GOVERNMENTAL DISCOURSE, MORAL REGULATION AND DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMATION: THE CASE OF TURKEY

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2021

GOVERNMENTAL DISCOURSE, MORAL REGULATION AND DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMATION: THE CASE OF TURKEY

Thesis submitted to the

Institute for Graduate Studies in the Social Sciences

in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

International Relations: Turkey, Europe And the Middle East

by

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2021

Governmental Discourse, Moral Regulation and Democratic Legitimation:

The Case of Turkey

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February 2021

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

Governmental Discourse, Moral Regulation and

Democratic Legitimation: The Case of Turkey

This thesis aims to demonstrate the substantial regulatory impact of the governmental discourse of the Justice and Development Party (JDP). Despite the fact that JDP had exhibited a model for the accommodation of Islamic discourses and actors in democratic structures, about a decade after its coming to power, JDP increasingly lost ground in its compliance with the democratic norms and values. JDP's compliance with the secular notions of Turkish government, however, presented a rather complex picture. While the party preserved its moderate character by refraining from explicitly overturning secular structures as feared, it gradually assumed an authoritarian moralizing character on the discursive level and utilized this increasing authority to thwart and diminish the secular norms. The hegemonic effect of JDP's domineering moral leadership often left little need for bureaucratic and legal regulatory reforms on religious affairs. In order to understand the moralizing impact of JDP discourse, three distinct topics concerning especially the citizens' bodily autonomy is analyzed. The governmental discourse on these topics exemplify how separate calls for democratic demands are deliberated differently as the governmental authority decides upon which democratic demands for rights and freedoms could be considered morally legitimate. Such moralizing claims when produced by the governmental actors with disproportionate discursive influence bring about spiraling hegemonic social structures of regulation.

ÖZET

Governmental Discourse, Moral Regulation and Democratic Legitimation: The Case of Turkey

Bu tez, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin (AKP) kullandığı hükümet söyleminin yarattığı etkin düzenleyici ve denetleyici etkiyi göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Önceleri İslami söylemlerin ve aktörlerin demokratik yapılarda yer alması konusunda bir model oluşturan AKP, iktidara gelişinden yaklaşık on yıl kadar sonra demokratik norm ve değerlere olan bağlılığını giderek yitirmiştir. Buna rağmen, partinin Türkiye Cumhuriyeti devletinin bir parçası olan laiklik ilkesi ile kurduğu ilişki çok daha karmaşık bir tablo ortaya koymaktadır. Parti, korkulduğu üzere laik yapıları doğrudan alt üst etmeye girişmeyerek ılımlı karakterini korumuştur; fakat, söylemsel düzeyde giderek otoriter bir ahlaki karaktere bürünmüş ve bu sayede artan merkezi otoritesini seküler normları engellemek ve sarsmak için kullanmıştır. AKP'nin otoriter ahlaki liderliği, hegemonik etkisi sayesinde çoğunlukla dini alanda büyük ölçekli bürokratik ve yasal düzenlemelere ihtiyaç duyulmamasını sağlamıştır. AKP söyleminin ahlaki etkisinin anlaşılması için, özellikle yurttaşların bedensel özerkliğine ilişkin üç ayrı konu incelenmiştir. Bu konular üzerinde üretilen hükümet söylemi, hükümetin hangi demokratik taleplerin ahlaki olarak meşru kabul edilebileceğine dair yetkiyi üstlenerek, farklı demokratik taleplerin nasıl farklı şekillerde müzakere ettiğini örneklemektedir. Orantısız söylemsel etkiye sahip hükümet aktörleri tarafından üretilen bu tür sübjektif ve ahlaki beyanlar, döngüsel ve hegemonik sosyal regülasyon yapıları yaratmaktadır.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor Assist. Prof. Alper Yağcı for their guidance and mentorship. I also would like to thank the rest of my thesis committee, Prof. Yeşim Arat and Assoc. Prof. Özlem Altan-Olcay for their insightful advice and encouragement; as well as Aslı Orhon for their help through my graduate experience.

I was lucky to have many friends supporting me throughout the writing of this thesis. My kindest thanks are to my “support team” Sophia and Zoe for listening to me and accompanying me in every step of the way.

Above all, I want to thank the two marvellous women in my life, Naz and Hülya, for being there to motivate, animate and inspire me throughout my academic and personal journey.

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ABBREVIATIONS

In the alphabetic order some abbreviations utilized in the thesis is as follows:

BDP – Peace and Democracy Party

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

ILGA – The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association

JDP – Justice and Development Party

Kaos GL – Kaos Gay and Lesbian Cultural Research and Solidarity Association

MP – Member of parliament

NMP – Nationalist Movement Party

RPP – Republican People's Party

VP – Virtue Party

WP – Welfare Party

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

With the volatility in the Middle East and North Africa region upon the turn of the century, especially with the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001, the fear of a possible upsurge in the culturalist attacks towards Islam was heightened. In such political atmosphere, a functioning model of a moderate Islamic democracy could have served to disprove the presumption that the dualism of 'God and Caesar, church and state, spiritual authority and temporal authority' is exclusive to Western culture and that intrinsically in 'Islam, God is Caesar' (Huntington, 2007, p. 70). In that regard, at the start of its political path Turkey's Justice and Development Party (JDP) set out a remarkable example for political scientists. JDP and the Turkish example was noteworthy in the sense that it could engage Islam in a functional democratic governance in the region thus implying that predominantly Muslim societies would also be able to embark in democratization processes. This entailed a positive outcome for the suggestion that the Islamist political movements in such societies could be reciprocally accommodated within democratic structures and thus moderate through their participation. This was in line with the 'moderation through inclusion' argument which hypothesized that radical popular groups may be moderated through their attempts at engagement in the democratic game. The hypothesis was that radical religious groups, in this case Islamic groups, may similarly become more moderate in their political demands and behaviors through their involvement in the democratic competition. Such an understanding would consequently eliminate the notion that Islamic political groups are somewhat

inherently inclined to subvert the secular regimes and pose a threat to the effective operation of democratic systems and virtues in the long run.

However, despite JDP's initial performance to accommodate its Islamic character within Turkish political structures, about a decade after its coming to power, the party's political practices began to signal a turn for a more authoritarian governance. Especially after the 2013's Gezi Park protests and the following human rights violations, Turkey under the JDP growingly lost its ground in its compliance with the democratic norms and values. The outcome was a democracy of a mixed and complex nature in Turkey. For most of its incumbency, the JDP regime preserved the secular characteristics inherent in the Turkish democratic regime. In this sense, Turkey's JDP kept its promise of moderation and refrained from explicitly overturning secular structures as feared. However, as per the other examples of democratic backsliding in the third wave, albeit not with a sudden and stark collapse of democratic structures, Turkey still experienced a fall from democratic grace in especially the last decade of the JDP regime. The democratic backsliding was perhaps subtler than expected, the democratic institutions and structures were weakened rather than overturned, civil liberties were curtailed rather than overtly distorted, democratic rules and legitimacy of opponents were undermined rather than completely rejected.[1] Where there were open and undisputable attack on democratic governance, JDP's governmental discourse was quick to validate these political actions as being just the opposite, proclaiming them as legitimate political moves decided by a legitimate majority party and done with the intention of preserving the democratic rights and freedoms of the majority.

[1] See here, the four key indicators of authoritarian behavior in the chapter Fateful Alliances in Levitsky and Ziblatt.

The assertion that democratic backsliding in the third wave often begins with words[2] was true for Turkey's backsliding under JDP as well; while the party preserved its moderate Islamic character without overtly challenging the institutions and norms of secularism, it increasingly assumed an authoritarian moralizing character on the discursive level and utilized this increasing authority to thwart and diminish the democratic institutions and norms. For the most part JDP moral leadership was so overly impactful in social regulation and policing that regulatory and judicial contentions remained unnecessary. As JDP's governmental discourse occupied and dominated all social spheres, the existence and utterance of different discourses slowly became unthinkable, which thus created a mechanism of auto-control. Therefore, JDP's claim to commitment to a majoritarian understanding of democracy remained despite its growing authoritarianism.

Situated within this background, this thesis aims to analyze JDP's governmental discourse and its moralizing and legitimizing power, in order to establish its relation to the party's growing authoritarianism. The relationship between JDP's governmental discourse and its gradual shift to authoritarianism seems to be mutually reinforcing. This relation is due to the two characteristics of the governmental discourse; namely its legitimizing and moralizing effects. With growing governmental capacity and coercion achieved through authoritarianization, the cost of formulating separate or contrasting discourses increases, which consequently transforms JDP's moral leadership into a moral hegemony. Thus, the regulatory impact of JDP's governmental discourse is increased with the increased authoritarianism of its regime. In turn the increased impact of JDP's political discourse is deployed to legitimize the increasingly authoritarian practices. Thus, as

[2] Ibid, Subverting Democracy, paragraph 10.

the moralizing political language validates or disproves certain social practices and norms, discursive strategies are also employed to legitimize the moral impacts of the language as well. The legitimizing discourse of JDP veils the expanding authoritarianism by reformulating free and equal political participation, democratic citizenship and the democratic relationship between civilian and governmental bodies. This claim to moral leadership and legitimate democratic citizenship creates a fertile ground for the party's authoritative tendencies. The result is the supremacy of governmental discourse in the marketplace of ideas concerning the appeal of religious norms; and an increasingly authoritative regime that is both reinforcing and is reinforced by its own discourse creating a downward spiral of democratic backsliding.

1.1 Outline

In order to analyze this reciprocal reinforcement, I will first aim to establish the theoretical grounds of moderation through inclusion hypothesis and analyze the literature on the democratic backsliding in the third wave. Then I will apply the theoretical knowledge on the topic to give a recap of the interconnected account of moderation and democratic backsliding in Turkey, asserting how the Turkey under JDP government had gone through a serious democratic recession despite its religiously moderate political display and limited outright and radical attacks to secular democracy.

Then I will go on to analyze the notions of democratic legitimation and authority in order to establish the relation between the democratic deliberation and governmental speech. I will argue, through the concepts of deliberative democracy and the moral authority to govern, that rather than presenting an example of representative democracy, JDP's utilization of moderate Islam as a moralizing and

legitimizing rhetoric advanced the democratic backsliding process in Turkey and attacked the very thing it was expected to be an example of: representative democracy. The argument here, in relation to the moderation and the backsliding hypothesis will be that it is the excessive and coercive use of the moralizing and legitimizing governmental discourse that endangers the democratic structures. Thus, despite the fact that being a Islamic party may have hitherto supplied a moral authority to JDP, the democratic recession at the time of JDP was not a result of the religious nature of their discourse per se but rather their utilization of such discourse to shift and subvert the notion of democracy according to a single moral outlook.

With these hypotheses, I will look into the governmental speech on three distinct topics in order to break down the discursive strategies that JDP employ to command the political conversation on the democratic rights of freedoms of distinct groups. With my first case on the topic of headscarf, I will have the chance to establish how the JDP's governmental discourse functions to display the headscarved girl as a legitimate citizen whose rights and freedoms should be protected by the democratic norms and regulations. Here the political conversation between the incumbent party and the opposition would set a good example of how, JDP's religious discourse is not per se the perpetrator since for this topic it was able to serve as a tool to advocate for further democratic freedoms for a group of citizens, especially since we observe most arguments that JDP makes for the headscarf freedom is made in the name of democratic governance.

However, the inclusive and pluralistic understanding of democracy quickly changes form on the topic on the LGBT+ rights and freedoms. Here JDP's governmental discourse takes a distinct and thoroughly contrasting turn and a much more antagonistic stance towards the democratic demands of the group of citizens is

exhibited. The notion of democracy was still relevant for JDP's discussion of the issues, yet this time the understanding of democracy was much more minimal, and more focused on the authority of the majority rather than being inclusive. What made these two discursive strategies particularly interesting however is that both are used to reinforce the democratic legitimation of JDP's authority. While the party's discourse on the headscarf issue emphasized the willingness of JDP to support citizens democratic freedoms, the discourse on the LGBT+ issue was contingent on a majoritarian understanding whereby the party's stance was justified with its commitment to represent the majority concern against the matter. Both strategies legitimized the democratic status of the party, veiling the moralizing impact of the party's discourse as well as its increasing authoritarianism.

A similar justification through majoritarian approach to democracy was also prevalent in the third empirical case analyzed which was the discourse on the women's bodily autonomy. Here, JDP discourse argued for a "local" conception of women's rights as the political actors made sweeping assumptions on the moral and religious values of the Turkish women, while simultaneously antagonizing liberal demands made by feminists. The demands from women which were deemed transgressive and immoral were quickly brushed aside as alien to the essence of the Turkish and Islamic values, which were only up to interpretation by the JDP discourse itself. Considering the liberal and individualist approach to women's bodily autonomy in the case of headscarf, the discourses on the alternative matters of bodily integrity such as adultery and abortion was significant, as it denoted how separate calls for democratic accommodation were treated in dissimilar ways determined by the party's subjective moral grounds and its political interests. The moralizing governmental discourse then comes to effect as the governmental

authority decides upon which democratic demands for rights and freedoms could be considered morally legitimate. Such subjective moral decisions reflected in governmental discourse create rifts between the citizens, bring about reciprocally reinforcing social structures of (self-)censorship with the unequal influence of the governmental discourse due to the regulatory capabilities of the state. This is exemplified through the mention of Istanbul Convention in the third case. Istanbul Convention exemplified how the discourse produce by the government may have regulatory power as well as a hegemonic impact.

These three cases thus illustrate the moralizing impact of JDP's discourse and its complex relation with the recent authoritarianization. The Turkish case of democratic backsliding demonstrates the importance of democratic deliberation and communication between political actors; and reveals that government's over-confidence in the legitimacy of its own perception of the good life may hinder such deliberation by creating overbearing populist discourses that infantilize its citizens and antagonize its opposition. Despite nuances that differentiate Turkish case of democratic backsliding from other examples, it is important to observe that an intricate relation between religion and democracy, a discourse that creates authority through moralization and an authority that utilizes discourse to legitimize its political and moral supremacy is not particular to JDP, nor Turkey, nor Islam. That is why in the final chapter the Turkish case is analyzed once again, in comparison with the democratization paths of two other cases, Tunisia and USA, with emphasis on the notions of moderation, religiosity and discourse.

1.2 Methodology: Discourse

The utilization of such concepts as "discourse" and "text" are not uncommon in social studies. Although, throughout the various research that had been done within

social studies and humanities, the definition for “discourse” had been presented so as to denote a range of implications; for the field of discourse analysis, “discourse” evidently forms the principal subject of thought and is construed similarly by various scholars as ‘instances of communicative action in the medium of language’ (Johnstone, 2018, p. 4). Despite the fact that the terminology regarding the concepts of discourse and discourse analysis is often analogous with the notion of language; for the studies of discourse analysis, the specific term “discourse” implies a rather abstract and ambient concept. The definition of discourse involves a hypothetical understanding of language systems as modes for comprehension and articulation of the world outside of the vernacular itself. Therefore, the varied and interdisciplinary studies that comprise the discourse analysis paradigm share a common issue-driven interest in ‘the way social power, abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context’ (Van Dijk, 2001, p.352). The specific focus on the analysis of the interplay between discourse and socio-cultural processes anchor the differing approaches in the field. According to Jorgensen and Phillips (2002, p.63), critical discourse analysis in its core aims to ‘reveal the role of discursive practice in the maintenance of the social world, including those social relations that involve unequal relations of power’. Discourse analysis, therefore, connects the semiotic data of language with the world outside the language, in order to make a statement about the social and cultural relations that construct the rhetoric.

In this thesis I aimed to utilize discourse analysis to examine JDP’s governmental discourse on three distinct topics, namely: the issues concerning the liberation of headscarf in public spaces, the issues concerning the freedoms of LGBTI+ persons and the rights advocacy of LGBTI+ organizations and the issues

concerning bodily autonomy of the citizens, especially women, such as adultery, abortion and child birth. For collecting data regarding governmental speech on these issues my method was to go through newspaper archives. I selected to go through the archives of Hurriyet as a starter, due to the reason that it had preserved a stable high circulation rank for the past three years and had an internet archive that is relatively easier to browse. I took my search in the Hürriyet archive as a basis however, in some instances where the speech material is covered better in other news sources, or better yet if I can find the video recording of the said speech, I preferred to include that as a source. I have translated each speech myself attempting to stay close to the verbatim meaning while also preserving the authenticity of the claims.

CHAPTER 2

ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY

When JDP came to office in the beginning of the millennium, the moderate Islamic discourse of the party and its commitment to the bolstering of civilian democracy in Turkey, did not only bode well for the democratic future of the country but also for the dismantling of the essentialist and antagonistic perceptions towards Islam and Islamist political actors. In the first years of its incumbency, JDP thus served as a pronounced example of how a moderate Islam discourse could function within the structures of democracy. This bolstered the arguments concerning the possible moderation of more radical political perspectives through participation in democratic processes. The application of moderation through participation thesis provided valuable expectations and postulations on the democratic behaviors of the political actors with Islamic discourses.

JDP's democratic journey as well as the evolution of its discourse demonstrates that Islamic elements may exist within democratic structures; furthermore, in some cases these elements may contribute to the deepening of democracy and expanding the democratic rights and freedoms for the citizens. However, the Turkish case in particular, also reveals how religion may be dogmatized and utilized as a rhetorical device to underpin the moral authority of the political actors, thus allowing the authority to centralize. This authority, readily available through the moral influence of religion, may thus result in a political environment that is susceptible to authoritarianization.

In order to better understand the relation of the moderate Islam discourse of JDP and the recent democratic backsliding of Turkish regime, however, it is

important to situate the Turkish case within the third wave of the global democratic recession. The arguments on the subtle and varied patterns of democratic backsliding in the third wave demonstrate that democracy may be stripped of its contents and utilized by political actors to legitimize their authoritarian practices which then illustrates how the JDP discourse was able to conceal its growingly domineering power,

Theorizing upon the literature on democratic backsliding and moderation, may thus allow one to trace the discursive path of Islam and democracy under the JDP regime. It can be argued that while the moderate religious views can be functional and fruitful within the democratic structure; in Turkish case it appeared that dogmatic religious discourses may also be utilized by political actors to accumulate authority after integration in democratic structures, and such accumulation and centralization of authority may be concealed with the subtle and varied methods to hollow out democratic norms and institutions. This allows one to better grasp how, in its democratic journey JDP has utilized its moralizing discourse to foster a deeper Islamization of the society rather than of the government institutions as was feared; and how it discursively legitimized its growing authority through a minimal and non-pluralistic conception of democracy.

2.1 Moderation Through Inclusion Thesis

In her essay *Myths of Moderation*, Nancy Bermeo (1997) refers to what she calls the "moderation argument" which refers to the fact that radical popular groups may moderate their behavior and political demands in order to undergo democratic transitions. Despite the fact that popular mobilization is needed to achieve more extensive representation within democracies, Bermeo's argument against moderation assertes that 'popular participation sometimes harms rather than enhances

democratization' (Bermeo, 1997, p. 305). Upon her research on democratic transition in the 1990s, Bermeo (1997, p. 307-311) concludes moderation attempts had proven to be either destabilizing or at least unproductive and superficial.

Despite the ambiguity on whether moderation refers to demands or the tactics employed by the political group, moderation broadly refers to a process whereby the group moves 'along a continuum from radical to moderate' (Schewedler, 2011, p. 352). In most cases moderation implies a more strict and common adherence to the liberal concepts of individual human rights and democratic understandings of pluralism and tolerance (Schewedler, 2011, p. 352). According Güneş Murat Tezcur (2010, p. 10-11):

> Moderation can be defined on two analytical levels. Ideological moderation can be defined as a process through which political actors espouse ideas that do not contradict the principles of popular sovereignty, political pluralism, and limits on arbitrary state authority. … Behavioral moderation concerns the adaptation of electoral, conciliatory, and non-confrontational strategies that seek compromise and peaceful settlement of disputes at the expense of nonelectoral, provocative, and confrontational strategies that are not necessarily violent but may entail contentious action.

Drawing upon the same analysis of ideological and behavioral moderation, Schewedler (2011, p. 352) underlines the fact that moderation in behavior in way of participation in electoral and other democratic processes, which may prima facie indicate the group's incorporation of liberal and democratic norms, may not be sufficient indicators for moderation by itself, since 'participation is a form of political behavior that a group might adopt for purely strategic purposes while continuing to harbour a more radical political agenda'. Based on such understanding of moderation, Schewedler (2011) outlines three models of moderation that are; 'behavioral moderation of groups, the ideological moderation of groups; and the ideological moderation of individuals'.

Though moderation theories could be applied to any radical political group, religious or non-religious, the recent studies of moderation focus heavily on the consolidation of Islamic groups and ideologies in democratic structures of the Middle East and North Africa. Such studies provide insight on how Islamic actors operate within liberal democratic spheres. In his work *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe* Stathis Kalyvas (1996) analyzes the identities and the formation of Christian Democratic political groups in West Europe, namely in Belgium, Austria, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, and tries to understand how these parties attempts to reconcile their religious stance with the democratic secular values of their countries. In an article published in 2000, Kalyvas also compares Islamic Salvation Front of contemporary Algeria and the Catholic Party of nineteenth century Belgium. In the comparison Kalyvas (2000, p. 379-381) concludes that Algerian Islamist groups lack the commitment to moderation that Catholic groups exemplified in Belgium; according to Kalyvas, this difference stems from the fact that Islam does not have a 'centralized, and hierarchical religious structures' through which the newly emerging Christian groups are able to denote their commitment with credibility.

