as a compass for the transformation of the Turkish economy and for democratic reforms" (Yavuz 2009: 3) mixed the mindsets of many intellectuals. At this moment, it is particularly generative to consider the role of IHLs' background on the current ruling elite of Turkey's political system.

This study also centrally underlines the role of IHLs on social mobility. The study suggests that the emergence of an unexpected social fusion at these schools creates a peculiar opportunity for upward social mobility. Social reproduction theories tend to stress that societies are in constant need of production, but also reproduction in order to maintain themselves. Bourdieu identifies different forms of capital that enable us to fully account "for the structure and the functioning of the social world" (Bourdieu 1986). These different forms of capital can be crudely listed as economic, cultural, and social. Bourdieu argues that cultural capital, in particular, is a tool that helps explain the different educational achievement patterns of students from different socio-economic backgrounds. He proposes "a model of social mediation and processes which tend, behind the backs of the agents engaged in the school system – teachers, students and their parents – and often against their own will, to ensure the transmission of cultural capital across generations." (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990: X) The IHL case in Turkey, however, challenges social reproduction theories in the way it generates a space where students from very different socioeconomic backgrounds gather around a shared purpose of religious education and culture of piety. This space offers a unique socialization opportunity for all students whereby students have access to the different forms of capital they bring with them. A student from a rural, low-income family background has access to the social, economic, and cultural capital of an upper-middle-class student, which enables faster acculturation and upward mobility among IHL graduates. This process of capital acquisition and conversion will be further elaborated in the following chapters.

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[11] Mübeccel Kıray suggestes the term "buffer zone" to address the structures that migrant populations develop that function to make their urban life experience easier (Kıray 1982). She uses the term specifically for the houses and apartment buildings migrant populations built in the suburban areas of cities almost overnight – called *gecekondu* – in Turkey. These *gecekondus* were functional for the urban population in that they did not have to mix with a new group immediately upon arrival in the city, and also for the migrants, as they gave them time to integrate into urban life.

[12] A number of studies analyze the rise of the religious political elite as part of the rise of political Islam globally since 1980s while others portray the rise of the AK Party as part of an aggressive, anti-Western, anti-Semitic, and essentially revivalist movement in the Middle East. See (Sivan 2003), (White 2005).

Methodology

In order to answer the research questions put forward in this study, I used a mixed methods approach combining in-depth interview methodology with ethnographic research that took place between 2009 and 2012. I conducted 64 interviews representatives of three generations of IHL students who graduated between 1951 and 2010. Each interview lasted about an hour and a half. The first generation participants graduated between 1951 and 1976 and comprised 10 men. I had no female participants for this sample as IHLs did not admit female students during this time period. The second generation graduated between 1976 and 1997 and comprised 14 women and 17 men. The third generation graduated between 1997 and 2010 and comprised 12 women and 11 men. In an effort to form a representative sample, I paid particular attention to maintain a proportional presentation among participants along gender, socio-economic and cultural status, especially by way of interviewing a balanced number of graduates from central versus peripheral IHLs, and along educational attainment levels.

Table 1: Interview participants' profiles

	Age	Women	Men
1950-1976 Generation I	62- 84	0	10
1976- 1997 Generation II	58- 38	14	17
1997- 2010 Generation III	33- 21	12	11

My ethnographic work included attending IHL social gatherings, events organized by IHL alumni associations, and meetings and activities planned by umbrella organizations like the Organization for Promoting Education (İYC), the Organization for Imam Hatip Schools' Students and Alumni (ONDER), and the ENSAR Foundation (ENSAR). I attended an IHL event at least twice a month over a period of three years as an observer. These events included graduation ceremonies, *iftar* (breaking fast during Ramadan) dinners, picnics, career days, competitions, and extracurricular activities like conferences on IHL education and student club activities. During these events, I engaged in dozens of casual conversations with IHL graduates, both women and men, from different socio-economic, cultural, and generational groups. The ethnographic part of the fieldwork helped me to better situate the personal trajectories I encountered in my interviews in a larger context and gave me a chance to clarify some of the complexities the interview material revealed. Keeping the core variables of the study in mind, I took note of relevant observations after each event, which later became a component of this study.

During the interviews, many graduates told me about their feelings of marginalization along social, cultural, and political lines in mainstream media outlets in Turkey. In order to understand why they had these feelings, I went beyond the interviews and looked at three nationwide daily newspapers: Milliyet (est. 1926), Hürriyet (est. 1948) and Sabah (est. 1985), seeking to assess how they depicted IHLs and students in their reports and columns. These three daily papers have been the representatives of the mainstream media in Turkey and they have been very influential in shaping Turkish public opinion.

The only condition for participation in this project was for one to be an IHL graduate in Istanbul. Research feasibility concerns were not the only reason I limited the scope of the study to Istanbul. First of all, as a metropolitan city, Istanbul offers a rich sample of IHLs and social settings with very different socio-economic characteristics. Secondly, the case of Istanbul allows us to better capture the sociological transformation of the last 60 years Turkey had gone through concerning industrialization, urbanization, and migration.

After an extensive literature review on IHLs, I decided to do a comparative analysis of IHL graduates in three generations. Each generation is marked by a critical juncture that changed the way state, society and religion interacted in Turkey. The first group consists of IHL graduates between 1951 and 1976, whereby 1976[13] marks the year when IHL graduates were given the right to attend a university degree-granting program and when female students were admitted to IHLs. While becoming a religious functionary was the primary aspiration of IHL students until then, following the enactment of the new Education Law in 1976, newly admitted students preferred IHLs also for their academic preparation for diverse university degree programs. A more career-oriented motive started to make these schools increasingly popular. 1976 is also a critical time, as it is the year when female students were first allowed to enroll in IHLs. This first period, henceforth, consists largely of men.

The second group of IHL graduates consists of those that finished high school by 1997, a year marked as critical due to a series of military interventions that culminated in the ousting of the democratically elected government. This period is known as the February 28 Period, as the democratic government had to sign a list of preemptive measures to prevent the rise of radical religious groups in opposition of the secular state in Turkey. These measures were drawn by top military officials and were imposed on the elected coalition leaders at the February 28 National Security Council (MGK) meeting. One of the measures adopted following this meeting was obligatory, uninterrupted eight years of primary education, which entailed the closing of secondary level IHLs. Students who used to be admitted to IHLs following five years of primary education now had to wait for another three years before being admitted to an IHL. With the adoption of lower coefficiency measurements, IHLs were further alienated in the educational sphere. The enactment of lower coefficiency measurements had sharply reduced IHL graduates' chances to attend university degree-granting institutions outside of their vocational training at high school and consequently lowered the popularity of these schools. As attending IHLs increasingly meant lower rates of academic placement following high school graduation, I assumed that the expectations and aspirations of the students that went to IHLs after 1997 differed from their predecessors. Furthermore, with the adoption of the law mandating eight years of uninterrupted education, students made their way to high school at around the age of 14 or 15 as opposed to the preceding years when students could make school shifts after finishing five years of primary

[13] With an amendment to the Law of National Education Imam Hatip Schools (IHO) were upgraded with the rest of vocational schools to "high school" status and their name was changed as Imam Hatip High School (IHL). From then on, IHLs serve as schools that prepare students for dual purpose of vocational education and preparation for university degree programs. With the new law, the purpose of IHLs is described as: 1) To raise students to serve as imams and *hatips* or perform religious services such as teaching the Qur'an and 2) To provide academic services to prepare for general university degree programs. Thus, from then on, IHL graduates gained access to university degree programs that enrolled students based on their verbal scores on the University Placement Exams, including law, economics, literature, history and education in addition to the school of theology known as *Yüksek İslam Enstitüsü* (Öcal 2010: 160). It is possible to assume then that until 1976 the primary purpose of these schools was to raise religious functionaries, but after 1976, families chose IHLs for a multiplicity of reasons. There is a need to understand these reasons. The generalized notion that families send their children to IHLs in order to raise them as practicing Muslims dismisses the possibility that as social actors, choosing to send their children to IHLs could be a way of resistance to the state-imposed boundaries impeding upward mobility for religious groups in Turkey since the foundational years of the Republic. By establishing 1976 as a critical time for IHL graduates, this study aims at capturing these sensitivities. Students do not choose these schools merely for religious education, but also for career purposes. Another important development that intersected with the new law was about the admission of female students at IHLs. The IHL Administrative Regulations Guide, promulgated in 1972, officially banned the admission of female students to these schools by instituting "being male" as one of the conditions for being an IHL student. The transition of the already enrolled students to the high school section was also prevented with a circular notice. When a few years later a parent petitioned the State Council demanding a reversal of this gender-based condition from the IHL Regulations Guide, the council decided in favor of the family and revoked the new condition in 1976 (Öcal 2010: 174).

education around the age of 11. The new system led to an indirect consequence: As students made high school choices at a more mature age, their families' influence on school choice became more complex. Based on the rationale discussed above, 1976 and 1997 stand out as the two critical years in the course of the institutionalization of religious education in Turkey. It is the course of this study that will determine ask whether these events were also significant in the eyes of IHL graduates.

As an IHL graduate myself, I had little difficulty in gaining access to the IHL community in general. Most of the graduates eagerly accepted my invitation for interviews and I had no difficulty attending events planned by umbrella organizations. In order to maintain a representative sample of participants for my interviews, I first started with a circle of friends and asked them to recommend others who might be interested in contributing to this study. I then asked IHL alumni associations for contacts of graduates from different backgrounds and cohorts, and then contacted nationwide IHL umbrella organizations when I had difficulty reaching graduates with more specifically defined characteristics, i.e., a second generation female graduate who studied at a suburban IHL who currently has a professional career. These organizations were very helpful in providing a large number of contacts over the period of my fieldwork.

Over time, I gathered a large number of potential interview participants from very different IHLs, age groups, and socio-economic backgrounds. I then started to choose among them according to variables such as the school's location (urban versus suburban), age groups, gender, internal migration status, socio-economic status, and post-graduation careers. This methodological preference allowed me to investigate whether all socio-economic groups as well as gender groups within the same time period were influenced in similar ways by the same macro-political and social changes that took place over the span of the last 60 years. In other words, this approach allowed me to compare my interview group both longitudinally in time and horizontally in space.

Limitations of the Study

During this research I confronted some limitations due to my personal identity, by the nature of this topic, and availability of the comprehensive data throughout my fieldwork. First of all, my identity as the daughter of the prime minister of Turkey at the time served both as an opportunity and a constraint. It was an opportunity in that I had ease of access to conduct interviews with a majority of my participants. They had little concern about trust and were open in sharing their personal experiences. However my personal identity was also a constraint for a) some of the respondents could feel unease in remaining open, objective and comfortable. Sometimes those who sympathized with my father very strongly spoke to me as if they were speaking to my father and I felt their accounts got a bit biased in that they did not want to be critical. In those cases I tried to crosscheck the accounts with graduates from similar backgrounds, gender and age groups. Especially those who opposed my father politically may have had a tendency to be politically biased in their response; b) graduates who opposed my father strongly would have basically rejected my interview invitation which would end up weakening the representativeness of my sample. In order to overcome these constrains, I decided to work with a research assistant who also had academic training in conducting social research. She and I worked together on daily basis to develop a shared language and approach in the interviews. My assistant got in contact with such participants. She introduced herself as assisting a doctoral student at UC Berkeley who is doing a research on the relationship between state-religion in Turkey in the context of the IHL schools and then asked whether they would accept contributing to the study. Upon their approval, she conducted eight such interviews and immediately after finishing the interviews I met with her

and she briefed me about the flow of the conversation. Then I listened to the interview records and gave her some feedback on what to pay more attention the next time. These few interviews helped me to get a grasp of the diversity of the student profile at the IHLs.

Secondly, because this is a study across generations, and as such, I was limited by the nature of each generation. The first generation interviewees were largely men above the age of 60 who had graduated at least 40 years ago, and have had a number of social, political and business engagements throughout those 40 years that have contributed to their personhood. These graduates tended to reflect upon their high school years retrospectively. The third generation interviewees, on the other hand, were young people in their 20s who have only a few years of experience after graduating and the effect of their high school choice is still very significant in their life experiences.

Over the years, the preference for an IHL education has been primarily based on its religious education, but the degree of significance, content, and style of religious education changed over time. Indeed, different aspects of IHL education came to the fore in different periods. We can safely argue that the religious education factor mattered to the greatest extent for the first generation graduates while the professional prospects mattered more for the second generation. Finally, a more deeply embedded aspect – school culture, which I call a "culture of piety" – was of decisive importance for the third generation. It would be misleading to think that a significant factor for one generation ceased to matter for the others. Rather, the degree of significance attributed to these factors changed over time in relation to socio-political conditions with which IHLs affiliated themselves in a display of surprising flexibility. In order to reduce this generational bias, I have read through a number of biographies that helped me better grasp the collective memory of the past and cross-referenced how accounts from the first generation especially stood vis-à-vis those written works. I also frequently consulted media content and political history reference books to crosscheck some historical references that came up in interviews.

Because there are only a few comprehensive pieces of survey research done on IHLs along their sociological aspects, this gave me only a narrow chance to compare my field observations with large-scale quantitative data. I believe that the higher availability of more comprehensive data would have further contributed to this study's findings.

I limited the scope of this study to graduates between 1951 and 2010. However, after 2010, very significant changes took place in Turkey's education system and the status of IHLs, including the lifting of restrictions for vocational school graduates to access general university degree programs, the addition of optional religious education courses in public state school curriculum, the abolishing of the headscarf ban at schools and public offices, and the general relaxation concerning religious practices in the public sphere. These changes certainly require further study on post-2010 IHL graduates whom I expect reflect different characteristics than the prior three generations considering the changing political and socio-economic environment in Turkey in the last five years.

The criteria according to which I compared and contrasted the three generations: entrance/post-graduation outcomes, socio-economic conditions, political attachments, extra-curricular activities, degree of religiosity, marginalization, culture of piety and views on secularism and idealism, can still be utilized as a scheme of analysis for post-2010 IHL graduates.

Chapter Outline

In Chapter 2, I put in perspective the Turkish religious education system by discussing the varieties of the state-religion relationship in the world and how those relationships affect the way religious education is institutionalized in a polity. This chapter focuses intensively on the differences and similarities of religious education systems in the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Egypt and Indonesia in order to better situate Turkey both on the secularism and religious education continuum. I will then examine the dynamics of the process of the creation of the Turkish nation and state as well as democratization in relation to IHLs over time. The emergence of IHLs cannot be understood apart from the process of the creation and building of the nation-state in early 20th century and the deeply embedded nature of religion in Turkish society and culture. Until the 1950s, the Turkish state resembled the fascist dictatorships of Italy and Spain in terms of the roles attributed to it: Nation-building via the perfect engineering of all the micro-processes in society and the formation of a standardized citizenry with absolute loyalty to the ideology of the new regime (Zürcher 2004, 186). Westernization, on the other hand, has been a vital element of Turkey's modernization. The state ideology upheld by the republican founding elite defined an ideal citizen for the new nation who is secular, religiously Sunni Muslim, and ethnically Turkish, all at degrees deemed appropriate by the state. IHLs grew within this context more as a concession to social demands for religious functionaries and religious education than a public policy to maintain pluralism and democracy as is the case in a number of Western and non-Western countries. Yet they were also effectively used as a space where the state could determine the ideal boundaries for religiosity in the new nation-state. This chapter also investigates the tension that rose between democracy and secularism in Turkey within the context of religious education.

Chapter 3 further discusses the relationship between IHLs and social mobility. This chapter also discusses the social fusion that emerged at IHLs among different socio-economic groups, which contributed to a rapid acculturation for students who came to the city from rural or suburban areas. The state of social fusion at IHLs in relation to socio-economic and political developments since the February 28 Period is further elaborated in this section.

Chapter 4 compares continuity and change over the three generations of IHL graduates: 1951-1976; 1976-1997, and 1997-2010. In addition to presenting a political and economic overview of each period, the extensive accounts of the experiences of these generations leads to a thorough questioning of the widespread portrayals of the IHL community as a homogenous and unified collectivity. This also illuminates the major tenets that define IHL subjectivity at different times and the dynamics of change and continuity within the IHLs' political subjectivities.

This chapter further investigates the change and continuity of the three generations of IHL graduates' profile and their worldviews, experiences, aspirations, and cultural affinities between 1951 and 2010. IHLs were initially founded to raise religious functionaries, yet over time observant Muslim families started to perceive them as an alternative educational track to state-run public schools. Some attribute this shift to curricular changes and crudely to the increasing proportion of secular content (Özgür 2012: 2), yet many, including the traditional elite groups and intellectuals, paid little attention to the underlying sociological phenomenon. To the contrary, they resisted confronting the sociological phenomenon behind these schools and framed them within the narrow boundaries of vocational education for careers as clerics. As such, the disproportionality between the increasing number of IHL students – especially female students – and the needed number of religious functionaries countrywide raised suspicions about the IHL community as a growing threat to the secular regime. They claimed that political parties with an "Islamist" agenda used these schools as a mobilizing ground for

political ends. The growth of these schools alarmed the traditional elite on ideological grounds: A religious, revivalist movement seeking to Islamize the public sphere, usually as part of the global movement of political Islam since the 1980s. As Giddens puts it, time and space are constitutive of social practice (Giddens 1989: 3) and people actively reflect upon their circumstances during which they operate as active agents constantly developing strategies of action.

Chapter 4 compares continuity and change over three different generations of IHL graduates' experiences: For the continuity layer, I discuss how different generations experienced and rationalized marginalization due to elite discourse, how the role of a culture of piety in IHL preference functioned over time, how different IHL generations viewed secularism and the secular state, and finally, their degree of idealism. On the change layer, I analyze how IHL graduates' political attachments, extra-curricular activities, the students' reasons for attending an IHL, post-graduation outcomes, and religiosity evolved through the years among female and male students.

Chapter 5 focuses on how the IHL experience differs by gender. In Turkey's mainstream religious practice, women are not appointed as imams or *hatips*. However, since 1976, the condition to be male in order to enroll in IHLs was cancelled by the Council of the State and religiously devout families preferred IHLs, especially for their daughters. The IHL experience mattered for female students more than male students for educational mobility, culture of piety and self-making, occupational mobility, and cultural mobility. While IHLs functioned as the only option for educational attainment for daughters of pious families, boys were treated more liberally regarding choice of school. This chapter investigates how this family attitude was informed both by traditional notions of gender roles and the degree of anxiety families felt about the rigidly secular environment at regular public schools. The critical role of the February 28 Period is also analyzed in depth with reference to the shifting dynamics that transformed the perceptions of religious families and their community about the role of women in society. The chapter seeks to explain the defining features of the female subjectivity that grew in IHLs and how that differed from their male counterparts, as well as other women in society.

CHAPTER 2
State-Religion Models and Religious Education

In contemporary societies, schools constitute the principal institution for knowledge formation, preparation for the labor market, elite recruitment, social cohesion, and socialization. As central as schooling is to modern societies, it is far from being monolithic and has undergone immense changes over the last century. Prior to the 19th century, education was viewed as primarily the responsibility of the family rather than the state. With the ascent of modernization and secularization, states gained legal competency and primacy in providing mass education, particularly in Anglo-American, Western societies and Europe, as part of the nation-building project, in attempts to create unity in language and culture.

The expansion of mass education around the world, as such, should be viewed as a historically specific phenomenon that entails a number of new issues. Weber explains this new system "as closely tied up with three key processes: how expert knowledge is legitimated as the basis of legal bureaucratic domination, how the state constructs the national citizen as a way of undermining traditional communal relations, and how the school becomes the framework for transforming the contractual relations of labor markets into those of a bureaucratic status order based on credentials" (Morrow and Torres 1995: 16). Others stressed the functionalist role of mass education as "an effective way to develop and strengthen a sense of nationhood (and) to accommodate the developmental goals of countries"; Durkheimian theorists argued that education was an instrument that decreased regional inequalities that arose from disorganized educational systems, thus helping to create solidarity (Manzer 2003: 72).

Critiques of mass education systems and their outcomes, however, were raised since the late 19th century. Spencer was critical of mass education for its potential to standardize human capacities through unified curriculums. Bourdieu, on the other hand, argues that mass schooling reproduced the existing class relations in societies. The difficulties in accommodating the needs of different communities with different ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds also came to the fore as forces of modernization unfolded throughout the 20th century.

Nevertheless, around the world, mass public education systems grew rapidly as the leading strategy for maintaining social order, improving human resources, and developing national identities. In the meantime, states have configured different solutions in response to demands for religious education, differentiated curriculums, and education in different languages. One of the most striking dilemmas for contemporary, liberal, democratic states seems to be the pressing urge to maintain state neutrality with regards to religious groups while engaging in religious affairs in different ways in order to ensure religious liberty for all.

The case of religious education vis-à-vis the secular, modern state provides ample data about the variety of similar and different ways in which states act. The education policies of a country, particularly regarding religious education, are usually formed in a consistent manner with how the relationship between the state and religion is configured in a particular country (Kuru 2009). Therefore, in this chapter, I will first address the literature on the prevalent models of the relationship between the state and religion. Then I will investigate how different modes of the state-religion relationship are reflected in the religious education models that developed in the US, the UK, France, Turkey, Egypt, and Indonesia.

In general, the state-religion relationship is categorized according to how a religion is situated in a country's constitution and other guiding legal documents. This approach assumes that it is principally these constitutions that define the fundamental principles and precedents of a state, and then the procedures by which laws are made. Jeroen Temperman, for instance,

identifies five typical ways in which the relations between the state and religion are established in the major legal texts and national constitutions of a number of countries:

1) *Religious state model*: In which the executive and legal authority of the state is based on religion, and in which the state acknowledges a religion as the state religion; for example, Saudi Arabia, Iran, the Vatican, Yemen, Pakistan, Oman, Brunei, Bahrain, Afghanistan and Israel.

2) *States with an official/national religion model*: In which the state has an official or national religion stated in its constitution, but the processes of executive and legal authority are secularized (separated and independent from religion); for example, the UK, Greece, Denmark, and the Netherlands. In addition, Egypt and Tunisia are countries that are not officially Islamic, but recognize Islamic law as the basis of their legislation. The countries in this category also differ in the way they institutionalize their relationship with the state. Generally, the close relationship between the state and religion in these countries entails some sort of state support and/or privileges, including the provision of religious services at schools, prisons, and hospitals.

3) *Concordatarian state model*: In which the state does not institutionalize a religion as official or national, but rather through concordats and agreements that support certain religions or denominations. These agreements are generally geared toward maintaining the rights and privileges gained historically or traditionally by a certain religious community. Argentina, Spain, Italy, Hungary and Poland are some of the countries that recognize the principle of separation of the state and religion in their constitutions, but grant privileges to certain religious communities through concordats.

4) *Secular state model*: In which the state and religion are institutionally separated. These states do not have any religious identification, are indifferent toward all religions and their authority does not rest upon any one religion. This particular secular state model developed in the second part of the 18th century as an outcome of the American and French revolutions and ideally it involves the mutual independence of the state and religion. However, secular states also vary:

a) Secular states where there is a mutual independence of religion and the state as institutionalized in the United States, Poland, Brazil and Albania;

b) Secular countries where the state's independence from religion is prioritized as in France, Turkey, Japan, Turkmenistan, and Belarus;

c) Secular countries where the independence of religion from the state is prioritized such as the Czech Republic and Germany (Temperman 2010: 25, 130).

Along the lines of Temperman's broad categorization, Kuru presents useful data drawn from the U.S. Department of State 2007 Report on International Religious Freedom (see Table 2 below). Kuru evaluates countries based on the following criteria: 1) religious authority in executive and legislative affairs and 2) the presence of a state religion. Countries that fulfill both criteria are referred to as "religious states" while those that fulfill only the second criterion are considered "states with an established religion." Those that fulfill neither of the criteria are "secular states" and, finally, those that oppose these criteria are referred to as "antireligious states" (Kuru 2009:8).

Table 2: Different Types of State-Religion Relationship				
	Religious State	**State with Established Religion**	**Secular State**	**Antireligious State**
Legislature & Judiciary	Religion based	Secular	Secular	Secular
The State & Religion	Officially favors one	Officially favors one	Officially favors one	Officially hostile to all or many
Examples	Iran Saudi Arabia Vatican	Egypt Denmark England Israel Iraq Malaysia	United States France Turkey Netherlands Indonesia	North Korea China Cuba
Number in the World	12	60	120	5
Source: Kuru 2009: 8				

The idea that a constitutional framework sets the agenda for the relationship between the state and religion, however, is a loose principle. It is more common to see states with some sort of an arrangement with a religion both in and outside of their constitutions. More intellectuals, therefore, try to explain the variations in the state-religion relationship with a multitude of qualitative criterion. For example, Stepan categorizes countries according to a state's friendly or hostile relationship to religion. Two groups emerge accordingly:

1) *Separationist model*, which includes the United States, France, and Turkey;
2) *Respect all, support all model*, which includes countries like India, Indonesia and Senegal (Kuru and Stepan 2012).

Kuru and Stepan further add that the countries in these categories also vary according to the role of the state vis-à-vis the establishment of secular culture. Using Kuru's definition of assertive secularism with active state involvement to exclude a religion from the public sphere (complete privatization of religion), and passive secularism with a liberal relationship in which the state allows for the visibility of religions in the public sphere, both Kuru and Stepan conceptualize secularism as a continuum in which countries move between these two models of secularism (Kuru and Stepan 2012: 99). Accordingly, the United States is closer to the passive secularist end of the continuum while France and Turkey are respectively closer to the assertive secularist end. Senegal, for instance, with its politics of the *respect all, support all* model, is closest to the passive secular model. Upon analysis of secular policies in the United States, France, and Turkey, Kuru theorizes that the existence or absence of an *ancien régime*, i.e., "the alliance between monarchy and the hegemonic religion against the republicans," leads to the development of either an assertive or passive secularism, respectively. Furthermore, these models preserve their dominance through public education and institutional socialization (Kuru and Stepan 2012: 100-103).

As outlined above, secularism is far from monolithic, ranging from cooperation with religion to restriction of religion, and depending on a number of factors, i.e., the existence of an old regime, the role attributed to religion at the time of nation building, the institutional flexibility and rigidity of the church, a number of state-religion models can be formed. States constantly review their policies to accommodate the changing demands of society as well as

those of the global community. While different intellectual and ideological discourses, for example, Enlightenment thought, French Republicanism, modernization theories and liberalism, view secularism as a prerequisite for democracy (Stepan 2012), and contemporary liberal thinkers like Rawls promote "take [ing] the truths of religion off the political agenda" (Rawls 1993: 151), empirical evidence indicates that the relationship between democracy and secularism is not necessarily mutually inclusive. If one examines the Western European experience it is clear that many of the long-standing democracies in Europe also maintained established churches; e.g., England and Scotland in the UK, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Finland, and Greece. In fact, Casanova argues that with the exception of the Catholic Church, every other major branch of Christianity has been established somewhere in Europe without apparently jeopardizing democracy. While the supremacy of religion in executive and legislative affairs of many countries ended long ago, states continue to be involved in religious affairs in a number of ways. Casanova claims that due to increasing pluralism in the Western European context, countries are increasingly de-privatizing religion and creating what he calls a sort of "public religion" (Casanova 1994).

Furthermore, the experiences of secular but non-democratic states like the Soviet-type communist regimes and fascist Spain illustrate that secularism can actually inhibit democratic consolidation and the flourishing of fundamental rights and liberties (Casanova 2008: 68). Stepan goes further to argue that since democracy is "a system of conflict regulation that allows open competition over the values and goals that citizens want to advance" (Stepan 2012: 56), secularism is relevant and necessary to democratic theory only insofar as it enables what he calls "twin tolerations", whereby an elected government is independent of any mandate from religious groups in policymaking and religious groups are free to advance their individual and group interests within the boundaries of democratic norms and law. Accordingly, the rigid separation of political and religious spheres has increasingly been diluted in almost every Western European country, including France and Spain, two countries with the most rigid model of separation, thus constantly constructing twin tolerations.

In the next section, I will examine the relationship between a state-religion model and the religious education policies in different countries. I will argue that different state-religion models lead to the development of different models of religious education. And as Kuru further argues, these institutional configurations of religious education in turn reproduce the ideological domination of that model of state-religion relations, which also has consequences for democratic consolidation (Kuru 2009). The historical evolution of each case below will illuminate the strategic use of the institutional structures of religious education by contingent groups in order to strengthen an ideological stance.

I. Turkey's Aggressive Secularism

Following World War I, in 1923, with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire the modern Turkish Republic was established under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Mustafa Kemal, like many of his contemporaries, envisioned that the salvation of the new nation lay within Westernization and its institutional forms. This view of modernization via Westernization was informed by 19th century positivistic ideologies that situated reason in opposition to tradition and religion. In this way it differed from contemporaneous movements like Pan-Turkism, pan-Ottomanism and Islamism, all of which advocated social and political reform through continuity rather than through radical change (Toker and Tekin 2007: 83). Such conceptualization of modernization underpinned the Turkish founding elite's aggressive approach to enact policies that would cause a radical break from the Ottoman past. Accordingly, it was thought that the ills of the new Republic were caused by the old regime, characterized by its strong commitment and respect for religion. And a secular democratic

state model was the only cure, as Western states exemplified. However, as Mardin argues, the founding elite did not comprehend the deeply embedded role of Islam in the everyday lives of the majority of Turkey's population (Mardin 1983: 108). Instead, the Turkish revolutionary elite perceived institutional secularism as a precondition to democratic transition, and at times resorted to authoritarianism at the expense of democracy to protect secularism.

The persistent efforts of the Turkish revolutionary elite to separate not only state and religion, but also religion and society as part of its nation-state-building agenda, therefore should also be evaluated, in particular with regard to the consequences for pluralism and religious liberties before drawing institutional similarities between different secular regimes. This section will focus on the evaluation of how religious liberties were influenced by the secularist reforms in Turkey and the outcomes for a representative pluralist democracy.

Classical definitions of secularism usually describe it as the institutional separation of the state and religion, whereby each sphere is able to exercise relative independence from interference from the other sphere. Turkish secularism, usually considered to have been modeled after French *laïcité*, established the state and religion as separate and independent spheres and also necessitated the separation of religion and public life. Kuru disputes an overstatement of the resemblance between the two regimes, contending that in the French *ancien régime*, an immanent tension existed between the clergy and the people over the property relationships of the clergy while no similar tension existed in the former Ottoman regime where religious institutions were "comparatively more deeply embedded in the society as there was not an extraterritorial pope or an isolated clergy with celibacy", hinting at the social-embeddedness of French *laïcité* (Kuru 2009: 33). Thus, while the Habermasian account of the rise of a public sphere entails an evolutionary and a discursive model informed by socio-economic shifts, Roy claims that in non-Western countries like India and Turkey, the creation of a public sphere compels a "sustained engagement with the implications of rupture and discontinuity in state forms and modalities of governance" (Roy 2006: 206).

Turkish secularism also evolved, not as a gradual socio-economic outcome, but as the result of a rupture and discontinuity that was viewed necessary by the founding elite. Therefore, the reforms undertaken during the foundational years of the Republic were directed against existing social, political and cultural ties to Ottoman-Islamic tradition (Küçükcan 2010: 964).

In this context, as the first stage, the Turkish revolutionary elite launched political reforms that redefined the relationship between the state and society, which included the abolishing of the Caliphate (the ruling authority of all Muslims worldwide, similar to ecumenical authority in Christianity) in 1924, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations in 1924, the *shari'a* (Islamic law) courts with the latter replaced with modern courts according to the Swiss Civil Code in 1925.

The second stage included cultural reforms that sought to affect the everyday practices of people, and were largely influenced by Islamic norms, values, and world views, for example, the closing of religious shrines (*türbes*) and dervish lodges (*tekkes*) in 1925, the adoption of the Gregorian calendar in 1926, the enforcement of a Western dress code, the changing of the alphabet from Ottoman-Arabic to Latin script in 1928, the "Turkification" of the call to prayer in 1932, and the change of the weekly holiday from Friday, the Islamic holiday, to Sunday (Küçükcan 2010: 965; Şentürk 2010: 322-3).

These assertive policies of modernization seemed to ensure secularization, but apparently they did so at the expense of democratic representation and excluded the initial coalition of the founding elite composed of late-Ottoman generals, intellectuals and religious scholars (*ulama* and *sheikhs*), as well as representatives of ethnic groups who were instrumental in establishing the early administrative and ideological basis of the Republic (Akın 2011: 35, Ertunç 2005: 12-43). This mixed group of founders was under the influence

of the great variety of ideological currents that existed at the time, i.e., pan-Ottomanism, Islamism and nationalism. They also differed in their levels of religiosity. The representatives in the initial coalition viewed Islam as vital to the survival of the nation and the state, but still viewed positivist thinking as necessary and admired the scientific and technological advancements in the West despite feelings of hostility to European imperialism.

Represented in the first National Assembly, this group of nationalists from different sectors of late-Ottoman society ratified the first constitution of the Republic in 1924, which stated that Islam was the religion of the new Republican state (Kara 2008: 13; Karpat 2008: 185). Analyzing the institutions and the founding cadrés of the Turkish Republic, historians of late-Ottoman modernization argue that Republican modernization in Turkey can be described as a continuation of the Ottoman Westernization movement, a movement that started at least half a century earlier (Kara 2008: 25) when the institutional and ideological prototypes of the Kemalist revolutionary changes were established. This initial coalition was dissolved in the process of state building and political power became increasingly concentrated in a single party, the Republican Peoples Party (CHP), established and led by Mustafa Kemal and his circle. The assertive secularist policies of the new regime were largely engineered and put into force by the single-party elite.

The constitutional status of religion shifted in harmony with the Kemalist agenda, thus consolidating a complete break from the Ottoman cultural legacy when the article concerning religion was removed from the constitution in 1934 and replaced with the principle of laicism in 1937. The constitutional use of laicism carried doctrinal rather than programmatic implications as it did not outline any criteria according to which the state and religion could be situated in practice. The article defining the new nation-state as a democratic, laic and social republican state is coded as an unquestionable constitutional principle. Yet the vague and loose definition of laicism continues to be a matter of constant challenge and accommodation on the part of changing political elites and social groups based on emerging practical problems in social, political, and educational spheres.

The Trajectory of Religious Education in Turkey

The historical trajectory of how the principle of laicism was implemented in educational reform demonstrates the style of change the Kemalist elite envisioned. Like their contemporary revolutionaries in Egypt, India, and Russia, Turkey's revolutionary elite also viewed educational reform as vital for the creation of a nation of loyal, responsible, and patriotic citizens.

In fact, the Ottoman bureaucracy and the *ulema* were not unaware of the 19th century debates in Europe about educational reform, which entailed the introduction of a "secular" curriculum to existing religious school systems, thus ensuring the attainment of the skills and knowledge necessary to adapt to the new economic and social circumstances. Thus, the *Tanzimat* bureaucrats launched the first round of educational reforms in the Ottoman polity in the form of an alternative school system alongside the existing *medrese* system, reflecting the simultaneous, worldwide transformation of the concept of public education. The new system sought to select the best components from the Western education model and established a three-tier French-style school system that combined general education with religious education.

This is outlined in the 1869 Ottoman Education Regulation. During the Hamidian era, (1876-1908) in the face of growing European political interference, missionary proselytizing, and the challenge posed by private, foreign, missionary schools like the American Robert College and the French Notre Dame de Sion, the state concentrated on expanding public education as a way to improve the moral qualities of society and to strengthen traditional

values (Fortna 2002: 372). These Hamidian schools differed from those during the *Tanzimat* period, as they were not merely an adoption of modern, Western-style schools, but rather an adaptation of the structural elements of the Western secular education system to Ottoman and Islamic understandings. Fortna argues that the intellectual tendency to simply view these schools as a vehicle of secularization based on their Western-style organization and structure obscures the state's use of them to redefine its relationship with society based on traditional values. In fact, these schools played an important role during the Hamidian era in reasserting the central authority after a period of decentralization. In addition, they not only provided human resources for the expanding state bureaucracy, but also assisted in shifting the socio-economic landscape by offering new career options to staff and students as well as providing more opportunities for direct contact between the state and its youth (Fortna 2002: 374). Hence, rather than promoting Westernization, the Hamidian school system promoted Islamic and Ottoman values through different instruments, for example, a high proportion of their teachers came from the *ulama*, the academic schedule was organized around the Islamic calendar and the architectural features of their buildings had Islamic elements. Ironically, although these schools aimed to raise a generation that valued tradition and religion while at the same time were attentive to the needs of modernization, they also raised a generation that supported the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, bringing an end to the rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II in 1908.

The educational reforms carried out after the 1908 revolution are important in that they paved the way for the radical reforms that the Kemalist elite would later undertake. While the new state school system thrived after the *Tanzimat* period, the traditional *medrese* system went largely unchanged despite increasing criticisms from inside and out. While the initial critiques of the *medrese* system called for curricular, administrative and physical improvements, following the military defeats in the Balkan Wars their demands started to question the very presence of the *medreses* alongside the more idealized state school system. Some proponents of reform proposed the integration of all *medrese*s into a unified state school system while others sought their total abolishment, as they had allegedly become centers of dogmatic teaching. From 1913 on, the degradation of the *ulama* had become a central aspect in this reform campaign (Bein 2011: 56- 60). Finally, in 1914, Sultan Reşat signed the *Medrese Reform* bill with the prior approval of the cabinet and parliament. The bill involved changes that centralized, regularized, and nationalized the *medrese* system under the office of the *sheikh'ul-Islam*, who consequentially gained complete authority over the curriculum, administration, and pedagogy of these traditional schools. These schools, unified under the banner of *Medreset'ül Dar'ül Hilafet'ül-Aliyye,* included non-religious courses such as sociology, philosophy, mathematics, and hygiene among others. These courses were based on the new state school curricula and were taught by teachers who had graduated from seminaries or universities rather than by the classical *ulama*, whose teaching was restricted to Islamic curriculum. Some of the popular *medrese* teachers of the time were Ziya Gökalp (teaching sociology, he was also instrumental in developing the positivistic ideology of the republican elite), Ahmed Ağaoğlu (teaching history, he was also a Turkist activist), and İzmirli İsmail Hakkı (teaching Islamic philosophy, he was an Islamist intellectual) (Bein 2011: 61-2). In 1913, the first prototype of the current state religious schools was established as the *Medreset'ül Eimme ve'l-Huteba* where religious functionaries would be trained (Ünsür 1995: 68). These schools trained students for two or three years with curriculum focused on religious subjects, including only a few general education courses.

Religious educational reforms, which had started with the *Tanzimat*, continued to follow a path of centralization. The 1914 reform was no different: while the *sheikh'ul-Islam* appeared to have autonomy in the organization and curricular activities of the *medrese* system, his office was under the direct authority of the government, thus making the post

more susceptible to state intervention. From early on, opponents addressed the 1914 reforms as a clandestine plan by the secularist Committee for Union and Progress (CUP) government to gradually abolish the *medreses.* These concerns were affirmed by the newly mandated state caps on *medrese* enrollments that foresaw a 40% decrease in the student body compared to 1910 enrollment statistics (Bein 2011: 63).

The Ottoman state in World War I further added to the deterioration of the *medrese* system, although sporadic reforms continued to expand the new *medreses* throughout the empire. Being on the losing side of the World War I removed the CUP from power and the ensuing political instability left room for more conservative policy changes in education. Although a parallel curriculum was introduced to regular state schools, due to administrative instability within the system and the political uncertainties of the time, *medrese* enrollments fell to an all-time low.

The *medrese* reforms undertaken after 1908, during the short period of CUP rule, in effect prepared the ground for the Kemalist elite to launch a secular education system that would play a central role in shaping a republican, modern nation-state, which is the system that continues to exist to this day. Upon the establishment of the Grand National Assembly, referred to as the First Parliament, in 1920, the elected government led by Mustafa Kemal established a Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Religious Endowments to replace the office of the *sheikh'ul-Islam.* The new ministry favored the new style of *medreses* as an ideal model for religious education. However, with the 1924 reforms, the new religious administration was demoted to an administrative department under the authority of the prime minister. With the ratification of the *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu* (Law of Unified Education) in 1924, the revolutionary elite effectively eliminated the jurisdiction of the religious administration over the education system and unified all school types under the Ministry of Education. A few days later, the minister of education declared the government decision to close all *medreses,* estimated to number 465 with about 16,000 students (Öcal 2011: 94), promising instead to establish vocational Imam Hatip schools to train religious functionaries, as well as a faculty of theology under the jurisdiction of *Darülfünun* (Istanbul University) (Bein 2011: 73).

Öcal disagrees with the idea that the closing of the *medreses* contradicted the Law of Unified Education, which was intended to open new fields of education and open access to different thoughts and viewpoints (Öcal 1994: 28). On the other hand, others, like Baloğlu, retrospectively commented on the law as a democratizing agent and a practical consequence of the principle of secularism (Baloğlu 1990: 6-7). The assertive application of the principle of secularism included degradation of *medrese* education in subsequent years and widened the gap between the Kemalist intelligentsia and the religious groups in Turkey. In response to the negative repercussions, Prime Minister İsmet İnönü was rather indifferent: "To see what we are doing as hostile to religion is to turn a blind eye to reality. What is being done is in no way hostile to religion. Ten years from now, the world and those who oppose us today or those who have concerns about religious decay will see that the purest, the cleanest, the most real form of Islam is in fact manifested in us. Until then, we will have to inculcate the revolution and execute this with law and force. All ignorant objections and initiatives that may obstruct our success will be eliminated." (Öcal 2011: 41; Ünsür 1994: 73)

Given the decreasing amount of difference between the new state school system, *mekteps,* and the *medrese* system in terms of their provision of general education subjects, even the most reform-minded conservatives were dismayed and felt betrayed when the Kemalist elite closed the *medrese*s. They received this radical decision as an attack on religion, as that was the key difference between the two systems. The cleavage between the Kemalist elite and the religious groups deepened when the secularization policies extended beyond institutional forms of religion to popular practices of religion with laws that restricted the daily religious mores and practices of ordinary citizens, which ranged from interfering

with their religious attire, banning shrines, and closing down Sufi orders (*tarikats*). As Zürcher quiet aptly contends, "By turning against popular religion, they [Kemalists] cut the ties which bound them to the mass of the population." The Kemalists resorted to authoritarian, repressive measures while creating a public image of secularism as a system that was antithetical to religion while in fact, the Unified Education Code was used to hide the intention to close down the *medrese* system (Zürcher 1997: 200-201; Bilgin 1980: 47).