According to Schwedler (2011, p. 354), Kalyvas's comparison gives substance to the arguments concerning the exceptionality of Islam and thus 'undermines the ability of Islamists to demonstrate their commitment to embracing moderation'; not only that but also, Schwedler propounds that Kalyvas's comparison does not hold since he compares Islam with the Catholic church 'which just happens to be characterized by strong hierarchical authority'. Furthermore, the same processes of moderation had been observed in secular groups as well; such as the socialist parties of nineteenth century Europe (Przeworski and Sprague, 1986). With the participation into democratic procedures, socialist parties had undergone a similar

moderation of their goals, in order to signal credibility and commitment to the democratic values (Kalyvas, 1996). In the view of such studies then, the path of moderation is determined more by the power structures that are historically established and local conditions rather than by the religiosity of the political groups.

Mona El-Ghobashy (2005, p. 374) analyses Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, and asserts that Botherhood had experienced 'organizational and ideological transformations endemic to any party or social movement' in the way that they, first of all, had to strategically moderate their behavior in order to benefit from the political incentives that emerged, which then gave way to ideological moderation as well. El-Ghobashy (2005, p. 390) states that Muslim Brothers who had started out their political journey with the aim of establishing a strict Islamic society and state, were 'instead irrevocably transformed into a flexible political party that is highly responsive to the unforgiving calculus of electoral politics'; throughout their political journey the Brotherhood had grasped every political opportunity and fervently engaged in vote-seeking behavior which confirmed that 'the institutional rules of participation rather than the commandments of ideology … motivate political parties' (El-Ghobashy, 2005, p. 390). Thus, participation procedurally brings forth moderation in ideology and organization. El-Ghobashy (2005, p. 390), however, criticizes the moderation studies in a way, by claiming that the debates on whether Islamic groups moderate or radicalize, detract from 'how Islamists actually behave in semi-democratic political theaters'; not only that but she also asserts that the analysis of Islamist groups as 'political actors jockeying for advantage, relevance, and support' results in the understanding of their ideological statements as effects of their politics rather than predictors of it. According to El-Ghobashy (2005, p. 390), it is essential to keep in mind that, 'Islamist parties are subject to the same institutional

rules' therefore, will and do undergo the pressures experienced by other secular groups in their political competition.

The nuances in moderation processes and the shortcomings of blanket assumptions on the nature and goal of the moderation is highlighted by several scholars of the field. In a slight contrast to models of inclusion-moderation that employ different sequencing arguments concerning ideological and behavioral moderation, as well as group and individual moderation, Tezcur (2010, p. 83) asserts that the 'process of moderation is not deterministic'. Thus, despite the fact that moderation may include levels of ideological and behavioral change, there is not a single mechanism whereby moderation at one level leads way to another, instead 'moderation can and does take place along multiple tracks simultaneously' (Schwedler, 2011, p. 365). Moreover, according to Tezcur (in Schwedler, 2011, p. 366-367) inclusion in itself does not increase the number of individuals with moderate views within the group necessarily; rather, it makes these individuals more visible; in other words, political openings that facilitate inclusion moderate those individuals who have 'already abandoned radical world views'.

A similar notion is reflected within the work of Michaelle Browers (2009, p.9) as well who focuses on ideological change at the level of individuals and highlights 'the importance not only of ideology' but also of the 'individuals and groups of individuals in the formulation of ideology and the forging of cross-ideological cooperation'. According to Browers (2009, p.9) moderation studies often 'focus on structural conditions — such as the democratic openings of the early 1990s, which are said to have brought more groups into political processes', as examples of moderation in result of political inclusion, however in the meantime, they tend to overlook the intellectual and ideological background of these examples

which were mostly shaped by ‘exclusion and closings and conflicts (rather than inclusion and openings)’. Focusing solely on how the structural changes impact ideological change may disregard the existing individuals and ideas that expedite moderation in the first place. Browers’s argument here, is not to necessarily omit such causal links; instead she offers a reminder ‘that structures and agents, material conditions, and ideological contexts exist within a dialectical relationship’. Moderation, of radical beliefs and ideologies necessitate an environment of free speech and deliberation through which intellectuals may ‘interact and develop alternative frameworks for politics and society’, in that sense, the argument is that:

> The real challenge for the cultivation of progressive political ideologies in the Arab region is not the existence of Islamist thinkers or movements, but the dominance of particularist discourses that intellectuals try to assert as the basis of unity with the aim of responding to and opposing what is understood to be a cultural assault from the West. (Browers, 2009, p.179)

A similar account is given by Schwedler (2011, p. 371), according to whom the studies on moderation often emphasize this irrationality of assuming a dichotomy between behavior and ideology of actors. What they usually fail to acknowledge, however, is the fact that a ‘normative bias undergirds much of the inclusion-moderation literature: we want Islamists to become more moderate’.

2.2 Democratic Backsliding in the Third Wave

The foundations of the concept of democratic backsliding could be found in Samuel P. Huntington’s analysis of what he calls “the third wave of democracy” (1991a). In his analysis of the third wave, Huntington also focuses on the existence of reverse waves. According to Huntington (1991a, p. 12), the first prominent wave of democratization began with the 1820 and resulted in the formation of twenty-nine democratic states, however, the transition to democracy was interrupted with the first reverse wave, initiated by Italy’s Mussolini, which cut down the number of those

democratic states to twelve. A similar pattern also occurred in the second wave of democratization, upon the victory of the Allied Forces in the Second World War, which was once again accompanied by a reverse wave which have reduced to number of democratic regimes from thirty-six to thirty (Huntington 1991a, p. 12). Hence Huntington, asserts that the third wave of democratization may also follow suit, and a reverse wave could be observed. Such reverse waves may be initiated and facilitated by many different factors, just like the waves of democratization themselves. In any way, the conceptualization of reverse waves posited the possibility that political processes can work in reverse and that 'historical processes are messy and political changes do not sort themselves into neat historical boxes' (Huntington, 1991b, p. 15). This understanding of history, as well as historical and political processes such as democratization as not being 'unidirectional', urged scholars to analyze instances of reverse democratization (Huntington, 1991b, p. 15). Indeed, Gero Erdmann (2011, p. 21) states with the 'ebb of the third wave of democratization, the persistence of hybrid and authoritarian regimes and even the resurgence of the latter have not only posed a new political challenge, but have also provided a new research agenda'.

One reason that the area of democratic backsliding yields fruitful is the fact that the term covers an extensive breadth. Backsliding of democracy functions in different ways, with the results and the pacing of the backsliding varying within various contexts. There may be cases where backsliding occurs with 'rapid and radical change across a broad range of institutions' which may give rise to 'regimes that are unambiguously authoritarian'; there may however, also be cases where backsliding is gradual, with the changes impacting a restricted set of institutions which may be 'less likely to lead to all-out regime change and more likely to yield

political systems that are ambiguously democratic or hybrid' (Bermeo, 2016, p. 6). Backsliding can happen in regimes that are either democratic or authoritarian (Lust and Waldner, 2015, p.2). Therefore, backsliding can result in the weakening of democratic norms and institutions as well as complete breakdowns. Thus, since democratic backsliding may yield much 'finer nuances or degrees of change than in the case of regime changes', not only an analysis that is more apt to detect smaller gradation is required but also 'a refined conceptualization of democracy' is needed (Erdmann, 2011, p. 39).

However, democracy is often a multi-dimensional concept which can be defined and utilized in different perspectives. While minimalists' stances centralize electoral processes, scholars with maximalist stances on democracy highlight the importance of 'highly informed citizens to engage in near-constant deliberation to produce policies that maximize social, economic, and cultural equality' (Lust and Waldner, 2015, p. 2). Moreover, the variables that induce or accelerate democratic growth and strengthening remain equally ambiguous. Erdmann (2011, p. 35) asserts that: 'it is a common view among social scientists that no single variable or factor can entirely explain the transition to or the development of democracy in a country', and that democratization is the result of a combination of causes. The same is true for the reversal of democratization and democratic backsliding; not only the combination of possible factors may vary across social and political contexts but they may also differ from one "reverse wave" of democratization to another in the same context.

The patterns of democratic backsliding have also evolved since the Cold War; the extensive and dramatic democratic changes such as the military takeovers, executive coups, overt subversion and defrauding of electoral processes are now much rarer. Such dramatic changes had given their way to more subtle changes that

are harder to be tracked down and persecuted. As for the outset of the backsliding process, the Lust and Waldner (2015, p. 2-3) argue that democratic backsliding occurs when such changes takes place in a regime that negatively impact the democratic notions of 'competitive elections, liberties, and accountability'; these three notions are intrinsically linked to one another which then suggests that an important change in any of these would lead way to changes in the others. All three notions are indispensable aspects of democratic regimes, and democratic backsliding may occur at multiple dimensions concurrently (Lust and Waldner, 2015, p. 3).

The change in pace between the more dramatic and sudden breakdowns of the past and the recent gradual backsliding, means that the impact of the changes is less violent, however according to Bermeo (2016) the democratic erosion that is more recently experienced also offers its own challenges. Despite the increasing scholarly work on hybrid regimes, one such challenge is faced by the social scientist who still need to internalize the concept of democracy as "a collage" of institutions crafted and re-crafted by different actors at different times' in order to understand how the politicians that engage in de-democratization activities dismantle these institutions one by one (Bermeo, 2016, p. 14). Another challenge posed is political in the sense that the slow and ambiguous reversal of democratization may reduce the likelihood of the emergence of opposition movements which could otherwise be ignited by dramatic interruptions of democracy (Bermeo, 2016, p. 14). Opposing to these more recent forms of backsliding is further complicated by the notion that the actors and institutions that contribute to democratic backsliding are often formed as rational defensive responses against certain previous assaults and are legitimized by those democratic structures that they are undermining. Bermeo (2016, p. 15) states that the contemporary forms of backsliding often muster extensive popular support which

means that the attempts to reverse the backsliding process may be met with popular reaction; the problem is further aggravated when 'supporters of backsliding have a credible democratizing agenda of their own' which especially happens when the appeal for institutional change comes from 'marginalized groups that rise up to demand a more inclusive and responsive democratic model'.

Against these challenges offered by the recent patterns of backsliding however, Amel Ahmed (2014, p. 12) interrogates the normative perception of backsliding as a 'theoretical move back on an imagined linear trajectory'. Backsliding does not perforce mean that democratic progress in the next historical period is less likely; since not only that fluctuations may happen in both autocratic and democratic regimes but also these backsliding periods can mobilize certain political narratives that groups can utilize to demand further strengthening of democracy. Thus Ahmed (2014, p. 14) asserts, that backsliding 'need not always be remedied' and that certain political actions that may be considered as backsliding 'may, in fact, help to strengthen and consolidate democracy in the long run'. Lust and Waldner (2015, p. 6) utilize Ahmed's argument to further claim that similar attempts to overhaul democratic backsliding may not always achieve democratization as the processes of democratization and democratic recession remain intricately entwined.

2.3 A Quick Recap of Civilian Democracy in Turkey

Turkey's democratic adventure has surely been a rocky one. After the establishment of the Republic in 1923, the country had upheld a single party regime for twenty-two years. Despite the efforts to kickstart the multiparty politics, the Republican People's Party (RPP), which was established by the founders of the Republic itself, remained in power up until 1950. Only after about a quarter of a decade later than the birth of

the new republic, Republican People's Party was meaningfully contested by Democratic Party (DP) which won the popular vote in the second multiparty elections of the government in 1950. The Democratic Party government was interrupted however, by a coup d'etat in 1960. Civil government that ensued from 1961 onwards was interrupted again by the military coups of 1971 and 1980, along with the "postmodern" coup of 1997 whereby Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan was demanded to step down from his office and was later accused of violating the separation of religion and state.

The military oversaw civilian politics almost constantly throughout its unstable years as the governing parties and coalitions often were cognizant and deferential of this assumed role of military as the "guardian" of Kemalism, the principles upon which the Republic was founded. The persistent and powerful role of the military was a striking feature of Turkish politics after the Second World War, despite the gradual and sometimes halting transition toward liberal democracy. Hale and Özbudun (2010, p. 80) explain this as a condition of the fact that, 'Turkey never went through [such experiences as] the trauma of defeat in the Second World War or the collapse of fascist or Soviet-directed communist regimes' which 'had drastically undermined military prestige and power'. Instead Turkish collective memory was occupied by the experience of their War of Independence within the First World War in which both the military and the republican founders were depicted 'wholly positive' (Hale and Özbudun, 2010, p.80). After the national struggle against the occupying Allied powers of the First World War, the new Republic was founded by the leaders of the struggle, many of whom were ex-Ottoman Military officers. In his mission of founding and reforming the Turkish Republic, founding leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had not only swept away the old institutions of Ottoman Empire

including those that had Islamic connotations, such as Islamic lodges, zawiyahs and the caliphate; but also through those reforms Atatürk aimed to eliminate ‘the idea that the state's legitimacy rested on its attachment to Islam’ (Hale and Özbudun, 2010, xvi). With the new Republic founded on such a secular understanding, the authority of the governments heading the country now derived their legitimacy from the attachment to values of Kemalism. According Hakan Yavuz (2009, p. 268), the military background of the founders Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and İsmet İnönü along with the other reasons, as stated above, resulted in military being unofficially appointed as a significant partner in ‘establishing and safeguarding unity and a secular state with reformist agenda and European orientation’, which inadvertently divided the sovereignty of the country ‘between those who are elected and those who are appointed, such as the military establishment and the civilian bureaucracy’.

In many ways after coming to power, the conservative Justice and Development Party (JDP) led by the former mayor of Istanbul, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, undertook a process of stripping the civilian politics from the military influence. According to Cizre (2008, p. 134) in the first few years after its victory in the 2002 elections, the JDP government was wary of a contention with the military while still implying through their policies an aim to ‘shift the epicenter of politics from the civil military bureaucracy to civil society’. JDP policies which signaled a certain reformism towards a more democratic and civilian form of decision-making through those years thus ‘highlighted an undeclared commitment’ towards the curtailment of the military influence (Cizre, 2008, p. 135).

In its foundation in 2001 JDP was established as a reformist branch of the Islamist “National Outlook” movement, the leaders of which ‘claimed to have abandoned the retrogressive Islamist outlook for democracy and human rights’ which

had fueled the analysis of the moderation of the Turkish Islamist movement (Yılmaz and Bashirov, 2018, p. 1816). However, the reform angle shifted from 'democratic consolidation' to 'consolidating its power and capturing the state in [JDP's] second period in power from 2007 to 2011' (Yılmaz and Bashirov, 2018, p. 1816). With this shift in process, JDP continued the reforms that were particularly focused on judiciary and military; with the reforms of 2010 bringing in 'sweeping changes to the Constitution, reorganizing the Constitutional Court and the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors', as well as conducting a 'series of investigations between 2008 and 2011 called Ergenekon and Balyoz' through which 'the government purged as well as put to trial tens of high-ranking military generals who were accused of plotting to overthrow the government' (Yılmaz and Bashirov, 2018, p. 1816).

The year 2007 is, thus, chosen by this thesis as a start of gradual change in discursive representations of democracy and human rights within JDP. All things considered the year of 2007 witnessed 'the most extreme manifestation of the "breakdown" in the civil-military equation' with 'an ultimatum-like statement put on the website of the general staff' (Cizre, 2008, p. 159). Not only the tone and wording of the statement was extraordinarily harsh but also the timing of the statement was significant since it came right after the first round of presidential elections held on 27 April (Cizre, 2008, p. 159). The memorandum signaled the failure of JDP's policy toward the erasure of military influence over civilian politics. The vulnerability of the party as a legitimate actor of civilian democracy against the military was highlighted with the statement; still, the commitment to democracy exemplified by the party had also resulted in the JDP's victory in 2007 presidential elections 'without putting the country through any crises' (Cizre, 2008, 161). According the Yavuz (2009, p. 267), the "silent revolution" that JDP had initiated during the first

years of its government, in order to 'protect both the republican principles and democracy', had resulted not only in the reduction of military's power but also in 'the evolution of a new moral language of politics' after the breaking point of 2007. JDP had redefined the understanding of politics as 'an instrument of propagating bureaucratic decisions to the people' rather than 'an instrument of articulating societal claims and demands'; and had changed the nature of political discourse in Turkey which had previously 'focused on the protection and consolidation of state power' and defined the nation 'as an extension of the state' (Yavuz, 2009, p. 274). JDP had reformulated the political terminology of Turkey with ideas that were put to practice by the emerging new bourgeoisie of the country. This has also resulted in the evolution of the Turkish political Islam. The year 2007 was important due to the sense of urgency it had instilled in JDP regarding the party's political legitimacy. According to Cizre (2008, p. 158) the discursive turn taken by JDP was a result of its 'survival instinct'. Cizre (2008, p. 158) describes JDP's attempt to guard its political existence claiming:

> The survival instinct of the government has told it to go with the flow of xenophobic outrage ... Escalating into a politics of hatred, this particular brand of nationalism, which was built on a polarized rhetoric and was marked with hostility towards leftists, democrats, liberals, EU supporters, human rights activists, anti-militarists and conscientious objectors, have been making streets and courtrooms unsafe. Thus, from 2007 onwards, experiencing that democratic reforms were not enough to defer confrontation with the military, JDP increasingly strived to establish and propagate narratives that bolstered its legitimacy as a political actor; while undermining the political legitimacy of the opposition in the meantime.

2.4 Democratic Backsliding and Moderation in Turkey

It has been argued by scholars that Turkey under the JDP regime had undergone a democratic backsliding process for at least since 2011 (Yılmaz et al, 2019, p. 1-3). However, despite the unanimous conjecture on the changing nature of Turkish democracy, and the parallels in the descriptions regarding the attributes of the

processes have been various. For the description of the concept of backsliding in Turkey, scholars used such terminology as; 'delegative democracy',' competitive authoritarianism', 'electoral authoritarianism' and 'weak authoritarianism' as well as others.[3] The different terminologies however, do not necessarily formulate different depictions of backsliding, but rather focus on distinct aspects of the similar overall processes. What is observed is that the authoritarian practices of JDP paired with 'its ongoing commitment to a minimal representative democracy and its insistence on legitimizing itself by invoking a majoritarian conception of a "national will"' left Turkish democracy in a limbo (Tansel, 2018, p. 200). Despite the fact that the exact nature of this new regime is hard to define due to 'its fluid and fast evolving nature', according to Akkoyunlu and Öktem (2016, p. 506) the political developments after the year 2015 and especially after the 2016 coup attempt forced the scholars to shift focus from the definitions of flawed or illiberal democracy for conceptualizing backsliding in Turkey and 'opt for sub-categories of authoritarianism'.

While recent studies on Turkish democracy are focused on its gradual authoritarianization; at the beginning of the millennium, the debate on Turkey's future trajectory 'revolved around two main clashing lines of analysis' which were either that 'Turkey was experiencing unprecedented levels of democratization and economic development, and that it aspired to play a positive role in its broader neighborhood' or that Turkey would take 'a more Islamic conservative turn in Turkish domestic and foreign politics' in order to likewise assume a hegemonic role

[3] For "delegative democracy" see: "Turkey – From Tutelary to Delegative Democracy" by Taş (2015); and "AKP at the crossroads: Erdoğan's majoritarian drift", Özbudun (2014). For "'competitive authoritarianism" see: "Turkey's Judiciary and the Drift toward Competitive Authoritarianism." Özbudun (2015) and "Rising Competitive Authoritarianism in Turkey" by Esen and Gümüşçü Ş. (2016). For "'electoral authoritarianism" see: "Examining State Capacity in the Context of Electoral Authoritarianism, Regime Formation and Consolidation in Russia and Turkey" by White & Herzog (2016) and "The AKP after 15 years: emergence of Erdoganism in Turkey" by Yılmaz and Bashirov (2018). For "weak authoritarianism" see: "Existential Insecurity and the Making of a Weak Authoritarian Regime in Turkey" by Akkoyunlu and Öktem (2016).

in its neighboring regions (Tziarras, 2018, p. 593). Thus, when first elected to office in 2002, the JDP government had presaged a possibility for the consolidation of civilian democracy. In fact, Tziarras (2018, p. 594) asserts that scholars analyzing the path of democracy under the JDP regime, frequently agree on 'the initial success of the JDP', however, they 'point to the eventual reversal of progressive reforms'. Likewise, in an article published a year after JDP's first victory in Turkish general elections Insel (2003, p. 293), pointed out that the newly JDP government 'created an unexpected possibility of exit from the authoritarian regime established after the military coup of September 1980'.

However, the 'golden age' of democracy under JDP had not lasted long, with the beginning of 2007, the democratic regime started to undergo a transition, and after the 2011 elections, 'the virtuous cycle of the first phase [went] into reverse' (Öniş, 2016, p. 142). Considering the fact that Turkey was performing relatively well on structural factors that were presupposed to be necessary for democratic progress, it was particularly thought provoking that the country was 'one of the major democratic under-performers' of the decade (Esen and Gümüşçü, 2016, p. 1584).

The starting point of JDP's shift to authoritarianism in governmental practices is often pinned around the year 2010, with the constitutional reforms of 2010 and the court cases against several members of military for alleged coup attempts; JDP's second electoral victory in 2007 is also mentioned 'as an earlier, but perhaps less explicit, crossing point' (Tansel, 2018, p. 205). Around the years 2007 to 2011, court cases of Ergenekon and Balyoz were pursued were military members were brought to court to 'answer allegations of conspiring to overthrow the elected … government' (Esen and Gümüşçü, 2016, p. 1585). Thus, within the year of 2010, JDP had appeased the politicized military actors and had halted the tutelary regime within

Turkey. Within the same period, JDP was also processing a series of actions to enhance the social democracy ‘as the representative of the disenfranchised — the social groups of explicitly Islamic or Kurdish identity formerly sidelined under the Kemalist regime’, thus increasing their legitimacy as democratic actors in Turkish politics (Esen and Gümüşçü, 2016, p. 1585). However, Esen and Gümüşçü, (2016, p. 1585) also assert that despite such crucial steps toward democracy, JDP’s democratic discourse at the time had oscillated ‘between liberal and majoritarian understandings of democracy’.

In any case it was the Gezi Park movements of 2013 with the government's violent counteraction against the protests as well as the subsequent human rights violations that severely thwarted JDP’s democratic credentials which was coincidentally followed by ‘discursive reconfiguration, as the party gradually replaced its own claim to creating a “conservative democracy” with that of a nebulous “advanced democracy”’(Tansel, 2018, p. 205). According to Esen and Gümüşçü (2016, p. 1583) however, this turn towards authoritarianism was not altogether unheralded; as they claim that Erdoğan’s and JDP’s discourse disclosed ‘attempts to polarize and politicize Turkish society’ and had ‘consistently violated the norms of impartiality in favor of the JDP’ which had thus hindered the effective practice of democracy.

According to Esen and Gümüşçü (2016, p. 1590) the ‘violation of civil liberties has taken a systematic form under the JDP government, which has not only created an uneven playing field but has also securitized dissent’.
Specifically, throughout its rule since 2002, the JDP regime established media networks that are sympathetic to its government, as well as utilizing its disciplinary powers in order to intimidate various media organs with ‘mass firings and

imprisonment of journalists, and buying off media moguls' (Esen and Gümüşçü, 2016, p. 1590). Blocking of social media and policing of free expression within such media platforms were also frequent. Such actions were referred to in the 2014 report of European Court of Human Rights which claimed that: 'In office for twelve years under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan the JDP has shown increasing intolerance of political opposition, public protest, and critical media' (in Esen and Gümüşçü, 2016, p. 1593).

Analyzing JDP's discourse of conservative democracy within Turkey, Doğanay (2007, p. 86) points out Erdoğan's pragmatic use of terms like "deepening of the democracy," "negotiation," "participatory democracy" and "dialog" which are often utilized by democratic actors in crises of democracy where demands for democratization occur with the perception of "democracy" not only as a "tool" but as a more sub-stratal notion through which individuals gain identity as political beings. According to Doğanay (2007, p. 86) JDP's use of such discourse without the adoption of the democratic perception from which they arise signifies that democracy is utilized pragmatically as a tool to further party interest.

This fall from grace in JDP's democratic performance does not solely serve as an insight for Turkish case of democratic backsliding. JDP's example with its persistent discursive commitment to minimalist democracy and with its institutions and legal frameworks in compliance with the minimal demands of electoral democracy despite the frequently noted authoritarian practices, also urges the observer to be wary of the 'Western liberal democracy as the only form for imagining "the political" and situating ideal-type liberal democratic institutions and practices as an effective antidote to the vagaries of authoritarian regimes' (Tansel, 2018, p. 205).

The democratic backsliding throughout the incumbency of JDP was also noteworthy since it served as a contradictory example to the validity of moderation through inclusion hypothesis, especially since the country was seen 'as "the" example of Islamic moderation in its early years of incumbency' (Kirdiş, 2018, p. 901). Despite the fact that Islamic political engagement had been visible since 1970s, Islamist actors taking center stage in Turkish politics could be traced back to the establishment of the Welfare Party (WP), in 1983. Upon its establishment, in compliance with the moderation through inclusion hypothesis, WP had progressively formulated policies that may appeal to the broader public as per the competitive demands of electoral democracy (Tezcür, 2009, p. 79). Yet despite its path towards moderation, WP had been banned by the Constitution Court with the fear of religious reactionism and Necmettin Erbakan, its chairman, was prohibited from engaging in political activities. Thus, Virtue Party (VP), established in its place in 1997, was mainly focused on organizational survival and despite the fact that the party took WP's moderation further, it could not receive necessary electoral support. Finally, after the Constitution Court had banned VP as well; the dispersed members formed two groups, 'the old guard established the Felicity Party in July, and the younger generation the JDP in August 2001' (Tezcür, 2009, p. 80).

Somer (2007, p. 1272) mentions that the moderation of political Islam was a deliberate choice for JDP, who had employed a 'pro-democracy programme and secular outlook' advisedly in order to not repeat the errors of its Islamist predecessors and to appeal 'to broader segments of the electorate'. The younger generation that formed JDP had the intention of being a pragmatic political force. They had learned from their predecessors' experiences that, 'ideologically driven platforms had both limited public appeal and rendered their parties vulnerable to

state repression' (Tezcür, 2009, p. 80). Thus, they had utilized a twofold strategy of presenting a centrist and inclusive platform and accommodating the secular elite and military in order to countervail possible hostilities.

This conciliatory approach to politics was also visible from the change in discursive characteristics of the JDP. According to Tezcür (2009, p. 80-81):

> Erdoğan utilized vernacular Islamic idiom to make his conciliatory stance accessible and meaningful to the crowds who listened to him. Whereas, for Erbakan, Islam was a holistic ideology that was in an inevitable struggle with the West, it has become a source of moderation and conciliation in the discourse of Erdoğan. For the latter, Islam has been a cultural source through which he could justify his ideological moderation and communicate it to the voters ... Erdoğan articulated Islam as a language of peace and political pluralism.

Yet, the moderate discourse that JDP had employed had not stayed consistent over its incumbency. Both political practices and discourse of the party, along with its chairman Erdoğan, started to evolve around 2007. After the 2011 elections, JDP had left behind its pluralistic and inclusive stance by defending the 10 per cent threshold in elections, retaining centrist political structures, and framed their 'unilateralist, imposing, moralistic and combative' social policies and views as democratic responses to the conservative popular demands (Çınar, 2018, p. 129). According to Çınar (2018, p. 131), it was not just the support of the popular masses evidenced by JDP's continuing electoral victories that was the source of JDP's claim to democratic legitimacy; during its time in government JDP also had devised a "nativist" understanding of democracy which promoted and defended the concept which Çınar deems as "our civilization." This local view to democracy freed the party from having to adhere to universal principles and demands of democratic governance. This salvational project also enabled JDP 'to elevate itself above politics and provided it with a pretext to concentrate power, shirk away from transparency and accountability and reject the principle of separation of powers' (Çınar, 2018, p. 131).

Furthermore, Erdoğan, whose charismatic leadership had ‘made up for the party's vague political identity’ and aided in the survival of the party through the anti-systemic reforms it had implemented in its early years, gradually started to deteriorate the party's pluralistic inner structures (Kirdiş, 2018, p. 905). According to Kirdiş (2018, p. 905) this lack of intra-party democracy, was in sharp contrast ‘with its early years when the party was an umbrella organization with various political leanings’. As mentioned above, the existence of charismatic leadership to legitimize democratic ideas and practices may accelerate ideological moderation. However, the strong leadership of Erdoğan, though in itself not necessarily a setback for democratization, was partly responsible for the constrained understanding of the party in concepts of equality and democracy. This relapse in pluralism contributed to demoderation of the party as well; making the members and the supporters of the party more wary of “the other” and “the unseen enemy” (Kirdiş, 2018, p. 905). According to Çınar (2018, p. 140) JDP’s demoderation was thus, ‘not a natural process, but a consequence of Erdoğan’s conscious disciplinary maneuvers which prevented the development of a centrist middle ground’. Çınar (2018, p. 140) asserts that Erdoğan had increased both the costs of opposing and the rewards of supporting his dictates and deliberately assigned a network of politicians, business-people and media-persons who had ‘dominated the public sphere and have made Erdoğan’s political logic the new paradigm of Turkish “democracy,” which thus empowered his person ‘at the expense of his party and Turkey’s democratic institutions’ with ‘his paternalism and zero-sum approaches’ being normalized through the process.

However, it was not just the intra-party politics that contributed to JDP’s moderation; Murat Somer (2007, 2014) also highlights the importance of the secular opposition and the formulations of a democratic political center in defining the

moderation pattern of JDP. In his study Somer (2014, p. 245) defines the country's political center as consisting of 'the mainstream social-economic, political and external environment of that country at a certain time' which, despite not determining political outcomes by itself, may still 'restrain political actors and influence their understandings of how to become and remain major power holders' thus impacting 'the content and consequences on democracy of moderation'. Therefore, considering the military tutelage and lack of a fully democratic center, it is argued that JDP was only able to follow the path to democracy only 'as far as the centre itself was democratic' and lacked the necessary tools and principles of political pluralism and deliberation which could have facilitated the meditation of 'the material and ideological conflicts between religious and secular actors' (Somer, 2014, p. 246). The lack of such mechanisms of mediation then resulted in the secular actors being threatened and radicalized against the democratization efforts of JDP.

According to Somer (2007, p. 1273) JDP's relation with democracy is shaped by the 'nature and decisions of the secularist political actors' as well as their own. In this sense, Somer (2007, p. 1273-1274) envisaged three different scenarios for democratization under JDP government in his 2007 study: the best possible case is when JDP is 'checked and balanced by strong secularist political parties that manage to translate secularist and nationalist concerns into political programmes combining modernization with further democratization', another is if JDP is against a strong secularist opposition with nationalist priorities which may urge JDP to conceive its own religious nationalism which would force Turkey to choose 'between two authoritarian forces: one secular-nationalist and the other Islamic conservative nationalist', the last option is if JDP is against a fragmented and weak secularist opposition. In such a case according to Somer (2007, p. 1273) the party could at first

introduce institutional and legal revisions ‘which may initially strengthen democracy, for example by reducing the military’s clout’, but it could also ‘be unable to resist promoting a deeper and faster Islamisation, not necessarily of government, but of society’ with the temptation of a lack of opposition which could also lead to the destruction of the party in the long term.

JDP’s political trajectory seems to have followed the latter third case with JDP’s earlier attempts at democratization coming up against harsh reactions from the military and Kemalist secular elite. JDP’s moderate Islam was almost more threatening for the secular actors then radical Islam which had made actors from both side unable to trust or communicate with each other (Somer, 2007, p. 1277). This, along with party’s diminishing intra-party pluralism and lack of keenness for ideological demoderation, had contributed to JDP’s lessening commitment to democracy and investment in further authoritarian safeguards to ensure its political survival. Thus with the prospects of EU membership and support of global democratic partners dwindling JDP had ‘became less interested in socio-economic reform, which was its major focus in its first two terms in office, and more interested in pursuing top-down policies aimed to administer the demands of a “moral majority”’(Kirdiş, 2018, p. 905-906). Party’s electoral dominance only served to bolster its majoritarian attitude, and legitimized Erdoğan’s understanding of a minimalistic non-pluralist version of democracy. Thus the party redefined the political center of Turkey, in a way that was not expected by the defenders of moderation-inclusion thesis, whereby JDP did not moderate and adapt to Turkey’s weak political center but instead, made it so that, other political actors — including not just the political parties and their members of the parliament, but also the

citizens, civilian organizations and structures with political influence such as military — are compelled to adjust to the center as defined by JDP itself.

CHAPTER 3

MORAL AUTHORITY AND DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMATION

As a conservative party emerging in the stoutly secular republic, JDP had to construct its political identity with an unreserved compliance to the democratic norms and values. Thus, from the very beginning, Turkey's JDP had an identity that is ineradicably contingent on the notion of democracy. Although one might have deemed the party's initial adherence to secular democratic values to be a tactic of survival, as observed in the above chapters, JDP's democratic performance at the time was also considered to be an example of the healthy functioning of a party with Islamic conservatist nature within the democratic structures. Despite the recent democratic backsliding and the ambivalent success of the party as an example of moderation however, throughout its incumbency the JDP discourse was indeed insistent on affirming its commitment to democracy. To fit this discursive commitment to democracy, in the face of its growing authoritarianism JDP's interpretation of what democracy was had to alter continuously. The moralizing nature of the government discourse contributed to the growing authoritarianism through the construction of a socially exclusive and minimal understanding of democracy by selecting what democratic demands were morally justifiable, and thus were democratically acceptable. In the meantime, however JDP also produced legitimizing discourses that obscured this moralizing attitude towards governance through constantly changing definitions of democracy. This double nature of the government discourse allowed the party to remain "moderate" in its contention with secular democracy while adopting an increasingly authoritarian governance method.

While forming its legitimizing discourse and describing the party's democratic character, JDP used minimal and pluralist definitions of democracy interchangeably, which is why an exploration of the arguments regarding the feasibility of different arguments for the authority of a democratic regime may serve beneficial to better analyze JDP's changing discourses on the topic. Different sources of democratic authority, as well as the limits of it, are crucial in understanding how democratic regimes legitimize themselves. Understanding the intricate relation of equality and freedom with the notion of democratic representation, and questioning whether the electoral consent of majority is enough to legitimize the moral authority of a democratic government such as JDP is also pivotal in examining JDP's relation with democracy and moderation. Considering how JDP shifts its governmental discourse — either focusing on its status a majority party, or its self-proclaimed status of the inclusionary defender of democratic freedom and equality — in the hereby chapter, I will thus explore the limits as to how much moral authority that different democratic processes may bestow upon a governing party in order to better grasp the discursive pendulum of JDP oscillating between the minimal and liberal definitions of democracy.

3.1 Democratic Legitimation and Minimal Electoral Conceptions of Democracy

As any other social structure, a governmental regime such as democracy sources its authority from its legitimation. The reason as to why an established democratic regime is considered legitimate and authoritative is, as a matter of course, tied with the illustrative reasons why a government of people should be established on the basis of democratic norms and structures. Such sources of legitimation may include arguments of utilitarianism whereby the democratic method is considered to be beneficial instrumentally to achieve the greatest happiness of the greatest number of

people. One such scholar is John Stuart Mill, who argues that ‘a completely popular government’ is the only practicable governance structure which is endowed with ‘the greatest amount of beneficial consequences, immediate and prospective’ (Mill, 1895) The argument is that a truly representative and popular government thus allows the citizens to act in a way that is self-protecting and self-dependent (Mill, 2003, p. 312-313). As democracy distributes power of decision making amongst the citizen body, there would be stronger incentives to make decisions that aim to achieve greatest utility for the society.

A different point from which the establishment of democratic regimes are argued for, occupies the ethical and moral territory. Such arguments, instead of focusing on the utilitarian values of the outcomes of a democratic regime, concentrates on the moral basis upon which the democratic values are based on and underlines the ampleness of democracy due to the moral probity of its intrinsic values. In such consideration of democracy two values seem to come to foreground: freedom and equality.

Indeed, Aristotle (in Everson, 1988, p. 1292) claims that ‘the basis of a democratic state is liberty’, an assertion later echoed in many modern conceptions of democratic regimes, like those of Robert Dahl (1989, p. 89) who would propose that a democratic regime proposes ‘freedom as no feasible alternative can’. This link between liberty and democracy often stems from the understanding that in a democratic regime, the citizens would have the opportunity to self-govern. John Dewey expands on this relation of democracy and liberty by observing that democratic forms of government endows its participants with liberties that are essential for their individual growth and advancement; such as the freedom of expression and communication of ideas, as well as the freedom to decide and follow,

individually or in association with others, a specific conception of the good life (Dahl, 2020).

Another core value of democratic governance mechanisms, along with their argued ability to provide the individual with the liberty to participate in political decision-making, is that they aim to provide such liberty equally to all individuals involved in the mechanism. This is, in the most part, due to the fact that democratic decision-making mechanisms are centered around forms of popular electoral voting. Scholars of the field (Diamond, 2003, p.31; Schumpeter, 1947, p. 269; Lipset, 1981, p. 27; Linz, 1978, p. 6) observe that competitive popular elections for the assignment of effective and representative authority lies at the heart of democracy.

In terms of democratic values of liberty and equality however, the equality of choice provided by the popular elections, in effect, may hinder the individual's liberty to choose, since in the face of non-unanimous decisions, democratic mechanisms usually function so as to give way to the decision of the majority. Whatsmore, in electoral democracies the fact that individuals are free to observe their own understanding of the good life and that they can hold equal power to participate in the decision-making accordingly, suggests that the outcomes of electoral decision-making may at times be less desirable then expected or even outright ineffective. This is because the democratic values of liberty and equality assumes that societies, just like individuals, should, and through democratic governance would, be free to contribute to democratic processes equally even if their participation may result in such outcomes that may lower the greatest utility for the long or short run. Thus, different utilitarian, liberal and egalitarian arguments for democracy introduce varied dilemmas which tie in with the question of whether a minimal electoral

understanding of democracy is enough to legitimize a certain governance as being democratic.

Therefore, even though popular elections may ensure the high political participation of the citizens, 'the faith that merely holding elections will channel political action into peaceful contests among elites and accord public legitimacy to the winners' may also pose a threat to the certain democratic principles (Karl, 1986, p. 34). This notion is called the fallacy of electoralism by Terry Karl and Philippe Schmitter (1991, p. 78) and it alludes to the fact that though elections are central to the functioning of democratic regimes, it is misguided to not acknowledge the fact that even the fairest elections, provide a limited deliverance of political representation and, in their principle of majority, run the risk of excluding some important sections of the citizen body from contending for power and furthering their interests. Alluding to this fact scholar Larry Diamond (2003, p. 34) asserts that 'the gap between electoral and liberal democracy has grown markedly' mid-1970s onward, during what Samuel Huntington (1991, p. 21) claims to be the third wave of democracy.

Regarding the different conceptions of democracy, namely liberal and minimal, when one evaluates the accuracy of minimal and solely electoral definitions of democracy; one consequently considers to what degree a government that sources its authority merely from the democratic value of popular elections may be considered legitimate. This then raises the question of whether political parties such as JDP who hold the electoral majority, may legitimize their authority through their populist status. The important problem, especially in the case of JDP is that, such a minimal definition of democracy may validate the authoritarian governance and the coercive social regulation of the governing parties with popular support under the

rationale that their decisions and actions reflect the will of the majority and thus is democratic. For most of the institutional and legislative designs of democracy, democratic citizenship would endow all individuals the right and the responsibility to participate in governmental decision-making. However, the equal participation in elections also requires that the individual would accept and comply with the political aims and plans decided by the summation of equally-weighted votes of the electorate, which in cases where democratic participation is reduced to popular voting may result in the tyranny of the majority.

3.2 Notions of Consent and Moral Authority in Relation to Democratic Regimes

Whether or not the popular vote reflects the society's will is an important issue since this reflection grants a certain legitimacy to the authoritative power exercised by the government. In other words, the democratic procedures, including but not limited to the electoral processes, are themselves the origin of the legitimacy of the results that they produce; hence, these 'results are made legitimate by being the results of the procedure' (Christiano 1996, p. 35). This basic principle of the authority stemming from the will of the governed is such a fundamental concept in our understanding of human rights and limits of governance that it was stated in the Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ratified in 1948 that 'the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government'. As with other regimes, the legitimacy and the authority of a democratic regime is greatly dependent on the decision-making and deliberation procedures that rest upon the consent of the governed, or at least the majority of the governed. Apart from the instrumentalist and proceduralist justifications as mentioned above, the legitimacy of democratic regimes is also founded on this notion of public consent. That is why in the field of

‘contemporary political philosophy, many, but by no means all, hold that democratic procedures are necessary for political legitimacy’ (Fabienne, 2017).

The simple understanding of public consent requires that any political authority may be conferred only from below by those who are under it (Beran, 1987). Thus, consent implies that the general public may self-determine the aspects of the authority exercised upon them and this understanding comprises a basis for many democratic regimes of the current world. According to George Klosko (2019, p.17), *The Second Treatise of Civil Government* of John Locke may be considered as the locus classicus of the subject of political consent. Locke was a supporter of democratic notions of political equality, individual liberty, as well as the majority vote. His suggestion was that once a governance of people is established through social contract, that society must follow the course of the ‘greater force’ which would be the course preferred and wanted by the greatest number of individuals (Locke, 1982, p. 58). Locke’s resting the ultimate sovereignty on the people, and his understanding of government as a guardian of the rights and liberties of the people, consequently brings forward the right of revolution. Consequently, Locke holds the position that the legitimacy of a government can be subject to inquiry and the people would have the right to revolt and rebel against a government that fails to defend people’s rights and liberties (Locke, 1982, 137-142). A similar notion of legitimacy is reflected and redeveloped in the works of Rawls; where he distinguishes the ‘originating consent’ upon which the government is constituted and the ‘joining consent’ through which the performance of the political regime is observed and regulated continuously (Rawls quoted in Fabianne, 2017, p. 4). According to Rawls, ‘political power is legitimate only when it is exercised in accordance with a constitution … the essentials of which all citizens, as reasonable and rational, can

endorse in the light of their common human reason' (Rawls, 2001, p.41). Therefore, the originating consent by itself; for a governance of people to be considered legitimate the legitimacy should be validated regularly by a constant communication between the government and governed to ensure the latter's joining consent.

On a rather dissimilar note, David Estlund conceptualizes authority as 'the moral power to require action' which is essentially 'the power of one's commands to count as moral reasons for action on their own' (2008, p.118-119). This connects with Estlund's understanding of consent. According to Estlund, 'authority can simply befall us, whether we have consented to it or not' (Estlund, 2018, p. 359). This is partly due to the fact that 'duty to consent already depends on prior moral facts, which might as well be taken as the moral basis for the authority itself, as well as for the duty to consent' (Estlund, 2008, p.130). This denotes that the conditions and facts that require one to consent or not are the same conditions that ground the legitimacy authority, thus, independent of the willingness to consent to authority, the mere fact that such an inquiry is made establishes the authority (Estlund, 2008, p. 130-131). Estlund agrees with the fact that no person can be under someone else's authority unless they duly consent, however he highlights that authority of any legitimate regime, be it democratic, rests in prior moral facts. The authority's role, on the other hand, would not be coercively seeking consent and impose on the person's choices, even if those choices are morally impermissible; it would just be 'the imposition of duties' and these may not be evaded by immorally refusing to consent to it (Estlund, 2008, p.131).