Article 4 of the Unified Education Code mandated that the state "build separate schools to train civil servants who will execute religious duties like *imamet* [leading of prayers] and *hitabet* [giving sermons]." By March 1924, 29 of the *Dar'ül-Hilafe Medreses* had been transformed into Imam Hatip Mektepleri (IHM Schools) where religious functionaries would be trained in a four-year program. These schools accepted students upon the completion of primary education and taught a mixed curriculum designed at the Ministry of Education, which consisted of both religious and secular subjects. Ironically, though, the state did not ensure that these institutions thrived, and rather restricted employment opportunities for their graduates. Moreover, the state did not support improving the poor quality of education at the IHMs. Over a two-year span, the state took action to gradually close the IHMs on grounds of the allegedly low level of student enrollment, further contributing to the conservative claims that the state was hostile to religion. By 1930, there were no IHMs left, and in 1933, the Faculty of Theology at Istanbul University was also closed. Furthermore, by 1931, the compulsory course on religion offered at regular public schools and teachers' colleges was removed. Until the opening of the Training Course for Imams and Hatips in 1948, no religious education was offered in Turkey (Öcal 2011: 54-56; Ünsür 1994: 75).

During the early Republican period, the transformative effects of secularization policies were visible more in the towns than in rural, agricultural areas. The military and civil bureaucrats, state officials, teachers, doctors, lawyers, and entrepreneurs of larger commercial enterprises formed the backbone of the Kemalist nation-building project while craftsmen, small traders and the large agricultural population represented the traditional, conservative culture (Zürcher 1997: 203; Karpat 2008; Mardin 2001, Keyder 2007). In order to transform the rural countryside in parallel with the objectives of the new state ideology, the new regime established a local school system, known as "village institutes," in which village youth were trained as primary school teachers, equipping them with technical and technological skills as well as literacy. While these schools were successful for a while in fighting illiteracy in the countryside, following World War II, they were accused of becoming bastions of communist ideology. With the democratic, first multi-party elections and the election of the Democrat Party (DP) to government in 1950, these schools were completely banned (Zürcher 1997: 202).

Some of the socio-economic characteristics of the new political elite stood in stark contrast to the previous Kemalist political elite. DP representatives had relatively lower levels of education, were less elitist, had a somewhat populist agenda that took the values and concerns of their constituency seriously, and were likely to have a background in commerce or law. In fact, in contrast to the elite of the CHP, only a few DP representatives had bureaucratic or military backgrounds. DP representatives favored a more liberal outlook in politics and economics. The changing characteristics of the political elite were reflected in the immediate policy preferences of the first DP government. In a way, the 1950 election results reflected both the fury at the economic failure of "the politically statist" Kemalist regime, as Landau labels it, and the long-aggravated frustration of the masses with the state's aggressive secularization policies. In contrast to the bureaucratic elite of the single-party period, who claimed that the exclusion of religious education was necessary for social progress, the DP elite argued that "science and technology by themselves cannot guarantee a nation's freedom and independence unless that nation equips its youth with its national characteristics,

traditions, religious and humanistic values and virtues." (Dağlı, et al. 1988: 161)

In effect, some of the earliest actions the DP government took were directed toward a relaxation of policies that governed all the religious affairs in the country. Some of these acts were symbolically important, for example, the reinstatement of the call to prayer in its original Arabic language format to which all Muslims attribute sanctity. Yet others, like the establishment of a new school model that provided religious education as part of its mixed curricula, as well as a combination of religious classes and a general education curriculum parallel to other public schools, carried much greater political weight. Over the long years in which religious education had been banned, the number of imams and *hatips* in the countryside dropped to a point at which people could not find an imam to perform their funeral services, let alone lead the five daily prayers in the mosques. The minister of education at the time, Tevfik İleri, expressed the need for opening IHL schools: "We are convinced that it is imperative to open the IHL schools. We wish to see mature and well-educated imams and *hatips* who have been raised to be capable of addressing the modern Turkish nation." (Ayhan 1999: 166)

Imam Hatip High Schools (IHLs) were founded in 1951 as vocational schools to provide students with the necessary religious education to become learned imams and *hatips*. The foundation of the IHLs was largely in response to popular demand for religious education alongside the need for well-educated religious functionaries (Adanalı 2008: 230). The IHLs, therefore, stand as more of a concession on the part of the state elite in Turkey in a Gramscian sense than a willing service for the interests of society. In fact, in a personal account, one of the first IHL graduates, Yahya Kutluoğlu, cites İleri, saying: "We did not take the food out of the lion's mouth, we took it from its stomach," thus describing the difficulties they faced with the state apparatus in opening IHLs.

IHLs were modeled after the IHMs of the early years of the Republic, and their general structure has remained unchanged to this day. They were established as public schools with a three-year middle school program and a four-year high school program. The Ministry of Education regulated the curriculum and academic calendar. The state-approved curriculum taught at the IHLs included subjects like Arabic, the Qur'an, religious education, *akaid* (religious doctrine), *siyer* (life of Prophet Muhammad), history, geography, citizenship, mathematics, music, arts, physics, chemistry, physical education, English, and Turkish (Öcal, 2011: 115). Around 60% of the curriculum was science, sports, arts and culture courses, with 40% being concerned with religious education. Since their initial opening, the IHL teachers, appointed and paid by the Ministry of Education, taught the same scientific and cultural curriculum and used the same textbooks as those in general education schools. Furthermore, functioning as public schools, IHLs were subject to the same state regulations regarding financial and administrative issues. The first IHLs were opened as citywide schools in seven large cities: Adana, Ankara, Isparta, Istanbul, Kayseri, Konya and Maraş. With the immense support of religious associations and individuals, IHLs grew rapidly from the early 1950s on. This raised suspicion and resistance from traditional secularist elites. They viewed the increasing popularity of these schools as a potential threat to the consolidation of a secular democratic regime in Turkey and constantly placed legal impediments, which made entrance to college degree programs other than departments of theology almost impossible for IHL graduates. Anxiety about the popularity of IHLs, on the other hand, lay partly within the exclusivist ideology that underpinned the Unified Education Code. Training a group of "narrow-minded, dogmatic bigots" at IHLs, as opposed to the "enlightened, rational and modern" intellectuals who were emerging from regular public schools contradicted the progressive goals of unified education – goals that were primarily the creation of solidarity for the nation based on the founding ideals of the Kemalist elite (Ayhan 1999: 168). Following the 1960 coup, religion started to be increasingly perceived as a field of political contest. Kara

stresses, however, that this shift did not correspond with public sentiments until 1969, when Necmeddin Erbakan founded the National Order Party (MNP). Erbakan, a very successful engineer who received a Western-style education and had an upper-middle class background, had objections to Westernization as rejecting religion in society, and instead stressed the importance of economic development that is national in origin, and social development that is rooted in a moral reawakening. As the leader of the National Vision (*Milli Görüş*) movement, he had a significant role in raising the participation of devout people in Turkish politics (Akdoğan 2005: 622, Karpat 2011: 210, Yavuz 2005: 592). The MNP electoral base was largely composed of "1) a new educated group of religious families with rural background who migrated to cities, received a secular education and work as self-employed, 2) religious entrepreneurs who do trade and manufacturing in the rural parts of Turkey, and 3) Sunni Muslims with lower-income status in both rural and urban parts of Turkey." (Çakır 2005: 545) MNP politics concentrated on "1) the failure of the national education system to train the youth in correspondence with national developmental goals, and 2) the fact that the national education policy is based on a rejection of the national past." (Mardin 2001: 124) Following the 1971 coup, the MNP and all other political parties were outlawed. During the stalemate period between 1971 and 1974, the secondary school section of all IHLs was closed down and IHL graduates' access to higher education was restricted (Özdalga 1999: 428). In 1973, the MNP was reopened under a new name, the National Salvation Party (MSP), and received 11.8% of the popular vote, winning 48 seats in parliament.

The MSP supported the idea that modernity could exist peacefully with tradition and religion, both of which needed to be protected, and this protection could be ensured through pious families and the state education system. The presence of the MSP in the coalition governments from 1973 until the 1980 coup, as such, was reflected in the dramatic increase in the numbers of IHLs and student enrollments – from 129 schools to 339 schools and from 34,482 students to 308,085 students.

The 1980 coup had a mixed effect on religious education. In an effort to combat a potential socialist encroachment in the country, the military junta allied with a nationalist group that supported a model, known as Turkish-Islamic Synthesis (Kaplan 2002: 117; Kurtoğlu 2005: 214). They re-engaged with religion, to some extent, by adding compulsory religious education to the public school curriculum and by utilizing religious rationale as a justification for activities carried out by the military. No new IHLs were opened during this period, but neither were there any school closures. We know from media accounts, however, that Kenan Evren, the general who led the coup later to become president, was not very fond of IHLs, but merely tolerated them for political purposes, i.e., the anti-communist campaign run by the state.

The 1983-1993 period is characterized by Turgut Özal's Motherland Party (ANAP) government, which prioritized educational development in order to secure the human resources needed to sustain Turkey's economic development. New employment opportunities for people with technical and vocational training as well as preference for higher education degrees for managerial positions made educational attainment instrumental for upward mobility. In this context, in 1985 the first Anatolian IHL was founded. This was in response to demands for religious education from Turkish families who had migrated to Germany as workers in the 1960s. The new AIHL model provided higher quality education in German. Turkish working families in Germany could send their children to these schools where they would receive religious education in boarding schools and return to Germany to serve as religious functionaries for the Turkish community there. Over time though, these schools attracted more students who lived in Turkey than Germany and offered foreign language education in English rather than German. Admissions to the AIHLs were based on scores received at the National Anatolian High School Exams (ALS), which consequently attracted

more successful students compared to regular IHLs. In 1994, one of the earliest graduates of Kartal AIHL, Mustafa Önder Kıyıklık's, scoring first place in the national university entrance exams, gained further visibility and popularity for these schools. By 1996, there were 601 IHLs – 90 of them were AIHLs – which had 318,775 students enrolled at the middle school level and 192,727 students at the high school level (Öcal 2011: 226-231).

The political context turned even more favorable for IHLs in general with the formation of the new Welfare Party (RP) in 1983 under the leadership of Necmeddin Erbakan. The RP differed from its predecessor MSP in its discourse, being less religious in its references, more democratic in its outlook, and had a more civil society-oriented approach (Yavuz 2005: 596). The RP succeeded in rapidly broadening its base and gained an important electoral success first in the 1994 municipal elections, winning mayoralties in big cities like Istanbul and Ankara, and second in 1995 when it won the general elections as the first party. In 1996, the RP and the True Path Party (DYP) formed a coalition government. The RP-DYP government period was a period of relaxation on the part of religious groups in general and for IHLs in particular. The increasing visibility of pious groups in the sociopolitical and economic arena, however, heightened secularist anxieties, especially among the military elite. The secularist elite at the time stereotypically framed IHLs as a threat, as they saw them as a potential recruitment ground for the RP. While RP representatives rejected such claims, on February 28, 1997, the military bureaucrats at the National Security Council (MGK) meeting forced the RP-DYP government to accept certain preemptive measures to protect the secular state regime. The fourth article of the measures precluded that religious education institutions must be restored to their status as schools that trained religious functionaries in numbers that corresponded to national needs. This was accomplished by imposing compulsory, uninterrupted, eight-year public education. The 13th article of the measures, furthermore, entailed a headscarf ban in the public sphere, which encompassed all levels of education both public and private. This ban was justified with the argument that the headscarf negated the regulations of attire in the public sphere and led to "backward spectacles and practices" in the public sphere.

In 1998, the RP was closed for violating the secularism principle in the Constitution. The February 28 measures were enacted in full swing during the following tri-party government of Mesut Yılmaz's Motherland Party (ANAP), Devlet Bahçeli's National Movement Party (MHP), and Bülent Ecevit's Democratic Left Party (DSP). The middle school sections of IHLs were closed down, girls were not allowed to wear headscarves, and education was transformed into a coeducational setting. Further damage to IHLs was done with a 1999 decision from the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) to use a lower coefficiency factor (0.2*GPA as opposed to 0.5*GPA) on the university entrance exam score of vocational school graduates, seriously limiting the chances of IHL graduates to enter university degree programs outside their field. This had a direct effect on IHL enrollments, IHL students, and their career choices. Under such political pressure, enrollment at IHLs dropped significantly. Prior to the February 28, 1997 coup, 511,502 students were enrolled in IHLs; this figure fell to 64,534 in 2003 (Kuru 2009: 194). In fact, IHL enrollments and the number of IHLs have always been informed by the political opportunity structure. In times of relaxation they thrived rapidly while in times of pressure they dropped. For instance, from the 1980 coup to the 1997 coup, the number of IHLs rose from 374 to 605.

IHL enrollment continued its decrease until the election of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party), led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, which formed the new government in 2002. The AK Party defined itself as a conservative democratic party in which they tried to create an authentic "synthesis between its Muslim identity and modern values" (Tepe 2006: 118). "Conservative democracy" was expected to bridge the gap between the state and the people by way of embracing long-ignored social demands, including to end

unjust policies like the headscarf ban and the lower coefficiency barrier for vocational schools,. The AK Party succeeded in winning 67% of the seats in the parliament, forming the first majority government since Özal's ANAP governments. In contrast to the unstable coalition governments since the 1970s, the three consecutive terms of AK Party-majority governments are considered to have brought political stability in Turkey. The AK Party period can be described as a period of restoration for IHLs. It gradually lifted the political pressure on religious education, particularly on IHLs. It initially struck down the ban on wearing headscarves at schools and later in 2010 took action to end the lower coefficiency barrier in response to demands for equal opportunities to higher education. This relaxation period once again raised IHL enrollment whereby the IHL community had faith in the party's ability to overcome past injustices, even if it took some time. The general structure of religious education, however, remained the same until recent changes enacted in the 2012-13 academic year. These changes included the addition of optional religion classes at public schools, the reopening of the middle school level of IHLs, which had been closed due to the imposition of compulsory eight-year education, and the repealing of the age limit for attending Qur'an courses at mosques, courses run by the Directorate of Religious Affairs (DİB), the state office in charge of managing all religious affairs in the country. Despite these changes toward a more differentiated, flexible and inclusive educational system, Turkey continues to suffer from its own contradictions. An authoritarian rigidity and a dogmatic approach in the way relations between religion and the state are managed are still apparent. The state is still considered to be the primary provider of religious education in the country, which is hardly an element of pluralist democratic systems.

In order to better illustrate the particularities and contradictions of the Turkish case, in the next section I will investigate the different ways other secular regimes – France, the UK, the US, Egypt and Indonesia – strike a balance between their state-religion relations and democratic inclusivity in schooling.

A. France

In France, secularist policies prioritize the protection of the French state from the intrusion of religion. The principle of *laïcité*, which was imposed more as a doctrine than a law, encapsulates three fundamental components that are closely attached and inseparable: freedom of conscience, equality in law for different religious and spiritual choices, and official and political neutrality regarding religious groups (Trigg 2007: 119). The state cannot have any official religion and, respectively, cannot directly support any religious group. Religion is viewed as a matter of individual conscience, and as such it cannot claim appearance in public space (Trigg 2007). The French model of radical separation as such not only separates religion and the state, but also strictly privatizes religion. Public liberties for religious groups, however, are protected through the right of association. Religious groups can be designated as illegal only if they transgress the state's fundamental freedoms and values, which have been granted by the rule of law. However, the right of association also bears inherent contradictions. While religious groups are free to associate, they enjoy different levels of access to communication with the state, as the state is legally bound to interact only with nationwide religious associations. Groups that lack the capacity to unite under a national organization do not have access to the state nor can they receive state support. As such, groups that are not organized at the national level are effectively excluded from presenting their concerns (Köse and Küçükcan 2008). For instance, the failure of Muslim groups to generate effective support from the French state is usually regarded as part of this restriction.

Groups that try to carve out more space to advance their interests have constantly challenged the French model of separation between church and state. Over time, the state has

modified and recalibrated its relatively rigid *laïcité* to accommodate emerging social and political needs, such as the increasing need for universal literacy and the need to integrate the new waves of immigrants into French society. This modification generally entails a sort of provision over religious liberties for different groups. Evolving national policies regarding religion include: state maintenance of houses of worship – churches and some synagogues – by the state or local governments as part of the physical patrimony of France; public payment of Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Islamic clergy in the military, prisons and in hospitals; a special social security system for clergy; tax exemptions for religious institutions; government subsidies to religious non-profit organizations that provide educational services for the public interest; state subvention of parochial schooling; the provision of a special period for catechism in elementary schools on a voluntary basis; the allocation of state-subsidized television broadcasting time for one or another religious broadcast, and the assignment of national or communal properties to religious groups (Safran 2003: 61). In addition to these nationwide practices, the French state funds Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish houses of worship and the clergy in the regions of Alsace and Lorraine, based on a *regime concordataire* established in 1918.

The equality of all religions before the law, the impartiality of the state and the principle of *laïcité* evolved in close relation to the development of a national education system in France. The French state viewed a secular education system as the fundamental instrument for inculcating republican citizenship. However, from very early on, the state also ensured the freedom to teach religion at church schools on the condition that they were privately funded. The importance of and the demand for these schools rapidly decreased after the 1882 Ferry laws, which established a "free, obligatory, and neutral" national system of public schools that was free from all forms of religious education (Safran 2003: 55). The socio-economic transformations following World War II, including urbanization and modernization, led to an increase in demand for private schools, even among secular families. Legal arrangements to accommodate these changes were adopted, for example, the *Barangé law* of 1951, which allowed state subsidies for families with school-age children, regardless of their choice of schooling, private or public. The *Debré laws* of 1959, on the other hand, instituted that public funds be given to Catholic parochial schools that agreed to follow a state-approved curriculum (Safran 2003: 68). All in all, the French government, despite a history of a relatively hostile separation of church and state in comparison to many other Western European cases, has supported private religious schools since the policy changes in 1958.

Consequently, contemporary debates about religious education in France are less about state funding of religious schools and more about the constructions of the private versus public realms. French *laïcité,* with all its versions, treats religion as a matter of the private sphere and, as such, no public issue is debated on religious grounds. However, what constitutes the private is a matter of constant debate. The public controversy over the public versus private sphere, which arose in 1989 when Muslim high school students were expelled from schools for wearing *hijab* (the Islamic headscarf) at school, reappeared in 1993 when a Jewish student was expelled from school for repeated absences from his Saturday classes due to religious reasons. In order to clarify this sort of ambiguity about the use of the principle of *laïcité* in practice, then President Chirac established the Stasi committee in 2003. The Stasi report, as it came to be called, stated that "ostentatious display of religion" violated the secular rules of the French school system – "ostentatious display" refers to any visible symbol meant to be easily noticed. As such, it includes Muslim girls' headscarves, Jewish boys' yarmulkes, and Sikh boys' turbans while allowing small symbols like pendants with religious symbols.

Public education in France is increasingly secularized for purposes of pluralism and inclusiveness, which as Trigg argues, plays out to increase demands for religious education

(Trigg 2007: 119), a contradictory outcome of the principle of state neutrality in France. *Laïcité*, on the other hand, differs from secularism in other countries, as it separates not only religion and the state, but also religion and public space. Consequently, French *laïcité* prioritizes the demands of the state over the demands of the individual per se. In other words, a Jewish boy's commitment to wear a yarmulke or a Muslim girl's to wear a headscarf is dispensable for purposes of national cohesion in the public sphere.

B. The United States

The United States, which sets an example for a secular state with mutual independence of religion and state, is a state that is constitutionally opposed to helping the establishment of any religion as the state religion or state-supported religion. This anti-establishment principle has led to a rigid "wall of separation" in the United States, however the second clause of the First Amendment is also strictly upheld in order to protect liberties. The American constitution maps a strategic plan of action for how lawmakers practice the separation of state and religion. It does not use the term secular, rather grounding secularism on the principle of free exercise. The primary goal of the state, then, is to protect freedom of exercise, thought and belief, which is in stark contrast to French *laïcité* included in the French constitution in a doctrinal manner rather than a guiding principle. American debates about the educational system, particularly religious education, have evolved around this idea of pluralism and how integrating or segregating religion in public schooling affects the social order in a highly multi-cultural and multi-religious society.

The education systems in the United States include public schools, private schools – the largest portion being Catholic – homeschooling and more recently, the rapidly growing charter school system. In much of the 19th century, public education included non-denominational religious instruction as a means of cultivating individual morality and a sense of American citizenship. By the early 20th century, public schools had been to a large extent secularized, except for the persistence of daily morning prayers and Bible reading, which were completely eliminated by Supreme Court decisions in the 1960s. The more recent discussions about religion in public schools revolve around the idea of a comprehensive religious instruction, which does not favor any particular religion or denomination and does not introduce religious rituals.

The trajectory of private Catholic schools in America is instructive in order to understand the contemporary debates on religious education in the US. In the first phase, these schools were run by the Church, and did not receive any direct financial assistance from the federal, state or local governments, but were funded by parishes. The second phase of Catholic schooling was defined in relation to the general public school system, which would help homogenize the large numbers of European Catholic migrants in the mid-19th century in response to fears of a Catholic invasion and questions about patriotism, national identity, religious separatism and principles of citizenship (Walch 1996: 26, Carper 2007: 241). These schools, called "common schools", met state requirements for curricula and received tax-funding. The common school system eventually turned out to be a common ground for mainstream Protestants, but failed to include 1) Catholics, due to the overly Protestant nature of the curriculum, and 2) Evangelical Protestants who did not find its curriculum sufficiently Biblical or doctrinal. Walsch indicates that three models of parish schools emerged toward the end of the 1900s: the publicly supported parochial school (experimented with in a few places), the Americanized Catholic schools (later to become the proto-typical model for contemporary parochial schooling) and the ethnic Catholic school. The publicly supported parochial school model involved an agreement between parishes and school boards in which they jointly selected the faculty; the school boards usually leased a building to the parish at lower rates

and paid the salaries of the faculty (Walch 1996: 66-71).

There are still debates about the relationship between the state and Catholic schools in America. As the quality of public education dropped, more American families – not necessarily Catholics – have preferred sending their children to American Catholic schools. In response to the poor quality of public schools, the federal state launched a charter school system which that required the signing of a charter between the state and private groups where the private group receives state funding in return for its commitment to provide secular education and to avoid proselytizing any religion (Mulvey et al. 2010: 126). Some Catholics oppose the charter school system as it threatens to further weaken the parochial system while others contend that Catholics should transform their schools into charter schools, thus benefiting from state funding while also enjoying relative independence in managing the schools.

The relationship between the state, society, and religion, specifically with regard to education, has been constantly contested through legal struggles in the US. These legal cases have ranged from disputes about who has the primary authority in children's education and the interpretation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, to demands for state funding of Catholic schools with their increasingly secularized educational curricula and heterogeneous student profile. Some legal cases like Pierce v. Society of Sisters (1925), Township v. Schempp (1963), and Everson v. Board of Education (1947) are significant for their effect on the wider education system in the United States. Despite little success in receiving direct state funding, indirect support through voucher payments has been extended to include Catholic school students since 1995 (Carl 2011: 4). The emergence of creative solutions regarding religious education such as the voucher system and the opening of the charter school system indicate that despite a strict commitment to the anti-establishment clause in the Constitution, the system is willing to accommodate public demands for exercising freedom of religion.

C. The United Kingdom

The UK is a country with an official religion and one that has religious education as part of the compulsory national education for students aged between five and 18. There is no national religious education curriculum, unlike other subjects. Religious education curriculum "1) is determined by a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) in state schools. There is one SACRE for each Local Education Authority. This curriculum is then compulsory for all state schools in the LEA. A SACRE may decide to adopt the curriculum from another LEA; 2) is heavily formed by religious communities in schools with a religious foundation (mostly Christian but a growing number of other religious groups); 3) is chosen among religious education curriculums designed by SACREs or religious bodies or determined independently at Independent private schools which are not state-funded" (Hopkins 2011).

However, until the 1870 Education Act, schools in the UK were founded and run by the Church of England, philanthropic organizations or private individuals, similar to the *medrese* system in the Ottoman Empire, where endowments supported *medrese*s. By the end of the 19th century, in response to the increasing need for skilled labor in growing new industries and to the rapid urbanization that accompanied industrial development, the state launched free, compulsory, universal elementary schooling for children aged between five and 12. State support for religious schooling, on the other hand, has a much longer past in the British education system when compared to other Western countries. In fact, Andy Green, in his important book, *Education and State Formation: the Rise of Education Systems in England, France and the USA*, states that the central state in Britain was much slower to act

decisively in the realm of education, leaving initial provision of schooling to religious interests. According to Green, this was in part due to “relatively gradual, protracted, and delayed” state formation in Britain (Green 1990: 34), with a greater emphasis on the role of voluntarism compared to the more intensive forms of state formation in France, Prussia and the US. Throughout the 19th century, therefore, Protestant churches in England and Wales were major providers of elementary education and received funding support from the state. Moreover, the 1870 Educational Reform act allowed public schools to opt for Bible teaching without denominational instruction, and at the same time, the right to withdraw from this class was preserved. The privileged role of the Church of England as the established church meant, in practice, that it was the major provider of church schooling and the major recipient of government grants. The 1870 act was later utilized by Catholic bishops to legitimize their demands for state funding for Catholic schools. Unlike the small gains of the Catholic community in the US, in the UK they were able to successfully appropriate state funds.

While the Church of England enjoys only a symbolic political role today, it still remains influential in education – 25% of all primary schools and 6% of all state secondary schools are Church of England schools while 18% of all primary and 5% of all secondary students are enrolled in these schools (Safran 2003: 92). These schools are of two kinds: voluntary-aided and voluntary-controlled. In voluntary-aided schools, the Church of England largely carries out the administration, while the state pays the teachers’ salaries. While 15% of all the costs related to the functioning of these schools are met by the state, the church has control over religious education curriculum. A board of governors appointed partially by the state and partially by the church administers the voluntary-controlled schools. The respective local education authority (LEA) pays for school expenditures, including teachers’ salaries. The voluntary-controlled schools follow locally agreed syllabi. Daily collective prayer is viewed as essential for children’s early educational experience, and as such is not banned, although in practice it is largely limited to a short Anglican prayer in the morning.

While there has been state funding for schools with a Christian foundation since the beginning of state education in 1870, the Education Act of 1944 extended state funding to cover some Jewish schools. With the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act, the Labour government decided to provide state funding for other faith groups, including Muslims and Sikhs. This policy shift was partly due “to a serious concern on the part of parents or children from South Asian religious minorities that their languages and cultures were not sufficiently respected and fostered in County (now Community) schools and that research (specifically the Commission for Racial Equality's Report titled ‘Terror In Our Schools’ revealed a high degree of racism in the County school system (Anon 1988)” (Jackson 2004: 47). As such, the promotion of faith-based schools grew in response to popular demand for tolerance and diversity.

Britain experienced a gradual process of state building through cooperation with religious authorities, and religious education is viewed as a pivotal element for consolidating national cohesion and improving individual cultivation.

D. Egypt

Since its declaration as a republic in 1953, the relationship between state and religion in Egypt has been a matter of ongoing political debate and at times a matter of violent conflict. Almost every constitution passed before and after the declaration of Egyptian independence has stated Islam as the state religion and that the laws of Islam constitute a source for legislation. This was the case until the 1979 amendment introduced by the Sadat government, which stated that Islam is the chief source of legislation. The institutions of religious education, in particular, the al-Azhar system, have been historically central to any

effort to set the political agenda in Egypt.

Today, the Egyptian education system reflects the legacy of both Islamization and Western-style modernization, which was not hostile to religion, but rather co-opted religion. Nineteenth century developments regarding education are particularly important in understanding the evolution of the contemporary system. Prior to the rule of Muhammad Ali Pasha and his heirs (1805-1882), education in Egypt was largely comprised of small Qur'an schools known as *kuttab* where a religious scholar was in charge and taught basic writing and reading in addition to basic Islamic sciences. These schools were an important site of religious socialization for the largely agricultural communities in rural parts of Egypt. When Muhammad Ali launched his European-style modern technical schools, he relied on the *kuttab* as "the country's only source of *entreé* into the *literaté* tradition." (Starett 1998) Later on, the British colonial rulers initiated a modern educational system similar to the general education system in Britain, organized in a more systematic, disciplined, and hierarchical fashion, thus accommodating the developmental needs of the country. The goal of the British educational reform was for the most part to maintain social order while increasing the profits of their colonial pursuits. The colonial elite, instead of abandoning the religious *kuttab*, decided to improve them into institutions of religious education that also taught non-religious subjects, thus helping the children acquire the necessary skills to become productive peasants, but not allowing them to pursue secondary or tertiary level degrees. With the centralization of the administration of the *kuttab* under local state offices, the role of these schools was consequentially transformed from being primarily a place for religious socialization under the guidance of a scholar to a place for gaining self-sufficiency skills to maintain one's livelihood under the provision of state administration. Therefore, the British policy of differentiated education involved state support of religious education for rural development purposes, but also helped maintain the new social hierarchy by solidifying the barrier between the village and the city (Starett 1998: 55). In response to strong popular dissent and criticism, the post-colonial Egyptian government enacted a policy that unified all public educational systems – elementary and primary – and abolished all fees for public schooling by 1952 (Starett 1998: 227). The post-World War II era marked a period of nation building for Egypt in which successive governments endorsed a particular interpretation of Islam to gain legitimacy for their political preferences and the modern institutions they aimed to control (Hibbard 2010: 18-48).

Reading through the history of Egyptian nation building, it is especially interesting to see the role of al-Azhar for different group of political elites. Due to the social esteem the al-Azhar system enjoyed, every political venture found a way to work with it. Nasserist politics of religion involved co-opting al-Azhar in order to 1) ensure that the *ulama* issued religious opinions that were consistent with secular values and socialist policies and 2) to decrease the autonomy of the conservative *ulama* concerning social and political matters. Some of the major policies adopted included the 1952 land reform that nationalized all endowment (*waqf*) lands, which had been the primary source of funding for al-Azhar, abolishing the *shari'a* courts and merging them into the national judiciary, which further limited the state-independent functioning of the *ulama*, and finally, the 1961 law that reorganized al-Azhar by placing it under the Ministry of Endowments, giving the president the authority to appoint the director of al-Azhar and supervise its curriculum (Hibbard 2010: 60- 64). However, Nasser's policies had mixed results: the *ulama* became further entrenched in the state bureaucracy and they received more resources from the state. Hatina also argues that cooperation with political regimes on certain issues allowed the al-Azhar *ulama* to continue in their traditional role as the sole moral authority, which worked to preserve the Islamic image of Egyptian society in other issues concerned with social relations (Hatina 2010: 175).

The 1971 constitution mandated religious education as compulsory at public schools,

while Sadat transformed the al-Azhar system into an education system that was parallel to the general public education system. Al-Azhar schools increased in number, and according to Starett, enrollment at the primary level grew by 70% between 1976 and 1980 (Hibbard 2010: 83).

The current education system in Egypt is divided into three parallel systems: the state system, the al-Azhar religious system, and the private school system. State schools and private schools are under the administration and supervision of the Ministry of Education while a semi-autonomous council that is accountable directly to the prime minister supervises al-Azhar schools. State support for religious schools both public and private has continued to be a part of Egypt's social and economic development strategy since the early 20th century. Today, however, the al-Azhar system stands as the largest religious education system in Egypt, with around 1,906,290 students enrolled in pre-university institutes. Despite ties to the state, al-Azhar enjoys a semi-autonomous status and is administered by the Supreme Council of the Al-Azhar Institution. The al-Azhar system encompasses primary, preparatory, and secondary levels of instruction and their curricula include religious and non-religious subjects, albeit not as intensively as in state schools.

The historical development of the al-Azhar system into an extensive public education system is key to understanding how the Egyptian state has addressed religious education and how changes in its curriculum have transformed the profile of the students enrolled in these schools. The evolution of al-Azhar in the post-revolutionary era illustrates that the modernizing elite in Egypt did not antagonize religion per se, but rather problematized the rise of particular interpretations of religion. Thus, debates on religious education in Egypt evolved around which interpretation of Islam would better align with the modernization goals of the political elite. Elimination of religion, or "a godless secularism," as Nasser put it, was never on the agenda, as that would weaken social support for consolidating modern institutions. Still, Egypt's modernizing secularist elite hoped that education would enlighten religious groups over time and weaken their religious loyalties. Even if it did not exactly work out that way, the embrace of religion and secularism in the school setting ended up transforming both religion and secularism (Starett 1998: 91). Religious education, once a total way of life, was first detached from its living content and then loaded with nationalist meanings. On the other hand, secularism, as it existed in the minds of the Egyptian elite, embraced certain forms of religion in order not to alienate society from the state.

E. Indonesia

Indonesia, home to the largest Muslim population in the world, is currently a representative democratic republic with vast authority resting in its presidency. A secular democracy since the democratic elections of 1999, Indonesia's secularism evolved in relation to the particular challenges rooted in its colonial past and the religious diversity of its society. A secular foundational state ideology, the *Pancasila* (a Sanskrit word referring to the "five principles"), forms the basis of politics in post-colonial Indonesia. These principles are listed in the preamble of the 1945 Constitution as: 1) belief in God, 2) just and civilized humanitarianism, 3) the unity of Indonesia, 4) democracy guided by the inner wisdom of the unanimity that arises out of deliberations among representatives, and 5) social justice for all the people of Indonesia (Mujani and Liddle 2009: 577-578). The *Pancasila*-based state grew as a compromise between Indonesia's different social sectors, which was for the most part, non-practicing, secular, and Western-oriented Muslims, known as *abangan,* and practicing, traditionalist Muslims known as *santri.* Despite their divergence on matters of religiosity, their shared aspiration for national independence and national unity allowed them to conciliate on the principles of the *Pancasila* during the establishment of the first post-colonial

government (Furchan 2002: 61). Notwithstanding this initial cooperation, the enactment of *Pancasila* in policymaking has stirred controversies, especially in the sphere of education.

The institutional legacy of Dutch colonial rule is central to the development of the contemporary education system in Indonesia. Prior to the Dutch public school system, the traditional *pesantrens*, residential boarding schools, used to be the main mass education institutions that were available for Muslims in Indonesia. At the turn of the 20th century, however, the Dutch established a strictly secular, Western-style, modern education system primarily to provide cheap labor that would work in the interests of the colonial state and the Western-oriented elite who oversaw them. The traditional *santri* promoted education at the *pesantren*s while the modernist *santri* developed *madrasa*s, where they combined the Dutch curriculum with Islamic education. The goal of educational reform for the modernist *santri* was to enable "their God-given reasoning powers in adapting the basic principles set out in the *shari'ah* to changing conditions of life in each generation" (Brown 2000: 96), rather than educating a generation that would transform the secular state.

The Indonesian state placed religious education under the shared control of the Department of Religion, which provided Islamic schools with minor state support, and the Department of Education, more Western-oriented, in order to balance out the contradictory demands from traditional and secular Muslim groups. The status and content of religious education at public schools, however, changed over time. From Sukarno's communist government rule until the 1965 coup, religious education was a non-compulsory part of the public school curriculum, and its nature evolved into moral education rather than catechistic education. Succeeding, the Suharto government prioritized religious education at public schools as part of its anti-communist political agenda. Soon after the coup, religious education was made compulsory at public schools, and the nature of this education grew more catechistic in character and content (Furchan 2002: 135-138). The content of religious education emphasized Qur'anic teachings and worship instead of the previous emphasis on morality and ethics. While this shift reflected the demands of *santri* Muslims to a greater extent, Suharto's New Order government envisioned religious education not only as a way to raise practicing believers, but also as a way to raise good citizens. Accordingly, a religious education curriculum was organized to teach students the principles of the *Pancasila* and ways to implement them in their lives. This was also the first attempt since independence that any Indonesian government used to try to program the *Pancasila* state ideology.

Complementary to the reforms to integrate *madrasas* within the national educational system on an equivalent basis, Mujani and Liddle argue that Suharto's market-oriented politics, which maintained steady and rapid economic growth, also contributed to the *santris*' agreement to participate in secular politics rather than pursuing a state based on religion. The state's policy of rewarding different groups that served the national goals was clearly illustrated in the field of education in which the instructors of religious education developed strategies to "adapt their educational programs to the ideals of Indonesian nationhood and the Muslim public's demands for marketable skills and general education." (Hefner and Zaman 2007: 172-199)

Despite criticism from the modernist Muslims, even the traditional *pesantren*s reformed themselves over the course of a century and are still esteemed for the quality of their Islamic education, which in most cases is combined with the general education curriculum. The modernization of the *pesantren*s and the *madrasa*s gained momentum when the state issued a memorandum in 1975, inviting private religious schools to restructure their education so that 70% of Islamic school curriculum would consist of general education courses, and the schools would use state-published textbooks. In response to compliance with these standards, the state offered partial funding for religious schools, covering the cost of specific programs and infrastructural expenditures. More importantly, the state allowed the graduates of these

schools to take university entrance exams if they fulfilled the general education requirements the state set. Despite the state's increased involvement in their curriculum, many *madrasas* embraced the 1975 reform, as it allowed their graduates to have equal opportunities to participate in the economic, social and political affairs of the country (Hefner 2009: 64-66). The *madrasa*s' efforts to equip their students with marketable skills as well as their religious curricula were further reflected in their "emphasis on educating girls, scouting and sports programs, printing school newspapers and journals and special educational programs for orphans and the poor" (Azra and Hefner 2007: 177). Over a period of 20 years, the number of Islamic schools of all types almost doubled and student enrollments increased by 260% (Azra and Hefner 2007: 178). Indonesia's educational policy reflects the socio-economic shifts in the country as well. For instance, in response to increasing public demand for religious education, the Indonesian government opened its first state-owned Islamic schools in the mid-1990s. Data from 2001-02 indicate that *madrasas* continue to be a central part of Indonesia's public education system and they enroll an estimated 13% of pre-college students (Azra and Hefner 2007: 180). The general student profile at these state-owned *madrasas* was generally students from rural and disadvantaged families, farmers, or laborers. The recent trend among the upper-middle-class *santri* to send their children to elite Islamic schools, which are better equipped in terms of educational materials and physical infrastructure, seems to confirm that socio-economic factors continue to drive the direction of religious education in Indonesia (Azra and Hefner 2007: 182).

The relatively peaceful relationship between religion and the state, particularly in the realm of religious education in Indonesia, developed due to 1) the successful experience of the early Islamic schools, which combined religious education with general education, helping to conceptualize religion and general education as complimentary rather than contradictory to one another 2) the state's reliance on the workings of the educational marketplace to regulate educational affairs, and 3) the active support of both secular/modernist and traditionalist Muslims to building a unified, independent Indonesia solidified in the coding of the *Pancasila* and a shared agreement that educational reforms served these national goals.

II. Analyzing the Cases: Separation, Pluralism, Democracy

The following table is a summary of the complex country analyses classified according to John Madeley's TAO typology of state-religion relations where T stands for treasury (the financial and property connections of the state and the religious communities), A stands for authority (the exercise of state's power of command), and O stands for organization (effective intervention of state bodies in the religious sphere) (Madeley 2009).

The historical experiences of each country analyzed above in relation to their trajectories of religious education illustrate that the existence of cooperation between the major religious groups and political elites during the formative years of state building have an impact on whether there would be a contentious or a peaceful environment for religious education. This was the case in Indonesia and Egypt, where all groups collaborated against a colonial power to protect national unity, and this early cooperation informed the dynamics of politics in later periods. In contrast, in France and Turkey, the formation of a new state was conceptualized with a complete separation from religion. While each country developed a different religious education system in relation to their state-religion model, some were more concerned about protecting diversity in society rather than supporting religious education as a means to control religious diversity and to promote a standardized version of religion, as in Turkey.

Table 3: Analysis of Case Studies according to Madeley's TAO typology						
	State-Religion	**RE[14] in public education**	**RE in private education**	**Direct state support for private religious schools**	**State authority over RE curriculum**	**State authority over religious school organization**
US	Secularism	No	Yes	No	Liberal	No
Britain	Established	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial	Partial
France	Laicite	No	Yes	Partial	No	No
Turkey	Laicite	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Egypt	Established	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes	Yes
Indonesia	Secularism	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial	Partial

It is also noteworthy from these brief country analyses that each country tends to have its own contradictions. While there is no religious instruction in French public schools, most of private schools sign contracts with the French state and receive state support, amounting to about 80% of their budgets, in exchange for following the national school curriculum in general education subjects. Furthermore, about 60% of French public schools have Catholic chaplains who respond to the needs of the student body. The flexibility shown with regard to protecting religious liberty and the nourishing of religious establishments is thought provoking, especially in a country known for its hostile separation of state and religion. In the United States, on the other hand, despite the constitutional principle of "a wall of separation," the state is increasingly involved in the business of religious schools. The recent promotion of charter schools, the increasing efforts to make use of the student voucher system by conservative families to send their children to Catholic schools (Kuru 2009: 68-70), the tax-exempt status granted to private religious schools as well as public schools for serving the public good illustrate a vibrant public sphere in which issues of religion are debated at multiple layers of civil society where the Supreme Court and the state negotiate social needs at a maximum level and protect religious liberties.

A brief comparison of relationships between the state and religion in Britain, Indonesia, the US, France and Egypt highlights the strictly rigid nature of Turkish secularism. This rigidity is clearly reflected in Turkey's religious education system, where the state holds a monopoly on all religious affairs. While even the most rigid secularist state, France, allows religious education in private schools, in Turkey, teaching religion at private schools is a violation of the Law of Unified Education. In Turkey, state policies, constantly fed by a fear of religious resurgence, often resorted to restrictive measures like banning religious attire at public or private schools and universities and restricting religious education options. Fox uses a dataset comparing the number of restrictions on majority versus minority religious groups in different countries and tries to evaluate the degree of religious tolerance in each country. France exerts zero restriction for its majority Catholic population as opposed to five types of restrictions on non-Catholic religious groups, whereas data on Turkey indicates that the majority Muslim population confronts six types of restrictions while non-Muslim religious groups face nine types of restrictions (Fox 2008). In a society where religion is still a vibrant dynamic of socialization, these rigid, secularist policies have ended up curtailing democracy rather than strengthening it.