When these remarks are considered, it can be argued that even though, in democratic regimes, political parties and government actors may have different ideological and moral sources of legitimation for their deeds and decisions, such

legitimation of their authority does not, by the virtue of their authoritative status, endow them with the role or the responsibility of extracting the consent of the governed and imposing on their notions of good life. Then, it may be posited that a democratic government may not assume moral authority over the governed, nor it could decide the legitimation of the basic rights and freedoms of the citizens based on the mere fact that it represents the majority. From this perspective, one could argue that the principles of democracy encapsulate more than just the majority decision, whereby unconsenting citizens could seek representation or accommodation within the public sphere. That is why in most conceptions of democracy, popular decisions are curbed by institutional and social checks and balances that ensure that the claims and demands from minority discourses are provided with political spheres of representation.

In his book *Polyarchy*, Robert A. Dahl strives to achieve a notion of democracy that comprises more than the minimal forms confirming the public's consent. Unlike those that rests solely on popular elections, Dahl (1973, p. 1-2) infers that 'a democracy is the continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens, considered as political equals' and a democratic political system possesses the 'quality of being completely or almost completely responsive to all its citizens'. Dahl (1973, p. 2) nevertheless claims that in order to achieve such a political systems the citizens should all have the opportunity to 'formulate their preferences, … signify their preferences to fellow citizens and the government through individual and collective action [and] … have these preferences weigh equally in the conduct of the government … with no discrimination because of the content or source of preference'. This concept of democracy as outlined by Robert Dahl was devised further by Alfred Stepan who underlines that as 'a system of

conflict regulation' democracy is also required to grant all groups, including minorities 'the right to advance their interests'; thus, 'no matter how free and fair the elections and no matter how large the government's majority, democracy must also have a constitution that itself is democratic in that it respects fundamental liberties and offers considerable protections for minority rights' (Stepan, 2001, p. 39). In such conceptions, deliberative procedures, respect for civil liberties and representations for minority rights and freedoms are indispensable elements of democratic regimes; and tyranny of majority axiomatically signals a departure from the democratic values. Pluralist systems where the government allows and encourages the voicing of minority discourses thus help create a democracy that aims to obtain the inclusive consent of the whole of the society in a way that minimal electoral systems cannot. A pluralistic approach to democracy necessitates a government that provides and ensures necessary social spaces where all social discourses, including those of minorities, can be practiced and represented. This then requires a certain neutrality from the governmental discourse itself. In other words, the state, for the sake of ensuring pluralist deliberation may in certain ways reserve its own discursive contributions to prevent crowding out.

In the light of Habermasian discursive ethics, a moral principle is only legitimate through the 'agreement of all … achieved through practical discourse which is to say through an open and free debate' (Edgar, 2006, p. 83). Thus, the state's exercise of administrative power is only legitimate if it is sourced from this communicative power generated through deliberative processes of democracy. However, the authority to set meaning and truth is not inherent in government administration and thus it 'cannot dictate to other people … what they should make of their lives' (Edgar, 2006, p. 88). That is to say, the authority endowed upon the

state in liberal democracies is the authority to mirror the democratically debated common good. The common good is then agreed socially; different discourses — both contrasting and complimenting — are represented; and the democratic regime thus remains alert and responsive to the discursive demands of all the participants.

A liberal democratic regime that drives its legitimation from pluralist deliberation, may then avoid the electoral fallacy, as its authority would be negated through constant discursive struggles. This then would reduce the democratic governmental authority from a discursive figure dictating the majority's demands upon the society, to a figure that mirrors the society itself to the best of its capabilities. Thus, if indeed the state aims to mirror the moral outlooks in its administrative actions as is dictated by the public discourses, it becomes crucial that the democratic states does not assume moral superiority per se. In turn, the authority's moralizing impact is also reduced, since it would no longer drive its legitimation from popular vote and would be socially checked and balanced constantly by differing public discourses. Governmental discourse in such an organization ultimately would not have significant moral value since the source of what's true and good is not considered to be the state but the people as a whole.

CHAPTER 4

STUDY OF DISCOURSE AND GOVERNMENTAL SPEECH

As a political party with an Islamic background, JDP had a distinct and interesting account in terms of the evolution and utilization of its political discourse. Starting its democratic journey somewhat as an outsider voice in strictly secular discourses of the Turkish Republic, JDP's discourse was one of its most crucial tools in forming the party's political identity along the years. Through the charismatic leadership of Erdoğan, the governmental discourse had reformed and reintroduced the party's ideology and identity in quick and clever maneuvers to secure and bolster its political standing. Always driving its moralizing authority from its democratic status, the governmental discourse has shifted from being progressive and liberal on some issue topics and being conservative and fundamentalist on others. In many ways the moderation expected from JDP concerned its discursive actions just as much as its political aims and commitments. Indeed, at the start of its incumbency, JDP's discursive stance on the democratic accommodation of Muslim citizens within the secular structures was poignant in the exemplary synthesis of democracy and Islam. Along with its administrative endeavors to lessen the military impact on civilian democracy, JDP argued for a state that is in constant discursive contact with its citizens rather than a tutelary state which dictates and commands moral ultimatums.

Throughout the years however, sometimes despite and sometimes in line with its administrative decisions, the governmental discourse employed by the party grew increasingly authoritarian. The party's commitment to liberal democracy grew evermore dubious, while the conception of democracy that the legitimation of the party's authority depended upon, shifted from being pluralist and liberal to minimal

and electoral. The governmental discourse was reshaped as the authorities picked and chose what demands were democratically permissible. These decisions often depended on the subjective moral stances of the governmental figures rather than being resulted from an inclusive public deliberation on social truths and realities. The governmental speech grew even more moralizing as the discursive agents assumed moral authority — sometimes validated by the majority's consent — and discarded their governmental roles as representatives of the whole citizen body including the minority voices. The result was a moralizing authoritarian government discourse employed by a democratically elected government.

JDP's history of moderation and backsliding was thus in close contact with the notion of discourse and its social and ideological impact. More than anything, JDP provided an example of how much regulatory power that an authoritarian discourse may yield, and how salient yet subtle the impact of the discursive tactics with various different degrees of censorship and propaganda can be, with the complex nature of its moderation and democratization. Therefore, in order to achieve a clear understanding of the Turkish politics' relation with the notion of democracy, in this chapter I aim to establish the role of discourse and discursive studies in social analyses, as well as focusing on the relation of discourse and social truths. The argument here is that social truths both construct and are constructed by discourses, which reflects the significant impact that discursive actions may have in creating social systems. Discourse then becomes a social tool, which may be utilized for the service of certain ideologies. Likewise, a discourse that is inequitably powerful may have coercive and hegemonic influences. Understanding the nature and the influence of governmental and authoritative discourses is thus essential in order to understand JDP's discourse on democracy and Islam.

4.1 Discourse as a Social Practice of Power and an Ideological Tool

A common point in the analysis of discourse is that it 'usually refers to a research approach in which language material ... is examined as evidence of phenomena beyond the individual person' (Taylor, 2013, p.2). This emphasis on the "phenomena beyond the individual person" is important as it indicates the crucial relation of discourse with the "outside-world" or the observable reality. The language, after all, is axiomatically assumed to signify, imitate and reflect the outside-world. That being said, according to the scholars of the discourse analysis, language is not a mere impression of a pre-existent reality but rather a structure of patterns that is formed, transformed and sustained through discursive actions. As Johnstone (2018, p.35) describes: 'People bring worlds into being by talking, writing and signing'. Therefore, the discursive relation of language to truth and reality is a two-way interaction whereby; while discourse serves as a mimesis of reality and thus is shaped by it, it also contributes to the social construction of the said reality.

Discourse practices construct a certain image of the world that is external to the text by supplying the individual with necessary tools to imagine and depict the world around them. The ideas and actions of an individual is inherently bound with the deep semantic luggage that the linguistic signs of these ideas and actions carry. Such an existential relation is what Heidegger alludes to when he says "language speaks us;" as this relation appoints the language as the 'house of being' through which we mediate and comprehend the world around us and situate our identity. Discourse practices, then, 'frame, and in many ways define, the way individuals and groups present themselves to others, negotiate roles, and conceptualize themselves' and thus they play a fundamental role in identity construction and expression for the individual (Bamberg, De Fina and Schiffrin, 2006, p.2).

As the language shapes and constitutes individual identities; it also shapes and constitutes collective identities and creates social meanings. According to Jorgensen and Phillips (2002, p.9), the '[s]truggles at the discursive level take part in changing, as well as in reproducing, the social reality'. This ability of social construction implies the fact that discursive practices are social practices as linguistic conceptions of the world may bear influential outcomes in the very composition of the social reality. Similar to its relation with reality and truth then, discursive practices are 'socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 258). This means that while the discursive practices of individuals can be affected by their social context which is made up of such notions as the cultural, historical, sociological standing of the individual; they can also produce 'the social world — including knowledge, identities and social relations' and, through this production, retain 'specific social patterns' (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002, p.5). In other words, discourse as a social practice, has a mutually consequential relation with social truths and realities. Knowledge and truth are conceived through these social practices of discourse with which common doctrines are established and trueness or falseness of claims are argued. This impact of discourse practices on truth and reality makes discourse constitutive in its ability 'to sustain and reproduce the social status quo and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 258).

According to the scholars of critical discourse analysis, the constitutive influence of discourse is 'the power of discourse' and its relation to power structures is what makes discourse 'worth struggling over' (Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak, 2011, p. 370). As discursive practices are able to promote and enable, or depress and prevent certain configurations of social realities; this impact that discourse has over

social reality, inescapably associates discursive practices with the concept of power. Habermas (1967, p. 259) explains this connection by asserting that through the legitimization or rejection of the latent standardized power structures language may also serve as 'a medium of domination and social force'. Thus, literature on critical discourse analysis more often than not is appointed with an interest in the ways in which 'discourse (re)produces social domination, that is, the power abuse of one group over others, and how dominated groups may discursively resist such abuse' (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, p.9). Therefore; the diverse, issue-driven research of discourse analysis is united with a 'shared interest in the semiotic dimensions of power, injustice and political-economic, social or cultural change in society' (Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak, 2011, p. 357). The social impact of discourse, its constitutive ability to categorize and express collective truths and realities provide the discourse practices with the capacity to have certain ideological outcomes as well. Jorgensen and Philipps (2002, p. 63) note that discourse as a social practice of power may 'contribute to the creation and reproduction of unequal power relations between social groups — for example, between social classes, women and men, ethnic minorities and the majority'. In a similar vein, Bourdieu asserts that one of the main purposes of the discourse studies is to demystify the discourses by deciphering ideologies (in Weiss and Wodak, 2007, p.14). This close relation of social power and ideology with the practice of discourse is why Weiss and Wodak (2007, p.11-17) treat the concepts of ideology and power to be the cornerstones of critical discourse analysis.

In his 1991 book, *Ideology: An Introduction* Terry Eagleton (1991, p.5) asserts that ideologies conceptualize much more than systematic beliefs or broad understandings of philosophy as it is often deemed. According to Eagleton (1991,

p.5) the concept of ideology refers ‘not only to belief systems, but to questions of power’. When the inherent social power of discursive practices and their bilateral relation with the social reality is considered, as discussed above, the relation between the discourse and ideology becomes immediately recognizable. In that sense, it is not coincidental to trace the ‘academic origins’ of the discourse analysis ‘in Western Marxism’ (Fairclough et al., 2011, p. 360). Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak (2011, p. 360) assert that Marxism’s relation with the concepts of meaning production and ideology provides a space for the analysis of discourse as a medium of social change, especially noting that the Gramscian notion that the perpetuation of power depends ‘not only on coercive force but also on “hegemony”‘. This also brings forth the notion of the ‘discursive struggle’ whereby ‘different discourses — each of them representing particular ways of talking about and understanding the social world — are engaged in a constant struggle with one other to achieve hegemony’ (Jorgensen and Philipps, 2002, p. 6-7). Here, hegemonic struggle refers to how each discourse aims to establish the meaning in their own way and hegemony refers to the supremacy of a particular discourse.

Despite the fact that there seems to be different opinions whether discourse should be analyzed in order to unmask the ideologies to achieve truth, or whether it should be analyzed to observe the various ideologies in order to detect the versions of truth that they represent; the common ground that all theories rest upon is the idea that discourse may, and often does, have significant ideological impact. As Russian linguist Valentin Voloshinov, a forefather of the linguistic theory of ideology, also asserts discursive signs are often ideological and ideological apparatus itself is often discursive. (Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak, 2011, p. 361). Thus, discourse has such ideological effects so as to ‘help produce and reproduce unequal power

relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic groups, through the ways in which they represent things and position people' (Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak, 2011, p. 358). According to Wodak and Meyer (2009, p.8) what critical analysis of discourse focuses on is 'the more hidden and latent type of everyday beliefs', here the aim is to unravel the dominant hegemonic ideology, which seems 'neutral' and retains 'assumptions that stay largely unchallenged'. Language, after all, as we have established, is not only a tool for the transfer of knowledge and truth but also a tool for the control of our ideas of the truth — whatever truth may be. Thus, as Mulderrig (2011, p. 65-67) states the ideological impact of discourse is often hortatory yet vague, and could be deconstructed when critically analyzed through revealing its social implications.

4.2 Moralizing Governmental Discourse: Censorship and Propaganda

The relation of discourse with truth, reality and ideology axiomatically brings forth the notion of propaganda and censorship which are discursive tools that a governmental authority — or any authority — may employ to establish, transform and sustain their own understanding of the good life, as well as their conception of an ideal society and citizen. These discursive practices within the spectrum of propaganda and censorship may be utilized as powerful social tools for and against certain authorities and other social structures. Discourse's covert yet coercive social impact may help create and sustain certain social systems, just as much as it may disrupt and displace it. As Catherine MacKinnon eloquently asserts:

> Words and images are how people are placed in hierarchies, how social stratification is made to seem inevitable and right, how feelings of inferiority and superiority are engendered, and how indifference to violence against those on the bottom is rationalized and normalized. Social supremacy is made inside and between people, through making meanings. (MacKinnon, 2002, p. 31)

The nature of transgression and the nature of propaganda embedded in discursive acts turns discourse into a social tool that is crucially political. That is why governmental authority and legitimacy hinges on the use of discourse. Censorship traditionally refers to the regulation of discourse by laws and direct punishment to hunt down collective and actualized transgression. In such traditional forms of discourse regulation, the controlling authority is obvious; thus, the regulation is not able to create authorial power infinitely. However, if persistent, this aggressive form of censorship obscures historical facts and truths, isolates the transgressive individual and crumples the foundation necessary for any collective cultural and social memory to form. This then creates a "foreclosure," as termed by scholar Judith Butler (1997, p. 168), by creating like-minded citizens who are automatic censorship machines by nature, not capable of forming thoughts outside totalitarian norms, and are closed to critical thinking.

However, censorship by mere obstruction and erasure of transgressive discourse is not enough for a perfect discursive regulation. Systems of discursive regulation work by also creating what Habermas called "systematically distorted communication" which is the disruption of social interaction by 'offering a legitimation of the existing political structure', as well as 'preventing people from perceiving, talking about and criticizing that inequality' (Edgar, 2006, p.147-148). Thus a "perfect" regulation necessitates a dominating voice, a totalitarian truth needs to be established. In other words, the discursive power should be formative (Butler, 1998, p. 252).

As mentioned before, this productive power is inherent in all forms of discursive actions to varying degrees. However, according to scholars such as Owen Fiss (1991, p. 2100), ideally the state as a discursive agent is particular in the sense

that it ‘must act as a high-minded parliamentarian, making certain that all viewpoints are fully and fairly heard’. Different censorial behavior is, thus demanded from the state, compared to what is demanded from private persons for two reasons; firstly, ‘the state may benefit from having more economic sources to articulating its position’. and also it has the unique availability and ability ‘to legitimate certain arguments merely by virtue of state endorsement’ (Levinson, 1998, p. 196) Hence, unlike private speech, ‘governmental speech, even when lacking the formal status of law, is a pervasive method of regulation’ (Levinson, 1998, p. 198).

It may be argued that a certain amount of regulation and censorship is ‘compatible with — indeed necessary for — a meaningful freedom of speech’ (Estlund, 2008, p. 186). In his model of wide civility for democratic deliberation, David Estlund (2008, p. 199) still argues against such regulations despite acknowledging their epistemic value however, by asserting that: ‘It is preferable to have a “wild,” “anarchic,” and “unrestricted” public sphere on which formal political institutions can draw, even though this does open the informal public sphere to morally undesirable biases and inequalities’. The aim of a truly democratic deliberation is then to achieve a truth that is not polluted by power’s interference. It is not wrong to assume that this aim could never be fully achieved, yet since the administrative authority imparts that the governmental bodies have a legitimate power over the citizen body, the discourses formed by governmental actors become implicitly crucial in observing tolerance and neutrality.

All that being said, considering authority to be ‘a morally justified form of authorship constituted by certain moral capacities’ in essence, reminds one that it is only natural that a form of political authority has its own understanding of the true and good life (Sartorius, 1981, p.5). It may also be natural that the figures of the

political authority are inclined to make their stances known within the public discourse. However, the grounds for coercive noninterference required from the governmental authorities are rooted in the same values that provide democracies with legitimation which are; equality and freedom. In that sense, governmental discourse is responsible for stirring away from censorship and propaganda due to its duty to preserve its citizens' right to exercise their democratic rights equally and freely. The democratic government's duty is not to regulate consent, nor is it to reflect the consent of a majority of people; but in fact it is to grant free and equal deliberative grounds for all discourses in order to be able to inclusively consult with the public consent which may then be reflected in the governance. This duty establishes the moral foundations of legitimacy in democratic authorities.

Raz (1986, p. 420) argues that: 'Given that people should lead autonomous lives the state cannot force them to be moral. All it can do is to provide the conditions of autonomy. Using coercion invades autonomy and thus defeats the purpose of promoting it, unless it is done to promote autonomy by preventing harm'. On the account that the political and social autonomy supplied equally for each citizen of the state is what lies at the core of a democratic governance, a temperance in moral regulation may even be considered the ultimate source of legitimacy for a democratic regime, especially when one considers how governmental censorship and propaganda may eradicate and subvert people's will. From such a perspective, authorities that assume the role of a moral regulatory organ, on the basis of such minimal structures as popular elections may lack a certain degree of democratic legitimacy. This creates a trap for a regime that employs a moral regulatory discourse and also aims to remain democratic, since even though the regime might assume such a regulatory role due to its self-confidence in its democratic legitimacy, the

moral regulation in governmental discourse itself actually undermines the democratic authority of the regime in the meanwhile. This problem then may become especially conspicuous for parties with religious background that aim to function within the democratic structures while assuming moralizing discourses.

CHAPTER 5

HEADSCARF: LIBERAL DISCOURSE FOR A CONSERVATIVE DEMAND

Tied closely with the party's history of confrontation with the old military and elite establishment JDP's insistence on advocating for headscarved women's rights and liberties served as a step in the right direction for democratic consolidation. However, as per expected from the nuances in the theorized expectations and explanations of moderation, other democratic players were wary of JDP's liberal discourse on the issue. Despite the fact that JDP's discourse on headscarf frequently highlighted the liberal democratic nature of the party, the debate on headscarf suggested that opposition actors often accused JDP of guiding a moralizing agenda and expressed concern that the government may utilize its democratic authority to pontificate particular conceptions of the good life. The intention-reading and doubt pervaded the discourse on both sides, perpetuating the existing socio-political and ideological drifts and clashes between the discursive actors, despite the liberal democratic outcomes of the debate.

5.1 Discursive History of Headscarf: An Apparatus of Politics

The discourse surrounding the headscarf issue is especially worth examining due to the significance of this public debate on not just the struggle for legitimacy and authority between the established state elite and the JDP but also on the formation of political identity of JDP for the years to come. It can be said that from the very establishment of the Republic, the headscarf was an issue that carried profound political connotation; rather than denoting a mere piece of garment, it was a 'question of civilization' (Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu, 2008, p. 519). With the new secular regime appealing for a commitment to gender equality and modernity, in the

following few decades headscarf was increasingly regarded as an attribute of rural Turkey signifying certain images of traditionality, underdevelopment and poverty. Despite the fact that the headscarf as a public issue with political connotations had taken up a certain territory in urban public debate throughout the 1960s and 1970s, it was from the mid-1980s onwards when the headscarf slowly and steadily obtained a substantial position as a political symbol, a sentiment later echoed by then Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan as well.[4] Through the 1990s, the headscarf was utilised as a symbol that 'the difference between the secularist and Islamist elites, especially within the context of state protocols' (Cindoglu and Zencirci, 2008, p.793). Headscarf as a political symbol was thus "reinvented" as a sign of the activist Islamist woman who occupied the public space as an educated, modern and metropolitan member of the society, actively contrasting and contesting with the traditional image of the headscarved woman. Cindoglu and Zencirci (2008, p. 793) assert that the 'meaning and the feminist value of the headscarf was altered significantly especially after the election of the JDP to office in 2002', in that the democratic potential that the issue carried was employed by the party to attest their political legitimacy and construct their political discourse in the years to come.