[14] RE stands for religious education.

It is necessary to note, however, that while the state's efforts to keep tight control of religious education reflects a rigid, secularist approach, it may have helped the state to control the growth of radical religious interpretations in society. Studies about private religious education in Western countries as well as in countries like Pakistan and Egypt illustrate that private schools with a religious emphasis have a tendency to teach a particular interpretation of that religion rather than exposing students to diverse interpretations of a particular religion. These schools also have a risk of alienating students from mainstream social actors, norms, and values by introducing a narrow curriculum and socialization opportunities outside the school community. In Malaysia, for instance, the state expanded religious education curriculum at state schools while cutting all funding for private Islamic schools, as they had become susceptible to extremist ideas. Eventually, the state required all private Islamic schools to follow the curriculum taught at state religious schools (Mancini& Rosenfeld 2014: 320). Debates on European integration and how to fight radicalization in Europe also tend to stress the role of religious education. Accordingly, states should promote religious education as a way to protect potential recruits from joining extremist groups while maintaining strict supervision on its form and content. A carefully designed religious education curriculum, as such, may provide tools for youth to resist the penetration of radical ideas, and develop a pluralist, tolerant outlook on different religious groups (Keast 2007; Rosenblit and Bailey 2007). Poorly designed religious education, however, may assist in the flourishing of extremist ideas or dissemination of marginal readings of religion.[15] Although much of the debates in Europe around religious education and extremism tend to focus on Muslim immigrants and Islamic radicalization since September 11, 2001, these are valid concerns for education in other religions considering the rise of radical right-wing groups in Europe like Pegida in Germany. So in a way, state control of religious education in Turkey could be considered to have protected religious education from the potential penetration of extremist interpretations of Islam.

The improving socio-economic conditions in Turkey over the last decade and the social and legal reforms directed toward accession to the EU have widened the boundaries of the public sphere to include formerly excluded groups in Turkey. The diversity of religious education models and the different ways the state and society reconciled around the matter of religion in the world illustrate that changing social dynamics led secular states to reevaluate their policies and accommodate them according to evolving social needs. In the following chapters, I will investigate the experiences of three generations of IHL graduates and seek to explain the changing socio-economic, political, and cultural dynamics in Turkey and the kinds of challenges and changing dynamics present for Turkey's rigid secularism and democratic regime.

[15] See (Willaime 2007) and (Jackson 2007) for a discussion of different religious education models in Europe ranging from state controlled, to private confessional and to state-community agreed model.

CHAPTER 3
IHLs and Social Mobility

This chapter discusses the role Imam Hatip Lisesi (IHL) schools have played in securing the social mobility of religious rural and suburban populations in Turkey. Although initially formed as vocational religious schools, I argue that the IHL model provided breathing space for religiously observant groups amid rigid secularist practices since its foundation in 1951. As a result, public schooling became attractive to a large group of practicing Muslims who were otherwise concerned about protecting their values and lifestyles from the narrow secular dictates of the state on their children. IHLs lifted a cultural barrier, which had led people from devout, traditional groups to avoid the state educational system. In this chapter, I show how IHLs expedited the integration of devout men and women in the education system and assisted their upward mobility. By way of focusing on social mobility, I also explicate different mechanisms of exclusion experienced by devout Muslims in Turkey in general.

While examining the dynamics of exclusion at public schools, this chapter also illuminates the systematic exclusion of others, for example, Kurds, Alevis, and the non-Muslim minorities of Turkey through the design of the school space, the school codes of civility, i.e., the ban on headscarves for girls, the obligation to only speak Turkish, and the content of the curriculum. Elif Akşit describes how the Girls Institutes, founded during the single-party era, required that students only spoke in Turkish and removed their headscarves. Such practices had been introduced and imposed as codes of civility in villages (Akşit 2012). The lower rates of schooling for devout Muslims have been attributed to illiteracy or ignorance, and portrayed as having occurred because of excessive religiosity. As I will discuss in the coming chapter on generational differences among IHL graduates, the underlying reason for families to not enroll their children in public schools had less to do with illiteracy or ignorance than the strict, institutional norms and practices at public schools. A 2004 study asked female IHL students whether they would go to another school if IHLs did not exist. More than half of the respondents said that they would not go to another school at all. This is more prevalent at rural IHLs. Bozan argues that scholars need to more seriously look into the lower educational attainment of girls in Turkey and the reluctance of devout families to send their children, especially for their daughters, to state schools (Bozan 2007: 27- 28).

Two factors, one positive and one negative, shaped the social mobility of IHL students: 1) The 1976 educational reform situated IHLs as schools that prepare both for general university degree programs and for vocational education. This enabled IHL students to use their diplomas to then study in fields beyond religion, 2) The February 28 measures of 1997 restricted entry to university degree programs for vocational school graduates outside of their vocational fields and imposed a ban on the wearing of headscarves at schools. Thus, while visible upward mobility defines the period after 1976, the period following 1997 can be identified with visible stagnation and even downward mobility.

The upward mobility trend after 1976 can be analyzed in relation to four factors: 1) The lifting of the lower coefficiency barrier provided IHL graduates with equal opportunity to enter university degree programs, 2) IHLs' success in educating students as competitive individuals on the nationwide university entrance exams, 3) IHLs continued to be the only educational alternative where religious rituals, values, and norms were observed (until 1997 with the rapid rise in the number of private schools that maintained religious norms and values at school), and 4) The diversified career-making opportunities, religious education, and academic success at IHLs drew both lower socio- economic groups as well as devout families from upper socio-economic backgrounds, who also started to prefer these schools.

This led to a process of what I call "social fusion", which refers to a process of

socialization between different socio-economic groups, facilitated through a shared set of religious norms and values. Students from rural backgrounds became acculturated to modern, urban norms, and those from more elite backgrounds developed a sense of responsibility toward the devout youth from more limited backgrounds. IHLs functioned as a unique space for devout Muslim students from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds to meet and interact. Students from rural towns had access to urban norms of living via the close acquaintances they made at IHLs, which led to changes in social norms at a much faster rate than they would otherwise proceed. This chapter will trace how the dynamics of social fusion evolved at IHLs and how it changed over the span of three generation sets.

Another axis of change in social mobility among IHL graduates can be demarcated by gender. As I will illustrate in Chapter 5 on gender, IHLs had a more dramatic effect on the upward mobility of devout women and still serve as the only formal schooling option for a large number of religious girls, particularly those from lower-income families. The fact that IHLs had the highest increase in the number of female student enrollments compared to other high schools until the 1997 educational reform act (see Table 4) supports this claim (Aydın et al. 1995: 140).

Table 4: Percentage of Girls in IHLs and in General Student Population

Year	Percentage of girls in IHLs	Percentage of girls in general student population
1963-64	0.5	25
1970-71	2	28
1977-78	5	33
1980-81	12	35
1985-86	15	35
1988-89	22	37
1991-92	30	38
1996-97	42	39
1997-98	44	N/A

Source: State Institute of Statistics Yearbooks, and Ministry of Education, Official statistics (Data taken from Aydın, et al. 1995: 140).

Social mobility is usually described as the difference between the educational and occupational status of a person as compared to that of his/her parents. As Hout and Beller discuss, researchers tend to focus on one of five forms of social mobility: educational, occupational, wage, family income, and wealth (Hout and Beller 2006). This chapter examines whether IHLs provided the possibility of educational and occupational mobility for their graduates. Both forms of mobility are relevant to changes in income, but are maybe even more important for social status. In the following section, I will first outline the general economic, political and educational context for each generation. Then I will examine how IHLs contributed to each generation in terms of their socio-economic position in society in comparison to that of their parents as well as how socio-economic shifts transformed family attitudes and perceptions about education among devout Muslims. Finally, I will analyze the dynamics of social fusion for each generation demarcated by two critical junctures: the 1967 education reform that expanded the opportunities for IHL graduates and the February 28 measures in 1997 that seriously limited their aspirations and opportunities. This chapter will

also discuss how these dynamics contributed to the emergence of IHL graduates as a political subjectivity in Turkey.

I. The First Generation (1951-1976)

The first IHLs were opened in only seven big cities in Turkey. Many of the first generation of IHL graduates traveled from towns and villages in the rural regions to these centrally located IHLs and attended as boarding students. Their experiences, strategies to adjust to urban settings, and their expectations differed significantly from later generations.

A. Economic and Social Change

On the economic and political front, 1st generation students were those who had experienced Democrat Party (DP) rule or its aftermath. The earliest graduates had a memory of single-party rule while the later ones recalled the execution of Adnan Menderes – the first democratically elected prime minister in 1951 – on the grounds that the DP had threatened the secular regime. DP rule until the 1960 military coup was marked by a shift in macroeconomic politics from a statist, closed economy to a societal model based on the principles of a liberal market economy. The defining features of the period between 1950 and 1960 were increasing movement from rural to urban areas and changing economic conditions for the small bourgeois groups in large cities and the agricultural population. These were the results of the macro-politics of agriculturally expansion-based exports (Keyder 1990: 181). The DP government prioritized the interests of farmers and invested in agricultural technologies, thus increasing differentiation and stratification among the rural population (Karpat 2008: 75). The agricultural expansion that boosted the general economic growth rate from 11% to 13% was reflected in the general living conditions throughout the country (Zürcher 2008: 327-328). Agricultural investments, however, could not prevent the high volume of migration from agricultural regions to the industrializing cities from the early 1950s on, and migration continued to grow at a greater rate than the industrial production capacity of the cities. The escalating social mobility in the sense of a rise in class, status, and income during the DP government is captured by Robinson's social mobility index, which was 173 in 1938, grew to barely 208 in 1948, and rose to 521 in 1955 (Karpat 2008: 74).

Following the 1960 coup, the bureaucratic elite established a new economic model institutionalized with a new constitution based on state planning, coordination and promotion of a national market, which was aimed at expanding bourgeois industry. The rapid growth of modern industry created a large sector of people employed in the supporting small industries and service sectors, which led to a stagnation of or even decline in the number of agricultural laborers (Keyder 1990: 82; Karpat 2008: 79-90). The population growth in the postwar period, with 20 million people in 1950 increasing to 48 million by 1980, provided the human potential necessary to support industrial production. In fact, the baby-boomers and migrants who went from rural to urban areas between the 1950s and 1980s exceeded the labor needs of industrial production at the time, leading to an exponential population growth in cities. According to population statistics, the proportion of the urban population in the general population in 1960 was 30%, rising to 37% in 1970, and 45% in 1980.[16] By 2000, it had risen to 65%. This sort of rapid urbanization led both to the emergence of new social groups of professionals, entrepreneurs, businessmen and technicians, creating a social infrastructure with the potential to generate sustainable development (Karpat 2008: 79), as well as to rising urban poverty.

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[16]Data drawn from the State Institute of Statistics Annals.

A large segment of the internal migration mentioned above was to Istanbul and Ankara, with about 20% of the population of Istanbul and Ankara born in other cities or towns while about 30% of all immigrants settled in Istanbul (Akkayan 1979: 37). Studies show that almost all those who live in *gecekondu* (shanty town)[17] are former migrants (Gökçe 1971: 74-75). The newcomers settled in the outskirts of the cities in these *gecekondus* – literally meaning "landed at night," referring to the fast pace at which these houses were built – and they did so without serious city planning, permission, or adherence to restrictions imposed by local administrative bodies for construction residences. They also took advantage of infrastructural services like water and electricity. These *gecekondu* neighborhoods dramatically changed the cities physically as well as sociologically. A cultural differentiation between urban versus suburban/*gecekondu* neighborhoods has defined the terms of politics and social tension in big cities since the 1960s.

B. Political Context

These macroeconomic shifts took place at the time of transition to a multi-party electoral democracy and changing politics in the relationship between the state and religion. Part of this shift was generated as a result of societal demand and the representative weight of traditional and/or religious groups. The electoral system pushed even the Republican People's Party (CHP) to soften its repressive secularization policies, which it had been following since the early years of the Republic. The CHP initiated a 10-month program to train imams and *hatips* in 1948, opening a faculty of theology at Ankara University, while at the same time banning all propaganda against the principle of *laïcité* through the promulgation of Article 163 in the Penal Code, thus attempting to control potential religious insurgency (Zürcher 1995: 339; Çakmak 2009: 830).

The DP, on the other hand, immediately after being elected into government in 1951, restored the Turkish call to prayer to its traditional Arabic format – after a span of 18 years – and opened seven-year IHLs to train religious functionaries, and opened the Higher Institute for Islamic Studies. This last policy created further education opportunities for IHL graduates and allowed them to become teachers at IHLs (Subaşı 2005a: 69). Bahattin Akşit describes the education reforms and transformation during DP rule as a period of revitalization of the differentiation in types of educational institutions in both religious and secular education (Akşit 2005: 400).

Clearly, the relatively relaxed atmosphere in religious affairs between 1945 and 1960 allowed for the devout Muslim section of society to vocalize its demands and needs more than before, which can also be traced through a more diversified content and increasing number of magazines published by devout Muslim groups and individuals with different interests. *Selamet* (1947-49), for instance, included articles on intellectual-religious debates in Turkey and the Islamic world in general. This magazine lobbied to channel public opinion about the need for religious education through the writings of its columnists and reported debates on religious education that took place in parliament and in other media sources (Subaşı 2005a: 70). The magazine *Islam*, which started in 1957, on the other hand, illustrated how in the course of about 10 years of multi-party politics, Muslim groups started to rid themselves of the fears left from the period of single-party authoritarianism and pursued their religious demands with more confidence. Necdet Subaşı emphasizes that this form of criticizing the state, which included expressing religious concerns, hopes and demands, was generalized under the banner of Islamism and encompassed the entire period from the early years of the

[17]These are low-cost houses illegally constructed on the outskirts of urbanizing cities like Istanbul and Ankara that lacked basic infrastructure. People who migrated from rural to urban cities lived in them. Robert Neuwirth explains that these buildings are constructed without going through the necessary procedures required for construction, such as acquiring building permits, and can be very densely populated. He says: "Half the residents of Istanbul - perhaps six million people - dwell in *gecekondu* homes." See (Neuwirth 2004: 8).

Republic (Subaşı 2005a: 59; Subaşı 2004: 225- 229). However, İsmail Kara also points out, religious groups in Turkey usually refrained from making religion a field of political contest and in times of pressure would withdraw their claims or remain surprisingly silent.[18]

Kara argues that the period after the 1960 coup was a critical turning point for the way religion and politics were perceived in the country. Under the influence of activist movements around the world in the 1960s, Turkey's intellectual movements also took on activist forms, including leftists, nationalist youth organizations, and later, Islamist activism. The traditionally conservative groups, that is, average devout Muslims with patriotic feelings who had formerly sympathized with the Justice Party (AP), started to fragment after the 1960s. Beginning with the proliferation of translations of activists' works from around the Islamic world, the more educated Muslim groups in Turkey began to see politics as an instrument with which they could pursue religious rights and concerns. The National Order Party (MNP) posed two critiques of the internal problems of Turkey: "1) The dependency of the Turkish economy on foreign markets and capital, 2) The low level of GDP per capita and the unjust distribution of wealth. These critiques also involved a deeper assessment of the inadequacies of the national education system for realizing the country's developmental goals and impoverishing its connection with the past (Sayarı 1981)."

The MNP was banned following the 1971 coup but was later reopened in 1973 under a new name, the National Salvation Party (MSP). The MSP was particularly successful in mobilizing its electoral base of rural craftsmen, small tradesmen, and farmers in areas disadvantaged by the industry-friendly economic policies of the state. In tune with the expectations of their electoral base, Erbakan and his followers advanced a discourse that defended social conservatism as supporting the key role of religion in society, and industrialization led by state orchestration (Yavuz 2005: 593). The MSP promoted a vision of modernity that defended the role of religion in society, which implied a particularly important role for the national education system. The MSP's presence in Turkish politics ended up significantly increasing the number of IHL enrollments. Yavuz argues that the MSP experience exceeded a counter movement, and succeeded in putting forward a new elite with an authentic vision of modernization. And this new elite utilized religious solidarity and identity to overcome the complications that had been caused by industrialization, for example, the integration of newly migrating groups in the cities (Yavuz 2005: 594).

C. IHL Experience

Given the socio-economic and political landscape described above, the earliest IHL graduates were for the most part students born in rural villages into families occupied with agriculture. The mothers of the first generation of IHL graduates generally did not work and had received either no or minimal education and were generally involved in activities at home. Their fathers, on the other hand, were farmers, small shop owners, workers, or quite often *hocas* (Islamic scholars) trained in traditional village *medreses*. Among the families of this generation, I came across no one who had a vocational background in politics or the state bureaucracy.

For students from this generation, given the boundaries of rural life, taking up their responsibilities in life and contributing to the family wellbeing was a top priority. However, because there were only seven IHLs, which were located close to city centers until the 1970s, the first generation of IHL students from villages had to stay in school dormitories for the most part supported by *vakıfs* (foundations) like the Organization for Promoting Education (İYC) or stayed in state dormitories that had limited capacities. This not only meant potential economic asset lost, but also extra economic burden for the families. The desire to gain a

[18] Notes from my personal interview with İsmail Kara who himself is an IHL graduate from 1972.

religious education was so great among the early generation that they chose to tolerate these difficulties, which could have been avoided if they chose to study at a nearby village school. In one of the earliest studies on IHLs, researcher Howard Reed observed this dedication of the students, saying that "first of all, virtually 100 percent of the students were keenly interested in the courses and have made some sacrifice to attend the school. Hence they worked very diligently. Secondly, the students were very well disciplined, and better mannered than most students in other types of public schools according to the teachers who have had experience in both. They report that the moral tone is high, with very little cheating, promptness in attendance at class and in preparation of assignments, and that the students are tidy and clean." (Reed 1955: 162) In the long run, the experience of leaving the village certainly opened up social, cultural, and educational opportunities for these students that would otherwise have been harder to attain.

Some of the early graduates had traveled to Istanbul knowing little about what awaited them in this big city, but they relied on the quality of the Istanbul IHL and the opportunities its diploma offered. The Istanbul IHL was a relatively well-off school compared to other IHLs in terms of the quality of teaching-staff and its network, with the few devout tradesmen and laborers in Istanbul supporting the physical needs of the school at the time. The majority of the earliest cohort of IHL students had a background in classical religious education at traditional village *medrese*s or came from families in which someone had teaching experience at a *medrese* – usually a father or a grandfather. Many of these students knew the Qur'an by heart and were revered as a *hoca* (Islamic scholar) in their respective villages.

From the accounts of the first generation graduates, I realized that there was usually an older figure from the family or village who tended to influence their school preferences. These older figures share the common experience of a past that used to be more challenging in terms of observing religious norms and rituals. During my interview with İsmail Kara, he recalled a moment from his childhood in a mountain village in Rize, a city in the far northeastern region of Turkey. One day he overheard a conversation among the village imams and villagers after a Friday prayer as they were sitting around a table:

> Our village is about 40 kilometers from the coastline. There was no radio or TV at the time. A group of villagers were talking about how the state had established the Imam Hatip schools in order to put a stop to religion altogether. I overheard this conversation as a child preparing to register at the Rize Imam Hatip School, which had recently opened in the city center. I still remember one of the comments an imam made: 'The state may indeed have such an agenda, but these schools will provide religious education regardless. If religion will be taught at these schools, the state cannot get everything it wants. And this is enough for us.'

The imam thought that eventually the IHLs would be utilized both for the benefit of the state and society. Kara found this assessment rather sophisticated and discerning, as he said it reflected an awareness of the transformative power of society.

Another reason why these older imams and *hatip*s as well as other knowledgeable figures in the villages encouraged young *hocas* to enroll at these new state IHLs was that their religious training was no longer accredited by the state following Turkey's Law of Unified Education known as *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu* (TTK). So these figures viewed IHL education as an instrument for government employment as an imam or *hatip* at mosques or even administrative posts in the Directorate of Religious Affairs (DİB) as a *mufti* (official scholar in Islamic law in charge of Islamic affairs for a province or district). This was not the case for the second or third generation.

Kerim, a 1958 graduate and a professor of Islamic studies at Marmara University, at the time of the interview, completed his primary schooling at his village school while attaining his *medrese ijazah* degree from his grandfather. After that, he worked at a mosque as an imam for two years. When I asked why he still went to study at an IHL despite his *medrese* degree, he replied: "I did not want to. My grandfather was working as an imam in another city, probably in Manisa, and learned somehow that Imam Hatip schools were opened. He sent word that my uncle and I should go and study at the Istanbul IHL. My uncle did go and register the first year. That year I managed to avoid it. I did not want to go. In my mind, I did not need further religious education. I already knew Arabic [and] I had received my *ijazah*. The next year my grandfather pushed me so hard that I had no choice but go." However, after about six months he came to view the IHL as a necessity, particularly based on his encounters with the strong faculty:

> We had renowned teachers, like Hasan Basri Çantay, who had written a three-volume Turkish translation of the Qur'an, still the best translation since the change of the Ottoman alphabet. We had Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, who wrote the best-known book on Islamic catechism, etc. These were highly educated intellectuals raised in the Ottoman *medreses*. Our general course teachers were also some of the best teachers of the era. Nurettin Topçu taught philosophy, sociology, and logics for seventh and eighth grade. We benefitted greatly from him and were lucky to become friends with him later on. These cultural courses were new to us and definitely were significant in raising our intellectual capacities.

Given the limited prospects for intellectual growth in his village environment, the Istanbul IHL offered a wealth of intellectual resources and raised his future aspirations. He turned down his father's offer to take up the family business and continued his education at the Higher Institute for Islamic Studies, finally becoming a professor of *kelam*. A typical career path for the first generation graduates, however, was that of Abdullah's older brother, who graduated from an IHL, became an imam, and was then appointed as a district *mufti*, finally retiring from his administrative post as provincial *mufti*. If these students had not studied at an IHL they would have probably remained in their village and been employed in agriculture, as would have been the case for his older brother, or in manual manufacturing jobs, in the case of Kerim.

Nureddin, another Istanbul IHL graduate from 1976 who is an engineer, had little support from his family. His father worked as a porter and lived on a very low income. Despite their dire economic conditions, his father supported Nureddin's IHL education, even taking on the payment of costs that studying in a different city incurred. He explained how hard it was to enter the Istanbul IHL at that time due to its high demand, and how he first studied four years at a junior IHL in Bolu and transferred to the more prestigious Istanbul IHL for high school. He learned from elder students that if he tested out from regular school curriculum subjects and received a secondary school diploma, he could gain access to university degree programs other than religious sciences. He eventually did so and became an engineer.

Unlike most 1st generation students, Mehmet was raised in a very wealthy Istanbul family. When I asked whether he had any adjustment problems at school due to the student profile mentioned above, he replied: "Despite the socio-economic and cultural gap, we all came to the IHL with a common purpose. We knew that after years of being prohibited, we were among the first group of students to receive a formal religious education. We believed that we had a duty to learn and uphold our religious values. This common purpose made all

other differences trivial. Still, I remember taking friends out to better restaurants in town, as the food at school was very simple." It was Mehmet's father who encouraged him to study at the IHL for the religious education rather than at an elite private school he could easily have afforded and which would have had much better physical and educational conditions. Going to school from a considerably upscale district in Istanbul, Erenköy, Mehmet still remembers hiding the name of his school from his childhood friends who studied at elite private schools.

The need to hide one's IHL school background is related to the widespread image of IHLs among elite circles as lower-class schools that educated narrow-minded reactionaries who sought a *medrese* education. Naci, a 1958 graduate, related that he had come all the way from a Trabzon village in the eastern Black Sea region to study at the Istanbul IHL, leaving behind his wife and two children. He was not able to support a family in the city and had to bear a large number of hardships, relying on his parents to support his wife and children. From his account, I understood that there were other students in his classroom with similar stories. Naci recounted that while the state opened the IHLs, it was uneasy about fully embracing them due to elite concerns about the content of education there. The state elite felt uneasy about providing certain rights given to students at regular high schools to those at IHLs. For instance, while all students were issued public transportation passes which enabled them to travel across the city, IHL students were issued passes with special restrictions, thus inhibiting the extent to which they could integrate into urban life.

The first cohorts were not allowed to go on to university degree programs, but were restricted to careers in the field of religion, which encompassed serving as an imam or *hatip*, studying at the Higher Institute of Islamic Studies, or teaching at IHLs. When the Higher Institute for Islamic Studies was transformed into a faculty of theology, its graduates went on to become university professors. However, some students from this generation followed a different path. Upon graduating from an IHL, they applied to regular public schools for enrollment and had to pass an examination on the coursework that was not taught at IHLs, receiving a second diploma, this time from a regular public school. This second diploma gained them access to university degree programs without any restrictions.

While initially viewed solely as schools for religious education, over time the function of these schools was transformed in parallel with the needs and aspirations of the social groups that supported them. Unlike the earliest graduates in the late 1950s and 1960s, like Kerim and Kasım, graduates in the 1970s were luckier to have a group of older IHL graduates who had found ways to pursue higher education in whatever field they aspired to. Although academic careers were restricted for IHL graduates, IHLs became increasingly visible with their achievements in citywide sports tournaments and citywide debate competitions. Ali, who studied at the Istanbul IHL between 1973 and 1976, spoke of how proud they were when older students received medals and cups from citywide sports tournaments and inter-school debate contests. Here IHL students were able to showcase their academic and sporting capacities in competition with the prestigious schools of the time. The successes he recounts helped the students gain self-confidence. According to Ali, these achievements, combined with the opening of university degree programs to IHL graduates in 1976, significantly helped his generation overcome the feelings of inferiority or inadequacy with which the older students had grown up.

II. The Second Generation (1976-1997)

The defining conditions for the second generation of IHL students shifted in important ways from that of the first generation. Most significantly, this period is marked by the legal changes that made it possible for graduates of vocational schools, including IHLs, to enroll in any higher education program of their preference. Another important legal change allowed

girls to enroll in IHLs. These two major institutional changes dramatically changed the IHL student profile, especially in terms of the students' socioeconomic backgrounds and academic aspirations in addition to affecting their perceptions and experiences of the IHL and career plans.

A. Economic and Social Change

The state-led national industrialization model that was adopted after the 1960 coup supported the infrastructural needs of private industries in Turkey while not becoming directly involved in industrial production. The state produced macro-economic plans through the State Planning Agency, which defined the needs and goals of the national economy over a five- or 10-year period. State planners strategically selected the popular consumer goods that were imported from the West and encouraged and promoted the private sector to produce these goods in Turkey. State support for the revitalization of the national economy at times included the regulation or even prohibition of certain imported goods through the imposition of high customs taxes. This state-led growth of national industry, however, still relied on the importation of raw materials as well as interim goods to produce consumer items like radios, televisions, refrigerators, and other electronics. Two loopholes to the growing national industry were: 1) an increasing dependence on imported raw materials and interim goods and 2) an increasing need for energy for both the production and consumption of these industrial goods. The energy need, on the other hand, was met primarily by oil, for which Turkey almost entirely depended on oil-exporting countries (Ramazanoğlu 1985, Keyder 1987, Eralp 1990, Barkey 1990, Bayar 1996, Boratav 2009).

The global oil crises in 1973, 1977 and 1979 had a dramatic impact on the Turkish economy. The governments had to raise inflation, which significantly reduced the buying power of consumers, and consequently increased poverty. The macro-economic instabilities of the 1970s directly affected the daily lives of the population. Common consumer goods increased in price and finding propane gas burners, commonly used in homes for cooking and heating, for instance, became more difficult and more expensive. The long lines of people waiting to buy propane gas burners became a symbolic picture of those years in society's collective memory. The late 1970s were marked by a large number of labor strikes in protest of worsening working conditions and falling wages (Keyder 1990, Zürcher 1997.)

The Özal period (1983-1993) was marked by a transition to a neo-liberal economy[19] and pragmatism in politics. He promoted integration into the European community as the "ultimate aim" that would expand Turkey's role and effectiveness in the region. However, at the same time he also sought good relations with neighboring countries in the Middle East and the Central Asian Soviet Turkic republics in order to expand Turkey's export market and to help meet the country's energy needs (Laçiner 2003: 23-48). During the Özal period, education was increasingly viewed as an instrument for upward mobility and families from all socio-economic and political groups invested more in their children's education, which was seen as a means to achieve higher status in society (Akşit 2005: 396). Educational reforms were undertaken in order to raise human resources for Turkey's growing economy. As part of these investments, Anatolian IHLs (AIHLs) – language-intensive schools that admitted students on a competitive basis – were established during Özal's period particularly for the benefit of Turkish families working in Germany. The opening of the AIHLs transformed these schools even further into an alternative to regular public schools.

[19]Öniş argues that the transition to neoliberalism in countries like Turkey is "not from voluntary choice, but as an inevitable and forced outcome of a major balance-of-payments crisis associated with the exhaustion of the import-substitution model of industrialization. In this context, the support of the transnational community is crucial for accomplishing a smooth process of recovery and a basis for sustained economic growth." (Öniş 2004: 118)

The conservative-liberal democratization dynamic that evolved in rural Anatolia – considered the heart of Turkey – after the mid-1980s gained momentum in the 1990s and then especially with the 1994 and 1995 electoral successes of the Welfare Party (RP) both at municipal and national level. Widely called "the Anatolian tigers", or at times labeled "green capital", this new middle class managed to strike a balance between their traditional and conservative values and modern, rational, entrepreneurship culture, which differentiated them from the established economic elite in Turkey. It was in 1990 that these businessmen established the Foundation of the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (MÜSİAD) as an alternative organization to its secular counterpart, the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD). The rise of a new, urban, well-educated religiously observant middle class, however, meant a confrontation between the old and new actors on the economic field, but maybe more importantly it entailed a confrontation on the socio-cultural field where anxieties revolved around cultural codes far from a rational framework (İnsel 2012). The fact that a new actor had claims not only to the economic pie, but also to sharing similar tastes and living standards with the established elite became a matter of tension especially after the mid-1990s. This anxiety was activated during the February 28 period when members of MÜSİAD were systematically excluded and put under pressure.

B. Political Context

These years of economic trauma became further destabilized with the escalation of political tension between the extremist left- and right-wing youth groups. These clashes claimed the lives of hundreds of young people and culminated in the military intervention of 1980. The anarchic atmosphere in the country was mentioned in the interviews with the second generation of graduates as an important factor that influenced their IHL preference. These schools offered a secure environment that neither right- wing nor left-wing extremist groups were likely to penetrate (Öcal 2013: 193- 194). In 1982, the military generals wrote the new Constitution that restricted the freedom of the media, syndicate rights, and reduced individual rights and freedoms. The Constitution also strengthened the political efficacy of the National Security Council (MGK), which was staffed by military generals. Basic human rights and freedoms were restricted or eliminated in cases where the violation of national interests, public order, national security, or a threat to the stability of the Republic was perceived. Moreover, changes in the Political Parties Law brought a 10-year ban for all political leaders who had been active prior to 1980. Of the 15 new parties that were established, only three were found eligible to participate in the 1983 elections. Turgut Özal won the elections with the Motherland Party (ANAP), which gained support from Demirel's AP, Erbakan's MSP and in part, from Türkeş's far-right Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) (Arıkan 2008, Bora and Can 2004, Zürcher 2004, Çalışlar 2004, Ahmad 2003, Tambar 2014, Keiser 2013, Bora, 2007).

Özal's personal traits helped him greatly in holding these different groups together. His belief in an open, liberal market economy gained him support among the money-owning private sector while his sympathy and close relations with a Sufi order gained him support among religious groups. Perhaps more importantly, however, he had grown up in the rural agricultural city of Malatya and was able to move up through his personal efforts and academic achievements, taking up top-level positions in public, private, and multinational organizations. Özal presented a success story with which the population could identify. Reflecting his personal traits, "the political party that he helped to create was based on a hybrid ideology, combining elements of liberalism, conservatism with strong Islamist connotations, nationalism and welfarism. By effectively exploiting this hybrid ideology,

ANAP, under Özal's leadership, could appeal to both the center and the periphery, transcending the elite versus non-elite divide in Turkish society." (Öniş 2004: 115-117)

In 1994, Necmeddin Erbakan's RP won major mayoralties in municipal elections. The fact that the newly elected RP mayors shared similar socio-economic backgrounds and lifestyles with those of the suburban population was effective in attracting the majority of suburban votes in cosmopolitan cities like Istanbul and Ankara. A number of the district mayors, and more importantly, the mayor of the metropolitan municipality of Istanbul, had grown up in rural areas or in suburban parts of the city with a lower socio-economic background. Many of them had graduated from an IHL and shared a religious lifestyle. Their electoral victory in 1994 provided the suburban youth with role models that they could aspire to: "I remember Erdoğan [as mayor of Istanbul] visited our school a couple of times. The fact that the mayor of Istanbul was an IHL graduate meant so much." Bülent recounted and added: "I used to aspire for a job that was more prestigious than my father's, but seeing that religious people who had grown up in neighborhoods like ours had become mayors raised the bar of achievement."

The portfolio of professions the IHL graduates could practice started to proliferate as the RP's municipal politics evolved. RP politics prioritized a progressive agenda at the municipal level that opened social facilities for public use at affordable prices or for free, like the transferring of restaurants at some of the most historical sights of Istanbul from exclusive private to public ownership, in this case the Municipality of Istanbul. These facilities used to be accessed based on club membership under private ownership. The municipality constructed large sports complexes, established İSMEK courses, which trained women for a vocation or in handicrafts, implemented the Beyaz Masa – a direct channel of communication for people to petition their demands and grievances with their local administration. These in turn opened channels of access for suburban, lower-income, marginalized groups to participate in urban culture and politics more directly, giving them extra self-confidence and a chance to narrow the cultural gap between the urban versus suburban areas of the city. The RP winning the 1995 general elections further contributed to this environment, as this time it was the new cabinet that included ministers who were IHL graduates and were supportive of strengthening religious education in order to reconnect the nation with its values and norms.

These electoral achievements allowed devout people to become more involved in the economic and political affairs of the country, reinforcing the middle class that was burgeoning among practicing Muslims who started to fragment and increasingly took up residence in higher-income regions of the city. The new apartment complexes in central city locations that were built and inhabited by devout Muslim families was a new phenomenon in the second half of the 1990s, signifying the socio-economic shifts of the country's devout Muslims. The end of the second period is marked by the February 28 period when the military intervened with the democratically elected government in1997.

C. IHL Experience

Given the above macro-economic and political shifts in Turkey, one of the clearest changes was the dramatic drop in the number of students who travelled from rural to urban areas. Part of this phenomenon is related to the increasing number of IHLs throughout the country, which made commuting between home and school easier for rural residents. It also made schools in other cities less preferable. This changed the main dynamic of social mobility among the second generation graduates, particularly after the mid-1980s, which can be summarized as the growing gap between suburban and urban areas of the cities. The urban and suburban divide had outcomes vis-à-vis access to infrastructural services, educational resources and the availability of cultural and social amenities.

While there was only one IHL school in the 1970s located close to the historical city center in Istanbul, the number of IHLs increased in parallel with the expansion of the city, accommodating the high volume of internal migration received from eastern parts of Turkey. As the city expanded, densely populated settlements split from the districts they had formerly belonged to and created new districts with separate administrative bodies. By 2008, out of 138 IHL schools, 43 were located in districts that were formed prior to 1980, while 66 of them were located in the new suburban districts that were formed between 1980 and 2008, and 23 of them were located in the newest districts that were formed in 2008. While the opening of new IHLs in suburban areas made them more accessible for less educated suburban population, effectively raising the levels of educational attainment among suburban groups; it led to a fragmentation between urban versus suburban IHLs, with marked difference in educational quality, physical facilities and the student profile especially with regards to the amount of their cultural capital.

The social fusion between the students from urban and rural backgrounds in the earliest cohorts became weaker over time due to the dropping number of migrating students from rural areas. However it still persisted, particularly in urban IHLs, where a synergy developed between urban versus suburban dwellers of the same city. While the previous generation largely sought governmental employment as imams, *hatips* or an academic career in the field of theology, increasingly more graduates in the second generation sought professional careers in engineering, law, political science, and medicine. As they gained self-confidence, they increasingly situated themselves as an organic part of society instead of an outsider and aimed to make their contributions in a number of ways. Mert, a 1994 graduate, told: “I completed my law school degree in four years and then opened my own law office. At the same time, I was involved in politics as well. I was the founding president of the AK Party İstanbul youth branch. I never considered my life as a matter of career making stripped of higher ideals like justice, better social conditions for all people. I gained such perspective at the IHL. This is why I have been on the board of trustees of ENSAR Foundation for the last ten years besides all my other duties.” Almost all the second generation graduates I interviewed had completed their university education and aspired for high status jobs in public or private sector.

The 1988 university placement exam results confirm the changing perceptions and also display the aforementioned change in academic pursuits among IHL graduates. Accordingly, 26, 855 students graduated from IHL schools in 1988. 32% of them chose faculties of law as their first preference, then public administration and finally faculties of theology (Baloğlu 1990: 137). Despite the increasing preference for law, public administration and education, as indicated by Baloğlu, the proportion of IHL graduates in law schools did not exceed 3.6% of all placements (Çakır et al. 2004: 23). Despite low university enrollment levels, however, IHL schools generated much discontent among the political and economic elite in Turkey. A 1990 TÜSİAD Report written by Zekai Baloğlu presented the changing preferences of the IHL graduates away from their vocational field of study as a threat to the secular state. Accordingly employing students with religious educational background negated the principles of the secular regime (Baloğlu 1990).

It is important to stress that compared to their fathers, the second-generation IHL graduates made a significant leap in career attainment. While the fathers of the first generation graduates consisted of farmers, small shop owners, workers, religious scholars and functionaries, the fathers of students who studied after the mid-1980s included people who worked in lower level white-collar jobs, or as professors or lawyers (Akşit 1986) in part due to improving relationship between the state and pious groups from the early 1980s which reiterated their participation in politics and society. Önder Kıyıklık, a 1994 graduate, recounted:

> "My grandfather was a farmer. He sent my father to an IHL so that he becomes a *hatip* and disseminates Islamic knowledge around the country. My father, however, decided to receive a regular school diploma upon finishing his IHL degree. He studied at the Faculty of Theology with his IHL diploma, and completed his law degree with the regular school diploma. Years later, my father sent me to an IHL so that I become a good Muslim and gave it up to me to study anything I wanted."

Önder studied industrial engineering at the Bosphorus University, one of the top degree programs in Turkey, and works as a top-level professional at one of Turkey's oldest holding companies owned by a pious family. Önder's experience clearly illustrates the extent of upward mobility over the time span of only three generations.

During the interviews I realized that the perceptions of families about women's education started to shift from the mid-1980s. Socio-economic changes, such as migration from rural to urban areas during the 1960s and 70s, also changed women's role in society. This period led to increasing detachment of women from agricultural production processes, and their growing participation in the manufacturing labor force due to macro-economic policy changes in the early 1980s. This may explain the general change in the perception of women's role in society and their level of educational attainment.

While there is little reference in the existing literature on the relationship between the relatively lower rates of school attendance among religiously observant families and the institutional challenges they confronted over the years, I argue that when institutional norms and values at school space became more friendly these families, who would otherwise refrain their daughters from schooling, actually eagerly supported their daughters' education. The rapid increase in girls' attendance at the IHLs following the 1976 legal changes, which allowed admission for female students at the IHLs, confirms this.

A third generation graduate's account of her family is informative of how within a period of two decades changing macro-economic, social and political conditions transformed religious families along with the traditional and/or patriarchal relations of authority they represented. Sude is the last child of seven siblings, six girls and a boy. Her father was a staunch supporter of the RP line of politics all his life. She describes him as a stereotypical example of the average religiously observant man in Turkey. Her father refused to send his first two daughters to school as he thought that the kind of educational degree received from the public schools – career oriented and secular – was useless for girls and in addition had a degenerating influence on the moral values with which they had been instilled. As a result, Sude's oldest sister became a tailor while the second oldest studied at a *medrese*-style Qur'an courses and memorized the entire text of the Qur'an; she is currently teaching at Qur'an courses-year-long adult schools that also provide religious education for children during school breaks in summer run by the Presidency of Religious Affairs (DİB). Following the IHL schools' enrollment of female students, Sude's father sent his third daughter to an IHL; this daughter graduated in the late 80s, and later received a university degree. She is currently pursuing a professional career at a mid-size company. As for Sude, she also graduated from one of the top IHL schools in Istanbul and is a bright academic with an MA degree who until recently worked at one of the most prestigious universities in Turkey. Women's social mobility will be further elaborated in Chapter 5 on gender.

III. The Third Generation (1997-2010)

The defining moments for this generation are the February 28 process and its effects on IHLs through measures like the lower coefficiency factor barrier, the headscarf ban, and the changing national compulsory education system that ended up in the closing of secondary level teaching at vocational schools. While these developments had very serious effects on IHL students and their socio-economic status in society, since the election of AK Party in 2002, their status and opportunities gradually improved. The effects of these political developments on students and their aspirations will be evaluated in this section.

A. Economic and Social Change

The consecutive coalition governments in Turkey during the 1990s failed to take the necessary precautions and introduce appropriate policies to avoid financial crisis, which eventually erupted in 2001. Rising inflation rates, lower purchasing power and increasing unemployment prepared the conditions for the electoral victory of the AK Party, which was established in 2002 under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Consecutive AK Party governments between 2002 and 2010 (the end of the period of this study) were generally characterized by political stability and a liberal economic policy accompanied by cultural conservatism on the one hand, and progressive social policy in education, health, transportation, and housing, on the other.[20] Economic growth based on a revival of domestic demand, privatization, and an increasing amount of foreign investment rather than solely imports all led to an economic policy that increased economic resilience during the 2008 global financial crisis (Karagöl 2013). According to Azevedo and Atamanov's working paper in 2014, between 2002and 2011, the size of the middle class in Turkey doubled from 21% to 41%, while extreme poverty dropped from 13% to 5% and moderate poverty dropped from 44% to 22%. These findings were most significant for the authors, as they also indicated that the benefits of the economic growth of the last decade in Turkey have been widely shared, reflecting a general trend of intra-generational upward social mobility (Azevedo and Atamenov 2014).