In the first term after their election to office, despite the party's conservative democratic stance implying an opposition to the headscarf ban especially in the higher education institutions — a ban that was also undergirded by the decisions of European Court of Human Rights — the issue was not accorded priority in public debate. (Arat, 2010, p. 872) In fact, later in a JDP party group meeting on October

[4] On January of 2008, in reply to the comments that the headscarf was worn as a political symbol rather than a religious commitment Erdoğan asserted that: 'Even if we assume that the headscarf is worn as a political symbol, would wearing it as a political symbol constitute a crime? Could you impose a ban on symbols? From the viewpoint of freedoms, is there anywhere in the world where such a thing is criminalized?' (See: "Başbakan'dan türban çıkışı", 2008)

2010, when the headscarf issue arose as a topic of public discussion in light of the upcoming constitutional referendum, Erdoğan claimed that the headscarf issue was then 'left for another time' since it was hoped that the issue would resolve itself through democratization of Turkey in time' ("Hakem millettir", 2010). However, headscarf as a symbol of JDP's otherness from the secular elite had been an issue of public debate from the very first years of the party coming to power and the headscarf had made its way to be quite emblematic in the struggle for political legitimacy, as exemplified by the reception crisis of 3 April 2003 whereby the high command of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) boycotted the reception held by who was then serving as the Parliamentary Speaker Bülent Arınç, upon the disclosure that Arınç's headscarved wife, would be co-hosting the event (Jenkins, 2008, p.172).

For the second term of their rule, JDP had accomplished yet another electoral victory, gaining 47 per cent of the popular vote and having 340 seats in the parliament, out of the total 550; thus, the party was now able to achieve the two-thirds majority necessary for constitutional reform. Therefore, in February 2008 JDP had passed two amendments for the Article 10 'which guarantees equality before the law was amended to ensure for citizens equal access to all public services' and Article 42 'on the right to education was changed to include a phrase preventing anyone from being denied access to education except for a reason openly stated in law'. However, according to Yeşim Arat (2010, p .872) in their efforts for constitutional reform JDP had abandoned the 'promises of a liberal, comprehensive constitutional amendment endorsed by a broad coalition both within and outside the parliament' and 'sought to change the Constitution only to bypass the ban on headscarves in universities'. Consequently, after the former founding member of the JDP and then president Abdullah Gül ratified the amendments, the main opposition

party RPP applied to the Constitutional Court for the annulment of the amendment. The Constitutional Court then decided for the annulment and the amendments were considered invalid since, ‘they violated the principle of secularism enshrined in the Constitution (Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu, 2008, p. 516).

In March 2008 the party was even subjected to a closure case after the appeal of chief prosecutor of the Supreme Court Abdurrahman Yalçınkaya for the disbandment of the party, with the accusal that the party was ‘a hotbed of anti-secular activities’ ("Closure case against ruling party creates shockwaves", 2008). In the accusal, the speeches and the discursive strategies utilised by the JDP agents were especially targeted as the subject matter of the suit. Most of the speeches mentioned in the accusal were also to do with the headscarf issue. In fact, the accusal asserted that through the process of the constitutional amendment, ‘the Prime Minister Erdoğan had employed a language that caused distress and polarized the public’ (*JDP v. Supreme Court of Appeals Prosecutor's Office*, 2008). In their pre-defence, in reply to the accusation, the Party hold forth the fact that the speeches fell under the protection of the freedom of speech, claiming that the acts and speeches of the JDP did not contain violence, nor did they induce violence and that the acts and speeches performed by the party personnel cannot be used as evidence; asserting that ‘in conclusion, the expressions and speeches that are exhibited in the accusal do not present a threat to the free democracy and the secular regime’ (*JDP v. Supreme Court of Appeals Prosecutor's Office*, 2008). As a result, the Constitutional Court found JDP guilty of the charges that it was accused of but the party was punished with a fine instead of a closure.

5.2 Headscarf Debate Through 2010 Referendum Campaigns

Despite the fact that the 2010 draft for the constitutional amendment predominantly addressed the judiciary and reforms; the campaigns for the upcoming referendum yielded an ample amount of public debate on the topic of headscarf. In the pro-reform referendum of JDP in Çorum, Erdoğan replied to the main opposition leader Kılıçdaroğlu's remarks regarding the headscarf, saying: 'He is out there saying "we will resolve the headscarf issue." Do you take these people for a fool? This RPP mindset calls my citizens 'those who scratch their bellies', 'barrel-headed'. You will see who the barrel-headed, the belly scratcher is on 12 September' ("Erdoğan: Kirli Senaryoları Uygulamak İstiyorlar", 2010). Erdoğan's remarks were utilising the metaphor coined by the columnist Bekir Coşkun who had caricatured the electorate as:

> He does not like the news. He watches TV entertainment shows. … He does not read books. ... He does not know any newspapers. … His most comprehensive view on the leaders is "He is a Muslim guy," his only opinion on democracy is "let them steal as long as they get the job done." Then he scratches his belly. … democracy is a regime for the people who more or less have the same awareness. If the majority of a public consists of the men who scratch their belly, there will not and cannot be democracy. He is the one that Tayyip Erdoğan trusts: The man who scratches his belly. ("Göbeğini kaşıyan adam", 2007)

In his reply, Erdoğan cleverly alluded to this caricature from Coşkun, which had caused quite a stir in its publication in 2007, since the metaphor was compelling in depiction of a point of view which degradingly regarded the JDP electorate — which, according to the recent general elections showed was a large plurality of the Turkish population — to be unfit to participate in democratic decision-making. This point-of-view, constructed through 'not only the self-identification of the JDP elite but also the opponents of the party' established a certain 'high-low divide' in Turkish population (Baykan, 2018, p. 96) This thus set the political actors of JDP, and especially Erdoğan to be the guardians of the peripheral and oppressed majority

against the elitist government structures of the past and bolstered their populist appeal.

Erdoğan's defense on the headscarf did not only carry populist attributes however. In fact, his speeches regarding the headscarf throughout the referendum campaign brought forward the significance of civil liberties and the democratic equality. Upon RPP's claims that the party was examining the headscarf issue and the nature of veiling, Erdoğan opposed the dictation by the political authorities regarding the issue, and accredited agency to women to decide the shape and form of the veiling themselves:

> Now he [referring to the opposition leader Kılıçdaroğlu] is saying: "I will handle the headscarf issue." Do you believe it? … [They say:] "We would assign a designer." Studies are being done in the Olgunlaşma Institute.[5] Deciding on the colours of the headscarf, whether it should be tied from the bottom, whether it should be like a bonnet, whether this or that. What kind of a freedom is this? Do you do this for our other girls? Do you also discuss such things like; should they wear a skin-tight pant or a shalwar, should they have sleeves or not? Did you also give orders like that? I mean, it is the freedom of education, of belief that we are discussing with you. ("Erdoğan: Türban sorununu şimdi çözsün", 2010)

The speech here attributed their bodily sovereignty to the people, to the women in particular; and empowered the headscarved women to have authority over their physical appearance, their attire and their bodies. This established an equality between the state and the citizen, with the state authorities recognizing the citizens ability to govern their personal spheres freely and rightly. This democratic recognition expanded even further as Erdoğan continued his speech: 'If you are honest and sincere [in resolving the headscarf issue], no later than 13th of September, from this very day onwards… We are ready. Let's sit together, let's decide and take

[5] Olgunlaşma Institute here refers to a technical school that provide a special two-year training program for the students with at least a primary school degree, in studies regarding the traditional Turkish clothing and handicrafts.

this step. Be honest' ("Erdoğan: Türban sorununu şimdi çözsün", 2010). Here despite noting his distrust towards his political opponent's words, Erdoğan underlined his willingness to cooperate in a mutual solution, thus acknowledging the legitimacy of the opposition. Still the distrust of both sides of the discussion, clouded the democratic debate regarding the headscarf. In about a month later, Kılıçdaroğlu described their caution towards the reforms regarding the repeal of the ban on headscarf in universities:

> Politicians must oppose double standards. This is what we want. Whether it is in the context of the headscarf or in another context, freedom is freedom, rights are rights. However, what I perceive is, the government only brings the matters that they face, only wants these to be brought to the table. If there are opinions of other political parties, they say that there is no need to discuss them. This is not a mentality of compromise, but a mentality of imposition. ("Demokrasilerde dayatma olmaz", 2010)

Similarly, Kılıçdaroğlu expressed that he did not object to Erdoğan's appeal to resolve the headscarf issue collectively, however he still implied that certain hurdles were created deliberately that hindered the process of collaboration. Kılıçdaroğlu mentioned that they were willing to resolve such matters of public through peaceful and rational discussion; however, after claiming that his party did not 'approach politicians with prejudice' and did not intend on engaging in unnecessary conflict; he had pointed out that 'some people create additional problems while resolving the problems' ("Kılıçdaroğlu 'türban sorununu çözecekleri' iddiasından vazgeçmiyor", 2010). As evident from Kılıçdaroğlu's statements, the readiness for democratic debate and cooperation exemplified by Erdoğan and his party on the headscarf issue was interpreted as a practice of double standards as the party was accused of not demonstrating the same willingness for democratic debate in provisions regarding other civic freedoms. Such accusations were countered by the JDP however, with the assertion that the party adhered to the directives of public consensus regarding the

issue, utilizing the rhetoric that they have been the ‘servant of the people’ ("Erdoğan, kongrede konuştu", 2009). JDP utilized the rhetoric of “governing for the people” to serve as a contrast against “governing despite the people,” which in return was associated with the previous governments of the secular elite, namely the RPP. This disparity, assumed by the JDP rhetoric, was incited by certain statist rhetoric of RPP. Correspondingly, Kılıçdaroğlu continued his previous stance on the headscarf issue with these words:

> What we call a state is essentially a regime of institutions. When everyone obeys these, the institution we call the state would gain strength and prestige. Freedom does not mean that a person can say, "I can do everything I want." Freedom is the exercise of the rights and powers granted to the people within the framework of the rules and laws set by the state. ("Demokrasilerde dayatma olmaz", 2010)

Within the political debate, such shortcomings of expression could easily be regarded as evidence of the lack of commitment towards the democratic values and the will of the people. Thus, in 2010 Erdoğan criticised the opposition for not being able to “speak the language of the people”:

> Those who cannot establish a language tie with the nation cannot understand the JDP’s struggle. Those who labelled us were always left ashamed. … Those who thought they could decipher our true intentions, those who fabricated hidden agendas were proven wrong every time. We are Turkey; with all its colours, sounds and ululations. We know the pain of being silent and silenced. ... Our republic embraces the people in all their colours. … This Republic is the Republic of all of us. It is the people. The place which solely belongs to the people cannot be banned from the people. … They must understand this. Such an approach is against humanity. … Those who saw themselves to be the principal and the sole owner of the Republic … caused the greatest damage to the Republic. ("Başbakan'dan türban hamlesi", 2010)

In this speech that Erdoğan made just a week after Kılıçdaroğlu’s previous statement, Erdoğan further highlighted his stance as pro-liberties, putting himself in contrast to Kılıçdaroğlu’s statements in which he seemingly held a different, slightly more despotic standpoint towards personal freedoms. He claimed: ‘Justice cannot be regulated by the laws. Laws are regulated by justice, by rights. What really matters

are the rights and the justice' ("Başbakan'dan türban hamlesi", 2010). With this statement Erdoğan asserted clearly that he puts the authority of the personal liberties over the authority of the state, claiming that state should be regulated with compliance to the people's demands of their natural rights and freedoms, rather than their rights and freedoms to be dictated by the state. Erdoğan further echoed this narrative refuting the statement of the General Prosecutor of the Supreme Court. The written statement of the General Prosecutor amidst the headscarf debate declared that 'concerning the regulations on the attire of the students in higher education institutions, validating the use of the headscarf for adherence to religious beliefs' would violate the principle of secularism since it would be 'an arrangement in the field of public law that is made based on religious principles' ("Yargıtay'dan Başörtüsü açıklaması", 2010).

This statement, which JDP claimed to be 'a clear intervention to parliamentary democracy' and a violation of the separation of powers, was further condemned by Erdoğan in a speech that reiterated similar oratory expressions that was used to Kılıçdaroğlu's opinions on the headscarf issue ("AK Parti'den Yargıtay'a sert yanıt", 2010). Again, Erdoğan criticised the secular establishment for not negating his and his party's stance per se, but for negating and neglecting the stance of "the people" and thus undermining the Turkish democracy.

Stating that the parliamentary speaker and the other political parties all assumed the 'appropriate' stance against the declaration of the General Prosecutor, Erdoğan singled out RPP and claimed that RPP had 'unfortunately taken a stance with the status quo, as always'; which Erdoğan demonstrated particular disappointment since he the General Prosecutor's comments to be the existence and the authority of the RPP as a political party operating within the structures of Turkish

democracy as well ("Başbakan'dan Yargıtay Başsavcısı'na sert cevap", 2010). Taking a stance with the status quo, also meant for Erdoğan taking a stance against the people. Expressing his frustration, Erdoğan stated that, 'especially from the main opposition party RPP, we would have expected a stance in favor of the nation in the face of this mistake that casted a shadow on the democratic will. … RPP, as always, failed to side with democracy and civil politics' ("Başbakan'dan Yargıtay Başsavcısı'na sert cevap", 2010). Again, the two poles of the debate were made distinct through Erdoğan's rhetoric: namely the JDP siding with the will of the people and civil democracy and RPP siding with the despotic statism and status quo.

During the JDP group meeting, five days later than his previous statement, Erdoğan had once again mentioned the pro-status-quo RPP mindset, which he seemed to be the focus of his criticism. The emphasis on "the mindset" as the center of criticism created an understanding, again, that Erdoğan was not necessarily targeting the individual actors of political opposition as such but rather, a notion that encapsulated these actors, an idea that contained but was not contained by these actors, a certain invisible hegemonic system almost:

> Mr. Kılıçdaroğlu brought up this issue which we had left for another time, an issue which we thought would be defunct through the democratization of Turkey and would be resolved by itself. … But if the RPP chairman is sincere about this, then it is clear that he did not take the RPP mindset into account while making such promises ... Mr. Kılıçdaroğlu made a promise without any preparation, without any consultation and without taking into account the ancient traditions and ideological codes of the RPP. Now he is crushed under [the weight of] his promise. It had become a process whereby the hopes of headscarved girls are exploited by the RPP and a process that is also open to provocation. Even the RPP members who excitedly thought that RPP was finally democratizing, were left disappointed. As expected from its unfortunate course of fate, RPP had fallen behind the democracy and the nation and could not rise to honour of taking the Republic one step further. ("Hakem millettir", 2010)

In the same speech, Erdoğan criticized NMP ("Nationalist Movement Party") as well, claiming that they have also 'disappointed' their electorate. Erdoğan then went

on to remind the audience about their plans for constitutional drafting after the elections of 2011 and said that the reforms were not going to be limited to only 'certain problems and certain freedoms' but instead was going to be an exclusive 'whereby all problems and all issues of freedoms would be resolved in Turkey' ("Hakem millettir", 2010). Erdoğan clearly and confidently asserted that JDP was 'on the side' with the people and implied that the issues regarding citizens' own rights and freedoms should be decided by the citizens through popular vote: 'The nation will make the final decision on [the matters regarding] the freedoms, and the nation will have the last word. … It is certainly hopeful that this issue had begun to move towards the path of resolution without the intervention of politics' ("Hakem millettir", 2010). Yet, just how feasible it is to present citizens' inalienable rights and freedoms to be decided by the majority vote could be debated. Nevertheless, considering both Erdoğan's and Kılıçdaroğlu's statements on the issue, it seems that for both leaders, majority's support on the exercise of a right or freedom, brought a certain legitimacy to the political advocacy for the said rights and freedoms. Erdoğan's confidence in the adequacy of popular decision in issues regarding rights and freedoms of the citizens seem to also stem from the fact that JDP had received the majority vote in the previous elections. Further in his speech, Erdoğan reiterated his previous stance of insinuating the existence of a separation between the elites of the country and the people of the country, the latter of which is, again, insinuated to be JDP's electorate. Here it is important to note that Erdoğan did not specify a certain ethnic, ideological or religious group while referring to the people of Turkey; instead, employing a populist rhetoric, he had highlighted what separated "the people" from "the elites" was the abstract quality of being keen to change and improvement:

> The Republic was founded by the nation itself, by all the components of this nation, as opposed to the group which had emerged much later than the foundation of the Republic and which had been estranged to their own history and geography. They had created a republic of fear in the name of protecting the Republic. ... We all saw that these fears that they had instilled are empty. This Republic is not a feeble republic ... This Republic is a deeply rooted republic, founded and sustained by a great and powerful nation. Maintaining the status quo, resisting change, insisting on such prohibitions is the greatest injustice that can be done to our Republic and this beloved nation. ("Hakem millettir", 2010)

Amidst all this debate on the subjects of personal freedoms and the majority vote, there was also a worry that the issue was politicized by the political parties in order for them to evolve, create or legitimize their social standing. In an opinion piece, Marc Champion (2010) underlined that Kılıçdaroğlu was reshaping RPP's stance by renouncing the 'long-standing opposition to letting female students wear headscarves'. On the other hand, the worry that the issue was being over-politicized was also voiced Kılıçdaroğlu who, despite initiating the discussion on the headscarf asserted that:

> Yes, there is a headscarf issue [in Turkey]. Can we remain indifferent to this? No. If you are a politician, you will try and resolve all issues that arise. That is why we say, "'We will solve this problem." However, we do not politicize it, we look at it differently. The difference between us and the JDP is that JDP has politicized the issue and cannot resolve it because of that … You cannot regulate people's attire by law. … the society will overcome such issues. But we do not regard the issue politically, we regard it from the point of rights and freedoms. ("Kılıçdaroğlu 'türban sorununu çözecekleri' iddiasından vazgeçmiyor", 2010)

In a rather similar line, then president Abdullah Gül claimed that he was 'tired of the headscarf issue'; pointing out the surfeit of discussion on the topic, Gül complained that this was the only topic of discussion in the media, 'like Turkey has no other issues' and urged that everyone is left alone to do, speak, and think whatever they want, and to dress in whatever manner they choose ("Gül: Bu konunun konuşulmasından bıktım", 2010). Indeed, despite the fact that the political debate concerned the freedom of wearing the headscarf on higher education it was argued

that the discourse regarding the personal freedoms and the headscarf was deliberately polluted with the discussion of more sensitive topics, such as granting freedom for the elementary and middle school students. In this context, the spokesman of the JDP, Hüseyin Çelik commented on the demand for the liberation of the wearing of headscarf in elementary schools, claiming that it was 'provocation' ("Çelik: İlköğretimde başörtü talebi provokasyon", 2010). Çelik continued by saying that: 'We may see veiled people, only eyes of whom are visible, trying pass through the gates of the universities. These people may turn out to be men when they are unveiled. These shouldn't surprise anyone. We may encounter those who want to provoke this process' ("Çelik: İlköğretimde başörtü talebi provokasyon", 2010). This reactivity to provocation, agitation and propaganda is quite telling in not just how the slightest nuances of discourse around the topic were weighed by the actors in their search for political resolution, but also in how distrustful the political actors were in their discursive interactions. Erdoğan, on the other hand did not bring these sensitive issues to discussion, perhaps with the fear that such speculation may crowd the ongoing discourse regarding the headscarf issue and would delay any achievable outcome. His silence was however criticized by Kılıçdaroğlu, who found it to be a 'grave situation' and claimed that Erdoğan should have commented. He then, for his silence, comdemned Erdoğan by saying that politicians should not try to collect votes through manipulation of religion and beliefs and attributed Erdoğan's silence to a 'hidden agenda' regarding the headscarf issue ("Erdoğan'ın sessizliği vahim", 2010).

The fears of the existence of a 'hidden agenda' and the resulting doubts regarding the legitimacy of the discourses produced by opposing political party, had hindered the possibility of achieving a consensus on the matter before the 12 September 2010 constitutional referendum elections. After Erdoğan's demand for the

arrangement of talks between NMP and RPP, much has been debated both publicly and in bilateral talks. The conflicts regarding the terminology and discursive choices when discussing the issue were at the forefront, such as the discussions on the correct definition of the public space, or whether to use the words “başörtüsü [headscarf]” or “turban [hijab]” in regards to the matter at hand ("112 gün önce kimse bugünü hayal edemezdi", 2010).