For devout Muslims, the trend in upward mobility that started in the mid-1980s gained momentum during the AK Party period. The urbanization of rural Anatolia narrowed the socio- economic gap between the center and periphery in Turkey. This is largely attributed to the normalization in norms and standards that defined the boundaries of participation in the public sphere.[21] Keyman points to the AK Party's foreign policy as one of the key factors in the development of the new entrepreneurial class in Turkey and its integration into global economic markets (Keyman 2012). With expanding work opportunities in a diversified job market, the country's devout Muslims started to participate in fields that were regarded as restricted for "white Turks" (a term for the upper-middle-class, secular, elite groups in Turkey who benefitted disproportionately from the state's economic and cultural policies). More devout Muslims are visible today in sectors like media productions, visual arts, telecommunication, and international trade among many others. This new middle class gathered around umbrella business organizations like MÜSİAD and ASKON and contributed to the opening of new employment opportunities as well as to urban transformation in their base Anatolian cities (Keyman 2012). Keyman argues that what is significant about this new middle class is that "it signifies the emergence of a new actor which was formerly excluded by the Turkish modernization and was treated as a static and traditional periphery that gained

[20] For more on the rising, new middle class see (Heper 2013), (Çevik 2012), (Çevik 2015), (Göle 1997), (Başkan 2010), (Hwang 2012), (Buğra and Savaşkan 2014).
[21] See also (Keskin 2002), (Ramazanoğlu 2004), (Çaha 2007), (Cizre 2009) and (Esayan 2013).

the ability to effectively influence not only the field of economic dynamism and entrepreneurship, but also other fields like culture, identity and politics" (Keyman 2012: 26).

The new middle class did not only become more visible economic actors and producers, but also developed a new consumer profile with changing tastes and habits. The increasing number of hotels designed according to the needs of practicing Muslim families, the number of fashion brands producing goods that appeal to Muslim sensibilities, and increasing visibility of women wearing headscarves on mainstream TV channels reflect the above-mentioned processes of integration. Neslihan Çevik further points that the rise of a new middle class among the devout Muslim populace reflects a deeper theological transformation in the way Islamic principles are reconciled with modernity. She argues that the neoliberal transition and the rising, new middle class has not only ended up in changing consumption patterns but also:

> Established human rights organizations that articulate Islamic references of human rights with Western references (for example, linking the farewell speech of Prophet Mohammad with United Nations conventions), business organizations that embrace the free market, while moralizing its principles with Islamic ethics (for example, competition, pragmatism, individual enterprise, and liberty are related to *helal* [permissible] versus *haram* [impermissible] gain, *israf* [prodigality], individual profit versus *infak* [spending to please God] and to do *hayır* [blessedness/goodness], and women's associations that retrieve progressive Islamic concepts (for example, *ijtihad* and *masalih*, both referring to adaptation to the new social currents) to challenge male dominant exegesis of Islamic theological sources and traditional practices such as polygamy or and laws of inheritance. (Çevik 2011: 89)

In the course of my fieldwork, I observed that a majority of the IHL graduates celebrated the above-mentioned socio-economic developments as a "normalization" of the status of devout Muslims in the public sphere. I realized, however, that many were also aware of the fact that it came with a cost. For instance, more of them chose to live in secluded, modern apartment complexes instead of independent apartments on the street that are not separated with a wall or a security entrance. This sort of housing, while in response to the urban needs of families such as street security and access to sports and other facilities, generally accommodates people with similar socio-economic backgrounds and thus decreases the degree of interaction between groups with different socioeconomic backgrounds. Similar socioeconomic homogenization is reflected in the increasing number of devout Muslim families sending their children to private schools that uphold their traditions and values. While such a process of becoming the new bourgeoisie or elites and its effects must remain a topic for further study, insofar as IHL graduates are concerned, many were aware of its downside such as conformism, lack of idealism in life, and inner discomfort about the disconnect between their lifestyles and their religious norms. My findings also indicate that the bourgeoisification of this group may undermine the social fusion that has been a typical characteristic of student life at IHLs for the previous two generations and enabled faster acculturation and upward mobility opportunities for IHL students.

B. Political Context

The third generation should be analyzed across two political periods in order to capture the spirit of the era: The February 28 period characterized by coalition governments and the post-February 28 period, and the AK Party period. In 1998, Erbakan's RP was banned from politics on the grounds that it violated the principle of laicism in the Constitution. Meanwhile, the RP base reorganized under a new name – the Virtue Party (FP) – and entered the early general elections in May 1999. Following the elections, Bülent Ecevit of the Democratic Left Party (DSP) established a tri-party coalition with the MHP and Özal's ANAP, which was under the leadership of Mesut Yılmaz. This was the time when Merve Kavakçı, a newly elected member of parliament who wore a headscarf, was drummed out of parliament by a protest mounted by approximately 100 DSP MPs, both men and women. In the end, Kavakçı was unable to take her seat in parliament. For her constituency, her sitting in parliament was merely an act of democratic representation. However, for the secular Kemalist elite, her entrance into parliament was a clear show of defiance against the official state ideology and, more specifically, the secular regime (Peres 2012: 117- 126). Such discriminatory practices implied to devout groups, and particularly the women of those groups, that regardless of one's loyalty to democratic principles or one's level of educational attainment and self-confidence, deeply rooted ideological divisions would resurface and prevent participation in political and social affairs. During the three-year MHP-DSP-ANAP coalition government, the middle school level of IHLs were closed, female students were not allowed to wear headscarves at school, gender segregated education was not permitted, and a lower coefficiency factor was applied for vocational school graduates, seriously limiting their chances of admission into university degree programs outside religious fields. This had a direct negative effect on IHL enrollment, IHL students, and their career choices.

The second political period to have a defining influence on the third generation of IHL graduates was the three consecutive AK Party governments period, which started in 2002. Self- identifying as a conservative-democratic party, the AK Party prioritized reconnecting the state with society on a number of levels to encompass the restoration of social and political rights and freedoms for different sectors of society and the promotion of policies for integration of the new Anatolian, entrepreneurial middle class in the economy. Recognition and restoration of the social and political rights of groups that had previously faced state discrimination such as the Kurdish population, non-Muslim minorities, women, and devout Muslims, which had all previously faced state discrimination, are also illustrative of the changing state-society relationship (Cook 2007: 128; Rumford 2008: 122; Kuru 2014: 162; Öniş 2006: 1935; Tepe 2006: 128.). İnsel refers to this expanding democratic environment and points out: "[The AK Party] did not have any choice to share authority with the forces of the former tutelage regime, it had to abide with an all win or lose rationale when claiming full authority in government. Insofar as the former tutelage regime resorted to protect their authority through their classical tactics like postmodern coups[22] or political interventions via the judiciary, the AK Party expanded its line of democratization as a way to defend itself" (İnsel 2011). The AK Party's support base rapidly expanded beyond the traditional conservative electoral base of the MSP-RP-FP line. It promoted an identity that was conservative on cultural issues and did not hesitate in exhibiting its religiosity, but also promoted entrepreneurship and upheld moderate nationalism.

The AK Party period from 2002 to 2010 was also defined by an acceleration of Turkey's EU accession processes, which entailed legal and political reforms that improved political and civil rights in Turkey and consolidated the overall democratic system. Despite

[22] İnsel is referring to the February 28 coup is widely called a postmodern coup whereby the military overthrew a democratically elected government not through violent means but through pressuring it to abide a series of ultimatums issued by the National Security Council.

these improvements, the AK Party was constantly challenged by the former military tutelage regime on issues of religious freedoms.[23] Such resistance from the former military and political elite was exposed through semi-coup initiatives like the April 27 "e-coup" in 2007[24] or Supreme Court decisions like that which overturned a law that was passed in parliament with 411 in favor and 139 opposed to enable wearing religious attire in state institutions and party closure cases in 2002 and 2008, all held back the AK Party in implementing policy changes that would respond to the demands of its conservative base. The complete elimination of the lower coefficiency factor was achieved in 2010, the lifting of the headscarf ban for public servants took place only in 2013 as part of a larger democratization reform package,[25] and the secondary section of vocational schools, including IHLs, was reopened in 2012 following comprehensive educational reform that increased compulsory education period from eight to 12 years configured as a three-tiered system. The third generation of graduates in this study consists of those who graduated prior to these changes. Still, the election of the AK Party as a single-party government in 2002, by itself, clearly gave hope to IHL students that their conditions would gradually improve. This optimism is reflected in the increasing enrollment rates at IHLs immediately after the 2002 elections: 71,583 students had enrolled at IHLs in the 2001-02 academic year, which dropped to 64, 534 in 2002-03, and rose back to 84,898 students in the 2003-04 academic year (Bozan 2007: 26).

C. IHL Experience

In complete contrast to the first generation, there were almost no migration stories from the third generation, and nearly all the graduates came from urban families. In fact, there is an organic relationship between the second and third generations, as a majority of the third generation are children of earlier IHL graduates. Among the mothers of this generation, there were more university graduates who worked as teachers or doctors. This also reflects the effects of the cultural changes that took place from the mid-1980s on. The fathers of this generation, on the other hand, had a wider range of occupations in journalism, politics at both local and state level and as educators at universities in a number fields from theology to law and medicine. The socio-economic profile of this generation's parents is important, as it illustrates: 1) the increasing social and political participation of devout Muslim groups since the mid-1980s and 2) the changing expectations of education and particularly IHLs with regard to career and education prospects. Families worried less about the professions their children would choose and rather focused on their educational attainment. They increasingly viewed education primarily as a means to achieve social status and thus prioritized education to help their children overcome the lack of confidence with which they themselves grew up. They wanted their children to be confident among the children raised in more secular social environments.

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[23] Freedom of religion is clearly described in Article 10 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU as follows: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or in private, to manifest religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance."

[24] The Turkish military, which considered itself as the guardian of the secular Turkish state, issued an online memorandum at midnight on April 27 just weeks before the presidential elections in which AK Party supported its former party chairman president. The online statement was seen as direct military interference and pressure on particularly the AK Party to nominate a different presidential candidate. The statement read as follows: "In the recent days, the problem on the eve of the presidential elections has centered around a debate on secularism. The Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) follows the situation with concern. We remind that the TSK is a side in these debates and a strong defender of laicism. Furthermore, the TSK is strictly opposed to the ongoing negative comments and debates, and no one should have any doubts that if need be, it will manifest its attitude and deeds clearly and openly." The government responded to the statement with equal intensity. Government spokesman Cemil Çiçek read the following response: "It is unthinkable in a democratic state of law that an institution like the TSK, which functions under the Office of the Prime Minister, to make statements against the government. The TSK is an institution under the command of the government and its duties are designated in the Constitution and the corresponding laws. According to our Constitution, the head of the TSK is responsible to the Prime Minister."

[25]"Kamuda başörtüsü bu sabahtan itibaren serbest", *Radikal,* October 8, 2013. http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/kamuda_basortusu_bu_sabahtan_itibaren_serbest-1154558, (Accessed: January 25, 2015).

The measures introduced during the February 28 period made up the defining feature of the period, which in turn lowered IHL graduates' aspirations. As I argue in Chapter 5 on gender, women were the most negatively affected group, but also the group that made the greatest leap to overcome the systematic barriers they encountered. Male students, on the other hand, generally changed schools and attending regular public or private schools to avoid the lower coefficiency factor barrier, and thus could freely make career preferences. Those who could not change schools tried to get into lower-tier university programs or faculties of theology. For girls, though, the story was a bit more complex. Some took off their headscarves and were able to study at universities while others managed to study abroad either through family support, scholarships from philanthropists or NGOs, and still others could not study as they rejected removing their headscarves or could not find a way to study abroad. These girls stayed in Turkey and resisted in their own ways which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

In any case, for an IHL graduate at the time whose university entrance exam score would normally gain him/her access to a top four-year university degree program, the February 28 measures now ensured that he/she would only be able to attend a two-year degree program at a lower-tier university. As such, even those who managed to enroll in university degree programs studied in lower quality programs, thus negatively affecting their potential employment prospects. Even those who scored high enough to be among the first 500 students on the university entrance exams shared this situation. Those who could afford to do so enrolled in four-year programs at private universities. Sena, who was among the top 500 scoring students on the university exam, said: "Normally I could easily have gotten into a top four-year program, but I had to find a sponsor in order to study at a private university in a degree program that I was not really interested in. That was the only way I could finish a four-year degree. It is silly. Only one other friend of mine was able to get into a four-year university, and that was also private." Upon graduation, Sena was accepted to Goldsmiths College, University of London for a master's program in media studies. Currently she works in a managing position at a mainstream media company.

Those students who were able to pursue undergraduate studies abroad, both men and women, could usually select from a wide variety of academic programs ranging from media studies to engineering at good universities. However, they faced challenges regarding cultural adaptation and, at times, financial problems in covering their living expenses. Upon their return home, the challenge for these educated students, particularly the women who gained a considerable amount of international experience, advanced language skills, and high academic credibility, was to find suitable employment opportunities. Due to the headscarf ban in the public sector, women who wore headscarves were employed by only a limited number of private companies owned by devout Muslim businessmen, a majority of whom were skeptical about women's employment in general. There were three reasons for this: 1) they did not want to skew their reputation by appearing to be a religious company, 2) they held deeply embedded, patriarchal, protective reflexes toward women and believed, as many devout Muslim men did, that women would be harmed in the working environment, and 3) they believed that women should primarily be a mothers and education was necessary only insofar as it supported motherhood. Consequently, a majority of these women were employed in very low-paying jobs, disproportionate to their academic and intercultural experience. Thus, while these women had gained high cultural capital, their economic gain remained low.

During this period, male IHL graduates were also discriminated against in the workplace. As a result, it was more common and acceptable, and more possible for men than for women, to disguise their IHL background. They usually hid that they had graduated from these schools in order to move up to more prestigious positions in the workplace. Önder expressed how he was aware of the discrimination he would face upon graduation, explaining:

> We knew that when you graduate from an IHL you would not be admitted to military schools, you would not become a diplomat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, you would not work for any international company. In the US this is not the case. You can work for McKinsey or P&G, but in Turkey these companies are reserved only for the white Turks [secular elites]. They clearly exhibit these restrictions to you. So especially in my IHL years we did not study with a feeling of open opportunities. However, this feeling of discrimination also had a reverse effect to motivate us to do our best.

The different experiences of men and women in the work place situated them differently, not only on the socio-economic ladder, but also in their worldviews. For the girls and women, who lived through the February 28 period, educational attainment took on an almost self-making education career.

Those who could not study at university felt inadequate, no matter how well they trained themselves at voluntary educational activities or in handicrafts or the arts. While all these courses ended up contributing greatly to their personal enhancement, they offered much lower social mobility for women as compared to that which was provided by a formal university degree. Many of these women chose to get married and raise children earlier than they would if they had been able to get a university degree. Marriage stood out as a practical path to escape the psychological and social pressure they experienced at home. Indeed, following the lifting of the coefficiency barrier in 2010, I met women who decided to enter the university entrance exams at age 40 – more than 20 years after graduating high school – to make up for this loss.

The February 28 period influenced both those who were directly victimized by the process as well as the mood among friends, families, and in neighborhoods. The individual experience of these girls, their fragility because of headscarf ban, their dilemmas, were shared by a number of others around them, leading to a deep feeling of hopelessness about their status in society. This communal process of sharing sorrow raised awareness and consciousness about issues like modernization, secularism, and the attainment of education for girls.

However, the election of the first AK Party government in 2002, relieved some of the systematic pressure felt by devout Muslims and gradually facilitated and improved their participation in society, politics, and economics. The improving socio-economic conditions of devout Muslim families and their shifting perceptions about education, accompanied by deteriorating educational quality in IHLs due to the measures implemented after February 28 led to a new trend. While in the second generation, middle-class and upper-middle-class devout Muslim families used to send their children to IHLs, they increasingly preferred private schools in order to avoid the lower coefficiency factor after 1997. This trend continued even during the AK Party period began due to these families' demands for a more individualized education and better physical and social conditions of the school, which were less possible at public schools. The trend to move away from IHLs among the "religious bourgeoisie," as some called them, was in part related to their socio- economic well-being and their increasing concern about their children's intellectual capacities, psychological needs, and physical development. Ayten, a 1996 graduate, told me: "My daughter has a special interest in the arts and I really want her to grow up to realize her potential. I would like to send her to an IHL. However the quality of teachers and psychological counseling services all seem to be poor. I would like to see more dedicated teachers at IHLs and better administration. I would like my child to grow up loving her religion, but at the same time receive enough attention to develop her skills."

In the new phase, starting from 2010, IHL students' expectations and those of their parents were much higher than those expected from regular public schools, which in part reflected the anxiety of the upper class around the world to raise their children well-equipped to compete globally. Families were increasingly concerned about academic rigor and the quality of the faculty at IHLs. I heard many graduates complain about their past experiences while expressing their concerns that the teachers lacked the urban culture with which the students had grown up and thus had difficulty in understanding their interests, capabilities, and ways of thinking. In particular, some former male students stressed that at times, the teachers tried to compensate for their inadequacy by obstinately insisting on their opinions, even when they were mistaken or misinformed. Male teachers even forcefully punished male students. I realized that the girls almost never mentioned this issue. This different treatment of girls and boys in part explains why male graduates were more likely to express adverse feelings about their IHL experiences compared to female graduates. A few of the men I interviewed strongly disliked IHLs based on these sorts of negative experiences with their teachers. Some not only hated the as schools, but religion and religious-minded people for being moralizing, narrow in thinking, and unquestioning. Four graduates I interviewed said that they are atheists, and one of them refused to mention the name of the IHL he attended. These past experiences are a source of anxiety for contemporary pious Muslim families who would otherwise prefer the IHL experience for its comprehensive religious education and what I call the "culture of piety" – a concept that refers to the organization of time and space at school in accordance with religious norms and rituals.

The changing socioeconomic conditions, volume and accessibility of communication technology, dilemma of being part of the modern world, and embracing tradition at the same time have all placed new demands on IHLs in terms of physical conditions, curricular content, extra-curricular activities, and the faculty. Unlike in earlier periods, during the February 28 period, religious private schools proliferated in number as an alternative for devout Muslim families seeking a school with a culture of piety. Thus, families increasingly tend to compare newly opening IHLs to these private schools and not to public schools. If IHLs fail to accommodate these concerns and expectations, it will be difficult to sustain the kind of social fusion that emerged in the earlier period, despite the political environment that is supportive of these schools.

IV. Social Fusion across Generations

The state's rigid secularization policies combined with a wave of democratization in the 1950s led to the creation of the IHL model rather than the many different models that can be found in other secular countries. The state goal to give some leeway while keeping a grip on religious life and culture in society institutionalized these schools as essentially orthodox Sunni Muslim state schools. Yet, quite unintentionally, these schools became popular in Turkey as parallel educational institutions to regular public schools due to the lack of other alternatives for formal religious education. They became popular among devout Muslim groups from lower- and upper-income groups, both Kurds and Turks, as well as women and men, thus creating a "social fusion" that did not necessarily emerge in regular public schools, as the secular elite had a range of other options, including private elite schools, with which they could accommodate their distinct status. This led to a general lack of intermingling with the lower-status groups among secular elites. In contrast to the claims of social reproduction theories about how educational systems are functional in reproducing existing class relations in society,[26] I argue that the culture of piety indirectly led to the mingling of students from

[26]For more on social reproduction theories see (Bourdiue and Passeron 1977), (Karabel and Halsey 1977), (DiMaggio 1982) and (Sullivan 2001).

differentiated economic backgrounds, creating a peculiar sort of social fusion at IHLs. In addition, the encounter between upper- and lower-class students at a school they all preferred in order to be educated with common values enabled a more rapid upward mobility for students coming from lower socio-economic backgrounds. My interviews illustrate the mechanisms of transmission of cultural capital among IHL students ranging from basic socializing activities to art performances.

Almost all of the first generation of graduates felt that a shared moral framework and purpose for studying at IHLs held them together. Abdullah said:

> We were students who came from all over Turkey, from different cities. But the reason that had brought us together was similar: to receive a religious education, to grow up as pious Muslims. Our families did not know one another, but the family of a boy from Çanakkale and that of a boy from Ordu shared similar thoughts about the future of their sons. I had a friend from Erzurum, for instance, he is now the mayor of Erzurum. He was a *hafiz* [someone who can recite the Qur'an by heart] and was much older than me. All in all, the thoughts and expectations of our families were the same. The students from Istanbul, those who knew Istanbul a bit better, had greater advantages [in terms of adjusting]. They saw themselves as a bit above us. They did not act differently, but still they felt different. They were a minority though. They were less than one-quarter of the school population, maybe one-fifth.

The sort of unintended convergence of this diversity of students led to an even stronger bond of brotherhood among students that exceeded regional or cultural differences. Another first generation graduate, Mehmet, grew up in one of the wealthiest families in Istanbul. In the early 1950s, his family started to affiliate with a Sufi order and adopted a pious lifestyle. His extended family was one of the leading financiers of early IHLs and dormitories, and the members of the family are among the founders of the Organization for Promoting Education (İYC) – an NGO established by a group of willing small-to-mid-size business owners to support IHLs. While his uncle sent his own sons to American and French private schools in Istanbul, Mehmet's father sent him to the Istanbul IHL in the hopes his son would lead a life devoted to Islamic values. Mehmet reflected that it was difficult for his uncle to overcome the underlying belief that religion was a matter for the lower earning and lower educated.

Mehmet, as one of the few children from a pious but upper class family in Istanbul, was a unique case among the first generation graduates at this time. One tends to assume that a wealthy family would prefer not to send their children to such a poor school environment. However, the lack of better alternatives that combined religious education with general education meant that a few wealthy families also sent their children to IHLs. This was the case roughly until the February 28 period. The unspoken moral values shared by all the students and teachers, for example, modesty, protection of the weak by the more powerful, and belief in distinction by high morals rather than material wealth, led to social fusion rather than social divergence among these students. Such social fusion may help explain how some of the students who had migrated from rural villages could handle the rapid adaptation to urban life and within one generation became cultural and political actors in the public sphere.

Halis, from the second generation, was born into a relatively wealthy family in Istanbul. He stressed that at school he had no problem getting along with the poorer students who came from eastern villages: "Economic status did not matter, as we were taught at home and in our religion classes that what mattered was neither beauty nor wealth, but one's closeness to God. In fact, witnessing the fact that some of my classmates had difficulty even

purchasing a winter coat, I strove to remain humble at school, not wearing anything ostentatious or expensive." The atmosphere at IHLs allowed these students to foster devout Islamic values, such as social responsibility, brotherhood, caring for the needy, and loving people for the sake of God while also contributing to their cultural and educational enhancement.

Social fusion at IHLs did not emerge only out of a shared value system, but also from shared experience of marginalization coming from elite institutions. Önder recalled:

> In my high school class, there was a boy from Diyarbakır. He was Kurdish and his Turkish was a bit broken. I don't remember any moment of discrimination. My father was working as a lawyer at the time, but there were boys whose fathers were workers, farmers or carpenters in different Anatolian cities. We had starkly different socio-economic backgrounds, but it just did not matter. We were all raised both at home and at school with messages of social equality.

As the examples indicate, social fusion helped IHL graduates to more rapidly adapt to the demands of urban life as well as the cultural practices of upper middle-class families and the transfer of cultural capital, which usually took place through family networking, was, in a way, commissioned to peer socialization at IHLs.

V. The Family Factor across Generations

The state's rigid secular policies in a considerably religious society stood as a challenge for the consolidation of democracy in Turkey. The elite of the regime found a solution in establishing a unified educational system in which teachers could communicate the norms and values of the new state ideology to society. The underlying notion that encompassed all these efforts was that no matter how aggressively the state implemented secularist policies, counter-structures deeply embedded in society, like the family, would potentially overturn the reforms if the state did not eliminated them. Accordingly, the family, as the primary socializing agent, served as a carrier of traditional and, in general, religious values and lifestyles to the next generation. The new educational politics held the state liable as the prime educator of the youth and teachers acted as the embodiment of state ideology, carrying out a civilizing mission to free society from the trap of tradition and/or religion.

IHLs and their graduates exemplify the tension between these teachers as the embodiment of state ideology and the children of traditional and/or religious people. Meral, a 1992 graduate, who unwillingly went to an IHL, for instance, said: "Families in those days were a bit careless. My primary school teacher was very opposed to things like IHLs or Qur'an courses. We could understand this from her manner." As one of the favorite students of the teacher, Meral was so influenced by her anti-religious sentiments that she said: "I could not even walk down the street where my primary school teacher lived [after being admitted to an IHL]. Frankly, I did not want to meet her. If she asked: 'Why did you go to an IHL?' I did not have my own response. And I admired her as well. Later on, I realized she was mistaken." Even the teachers that did not have an ideological baggage against religious education were prone to refrain from recommending IHLs for their students due to their perceived lower quality of educational. Public school teachers acted as the representatives of the state and embodied the norms and rules of the aggressively secular state machine. They taught obedience to the secular state authority as a key to social progress. Many viewed teaching as a sacred vocation by which the revolutionary ideals could be inculcated. Religious students from practicing families appeared to them as being brainwashed and they did everything they could to emancipate this new generation from the narrow boundaries of tradition and religion.

Still, there were other teachers who either out of respect or in acceptance of a student's family preference, would recommend IHLs as an option. Sude recalled that she learned about the language-intensive AIHL she went to from her Kemalist teacher for the first time. The teacher was sure her family would send her to an IHL, but knowing her student's intellectual capacities, she felt responsible to direct her to an AIHL rather than a regular IHL, which had a clear effect on Sude's post-graduate career.

The accounts from the students illustrate how, aside from macroeconomic factors such as urbanization and political change, micro-factors like teachers' advice, as well as family preference and awareness of educational attainment, were just as influential on these students' careers. Unlike those in the first generation who came from rural families, the parents of the second generation, who largely lived in the cities, had a guiding role in the academic pursuits of their children. The changing role of the family and an increasing parental role in the lives of children emerged as a new phenomenon in the 1980s due to a combination of factors. These included the increasing average educational attainment in Turkey, a greater awareness of the effects of education on one's future career and the ascription of the primary care-giving role to the nuclear family, which was consequent to the changing structure of urban family networks. Prior to the 1980s, families tended to be less informed about the IHL model and made their decisions almost coincidentally following advice from figures like a district imam, a *medrese* teacher, or an elder student with IHL experience. In later years, however, families started to make more deliberative decisions.

Meral, a second-generation graduate and a young mother, said she foresees a career plan for her daughter, but with a slight reservation: "I need to check the quality of IHLs before sending my children. If they can get into an Anatolian IHL, I would send them. The regular IHLs are too crowded. Kartal AIHL would be a good option. Or if Istanbul IHL accepted girls, I would think of that, too. They have a really good education there. School quality is also related to student quality after all." In the 1990s, IHLs were allowed to hold their independent placement exams due to the high demand for enrollment, and that enabled them to raise student quality, which in turn increased educational efficacy. IHLs' physical conditions, quality of education, and the teachers' relationships with the students started to become the central criteria that were influential in selecting schools since the early 2000s.

I realized during my fieldwork that around the mid-1990s, families made less ideologically driven and more informed decisions about which schools to send their children. Informed partly by their own school experiences, but also by improved socio-economic conditions, they started to make school selection after giving more thought to the suitability of IHLs given their children's personal traits, rather than merely making a decision on an ideological premise or dedication to pious religious life. With improving socio-economic standards, pious devout Muslims came to grips with rising individualism – a concern for individualistic goals rather than idealistic communitarian spirit – the increasing interest in educational technology, and self-cultivation. Therefore, a more critical approach started to inform school preferences in this period and heightened expectations from an IHL diploma.

The post-February 28 environment also influenced this shift in family attitudes regarding school selection, whereby families had to appeal to new strategies to raise their children in a religious setting. Many devout Muslim organizations started to open private schools that used the state curriculum, but added extracurricular courses such as instruction in religious values, although more casually than at IHLs. The culture of piety that was distinct to IHLs previously was to a large extent maintained at these private schools. For families who could afford private schools, these schools with their higher physical and education standards significantly raised families' expectations. Many graduates who said that they would not send their children to an IHL following the lifting of restrictions on IHL graduates in 2010, had in their minds the standards of these private schools and were no longer interested in state

schools. The proliferation of the number and the tendency of devout Muslim families to send their children to these private schools in effect diversified the religious population in Turkey as reflected in further differentiation of career choices, changing conditions of access to secular social settings, and their worldviews in general.

Rising expectations due to improving socio-economic conditions of the devout Muslims in Turkey, their increasing participation in the public sphere, and the availability of other alternative routes to religious education is the challenge for IHLs today.

Conclusion

Since 1951, IHLs have served as an instrument for social mobility in a number of ways. For the first generation, these schools were more of an instrument for students to move horizontally from rural to urban areas, especially Istanbul, and help them gain intellectual and cultural capacities to participate in social life without having to forgo their personal values. For the second generation, this sort of mobility became reduced due to an increasing number of IHLs that led to decreased opportunities for horizontal movement. However, IHLs were still instrumental in raising the aspirations of the religious suburban population and increasing their involvement in city affairs. A common pattern of upward social mobility is the transformation of the middle class from entrepreneurial to bureaucratic occupations, as this was the case with the IHL graduates starting from the mid-1980s. The mobility of the IHL social base is also reflected in familial transformations, particularly the increasing concern about the personal characteristics of students and families' focus on education as a mechanism for upward mobility, in contrast to the standard practices of religious education in Turkey in general. I also argued in this chapter that there is a need to recognize two critical junctures that informed the processes of social mobility of IHL students in Turkey. The lifting of university attendance restrictions for IHL graduates and the opening of IHL admissions to girls in 1976 accelerated upward mobility for all graduates, while the restoration of restrictions before university entrance and the headscarf ban at state institutions and schools in 1997 led to a stagnation and even downward mobility among IHL graduates. Female students from lower income families experienced this renewed downward mobility most strongly. Table 5 below illustrates the dramatic shift in the university placement of IHL graduates immediately after the restrictions were put in effect in 1999.

Table 5: Number of Placement of IHL Graduates in Different Undergraduate Degree Programs

Year	Law	Political Sci	Education	Religious Education	Theology
1998*	232	277	3,285	322	1,420
1999	54	97	315	669	1,324
2000	96	149	639	778	1,254
2001	82	93	541	785	917
2002	91	70	374	603	685

*Lower coefficiency factor not in effect
Source: Mehmet Gündem, "İmam Hatiplerin Dünü Bugünü Yarını" series, Milliyet Daily, 3 Mayıs 2004, quoted in Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) report "Imam Hatip High Schools: Legends and Realities", Ruşen Çakır, İrfan Bozan and Balkan Talu.

Especially the drop in the number of graduates that were placed on faculties of education to attain a teaching certificate from 3,285 to 315 is rather dramatic. I further discussed how the experience of social fusion affected the rapid rise of IHL graduates within the framework of three generations, from agricultural jobs to upper-level, white-collar employment in cities and, more recently, to cultural and entrepreneurial positions. The process of learning among students from different class backgrounds has played a significant role in the upward mobility of IHL graduates, which is often not captured in studies about IHLs. Social fusion worked to blur the lines between social classes, making status less a matter of ascription from social origin and family, but a matter of achievement. I argue that this process of peer culture and social learning aided the rapid integration of IHL graduates into Turkey's social, political, and economic life.

CHAPTER 4
Continuity and Change in the IHL Experiences of Three Generations

In this chapter I will compare IHL graduates from three different time periods, each marked by a critical juncture that changed the way the state, society, and religion interacted along a number of dynamics: Socio-economic conditions, degree of political attachment, extracurricular activities at schools, entrance and graduate outcomes, degree of religiosity, experience of marginalization, importance of culture of piety, perception of secularism, and degree of idealism.

For the first generation, 1976 marks a critical juncture when IHL graduates were given the right to attend a university degree program, and it was also the year when female students were allowed to enroll in IHLs. This first period, therefore, consists only of men. It is possible to assume then that until 1976 the primary purpose of these schools were to raise religious functionaries, but after 1976, families chose IHL education for a multiplicity of reasons, including better career options. I seek to first posit these shifting reasons for choosing IHL education. Otherwise, the generalized notion that families send their children to these schools in order to raise them as practicing Muslims dismisses the possibility that as social actors preference for IHL schooling may actually be a way of resistance to the state-imposed boundaries that impeded social participation for religious groups in Turkey since the foundational years of the Republic.

The second generation of IHL graduates studied at an IHL between 1976 and 1997. 1997 is the year marked by the February 28 period when generals imposed a set of so-called preemptive measures on the elected government, which included the adoption of the obligatory, uninterrupted eight years of primary education that entailed the closing of secondary level IHLs, adoption of the lower coefficiency factor measure for vocational schools, and the headscarf ban at schools.

The third generation graduates are students who graduated from an IHL between 1997 and 2010. Until 1997, IHLs functioned as a form of public school option for those who wanted to receive Islamic education for a religious life and not so much for a career as a religious functionary. While the coefficiency measure aimed at a more efficient placement of high school graduates, in the long run it created a rigid system in which students had to make lifetime career decisions very early in life and with little self-discovery. This measure was abrogated in 2010 when all students were given equal opportunity to access university degree programs regardless of their high school track.

Why generational comparisons?

The intergenerational comparative approach prevents reductionist overgeneralizations and allows us to capture the links between the micro and macro social processes at play. While I was working on the existing literature, survey materials, and media analysis on IHLs, I recognized that IHL graduates were frequently portrayed as a homogenous group with only marginal representation in society, the media, and academia. However, considering the effects of the two critical junctures described before on IHL students, and the effects of the socioeconomic shifts that took place in Turkey over the last 60 years, one can hardly analyze IHL graduates as a homogenous group. They vary according to gender, generation, and location, socioeconomic backgrounds, degree of religiosity, and political attachment, among others.

I argue here that the IHL experience and student profile changed significantly over time based on: 1) changing norms and values of the urban population versus the rural

population, 2) changes in the socio-economic conditions of pious groups coupled with a higher degree of confrontation with secular social institutions, and 3) changes in the political opportunity faced by IHLs, that is, an inclusive or exclusive attitude on the part of the government at the time. Sociologist Ergun Yıldırım argues that:

> IHLs responded to the demands of the periphery for religious knowledge, intellectual progress and wisdom at the same time. People migrated to study at IHLs and they found the opportunity to socialize and have a say in social affairs. Thus, IHLs were instrumental in carrying the peripheral groups to the center of the social and political arena. (Yıldırım 2012)

It is further contended that this is part of the reason interventions such as that which occurred on February 28, 1997 directly targeted IHLs. The escalating demands of the lower and lower-middle stratum of society to be part of the center without surrendering their cultural, religious, or symbolic attachments created a counter-resistance within the center, which was generally occupied by the secular, ultranationalist Kemalist elite. Yıldırım further argues that IHLs opened the way for the development of a new group of tradesmen and professionals who asked for a share in the status, privilege, capital, and culture attributed to the center. The center's reaction was to repress this group through military intervention accompanied by a public smear campaign, which ended up in a number of professors, bureaucrats and other employees who were considered to be part of this periphery losing their jobs. In this process, IHL degrees were used instrumentally as a key criterion to detect the risk factor against the center, "in a way turning IHL graduates into Victor Hugo's Jean Valjean." (Yıldırım 2012)

It is clear that IHL students had a shared self-awareness about themselves as being different. Even the most critical IHL graduates reflected in their accounts that being an IHL student placed them in a different status in society – sometimes revered and other times insulted and denigrated. This common social attitude also reflects their perception as a homogenous group in society. Many graduates, for instance, claimed that they encountered less tolerance for errors as compared to their peers from regular high schools; people had higher expectations from IHL graduates in terms of their moral attitudes. Yet, some questions like if these schools produced an IHL ideal type or a particular political subjectivity and what the components of that subjectivity were are worth asking in order to understand IHL graduates' distinct and common characteristics.

İsmail Kara said during our interview that he did not believe in the existence of an IHL ideal type anymore. He said that "there was an 'IHL ideal type' that could be easily differentiated with some common characteristics until roughly the time of the 1980 coup." He described these common characteristics of the graduates:

> A majority were peasants and villagers. They were poor and put up with hardships. A lot of them were *hafiz*, and some were also mullahs, i.e., having completed a *medrese* education. Poverty and peasantry developed a pragmatic and solution-oriented quality in them. In terms of their conception of religion, they were inclined toward neo-Salafism [even closer to modernism and Wahhabism, knowingly or unknowingly], hence they distanced themselves from popular conceptions and practices of religion as well as from Sufism and mystic orders. They wanted to change and transform this *volkislam*. On the intellectual front, they were generally conservative and supported rightwing politics. They wanted to serve the public good, stake a claim in their country, and succeed. They were idealistic and indigenous. Although with different degrees and depths, they were critical of the [political] system, but their

knowledge and capacity to explicate on the system was weak.

Table 6: Change and Continuity Among the Three Generations of IHL Graduates

		First Generation (1951- 1976)	Second Generation (1976- 1997)	Third Generation (1997- 2010)
Change	**Socioeconomic Conditions**	Low-income families with rural/ agricultural background	Period of urbanization, an evolving new middle class with professional occupational background	Lower-middle class and urban poor
	Political Attachment	Lower participation in party politics	More participation in party politics, new political actors as role models	Lower participation in party politics, increased civil society activism, IHL graduates in high profile political posts significant as role models
	Extracurricular Activities	Soccer and wrestling	Diverse sports activities, engagement in interschool cultural competitions like debates, participation in youth organizations (MTTB, YMMB, MGV)	Diverse sports activities, self-enhancement courses at municipal facilities (musical instruments, language training, computer skills)
	Entrance/ Postgraduate Outcomes	Religious functionary, scholar of Islam (no coefficiency factor barrier, but access to higher education is restricted)	Career in diverse professional fields (no coefficiency barrier, free access to higher education)	Lower postgraduate aspirations (presence of coefficiency factor barrier, headscarf ban for girls)
	Degree of Religiosity	*Fiqh*-oriented	*Ummah*-oriented, socially alert morality	Faith-oriented, Sufism on the rise
Continuity	**Marginalization**	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Culture of Piety	Yes	Yes	Yes – most important
	Secularism	Positive – Secular state secures freedom of religion	Positive- Secular state secures freedom of religion	Positive Secular state secures freedom of religion
	Sense of duty, living for a greater cause	Yes – preserving religious identity	Yes serving the *ummah* through education in religious and positive sciences at the same time	Yes claiming IHL as a source of cultural capital

As opposed to the higher degree of homogeneity among the first generation graduates regarding life aspirations, worldviews, and views on religion, the second generation displayed an increasing heterogeneity due in part to the changing intellectual and political conditions of the period. During the foundational years of the Republic, the religious type represented by Ahmet Hamdi Akseki – a late Ottoman scholar of Islam who chose to reconcile with the

secular state following the years of radical secularist reforms (1923-25) and struggled to revise the state-religion relationship by taking up political posts – had much influence on early religious publications in the Republic (Subaşı 2004).

The state promoted this reconciliatory approach of Akseki. Kara argued that until the 1970s, the IHL graduate profile resembled that of Akseki. Later on, developments like the foundation of political parties with religious discourse, the National Order Party (MNP) in 1969 later recast as the National Salvation Party (MSP) in 1972, their influence on stimulating interest in active politics among pious groups, the development of a new line of Islamic publications imported from other Islamic countries that were translated into Turkish and advocated an activist religious and political discourse, in addition to increasing demand for modernization triggered by mass media encroachment and urbanization all worked to create a more politicized surface, or monolithic Islamism, that started to lose the intellectual vibrancy and authenticity that characterized pre-1960 Islamism in Turkey (Kara 2010: 219).

The increasing accessibility of communication technologies, rapid urbanization, professionalization, and the expansion of modern educational processes all contributed to a change in the conception of religion in society and defined the mood of the day, thus inescapably leading to increasing heterogeneity among IHL students in the 1980s and 1990s. Increasing involvement in the secular culture of politics, society, and economy further transformed IHL graduates, particularly since the 2000s, and generated different images of modernity within the IHL community. Despite all the changes, an effort to combine religiosity with the technologies of the day, a non-confrontational agency in pursuit of rights and freedoms, a rather mainstream reading of Islam, and a deeply embedded trust in democratic processes continue to define a majority of IHL graduates.

I. Change between Three Generations

A. Socio-economic Conditions

As discussed earlier in Chapter 3 on social mobility, IHL graduates differentiate along socio-economic lines over generations. The widespread approach to the IHL community tend to dismiss the shift from a largely rural, lower income student profile at IHLs to a rather fragmented profile and the growth of a pious urban middle class since the mid-1990s. This approach reflects the economic marginalization of the IHL community in society which will be elaborated in this section.

The roots of such economic marginalization can be analyzed through a center-periphery approach that Şerif Mardin introduced as key to understanding Turkish politics and society. His approach questions the accuracy of situating political tensions in Turkey on a classical modernization-secularization axis manifested in the constant contrast between secular versus religious groups in Turkey. Instead, he disputes that while the Republican revolution had made a radical break from the Ottoman past, it retained some domains of symbolic tension in the Ottoman state-society model. Here, Mardin refers mainly to the historic tension between sedentary versus nomadic groups, the heterodoxical influences in the periphery versus the institutionalization of an orthodox religion at the center, political and economic privileges of the bureaucrats at the center versus the periphery, and finally, the elitist high culture that was exclusive to the center versus the less refined folk culture of the periphery. Yet compared to the Ottoman period, in modern Turkey, the degree of overlap between the institutional norms and values the political structure upheld and the values and norms of society at large led to occasional crises of legitimacy (Gülener 2007: 44; Mardin 2003). IHLs, in a way, present a form of elite concession given in response to social questioning of the legitimacy of systematic exclusion of the norms and values of the

periphery.

Indeed, the center-periphery approach can be useful in understanding the experiences of the first two periods of IHL graduates, yet it is less useful in understanding the dynamics of change in the field of power later on. Since the mid-1990s, we see a growing profile of IHL students who were born and raised in central districts of the city and socialized in urban lifestyles, tastes, and habits. The latest graduates I interviewed were raised in a Turkey in which they have witnessed IHL graduates become the prime minister, ministers in the cabinet, and occupying relatively higher political and economic positions. They do not imagine themselves as the periphery and find that term otherizing and degrading.