In October 2011, the Sırrı Süreyya Önder, an MP from opposition party PDP (“Peace and Democracy Party”) made a motion to allow the male deputies to not wear a tie while also allowing the female deputies to enter the parliament with their headscarf. The motion was resiled to Commission; Burhan Kuzu, the president of the Constitutional Commission of Parliament and a MP of JDP, stated the preparation of a more extensive amendment as the reason for the disregard of the motion. Despite Kuzu’s statement however, in the 18. Consultation and Evaluation Meeting of JDP, Erdoğan stated:

> You have seen last week, a group comes and makes a motion just like that. But they do not really have an issue [with the fact that members of parliament not being able to wear a headscarf]. If this was really their problem, they would do whatever needed, there is nothing against that, get on with it and do what you want. Why are you exploiting my headscarved sisters? If you want to do it, then do it. They [headscarved deputies] could come in and enter [the parliament], you never had a problem with that. Would those with such an understanding, religion of whom is Zoroastrianism, have such a problem? Their problem is exploitation… Who do you think you are outmanoeuvring? ("Dini Zerdüştlük olanın böyle bir derdi olabilir mi?", 2011)

Here not only was it observed that Erdoğan deemed PDP’s motion to be an attack against the JDP group but also returned the criticism that JDP had faced many times from RPP; that the issue was being problematized in order to gain political advantage. With such anxieties and accusations of the actors from all political leanings clouding the possibility of a democratic middle and delaying a possible resolution, the headscarf debate could finally be settled in 2013, with a package of

reforms introduced with the aim and promise to improve democracy. In his speech on October 2013, at the JDP Group Meeting, after the new regulations were published in the official gazette, Erdoğan said that a 'dark era has come to an end', and added:

> We are dispersing a shadow that had been put down in the history of Turkey as a black stain of discrimination; today, we are expanding and enlightening the horizons of not only the headscarved people but all seventy-six million of our people. The removal of this restriction is only a normalization. ("Gözyaşlarına boğuldular", 2013)

Erdoğan's emphasis that the regulations were not for his own electorate, or for the conservative citizens, but for all the Turkish citizens as a whole had been something that were reiterated quite frequently during the debate around the "package of democracy". These words as well as the coming into force of the democratic package had happened occurred the Gezi events whereby the discourse of the headscarf was employed in Erdoğan's criticism towards the protesters. In a speech made in Ankara to the crowds that greeted him in Esenboğa Airport, Erdoğan mentioned:

> We have set off this path wearing our graveclothes. We do not owe anyone an explanation but to God. We do not answer to marginal groups but to nation. The place of reckoning for the nation is the ballot box. The nation brought us, and the nation may send us off. … What they do is only knocking around. Attacking and vandalizing public buildings. ... Not just that, they had also attacked my headscarved girls, my sisters. Not only that, they had also entered the Dolmabahçe Mosque with beer bottles in their hands and, unfortunately, with their shoes on. The girls with headscarves who had been treated as outcasts for years did not do what they had done, they were forbearing. ("Erdoğan: Başörtülülere saldırdılar", 2013)

There seems to be a pattern here of how, despite the fact that actors from all political leanings mention a commitment to the rights and freedoms of all citizens while talking on the liberation of the headscarf in public spaces, the 'headscarved women' through the years of its discourse implied a separate group that was often pit against others, like exemplified in Erdoğan's speech above. The contesting dichotomies were prevalent through the discourse as established above; sometimes in the form of those

for the status-quo and those against it, sometimes in the form of RPP and JDP, sometimes in the form of Islamist elite and Republican elite, or in the form of "Gezici" protestors and the headscarved women. Throughout the discourse, it can be observed that Erdoğan, considered him and his party to be on side with the will of the nation and the majority. As per his speeches it may be adduced that he believed that the judiciary and state should be organized in accordance to the natural rights and freedoms of the citizens, instead of the vice versa where the judiciary and the state regulates and oversees the rights and freedoms of the citizens; and thus the demands regarding these rights and freedoms should be made democratically and be adhered to if a majority demand is provided. JDP's moderate Islamist discourse on the headscarf issue, thus exemplified a liberatory impact for religious rights and freedoms. Erdoğan's speeches conveyed a sense of trust towards the masses in their capability of democratic governance and decision-making on issues regarding to their bodily autonomy and individual integrity. However, the antagonizing discourse employed, such as the one given above about the Gezi protestors, and Erdoğan's propensity to utilize "headscarved daughters" as a political metaphor to denote "us" against the "others" served to deepen the hostilities between the political actors. The already established contrasts between the discourses produced by the JDP and its opponents grew, despite the liberal democratic achievements on the issue of headscarf; and the political opposition festered doubts about the sincerity of the JDP's commitment to democracy due to populist nature of its discourse. The fear was that JDP was utilizing democracy as legitimizing discourse for a "hidden agenda." Underlying such fears seemed to lie a question on whether, considering the intricacies of justice, the demand for a right or a freedom by a citizen, were only to

be considered legitimate on the condition that it aligned with the majority's understanding on what was just and right.

CHAPTER 6

LGBTI+ - ANTAGONISTIC SILENCE

As elucidated in the previous chapter, the headscarf issue was politized heavily by both the government and the opposition to situate themselves in the political spectrum and discursively construct their political identities. The political opposition's doubts against the liberal discourse employed by JDP and its commitment to democracy was due the perception of the party's moderation as being pragmatic. The argument was that JDP's discourse of liberal democracy was not going to apply to the issues on rights and freedoms that are not in compliance with the party's own ideology and own conception of good life. Rather in line with this argument, unlike the prominent political debate on the issue of headscarf concerning the bodily autonomy of the headscarved women and the religious rights and freedoms; the rights and freedoms of the LGBTI+ community in Turkey was hardly ever politicized, or brought to public debate. The silence on such a pressing issue could have been enough to cast a shadow on the party's democratic legitimacy, however it was the growing antagonism that thoroughly impaired the party's claim in advocating and respecting personal rights and freedoms. JDP discourse on LGBTI+ not only informed the observers about party's moderation trajectory but also showed how the government's authority, which was previously legitimized through its democratic status, was used to diminish liberal democracy.

6.1 A History of Silence: Discourse on LGBTI+

A significant substantiation for the claim of silence on the issue may be the quantity of discursive data collected for the research on the political discourse of the issue, perhaps even more so than its content. In the analysis of online archives of news

outlet Hürriyet from January 2002 to the current date, for instance, the word "LGBT" when searched, brought up a total of 488 headlines, with most of the coverage being global news, and the few national news consisting mostly of hate crimes or crimes involving LGBTI+ persons. The more idiomatic and descriptive terms such as "gey [gay]" and "lezbiyen [lesbian]" produced 1.534 and 835 results respectively; while the same archive system of the Hürriyet had produced 2.651 and 1.794 results for the terms "başörtüsü [headscarf]" and "türban [turban]" respectively. I had further observed that while in my search for the speeches on the headscarf issue, the two search terms usually produced more discrete sets of data, the terms selected for the search on discourse concerning LGBTI+ issues, produced more data in union set, meaning that an article that included the term "LGBT" was more likely to also include the terms gay and lesbian.

The lack of public speech on the issue is notable concerning the fact that only in 2018, a LGBTI+ rights organization, Kaos GL reported seven murder attempt cases, three cases of assault with weapon, four cases of rape and sixteen cases of other sexual assault (Kaos GL, 2019, p. 39-41). In the report concerning the hate crimes against LGBTI+ persons, the latest of which was published in 2018,[6] a total of 150 cases were documented all of which were collected through an exhaustive investigation of the daily updates on news portals and other social media platforms and were filtered with respect to the standards of reliability and consistency (Kaos GL, 2019, p.8). Out of the 150 cases, 56 of were direct assaults against the individual such as attempted murder, physical violence, rape or other sexual assaults. And only 20 of the 56 cases were reported to police, with only 6 cases being brought to trial (Kaos GL, 2019, p.11). These numbers gain further significance when one considers

[6] As of the writing of the hereby thesis the latest published issue of the Hate Crime Report was for the year 2018, however in June 2020, the report for the year 2019 had also been published.

the fact that the main reason that the cases were not reported to the police was the fact that the injured party 'did not believe that reporting to the police would resolve the issue', besides, the victims 'refrained from being exposed to the media or their families by the police' and they were 'afraid of being discriminated against by the police because they were LGBTI+' (Kaos GL, 2019, p. 37-38). The report is striking in many aspects, but it is especially important in the line of argument of this thesis that not only hate crimes and prejudice against LGBTI+ citizens was non-negligibly rampant, but also that the victims of the prejudice were not trusting of the very state agencies that were tasked with protecting them. This shows that the lack of visibility for the LGBTI+ persons was more comprehensive then the mere lack of news media coverage; it was a matter that involved a collective ignorance and prejudice for which the state authorities were also to blame. The complicity of Turkish legal and political system in discrimination of the LGBTI+ community is further evidenced by the fact that although the Turkish Penal Code does not outwardly criminalize same-gender sexual acts of consenting adults, the LGBTI+ persons are not recognized and protected under the legal and constitutional regulations. ILGA World's report on *State-Sponsored Homophobia* (2019, p. 174-176) states that Turkey is one of the five countries amongst 48 countries in Europe to not include any form of legal and governmental protection nor recognition to LGBTI+ persons. In its 2019 progress report of the European Commission (2019, p. 38-39) states that:

> There are serious concerns on the protection of the fundamental rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons. … Hate speech by government officials and media against the LGBTI community continued during the reporting period. Intimidation and violence against the LGBTI community continues to be a major problem, and hate speech against LGBTI persons is not effectively prosecuted, as it is mostly considered to fall within the boundaries of freedom of speech. There is no specific legislation to address these crimes. There is limited protection of LGBTI organizations which have received threats. Discrimination towards the LGBTI community is still widespread.

Despite the lack of acknowledgement in the context of the media and the legislation however, the LGBTI+ acceptance in Turkish society has increased since the start of the millennium (Flores, 2019, p. 33-35). In the survey conducted by the Kadir Has University (2020, p. 61) as well, almost half of the participants, 45 per cent to be exact, agreed with the statement that 'Gay, lesbian, bi and trans individuals should have equal rights', which was 9 per cent higher than the previous year's 36 per cent; this agreement rate was its highest since the year 2016. If one were to consider the indexes on social acceptance then, the ever-permanent plenitude of hate crimes and hate speech against LGBTI+ persons despite increasing social tolerance may point to the propagating fanaticism of those that are intolerant towards different gender expressions, identities and sexual orientations. As mentioned, Kaos GL report shows that the victims of the gender and sexuality-based hate crimes are often distrustful of the enforcement system; according to the report, the victims' unwillingness to notify authorities exhibits that 'the rightful parties do not trust governmental bodies' (Kaos GL, p. 6). The mistrust towards the lower cadres of the state authority may be resulting from the injuring discourse prevalent within the higher governmental cadres.

In his book *LGBTI Rights in Turkey: Sexuality and the State in the Middle East* Fait Mudeini (2018, p. 30) notes that the period onwards from when JDP came to power 'largely coincides with the rise of the LGBTI activism in Turkey' and asserts that Turkish governmental history 'and more specifically the tenure of the Justice and Development Party is abound with 'a pattern of public statements against same-sex rights, along with a history of human rights violations committed against sexual minorities'. In fact, Mudeini quotes Idiz who in his 2014 opinion piece claims that Erdoğan and JDP government had 'done nothing but obstruct attempts at

enhancing LGBT rights' (Idiz quoted in Mudeini, 2018, p. 30). Despite such a perception regarding JDP's antagonistic discourse on LGBTI+ however, one could argue, from public speeches from before JDP came to power, that it had not always been the case. Indeed, one of the speeches that are picked up in the recent arguments by ally organizations and politicians when discussing LGBTI+ acceptance is Erdoğan's answer to a question asked on the issue of LGBTI+ rights on the TV program called *Abbas Güçlü ile Genç Bakış* in 2002. Here Erdoğan replies to the question, '… we have gay and homosexuals citizens here in Turkey, are you considering to grant rights such as of marriage to these gay and homosexual citizens like they have in some other European countries, or do you have any personal opinions on this … should such rights be granted or not,'[7] by saying: 'First of all, it is imperative that homosexuals are guarded with legal protections within the context of their own rights and freedoms. From time to time, we see the inhumane treatments that they receive and we do not approve'. The discourse presented here is momentous especially when one considers the fact that is employed by Erdoğan, a religious conservative figure with significant political influence, right before the 3 November 2002 elections. This is, however, no doubt a rare positive stance on LGBTI+ related rights and freedoms held by a member of the now ruling party JDP. In fact, it will be argued that JDP's stance had been more that of a neutral silence than a negative slander regarding the issue in the first few years of its government.

Quite in line with this argument, the earliest remark Mudeini records is a quote made in 2003 right after JDP came to power with 2002 elections by a

[7] It may be important to note here, that upon the utterance of the words "gays and homosexuals," a collective laughter and consequent clapping takes over the audience, which due to the program's concept generally consists of people around the ages of 18-22. This alone, combined with Erdoğan's calm and serious tone in his answer, may denote to the discursive impact of Erdoğan's words for the rights advocacy of LGBTI+ persons whose issues were regarded, even by the youths of the country to be a laughing matter.

spokesperson for Erdoğan in which he claims that homosexual individuals 'cannot be members' of JDP, however 'they can establish their own' political parties (in Amnesty International, 2011, p. 9). This earlier quote is a rare comment on homosexuality in the first years of the JDP government, which is only made through a spokesperson rather than a direct speech. Further, despite its obvious homophobic undertones, the comment could be considered to be relatively less negative in comparison with the more recent comments of government authorities on the matter, since it does not necessarily imply an objection to LGBTI+ individuals having a space within the democratic structures for their recognition and representation, but rather asserts that such a space would not be allocated within JDP cadres.

In congruence with Mudeini, the news outlet data search for the hereby thesis did not produce instances of public speech on LGBTI+ issues, negative nor positive, before the year 2007. Likewise, in their compilation of public statements of JDP, Kaos GL (2015) puts forth only two instances of public speech between the years 2001 and 2007 and thirty-nine instances between the years 2007 and September 2015. Kaos GL further makes the analysis that this chronical compilation displays how JDP discourse shifted from claiming that 'the rights and freedoms of homosexuals should be legally protected' in 2001, to asserting that the issues concerning the LGBTI+ were not matters that could be resolved 'within this century' in 2008, and then to defining homosexuality to be an outright 'immorality' recently (2001'den 2015'e AKP'in LGBTİ tarihi, 2015). The discursive pattern is that of a positive stance before the party's election to government, then to an injurious neutrality and silence until around the 2007 reform debates which gradually became an outright negative from then on. This turn towards a more vindictive discourse on the LGBTI+ issues could also be explained with the increasingly authoritarian and

populist nature of party's overall discourse after 2007. This in turn could be the result of the loss of trust towards democratic and inclusive discourses due to the conflict with the military reaching a tipping point, or the boost of confidence gained against the military after the landslide victory in 2007 elections.

6.2 Kuzu, Şahin and Kavaf: Ignoring, Alienating and Tolerating Difference

The silence that ensued from JDP's coming into office in 2003, was first disrupted with the 2007 constitutional reform debates. During the campaign period of the 2007 elections, JDP had pledged 'a new civilian constitution based on a social contract of broad consensus' that was going to safeguard the 'fundamental rights and liberties in line with the standards established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights' (Gunther, 2012, p. 123). The proceedings of the constitutional amendment were shadowed and hindered by the friction between the JDP and the Kemalist elite and military, but the amendments finally came into force after public vote in 2007, along with the highly debated amended articles on citizens' equal access to public services that mostly aimed to permit the wearing of the headscarf in the higher education institutions. During a debate on whether the headscarf freedom would give way to students wearing a headscarf in high schools as well, the president of the Constitutional Commission of Parliament and a member of parliament of the ruling JDP, Burhan Kuzu, assured that such a demand will not be met, claiming: 'We do not have the obligation to satisfy every demand. There had also been a high demand from homosexuals to be granted equality and a right to marriage. Are we going to appease this just because they demand it? We have to act with a governmental responsibility'. As might be expected, the statement has prompted a reply from the Constitutional LGBTT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transvestite, Transsexual) Commission which comprised

various different LGBTI+ and ally organizations. The Commission (quoted in LGBTT Hakları Platformu, 2009, p. 81-83) had addressed Kuzu with a letter stating:

> In the process of [drafting the] civil constitution which, the government has ensured, was to include all segments of the society, you perpetrate discrimination by excluding homosexuals who are a part of the said society. First, government spokespeople suggested that we should wait for the 22nd century, claiming, "They demand it, but we shall not grant equality to homosexuals." Now you are saying that there is no "discrimination" towards homosexuals in the constitution and bylaws, and see no objection to distort our demands by saying, "What they are saying is something else. They want an amendment so they can marry the same sex." … The people you constantly marginalize as "them" are the citizens of this country and the members of this society. … The expressions "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" should be added to the article that regulates "equality" in the civil constitution ... We remind you, as the Constitutional LGBTT Commission, that we pay the utmost concern and demand that the constitution Republic of Turkey is drafted in a way that it includes articles to prevent all sorts of discrimination and protects the human rights of all citizens.

The letter sent to Kuzu, depicts how the struggle for legal visibility depended on the struggle for an existence in the governmental discourse for the LGBTI+ individuals and organizations. Kuzu's discursive choices, deliberate or unintentional, was picked up in the letter, such as his avoidance to refer to the LGBTI+ community descriptively; the frequent use of "them" and "those" was aptly analyzed to be a discursive tool of marginalization. The letter did not only present the group's demand for constitutional equality but also, and perhaps more adamantly, voiced their concern and disdain for the homophobic discourse of the president of the Commission. Throughout the debates on the amendments, Kuzu displayed a certain discursive dismissal towards LGBTI+ demands, rarely mentioning them or implying social demands such as these may not be worth consideration due to unspecified reasons. Upon his avoidance, Kuzu refrained from voicing a subjective opinion on these demands as well, not directly deeming such demands appropriate or rightful. On 19 February 2009, for example, in an interview on the television program *Teke Tek*, he claims while holding a card sent to him depicting a rainbow on it: 'These

ones want gender equality. They have sent me three-four hundred of these, their problem is different as well' (quoted in Altay, 2009). Kuzu's refusal to outrightly decline or even publicly address these demands, imply that these would not even be considered in the drafting of the amendment. As stated by Jorgensen and Phillips (2002, p.45) 'groups are not socially predetermined, they do not exist until they are constituted in discourse. And that entails that someone talks about, or on behalf of, the group'. Thus, the lack of acknowledgement in the discourse and the refusal to create a dialogue, becomes a form of oppression, especially when the discursive agent is the president of the Constitutional Commission. As Kuzu fails to engage in a discourse that seriously considers LGBTI+ persons as discursive objects, he reflects that such persons do not legitimately exist for him. His personal refusal, however, is not the problem in and of itself; the indignation expressed in the letter is rather to do with what Kuzu represents and the fear of what being absent or vilified within the discourse of a governmental and constitutional authority might mean for the rights and freedoms of the LGBTI+ persons.

Following the Burhan Kuzu's remarks on the topic, the silence surrounding the LGBTI+ identity ensued, until 2010 when then Minister of State Responsible for Women and Family Affairs, and a member of parliament of the ruling JDP Aliye Kavaf claimed in an interview with the newspaper Hürriyet that she believes that 'homosexuality is a biological disorder, a disease' ("Eşcinsellik hastalık, tedavi edilmeli", 2010). She continued saying:

> I think it's something that needs to be treated. Thus, I do not regard gay marriages positively. There is no work being done about these issues in our Ministry. Besides, there is no request made to us. We do not say that there are no homosexuals in Turkey, there are such cases in Turkey. ("Eşcinsellik hastalık, tedavi edilmeli", 2010)

It is unclear whether Kavaf would have brought the matter up unless she was asked about it. Anyhow, her departure from silence did not yield a wholly positive discourse on the topic. Unlike Kuzu, Kavaf confirmed the existence of 'homosexuals in Turkey', yet she also implied that the Ministry is in no dialogue with the many representative organizations and the persons. In her statement Kavaf switched between the first person and third person singular. While she used first person to express her rather homophobic stance personally, 'I do not regard gay marriages positively'; she utilized third person singular to express her Ministry's stance on the subject, which in its unbothered distance mimicked Kuzu's remarks. She also, perhaps inadvertently, reflected her personal discourse that equates homosexuality to 'a disease' by referring to Ministry's acknowledgement of the 'cases' ("vaka") of homosexuality. Read within the context, wording reminds one of a medical case, and it gives the impression that the Ministry, if it ever were to address the issues of the LGBTI+ community, would do so in the manner of the treatment of a social defect. Thus, it is not surprising that the issue was further commented on by then Minister of Health, Recep Akdağ. In an attempt for a remedial response to Kavaf's remarks, Akdağ claimed that it is hard to be a homosexual in Turkey as 'it can be a cause for discrimination' ("Sağlık Bakanı Kavaf'ı insaflı olmaya çağırdı", 2010). Akdağ also spoke on behalf of the Turkish society to assert that while 'society needs to be merciful' about the issue, the consummation of homosexual marriages was 'not a situation that our society can accept' and that the necessary measures should be taken 'for the sexual education of the children to develop correctly' ("Sağlık Bakanı Kavaf'ı insaflı olmaya çağırdı", 2010).

Three days later than Kavaf's controversial comments in her interview, an article covering the Benötesi Psychology Center that claims to "treat" homosexuality

was published in the same newspaper Hürriyet. In the article Yusuf Karabulut, who works in the center asserted:

> I do not know under what circumstances … that the dear Minister responded. But this is the fact: Homosexuality in Turkey, is a difficult thing for those who live through it. … I have also read about the possibility of gay marriages along with these discussions, for example, this is not something that our society can accept. These should be left aside as personal freedoms. We should do whatever is necessary for the sexual identity of our children to form and their sexual education to develop properly. It is obvious that the healthiest sexual life is the monogamous relationship between men and women. ("15 eşcinseli güçlendirdik", 2010)

Karabulut's words, which were eerily similar to Kuzu's later remarks, depicted just how much of an agentive role that the governmental speeches may have. This exemplified that the discourse produced by governmental persons may have a lasting and ingrained effect on society as they legitimize such archaic and prejudicial practices as conversion therapy. Homosexuality was removed from international classification of diseases by World Health Organization (WHO) in 1992, almost a decade before JDP came to power; furthermore, in 2014, a working group from WHO tasked with reviewing categories regarding sexuality in the chapter on mental and behavioral disorders had published a report which recommended that the categories on 'psychological and behavioral disorders associated with sexual development and orientation' be removed entirely due the fact that it is 'not justifiable from a clinical, public health or research perspective for a diagnostic classification to be based on sexual orientation' (Smith et al., 2004; Cochran et al., 2014). Yet, the outdated perception of homosexuality as a treatable disease is perpetuated in Kavaf's words, which is then reflected in the words of a practitioner of the field. Kavaf's, Akdağ's and Karabulut's discourse, thus, are similar in the way that they imply a presupposed societal condition as an unalterable social fact.