From very early on, as means to attain the benefits of citizenship to the new Republic were spread throughout the country, mass public education in public schools became part of the country's revolutionary agenda. However, the aggressive secularization policies of the 1930s and 1940s created a deep sense of mistrust and suspicion toward the state and its institutions in rural parts of the country. People in the villages and the countryside were reluctant to send their children to public schools once they had finished the compulsory primary education.

Some of the first generation of graduates described the image of regular public schools among the village residents as schools that the state had established to raise "infidels" and to alienate the youth from traditional and/or religious rituals and values. As a public school in essence, the reliability of the religious curriculum at IHLs also raised skepticism and mistrust, but the schools very quickly gained popular support. People not only sent their children to these schools, they also actively supported the construction of school buildings and dormitories as well as supplying food and clothing for their poor students. Over time, IHLs became the focal point of philanthropic efforts for pious groups in Turkey (See Table 7). Howard Reed stresses in his comprehensive IHL analysis that:

> The Ministry of Education acts on the policy that no such school will be sanctioned unless a vigorous, responsible, formally organized group of local citizens first indicates its genuine interest in the new school. Usually, these legally constituted private groups raise funds in the community. They often purchase or rent a site for the pro-posed school, erect a building, (to which, in Adana, Isparta, Izmir, Kayseri and Konya, they retain title, although the central government in some cases contributed roughly 1/4 of the cost of construction. In some of these places the school property will, when completed, be turned over to the state) pay for most of the equipment and furnishings, help support worthy students by means of scholarships and, where practicable, create and operate one or more hostels and canteens for the needy and deserving students. (Reed 1955: 158)

Table 7: Institutions and the Construction of IHLs	
By the state	38
By cooperation of the state and people	77
Temporarily reserved buildings, property of National Treasury	22
By associations, foundations, and other institutions	263
Total	**400**

Source: Ministry of National Education (MNE), Coordination of Research and Planning Committee (CRPC), revealed by Ünsür 1995, p. 149 quoted in Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) report entitled "Imam Hatip High Schools: Legends and Realities", Ruşen Çakır, İrfan Bozan and Balkan Talu (eds.), 2004 p.43.

The younger generations generally expressed a lower degree of religiosity during their post-graduate lives compared to their IHL years, and a higher degree of integration in secular social environments. The changing social and cultural habitus of IHL graduates, not unlike the pious groups outside the IHL community, consequentially led to a “latent secularization” within this group. Latent secularization here refers to maintaining religious symbols and rituals but at the same time not making concessions to the mainstream secular lifestyle. This sort of secularization stresses that secularism is not only a state system, but also a way of organizing daily life. My fieldwork points to the phenomenon that IHL students are just as much part of the secular conception of life in Turkey as other groups despite having occasionally faced discriminatory educational policies. This sort of secularization revealed itself more in the daily practices of the second and third generations’ growing middle-class families. “Living secular lives but keeping God in mind” describes this dilemma. Especially in the third generation, this means going to pop concerts, watching popular TV serials, following movies without hesitating much about their moral content. Hasan, a 1987 graduate, said frankly: “Our family lives, our working environment or academic endeavors are separated from our religiosity. We go to Mecca for the *hajj* [pilgrimage], pray five times a day, and so on and forth, but the cars we drive, the amount of money we spend, the kind of things we refrain from doing, after a while no longer matter.” While many graduates viewed this process of secularization as becoming more profane and lamented their weakening ties with the sacred as illustrated above, the secularist elite maintained their perception that the ascent of the religious groups cast a threating specter on their lifestyles. The second generation of graduates also viewed this period as a period of democratic “normalization,” which is the restoring of an inclusive representative democracy and an opportunity to demonstrate that it is possible to be modern and pious at the same time. When I asked Nuran, a 1997 graduate who is a woman who wears a *çarşaf,* a black garment that covers all parts of her body except her face, whether she considered herself to be modern, she replied: “Modern, I think, is a person who does not shut herself off from the changing conditions of her time, for example, technology. In that sense I am modern. As long as they are within the boundaries of Islamic rules, I take advantage of all possible contingencies. I am modern in that sense and do not wear blinkers.”

It appears that as IHL graduates came to terms with secular norms and institutions they also realigned themselves in order to adapt to the changing conditions. They started to take advantage of the opportunities modern life offers as a way to express themselves, their values and customs. More specifically, they developed a worldview in which modernity and tradition had specific connotations and meanings and they laid claim to both. However, this turned out to also transform their religiosity and idealism. Becoming a complete actor in a secular society necessitated some concessions and compromises, which will be discussed below.

B. Political Attachments

It is necessary to remember some of the political dynamics that have influenced the degree and content of political attachment of IHL graduates over time. Recall that the first multi-party election in 1950 in which the Democratic Party (DP) won in a landslide over the founding Republican People’s Party (CHP) was a turning point in which the religious sections of society built an attachment to the DP for its opposition to the nearly 30-year, authoritarian, single-party rule of the CHP. Following the 1960 coup and the ousting of the DP, between 1960 and the 1980s, political socialization of the observant Muslim youth grew largely around youth organizations like the National Turkish Student Union (MTTB), Movement for the Revival of National Struggle (YMMH) and Akıncılar Association (AD), among others. These organizations, unlike the leftist youth movement or the far-right nationalist youth movement,

Ülkücüler, or extremist religious groups like the Great Eastern Islamic Raiders' Front (İBDA-C) and Hizbollah that appeared in late 1970s, rejected violent confrontation and focused on education encompassing conferences, debates, theatrical performances, and non-violent protests. The MNP-MSP-RP line of politics, on the other hand, had gained support among devout Muslims since the 1970s for upholding Islamic values and the role they played in social and political development. The RP and its youth organization, MGV, played a significant role in the 1990s. Following the closure of the RP during the February 28 period, political socialization took place around social and cultural events at municipal culture centers and a variety of civil society organizations ranging from philanthropic organizations to human rights organizations. In the 2000s, the AK Party succeeded in gaining the support of a majority of pious Muslim groups and has since become the focal point for political socialization. It is worth mentioning, however, that this last period has been marked by increased civil society activism among pious Muslim groups outside of party politics.

IHL graduates, in general, tend to support conservative, right-wing political parties, but particularly favor those that have been sympathetic to Islam and devout Muslims. They have been less fond of nationalist parties, and historically sympathized more with the RP-line of politics and, since its foundation in 2002, the AK Party. In this chapter I explore the dynamics of politics in IHLs and whether IHLs inherently politicized their students. The widespread image of IHLs as the backyard of political Islam in Turkey usually disguises the sociological dynamics of political mobilization among IHL students. Given the fact that IHLs opened two decades before a political party – the MNP – used Islamic discourse in Turkish politics, a closer examination of the political preferences and activities of IHL students in that period is useful to understand whether the above accounts accurately reflect the IHL phenomenon.

My fieldwork illustrates that the key dynamic of politicization among IHL students has been the presence or absence of political pressure. A second dynamic is the degree of negative framing and labeling in the media and public. In times of high political pressure and/or negative framing of IHLs and their students, students tended to question their political and social belonging. Indeed, they tended to describe and defend themselves with reference to the discourse used against them. Cemil Çiçek, the president of parliament at the time of the interview, and a graduate of the Yozgat IHL in 1966, claimed that there were no political party allegiances at IHLs until the 1970s. İsmail Kara made a similar claim, arguing that "until the '60s, pious people did not want to see religion as a matter of political nature. They avoid politicization of religion by simply receding in times of conflict or pressure, making maximum use of all the possibilities in times of open opportunities."

The global tide of intellectual activist movements, including nationalism, Islamism, and the leftist movement, created vigorous efforts by all groups to translate and circulate intellectual works, particularly from leftist intellectuals, but also from left- leaning Islamist intellectuals, around the world. As a result of these developments, religion increasingly turned into a sphere of political contestation. Çiçek contended:

> In the '60s, we were inclined to situate ourselves against the widespread leftist movement due to their propaganda against religion. The leftist publications that spread very rapidly were rich in the diversity of arguments they made about everyday life. Given the very few Islamic sources available at the time, it was difficult to develop a counter-discourse against the anti-religious leftist groups who were fed by a large selection of publications from novels to theaters to stories and newspapers. They had the programmatic experience of [Soviet] Russia to strengthen their case. They claimed that state ownership of everything would solve unemployment, would provide free access to education and healthcare for all, free water, free electricity. Considering the [Soviet]

Russian propaganda at the time, these were very attractive social promises, in particular for the youth. I remember having only high school knowledge and a bit of catechistic information and not much else.

The MTTB served as the one place where devout Muslim youth could realize a sense of belonging and collective effervescence through conferences with intellectuals like Necip Fazıl and Nurettin Topçu. Yet Çiçek stressed: "These gatherings did not produce a programmatic agenda like that of the left. Later on, the newly translated works of Mawdudi, Sayyid Qutb and Muhammad Qutb were like a cure for us. Then the Nationalist Movement Party [MHP] was founded by Türkeş. Some of us tilted toward a more nationalist discourse." Some students got involved in the National Struggle Movement, which began toward the end of the 1960s and defended activism based on an anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist, and anti-communist agenda, while others like the *Risale-i Nur* movement sought to revitalize Islamic faith through rationalist discourse. A majority of the first generation of IHL students, however, made their way to the MTTB, which organized conferences and intellectual debates on books in addition to poetry and theater clubs that were very attractive to students. These same students most commonly supported the MNP-line of politics in the 1970s and 1980s. Political activism through youth organizations like the MTTB and the YMMH developed in reaction to the challenges IHL students confronted in society, strengthening the collective spirit among the observant Muslim youth. Çiçek described it: "We were treated as if we had the plague. The leftist loquacity would be framed as progressive while we would be called reactionary." So, as far as we understand from this account, we can say that in the 1960s, Islamists and the leftists were among the most vocal youth groups with the left was more acceptable among elite circles and university students since it had a progressive agenda with organizational schema for their goals. Islamists watched and learned from this experience in later decades.

When discussing the presence of politics at school, Meral, from the second generation who graduated in 1993, responded: "Not at school, but outside the school we would be confronted with political stuff we knew little about. Very often we would be insulted in the street with questions like: 'Are you an Iranist?' We did not know what that meant exactly, but we were politically aware of the Welfare Party and its leader Necmettin Erbakan. Some of my friends were involved in National Youth Foundation [MGV] activities outside the school."

The MGV was a youth organization supported by the RP, and since the mid-1980s, it has attracted some IHL students outside the school. Students were not mobilized to participate in MGV events in any systematic way, but rather through friendship circles. One of the most marginal graduates I met during my fieldwork was Cevat, a second-generation graduate who is an atheist and very critical of IHLs on a number of issues. He described the MGV structure as "a very laid-back organization". "The *Nurcu* students would be very annoying, frequently questioning us, asking: 'Why don't you come to our conversation circles,' or, 'Why don't you do this or that?' We hated that. But the MGV was open. We would go there to read stuff. No one would keep a tally of our attendance. They would generally have reading and discussion activities." Mert, who graduated in 1994, explained that his cohort was very active in the MGV – nearly two-thirds of his class participated in MGV activities outside school. The rest either "did not like politics, or belonged to a different political party, or were just too idle for extracurricular activities."

Particularly among boys, talk of politics was a frequent part of daily socialization at school. Mert recalled: "For a long time we talked about Erbakan's initiative to establish a Union of Islamic Societies, which aimed to create a synergy in the region. We would sarcastically call out in class: 'Yo Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria! Come and start the Union of Islamic countries!" Yusuf, who was known as an MGV supporter, said: "The MGV served like a study group for us. I used to think of it as an association for reinvigorating religious

awareness, nothing more. We would meet during breaks, write a hadith on the board and discuss it. It took me until I was in high school to realize the political connections, but they were never strongly felt." That is to say IHL students were very aware of their own image in society that was disseminated in secular circles, and they were able to reflect upon them with irony.

Mürsel opposed the tendency to view IHLs as the backyard of the RP, arguing that "if you go to, say, the eastern Black Sea coast to Trabzon, Of, Vakfıkebir, Çaykara, Bafra or elsewhere, you will meet members of various associations that sustain IHLs; they come from different political parties, including the Republican People's Party (CHP)." He then pointed out that "the Justice Party (AP) and the True Path Party (DYP) of Süleyman Demirel opened more IHLs than the leader of the RP, Erbakan, for instance. Ecevit, from the left-wing Democratic Left Party (DSP), also opened IHLs. Not to forget the ones opened by Kenan Evren. Yes, the MSP may have been more supportive of these schools, but no political party can remain indifferent to the demands of society. It would be better to see these schools as the back garden of Turkey. If there had not been sociological reciprocation in these schools, they would not have survived until now. These schools have a spirit that keeps them going and that spirit is an organic part of this society."

The most recent graduates, however, tended to have more apolitical attitudes, which can be understood considering the political dynamics of the February 28 period. The degree of political pressure, othering, and economic conformism in the form of higher engagement in the prevailing market-oriented, consumerist culture significantly influenced the degree of political attachment in IHLs. In the absence of a perceived threat to their values and norms, IHL graduates during the AK Party governments apparently opted for less political and more cultural and intellectual self-enhancing extracurricular activities. Tarık, a 2010 graduate, studied communications and media systems at university. He said his first interest with visual arts was because of his lawyer father with whom he had the chance to go to musicals, theaters, exhibitions, and concerts. When he enrolled in an IHL he was more than happy that the school had a humble but wholehearted theater club. He became a member as a junior and then became the president of the club as a senior. He remembered the best part of his high school years when they were performing "famous" plays at the end of each year and the preparation ceremonies were priceless experiences for him and his friends. Tarık not enrolling in law school, not being an engineer or a doctor, neither motivated nor targeted for any of those occupations, instead chose to study in the communications faculty at university, which is a rare example among IHL graduates.

C. Extra-curricular Activities

As mentioned in Chapter 3 on social mobility, the first generation IHL students were both a few years older than standard high school students and better qualified in Islamic studies than succeeding generations. However, they were very interested in soccer – an all-time popular sport in Turkey – and wrestling, esteemed as a traditional sport. IHL students attended city competitions with their school teams and achieved high rankings in tournaments. Having access to so little cultural capital and limited institutional support, soccer and wrestling stood as the only choice of extracurricular activities for the first generation.

Soccer continued to be popular for the second generation of graduates, yet extracurricular activities varied in the meantime. Debates and poetry competitions became very popular at that time for both IHL students as well as other high school students in general. Youth organizations like the MTTB and the Akıncılar Association were valuable sources of increasing social and cultural capital for students where they could follow up seminars by prominent intellectuals while also participating in student-run debates and

theatrical performances. These places created a vivid cultural and intellectual arena for students to think about the current issues as they stayed in close contact every weekend at their meetings. These environments affected the students' intellectual agenda and shifted the nature of other activities they were attracted to outside of school from personalized to community-centered activities.

From the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, the city-wide debates and sports competitions served as: 1) an invaluable opportunity for the middle cohorts to demonstrate their cultural, intellectual and physical competence publicly, which in turn gained them legitimacy, and 2) a space in which IHL students could make statements about their worldview in general. Abdullah, a 1979 graduate, recalled the citywide debates, which were taken very seriously at the time: "Each classroom would have a debate team and they would first compete with other classes in the school. Then the winners would form the school team to compete in citywide debates with other schools." The IHL debate teams would display their distinction from regular public schools through the references they made to nationalist and Islamist intellectuals like Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, and Yahya Kemal. This was in a way a statement against the mainstream secular intellectuals promoted at other public schools.

Public contests also acted as scenes where the cultural marginalization of the IHLs' could be easily identified. At times, IHL students expressed that they felt insulted and were treated with stereotypical prejudgments as backward, narrow-minded, or vulgar. A second generation graduate, Metin, said: "I was a member of the school's debate team and still remember how the audience would chant: 'Down with the imams, down with the imams,' when we got on stage at interschool debate tournaments. It was pretty distressing." The image of the imam has been ridiculed, undignified, or downgraded in Republican rhetoric as someone who is backward, lecherous, and corrupt (Yenen 2011; Maraşlı 2011; Yenen 2012). Referring to IHL graduates as imams was a way of both reproducing that popular deconstruction of the term from its original religious connotation, and implying that they could not lay claim to areas outside religion.

There were one or two teachers who were particularly passionate about strengthening the cultural and intellectual knowledge of IHL students. Earlier graduates cited Nurettin Topçu and Mahiz İz, who taught at Istanbul IHL. These teachers voluntarily met with students outside classes and guided their intellectual growth in literature, history, and moral ethics. With their guidance, students read Western novels, but also read the responses to modernization from the Islamic world, including a number of marginalized canonical works like the writings of Şehbenderzade Filibeli Ahmet Hilmi, Said Halim Paşa, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Cemil Meriç, Necip Fazıl, Nurettin Topçu, İdris Küçükömer, and Kemal Tahir.

Over time, IHL students emerged with a different intellectual profile from other pious Muslims in society. They got involved in cultural fields like theater, which traditional religious groups rejected and ostracized for being strictly non-religious or even anti-religious. Indeed, the traditional, secularist elite has occupied the field of cultural production since the early days of the Republic (Göle 1997: 50). Mürsel summed this up, hinting at their theatrical performances: "Those days, our pious community outside the school viewed theatrical plays as *haram* [not permitted in Islamic law]. But at IHLs almost every class had a theater troupe and they would put on plays, no matter how good or bad they were." This reflects how IHLs contributed to the differentiation of their students from the traditional, Islamic social groups they grew up in, especially in terms of the way they reconciled their Islamic and traditional values with those of the predominantly secular field of culture.

Later graduates were more fortunate, not only because they had better physical facilities in the school and more extracurricular activities, but also because they gained access to higher cultural and social capital due to improving socio-economic conditions as well as

the expanding political opportunity structure in Turkey. We see that basketball became a popular sport among students in the 1990s, and whereas volleyball had always been more popular among female students, we even see girls' basketball teams in the third generation. Due to the developing IHL campuses and the expansion of their facilities, students published magazines, school papers, and books. A variety of social clubs such as conversation clubs, reading clubs, music clubs, and social science clubs emerged in the 2000s at IHLs. As IHL education was weak in giving its students a taste of the arts and was thus criticized, especially by later graduates, more arts and music activities such as drawing, traditional Turkish and Islamic arts like *ebru* (marbling), *hat* (Islamic Calligraphy), *tezhib* (Islamic illumination), and extra courses in musical instruments like the *ney* (reed flute) were made available.

Female students spoke of a sisters' hour at IHLs when "elder students would come to our classroom and we would chat for 15 to 20 minutes. They would give us advice about the importance of religious duties, as well as social etiquette, and we would ask them questions about everything." Boys also had similar conversations with one another on religious topics. Sude, a 1999 graduate, explained how she worked closely with younger students: "I was overseeing students interested in literature. They would write poems and we would reflect on them, giving advice on how to improve."

Although considered weak in literary terms, the genre of conversion novels, including those of Ahmet Günbay Yıldız, and Şule Yüksel Şenler, also gained higher circulation among IHL students, who quite often would organize performances to celebrate important religious and national days. There, they would read the Qur'an, perform plays, read poems, sing hymns, and prepare stirring speeches. These events instilled group solidarity and a sort of idealism among students.

D. Entrance Purposes and Post-graduate Outcomes

Upon graduation, the first generation of students returned to their hometowns and served as imams or *hatip*s at mosques. Remaining an imam or *hatip* or a teacher at a Qur'an course did not necessarily mean upward mobility, but at least formalized their status as Islamic scholars. Moreover, this high school diploma was enough for some students to get bureaucratic posts in a governmental office, for example, the Directorate of Religious Affairs, thus implying a certain level of upward mobility. Others chose to remain in the city and continue with higher education. For early graduates, academic aspirations were limited to studying at the Higher Institute of Islamic Studies. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, many graduates discovered an alternative route that allowed access to different university degree programs. To this end, they took an exam that tested their knowledge on standard public school lessons – these lessons were either taught for fewer hours, or not taught at all in IHLs. The students who passed these exams were granted a regular public high school diploma and could take the National Student Assessment and Placement Exam (ÖSYS) alongside graduates from other schools. In this way, IHL students could enroll in university degree programs outside their vocational area of religious sciences. Among the top choices for IHL students were law and economics. In a way, these students set the benchmark for later IHL students by demonstrating that religious education was not opposed to scientific knowledge and that it was possible to be both devout in a secular state regime and strive for a profession.

In these early years, the decision to attend an IHL was apparently made more through encounters with influential role models, as was the case for Nureddin, a second-generation student whose father resisted sending him to a regular public school closer to home. He said: "My father never thought of sending me to a regular public school in our district. Our neighbors' children went to the district public school, and he never liked their manners. My

father was more or less a religious man. He was pious. He prayed five times a day. That is why he did not send me to that school. He wanted me to receive a religious education." He further recounted: "Once we went to a mosque with my dad and listened to a young imam's sermon. My father was moved by him and told me that he wanted me to become an imam. Since he did not know much about IHLs back then, he sent me to a traditional Qur'an school." Nureddin's primary aspiration was to become an imam, yet he learned from elder students at the Qur'an school that he "needed an IHL degree to become an imam. I explained to my father that studying at a Qur'an school had no future and that I had to go to an IHL. I also had friends enrolled there who informed me about the better prospects as an imam or a *hatip."*

Role models from earlier generations raised the academic achievement bar high, particularly after the 1970s, as students who enrolled increasingly believed that if earlier graduates could succeed despite the limited opportunities available to them, they had to succeed. Dursun, who studied at the Istanbul IHL between 1973 and 1976, related how proud they were when older students received medals and cups from citywide sports tournaments or high school debate contests in which IHL students showcased their academic and sporting abilities in competition with the prestigious schools of the era. These achievements, combined with the opening of university degree programs for IHL graduates in 1973, Dursun said, significantly helped his generation overcome the feelings of inferiority or inadequacy that the older students had grown up with. He still recalled the rousing speech their school principal made on the first day of the 1973 academic year when he announced IHLs' new status to prepare students for university education as well as providing religious education. Dursun said: "This was good news and gave us much confidence and motivation. I was greatly dedicated and I aspired to finish school and study at a prestigious university." Then, with a sour smile on his face, he continued: "I even remember dreaming of studying at the School of Air Defense and becoming a pilot." He would learn later that IHL graduates could not be admitted to military schools. When the MSP members on the National Security Council (MGK) proposed admission of vocational school graduates to military schools in 1975, it was vetoed on the grounds that such a legislative change would also allow IHL graduates to attend military schools. In response to this veto, MSP member Fehmi Cumalıoğlu defended IHLs, arguing: "It is a clear fact that regular high school degrees yield no cultural or intellectual superiority for a student. IHL students have ranked first in 90 percent of all debates and competitions in which they have participated to date" (Milliyet Daily, 23.05.1975). This controversy illustrates how, despite expanding opportunities, religious education stood at odds to the idea of education in which the school was conceived as the carrier and guarantor of the values and norms of the secularist state.

In 1973, the Ministry of Education recognized IHLs as being vocational schools that prepared students for a related vocational field as well as for general higher education. As such, it was ruled that an IHL diploma would be accredited for entrance to all higher educational programs without the need of a second diploma for equivalency purposes. 1976 graduates were the first to benefit from the new system. The consecutive political presence of the MSP in the coalition governments from 1973 to the 1980 coup also helped the expansion of IHLs as well as increased public interest in the schools and helped them grow in number. Öcal claims that part of the growing public interest was due to the pervasive perception of IHLs as secure and insulated from the anarchy and terror that was spreading through the country at the time with the heightened tension between far-right nationalist and leftist youth groups. Families feared for the lives of their children at regular public schools, which militant groups penetrated more easily than IHLs (Öcal 2013: 193-194).

In addition to these social and political shifts that favored IHLs, the lifting of legal barriers that prevented the admission of female students further transformed these schools and their function in society. Until the 1972 regulation that restricted IHL admissions to male

students, justified by the traditional argument that women do not become imams or *hatip*s, there were only a few registered female students at IHLs. In 1976, when a female student's enrollment was rejected based on this 1972 regulation, her family filed a lawsuit claiming that the new code discriminated against female students and contradicted the constitutional principle of equal opportunities in education. The gender issue was finally problematized, at least within the framework of religious education, and was resolved with a court decision favoring the admission of female students at these schools. (Öcal 2011)

The macro political and social dynamics discussed in the previous chapter clearly affected later IHL students' aspirations, goals, and general characteristics. The changes in the legal status of IHLs in 1973 rendered the educational quality of these schools as the key factor for preference. The expanding opportunity structure had a powerful impact on IHL student' academic preferences. A second-generation graduate, Nureddin, who was admitted to the Department of Economics at Marmara University, said: "At the time, IHL students had high aspirations. They wanted to become judges, lawyers, governors." Second-generation graduates increasingly expressed their aspirations for careers other than serving as religious functionaries, but they still feared the return of legal limitations and systemic exclusion.

As discussed earlier, IHLs' popularity grew rapidly in tandem with rising demand for better-quality education at IHLs. Consequently, those in the middle generation were students at a time when there was a growing number of IHLs throughout the country. In 1973, there were 72 IHLs. By the 1974 academic year, this number had grown to 101, in 1975 to 251, in 1978 to 338, and in 1979 to 374.This increase in the number of schools meant more students could gain access to IHL education, which coincided with the rapid growth in the suburban population in bigger cities like Istanbul and Ankara. IHLs became popular particularly among suburban groups keen to protect their children's attachment to Islam, traditional norms and values. The centrality of Islam and tradition for suburbanites is illustrated in a number of studies, (White 2002, Akyüz 2007, Gülener 2007, Yılmaz 2005), which demonstrate that Islam acts as the leading factor determining the political preferences of these suburban settlements even more than economic concerns (Akyüz 2007: 94) and that this is in part related to the levels of educational attainment (Çelik 2002).

In the second period, unlike the first, IHL education was available in the rural parts of Turkey, but still many students continued to travel to big cities in order to study at urban IHLs with higher quality of educational. During this period, entrance into certain IHLs became particularly competitive. Nureddin, for instance, explained how hard he had to prepare to get into the Istanbul IHL, desribing it as "the Harvard of IHLs at the time." The newly emerging competition among IHLs indirectly caused disparities between more central IHLs and the more peripheral IHLs. Experiences at central IHLs like the Istanbul IHL, Kadıköy IHL and Bakırköy IHL differed significantly from experiences at the Sarıyer IHL, Zeytinburnu IHL or Sultanbeyli IHL. Central IHLs had better facilities and a more diverse student body, especially in socio-economic terms. The increase in the number of IHLs not only affected the number of graduates, but also shaped and oriented their preferences after graduation. Increasing numbers of families started to send their children to these schools with the expectation that IHL graduates would be able to hold professional diplomas in a variety of occupations at the conclusion of their education.

Since the mid-1980s, with the opening of the foreign language-intensive AIHLs, IHL students also confronted the existing classification among regular public schools based on their quality of educational as Anatolian or non-Anatolian schools. This was a new axis of differentiation among IHLs that went beyond the urban-suburban divide. The increasing number and visibility of achievements of AIHL graduates and their placement in top-ranked university degree programs in the early1990s drew top students to these schools who had enough confidence from the academic rigor of the AIHLs so to prefer them over the more

prestigious public and private schools. Bright students like Yusuf, who might otherwise have chosen a prestigious private school, chose the Kartal AIHL for its "bonus" of religious education. He recounted: "I had a high enough score on the national high school placement exam and was able to enroll at Galatasaray High School [one of the most prestigious high schools in Turkey]. When my family heard about this relatively new school in Kartal – an Anatolian IHL – they selected it instead for its quality education in both religious and general education."

IHL students reacted to the political pressure after 1997 in different ways in planning their future careers. Many male students were sent to regular public or private high schools. As I will discuss more in Chapter 5 on gender, female students were victimized, not only by the lower coefficient, but also by the ban on headscarves. Some girls were able to study at private schools, a few were able to study abroad, but the majority stayed at IHLs. Over time, due to lower career prospects and pressure on wearing headscarves as well as the changing school culture with gender-integrated classrooms, overall enrollment rates at IHLs dropped significantly along with the academic aspirations of the students who did enroll.

The third generation of interviewees (between 1997 and 2010) had two groups of students. The first group was already enrolled at an IHL at the time of the February 28, 1997 coup while the second group chose consciously to enroll at an IHL after that, despite the February 28 restrictions, which as explained earlier significantly changed the educational structure of IHLs and limited the post-graduation academic possibilities for IHL students. The latter group was admitted to ninth grade upon completing the eight-year compulsory primary education in public or private schools. The clear difference in these later graduates from their predecessors was their lesser religious educational background and lower academic aspirations. Largely due to the limitations on career options after graduation since the February 28 amendments, more successful students were sent to more prestigious schools, even those from pious Muslim families. For example, Yusuf, along with 25 other students from his cohort, transferred to a private school in his final year to escape the lower coefficiency barrier and was accepted by the International Relations Department of Boğaziçi University, which is considered one of the top programs in the country.

On the other hand, Esma finished her secondary studies through eighth grade with the highest score and received a full scholarship from the Istanbul Social Sciences High School, which she decided to accept as a way to escape the coefficiency barrier for IHL students. She went there to register and the principal commended her success, stressing that they expected top scores from her on the university placement exams. "Yet it was a coeducational school, I had to take off my headscarf and study in a classroom with a majority of boys. I could not sleep that night. I was only 14 then, but decided that I did not want this. I woke up the next morning and said: 'Dad, I don't want this, I will stay at the IHL,' and with his agreement, we cancelled my admission at the new school." Esma scored among the top 500 students out of 1.5 million on the university placement exam. She could have been admitted to top programs in distinguished universities. She recalled: "I could only enroll in a poor-quality degree program, the department of American literature, at a low qualified university.'

These students obviously knew prior to their admission that their chances for academic success were slim. Yet they preferred to stay at IHLs, largely due to the culture of piety at these schools and a sense of belonging to an educational tradition. Except for those who chose IHLs in order to follow a career in the Islamic sciences, a large segment were students from lower income groups who could not study at a private school and/or did not have very bright academic prospects. As a result, their families chose IHLs for them so they would at least learn a bit about their religion while receiving a standard quality general education. For many female students, especially from the poorer sections of society, IHLs remained the sole option for academic attainment.

E. Degree of Religiosity

i. Changing Views of Religion and Religiosity

A shifting perception of religion can be noticed among the three generations in relation to their integration into urban life and their changing socio-economic conditions. While the earlier generations viewed religion as a shield with which they could protect themselves from the vices of urban life, the later generations increasingly attributed a constructive rather than a conservative role to religion. The middle generation quite often referred to how religion fostered many of the artistic historical and religious productions in the past. This was a response to claims that Islam contradicted progress and creativity. By making references to the past achievements of past Islamic states, like the Seljuk and Ottoman Empires, in architecture, politics, and literature, IHL graduates tried to revitalize a Muslim identity that could contribute to modern society as it had in the past.

The IHL curriculum has been criticized especially among second- and third-generation graduates for the "lack of *tasavvuf*" in its religious curricula. *Tasavvuf* refers to a spiritual cleansing and attainment of an inner lifestyle that is within the framework of the external (*zahir*) and esoteric (*batın)* provisions of orthodox Islam. It aims at preserving the heart from worldly pleasures, to nurture the desires of the *nefs* (self) in order to beautify manners (Öngören 2011: 119-120). *Tasavvuf* has been taught traditionally through *tarikats* (orders) that had been institutionalized after a *mürşit's* (guiding scholar) teachings and methodology (Ceyhan 2014). These Sufi orders have played an immense role in shaping the spiritual life and culture of Islamic societies since the eighth century. In Turkey, too, a number of Sufi orders have had influence on society and been an important channel through which different segments of society gained religious knowledge. These Sufi orders were among the targeted institutions during Turkey's secularization processes. The official secularist state ideology in Turkey has always been weary of Sufi orders and systematically suppressed them. The Kemalist revolution was particularly anxious about the Sufi *gemeinschaft* and its influence on society, and it ended up banning all Sufi orders in 1925, as they were seen as a threat to the new secular order of the new Republic wanted to introduce. However, as Mardin aptly noted: "The Kemalist elite did not understand the role of Islam in the construction of individual identities in Turkey." They expected that as mobility from rural areas to urban centers and from traditional to modern environments increased, people would embrace Kemalism's cultural symbols. On the contrary, increasing social mobility increased the feelings of insecurity among people and that insecurity led Islam to gain momentum in Turkey (Mardin 2001:74-77). Many IHL graduates valued discipline in their religious practices, however they were very critical of the catechistic, rigid, distant, and dry content of the religious courses at IHLs. The rising demand for Sufism among later generations of IHL graduates thus entailed a quest for spiritual balance. Yet the positivistic and scientific religious training they received at IHLs also created a deeply embedded skepticism toward Sufi orders. From the earliest to latest graduates, many benefited from occasionally participating in Sufi circles and reading books written by the sheikhs of these orders, but establishing a personal attachment with one spiritual figure – a sheikh *or mürşi* – was less common. A second-generation graduate, Abdullah, argued that this was because "IHLs provided the tools and methodology to learn religious knowledge. That generated a significant degree of self-confidence in students. You do not feel the need for outside support to learn religion."

However, among the participants in this study, there were students who sympathized with *tarikats*, including the *İskenderpaşa Cemaati, Nurcular, Erenköy Cemaati*, and *İsmailağa Cemaati*. These students gathered in small circles during lunch breaks, read and

debated a number of topics. Mürsel said: “Sufi culture in Turkey developed through sermons depicting parables. This was the difference between religious knowledge in these orders and at IHLs. Sufi sermons as such were intended for the general public and thus more accessible. At IHLs, we learned more scholastic information. The two did not necessarily contradict each other, but differed in style and audience.”

IHL students believed that the more systematic, objective and comprehensive approach and the systematic thinking gained at IHLs allowed them to make rational decisions about religious matters. A 1993 IHL graduate and a current IHL teacher, Meral, said: “I sympathized with Sufi orders, however I did not adhere to any. When my students ask me about them, I tell them that the Sufi way – *tarika* – is a way to God, but that they need to question and seek the truth and not take anything at face value.”

Fearing the possibility of fanaticism or bigotry through adherence to an order, a majority of IHL graduates wanted religious education to remain under state control rather than that of the religious communities, the *cemaats*. “At IHLs you see students from all orders. But they do not exclude one another. In society at large, however, adherence to one sect sometimes leads to rejecting others. Such exclusivism damages the Muslim community as a whole,” Mürsel said. As such, while IHL graduates sought more Sufism in the curricula, they appreciated the methodological approach pursued at IHLs, which must be viewed as an achievement of the positivist state ideology[27].

ii. Questioning Religiosity

In parallel to a higher degree of integration into the secular practices of modern life, a number of graduates had a chance to reevaluate the religious education they had received at IHLs. For older graduates, some of their teachers came from a *medrese* background where religion was taught as a system that encompassed all spheres of social life. They were idealistic teachers who were strong both in their Islamic knowledge and moral training, but conveyed a somewhat rigid reading of Islam.

While there are still a few idealistic teachers of this sort, teaching Islam at high school increasingly became a profession that excluded the former function of moral guidance. Given the lack of moral guidance by idealist teachers and the curriculum, more of the later IHL graduates stressed that the progress of the Muslim community – the *ummah* – depended on the salvation of the individual’s moral revitalization through Sufism as a system of self-purification rather than merely instruction in *fiqh* – Islamic jurisprudence. Hasan, a 1994 graduate, argued that when duties are introduced to students prior to the logic and aim of those duties, the students are prone to drift away more easily, thus explaining for him “the gap between the words and deeds of many Islamic experts who speak on TV programs. Their mastery of religious knowledge makes them unaware of their personal traits like greediness, arrogance, and other inadequacies.”

The latest graduates are also more likely to prioritize moral behavior over the more formalistic rituals of Islam. While former generations paid greater attention to the form and image of Islam as a social phenomenon in signifying their religiosity, the later graduates viewed religiosity increasingly more as personal purification reflected in the moods and manners of social interactions.

At times, they even seem to esteem matters of social justice more than the practice of daily prayers.

[27] Republican bureaucrats and intellectuals followed a positivist approach in the processes of building the new state and the nation. Hakan Yavuz argues that the secularism that was derived from the Jacobin statist and positivist French tradition “has not meant simply a formal separation between religious and political authority and institutions, but rather a positivist state ideology to engineer a homogenous and stratified society” (Yavuz 2009: 25).

> There is a mosque close to our house and it is located next to a three-lane highway. On Fridays, three of four lanes are full of cars of people coming to the mosque for Friday prayer. And this makes it really hard for cars to pass and, particularly for buses to maneuver. Once I went to the imam and asked if he could please inform the community about this, for while trying to do a good deed, they are unintentionally transgressing the rights of others, which is a greater misdeed. The imam was a bit uncomfortable and surprised to get such reaction from a woman wearing a headscarf.

Having said this, Sude insisted:

> We must be aware of our moral attitudes as much as our religious duties, like daily prayers. Religion is clearly described by the prophet as 'high morals.' Nothing weighs heavier than high morals on the Day of Judgment. We say these verbally, but then we also say religious teachings like 'a person is at a loss if his good deeds on a day do not surpass his good deeds on the day before,' and then we waste time for unworthy actions like watching soap operas and gadding around. From outside we look all too religious.

This sort of self-critique is commonly found among later IHL graduates and illustrates the transformation in how they relate religion in their modern lives. For instance, Esma said: "I don't think I am a religious person. Religiosity is being perfect, I think. I try to abide by the rules of religion to the best of my ability. I am laid back about daily prayers though." Although she does not consider herself to be religious, Islam has acted as a reference point in her daily life: "I would like to marry a practicing man so that he sets an example for me, too. I would like to raise my kids as pious Muslims."

Meral also attributed great significance to Islam in her everyday life, "from socialization to choosing my husband and my friends." She also wants to raise her children as pious Muslims, but she tried "to explain everything instead of imposing a list of duties on them." This shift in mindset from a duty-oriented to a morality-oriented view of religiosity was also reflected in their views of religion in society. While the visibility of religiosity increased over the years, many of the graduates were concerned about declining morality. Meral said: "There are so many people who claim to be religious, but know so little about the religion. Our society is a bit formalistic about religion, a bit imitative. I do not want to see Muslims who have a beard in imitation of the prophet's way of life while ignoring the rights of others." Some graduates commented that people in general are increasingly apathetic about the rights of others in society, which must be considered as part of religiosity, or they criticized for example, in Ramadan, people fast to chasten their animalistic feelings like aggressiveness or impatience, but when they fast, get more aggressive in traffic and daily life.

What these rising concerns illustrate is a dilemma that pious groups experience between the demands of a competitive, individualist, consumption-oriented, capitalist society that they cannot entirely reject, and the demands of a more balanced, faith-oriented, and communitarian spirit Islam advocates. Addressing these different approaches to religiosity from the earlier and later graduates, however, should not disguise their shared acknowledgment of Islam as a must for society or for social cohesion.

Growing interest in moral issues can also be addressed as a reflection of the latent secularization of social life in Turkey. While earlier graduates took greater care to organize their lives more according to Islamic references, I realized that in some of the interviews, later graduates are more embedded in the secular organizational culture, and this also affects their relation to Islam. Faruk, for instance, grew up in a very religious and intellectual environment

in Fatih. He studied computer engineering at a prestigious university and is currently the co-owner of a mid-size company. I visited him at his office for the interview and was surprised to see that there was not anything that would differentiate his office from the office of a secular, upper-middle-class professional. The art decorating his office was modern rather than traditional or Islamic art, the furniture was modern, and his secretary was a woman who was not wearing Islamic clothing. When I asked whether there was a room where I could pray, he took a prayer rug out of his cabinet and told me I had to pray in his room. In a company owned by two pious Muslim professionals, one would expect at least a small room set aside for prayers. Secularization of this sort is more frequently encountered among those who had more frequent confrontations with secular actors and institutional norms in society.

II. Continuity across Generations

There were several elements that remained constant over the three generations of IHL students I interviewed: their marginalization, their search for a culture of piety, their understanding of secularism, and their idealism. I discuss each of these elements below.

A. Marginalization

My interviews with three generations of IHL graduates illustrate that marginalization has been an important dynamic shaping their political subjectivity. I argue that IHL graduates feel marginalized economically, politically, and socio-culturally by traditional elite groups in direct and indirect ways. These elite groups are deeply embedded in the institutions of the economy, media, academia, and other cultural enterprises in Turkey. The knowledge produced in these circles has been effective in shaping the public discourse on IHLs, and IHL graduates constantly found the need to defend themselves against such images. They had to confront these images and stereotypes whenever they attempted to participate in the field of power, thus informing their self-formation.

One of the male participants, Yusuf, narrated an amusing memory from his IHL years (1995-1999), which shows the kind and degree of marginalization as well as how the students internalized this kind of othering at a young age. The students became so comfortable with the way they were framed in society that at times they made fun of it at school. “We were sitting in the classroom and chatting with one of our new teachers. She admitted that she was very prejudiced prior to teaching at an IHL. She continued to recount that over time she was amazed with the students and could not hide her true astonishment of the welcoming environment at school in general. Suddenly, one of the students stood up and shouted: ‘Ma’am you haven’t seen nothing yet, one day we will draw our swords and behead the ones we hate.’ The joke was enough to terrorize the young teacher and she listened to them very timidly.” Yusuf related the scene as if it were today, laughing until tears ran down his face.

IHL graduates referred to three claims concerning social marginalization: 1) IHL students represented a small group of society – about 13 percent of the general student body, 2) the rapid increase in IHLs’ visibility was a development supported by Islamic fundamentalist movements abroad, usually referring to Iran or Saudi Arabia, and 3) students from powerful socioeconomic groups who had low career aspirations chose IHLs. The first type of marginalization usually played down the problems IHL graduates faced while the second type was used to spread fear about these schools and to justify state pressure on them. The third claim, on the other hand, was utilized in a very orientalist fashion to underplay IHL graduates’ successes. Such accounts, however, undermined the larger social base, largely identifying as devout, in which these students grew up. Portrayals of the schools and their students in the media continuously presented them as people who had appeared out of

nowhere. Both the media and academic works on political Islam portrayed IHLs as breeding grounds for political Islam in Republican Turkey and as a recruitment place for Islamist political parties. The underlying message of such framing was that IHL graduates were inclined to hold extremist political views, particularly about the need to establish a state based on Islam as opposed to secularism. My fieldwork, however, hints that IHLs were not consciously political structures or "movement halfway houses" as Aldon Morris (1984) describes that the Highlander School was for the American Civil Rights Movement[28], in that they did not originally have political aspirations, but that changes in the political opportunity structure influenced the level of political awareness among the students.

Since the 9/11 attacks in the US, the immediate connotations of Islamism and political Islam have become violence, fundamentalist rigidity, and intolerance. By way of framing these schools as the hotbed of political Islam or the back garden of an Islamist political party, Turkish media accounts as well as academic studies have created an image of these schools as part of a global extremist movement. As illustrated in the accounts above, many IHL graduates do not envision an Islamic state. Some went even further to say that a moderate secular state is a necessity for social harmony in Turkey and in other countries that have pluralist societies.

Considering the high electoral representation of the societal base that supports IHLs, their systemic marginalization in economic, political and socio-cultural terms under the Turkish state's aggressive secularist state policies took on rather repressive forms. The very fact that these schools are state schools effectively negates such portrayals of revolution and demonstrates that the kind of worldview promoted in them is generally mainstream and far from peripheral or marginal. The state determines both the curriculum and the teachers at these schools. IHL students are equally under the influence of the macro-social, economic and political changes in Turkey as the students at regular public schools are. A discussion of the assertive state policies and the marginalization produced through public discourse on IHLs will illuminate the mechanisms through which the Turkish elite, in a Bourdieusian sense, reproduced its status in the field of power.

Despite representing about 13% of Turkey's general student body, IHL students became visible and popular due their high academic achievements, which escalated the past worries of the traditional elite groups in Turkey. Having graduated in 1994, Önder Kıyıklık's success, scoring first place on the national University Entrance Exams, came at a political juncture when Necmettin Erbakan's RP had won very important municipalities around the country, including Istanbul and the capital Ankara in the 1994 local elections. A number of the newly elected mayors were IHL graduates, something that in itself had an impact on the way IHL students perceived themselves in society. The number of IHL graduates in positions in local municipalities, and particularly in the Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul, was later used by media outlets and military officials to defame IHLs as a "hotbed of radical Islamism," a place where students were not only brainwashed, but also systematically placed in critical positions in the government, the judiciary, and universities with a secret agenda to take over the secular state.

In 1994, Yalçın Doğan, a columnist for the *Milliyet* daily, a widely read daily newspaper in Turkey, wrote that the right-wing parties, the AP and the DYP, had opened the highest number of IHLs in Turkey as part of their populist politics, and this populism had resulted in the emergence of IHL graduate mayors like Erdoğan of Istanbul. Embedded in these articles was the suggestion that these schools carried out the necessary groundwork to eventually replace the secular regime with an Iranian style *shari'a* state in which women would be forced to adhere to the Islamic dress code, men and women would be in separate public spaces, and children would be exposed to a dogmatic education as opposed to modern

[28] See (Morris 1984).

scientific education. IHL students at the time in the early 1990s were very often stereotyped as "Iranist" or as "Humeyni [Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini] fans." Abbas Güçlü, another columnist for *Milliyet* daily, in particular problematized the opening of AIHLs with intensive foreign language training as obvious proof that "the goal of these AIHLs is not to raise imams or *hatips*, but to raise students directly to attain a university degree," implying an Islamist threat to the general educational system.

Referring to the achievements of the older cohorts during these difficult public displays, Dursun, an early second-generation graduate, said: "They reinforced the belief that if we worked hard enough we could achieve despite all the difficulties. The display of the cups, medals, and achievement certificates at the school's entrance helped to lower the inferiority complex the earlier cohorts struggled with." While the political opportunities relaxed for IHL graduates in the second half of the 1970s, they still had to overcome stereotypic insults like "imam" or "*ölü yıkıyacı*",(mortician) both of which were employed to accentuate the limits that religious education had in making claims to a modern, secular society.

The political achievements gained through electoral processes such as the winning of important mayoral seats, or gaining higher representation in parliament did not, however, resolve the uneasy relationship between the secularist state and military elite and the devout Muslims in society. IHL graduates continued to experience systematic exclusion in the public sphere, "like a person with the plague" or "a second-class citizen," particularly in education and employment in governmental offices. A number of graduates explained that they felt the need to hide their IHL backgrounds in order to attain better employment opportunities even in the private sector. When Mert, a 1994 graduate, completed law school, he wanted to gain experience in the field. He said: "I had to hide the fact that I studied at an IHL or that I prayed daily in order to get accepted into law firms, particularly the good ones. I got into one office, but it did not last long before they realized that I was a pious person and that was the end of that." Yusuf, a 1999 graduate, also felt the need to hide his IHL degree, as once people learned about his IHL background, they underestimated his intellectual capacity. "We felt like we were living with two characters, particularly in the atmosphere of the February 28 measures. You see that there are prejudices of IHLs and if people learn about this first, they remain distant. Thus, we would not talk about the IHL at first, but once they got to know us in person we would tell them about our IHL background."

Sude, a 1999 graduate, on the other hand, remembered how the Fulbright committee members first praised her command of English in an interview for a scholarship, but had difficulty believing that she had learned English at an IHL. She said: "It was annoying being an IHL graduate and speaking fluent English or having cultural competency, and critical thinking just did not work together for many people, including many professors."

B. Culture of Piety

The pervasive school culture, which I refer to as the "culture of piety," must be addressed as the second major commonality among all three generations of IHL graduates. IHLs provided a formal setting that was geared toward Islamic sensitivities of devout families. Girls and boys studied at gender-segregated facilities or at least on separate floors in the same building, except for a short period after the February 28 period. The prayer rooms, *mescits,* at the schools allowed students to carry out their daily prayers while gender-segregated recreational areas gave room for students to more comfortably enjoy themselves with less concern about the prescribed interaction norms between the sexes. Male students were allowed to go to a nearby mosque for Friday prayers. These were the kind of comforts that did not exist at regular public schools, but which IHL culture provided for students.

Mert, a boarding student at the Kartal AIHL, stressed how the organization of time at

school helped him better discipline his religious life both then and now: "The day would start with the morning prayer before dawn and continue with a study session until breakfast. Then we would rush for assembly. Then instruction would start at 8:30 or so. Then we would have an hour for lunch break, which included the noon prayer and lunch. At 5:10 p.m., instruction would end." Many students described how the school culture channeled them toward pious living without any explicit rules, as Semra put it: "No one forced you to pray, but you knew that it was the right thing to do. Even if you did not do it, you would at least feel the guilt." Yusuf, a second generation graduate explained: "Over time you got accustomed to thinking in an Islamic way, but this does not mean irrationality." he further argued: "If it was not for the IHL culture I would not have been able to place religion in the center of my life. Religion is the main reference in all my decisions. You gain this outlook over time. For example, I never applied for a job, no matter how prestigious, where I would not be allowed to pray. Some of my friends do not share this attitude, but I always believed that it is God who provides for our livelihood. You only need to worry about keeping something *halal* (Islamically lawful)".

The culture of piety dispelled the dichotomy between a pious life at home and a secular life at school, providing an ease of mind and heart for both students and their families. IHLs thus responded to a sociological need for self-making among pious groups rather than raising ideological opponents to the secular culture at regular public schools. Traditional and/or devout families supported IHLs for their children, as they would not have to compromise their Islamic values, rituals, or manners for the sake of education. Mustafa, a 1976 graduate whose father was a laborer who had migrated to Istanbul from an Anatolian city, related that despite his family's very limited economic assets, his father preferred to send him to an IHL in another city. When I asked why his father did not send him to a regular public school close to home, Mustafa replied: "My father never thought of sending me to a regular public school in our district. Our neighbors' children went to the district public school, and he never liked their manners or behavior." This was the sort of sociological reality that underpinned IHLs. The shared norms, values, habits, and rituals in everyday life made students feel at home and provided them with an opportunity to socialize without having to worry about explaining themselves, as they would have had to in regular public schools.

Semra said: "I used to hate my teachers at secondary school. One of them was a Kemalist secularist who put pressure on us as Sunni Muslims while others would oppress the students whose mothers wore headscarves." For pious people, this sort of mocking and insults according to the Kemalist mindset experienced at regular public schools, put the students under psychological stress or placed them in contradiction to their Islamic environment at home. There were teachers like this at IHLs as well. They were fewer in number, but students recognized their attitudes and usually refrained from coming into conflict with them. The teachers of Islam courses were usually found to be more idealistic, sincere, and polite in teaching while the teachers of the general courses were a bit more remote. But in the end they tended to sympathize with the generally respectful student profile at IHLs.

I will discuss the particularly important role of culture concerning female students at IHLs in the subsequent chapter. This role differed for female students, as the margins of adaptation at regular public school were much higher for them when compared to their male peers. The culture of piety emerged as a key factor in school preferences, particularly in the post-February 28 period, and even more so for lower-income female students who had practically no other alternative to study.

C. Secularism

The anxieties of elite groups in Turkey about the future of the secular regime did not, however, take into account how the IHL community related to the notion of secularism as a state ideology and as a way of living. While traditional elite groups in Turkey frequently shared their concerns about the fate of secularism, in Dobbeleare's terms, they refer only to one among three levels of secularization, that is, societal secularization that she describes as "laicization as a manifest[29] process of secularization: the polity in conflict with the churches emancipates institutions that have long been under the influence of religion by creating state schools and according autonomy to culture, the constitution, and the law, thus freeing them from religious mores" (Dobbelaere 2002: 13). However, Dobbelaere also identifies forms of secularization on an organizational level and on an individual level. Secularization on the individual level usually takes a latent form and refers to a compartmentalization of the individual's system of meaning whereby religion is perceived as separate from other fields of life (Dobbeleare 2002: 178), encompassing a wide range of daily practices from consumption patterns to leisure time activities and working conditions,. Understanding how IHL graduates situate themselves in relation to both manifest and latent forms of secularization is necessary to understand the subjectivity of IHLs.

It was clear from my interviews that almost no graduate in this study viewed the state as an inherently anti-religious entity, despite constantly facing restrictive and at times repressive treatment. Rather, they accused certain political parties or figures that defended assertive secularist policies of being responsible for the mistreatment they received. Their interpretation of secularism is informed by a deep trust in the possibility of the state as the protector of Islam and its value system. Indeed, this has historically been the case since the Ottoman period. A second deep-seated normative approach also informs the perceptions of secularism among these graduates – the Qur'anic principle (Surah Rad: 11) that "God will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves." This principle led pious groups to carry out self-critiques rather than setting them against the state.[30] This teaching has usually been emphasized in Sufi circles, but has widespread espousal in the public. In particular, the first generation emphasized that if they were experiencing difficulties in living their lives in an Islamic fashion, then it must be due to something they did wrong. Therefore, instead of radicalizing against the state, these groups expended efforts to assess their errors and reinvigorate Islamic consciousness in their communities.

The first generation also had a memory of the long years of repressive secularist policies during the single-party rule of the CHP in the 1930s and 1940s, but witnessed how Islamic feelings were deeply embedded in and shared by a majority in Turkey, which fed a deep trust in the forces of democracy that the state would eventually recognize the rights and freedoms of devout Muslims. Their trust in the democratic processes is reflected by the fact that the CHP, the locomotive political party behind secularization in Turkey, has never won an election since the beginning of multi-party period.

Some graduates likened the period of single-party rule to the Mecca period, the earliest years of Islam when Muslims were attacked, boycotted, and insulted by non-Muslims, and they saw it as a step toward the Medina period, a time when the Muslim community found security and comfort. Kerim, a 1959 graduate, now a professor of Islamic studies, said: "In

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[29]Robert Merton is the pioneering social theorist to coin the terms manifest and latent function in his 1936 article "The unanticipated consequences of purposive social action."

[30]David Zaret develops a similar argument in *The Heavenly Contract* about how Puritan clergy, subject to a hostile state, developed a theology that emphasized inner transformation. The principle they pushed forward was "The conscience of the subject is, the strength of the prince" whereby Puritan clerics emphasized conscience and its sanctity and the need to submit to authority. The state in return went into alliances with the Puritan clerics in order to avoid more radical popular dissent (Zaret 1985: 81- 95). In the case of Turkey, while the state may have very well made use of orthodox Islam to maintain submission to state control, the same principle also fed people's belief in their transformative power.

my opinion, there are three values in the world. One is God and He does not need anything; the second is Prophet Muhammad, and he was a mortal being and completed his mission on earth; the third is the Muslim community – the *ummah* – which is still alive and is the single merit we have. The successes of political leaders like Adnan Menderes and Turgut Özal must first be attributed to this community and its relentless prayers and efforts."

Cemil Çiçek, a first generation graduate and was one of the former chairmen of the national assembly at the time of the interview, also indicated that until the transition to a multiparty system, religion was officially portrayed as an obstacle to progress. "Yet, the Islam that exists in society, despite official restrictions, forced politicians to take into account the values of the pious majority." He also mentioned that rather than promises for agricultural incentives, the Democrat Party's campaign slogan: "Enough! Time to Speak for the Nation!" from 1950, successfully captured national sentiment after a period of aggressive secularization, particularly in the 1940s. Democracy was a way for devout Muslims to state their claims, norms and values, in a non-confrontational yet powerful way.

Despite IHL graduates' reliance on the secular state to protect their rights and freedoms, their IHL diplomas became an obstacle in front of them, questioning their dedication to, and sincere faith in, the secular principles of the state. While the attitude of the secularist elite of IHLs changed little over time, IHL students came in closer contact with secular institutions and their norms. One of the leading reasons for this was free access to general university degree programs, but also the changing political scene, i.e., the establishment of political parties that represented the interests of devout Muslims, the progress of new media technologies, and growing modes of communication. IHL graduates came to terms with secularist norms and practices while becoming teachers, lawyers, doctors, politicians, and professors. For the second generation, the 1970s and 1980s was a period of discovery and reflection in which they learned about the limits of participation of a devout Muslim Turkish citizen in a secular society. Mürsel argued that these secularist norms and practices were used to protect the status and privileges of the secularist elite while effectively excluding others.

As an example of this exclusion, Çiçek mentioned the State Council exams held in 1972. He took both the verbal and written exams and ranked first with a score of 99 out of 100. However, the State Council decided to appoint the first person on the reserve list. This was following the 1971 coup when state offices recruited personnel after a background check, known as a "security investigation". This practice was introduced in response to anxieties that extremist factions had leaked into the state. Examples of extremism were taken as Muslims who prayed five times a day or men whose wives wore headscarves. Çicek said: "I understood then that I did not have much chance at public office, so I decided to do my military service and then became a lawyer, and then a politician."

IHL graduates in the second generation had only a vague memory of the pressure on religion in the single-party period. They grew up at a time when devout Muslims were considered to be an electoral force that all political parties had to take into account. Many graduates of the period referred to the Charter of Medina, drafted by Prophet Muhammad shortly after the immigration of Muslims from Mecca to Medina in 622. Various Muslim, Jewish, Christian, and pagan groups in Medina signed this agreement, declaring them to constitute "one nation," and demarcated the rights and responsibilities of these groups toward the others, forming the basis of a multi-religious, Islamic state in Medina. For the graduates, the Charter of Medina was a key reference that addressed the functions of an ideal state in protecting the concept of *ismah*, "the protection of life, property, religion, mind, honor, and family against any intrusion by individuals, communities, or states," and *adamiyyah,* which "corresponded to the modern concept of personhood and humanity." As Şentürk further explicates: "Abu Hanifa, the founder of the Hanafi School of Law, argued that sanctity, or

basic human rights, are the right of humanity [*al-ismah bi al-adamiyyah*]. All Hanafi scholars subscribed to that position and advocate granting basic human rights universally, although the doctrine was not fully elaborated or institutionalized the way it was in the West after World War II. This political/Islamic philosophy was implemented, to some extent, in the vast region in which the Hanafi doctrine was practiced, including areas such as the Ottoman Empire and Central and South Asia" (Şentürk 2002 & 2005).

IHL graduates' general attitude toward the secular state was that the state was legitimate as long as it protected the aforementioned rights and freedoms. However, the way secularism was practiced in Turkey raised questions, as expressed by Mürsel, who criticized the founding elite for misinterpreting French *laïcité.* Mürsel claims that French *laïcité* was not established against religion, but was rather opposed to institutional religion as seen in the Church.

One of the participants in this study narrated the following anecdote: "Following the 1960 coup d'état Cemal Gürsel [the president], and Refik Tunga [the governor of Istanbul] wanted to close down the Istanbul IHL. With this in mind, they paid a visit to the school. Gürsel asked the principal at the time about what they taught at school. The principal replied: 'We teach chemistry, physics, etc.' Finally, he listed religious subjects like hadith, *tafsir*, the Qur'an, and Arabic. Gürsel interrupted, saying: 'Why on earth are you teaching all these? These kids will only be imams. You can raise imams within a couple of months, why keep them here for seven years?' The principal responded: 'Sir, we want to raise intellectual, enlightened religious scholars, not bigots.' Gürsel continued to make claims about religion: 'What about the daily prayers? In this modern age, the greatest prayer is to mention the name of God'." This anecdote illustrates the contradiction of Turkish secularism that many IHL graduates perceived as problematic: the secularist elite had the authorization to define the content and boundaries of religion while at the same time requiring religious authorities to make no claims to politics.

IHL graduates were also critical of the state's involvement in religious affairs, in particular religious education. Critical statements from a number of graduates, especially among the second generation, suggest that they had a feeling that if IHLs were left alone they would devise more inclusive curricula to reflect the diversity of the living Islam in Turkey. The lack of *tasavvuf* and Sufi orders, Shiism, and Alevism in the IHL curriculum is a clear reflection of the officially accepted concept and boundaries of religion and religiosity, in this context, Islam as a moral system of beliefs that organizes the relationship of an individual with God and believers, in which the adherents are free to exercise their religion in the mosques, during Friday prayers, and at Eid prayers. Nuran reacted: "In the schools we were taught that there are three places that religion and politics cannot enter together: the mosques, the schools, and the military. In reality, secularist politics dictates a semi-religious ideology that enters all three while excluding our Islamic values and norms."

D. To Live for a Greater Cause

A fourth factor that all generations shared was the belief that despite barriers, it was important to struggle to maintain the minimum standards to practice their religion. In the first generation, this sense of duty and living for a cause greater than one's self is rooted in the memory of a past when all religious education was banned. They perceive themselves as the carriers of religious and traditional values in a rapidly secularizing society. For the next generation, living for a greater cause involved finding a way to resolve the dilemma of being a devout Muslim and becoming an actor in a secular society. With the political achievements of the MSP and RP, the middle generation of IHL graduates started to view politics as an opportunity to serve the public good while also preserving traditional and/or Islamic values.

The sense of duty among the more recent graduates, although significantly reduced compared to earlier generations, generally developed in relation to their familiarity with the February 28 period. For some, living for a greater cause meant sending their children to IHLs despite the low academic prospects, and for others, it involved working harder to achieve the highest degree possible. Nuran, who was not able to continue her educational career due to the lower coefficient, expressed her eagerness to send all of her four children to IHLs following the new amendments that restored the conditions of the pre-February 28 period to all vocational schools, including IHLs. She sent her oldest son to the Kağıthane IHL despite its overcrowded classrooms and lack of teachers for some courses. "We have to stand by our schools in times of need, as they will serve our next generation," she explained.

Furthermore, regardless of the degree of political attachment, a majority of IHL graduates identified themselves first as Muslim. They viewed IHLs as a response to the archaic question of whether Islam was an obstacle to progress, which has occupied the modernization agenda since the late Ottoman period. In reaction to Westernizing elites who held Islam responsible for the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, IHL graduates viewed their intellectual growth and integration into modern systems of governance, science, and technology as effective proof that Islam did not impede progress. IHL graduates' concepts of "Turkishness" and Islam, on the other hand, were not contradictory of one another, as they conceptualized "Turkishness" as going hand in hand with Islam. Historically, they claimed Islam was used simultaneously with "Turkishness" and that they are inseparable.

Devout Muslims sought to engage in politics, the economy, and culture through what they called an "agentic compromise." The examination of IHL graduates and their reaction to political pressure over time also demonstrates a form of non-confrontational agency. Non-confrontational agency refers to IHL graduates' consistent micro-level strategy for dealing with the number of legal and political limitations and marginalization they encountered over the last 60 years. They tend to passively transform their experience rather than developing an aggressive form of resistance. In times of narrowing opportunities they tried to find conciliatory ways to react, like attaining a second high school diploma in the 1960s or wearing a wig instead of a headscarf or ceasing to go to school in the post-1997 period. In times of growing opportunities they tended to fully support IHLs by building new schools and dormitories, or at least sending their children there. For Mürsel, IHLs are an embodiment of this non-confrontational agency of devout Muslims; they are schools that were opened as a result of a quest to find a middle ground with the state after close to 30 years of patiently waiting.

Non-confrontational agency also refers to IHL students' active utilization of the opportunities available to them. Religious education and its format have remained unchanged over the years, yet students made use of the curriculum according to their own needs and aspirations. All in all, as İsmail Kara pointed out, the IHL model somehow managed to serve the seemingly conflicting demands of an aggressively secular state and a devout section of society at one and the same time.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have analyzed both the continuities and changes between the three generations of IHL students between 1951 and 2010. These generations resemble each other in some respects and differ in others. For instance, the first two generations converge in terms of socio-economic characteristics. On the other hand, the hindrances that they encountered over the course of time or their means of socialization differ. While religiosity is important for each generation, it has a different meaning for each. I have traced change and continuity among IHL graduates along socio-economic conditions, political attachment, extracurricular

activities, entrance and post-graduation outcomes, degree of religiosity, marginalization, culture of piety, views on secularism, and a sense of duty.

On the socioeconomic front, while the first generations had largely had rural backgrounds, later generations, especially those attending IHLs in the 1990s, were mostly urbanites. Most of the first-generation graduates in Istanbul had stayed in boarding schools, but later generations were largely of students who were born and raised in central districts of the city, and socialized in urban lifestyles, tastes, and habits. Thus, while the first generations felt they belonged more to the periphery, later generations felt closer to the center. Almost all students in the first generation came from low-income families while there were substantial numbers of students from higher income families in the second and third generations.

One of the reasons behind the growing demand for IHLs in the mid-1980s was that increasing numbers of parents decided to send their children to these schools after seeing the earlier graduates' achievements in their academic and professional careers. Moreover, amenities and facilities at these schools improved over time. They transformed from being un-established schools into ones with sports complexes and various workshops. And this naturally affected the graduates' profile.

The first generations had been seen as reactionary and bigoted, and the career path that the first generation had planned for usually entailed becoming an imam or a *hatip*. Nevertheless, many graduates from that generation pursued academic careers and become professors, usually in Islamic studies due to the restrictive access to higher education in other professional fields. When the second and third generations were given the right to enroll in different university departments, they began to study in other fields like medicine, law, and economics.

The three generations of IHL students in this study converge on certain common experiences and were exposed to similar processes, albeit to varying degrees. One of these processes is their regular marginalization. Alienation of the school and its name, its portrayal as part of extremist political Islam and as a structure opposed to the state, caused students in all three generations to occasionally hide the name of their schools from other people. In each generation, the word "imam" in the school's name served as a pretext for insults and ridicule. It not only drew insults in the social arena, but also led to economic marginalization by creating problems for graduates during job applications. A lot of graduates said they had not specified the name of their IHL on their CVs for years.

IHL's devout Islamic environment and gender segregation always make those from the devout Muslim community prefer them. It avoided a potential dilemma between secular life at school and pious life at home. Although religiosity has always been at the heart of IHL education, the relationship that students developed regarding religion also differs. For the first generation, religion was a shield against the outer world. Later generations, however, utilized religion in constructing the self in a modern society. They tried to revitalize a Muslim identity and criticized themselves in terms of social justice.

On the other hand, while the first generation had been more sophisticated in religious matters, the third generation entered into a process of latent secularization. Despite constant repression, they do not see the state as an anti-religious entity. They have never become radicalized against the state, even though being an IHL graduate created a question in terms of their sincerity and loyalty to the secular state. Struggling with marginalization for years while lacking any alternative to IHLs, IHL students appear to be the carrier of tradition and Islamic values. Hence, their relationship with society and the state was non-confrontational.

CHAPTER 5
IHLs and Gender

During my fieldwork, the differences between the experiences and perceptions of female compared to male graduates from Imam Hatip High Schools (IHL) stood out starkly. The opening of IHLs to girls in 1976 was highly significant, as it reflected the changing conditions for devout women in Turkey. The first generation participants of in this study were only men, since only boys could train to become imams or *hatips*. Women in the second generation (starting with admission in 1976) shared similar objective conditions to their male peers until 1997 when the February 28 measures held sway. The third generation of female graduates represents those who entered these schools before the February 28 period as well as those who experienced the changing political conditions for IHLs during the period of AK Party governments.

I examine in this chapter the way IHLs contributed to the formation of IHL women as subjects as a consequence of their confrontation with power relations in three spheres: the state, society, and the family. While focusing on the experiences of these women, I will also attend to the shifting cultural perceptions and norms of men and show how those changes in particular informed IHL women's agency in society. This will help avoid the conceptualization of society as solely a space of contention between men and women, and render a way to view it as a space of multiple levels in power relations where both cooperation and contention between men and women are possible.

I further discuss in this chapter how IHL culture, which I have defined as a "culture of piety", contributed to the empowerment of devout Muslim women in Turkey. The culture of piety that defined daily life at IHLs allowed their students to preserve their Islamic norms while having access to both religious and scientific knowledge. As I will discuss later in this chapter, this ambience mattered especially for girls, because devout families that would otherwise refrain from sending their daughters to school were relieved of their anxieties about the rigidly secular culture of the national education system that had been in place since the Kemalist revolution. The following numbers illustrate how enthusiastic these families were about sending their daughters to IHLs. In 1989 – the earliest year for which I could obtain figures – there were 69, 624 (24.90%) female students to the 209,988 (75.10%) male students enrolled at IHLs. The rate of girls exceeded boys over time, reaching 123,031 (52.2%) to the 112,608 (47.79%) boys in 2010 (Öcal 2013: 288).

Table 8: Number of Female and Male Students at the IHLs in 1989 and 2010

Year	Female	Male
1989	69, 624 (24.9%)	209,988 (75.1%)
2010	123,031 (52.2%)	112,608 (47.79%)

Source: Öcal 2013: 288

I will first turn to an analysis of the changing cultural perceptions of education regarding gender in Turkey, specifically among devout Muslim families. I then examine the different experiences of male and female students at IHLs and how this experience enabled

upward social mobility for female students. Since the general social mobility effects of IHLs on their graduates are analyzed in Chapter 3, this chapter only partially touches on the relationship between social mobility and gender.

I. Cultural Shifts in the Perception of the Role of Women

Both macroeconomic and political changes influenced the general perceptions of gender roles. While men, in particular religious men, viewed the role of women as being limited to performing domestic duties, this perception started to change from the mid-1980s, especially for devout Muslim families. The opening of IHL admissions to female students in the 1970s exacerbated this transformation (Çaha 2010: 311- 314). This cultural shift was reflected over time, especially in the way girls' education was perceived in Turkey. Due in part to economic liberalization and urban migration, gender roles began to change in the country. The changing dynamics in politics and civil society such as the founding of the women's branch of the RP, and the proliferation of devout Muslim women's NGOs in the 1990s, and later the February 28 period, increased observant Muslim women's participation in social and political life. The semi-military coup of February 28 must be given particular attention as a point of rupture in the way devout Muslim families perceived girls' education and careers, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

The following is an analysis of the dynamics of cultural change in the perception of women in Turkey that has occurred over the last 60 years and a discussion of the conditions under which the female graduates of IHLs formed a political subjectivity. Girls' education is one of the key issues that needs further elaboration in order to overcome the essentialist explanations that deal with conservatism about women's education as a direct consequence of religiosity. In fact, a sociological approach illustrates how in the case of Turkey the relationship between girls' education and religiosity was far from stagnant and has shifted over time in relation to 1) socio-economic changes and 2) new dynamics in the political sphere and in civil society.

The period following the 1980 coup is marked by two socio-political phenomena, both of which are crucially important in shaping the conditions and discourses through which gender has been conceptualized in Turkey to this day: the rise of a feminist movement[31] with patterns similar to Western feminist movements, led by well-educated, secular-minded women who were working professionals in urban areas with middle class backgrounds (Arat 1994a; Sirman 1989; Tekeli 1986; Aldıkaçtı Marshall 2005), and the rise of the Welfare Party (RP), a political party led and supported by devout Muslims and was instrumental in channeling devout men and women to participation in competitive party politics. Turkey's

[31]Çaha addresses the feminist movement of the 1980s as the fourth and most important phase of the women's movement in Turkey. According to his account, the first phase of the movement was the phase when women participated in social life, dating back to the 17th century and extending until the declaration of *Meşrutiyet* (The First Constitutional Rule) in 1876. The second phase is when women started to become social actors in the public sphere which lasted until the establishment of the Republic. The third phase is a period of abstraction from femininity, which lasted until the 1980s. In the third phase, the state approached women in a protectionist manner and benefitted from women to achieve its progressive goals of westernization, secularization and rationalization. In particular, the state viewed educated women were viewed as the defenders of the revolutionary ideals of the Republic and were assigned the role to educate the nation to live up to those ideals. Göle described the women of the third phase as masculine "women isolated from their femininity," as their struggle in this period was almost identical to their male counterparts who also worked hard to realize the roles the new regime assigned to them. The fourth and the most important phase of the movement, starting in the 1980s, is called a phase of quest for the feminist movement. The movement remained largely indifferent towards the more local problems of Turkish women and mobilized chiefly around issues of sexual freedom. Therefore, the movement could not go beyond the western feminist discourse, consequentially being framed as an elitist movement. For instance, the feminists' indifference and at times support for the state- imposed ban usually referred to as the "headscarf dispute," which affected thousands of women wearing headscarves lost them the support among pious women of Turkey. It is necessary to note however that this phase is also a phase where the feminist women broke into cleavages, whereby the left- leaning feminists differentiated themselves from the Kemalist feminists criticizing them for being heavily statist. This new cleavage was more inclusive of the religiously observant women in Turkey, but still viewed them as yet- to- be- emancipated women... The split between the fourth wave of feminists and the pious women crystalized in the rise of an "indigenous" women's movement in the early 1990s. These women consisted of pious women who were active participants in political parties, non-governmental organizations and the publications sector. These women mobilized around the democratic right to participate in the public sphere, mainly at universities and public offices (Çaha 2001).

feminist movement consisted mainly of women from leftist groups who were active in academia, the arts, and politics. The feminist movement then served as an alternative space for political activism in a setting where all other forms of political organization were banned by the military junta (Aksu 1990).

Women's rights in Turkey emerged under the guidance of the Kemalist state elite, which some scholars like Arat, Tekeli, and Toprak called "state feminism." Reformist Kemalists usually say that women's rights paved the way for women to take part in society. Leftist feminists who came to the fore with their academic studies and activism in the 1980s criticized Kemalist feminists as the supporter of rigid secular reforms. These academics suggested in their work that Kemalism considered women not as transforming, guiding, or at times challenging agents, but as actors who executed their state-ascribed duties and roles. The state's active involvement in the field of women's rights slowed down the development of a mature and independent women's rights movement in Turkey until the 1980s. Despite deep differences, however, these two movements displayed similar attitudes on devout Muslim women and chose to maintain their distance from the issues devout women confronted. In this respect, these women's struggle to wear Islamic clothing and to be present in the public sphere with their Islamic identity was neither on Kemalist's nor leftist feminists' agendas. For a long time, leftist feminists did not recognize this struggle as legitimate and did not support it. As Turkey's pluralist democracy evolves, however, new encounters and spaces of dialogue are beginning to emerge between leftist feminists and devout Muslim women seeking possibilities for cooperation for common purposes.

Underlying the adverse feminist attitude on devout women was their view of religion and Islam as antithetical to women's progress and as an instrument of male domination over women. They dismissed women's agency in choosing a life of piety and framed these preferences as being imposed upon devout women by their husbands or fathers. The words of a young feminist participant in Gül Marshall's study are telling: "Islamist women do not question the fact that their status is determined by men. I think this is a problem. They see themselves from the eyes of Islamist men: obedient and feminine women who do not give any reaction. They are not critical about the existing roles of men and women because they see women's and men's domains as mutually exclusive." (Marshall 2005: 109). Despite claiming a broad interest in women's wellbeing, the feminist movement did not take up the responsibility to struggle against state-imposed exclusion of devout Muslim women from the public sphere, but rather preferred to launch campaigns of awareness and education against the use of religion, which was seen as functioning under male authority. The Turkish feminist movement and its distance from religion and Islam as a regressive force in society remained largely unchanged. Furthermore, in the 1990s, the state established two major institutions: the Directorate General of Women's Status and Problems (KSSGM), which aimed to fulfill the demands to protect women's sexual independence, and the State Institute of Statistics, which collected data specifically based on gender.[32] The establishment of these two bodies to a large extent reduced the vigor of the feminist movement. According to Çaha, the new actors who subsequently spearheaded the women's movement were the devout women whom he described as women with an ¨authentic agenda¨ about women's progress in Turkey, whereby they took as their reference not the global feminist movement, but the problems central to the lives of Turkish women and tried to figure out ways to delve into their issues in a way that could, at times, challenge the feminist movement's agenda in the West (Çaha 2010).

The rise of the RP played a critical role in enabling the growth of devout women's agency in the country. Yavuz argues that as a political party that "accommodated Islamic voices and expanded the boundaries of participation," the RP consolidated Turkish democracy

[32]These two state mechanisms worked together to protect women from discrimination based on gender and all sorts of sexual abuse through orchestrating state organs at different levels.

and civil society (Yavuz 1997: 63). The RP experience expanded both the social and political space of action for devout women through the central role designated to its women's commission, which worked in cooperation with the predominantly male leadership of the party. The women's-only branch and its dynamism were unprecedented and managed to bring out devout Muslim women as political actors to challenge the stereotypical frameworks of religion and state, tradition and modernity. Arat says that the RP attracted nearly 1 million women as members within six years. These women were portrayed in the media with terms such as the "dynamo of the RP in the elections", and "the most industrious". The chairwoman of the RP Istanbul women's commission was even described as "the woman who carried [Recep] Tayyip [Erdoğan] to the mayoralty." (Arat 2005: 8).

The RP Women's commission provided a channel for political discussions among devout women and an institutional platform where an alternative discourse on women and their roles in society developed. The increasing visibility and representation of devout women in the political sphere and in civil society led to an altered perception of women among devout Muslim families. Women who gained experience in politics, civil society, and the publishing sector later became the actors of a vibrant new women's movement. State policies had excluded devout Muslim women from freely participating in the public sphere, creating a split between the modern versus the traditional and/or conservative Muslim women. The first demand of these women, therefore, was for equality among all women, regardless of their degree of religiosity. The second was the right to attend universities and hold public office while preserving their Islamic values and beliefs. Finally, these women wanted recognition as actors in modern society, tearing themselves away from the domestic roles traditionally attributed to them (Çaha, 2001.) According to Arat, the rise of devout Muslim women as social actors had an effect on transforming Kemalist women, who did not view the increasing visibility of practicing Muslim women as a matter of women's empowerment, but rather a threat to the secular regime.[33]

II. Women as Subjects of Religious Education

Studies on women and their participation in social, political, and economic life tend to assume a negative correlation between women's empowerment and their exposure to traditional forms of education. Norton and Tomal point to a strong negative correlation between religiosity and educational attainment (Norton and Tomal 2009) while Barro and Sala-i-Martin link the educational gap between males and females[34] to a general "backwardness," as traditional forms and sources of education, including religious education, are very often viewed as one of the most effective socializing agents for transmitting religious and/or traditional norms that assume secondary and usually domestic duties for women while promoting men as the breadwinners of the family (Barro and Sala-i-Martin 1995; Toprak 1995; Arat 2010a; Çığ 2012; Gök and Ilgaz 2007: 134). These studies, however, underestimate the anxieties that religious people feel about secular public education institutions that are increasingly the standard form of education that prepare students for professional careers.

[33]The founding of the Association in Support of Modern Life (ÇYDD) was the solidification of these Kemalist feminist anxieties about the rise of "Islamist" women movement. The first president of the ÇYDD- Aysel Ekşi explained the reason to the need for ÇYDD as: "We are facing a serious and insidious reactionary movement for a while, which uses the "women should freely decide what to wear according to their preference" rhetoric. In reality, they are taking us back to the dark era of the Middle-Ages. This reactionary movement led by a handful of bigots or religious fanatics with outside support and deceive our innocent and bona fide people, with no doubt perceive the secular Republic as the primary target to get rid of and aim to establish a Shariah state instead." (Arat 1998: 97)

[34]According to a 2012 State Institute for Statistics (TÜİK) Report, the gender gap in educational attainment decreased significantly (TÜİK report no. 13458). Literacy rate for females is 92,2% versus 98,3% for males. In 2011-2012 school year, enrollment rates at primary school is 98,6% for females versus 98,8% for males; at secondary schools 66,1% for females and 68,5% for males; finally enrollment at higher education is 35,4% for females as opposed to 35,6% for males. These recent numbers contrast dramatically with a 2003 KA-DER report illiteracy rate for women was 30.4% as opposed to 10.1% for men (Gök 2007: 134).

In Turkey, many studies illustrate the active involvement of the state from the earlier days of the Republic in the construction of an idealized citizenship, one that was committed to a secular worldview and submissive to the state's ideals and patriarchal norms through an effective use of the national education system (Baban 1999; Kaplan 2006). The creation of a national identity through the national educational system promoted an organic unity of a secular, non-class-based identity that involved the exclusion of other identities, i.e., Islamic identity (Keyman 1995). In fact, the underlying belief behind the Law of Unified Education, (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*), introduced by the Ministry of Education – one of the earliest legal adjustments following the foundation of the Republic – was that "the Ottoman Empire had suffered from several educational systems, the conflicting ideological and pedagogical goals of which had prevented the Turkish people from realizing themselves as a nation" (Kaplan 2006: 39). Women were the central figures within this nation-building project, as educating women meant transmitting the norms of this new cultural identity to the family setting.[35] Over time, the degree of women's desire to escape past norms and values, measured through a framework of equality and rationality, became the most visible marker of national progress. In other words, empowerment for the Kemalist elite meant distancing oneself from Islamic norms with the assumption they had been imposed on them through patriarchal family relations and were useful in maintaining the subjugation of women.

However, as I met more female IHL graduates in this study, I realized how a framework of equality was insufficient to understand the dynamics of women's empowerment in Turkey, as it fails to recognize the agentic role that a large group of devout women have had throughout their lives. These women faced a dual pressure caused by a systematic exclusion from public education upon the accusation that they had transgressed the constitutional principle of *laicité* by wearing Islamic clothing, most often exemplified in the headscarf, and pressure from the patriarchal norms and perceptions felt by Turkish women at large. While a majority of the female participants in this study said that wearing a headscarf was an autonomous choice, they faced accusations from traditional elite groups, including Kemalist feminist organizations, that either a husband or a father figure imposed it on them. These women responded to these claims by arguing that wearing a headscarf was too difficult for a woman to bear in order to please another person, and that they felt insulted when faced with such claims. Similar to Saba Mahmood's subjects in her work, *Politics of Piety*, the women I interviewed for this study said that they made the choice to wear a headscarf as an act of piety (Mahmood 2005).

The equality focus in the accounts of women's progress maintains faith, as Mahmood writes, in the "normative political subject of … feminist theory [that] often remains a liberatory one, whose agency is conceptualized on the binary model of subordination and subversion," and therefore fails to recognize how "what may appear to be a case of deplorable passivity and docility from a progressivist point of view, may actually be a form of agency, but one that can be understood only from within the discourses and structures of subordination that create the conditions of its enactment." (Mahmood 2005: 14-15). Indeed, many of the women I interviewed said that wearing a headscarf was an expression of piety. What made such desire to obey can only be understood through their discursive reasoning – their statements framing submission to a divine being and his will as emancipatory from many levels of worldly hierarchies and reassuring at the same time.

Instead of imposing the progressive agenda of the civilized Western woman on non-Western women – a form of "orientalizing" – Mahmood argues for the need to "interrogate the practical and conceptual conditions under which different forms of desires emerge, including the desire for submission to recognized authority." (Mahmood 2005: 15). Using

[35] For further reading on the effects of women and nation building processes see: Mounira Charrad's *States and Women's Rights*, which emphasize how different nation-building strategies led to different policies toward women in Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco (Charrad 2001).

Mahmood as my model, I avoid imposing an orientalizing framework on these women while examining their experiences, perceptions, and expectations about IHLs. IHL graduates, by way of committing themselves to devout practices like the wearing headscarves, may at one level be viewed as reinforcing patriarchal norms. Yet this essentialist approach not only disregards women's agency with regard to challenging patriarchal norms and values by assuming women's relationship as stagnant, at the same time mystifies women's agency with regarding different operations of power that they encounter on a daily basis.

Feminist approaches that tend to explain women's agency in general and those that tend to explain women's agency strictly through the lenses of resistance and subordination face two major pitfalls in relation to the case of female IHL graduates: 1) by equating agency with a desire for freedom from domination, these studies dismiss devout Muslim women's perception that submission to a divine authority can be emancipating from traditional patriarchal hierarchies and 2) by examining women's empowerment strictly vis-à-vis a framework of resistance primarily against traditional authorities – patriarchy and religion – they tend to dismiss other fields of resistance where these women mobilize in a very agentic fashion. The resistance IHL women showed when they encountered other operations of power, including state authority or cultural hegemony of elite secularist groups as well as the staunch Kemalist feminist groups in Turkey, clearly illustrate their agentic capacity.

IHLs have always caused anxiety for secularist elite groups in Turkey, as I addressed earlier in Chapter 3. This anxiety, according to Yavuz, is rooted in the way elites understood these schools as "a challenge to the shared secularist Turkish identity of the nation and a source of cultural division." (Yavuz 2003: 126). The Turkish experience with political parties led by devout Muslim figures who practiced liberal democratic politics and their support for IHL education created further suspicions among the traditional elite groups regarding the future of secular norms and in particular about gender equality and women's social rights. In fact, "equating national progress with women's emancipation formed the backbone of Kemalist feminism" (Göle 1997: 61). Indeed, progressive scholars such as Yeşim Arat explicitly link women's emancipation to their breaking away from institutions of religious education, which she assumes position women as submissive and non-questioning political subjectivities. Arat argues: "It is not the lifting of the much-publicized Islamist headscarf ban in universities that we should prioritize as a danger, but the propagation of patriarchal religious values sanctioning secondary roles for women through the state bureaucracy, as well as through the educational system and civil society organizations."[36] It is ironic how Arat frames the lifting of the headscarf ban at universities as a danger even if it is of a lesser degree than that posed by the institutions of religious education. This approach is fairly typical of the secularist elite's approach to devout Muslim women in Turkey.