According the discourse produced by all three of these speeches, there are "cases" of homosexuality in Turkey, it is hard to be a homosexual in Turkey, and the society will not accept homosexual marriages. The first claim, despite its homophobic undertones, is still a positive change from an outright denial of the existence of LGBTI+ citizens. The second claim, however compassionate it may seem, is absurd, when put forth by a governmental authority, who has not only the capacity but also the responsibility to alleviate the citizens' concerns and improve their quality of life. Not to mention, this claim also ascribes a certain kind of irreparableness to the concerns of LGBTI+ by transferring the duty of ensuring the social acceptance solely to the society itself; an inference which may be confirmed by Kavaf's assertion: 'There is no work being done about them in our Ministry'. For the third claim, where Kavaf asserts her personal view on the topic of same-sex marriages, Akdağ speaks for the society itself, perhaps with the confidence of being an MP of a majority party, and presumes that same-sex marriages will not be accepted in Turkey. Now, this would not be to say that there is no truth to Akdağ's assertions, however, like all other factors of society, social acceptance can also change through time. All in all, societal values are not irrevocable and unchangeable and to ensure a society that is accommodating the rights and freedoms of all its citizens could be considered amongst the core duties of the government. Thus, when a governmental authority dictates a societal condition as an unalterable social fact, it legitimizes the avoidance of the topic, proposing change as something that cannot, under any condition, be possible. Such stigmatizing discourse implicitly specifies the discursive limits within the society, subjectively deciding which topics could be talked about, imagined and made possible. Besides when the stigmatizing discourse is produced by the government itself, creating counter discourses require even more

socio-cultural power; exemplified by the violent apprehension of Kaos GL members who protested Kavaf's words, holding out signs during Kavaf's attendance to a conference on equal opportunity and gender equality, demanding Kavaf to apologize ("Konuk önünde yaka paça", 2010).

In 2011, however, Fatma Şahin, the new Minister of State Responsible for Women and Family Affairs went on to take a slightly more positive stance on the issue and invited Belgin Çelik as a representative of Pembe Hayat LGBTI + Solidarity Association for a meeting on the drafting of law on the prevention of violence against women and the upcoming constitutional amendments. When asked about possible amendments that would benefit LGBTI+ persons in the constitution, Şahin responded: 'We would like to work with you actively. We would like to learn, to know about these issues. Participate in the processes regarding the draft, convey your suggestions' ("Bakan Şahin'den eşcinsellere: Gelin, birlikte çalışalım", 2011). A month before the meeting Şahin had also claimed, in an interview in Hürriyet, that:

> As the minister responsible from family affairs, who is from a conservative and democratic party, I believe these [homosexual relations] are difficult and troublesome for the society because I attach importance to protective measures regarding the family. But ultimately, there is such a reality and I think that as a minister of this country, I should also be considerate in undertaking measures that will protect their right to live without discrimination and will make their lives easier. There needs to be a fine balance. (KaosGL, 2011)

Şahin's words are, without a doubt, much less homophobic then the previous examples, and the commitment to the engagement with LGBTI+ persons attempts to set an example of how a member of a conservative government might include such issues to its discourse without forfeiting its character and values. Şahin, here makes a point to assert both the "conservative" and "democratic" assets of their party and aims to cooperate her conservative political stance with her responsibility as the minister of the democratic state. Still, Şahin's words instigated a debate on whether

or not conservatism and democracy could be thoroughly compatible.[8] In fact, scholar of philosophy Dr. Nilgün Toker Kılınç had asserted that Şahin's comments demonstrated a 'despotic' point of view which reflected 'a government which thinks that it has the right to decide which rights are appropriate for the system' (Kılınç quoted in "Ya benim isteğim gibi olursunuz", 2011).

6.3 Gezi Events and the Increase in LGBTI+ Visibility

Along with this positive step taken for the resolution of the demands and problems of LGBTI+ persons, summer of 2013 also witnessed the Gezi protests, in which, as Kılıçdaroğlu also asserted, queer people took on a leading role. In an interview by Ayşe Arman, one of the protestors who identified as 'Kurdish, homosexual, Christian' and thus 'the epitome of the other' commented that 'Gezi was an educational process for all' with an unseen 'level of communication' and solidarity between people with various values, beliefs and identities:

> We listened to each other and conversed. The sympathy we created there as LGBT individuals was important. … "Revolution" does not necessarily mean to overthrow political power. To awaken political power is actually a revolution as well. That was what we were trying to do. What we were trying to say was very simple: "Please just open your ears and listen to us! Hear us, accept our existence. You constantly otherize and oppress us with your policies. Stop it now! ("Lütfen kulaklarını aç ve bizi dinle", 2013)

With the visibility gained through the Gezi protests, the activism for the LGBTI+ rights and freedoms also gained fervor. Muedini also records the concerns of LGBTI+ individuals about possible retaliation after the Gezi events. While activist and politician Sedef Çakmak asserted that the governmental actors 'were just ignoring' LGBTI+ rights activism and thus the activist groups did not pre-empt any governmental aggression before the Gezi protests; Murat Renay, the founder of

[8] See the interview of Kaos GL with the lawyer, journalist and human rights activist Orhan Kemal Cengiz, *Hiçbir Ailevi 'Değer' Bir Grup İnsanı Şeytanlaştırma Hakkı Vermez* (2011) and the opinion article *Ya Benim İsteğim Gibi Olursunuz ya da Toplum Sizi Hizaya Sokar* 2011).

online LGBTI+ lifestyle publication GZone, asserted that the activists started to 'become visible' after the Gezi protests, further asserting that 'being visible has consequences both negative and both positive' (Çakmak in Muedini, p. 209; Renay in Muedini, 2018, p.123). Thus, the silence that was slowly breaking during the constitutional drafting, took hold of the governmental discourse; and despite the increasing visibility and activism of LGBTI+ rights movement, especially due to their role in the protests, the governmental authorities once again withdrew to an antagonistic avoidance.

In May 2015, before the June general elections, Erdoğan alluded to PDP parliamentary candidates Barış Sulu, who was openly gay, and Nimetullah Erdoğmuş, who was an old mufti of the province; claiming that People's Democratic Party was 'playing with the citizens' sensibilities', by nominating 'a mufti in Diyarbakır' and 'a homosexual in Eskişehir' implying that the nomination of two candidates inherently conflicted each other ("Cumhurbaşkanı partili oldu", 2015). The same year prime minister from JDP, Ahmet Davutoğlu remarked his disapproval of the nomination by claiming that 'homosexuals have brought forth the ruin of the people of Lut'[9] ("AKP broşüründe 'Gay Pride'", 2015). Yet, it was mentioned in the leaflets distributed for the election campaign of JDP in Beyoglu, that 'Turkey is a country where there could be a Pride march in the İstiklal Street in the middle of the month of Ramadan, the fact that conservative people are more visible does not mean that anyone interferes with anyone's lifestyle' ("AKP broşüründe 'Gay Pride'", 2015).

[9] Here Davutoğlu refers to the story of the people of Lot mentioned in several verses of Qur'an. The Qur'anic story is often cited as evidence that Islam prohibits homosexuality. For more information, see, "İslam ve Homofobi: Tarihsel Bir Perspektif" by Gökçen Dinç in *Anti-Homofobi Kitabı*.

From 2015 onwards, Pride marches were regularly banned or were affronted with strict police intervention with the marches often being dispersed by rubber bullets and teargas.[10] In 2014 and 2015, both the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Labor responded to the enquiry motion of Mahmut Tanal, MP of RPP and a member of the Parliamentary Human Rights Investigation Commission, by claiming that no specific work was being done to address various matters regarding the LGBTI+ citizens in their jurisdiction ("Adalet Bakanlığı", 2014; "Çalışma Bakanlığı", 2015). In 16 February 2016, in the meeting of the parliamentary Committee on Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men where proposition of the establishment of the Human Rights and Equality Institution was being discussed, Candan Yüceer of RPP criticized the draft for ignoring individuals of different gender identities and stated that 'everybody will be benefiting equally from legally recognized rights and freedoms, but some will be benefiting less equally' ("Eşcinsellik en büyük tehditlerden biri", 2016).

6.4 Covid-19 Pandemic and Erbaş's Recent Statements

Recently, during the writing of this thesis which coincides with the global Covid-19 pandemic, discussions regarding hate speech and homophobia came into prominence once again, with the president of Directorate of Religious Affairs, Ali Erbaş, mentioning homosexuality and HIV in his Friday sermon dating 24 April 2020. In his sermon Erbaş asserted that:

> The realization of peacefulness, serenity and salvation is only possible if human beings comply with the moral principles demanded from them … Islam names those substances and behaviors that are good and lead one to goodness as halal, and the substances and behaviors that are bad and lead one

[10] See for example, the international news coverage for Pride marches in Turkey: ("Turkish riot police fire water cannon and rubber pellets at Pride revellers" (2015), "İstanbul'da Onur Yürüyüşü'ne polis müdahalesi" (2015), "Organizers say gay pride march in Istanbul canceled after ban", (2016), "İstanbul'da Onur Yürüyüşü'ne polis müdahalesi sonrası gözaltılar" (2017), "Istanbul gay pride march hit with tear gas as Turkish police try to enforce ban" (2018) and "Istanbul Pride marchers teargassed by police", (2019).

> to badness as haram. In other words, clean and beneficial ones are deemed halal, dirty and harmful ones are deemed haram. (Diyanet TV, 2020)

Erbaş continued to give some examples of deeds that are dirty and harmful such as the use of tobacco and of mind-altering drugs, as well as pollution. In his sermon, Erbaş criticized these haram deeds and the 'operations of global perverse belief centers that lead the world into chaos for the realization of the kingdom of God' since these evils 'disrupt the balance of the world' and bring such misfortunes as the pandemic (Diyanet TV, 2020). Erbaş's list of haram deeds include also adultery and homosexuality:

> Islam deems adultery to be one of the greatest harams, and curses Lutism and homosexuality. What is the wisdom behind this? The reason is that these bring forth illnesses and wither generations. Hundreds of thousands of people per year are exposed to the HIV virus caused by this great illicit, referred to as adultery in Islam, which is the illegitimate and unmarried life. Let's fight together to protect people from such evil. (Diyanet TV, 2020)

These words have met with great reaction and three days after the sermon Ankara Bar Association filed a complaint against Ali Erbaş, for the reason that the sermon 'constituted public provocation to hatred and hostility' ("Turkey: Criminal Case for Opposing Homophobic Speech", 2020). Upon the complaint, Ankara prosecutor's office opened an investigation against the Bar association with the reasoning that it was 'insulting the religious values adopted by a part of the public' with its statement against Erbaş ("Ankara Barosu hakkında soruşturma başlatıldı", 2020). Recently the disagreement with the Bar associations and the government had escalated when a draft law was issued that gave way to the establishment of multiple Bar associations in cities where over five thousand lawyers reside ("Çoklu baro düzenlemesi TBMM'de kabul edildi", 2020). The draft law was considered to be an anti-democratic retaliation against the Bar associations.

On June 2020, the parliament discussed the motion regarding the 'investigation of the targeting of bar associations and professional associations' where arguments regarding democracy and dictatorship had unfolded to exhibit the interwovenness of these topics with the notions of sexual freedoms, bodily autonomy, authority and freedom of speech (TBMM, 2020). The discussion started with Filiz Kerestecioğlu Demir, speaking on behalf of People's Democratic Party, re-asserting her party's conclusion that the aim for the regulation on Bar associations was 'to remove the last obstacles against full authoritarianism' as these organizations 'have for years upheld a tradition of being on the side of the people, of science, nature and peace against privatizations, rent policies and antidemocratic practices' (TBMM, 2020). This had started a back and forth between Kerestecioğlu Demir and Mehmet Muş of JDP. To Muş's assertion that 'the Republic of Turkey is governed by a President who was elected by a 52 per cent majority' and that 'in countries dictated by dictatorship, they would not let the honored speaker make that speech', Kerestecioğlu Demir answered: 'In countries ruled by dictatorship, they would let such speeches be made and then they would make the speaker pay the price' (TBMM, 2020).

The discussion of democracy and dictatorship regarding the multiple Bar associations system, thus ushered an interesting discussion on hate speech and freedom of expression. In his defense for the regulations on the Bar associations İshak Gazel of JDP argued when these organizations render an opinion on the political issues, such as their complaint against the speech of Ali Erbaş, they aim 'to create a mechanism of oppression' through which they would establish a certain hegemony over political authorities in order to create biased policies (TBMM, 2020). Gazel then questioned:

> ... how could the statements of the Ankara and Izmir Bar Association and their subsequent criminal complaints against the president of the Religious Affairs be deemed compatible with human rights advocacy? Did the president violate human rights? He said: This is the Islamic rule, this is the Koran, this is the sunnah. And he did so as is required by his duty … but the Ankara and Izmir Bar Association made a statement, which went against the will of the majority of the nation, as if the president of the Religious Affairs was violating human rights. There is nothing to defend about this. You regard the statement of the Ankara and Izmir Bar associations as democratic maturity when it comes to freedom of expression, but when we make a statement against this ... you label it as the oppression of the political power. Today, AK Party is a party that has received the most votes and is the party with the largest majority in the parliament. (TBMM, 2020)

Gazel's statements on freedom of speech and democracy touched on the intricate nuances of these topics. He attested that Ali Erbaş's sermon fell within the limits of freedom of speech bestowed unto him with the very concept of democracy. Thus, according to Gazel, when Kerestecioğlu Demir – and through her agency PDP and other opposition parties – defended the discourse formed by the Bar associations against Erbaş in the name of freedom of speech, that was essentially self-righteous and hypocritical. However, while forming this argument Gazel, perhaps knowingly, excluded an important aspect concerning the democratic notion of freedom of speech which is the relations of power and authority between the discursive agents. Whereas the imbalance of power between different discursive agents is rather apparent in the hereby matter. Bar associations are public professional associations thus, one could argue that the criminal complaint or the published declaration against Erbaş does not hold more legislative and governmental value than those of any other civil organization. One could make the same argument for Erbaş; albeit which much less conviction since by the virtue of Erbaş being a civil servant employed under the constitutionally established state institution, Erbaş's words may hold the authority of a governmental discourse. It could be argued, that this authority is further enforced

with the moral legitimacy that the Directorate has due to its history as well as its recently increased role and authority (Aydın, 2019, p. 269).

The imbalance of power between these discursive agents is also made apparent through Erdoğan's statement where he put forth his agreement with Erbaş's words and asserted that any attack made on Religious Affairs is an attack on the state itself ("Diyanet İşleri Başkanı neden eleştirildi", 2020). However, perhaps the most telling evidence of the discursive power that the governmental authorities such as Erdoğan and Erbaş hold is the subsequent regulatory imposition which is the subject of the parliamentary debate given above. The imposition on Bar associations exemplifies the regulatory power that the governmental discourse may have. Even when this governmental power is not exercised – though in this case it is – the mere possibility of such repercussions reduces the propensity to develop counter-discourses and creates a pattern of censorship. This subtle yet significant consideration was, however, missing from Gazel's argument on free expression and democratic maturity.

Concerning the matter of integrity, identity and bodily autonomy of the LGBTI+ citizens in Turkey, the ignorance and propagation of injurious discourse under the assumption of freedom of expression is extensively and deeply harmful. That is why when MP of JDP, Mehmet Muş commented that although the other parliamentary groups are free to defend 'homosexuals and lesbians', JDP members are also free to defend that such identities and behaviors are inherently wrong, it lacks the acknowledgement that under the current authoritative power of the government such discourses may be intimidating, or even threatening (TBMM, 2020). Still, the fact that the governmental discourse of JDP for the most part ignores the democratic demands of the LGBTI+ citizens – and considers their existence and

integrity as something to be politically defended – exemplifies the moralizing impact of the discourse or the lack thereof; while the recent issue with Erbaş exhibits the relation of this discursive impact with the Islamic values and traditions.

CHAPTER 7

WOMEN'S BODILY AUTONOMY: CONSERVATIVE MORAL REGULATION

The two different discourses above, exemplified how JDP's conservative moderate Islam discourse played into their understanding of democratic governance. When Erdoğan argued against Kılıçdaroğlu's statements regarding the oppositions ongoing studies on how to wear the headscarf appropriately, he did so from a liberal point of view, rather than a conservative one, arguing democratically that the same regulations of attire are not — and by implication should not — be exerted upon other women. With this, Erdoğan attributed the women their bodily autonomy and deprecated the state's approving and adopting of regulations that would limit the said autonomy on a purely subjective notion of "the good life." The same liberatory discourse was not formed for the issues of LGBTI+ citizens. The democratic argumentation for the ignorance and hostility towards LGBTI+ rights advocacy, if there ever was any, employed a much more majoritarian approach. The importance of traditional and Islamic values was much more frequently referenced. The individualist liberal stance was also not preserved on other topics concerning the women's bodily integrity.

7.1 History of Adultery as an Example of Governmental Moral Regulation

One of the earlier instances of this had happened during 2004, about two years after JDP's coming to power, when a bill concerning the criminalization of adultery was presented to the parliament. The bill was defended by then Prime Minister Erdoğan with the claim that the penal regulation would 'protect women from deception' ("EU irked by Turkish adultery law", 2004). Still, the proposal of the bill was perceived as the government introducing Islamic elements into Turkish penal code and diverting

from EU legislations. The national and international uproar on the proposal of the bill was partly due to the historical importance of the issue, especially in regards to women's citizenship and the relation between the nation and women's gendered bodies. Those who objected to the passing of the bill, did so on the rationale that the previous criminalization of adultery 'penalised women more than men 'and that such a penal regulation would 'provoke honour killings more than ever '("EU irked by Turkish adultery law", 2004).

In her analysis of the discourse on the topic of adultery by JDP actors in 2004, İlkkaracan also focuses on the historical development of the issue and asserts that the earliest constitutions of Turkey reflected the similar sentiments that were employed by the modernist and nationalist elite of the time regarding gender and sexuality. According to İlkkaracan (2008, p. 44) though the Islamists and the modernists argued for different societal roles for women, they were on par with each other in their 'zeal to construct a patriarchal ideal of female sexuality' and their willingness to reconstruct and sustain the structures that aim to control women's bodies and sexualities. The Turkish Penal Code dated 1926, attested to these anxieties regarding women's role as citizens of the newly found Republic and the distrust towards 'women's capacity to fulfil their new citizenship obligation' (İlkkaracan, 2008, p. 44). Thus, customary and Islamic discourses, norms and regulations were 'simply translated into a new language, subsumed under a notion of public morality' to which women's sexual liberation posed a certain threat (İlkkaracan, 2008, p. 44). That is why in the earlier laws and regulations, certain sexual acts such as adultery were criminalized as crimes against society rather than crimes against persons and were considered as offences against the social morality and family order. Adultery remained a criminal offence until 1996 when the Articles

440 and 441 was annulled as a result of the active efforts for the reformation of the Penal Code by the legal and feminist advocacy of 1990s (Akman and Tütüncü, 2011, p. 46).

Considering these historical, social and legal implications of the debate, it was not surprising that these claims regarding the re-criminalization of adultery was widely contested by the feminist groups. Women's right advocate Senal Saruhan had claimed that regulation assumes a 'backward approach' that would 'allow the state to intervene in the women's lives ("Turkey signals U-turn on adultery", 2004). In addition to - and perhaps more importantly than - the national backlash Erdoğan's sudden assertions on the issue received international backlash which was critical for Turkey's accession into the EU. In the light of these circumstances, the bill - which İlkkaracan claimed to be more of a populist political strategy than a genuine attempt of criminalization - was dropped, mostly in order to mitigate international criticism received during the EU accession period. Still, quickly after the withdrawal of the bill, Erdoğan was quoted in the news, commenting on the slogans from a women's rally, "Our Bodies and Sexuality Belong to Ourselves," by saying: 'There were even those who marched to Ankara, carrying placards that do not suit the Turkish woman. I cannot applaud behavior that does not suit our moral values and traditions … A marginal group cannot represent the Turkish woman' (quoted in İlkkaracan, 2008, p. 42). This was an early example of the strictly moral and thoroughly exclusive societal role that was casted for the Turkish citizen and especially the Turkish women.

Thus, the issue was not debated any further, until more than a decade later when the topic of adultery was brought up in consideration the crimes of child abuse

including sexual harassment. After arguing for chemical castration of child molesters President Erdoğan mentioned:

> … I am in the opinion that it would be very very incisive to also reconsider the issue of adultery. Because this society has a different position in terms of moral values. While we were in the EU [accession] process, and this is self-criticism, I have to say this: We made a mistake in this regard; while preparing the regulation of adultery, we should perhaps consider these harassments [of children] and so on, within the same scope. ("Erdoğan'dan 'zina' açıklaması", 2018)

Erdoğan's rementioning of adultery, especially with the sensitive topic of child molestation, revealed a few cogent points about the governmental discourse on the topic of morality especially with regards to the "vulnerable" groups that need closer vigilance. First, is the essentializing of Turkish and Islamic culture and presenting it as an unevolving and unchanging mass of beliefs and norms that is somewhat intrinsically separate from "the West." The notion here is that in Western cultures lawmaking is based on the values that are individual-centered, thus sexual crimes concern the injured persons; while in societies that are bound by moral and religious values, the questions concerning family and sexuality become social and communal concerns (Akman and Tütüncü, 2011, p. 192). This then creates a discursive struggle as it requires the government to regulate the individuals' body and sexuality as a form of humane responsibility. Akman and Tütüncü (2011, p. 192) point out to this discursive dilemma claiming that 'religiously conservative groups who incorporate liberal democratic values and institutions' such as JDP feel the need to often point out that 'liberal societies' history, culture, and values are different from those of Turkish society'. This unequivocal and unalterable distinction is why societies such as Turkey will have to 'struggle against the demands of "marginal groups" such as feminists whose ideals should not be effective in the lawmaking process' (Akman and Tütüncü, 2011, p. 195).