III. IHLs and Upward Mobility for Female Students

Perhaps the most critical impact of IHLs on female students was that they served as an opportunity for the girls to get out and discover their capabilities and interests. While some families assumed that IHL education would socialize their daughters into traditional female gender roles, my interviews found mixed results that changed significantly over time. While many of the earlier graduates did not continue their education at the university level, in the 1990s, a growing number of them sought university degrees and worked as teachers, doctors, and lawyers. Some of them had a slightly critical view of the traditional gender roles ascribed to them while others questioned these more intensely. Earlier graduates aspired to handle both traditional, Islamic female roles of mother and wife while at the same time working outside the home environment, usually choosing more "feminine" professions like teaching. While

[36]Yeşim Arat, "Türkiye'de Din, Siyaset ve Cinsiyet Eşitliği: demokratik bir paradoksun işaretleri mi?" *Radikal,* November 19, 2010.

later graduates did not reject traditional roles, they asked to share responsibility with men more often. Nevertheless, IHLs served as a stepping-stone for both students and their families in evaluating how and to what extent women could participate in society.

The majority of female participants expressed in different ways that their families would not have sent them to school if it had not been for IHLs. Potential alternative education options for the girls were studying at girls-only high schools, conservative private schools, *medrese*-style religious institutions either in formal or informal settings, or training programs in handicrafts and the arts. Girls-only high schools and private schools in Turkey provided education that was equivalent to public education. My interviewees said that neither they nor their families were much interested in girls-only high schools, as they did not allow headscarves and lacked the culture of piety found in IHLs, referring particularly to the organization of time and space for the fulfillment of Islamic rituals such ablution for daily prayers.

A second alternative was conservative private schools opened by pious Muslim groups and individuals, which grew in number and popularity especially after the February 28 period. Many of these schools were designed to serve the needs of these families and offered spaces where students could fulfill their religious duties. Yet the curriculum at these private schools had to be in line with public school curriculum, and thus did not include any form of religious instruction other than the Religious Culture and Morality course that was obligatory at all schools. These schools did, however, make use of the extracurricular time that was allowed by the Ministry of Education for all private schools to teach religious basics, values, and to ensure that students were socialized into a devout lifestyle and educated in Islamic ethics. The prevalent culture of piety at these schools, illustrated in their spatial, temporal, and curricular organization, attracted many devout Muslim families. However, those with experience of the private schools, either directly or indirectly through their children, indicated three important caveats: first, these schools were too expensive for the majority of families that chose IHLs for their children. After all, IHLs, as was discussed in the chapter on social mobility, historically emerged from lower-income groups and usually lived in the outskirts of the city or in suburban areas.

Therefore, the private school option was not viable for many. I suggest that the lack of education options resulted in lower rates of school attendance among girls in rural and suburban areas. As a result, these girls were trapped within the socio-economic boundaries of their families, leading to lower rates of social and political participation. The second caveat for private schools is that they provided religious education in a more casual fashion as compared to the more systematic education at IHLs, as the teaching materials they use are based on more limited sources, generally on books written by a religious scholar with whom the school administration sympathize, as compared to the more comprehensive list of sources taught at IHLs.[37] Consequently, the religious knowledge and consciousness produced at these schools is often found to be insufficient for developing disciplined piety.

Ali, a graduate from the Istanbul IHL and a father of four, explained how he sent his two older sons to an IHL and his younger son to a private college. His daughter, the youngest of his children, went to a public school for primary education, a private school for secondary school, and is currently at an IHL pursuing her high school education. He clearly felt that the private school and IHL instilled a different type of religiosity in his children. Comparing his sons, he said: "The ones who finished the IHL analyze both the world and Turkey much better. They have more self-confidence and systematic knowledge in matters of religion [Islam]. In the private schools and dormitories – usually sponsored by *cemaats* – students gain a religious feeling, but they do not provide systematic religious knowledge, as they are not

[37]The religious education taught at the IHLs is also criticized by its graduates for excluding the spiritual discipline and morality aspects of religion. See the generational differences section for more information on these critical comments.

religious schools. These are schools that give the experience of such a religious feeling." He stressed that religiosity based on a systematic learning of Islamic knowledge differed greatly from religiosity that grew through a personal experience of a religious feeling or through Sufi training of the *nefs* (self). For him, the former religiosity was stronger and more durable, as it provides the instruments to measure one's self without relying on the hearsay or dictum of others.

A majority of IHL graduates believe that IHLs are designed to train their students to become alert and questioning, sufficiently familiar with reliable sources of Islam so as to recognize on their own what is or is not religiously acceptable. This sort of programming behind IHLs' Islamic education is in part related to the anxieties of the state to control the influence of *cemaats* and Sufi sects on the minds and souls of observant Muslims in Turkey. A minority, however, expressed concerns about the difficulties of generating a sincere feeling for Islam that went beyond the rigid and generally historical and rule-based account of it that was taught at IHLs. This in turn directed many graduates to Sufi circles later in life.

This takes us to the third caveat for private schools, which is that they tended to have allegiances with certain *cemaats*, each with their own particular ways of understanding Islam. Some prioritize the reading of the Qur'an while others focus more on the books written by their leaders – sheikhs or *mürşits* – and still others try to combine both. According to a majority of graduates, the IHL form of Islamic education encompassed all these methods by following a mainstream interpretation and understanding of the Qur'an and the accounts of Prophet Muhammad's living example as the messenger of God. They found the course books used at IHLs to be more comprehensive and reliable, as they were prepared by university professors with expertise in different branches of Islamic studies. These perceptions, common among IHL graduates, illustrate a particular epistemological phenomenon that is consistent with the establishment features of IHLs as schools that teach a more technical, Sunni interpretation of Islam from a positivist approach. To that end, İsmail Kara describes IHL education as "a secular religious education" that aims to create religious information rather than a feeling of religiosity among its beneficiaries – the students. The IHL curriculum reflects a positivist approach by excluding the methods and approaches of Sufi orders, which are mystical and thus not rationally verifiable.[38] IHL graduates find this positivist approach more reliable and feel that it transcends the religious knowledge produced by the *cemaats*. Only a small number of participants were critical of the IHL methodology for excluding non-Sunni interpretations of Islam, like Alevism and Shiism.

Considering all the shortcomings mentioned above, private school education has fallen short of replacing the role of IHLs, particularly for female students, and most specifically for those from lower-income families. Alternatives like Qur'an courses not affiliated with the Directorate of Religious Affairs (DİB) or courses on handicrafts and the arts, as well as seminar programs on intellectual topics, have been important sources of self-enhancement and intellectual fulfillment for girls, but these institutions provided less structured training, and their diplomas were not equal to those obtained from a formal school education, and as such, did not offer the opportunity for social mobility. Still, the measures of February 28 consequently led many girls to these institutions as a way to survive the psychological trauma the restrictions caused them.

In sum, IHLs have functioned as the sole option of education for devout Muslim girls, particularly those coming from lower-income families, and as a consequence, the IHL form of education has helped them move up socially as women. While IHLs were a matter of choice for boys from devout Muslim families, it appeared to be the sole opportunity for an educational career and climbing the social stratification ladder for girls from similar families.

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[38]The views of IHL students on the Sufi orders and their degree of belonging to these orders are discussed more in depth in the generational differences section.

According to Sude's father, a boy had to be educated so that he could take full economic responsibility for his family when he is an adult. He thought that religious education and training in handicrafts would be enough for girls to live in prosperity up until the mid-1980s. By the time Sude had reached college age at the end of the 1990s, her parents' attitude, in particular her father's, was rather different. They dedicated themselves to her education and supported all her educational pursuits, despite the political pressure she faced during and after the February 28 period when the government banned headscarves at schools and limited enrollment opportunities for vocational school graduates, including IHL graduates, in good university degree programs. I will further examine the February 28 period and its consequences for female IHL students IHLs in the coming sections.

Seval, a 1999 graduate, an assistant instructor at one of the top private colleges in Istanbul, and the first girl in her upper-middle class family to study at an IHL, related the following: "I knew that if I wanted to study, I had to go to an IHL. I had no other choice but an IHL. My family did not permit any other school." In this way, she retrospectively thought that the IHL opened the way for her educational career, which would otherwise not have even begun. Seval explained how things changed for the younger generation of girls in her family: "The girls following my generation are luckier. There is more support for their educational pursuits. I never had that. My family waited eagerly for me to quit school. They believed that I did not need schooling, especially because I came from a relatively well-to-do family." Changing social, economic and political conditions apparently brought a change of mentality in male authority figures in devout Muslim families along with the effect of the more common experience of seeing one's child blossom into an intelligent, devout, young woman. The two examples above clearly show how prior to the mid-1980s, families viewed girls' education as a complimentary pursuit rather than an intellectual or instrumental one, and how that perception changed for the generation that grew up in the late-1990s and 2000s.

Meral's family worried about their daughter's education. A successful student during her primary school years, Meral, a 1992 graduate, still remembers the dilemma she faced when she finished primary school. Her father did not want to send his daughter to a public school, as he had been made anxious "by uninformed mutterings around him like: 'If she studies at public school she will change in this way or that way'." Meral's father decided to send her to a Qur'anic school in order to protect her from the "vices" of the public school system. "My father took me to the entrance exams. To tell you the truth, I contemplated deliberately answering questions wrong. I was a successful student at school and wanted to continue my education. I did not want to go to a Qur'anic school, but at that moment there was no other alternative. It was 1986. Luckily, my mother had heard of the IHLs where they taught both religious courses and general courses. Then my father agreed," she said.

The figure of the intervening mother appeared frequently in my interviews. These mothers are generally not educated, but are fully aware of their daughters' intellectual abilities. Sharing similar reservations as the fathers, they sought alternative educational institutions for their daughters and were generally the first ones to find out about IHLs. This is particularly the case for the first generation of female graduates for whom IHLs were still a new alternative. Meral was still unhappy the first day of school. She said: "I did not want to cover. I was so much under my primary school teacher's influence. Also, when things are framed as an order to do this or do that you do not want to do it." Many IHL students, both boys and girls, were challenged by this dilemma the first couple of years at school: "Why do you go to an IHL? Do you want to be an imam?" The role of primary school teachers in the school selection process also came up in several of my interviews. Teachers were seen as people who usually tried to steer students away from IHLs on the grounds that IHLs had low-educational prospects and religious education would raise bigots instead of open-minded intellectuals. The impact of primary school teachers on students is extremely interesting. They

act as the embodiment of the official ideology of the Republic and try to transmit those norms to their students. This was one of the strategies of the Kemalist elite to fill in the gap between the ideals of the state and the deeply embedded values of society.

The account of Kerime, a1984 graduate, one of the earliest female graduates from the Kadıköy IHL, is quite telling. As an exceptional case among her peers, she attended a regular girls-only public school prior to the opening of IHLs to girls.[39] She recounted how her father, a theology professor and one of the earlier graduates of an IHL, supported his daughters' education at regular schools, as he valued the role of education in the intellectual growth of the individual. For lack of a better alternative he sent Kerime to a public girls-only school. She explained how the basic Islamic knowledge she learned at home, generally through casual conversations with her father, was enough to make her feel alienated at a regular public school: "I felt a bit alienated by the atmosphere at the public school I went to. I remember being disturbed by some of the conversations I overheard among my peers." These conversations included swearing as well as conversations with what she considered adult content. When IHLs started to enroll girls, her father asked whether she would go to a newly opened school, an IHL, the next year, and she immediately agreed without knowing much about the educational content or standards of the school. Too young to decide which education best suited her, she recalled how "secure and comfortable" she felt at her new school and how "it felt like home" to her with friends who shared similar Islamic values, cultural sensitivities, and daily practices.

While Veli from the class of 2000 at the Kadıköy IHL said that he would have gone to a regular high school if IHLs had not existed, Betül, from the class of 1996 at the Eyüp IHL, who had a deep-seated desire to study literature, said that the IHL was "a hope for real education," as the only other school her family would consider sending her to was a traditional Qur'anic school.[40] Furthermore, at times when there were few opportunities for IHLs, male students opted to go to regular public schools. Some of the female graduates even told me that their families did not send their brothers to an IHL in order to ensure that they would be able to secure a future career. Sons were expected to attain degrees for a good career and take care of their families, but career attainment was not of central importance for daughters. Yet, as no other public school allowed girls to wear headscarves at school, female students were left with few options outside IHLs, and indeed, only private schools were available, and this only if their families could afford them.

Çakir et al.'s study indicates that after February 28, when measures were taken to close down IHLs secondary level, there was a significant drop in the number of IHL enrollments. They found out that most of the male students they interviewed in the post-February 28 period were students recruited from Anatolian villages by school administrators in the cities to prevent the school from being closed due to low enrollment rates. As for the girls, school administrators did not have to worry much, as devout Muslim families continued to register their daughters at IHLs despite the restricted opportunities for academic careers (Çakır et al. 2004: 119). Thus, there was not so much a choice among schools for girls, but there was a choice between education or no education, moving up or stagnating in the same

[39]One interesting finding in this study relates to different types of family backgrounds and how family type influenced the selection of schools. Families that included members with academic backgrounds tended to support their daughters' education more. According to such families, girls needed education not particularly for career purposes necessarily but for their intellectual growth and contribution to their community.

[40] With the ratification of the *Tevhid-i Tedrisat* Law in 1924 all types of education were unified under the supervision and administration of the Ministry of National Education. Traditional *medreses* were closed and IHLs were established as the primary institution of religious education within the national education system that also provided education in general courses taught at regular public schools. Many students expressed that they preferred the IHLs for this "double- winged" education model, and that they aspiredaspiredaspired for careers outside the field of religion, but wanted to lead pious lives. A more pervasive religious education was provided by the Presidency of Religious Affairs through its Qur'anic courses, which entailed teaching of fundamentals of Islam, reading and memorization of the Qur'an etc. These courses would sometimes be offered in a dormitory setting or in a less formal setting at district mosques. The certificate of completion received from these courses did not have any academic equivalency, but gave access to a career as a religious functionary.

socio-economic boundaries they had been born into, and practicing or not practicing their religious beliefs.

IV. Culture of Piety and Self-Making

For many families in Turkey – conservative or liberal – the primary purpose of education is, more or less, the preparation for a career and working life. That is part of the national education ideology that has shaped the form and content of all schools in Turkey from very early on (Kaplan 2002). For traditional and/or religious families, this general attitude toward education is additionally informed by culture and Islam, both of which address men as the head of the household and perceive them as being responsible for the family's economic wellbeing. Educating sons, therefore, carried primacy over the education of daughters, as sons bear the potential economic responsibility for their families. The reluctance on the part of traditional and/or religious families to send their daughters to public schools as such should be analyzed within this cultural framework, which changing socio-economic and political conditions challenged, as described in the previous chapter.

While this religious-cultural preference for an IHL education is to some extent portrayed in social science literature, the more fundamental explanation that came out of my interviews has been understudied or underestimated: the effect of rigid standardization in the national education system on the attitudes and anxieties of traditional and/or religious families in Turkey from the early years of the Republic.[41] The modernizing political elite's vision to transform society created an institutional structure that was alienated from the shared social and cultural values and Islamic practices of a large section of the population. This institutional structure effectively excluded large sectors of the population. The revolution of clothing, the revolution of the alphabet, and the declaration of a unified educational system were all measures that imposed a radical break from culture, tradition, the intellectual past, personal memories, and Islam. These assertive secularist policies, as Kuru refers to them, were established through authoritarian means during single-party rule as a top-down elite project in contrast to France's assertive secularism, which came into being through a bottom-to-top process in which assertive secularism coexisted with multiparty democracy (Kuru & Stepan 2012: 104). In the case of Turkey, the degree of dissonance between values and norms deeply embedded in society and the assertive secularist policies of the new Republic produced an uneasy coexistence between a multiparty democracy and an assertive secularism, which consequently led to military interventions nearly every decade.

One of the key factors to understand why devout Muslim families have been so welcoming to IHLs is that these schools reconciled the tension between the norms of an assertive secularist state and the norms of an Islamic society. For a number of interviewees, IHLs mattered mostly for the culture of piety at school reflected in the a majority of the students shared norms and values, the way gender relations were structured, the way the school space was organized, and how daily routines were formulated at IHLs.

A. Religious Attire and the IHL

Traditional and/or devout Muslim women have had to make perhaps the largest concessions in order to adapt to the expectations of modern citizenship in the new Republic. While the modern public schools of the Republic were free and open to all boys and girls in Turkey, traditional and/or observant Muslim families refrained from participating, and in

[41] The tension over how the schools should be structured for a modern nation-state in Turkey has its roots in the Second *Mesrutiyet* that is during the second half of the 19th century. Some of the most heated debates took place in 1919 around the *Inas Dar'ül Fünun*, a girls-only college program that ran parallel to the boys' college curriculum and which was established in 1914. These debates ended with a mixed gender university model that later formed the basis of the modern public schools. For further information, see (İhsanoğlu 2010: 265- 277).

particular they did not send their daughters to these schools due to the rigidly secular, and in their terms "degenerating," public school atmosphere. "My family could never accept the formal attire that the school administration required all students wear during the celebrations of official holidays like May 19 and October 29. Girls wearing mini shorts or tight pants were just not right according to our cultural standards," Halide, a 1988 graduate, said. IHLs were the first real educational opportunity for these Muslim families that offered a space where their cultural and Islamic sensitivities, habits, and concerns could be taken into consideration. These schools provided gender-segregated education in both the Islamic sciences and general education while also allowing for Islamic practices, including wearing headscarves for the women and girls and daily prayers. The relaxation of the rigid secular norms and regulations at standard public schools apparently relieved some of these families' deep but overlooked concerns.

The institutional limitations on wearing Islamic clothing for women at public schools were the most important element that led observant Muslim girls to study at IHLs. Rankin and Aytac's analysis of data from a 1988 survey suggests that the anxieties about wearing headscarves did prevent girls from devout families from seeking an education. IHLs, as the only public school model at which female students could wear headscarves, at least until the headscarf was banned in 1997, were spaces where their daughters could realize their Islamic beliefs and practices while at the same time preparing to become active members of society. When I asked Şeyma, a 2000 graduate, why her family did not consider the girls-only schools that were also available, she replied without hesitation: "Of course, due to the headscarf ban at those schools. My father wanted me to more comfortably practice my beliefs." A majority of female students also shared this family attitude. Some graduates said that they were not really aware of why they had gone to an IHL, mostly because they were too young to decide, but they just knew that it was either the only option or the best option for them. Others like Figen, a 1994 graduate, said: "Wearing a headscarf was a natural thing that a girl would do as she grew up, so I did not question it by the time I was of middle-school age. Being able to wear a headscarf at school and receive public education was a priceless opportunity for me."

B. Gender-Segregated Education

Pious familial concerns put aside, nearly all the women in the interviews seemed to express their satisfaction with the girls-only environment at IHLs, as this relaxed some of their Islamic and cultural concerns, as mentioned above. Most importantly, they related how this indirectly allowed them a space in which they could realize their capabilities outside the boundaries of public life, providing limited opportunities for them to be themselves. The school worked as a space in which these girls could potentially be involved in theatrical performances, singing competitions, and sports. For these women, part of the problem with Turkey's version of *laïcité* was the creation of public space that was not tailored to attend to the social needs of observant Muslim women.

Şeyma, a graduate from the Eyüp IHL in 2000 and now a young housewife with two small children, said: "My father is a literature teacher. As a teacher, he never liked the way girls and boys interacted at regular public schools and kept complaining about it. I think this is the first reason why he chose an IHL for me." She indicated how her father's concerns about gender-integrated education preceded his preference for even religious education. She continued: "Religious education was of course my family's second concern. I had already learned to read the Qur'an before going to the IHL. We used to frequently read about the life of the prophet at home. Moreover, the availability of a general education curriculum in addition to religious education was quite influential in our final decision." Male graduates and

their parents expressed similar concerns less frequently.[42] Although this is the case, when expressed, it is more specifically given as a reason by the earliest graduates for whom, after the years in which Islamic education was banned, IHLs were the only educational sphere in which they could attain Islamic knowledge.

Sude, for instance, was an active IHL student at the Kartal AIHL where she participated in the theater club, published a literature magazine and played on the volleyball team. She said: "Fortunately, I did not have to study with boys at school. In fact, I would not like the idea either. I remember how comfortable we felt in our girls-only classroom. We would take off our headscarves in the classroom whenever we wanted, or we would correct our hair, do our makeup, we would play games with water at times, we would run, jump, and fall. I don't know. You know we were young, and when you are young, you don't want to live properly all the time. You fall and your skirt opens, no worries in a girls-only classroom. When there are boys, however, you have to act properly all the time. This is real torture..." She related her story: "I was one of the most mischievous girls at school. I would probably have freaked out if there were boys. If I had to study with boys, I do not think I would have been able to realize and reveal my real character, having to constantly watch out for proper behavior."

The IHL setting, as opposed to the exclusionist environment at regular public schools, generated a sense of belonging in students. A similar observation is shared in Çakır et al.'s 2004 study in which they quote a female student who started studying at the Kağıthane IHL after completing eight years of compulsory education at a regular public school. She said: "I am happy to be at an IHL. There is a very warm ambience. I have never been in a similar [school] setting before. I used to see myself as an outsider at regular school, but never felt like that here." (Çakır and Bozan 2004: 119).

What is critical here is the sense of independence female students had in the IHL setting. As argued earlier in the chapter, what may appear as submissive from a post-structualist framework, actually had an emancipatory influence on women, but "can be understood only from within the discourses and structures of subordination that create the conditions of its enactment" (Mahmood 2005: 15). While gender segregation may appear to be a constraining condition to an outsider, these women and, indeed the men as well, found it emancipating as students. The fact that women could both be pious and realize their individuality outside the boundaries of public life was appealing. Moreover, by contributing to the self-discovery of these women, the IHL model generated a political subjectivity that aspired to inspire further participation in society with self-confidence rather than one in which the self was fractured between spiritual and secular realms or introverted and withdrawn from society.

While for the first two periods of graduates gender-segregation was one of the primary reasons for these families preferring IHLs, after the February 28 measures, gender segregation and the wearing headscarves at school became less relevant for IHL preference, as almost all the IHLs now had to abide by the headscarf ban and many started education in gender-integrated classrooms.

Melike, a 2003 graduate who experienced a great deal of hardship at school during the February 28 period, described the general student attitude at her school: "At the IHL, even the most recalcitrant student would keep quiet and display basic manners during the recitation of the Qur'an. Students were to a greater or lesser extent aware that they had to watch their limits. When we were scattered around different schools during the February 28 period, we all experienced a huge culture shock. I learned that we were a bit naïve, the outside world was a

[42]I did not intend to interview the parents of the graduates specifically, however the nature of this study as a study of three different generations of graduates allowed me to also observe how the older generation of IHL graduates – for the most part men – acted differently about the career plans for their daughters versus their sons.

bit messier." Melike reflected on the differences she experienced between the IHL and the "outside" environment. This strong distinction made between outside and inside the IHL environment underlines two things: 1) the IHL environment was a somewhat sheltered environment where despite their differences in socio-economic backgrounds, students and their families shared similar moral values and Islamic lifestyles. As such, by referring to the outside world as "messier", Melike and many other graduates did not necessarily mean that it was immoral or without any control or that regular public school students did not observe any moral code of conduct. The culture shock they experienced was partly due to their lack of encounters with people from different cultural backgrounds until after they graduated; 2) IHL students internalized the high expectations society placed on them and reflected it in their judgments of the "outside" world. IHL students were expected to be more polite, more trustworthy, and more controlled in interactions between girls and boys. These expectations tended to constantly put them in comparison to other schools' students.

The concept of "outside" usually refers to social occasions or institutions that have different cultural norms and that exclude the norms the speaker is comfortable with. Once I asked a male student, Burak, a 2007 graduate, about his feelings regarding gender-integrated education at his school, the Bakırköy IHL. Burak decided to study at an IHL following eight years of compulsory education at a regular public school. During the first two years of his studies at the IHL, instruction was in mixed-gender classrooms, and then with decreasing political pressure, the classes were segregated again. Still, Burak was able to compare his experience at the Bakırköy IHL and at his earlier public school not only in terms of the curriculum, but also in terms of how daily life was organized. He described how girls and boys sat on different sides of the classroom and how there was an unspoken set of rules for interaction that had evolved between the boys and girls at the IHL. He said: "Some of our teachers would give wise advice, especially to the male students, about being attentive to certain limits when interacting with girls. This was not their duty, but we benefitted greatly from their wisdom." Thus, Burak described how a culture of piety was maintained at these schools in contrast to regular public schools where, he considers, a great variety of what he saw as unethical interactions, referring to acts like flirting, being less controlled in manners, and using slang, took place. He further related how at some point the girls asked the boys to leave the classroom to the girls during the breaks, as the girls needed space and time to satisfy their "feminine" needs, like correcting their headscarves, sitting in a more relaxed manner, and doing their make-up. Later, other classrooms also followed this deal struck between the girls and boys, leaving the classroom to girls during the breaks. The girls managed to maintain their private space in a mixed-gender setting. What is striking here is the mutual sharing of the same codes of piety among the students, regardless of gender, as Burak added: "Even if the girls did not ask, we would leave the classroom to them because we saw that it was more difficult for them to maintain piety on all levels –wearing headscarves, sitting appropriately with their skirts, not jumping, not singing when with the boys, etc."

The mixed-gender nature of IHLs challenged girls, especially during their menstrual cycles. During these times, girls usually do not pray daily prayers, do not read the Qur'an, and do not fast. On a more cultural level, women tend to feel uncomfortable talking about their menstrual cycles and very often hide it. During their periods, when they are not obliged to fast in Ramadan, for instance, those who have their period eat only out of view, rather than eating in public places. In mixed IHL classroom settings, girls developed new habits to deal with the challenge. Burak said that the girls used to make a list of those who would not read the Qur'an because they had their periods and would give it to the teacher beforehand. The teacher would keep the list confidential and would not ask those students to read during the lesson.

Semra, a 2007 graduate, related a similar account to Burak's: "We used to have the girls' masjid in the girls' building and the boys' masjid in the boys' building. When education

was mixed and was carried out in the boys' building, to pray we kicked the four male students out of the classroom and prayed on top of our desks, as the girls' masjid was far away in the former girls' building." The dramatic fall in the number of male students following the February 28 measures compared to the decrease in the number of female students illustrates that particularly female students who came from the lower echelons of society experienced the sociological and psychological complications of the new policies more intensely because they could afford no other alternatives. However, as a lot of cases in this study illustrates many female students who continued their studies at IHL's were composed of both high and low-achieving students who chose to study at an IHL willingly. Male students who continued their studies at IHLs were more likely to be low-achieving students who could not afford further education in a private school or those who continued their studies with plans for a career in the field of religious sciences or as religious officials.

C. Physical Conditions at IHLs for Girls

The freedom to realize themselves both intellectually and religiously at the IHLs usually led these students and their families to overlook the shortcomings of the schools. The physical conditions at IHLs, especially until the mid-1990s, were very poor, particularly for girls. The girls' admission to IHLs was approved 25 years after the opening of the first boys' IHL - The newly-admitted female students were initially accommodated within the limits of existing facilities. At times these students would be crammed onto one floor of the building and have limited access to the school recreational area. Neval (1984 graduate), one of the first female graduates of Kadıköy IHL, said "we were little girls tucked on a floor in a boys' school... a restroom, a little canteen, and sometime in the garden while the boys were out for Friday prayer... Our roof leaked... But we were so happy despite the poor conditions; this was the only opportunity for our educational growth." Another early woman graduate described the poor physical conditions as: "Our school's physical conditions were terrible. There was a boys' building with a garden and a mosque. That was the original school built just for boys. After the enrollment of girls started at the IHLs, the school council, consisting of student families, bought a neighborhood apartment next to the boys' school to accommodate girls. Our section did not have a garden. Our prayer room was built in the basement. At times of heavy rains, it would be flooded due to poor drainage. There was no dining hall at the school. It was a horrible building..." She then admitted that despite all the inconveniences, the only option for schooling without compromising religious practice was the IHL.

In later years, as schools were built with both girls and boys in mind, physical conditions for both improved significantly. New IHLs were built to serve the needs of girls and boys at the same time. It is noting that of note that despite the poor physical conditions at school, the earlier female graduates talked about their IHL experience with much gratitude and a bit of nostalgia, focusing more on the quality of education and the warm relationship between students and teachers. In later periods, students were increasingly critical of school facilities generally despite the disproportionately their relatively better conditions.

V. The February 28 period

The February 28 measures – the full ban on the wearing of headscarves – illustrates this well the particular value of IHLs for the daughters of devout Muslim families in Turkey. The headscarves of devout Muslim women wear are a visible religious symbol, which has caused much legal and political debate in Turkey since the 1960s. In 1963, Gülsen Ataseven, who completed her degree in medicine at Istanbul University ranking first in her cohort, was not allowed to make a graduation speech – a tradition for the first ranking student – since she

wore a headscarf. The second ranking student made the address instead. Later, in 1965, President Cevdet Sunay made the following statement: "All the outspoken pioneers of the covered women will be punished." When a prominent female journalist and activist, Şule Yüksel Şenler, wrote in her column that Sunay must apologize both to God and to the public for his statement, she was sentenced to nine months in prison.[43]

During the1970s, well-educated women confronted exclusion and discrimination as they tried to use their knowledge and expertise in what Barbarosoğlu (2006) calls the "hegemonic public sphere." Women therefore created "sub-public spheres" usually in the form of a Qura'nic course, a tailor's atelier, or an association or a foundation through which they educated an alternative public with a conception of "service" or "duty" rather than career building (Barbarosoğlu 2006). Participation in these sub-public spheres involved a level of perceived exclusion from the hegemonic public sphere and a call to serve the public good, which differed from the traditional tendency to direct women solely to domestic duties. This was a period when the traditional patriarchal family started to consider that women could get involved in public duties aside from their primary domestic duties, but only in the sub-public spheres, insulated from the secularist norms. These sub-public spheres decreased the degree of tension between the private and public lives of devout Muslim women and thus contributed to their self-making. Ayten of the second generation told me about her mother's participation in a circle that gathered at a tailor's atelier. She explained "My mom used to go to that atelier to learn how to sew. But the tailor was a well-educated and well- spoken woman who would spend time with her students to converse on issues, daily matters in general, but with a religious insight. Even women with little religious education would learn quite a bit from these informal conversations. Over time, these circles grew and many women from secular lifestyles had decided to cover and started daily prayers." These informal socialization opportunities raised religious and socio- political awareness among pious Muslim women.

The early political pressure on headscarves during the 1960s and 1970s became institutionalized in 1982 when the government issued a dress code for civil servants. The new dress code stipulated a rigid civil uniform, which regulated attire from the height of the heels to the length of the nails; women were also required to keep their heads uncovered. Later in 1982, the Council for Higher Education (YÖK) issued a circular that enforced "modern attire" for all students. The circular required all university employees, faculty, and students to wear properly clean, plain, and modern clothing in compliance with Mustafa Kemal's reforms and principles. Students were additionally obliged to keep their heads uncovered. From then on, some universities did not admit female students who wore headscarves, while others meted out disciplinary punishments; while still others did allow these students to enter. In 1984, YÖK made a revision to the 1982 circular allowing the wearing of a "modern headscarf," which gave some leeway for the wearing of headscarves. Depending on the interpretation of what constituted a "modern headscarf," universities followed a range of scattered practices, from complete bans to full tolerance of headscarves.

The greatest administrative measure against wearing headscarves took place in 1996 when Istanbul University's School of Nursing failed 30 of its 70 students for refusing to take off their headscarves. Finally, in 1997, the military-imposed measures commonly referred to as the February 28 measures that decreed a full ban on headscarves at all public institutions, including IHLs, on the grounds that they had contravened the constitutional principle of *laïcité*.[44] Thereafter, in compliance with the measures, a number of IHLs started to provide education in gender-integrated classrooms and did not allow girls to wear headscarves except

[43] Şule Yüksel Şenler was a very influential figure on the popularization of the headscarf among young urban women through her writings, but also through her efforts to design an Islamic clothing style that would look urban, fashionable, and trendy without compensating from piety.

[44] The tension between Turkish democracy and Turkish secularism reached its peak in 1999 when Merve Kavakçı, a nationally elected MP, was not allowed to take her oath in Parliament because she was wearing a headscarf.

during Qur'an lessons. In addition, the new lower coefficiency, policy for graduates of students in vocational schools who sought admission in universities significantly and negatively affected the chances for IHL graduates to enter four-year university degree programs outside of the field of religious sciences.[45] Despite these dismal conditions, many families continued to choose IHLs for their children, and especially for their daughters. This was, as we have seen, a choice between IHLs, which offered limited academic possibilities, or other schools, which would mean compromising one's Islamic duties.

As discussed in Chapter 2, all secular states bear the responsibility of simultaneously managing their educational systems and their relationship with religious institutions. From the earliest days of the Republic, the state, in Turkey had anxieties about religious education and the kind of political subjectivity that would emerge from it. At times the state approached religion and religious groups in order to achieve social cohesion usually in the face of a perceived threat from the outside, but generally, the state adopted an assertive secularist political agenda that excluded religion from the public sphere. The February 28 "post-modern" military coup[46] allows us to better examine this uneasy relationship between the state and Islamic groups, in this case the IHL graduates, and even more specifically female IHL graduates. The state policies pursued after the February 28 measures redefined the state's distance from religious groups and in turn led to a questioning on the part of these groups about their status within this political environment. During these unsettled times, gender was clearly a factor in the way IHL graduates perceived state pressure (Swidler 1986). Different strategies were adopted to cope with political pressure and these strategic actions help us further elaborate on the kind of political subjectivity raised in IHLs. My research demonstrates that the February 28 period had a more traumatic impact on the girls than on the boys, both because it restricted their prospects for higher education by imposing a lower coefficiency score, but also because of the ban on Islamic clothing at IHLs and the universities. Even if the girls found a way to finish high school, and managed to get into a university, they had to confront the headscarf ban, even in theology schools. In this regard, the headscarf ban can be seen as a truly gender-discriminatory act by the state. Certainly this was the sense shared by some of the participants in this study, who, indicated the discrimination that male students with similar religious values and norms could still enter universities, as they were not obliged to wear particular religious attire. I will now turn to the consequences of February 28th on girls in both the personal and the socio-economic levels.[47]

A. The Personal Effects of February 28

Students and their families reacted to the new measures in different ways. While enrollment rates for boys dropped significantly following the enactment of the new policies, enrollment for girls remained stable. Some girls at the IHLs chose to uncover and continued their education, while others chose to resist the ban. Regardless, observant Muslim women who experienced the period of February 28 period faced a deep identity dilemma. Many of them were 15 or 16 years old at the time and could not even grasp the rationale behind the

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[45]Part of the reason why the February 28 measures are popularly perceived as tailored specifically to close the IHLs was the initiation of the obligatory eight years of uninterrupted education law. This law implied the closing down of three years of junior high school section of the IHL schools. Accordingly, students would choose to study at an IHL only after completing eight years of primary and secondary education at a regular public or private school. This new law was combined with a measure that was specific to vocational schools; this directly affected IHL graduates. The lower coefficiency factor measure, explained earlier, on the other hand, substantially decreased the IHL graduates' chances to enroll at a college degree program other than the school of religious sciences, which had very limited admission quotas. Lower career aspirations sharply dropped enrollments at the IHLs in the following years.

[46]The events of February 28 are commonly referred to as a post-modern military coup, as they developed through the use of a different set of tactics and instruments compared to past military coups. The events leading to the coup proceeded through a concerted effort on the part of the media, military, political elite and academia. Instead of the military elite directly intervening in the overthrowing of the government, by way of utilizing collaboration between traditional secularist elite groups they pressured a democratically elected government to undertake a radical reform package which effectively led to their resignation.

[47]Please see the introduction for an analysis of the political consequences of the events of February 28 for pious groups in Turkey.

ban. Esma, a 2003 graduate, narrated her experience as: "I was a 15-year old kid. I was not aware of what was going on. I knew little about politics or ideology or things like that. What we learned over time was that the state did not allow us to go to school with our headscarves. Still, we thought that either tomorrow or the day after we would get back into the school." Esma and her friends, ninth grade students who were lauded as the most promising students of the year, came to their school following a two-week semester break to see police barricades blocking the entrance to the school with armored police vehicles spread around the street, as if expecting an armed uprising. The school security personnel did not allow students to enter even the garden with their headscarves and the police intervened in case of resistance. Hundreds of students, most of them girls, did not enter school that day. Some male students also supported them. They came to school every day with their parents and signed a legal petition that said they had attended school, but had not been allowed in due to their clothing. They realized after about a month that this would be a longer wait than expected. In fact, their non-violent, completely civilian and self-organized protest outside the school lasted for about a year. This period of resistance almost automatically turned these young women into activists.

Graduates recalled the days when they were beaten by the police, in particular by female police officers, and taken into custody. Yet, according to Esma, even the police, as the representatives of the state, were fragmented and in a dilemma: "Some police officers would treat us really harshly or psychologically abuse us by insulting us or accusing us, but there were also those who wept with us and said, almost begging: 'My mom also wears a headscarf. I am like you, but, what can I do? This is my job, I am obliged to enforce what I am ordered to do. Please don't resist, for even I may have to use force otherwise'." I heard similar stories from a number of other graduates. I kept wondering through my interviews how these state policies influenced the way students perceived the state and the ways of resistance they identified as justified. Many of them were still heart-broken, emotionally sensitive, and confused. For instance, one of the graduates said "I am not an enemy of the state. Instead I always felt like the owner of this country." It is significant that none of these graduates turned to a confrontational strategy in order to gain their constitutional rights to education or freedom of belief while students.

They did, however, develop a non-confrontational attitude that led to a deep identity dilemma. The female graduates, in particular, had to redefine their religious beliefs, their life goals, their relationship with the state, and families. The stakes were high on almost every front. One of the students had an emotional outburst during her interview, when she talked about a friend of hers whose family did not support her decision to discontinue her education due to the ban and rejected her. This girl then fell into a heavy depression and was finally diagnosed with a multiple sclerosis and sadly passed away last year. This is one of the most dramatic stories I heard. However, even in cases in which families supported their children in their decision to comply with or resist the ban, they were under great stress. As Serra, a 2004 graduate put it: "Being a successful and hardworking student all my life, it was tremendously distressful to have to contemplate giving up my educational aspirations or abandoning a religious duty." Another student, Rana, 2000 graduate, had been the student leader of her class. She told me how her school administrators constantly insulted her for failing to convince her classmates to comply with the ban. "One week I started having trouble falling asleep and lost my appetite. I learned later on that these were signs of serious depression. And one day as I was fixing my headscarf in the class, my friend looked at me and said, 'Oh, your hair is so thin!' I defensively reacted: 'No, I have thick hair' because I used to have thick hair. When I got back home I remember looking in the mirror and saw that indeed my hair was falling out and grew so thin over the years of stress I underwent, but I had not even realized it."

Some of the girls decided to continue their education and took off their headscarves. Some decided to uncover permanently, as taking off their headscarves at school and then wearing them outside made them feel like as if they had a split personality. A majority of girls took off their scarves only at school. They told me how degrading, insulting and at times ridiculous it felt to take them off at the door; either wearing a wig, or a hat or other creative methods to cover their hair. Some wore the ugliest wigs possible to remind everybody of the ridiculousness of the ban, while others shaved their heads as a symbol of resistance. Still others wore a beret and a shawl around their neck, and others just took off their headscarves. Nur, a 1999 graduate, explained that she wore a beret and a shawl while entering her university building and felt like she was playing hide-and-seek with the security personnel who did not allow that kind of covering either. She recalled: "While my friends would enjoy the facilities of the school I concealed my presence. I attended long enough to get my diploma. I would go to the lectures, then to the masjid and then return home. I never went down to the cafe section or the library, thus avoiding both the security personnel and the ridicule. That is pretty much how my school years passed."

There were those who could afford to send their children abroad to pursue higher education. NGOs like the Organization for Imam Hatip Schools' Students and Alumni (ONDER) supported some others. Most of these students applied to European universities, particularly in Austria and Germany, due to the lower school tuitions in these countries. Only a few could afford schools in the UK or the US. Thousands of girls had to take intensive language training in German. Didem, a 2000 graduate was one of the earliest students fortunate enough to go and study in Vienna on an ONDER grant. Her experience there was immensely enriching, as she shared a dormitory with some of the finest IHL graduates from all over Turkey. There she developed a common bond with these students, across cultural or regional backgrounds. She described it: "We all wanted to successfully complete our education and return home to serve our country. This was the feeling that linked us together." Yet, the conditions at the dormitories were poor. "Staying in the tiny apartments in Vienna, there were nine students, sometimes 10 per room. No privacy if you felt sad and wanted to cry. If you were using the restroom you had to hurry. For six years I slept pulling my blanket to my nose in a room filled with girls, all of whom had psychological breakdowns. Some were having a hard time away from their families, others had trouble adjusting to the racist environment in Vienna," Serra explained.

B. The Socio-Economic Effects of February 28

Until the events of February 28, an IHL diploma was notable for the socio-economic opportunities it gave many devout Muslim women in Turkey. While boys escaped the lower coefficiency factor challenge by changing their school, girls, in particular those coming from the lower-income groups, remained at IHLs. The IHLs, which used to be spaces for social fusion for devout Muslim youth from lower- and upper-income groups, increasingly turned into a schools for those who could not afford other alternatives, i.e., studying at private schools or abroad. For a lot of female students, an IHL diploma meant deciding to pursue either a university degree in religious sciences, which became increasingly competitive due to very limited student quotas, a degree at a lower quality university in Istanbul or outside of Istanbul where they would have to take off their headscarves, a degree at a university abroad with family support or the support of a charitable person or organization, quitting school and opting for voluntary education or social activities, or finally, getting married as a way to escape a psychological breakdown. Nuran, a 1997 graduate, was one of the graduates who viewed marriage as a hope for a better life and higher status. She was in her final year of high school when the new policies were enacted. She had wanted to become a gynecologist,

however due to both the headscarf ban and the coefficiency factor she decided to discontinue her formal education. Her family had no other way to support her education abroad. She said: "I lived in a small village called Garipçe. I decided not to study at school, but desperately felt the urge to educate myself in alternative venues and as there was no alternative education in the close vicinity, I begged my parents to let me study at a Qur'anic boarding school. They did not agree and so I decided to marry just to escape the parochial environment of the village." Relying on the reference of one of her teachers, she decided to marry her husband after a 15-minute conversation. She is currently a housewife with four children and is, as she says, "luckily" content with her life. Aside from her familial responsibilities, she is actively involved in non-governmental charitable organizations and community work. Yet she still curses those who were involved in the "February 28 malady" that dramatically changed the course of her life. Another student who received an exam score high enough to get her into a school of medicine in Istanbul but could not do so due to the lower coefficiency. Her family decided to marry her to her cousin whom she did not want to marry. To avoid that marriage she accepted the first person who asked for her hand even though he was 10 years older than her. She said: "I am fine and happy. Yet I know that if I had studied at university, I would never had married this man. He is not really my match, I had to marry because I had nothing better to do." She then expressed her disappointment in herself: "We are all in this loser mood actually. We could not professionalize. We went to different educational courses, etc. A little bit of this and a bit of that, but we did not fully master anything."

The dire conditions for the female IHL graduates, were not limited merely to educational outcomes. Many of these women were further discriminated against in the workplace in different ways: they were either underpaid or employed in jobs that were below their capacity. Male graduates could conceal their IHL background and had less difficulty in building careers as compared to their female counterparts. As previously explained, wearing headscarves in public institutions had been banned since 1982. The private sector therefore presented the real alternative employment opportunity for these women. While many high-ranking companies did not employ women who wore headscarves due to ideological disagreements, companies owned by devout businessmen also discriminated against these women, paying lower wages and providing poor work-safety plans. Many graduates agreed to work in jobs below their abilities for minimum wage which in the long run resulted in deep psychological dilemmas, loss of confidence, identity problems, and feelings of anger toward and disappointment in their male counterparts.

Sema, a 1996 graduate, is only one example out of many. Due to the coefficiency barrier, her score on the university entrance exams was not high enough for her to enter a literature degree program. Her father was unemployed at the time and so she and her elder sister had to work in secretarial positions in small businesses for minimum wage. She said: "Despite the lower coefficiency I was able to study at a university outside of Istanbul, but my family could not afford the expenses. Then I had to work. Maybe we are questioning things too much. There is good in all that happens [referring to the Islamic belief that God wills only *hayır (goodness)* for believers.] If I had gone to school that year, I would have faced the headscarf ban that started a year later."

This notion of *hayır* (goodness for believers) is one of the common threads running through, IHL graduates, which also explains their non-confrontational style when faced with a challenge from the state. Despite their anger and repression, they believed that God would eventually reward them if they worked and made an effort. According to them, God's plan supersedes those made in this world.

Serra, on the other hand, returned from Vienna upon completing her degree in computer software engineering at Vienna Technical University. "You tend to think that a degree from a good university and fluency in two European languages will help you easily

find a good job. But no, your search for a decent job takes years. You start to worry about yourself. Then you lower your expectations. You already know that there are only limited work options with a headscarf – investment banks, [AK Party] municipalities, I am currently working at the municipality with colleagues who have a diploma from distant institutions who came from rural Anatolian towns." Serra's anxiety about the training and cultural background of her colleagues illustrates the disparity between the educational training of women with headscarves and the best positions they can attain. Even when hired, these women had to bear the symbolic pressure from their managers who were aware that few options lay in front of them and openly or discretely implied that they had hired these women not for their professional capabilities, but for idealistic purposes, thus patronizing them.[48]

The kind of change in career plans that took place among women was never an issue for the men. This was partly due to the social role and status ascribed to female students. When educational attainment required making concessions to Islamic duties- such as taking off headscarves or giving up prayers, families gave up on their daughters' educational pursuits more easily, justifying their attitude by saying "your primary responsibility is not working for a living, so it is not worth compromising religious duties. So, it is better not to study." This was the case, particularly in the early years following February 28. Later on, through their immense efforts to educate themselves either through formal education or voluntary courses, these girls were able to successfully transform their families' attitudes. I heard a number of stories in which families paid a great deal for their sons' education, expecting them to take on the responsibility of the family, but these boys failed whereas the daughters succeeded despite the institutional and cultural challenges that impeded their achievements. For later graduates, families seemed to be more supportive, especially in educating their daughters. Meral, for example, said: "I had two brothers. One of them completed his IHL education and the other studied at an IHL the first three years and then left for a regular school in order to escape the coefficiency problem. My sister on the other hand, studied at a girls-only high school due to the coefficiency problem also." Meral's father, opposed sending her to school earlier in the 1980s, but her successes over time and struggle to complete her theology degree during the February 28 period changed his attitude quite a lot. Her story is also instructive in illustrating how families overcame these problems. Her first brother apparently finished the IHL, and despite getting a high score, was only able to enter a two-year college. Based on his experience the family decided to send their second son to a regular high school. The family's attitude to support their youngest daughter's educational ambitions, on the other hand, shows how much their position on girls' education had evolved over time. Yet while both mothers and fathers supported girls' education, they were less sympathetic to their daughters working. Even when they supported their daughters working they tended to encourage them to work primarily in fields that would support motherhood or for social good for the sake of God. This was viewed as a bit more secure and was a tendency pervasive throughout time period I studied. Boys, on the other hand, were more readily prepared for the competitive working careers where making money was the top priority compared to a concern for the public good or pleasing God.

Further investigation would be useful to assess how the struggle of the female students to continue their educations despite the state-imposed February 28 measures influenced the attitude of their families. Macro-socioeconomic and political changes – the economic liberalization of the Özal governments in the 1980s, the increasing proportion of women in the workforce, and the relaxation of work conditions in different spheres of life – could help to explain the general shift in familial roles, relationships, and perceptions about how girls

[48]See (Cindoğlu 2010) for further reading on the various ways of discrimination and unfair treatment that women wearing headscarves confronted in the workplace. Süleyman Yaşar also makes a case that the headscarf restriction in the workplace compelled these women to work at municipalities' subcontractors at discriminatory wages. See (Yaşar 2010).

were to be situated in society, academia, and politics. However, these macro accounts tend to miss the experiences of these women, who have been left in the margins of modern Turkish citizenship based on their relationship with the aggressive secularist policies of the state.

This early confrontation with the state and the criminalization of wearing headscarves, which the state perceived to be a political statement against its secular regime, built a special bond between the IHL students, one that had not existed before they had faced such political pressure. Sude said: "After all the challenges we went through, I worked really hard to represent my school in the best way and to show that we are just as much the sons and daughters of this country as the other children who were at regular public schools. Despite the harder challenges I faced afterwards at university I felt I had no other chance but to succeed." My interviews demonstrate a very interesting relationship between religion, the state and society in Turkey. Despite state pressure, IHL students, particularly the girls, did not see the state as their enemy and chose to resist through a number of strategic actions that never included the use of violence. They perceived themselves as part of the state and kept faith that their rights would be restored through democratic means. The IHL ambience itself served to create a political subjectivity that had a deep faith in God's will, but also valued hard work and strategic action. Most importantly, as state schools, IHLs raised students with a deep-seated trust in the state and its democracy. While many of them were victimized with accusations of threatening the secular state, a majority of participants had no problem with secularism, but questioned the way it was exercised in Turkey to restrict fundamental rights and freedoms. They also made a distinction between the permanence of the state and the transient nature of democratic governments, demonstrating their embeddedness and confidence in democratic culture. This reckoning of themselves, with established authorities, and with different macro topics like secularism, democracy, and human rights, led many of the girls to a more open-minded, critical, globally-engaged, empathetic approach that superseded the intellectual progress made by both devout Muslim men and the ultra-nationalistic Kemalist elite groups. While many struggled for years with the psychological breakdown as a result of their victimization and a symbolic diaspora,[49] many of them like Rabia, a 2004 graduate, who said: "Over the last 10 years [referring to the period of AK Party rule] there have been significant improvements on issues of democratic rights and freedoms generally... (Çağlar 2013: 8) Rights like wearing headscarves at IHLs and universities are restored. We are still not able to work at public offices, etc., but there is a wide array of opportunities we should seek and benefit from. We should not carry our past victimization like a hump on our back. We lost enough time already."

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the female experience at IHLs significantly differed from the male experience. I suggest that IHLs mattered more for girls than they did for boys. These schools allowed girls to escape 1) the restricted opportunity structure, which the assertive secular state policies had imposed on them from the early Republican revolution and 2) the limited socio-cultural environment their families allowed them. Even parents who were initially skeptical of IHLs learned to be comfortable with their daughters' learning and attaining an education over time. Many of these women felt that they were able to pursue an academic career without having to compromise their morality, and they became further integrated in a secular social setting. They also effectively transformed their families' approach to women's issues, breaking long-held opinions that education at secular public schools would harm piety. Female IHL students and graduates were the most marginalized

[49]This term is used by Yasin Aktay to describe the political and cultural deprivation the religious groups went through under the repressive secularist state policies in Turkey.

group, affected by both state policies and marginalization by the secularist elite in Turkey. This very exclusion is what explains the constitution of the IHL women as subjects according to Judith Butler, who argues that "the subject is constituted through an exclusion and differentiation, perhaps a repression," and that this constitution is an ongoing signifying and resignifying process that is inherently political (Butler 1994: 162). Eventually, these women's resistance to different forms of abjection ended up in successful careers for some, and failure for others. However, even those who failed maintained their idealism and hope for future.

IHLs provided mental and spiritual continuity between the school and home experiences of its pious students, particularly the girls, who would otherwise have compromised either their Islamic duties or their educational pursuits. For male students, the compromise was not so much about their public image, but about their daily prayers, which was apparently many families overlooked as career goals for boys took primacy, at least until the attainment of a stable job.

It is important that as devout Muslim women realized themselves more freely at IHLs, their relationship with the male-dominant society also changed. Without directly challenging men or their status, they increasingly viewed themselves as actors in society who could contribute to its wellbeing. Some pursued careers while others preferred a variety of socially responsible projects through NGOs. Bourdieu once argued that social reproduction depends on the construction of social fields like education, and the economy, with each field employing its own forms and codes to restrict access to the field by new members (Bourdieu 1984). The codes and forms in all fields, particularly those of education, as Güveli stresses, were established by the Kemalist elite, and I argue that IHLs were an unpredictable experiment that illustrates how different norms and values can actually be articulated in a more pluralistic manner without harming democracy or secularism (Güveli 2007). The simultaneously modern and pious female experience at IHLs also illustrates that modernization does not have to be constructed upon a negation of religious values and norms, as the Kemalist elite so firmly believed. The degree of integration of female IHL graduates into modern socio-economic and political fields indicates that it is pluralism rather than rigid secularism that consolidates democracy.

The IHLs served as stepping-stones for both students and their families in evaluating the participation of women in society. The majority of female participants felt strongly that their families would not have sent them to school if there had not been IHLs. The IHL school culture – a culture of piety – mattered not only for the freedom to wear religious attire or for gender-segregated classrooms, but also because its shared mindset with the school community of students, administrators, teachers and families. This enabled families to continue to send their children, especially their daughters, to IHLs in times of political pressure when wearing of headscarves was banned and schools had to provide education in mixed-gender settings.

CHAPTER 6
Conclusion

This study started with a quest to understand the trajectory and impact of religious education in Turkey over time. I began with a look at different countries and their religious education models and found that while religious education systems were closely informed by the respective state-religion configurations in different countries, both changing national dynamics and the forces of encroaching globalism challenged these. Relations between the state and religion, have not remained static in any of the countries I analyzed. Instead they constantly evolve to establish a balance between the social interests of different groups in society and the autonomy of the state. Escalating demands for institutional pluralism have been the driving force that frames the boundaries of change in state-religion relations across different contexts. For a majority of secular regimes in the West, rising demand for pluralism stood as a question of democratic representation, freedom of expression, and conscience. Although attitudes on different religious groups displayed significant ethnocentrism and discrimination, much of the political debates revolved around a framework of deepening democracy rather than a rigid allegiance to an unchanging state-religion relationship. In the case of secular regimes, this entailed a particular conceptualization of secularism as a principle that is useful insofar as it protects democracy but not vice versa. The French state's increasing support for Catholic schools, the British state's attempts to increase the number of faith-based schools and include other religions in the compulsory religious education curriculum at public schools, the US's creative ways to support religious education ranging from student vouchers to charter schools and the Indonesian government's increasing financial support for a privately-run *medrese* system in return for an agreement on curriculum content, all indicate a shifting paradigm of religious education in the West and elsewhere in the world as well as a shift in the perception of secularism. How then does Turkey's account of democracy and secularism concerning the system of religious education stand with regard to the countries mentioned above? Do the same dynamics of change as in the West such as increasing demand for pluralism and changing socio-economic relations also hold for Turkey?

The relationship between the state and religion in modern Turkey has evolved in a fragile context. The early establishment elite viewed religion as a threat to the consolidation of the new Republic and therefore opted for assertive means to transform the state and society to correspond to what they considered the requirements of a modern nation-state. Despite the fiercely secular policies pursued by the founding elite under the single-party rule of the Republican People's Party (CHP) until 1946, religious demands resurfaced with the first democratic multiparty elections. The tentative relationship between democracy and secularism in Turkey could hardly stabilize given the coups nearly every 10 years which were justified on grounds of protecting the secular state against the revivalist religious groups.

Given the lack of correspondence between the socio-cultural fabric of Turkey, which respected and valued religion, and the institutions of the new nation-state, which were expected to transform the nation into a modern citizenry and protect secularism, IHLs gained popularity as spaces where the norms of the state and the spiritual values of the people worked together in harmony. They were also spaces in which students could develop their ideas about Islam and the related possibility of living an Islamic life in a modern, secularizing world. Understanding the political tension that escalated around IHLs in particular, and religious education in general, necessitates a deeper understanding of the role of religion specifically Islam, in Turkish society. Two opposing views of religion occupy much of the discourse on this. According to Mardin. "Islamists on one hand contend that Islam constitutes the content of Turkish culture. Secularist ideologues, on the other hand, claim that religion

must lie in the hearts of Muslims and that Islam as a sociopolitical movement is a hazardous ideological remnant." He criticizes both accounts on the ground that Islam has penetrated Turkish culture both in its form and content at a multitude of levels "such that we can only describe Islam in Turkey as a synthesis of both secular and religious values and as a belief system that contains elements of exceptionalism" (Mardin 2011: 92). The IHL system is one of the most obvious sites to capture this exceptionalism. IHL graduates align themselves with Islam and religiouIslamic values, yet they also stake their claim to secular norms and values. This unusual association seems to be one of the binding features among IHL graduates since the 1950s. Especially since the 1980s, a counter-movement in Turkey of Muslim intellectuals, some of them IHL graduates, effectively captured the secular discourse as Mardin puts it, and the inseparable relationship between secularism and religion that scholars who tend to focus on the institutional aspects of how secularism has been established in Turkey may overlooked (Mardin 2011: 165).

The most obvious finding to emerge from this study is that the IHL graduates do not represent a homogeneous community. Rather their subjectivities can be differentiated by generation, along class lines, political preferences, and gender. IHLs contributed to the formation of subjectivities that differed both from what the state and the secularist elite feared would emerge and from what its religious founders promoted them for. The "Ottoman-Turkish exceptionalism" in state-religion relations truly has its traces in IHL graduates and their hybrid personality as simultaneously secular and religious, modern and traditional.

A central puzzle of this study was to figure out the content of these subjectivities: Were IHL graduates reactionaries? Did they prioritize mysticism over scientific rationalism? Were they scholastic obscurantists? Furthermore, was the subjectivity that grew at these schools homogeneous? How did it change over time? How did they interact with changing socio-economic and political conditions? What are the dynamics of change and continuity for these subjectivities?

The accounts in this study suggest that IHLs at first grew in response to popular demand for Islamic education, but since the late 1970s gained different functions that went well beyond their original mission to raise "mature, well-educated imams and *hatips* who will address the Turkish nation."[50] The opening of higher education opportunities and the enrollment of female students at these schools increasingly pushed IHLs to become a formal alternative to regular public schools. While these schools contributed to raising the educational attainment in rural parts of Turkey and especially the educational attainment of girls, the anxieties of secularist groups about them, legitimized by the rise of Islam as a mobilizing force in other countries around the world, have shaped the discourse on Islamic education in Turkey and the kind of personhood it is expected to shape. This study argued that only through leaving aside generalizations and threating groups as homogenous can we capture the ways people constantly remade themselves by engaging with the available cultural tools and institutional opportunities. While trying to understand whether a shared worldview existed among IHL graduates, I realized that IHL graduates, above all, tried to realize their personhood simply as devout Muslim citizens – although the idea of what this is changed over the generations. Every generation of IHL graduates experienced a different struggle in their self-realization. While the first generation of largely low-income students from rural aspired to careers in the religious services, IHLs then started to attract students who aspired to careers outside the field of theology. For the second generation, IHLs mattered increasingly for professional career purposes and were preferred among other schools since they also provided religious education and a school experience maintaining a culture of piety which relieved devout Muslim families from their anxieties about the assertive secular school culture,

[50]It is the Minister of National Education, Tevfik İleri, who described why there was the need to open IHL schools as stated in the quotes in 1951 (Öcal 2013: 111).

excludes all religious practices from the school space at regular public schools. The third generation of graduates studied at IHLs, despite low professional prospects usually due to the culture of piety at IHLs. For the first generation, the struggle was primarily about migration from rural to urban settings and adjustment. They were nationalistic in spirit and at the same time felt a strong sense of duty to represent religion to their best ability. The second generation sought to become part of the urban public sphere with their Islamic identity. It was also a period of differentiation among the IHL graduates between urban versus suburban, and graduates of IHLs versus AIHLs. The struggles of the youngest group of IHL graduates centered on the protection of a devout lifestyles against state intrusion and pressure while at the same time trying to cope with the secular forces of popular culture in their personal lives.

A key finding of the study was that due to the lack of Islamic educational alternatives in Turkey, devout Muslim families from both lower- and upper-income backgrounds and from different ethnic groups around the country sent their children to IHLs. This in turn created a particularly fertile space of interaction where shared morals and values minimized socio-economic and ethnic differences, which created a "social fusion" that did not necessarily emerge in regular public schools. I argue that such social fusion accelerated the political and social upward mobility of IHL graduates and the rise of a devout, Muslim, political elite in Turkey over a span of 60 years.

It was eye-opening to see that while Islamic education was the primary reason for devout Muslim families' preferences for IHLs, the schools' culture was the second key factor. This culture entailed the organization of time and space in accordance with Islamic duties and habits of a devout Muslim which encompassed gender-segregated education, freedom to wear Islamic clothing, and facilities to perform prayers. An indispensable component of this culture of piety was the fact that a majority of the students shared similar values, norms and habits or at least came from families that wanted their children to become pious Muslims, a culture of piety that was harder to maintain at a regular public school. This culture of piety contributed to the self-realization of IHL graduates, as it removed the disjuncture students experienced between the cultural ambiences at school versus outside of school. IHLs have been the only option for some pious families since religious education and practices were strictly limited in both public and private schools at that time. The increasing number of conservative private schools especially after the February 28 period has presented a new alternative with regards to devout school culture and while this was a stunning increase in demand, it was only applicable to a small affluent segment of the population.

Despite Article 24 of the Constitution, which states: "…religious education and training is bound to the will of individuals, to the demand of the legal patrons of the minors…" the Turkish state has failed to provide institutional alternatives in response to demand for religious education. Thus, IHLs continue to function as schools that both raise future religious functionaries, and serve average devout Muslims who do not aim for careers in theology or religious service.

A significant implication of this study is that the assertive secular cultural codes in regular public schools distance devout Muslim families from them. In a society where religion is highly respected, its rigid exclusion from state schools reinforces the attraction to IHLs. While the secular elite has criticized IHLs for effectively functioning as a alternative public school system that has gone beyond the initial mission to raise religious functionaries, it has neglected the cost of the failure to make regular public schools more welcoming to pious families. The AK Party government's 2012 reform act which raised the period of compulsory education from eight years to 12 years and added three religious education courses – the Qur'an, life of Prophet Muhammad and basic religious knowledge – to the optional course list for regular public schools may be viewed as an effort to find a middle way between the anxieties of the secular elite and the demands of the devout Muslim section of the society.

However, further improvement of regular public school campuses in such matters as such the opening of prayer rooms at schools would require more cooperation on the part of the secular elite. Otherwise, public support for IHLs is likely to persist.

This study aimed to understand IHL subjectivities and the factors that shaped them. If the most significant component in the creation of IHL subjectivity was the shared desire for a pious life in a secular society, as discussed above, another important component was the marginalization devout Muslim groups confronted in society at the social, economic and political levels. This study has shown that IHL graduates in each generation experienced one or more of these three types of marginalization and defined themselves in reference to that. Marginalization, as discussed in detail in Chapter 3 raised an awareness of the "otherness" or "difference" and "defensiveness" of the graduates. It is safe to argue that this feeling of "being different" has contributed to their personhood in three ways: 1) a continual need to prove that they are just as much an organic a part of Turkish society as any other school graduate and have no other agenda but to develop themselves as pious citizens in a secular state, 2) a feeling of inadequacy to meet the expectations outside the school, and 3) reactive anger that could lead to heightened perseverance of Islamic ideals or, for a minority, to alienation from religion and IHLs in particular. However, in "unsettled times" (Swidler 1986) when such "otherness" is accentuated, graduates tend to get politicize and became more ideologically motivated and somehow radicalized. In other words, it was when a student was labeled as an "Iranist" that they started to question the politics behind such labeling and felt the need to take a side. It is when resentment of political pressure is high that the IHL community's idealism is heightened and more investments made in the building and maintenance of these schools so that religious education can persist in Turkey. It was when February 28 dictated the headscarf ban that students were alerted to secularism as the state ideology, and built an identity for themselves in reference to those concepts. Identity formation among the IHL students and graduates thus developed within the complex web of 1) framing by others that caused feelings of marginalization, 2) variation in the political opportunity structure, in particular political acts against them, and, 3) the collective memory of a shared past usually developed through socializing at youth organizations outside the school such as the National Turkish Student Union (MTTB), National Struggle Movement (MMH), National Youth Foundation (MGV), and Anatolian Youth Organization (AGH) where students voluntarily gathered for arts and literature performances, conferences, and sports competitions and other social activities. Graduates generally tended to refer to a shared collective memory and an "IHL spirit" when the degree of political pressure and marginalization was high. Furthermore, the graduates who were the most radical on political affiliation and more likely to identify with an ideology like Islamism[51] or on the opposite end socialism, were those who confronted political pressure the most. In times of relaxation, however, individual tastes, dispositions and interests gained prominence over community ideals.

The comparison of three generations of graduates has allowed us to see that the IHL community, including graduates, supporting NGOs, and families, has a distinct way of resisting the unjust practices they faced from the state. Despite the hegemonic portrayal of religiosity and resistance, this study points out that there is a different mode of resistance among devout Muslim groups in Turkey. Their way of resistance, which I call a non-confrontational resistance, differed from the left-wing activism in Turkey that situated itself in

[51] Islamism is frequently related to its contemporary use as a radical force in world politics that is usually associated with radicalism, however Islamism in this dissertation refers to the modernist 20th century movement which İsmail Kara eloquently describes as "an activist, modernist movement in 19th- 20th century embracing eclectical political, intellectual and scientific studies, pursuits, proposals, and solutions that sought to restore the domination of Islam as a whole (belief, worship, morality, philosophy, politics, jurisdiction, education…) over life and to rescue Muslims and the Islamic world from Western hegemony, cruel and despotic rulers, enslavement, imitation, superstitions… through a rationalistic method." (Kara 2012: Introduction)

opposition to the state mechanism. The IHL community, despite years of unjust state measures, never quite lost confidence in the state as an abstract, overarching entity. This phenomenon can only be understood through the above-mentioned "Ottoman-Turkish exceptionalism" and some key moral tenets that are inculcated in IHLs, in addition to the acceptance of the central patriarchal role attributed to the state. These tenets include 1) viewing of the state as the protector of religion and believing in the Qur'anic principle that obedience to such a state authority is a duty, 2) the belief in yet another Qur'anic principle that instructs that "a community is governed only with what it deserves". Thus, when graduates faced state discrimination and intervention in their lifestyles, they retreated to civil society activism, but showed their ideological preferences in the first democratic elections by electing nominees of the parties that vowed to uphold the freedom of religious practice and resist repression of the daily practices in the name of secularism. I discussed a number of strategies of non-confrontational resistance in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, which range from sending children to IHLs despite pressure to NGO activism in support of the IHL cause, and higher interest in competitive party politics. Ironically, this non-confrontational attitude unintentionally led to heightened voluntary civil society activism among the IHL community as a key channel of resistance. Civil society activism contributed to the increasing participation of this community in the public sphere to which it had long been denied access. Associations like the Organization for Promoting Education (İYC), Organization for Imam Hatip Schools' Students and Alumni (ONDER), and Turkish Youth and Education Foundation (TURGEV)[52] have all evolved into effective NGOs that grew in parallel with efforts to support, maintain, and improve IHLs and their students.

Despite being framed as a potential base for what is usually referred to as "Islamist radicalism" and a source of social division in Turkey, IHL school graduates have thus been relatively quiescent despite the coups in 1971, 1980, and 1997. Kara (2013)[53] suggests that radical oppositional Islamism has never had much correspondence in Turkish society and culture and that it would be misleading to analyze the Islamist movement in Turkey with reference to other Islamic countries, stressing that seeking traces of, for instance, al-Qaida, in Turkey would be in vain since it has no social or cultural base in the country.[54] This study also illustrates that in that the last decade improving socio-economic conditions, religious freedom, and cultural competency, particularly among devout Muslim groups, has led to a sort of conformism, further reducing their potential recourse to an oppositional line of Islamism.

Despite my efforts to maintain a dispassionate approach to the experiences, expectations and perceptions of female and male students, gender differences were so dramatic and central to the sociological analysis of the IHLs that I decided to spare a full chapter for it. Like many other studies, this study has shown that the IHLs have been vital for the educational attainment of devout female students, especially those from the lower income groups. For a significant number of women who participated in this study, an IHL was the only option for education for two reasons: religious education and the culture of piety at school. Apparently, IHLs schools emancipated these women from dual pressure of 1) denial from the secular public sphere of the right to a religious identity and 2) the traditional patriarchal anxieties about the rigidly secular school culture at regular public schools which led to families' hesitation about sending their daughters to school at all and the tendency of these families to prioritize sons' education over their daughters'. Mardin states that between 1978-79 and 1984-1985 the ratio of girls studying at the IHLs rose from 0.1% to 15%,which illustrates how receptive devout Muslim families were to their daughters' education when their concerns were taken care of (Mardin 2011: 165). My fieldwork shows that the IHL space

[52]For further information about these NGOs, see http://www.iyc.org.tr; http://onder.org.tr ; http://www.turgev.org
[53] See İsmail Kara's interview with Ruşen Çakır for further reading (Kara 2013).
[54]İbid.

allowed pious girls to realize their capacities and capabilities without having to watch out for the restrictions of the secular public sphere and the protective patriarchy at home. Compared to their fellow male students, the IHL experience mattered more for female students for their self-making, and educational, occupational, and cultural mobility. While IHLs functioned as the only option for educational attainment for girls, boys were treated more liberally, when it came to school choice generally due to the attributed future gender role as the head of the family. For a pious girl who would not otherwise go to school, IHLs played an important emancipatory role.

The 1960s were years when urban, observant Muslim families at best sent their daughters to the girls' high schools. These families were those who had at least on educated older person. From 1976 onward, girls' enrollment at the IHLs and the number of pious female students at universities started to increase. This period entailed the growing visibility of devout women who desired to be actors in the secular public sphere since the 1980s. These women pushed the "hegemonic public sphere"[55] (Barbarosoğlu 2006) to be more inclusive, pluralistic, and democratic. I understand from the female graduates' accounts that their efforts to participate equally in the rigidly secular public sphere ended up transforming them and their perceptions of traditional gender roles, their views on religiosity, and their views on politics and society. Since the 1980s, more and more devout women have wanted to attend higher education institutions upon graduation from IHLs. Those who missed the link between opening IHLs to female students and the rising demand for higher education among devout Muslim women in headscarves misinterpreted the increasing visibility of devout female students at universities as an effect of the Iranian Revolution (Barbarosoglu, 2006). A direct outcome of increasing educational attainment of devout women was of course an increasing demand to be a part of the public sphere.

The experiences of female and male students especially during the February 28 period, were dramatically different for girls and boys. These experiences ended up raising political consciousness, activism as well as a desire for further academic achievement significantly more for girls than boys. The efforts to overcome the headscarf ban included utilizing study abroad opportunities since 1983, and especially after 1997. Allowing their daughters to study abroad reflects a significant degree of a transformation of mindset among traditional Muslim families and is important to illustrate female students' agency within their patriarchal community.

IHLs, therefore, unintentionally contributed to the rise of the well-educated, devout Muslim woman as an actor in Turkish society. This new actor was received by the traditional elite as disruptive of the neutrality of the republican public sphere, as these women aspired to take active roles in the public sphere with a religious identity as opposed to their parents who had to accept subordinating their religious identity. These women challenged the archaic secularist view that as people are emancipated from religion, it will lose its significance. They also challenged their parents' attitudes that one should participate in the public sphere only to a "degree of absolute necessity" to ward off further conflict and discrimination (Barbarosoğlu 2006: 42). Barbarosoğlu points out rightfully that especially in the eastern and southern parts of Turkey there was a hesitation to send girls to school due to socio-economic and cultural reasons. In order to convince families to send their daughters to schools, the state used Friday sermons and the sermons during the daily prayers at mosques given that imams and *hatips* are some of the most influential public figures in those regions.

This study has found that the IHL graduates are in general more concerned about the global Muslim community and the challenges they face, even though the degree varies by generation. This deeply embedded attachment to a larger imagined community of believers is usually presented as a challenge to the shared secularist Turkish national identity and a

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[55] A term Barbarosoğlu uses to describe the exclusivist secular public sphere in Turkey.

disruptive element for national cohesion. In fact, this was raised by the founding elite and the later secularist elites raised this as a potential risk of religious education in general – the risk that students may establish deeper attachment to the global Muslim community, the *ummah,* than the Turkish nation. My fieldwork illustrates that while IHL graduates are indeed concerned about the *ummah*, they tend to see that the future of the Turkish nation is intermingled with, and not separate, from that of the *ummah*. If Turkey achieves higher levels of political and economic development, they believe that the *ummah* will benefit from it especially considering the contemporary political conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. This approach has also been criticized for implying a hegemonic agenda, a sort of "neo-Ottomanism" and a longing for the imperial past. My findings suggest instead that the glory of the Ottoman past, cited generally for its architectural and artistic legacy, gave IHL students the tools of reference to build self-confidence and confirm that Islam or religiosity did not contradict progress in politics, economy, or culture.

As Shah and Toft point out, it is usually the political authorities who construct the conditions, by way of "mak[ing], enforc[ing], and judg[ing] law, command[ing] armies and police forces and proclaim[ing] gods, ideologies [and] national identities … as legitimate in their realms." (Shah and et al. 2011: 25) It is under such conditions that religious groups develop their ideas, strategies of action and politics to seek out interests, or find that they are unable to do so. Such is the case for religious groups in Turkey. The changing political conditions, for example and democratization opened up new opportunities for strategic action on the part of the religious groups; religious schools provided a legal way for them to preserve their religious norms and values.

Implications for Future Research

This research has generated several questions in need of further investigation. The increasing proportion of female students at the IHLs is reflected also in the increasing proportion of female students in faculties of theology at universities. About 65% of students in these faculties are women. Given that a large proportion of them are recruited from the IHLs, this phenomenon raises questions about the future of the realm of religious studies – an area and subject that has historically been under male dominance. What are the implications of increasing female religious scholars for Islam and religiosity in Turkey? Is it likely to challenge the patriarchal Islamic discourse? Are we likely to see female scholars of Islamic jurisprudence, *fakihs and* preachers, in the near future as is the case in countries like Malaysia and Indonesia?

Several scholars, including Fatmagül Berktay, have warned that the increasing presence of women in a field signifies the receding of that field from the field of power in general. If that is the case, does the increasing proportion of women in the field of Islamic studies imply that religious affairs are losing its significance in the field of power in Turkey?

Another important area that needs further research is about the rising middle class in the pious community in Turkey and changing demands regarding religious education. IHLs after all, are public schools and have limited resources. While they were preferred for their religious education and their school culture previously, the expanding upper-middle income families tend to choose conservative private schools for their children both for their higher quality of education and for better the physical amenities at the schools. Yet these private schools generally fall short of providing a systematic and comprehensive religious education or provide religious instruction based on the teachings of a particular *Sufi* order or other religious community. Many former IHL graduates who did not want to send their children to an IHL for various reasons, also stressed that they are not fond of the religious education taught at private schools. Other families who are idealistically devoted to the IHL cause, on

the other hand, see the problems, but still try to deal with them through active participation on school councils. I heard many former graduates talk about the need for private IHLs where the school administration has leeway to at least choose its own faculty. The AK Party government appears to deal with such demands by way of improving the conditions at IHLs as state schools, but whether that effort will be enough to attract the pious upper-middle class of Turkey is yet to be seen. Further research would be interesting on the implications for religious education and the IHL education in particular of the trend away from the IHL schools among the upper-middle class observant Muslim families. What does that entail for social fusion that came up as a characteristic feature of IHLs until recently? What does that mean for social stratification among pious groups? How would this trend affect the rapid acculturation and upward mobility processes of the IHL graduates that existed previously? Would it lead to a fragmentation of the pious community along socio-economic lines?

One criticism that many graduates expressed about their IHL experience was the dry, scholastic content of religious education generally based on rote learning. Recent graduates tended to say that the goal of religious education should be more than learning the Islamic rituals and studying the life of the prophet as a collection of wars and agreements. Instead, they argued that religious education must lead to a spiritual journey to improve the human self in a way that rituals would follow. Accordingly, while teaching to pray five times a day, for instance, the teachers could stress what the prayers meant for one's relation with his/ her creator rather than focusing on its do's and don'ts. There is increasing demand for a more pluralistic and diversified teaching methodology and curriculum including courses on Islamic arts, *Sufism*, comparative history of the schools of Islamic law, and science in Islam. Changing expectations concerning the content and methodology for Islamic education reflects changing views on religiosity as a consequence of improving socio-economic conditions of the observant Muslim community over time and its increasing confrontation with not only the secular culture, as well as the tools of the global popular culture. In consequence, the latest graduates expressed their dissatisfaction with the content and methodology of IHL's religious education curriculum, as it did not correspond enough to the spiritual deadlocks they encounter in their daily lives in the face of ever invasive products of popular culture. Despite the dissatisfaction with the status quo at the IHLs, however, even the most critical graduates preferred state provision of religious education to private groups and organizations. A recent poll[56] further illustrates that a majority of Turkish society does not support the presence of *cemaats*' in the field of religious education. This research illustrated that the former graduates appreciated the rationality with which courses on Islam were taught at the IHLs as well as the comprehensive nature of the sources used as references. Yet the graduates' trust in the state's provision also reflected a level of distance to *cemaats* (religious communities) and *Sufi tarikats* (Sufi sects). While they sympathized and joined their circles, they tended to remain, in a way, "freelance Muslims". Keeping this in mind, educational reforms could address the current socio-economic profile of the new generation of IHL students and the new challenges they face in society while designing the methodology and content of IHL curriculum as well as for training the faculty to teach it. Further research could be helpful to illuminate the differences between the Islamic knowledge taught at IHLs and other institutions and whether these differences lead to the formation of different subjectivities.

While being viewed with suspicion in Turkey, the IHL system has received much international interest in recent years from countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan and Russia and has been promoted as a model religious education system for other Islamic countries for its balance between religious and secular education. Since 2004 International AIHLs, opened in three cities in Turkey, and accept students from the Muslim communities in primarily the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Africa while new IHLs are being built in Saudi Arabia, the

[56] See (GENAR 2014).

Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Belgium, Somalia, the Netherlands, Kyrgyzstan and Denmark in order to respond to the Islamic educational needs of Turkish nationals living in these countries.

IHL graduates' moderate, universalist, non-confrontational, and usually compliant attitude is the main reason for this growing interest. As Taha Akyol wrote in 2013: "Radical Islamist movements were never able to find their grassroots at Imam Hatip Schools and theology departments. These schools have not been home to violence and fanaticism," which is the key to why countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan seek schools like IHLs in order to modernize their Islamic education. At a regional security summit in Turkey in 2010, with the Turkish, Afghani, Pakistani presidents and British, American and Russian diplomats in attendance, the IHL model of ıslamic education was included on the agenda as a way to fight religious extremism in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Later in 2010, the Afghan Minister of Education, Wardak, visited a few IHLs in Ankara and expressed his appreciation of their balanced curriculum while seeking support from Turkish authorities to build similar schools in Afghanistan.[57] What differentiates the IHL system from traditional South Asian *medreses* is its centralized structure that makes it less likely for radical groups to penetrate and its curricular integration with other public schools on secular courses. İştar Gözaydın stresses: "The Imam Hatip model transfers religious education away from private mosque-based schools into the hands of the state and that is key in countering extremism."[58] While increasing interest in the IHLs abroad gives pride to Turkish authorities, some former graduates like the economist Hüseyin Korkut, urge caution: "We are disturbed by this understanding that these schools would educate 'soft' Muslims that could easily adapt to the needs and requirements of the international authorities," stressing that the Islamic education component at IHLs should not be underestimated.[59] This research shows that the centralized structure of the IHL system is both its strength and at some points its weakness. The IHL system has been much criticized for providing the state-approved orthodox Sunni reading of Islam and neglecting other interpretations. As such the pluralistic nature of the content of religious education is questioned.

Further questions came up in this study about the prospects of the increasing proportion of female students at IHLs and faculties of theology later on. As pointed out previously, IHL graduates tended to discover their personal interests and capabilities in times of relaxed of political pressure. While IHL students – especially girls – tended to choose religious studies at university in the post February 28 period, since the lifting of the coefficiency factor, they started to choose different fields of study ranging from law and public relations to computer engineering and fine arts. The fact that these students valued religious education, but also avoided further study in that area when access to other fields was open, raises certain questions about the future of Islamic studies and the quality of the functions of religious affairs in Turkey. Scholars of the field must further investigate the reasons why the best IHL students tend to choose other fields. Do they feel more empowered in the public sphere when they have careers in non-religious fields? Are they just devout Muslims with interests in different fields in a reflection of their agency? Do they find careers in the field of their secondary studies to be, low in prestige, or have low in pay? Or is it simply that a majority of these students choose IHLs because there is no other option to live a pious life in an informed way? It is important for the future quality of religious affairs in Turkey to think about the socio-economic profile of students who is likely to choose religious

[57]See reports on the Afghan minister's visit at: http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=afghan-minister-we-asked-turkey-to-build-imam-hatip-high-schools-in-afghanistan-2010-01-31.
[58]http://www.voanews.com/content/turkeys-religious-schools-being-used-as-model-to-fight-islamic-extremism-90856834/169468.html
[59]http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2010/02/26/2003466647/2

studies programs for higher education and what that implies for conceptions of religion and religious education.

As stated earlier, this study focuses on the experiences of IHL graduates between 1951 and 2010. The post-2010 period necessitates further analysis, as Turkey's education system has gone through important changes over the last five years. The lifting of the lower coefficiency factor that restricted vocational school graduates' entry to university degree programs, the addition of selective religious courses to the regular state school curriculum, and the abandoning of the headscarf ban at schools and public offices all had effects on IHLs. But most importantly the major reform act in 2012 on the general educational system in Turkey that changed he obligatory national education period from eight years of uninterrupted education to a 12-year model where primary, secondary, and high school last for four years each, also known as the 4+4+4 model, and students can change schools between each level. This had defining consequences for all schools but particularly for vocational schools like IHLs. I expect that this entire changing educational, socio- economic and political environment will end up in a new IHL profile in Turkey. From time to time I still visit IHLs to observe whether the student profile is shifting and recognize that their conceptions of piety, gender relations, and IHL idealism all differ from the past generations. The criteria I used to compare and contrast the three generations (entrance/post-graduation outcomes, socio-economic conditions, political attachments, extra-curricular activities, degree of religiosity, marginalization, culture of piety, views on secularism and idealism) can still be utilized as a scheme of analysis for new cohorts and new dynamics like the effects of social media on social integration.

The IHL experience is significant in showing how devout Muslims who had given up on the possibility of being actors in the secular public sphere, and so instead created "sub-public spheres" for themselves, were convinced to get out and participate in the secular public sphere. IHLs paved the way for observant Muslim groups to become actors in the public sphere by way of challenging the intellectual mindset that religion and secularism contradict each other. For pious groups, it provided intellectual tools to justify their participation in the secular public sphere and led to questioning the boundaries of the democratic public sphere. Volumes of books on how to be Muslim in a secular society, written by the leading scholar of Islamic jurisprudence in Turkey, Hayreddin Karaman, are the key reference books for IHL students and reflect the balanced approach to secularism and Islam gained at the IHLs.

Considering the shift from the earlier IHL cohorts who were more concerned with serving the will of God and the Muslim community to the later graduates who became increasingly concerned with individualistic goals and prioritized career-orientation, the IHL community is increasingly differentiated and diverse. Given the lower levels of marginalization they now experience in society, the lack of political pressure on IHLs and the presence of manifold academic opportunities available to them, one can project that the new IHL students are likely to have less feelings of belonging to an IHL identity compared to prior generations and will be less likely to be politicize. While there is a widespread expectation from IHLs schools to encounter the perceived erosion of morality and ethics in society, the new generation seems less concerned with such a mission than merely realizing themselves as pious Muslims.

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