From the 2018 statement of Erdoğan, it can be concurred that he had compromised — according to him, wrongly — from a stance that was not actually readjusted or reconsidered with the exploration of the criticism that the adultery bill received nationally and internationally. Erdoğan's trust in the legitimacy of these moral values and his commitment to base legal regulations on these values, however depends largely on his trust that these values were adopted and adhered to by the majority of his citizens. Not only does, he himself constructs a discursive separation between the liberal democracies of "the West" and Turkey, but, as seen by his comments about the women's rally in 2004 and his statement in 2018, he also validates this separation by his rebuke, which completely alienates any dissenting voices and expel the discursive agents from citizenship, thus delegitimizing their expression. When all transgressive discourses are determined invalid or inexistent, democratic legitimation for the moral claims made through governmental discourse becomes possible. On this line, Akman and Tütüncü (2011, p. 190) mention that the discursively the bill of 2004 was not justified by 'legitimate religious or conservative demands', but instead by it being a reply to the democratic demands of the majority of Turkish women; as such, the recriminalization of adultery was presented as 'a feminist demand if feminism is loosely defined as a reflection of women's demands and interests'. It is pseudo-feminist legitimation however since it employs an exclusive definition of the term. This presentation of the regulation as being a democratic consideration of a majority demand, conceals the didactic governmental approaches and the moralistic discourses employed.

7.2 Abortion: Democracy and Islam as Discursive Tools of Moralization

As mentioned before, moralistic discourses are often formed with the rather paternal instinct of preserving and upholding the public morality for the sake of the citizens,

at times even against the citizens' own will. This paternalistic responsibility assumed over the citizens becomes even more discursively salient on the topics concerning women's body and its sexualization. Oftentimes, JDP discourse mansplains the very notion of womanhood and defends the illiberal discursive and governmental practices as measures taken to protect the integrity of this "vulnerable" group. In his speech at the International Women and Justice Summit, Erdoğan, despite claiming that there is no gender-based discrimination in "our" culture, also asserts:

> Justice means giving everyone their due rights. Mind you, giving everyone their due rights does not mean equally distributing something to everyone or treating them in the same way. … You cannot make the weak compete with the strong. Some people keep mentioning equality… Let's assume we are equals. A man and a lady compete in running a hundred meters together, would that be justice? No. What should it be then? Women run with women; men run with men. ("Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, 3. Uluslararası Kadın ve Adalet Zirvesinde konuşuyor", 2018)

According to Erdoğan, such "inequality" is not necessarily due to an intrinsic deficiency of women but instead an intrinsic difference. Not mentioning the fallacious binary approach to gender exhibited in the speech, one could still deduce the coercive social influence inflicted on women through these predetermined conceptions of womanhood. It seems important to note that the discourse of Erdoğan typically assumes an unmistakably male point of view and the third person plural, "us" is used, more often not, to denote a male population. The genderedness of the discursive agent and the frequent reference to the inherent difference between binary genders, constantly "others" the woman citizen. Thus, a woman's worth and legitimacy as a citizen remains mostly connected to its serviceability for the nation, rather than their individuality. The women are recognized as legitimate citizens and their democratic demands are taken into consideration only to the extent that they follow the previously established norms of womanhood. When the woman fits the established narratives of womanhood, then her individuality is established and even

exalted through the governmental discourse employed by Erdoğan and JDP authorities. These exalted territories are often defined with a pragmatic relation determined between women's gendered bodies and the state. Similar to İlkkaracan's (2008, p. 44) observations of the social roles established for women in the newly found Republic, in JDP discourse as well women validate their citizenship status only through participating in the public sphere as a 'mother, teacher and political activist'.

One very prominent example of this is Erdoğan's speech in the "Strategy Document and Action Plan to Strengthen Women" meeting held by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies on the International Women's Day of 2018:

> Starting prior to their births and from the moment they are born, children learn everything from their mothers for a long time. Therefore, in my view, women are the first teachers of all human beings. … This is the divine aspect of the issue. … Women are already bestowed with a strong intuition as a gift from God. When that is combined with their talents in teaching; there emerges our mothers, whose hands and feet are to be kissed by us; our wives to whom we depend upon for all our lives; and our girls who are the light of our eyes. ("Kadın, tüm insanlığın ilk öğretmenidir", 2018)

Speech exemplifies the dramatic discursive tone that is employed frequently in exaltation of the women who adequately accede to the societal roles determined for them. Here, Erdoğan also utilizes religious narratives of creation in order to justify the patriarchal social role determined for women as teachers. After giving the example of Aminah, mother of the prophet Muhammed, and her compassion towards the prophet, Erdoğan goes on to say that a woman who is a good teacher in her family, may protect her children from unhealthy influences and may compensate for the shortfalls of the father and the society. It is, according to Erdoğan, primarily the women's duty to care for their children since the harsher circumstances of a men's life makes it 'undoubtedly more difficult for the father to be as successful as the mother in this regard' ("Kadın, tüm insanlığın ilk öğretmenidir", 2018). From here,

Erdoğan delves into another, and perhaps the most important, predetermined role for the women of Turkey:

> From time to time, I see that there are some people who are uncomfortable with the fact that we emphasize motherhood while talking about these issues regarding women. … However, the greatest privilege that God endowed upon women is this virtue of motherhood. … Separating a woman from her maternal attributes means taking away her greatest privilege … From time to time I say "at least three children". … Do you know why those who are bothered [with that statement] feel that way? They feel bothered because they are the enemies of this nation. Because what makes a nation? It is family. And what makes a family? Of course, the parents. (“Kadın, tüm insanlığın ilk öğretmenidir”, 2018)

As illustrated in the hereby quote, the most honorable aspect of womanhood is being a mother. This fact is discursively connected with the conservative significance attested the integrity of the family. As mentioned, women’s “otherness” is only acclaimed when it is serviceable to the state which then irrevocably links the female citizen with the family, which is considered a sub-structure of the state. The integrity of the family then becomes more of a prime concern than the physical and mental integrity of the women as individuals. This priority becomes perhaps most obvious in the discussion of abortion and cesarean deliveries. Regarding both as methods of birth control, Erdoğan alludes to the assumption that these methods are encouraged by “the nation’s enemies” as part of a plan to weaken Turkish nation by depleting its population. Erdoğan’s emphasis on the notions of reproduction and population had been known from the earlier years of JDP’s incumbency, with his frequent remarks such as: ‘Humans are essential in an economy. They want to root out the Turkish nation. … Have at least three children so that our young population does not decline’. However, the debate over abortion and population control had been especially prominent when Erdoğan mentioned:

> I regard abortion as murder. I am also addressing some circles and members of the media who oppose this claim of mine. ... I ask you: What is the difference between killing a baby in the womb and killing it after birth? We

> are obliged to battle this together. We have to know that there is an insidious plan to wipe this nation off the world stage, we should never lend credence to such games. (“Her kürtaj bir cinayettir”, 2012)

Less than a week after these remarks Erdoğan had attended an opening for a private hospital where he mentioned that regulation concerning this issue was underway. This was an illustration of how governmental discourse can have even more concrete outcomes than purely hegemonic forms of influence which are by themselves authoritative enough to achieve comprehensive social engineering. In his defense for the regulations on birth control, Erdoğan seems determined to not acknowledge the critical discourses as legitimate and to go ahead with the judicial arrangements without public deliberation.

> We are preparing the law on abortion and we will pass this law. Now some people are coming out, saying, "Abortion is a right." A woman says, “If she wants, she can have an abortion. It is her own right. You cannot interfere with her body." Then [you should] also allow those who [want to] commit suicide. … Isn’t that nonsense? There are two grievances here: First, there is the murdering of the fetus inside the mother’s womb; second, there is also harm done to her [the woman’s] own self. When we talk about these, we speak scientifically. And there is no difference between killing a fetus in the womb or killing a person after birth. … And, as their Prime Minister, I urge our sisters to be sensitive in regards to this issue. This is murder. … There are similar laws enacted in many Western societies. We are working on it as well. This is in keeping with our values. It is not allowed. … I say the same for cesarean [births]. … The caesarean issue is also nothing more than an operation to stagnate the population of this nation. (“Kürtaj Yasası çıkartacağız”, 2012)

In Erdoğan’s discourse the main lines of argumentation for further limitations on birth control are prevention of population stagnation and the protection of the unborn fetus as well as the pregnant women. The discourse formed around these arguments presents Erdoğan, and by proxy the government, as the patriarchal head of the nation who protects the bodily integrity of the unassuming members of the nation — born and unborn — against the foreign and transgressive discourses produced with “insidious plans” of population control and the local echoes of these foreign and

transgressive discourses. Despite, at certain points alluding to science and examples of similar global practices in the West — perhaps in an attempt to appeal to the support of the more relatively secular groups — Erdoğan is quick to mention that the regulations are also 'in keeping with our values' ("Kürtaj Yasası çıkartacağız", 2012). JDP's moderate Islam discourse often assumes the role of the incontestable spokesman of Islam and tradition, thus utilizing idiosyncratic interpretations of Islamic and conservative codes to legitimize the populist and moralizing governmental discourses. This applies to the notion of birth control as well, in 2016, Erdoğan asserts:

> We must continue on our way ... never forgetting our main purpose. We shall expand our posterity. We will increase our population; no Muslim family may ever abide by such conceptions of birth control and population planning. Whatever our Rabb says, whatever our beloved Prophet says, we will follow that path. ("Erdoğan: Müslüman aile doğum kontrolü yapmaz", 2016)

When such discourses that already have the social leverage of being produced by governmental actors are reproduced with such references to certain norms and values which are a part of a system of beliefs that is already greatly influential within the society, they become almost absolutely intransgressible. In the lack of the possibility of forming critical discourses, there happens a spiralling process where the already dominant discourse is reproduced with increasing severity. This had happened in 2012 as well, amongst the JDP circles. Around the same time with Erdoğan's statements in the end of May 2016, then President of the Human Rights Inquiry Committee Ayhan Sefer Üstün claimed that, abortion is 'a crime against humanity' ("AK Partili Üstün: Kürtaj yasaklanmalı", 2012). The debate on the issue concerning women's bodily autonomy ensued almost wholly through the discursive contributions of male members of JDP, and the discussions evolved to include under what circumstances abortion may be allowed. One such circumstance was the case

where the women was a victim of a sexual assault; on which the Health Minister Recep Akdağ proposed that ‘the state will look after the child’ produced of such an affair. ("Annenin başına kötü bir şey gelirse”, 2012) After less than a week later Akdağ’s proposition, in a television program that he had attended, then Mayor of Ankara Melih Gökçek made these chilling remarks:

> Why would the child suffer because of the mistake of that person who is supposed to be their mother? Let the mother suffer, let the mother kill herself. Suffering does not justify this practice. … There are many methods of protection. Your body may belong to you, but your life belongs to God. If you go and have an abortion, that is called murder. Bring the rapist [to the court], and make them receive their punishment. But what's the fault of the child in the womb? The state may take them and bring them up. The child wouldn’t even know. (“Çocuğun ne suçu var, anası kendisini öldürsün”, 2012)

The fact that Gökçek’s statements echoed many previous assertions within the JDP discourse — likening abortion to murder, proposing the state to take care of the unaborted children of assault victims — fortifies the claim of how a dominant governmental discourse may reproduce itself with increasing impacts of coercion through spiraling and subtle mechanisms of censorship and propaganda. Meanwhile, as mentioned before, transgressive discourses are quickly dispersed as illegitimate. In this case the transgressive discourses are mainly produced by feminist groups which are referred to by another speech by Erdoğan in June, 2012:

> Abortions and cesarean births are the main topics these days. There are two kinds of approaches here. Some say, “This body is mine, the choice will be mine to make.” This is propagandized mostly by feminists. There is also the right to life. We act from a pro-life point of view. … Nobody has the right to kill this [the fetus]. (“Erdoğan: 'Benim bedenim' diyenler feminist”, 2012)

The antagonization of feminist discourses is not specific to the issue of abortion, however. In 2008, the Directorate of Religious Affairs published these words on its website: ‘Feminism has very negative moral and social consequences. … the woman who is caught up in the feminist movement, in general, adopts the idea of

unconditional freedom and disregards many rules and values that are indispensable for the family, with in general' ("Diyanet, feministleri kızdırdı", 2008). In response to these remarks of from the Religious Affairs, activist Evren Kaynak notes the deliberate antagonization of the women's rights movement, and asserts that feminism is misunderstood 'on purpose', giving a concrete instance of how their endeavors to criminalize marital rape was encumbered by the claim that such regulations were demanded only by 'a couple of feminists' and 'do not reflect the general demands of Turkey' ("Erdoğan: 'Benim bedenim' diyenler feminist", 2012). As mentioned, governmental discursive agents frequently employ conservative Islamic codes to legitimize their subjective moral stances. Likewise, these conservative codes are often used to delegitimize the opposing discourses such as those of feminist groups. A clear illustration of this was when Erdoğan spoke out in response to the criticism he received on his comments on femicide:

> I say that women are entrusted to men by God. And those feminists you know… "What is that supposed to mean, to say that the woman is entrusted? That is an insult," they say. You have nothing to do with our religion, our civilization then. We follow the word of the dearest of dear ones. He says, "She is entrusted by God. Care for his entrustment." ("Erdoğan: Bu feministler filan var ya", 2015)

One of the most prominent lines of argument produced through governmental discourse is that feminist 'do not accept motherhood' which is 'the highest, the most unattainable status' that is endowed by God ("Uluslararası Kadın ve Adalet Zirvesi", 2014). In a speech made at the opening of a service building for the Women and Democracy Association (KADEM), Erdoğan had asserted that the discussions women's right activism in Turkey had been 'distorted' and dominated by a discourse that 'disregards the facts of humanity and which does not belong to this land and to this civilization' ("Erdoğan: Anneliği reddeden kadın eksiktir, yarımdır", 2016). The speech here utilizes similar figures of expression utilized in criticism of the old

secular regime, which not only undermines the value of feminism, but also echoes the nuances of democratic legitimation that JDP's governmental frequently employs through which the party assumes that it speaks for the nation and the opposing discourses are only made by those who are alien and enemy to the nation. Erdoğan continues to say that these alien views 'isolate the woman from the nature of her creation, her social and biological reality' ("Erdoğan: Anneliği reddeden kadın eksiktir, yarımdır", 2016). According to Erdoğan, 'what makes a woman is her motherhood, her impact on her family and children, her aesthetics, and the differences that she has', on that line he mentions that a woman's employment should never take priority over her motherhood since that would be her denying her own womanhood since: 'A woman who refuses motherhood and refrains from taking care of her home, is half a woman, no matter how successful she is in business life' ("Erdoğan: Anneliği reddeden kadın eksiktir, yarımdır", 2016).

Thus, almost a decade later, the discourse of Religious Affairs in 2008, is reproduced by Erdoğan. The governmental discourse utilizes conservative, traditionally Islamic descriptions of womanhood to obscure the discursive deviation from the individualist, democratic approaches where the state and its regulations are shaped through the demands of its citizens. This stance provides a particularly telling contrast with JDP's previous reforms for women's physical autonomy on the issue of headscarf. In support of the reforms on headscarf, JDP discourse frequently referenced democratic values, assuming a position as "the voice of the people" arguing for women's individual autonomy against authoritarian state structures which considered her public existence a threat. However, on the aspect of motherhood, the family — and by extension the nation — is prioritized; the prosperity and the integrity of the nation becomes more important than women's

individual freedom to live according to their beliefs and their own understanding of the good life. This approach to the women's bodily autonomy is criticized by Canan Arı in her response to the statement Religious Affairs dated 2008; Arı's words may well serve as a response to Erdoğan's 2016 remarks which seems to be the reproduction of the same discourse:

> These words indicate a mentality that cannot tolerate the individuality of a woman and that regards the women as nothing but a virginal body that should even sacrifice her own life for the sake of the family. There is nothing to be condemned about a woman who values her own life above the notion of family. ("Diyanet, feministleri kızdırdı", 2008)

In a clever allusion to the much-disputed secular student oath, which has the expression, 'shall my existence be dedicated to the Turkish existence', Arı claims that the mentality here reflects the understanding, 'let my existence be dedicated to the existence of the family' ("Diyanet, feministleri kızdırdı", 2008).

Democracy and Islam are both reinterpreted and utilized as discursive tools in the government's moralizing discourses on women's bodily autonomy. Democracy is utilized under a minimal, majoritarian interpretation whereby it is claimed that the moralizing ultimatums are just a reflection of the voice of the majority while the opposing discourses represent the transgressive voice of a few minority groups which are alien and belligerent to the integrity of the nation. Whereas, Islam and tradition are utilized to reinforce the illegitimacy of these transgressive discourses. Whether or not the majority of the nation share the same moral codes and beliefs or have the same interpretation of Islamic knowledge and traditions that is exhibited in government's moralizing speech is not up to debate. That is decided a priori and the discourse is formed around it. Just like it was observed in the discourse surrounding LGBTI+ issues, the claims on women's bodily autonomy assume a concrete, unchanging social reality and legitimizes the moralizing governmental discourse as

the mere expression of such realities. In no point, we observe a fruitful dialogue with the opposing discourses; instead they are illegitimized and wiped from the context of the assumed social reality. Thus, the social reality, which was once assumed, is reinforced and perhaps created by the hegemonic power of the governmental discourse.

7.3 Istanbul Convention and the Demand for "Local" Feminism

When governmental discourse aims to moralize, the trouble is not only that it may have a social regulatory impact but also that it may have a legal impact on the citizens life. A moralizing discourse which adopts a single outlook of the good life, a single set of values may thus bring about coercive impact on the citizens that are outliers to the governmental discourse. This regulatory impact of the governmental discourse on women is exemplified very clearly in recent debates on the termination of the Istanbul Convention. The issue here was once again, the distorted and alien nature of feminist discourses within the country and the necessity to create local discourses on women's rights activism that are more in line with traditional and Islamic sets of norms and values. As might be expected the debate on Istanbul Convention was not the first time that this necessity had been brought up; in a speech made by Erdoğan in 2014, he asserts that: 'Instead of importing concepts and actions, Turkey may establish its own distinct forms of struggle' (Uluslararası Kadın ve Adalet Zirvesi, 2014). This proposition could be considered as a call for a more inclusive form of feminism in Turkey, produced by the Turkish women themselves and an activism that conscious of and familiar with the ethos of womanhood in Turkey. In 2019, his proposition has put forth eloquently by Erdoğan's daughter and deputy chairwoman of KADEM, Sümmeye Erdoğan Bayraktar who had asserted that: 'We are told that we can achieve values such as freedom, equality and

democracy, only if we fit in with into molds perfectly ("Tek tipleştirilen bir kadın modeli", 2019). Such calls for intersectional and inclusive understandings of the global notions such as democracy and women's rights, by themselves are not unfounded or unmerited. However, propositions such as Erdoğan's are considered within their discursive context, they lose impact. Accordingly, Erdoğan's speech in 2014 also expresses Erdoğan's tendency to dogmatize his subjective moral claims as the de facto truths and realities of the Turkish and Islamic "civilization":

> … the laws and regulations are formed by the authority; but justice stems from a sense of truth and is formed by the conscience. … We have to build the concepts of equality and law, on the basis of justice and conscience. … You cannot make men and women equal. Because they are different by creation, by nature, their bodies are different. … Today, in many developed countries, we see that women's rights struggles are confined to certain patterns, certain concepts and discourses. Above all, we observe that women's struggle for rights is clinging to a concept of equality … Turkey may bring about different practices and discourses with different perspectives … Instead of imported concepts and action, Turkey, may build its own specific form of struggle. (Uluslararası Kadın ve Adalet Zirvesi, 2014)

Such morally biased subjective opinions on the women's creation, the priority of family and women's natural responsibilities could be argued against from a perspective that not just acknowledges and values the diversity and fluidity in gender performance but also recognizes the non-binariness of biological sex. However what taints Erdoğan's proposition of producing local discourses of feminism is not necessarily the flaws or the shortcomings of his conception of feminism but rather his historically noted unwillingness to improve on them. This is true for all actors that contribute to this governmental discourse on women; not only that they are predominantly men, but also as mentioned before in the hereby chapter, they exhibit the tendency to antagonize opposition and make sweeping assumed generalizations on behalf of the nation in order to legitimize their opinions. Thus, the proposition

becomes not for the establishment diverse and inclusive women's rights activism, but for the establishment for the JDP approved women's rights activism.

Although subjective, these claims when produced by governmental actors have regulatory power as well as a hegemonic impact. The call for a local discourse on feminism and the antagonization of "Western" or global feminism as well as their local reproduction had produced a concrete regulatory discussion around 2020. With the increasing femicide and violence towards women, on Women's Day, 8 March 2020, Erdoğan had asserted that they deemed violence against women as 'one of the biggest threats' towards the familial structure and that they were going to make sure that the measures taken against violence are preventative and that they are 'serving their main purpose' ("Vicdanları nasır tutmuş bir dünyanın", 2020). These statements had been interpreted as Erdoğan's intent to retreat from the international Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe against violence against women and domestic violence. Later in August, he alluded to this again as he spoke on the program for the JDP's foundational anniversary. In his speech, Erdoğan proposed that Turkey creates its own framework that reflects the Turkish social structure that is centered on the notion of family and stops using 'translated texts' ("Cumhurbaşkanı ve AK Parti Genel Başkanı Erdoğan", 2020). With a play on the word of "ataerkil" which means "patriarchal" in Turkish, Erdoğan claimed that Turkish nation is a "aile erkil," "familiarchal," nation that prioritizes the integrity of family and that approaches, regulations and ideologies that 'demolish the familial foundations are neither humane nor legitimate' ("Cumhurbaşkanı ve AK Parti Genel Başkanı Erdoğan", 2020). On that line he asserted that:

> … we will never be able to answer to our Rabb … if we hold back from protecting our women. That being the case, as JDP, one of the most important matters for us is the elimination of the distorted approaches that had permeated to our social structures over time, despite not originating from our

> own beliefs and values. … We shall not be a part of anything that would weaken the institution of family which lays at the basis of our beliefs and culture. In particular, in this world of us, we are not in any position to let anyone judge our sensitivity toward the [notion of] family. … We are neither going to let anyone weaken our struggle against violence towards women, nor are we going to allow a handful of marginals damage our family values. … we may say "Ankara Criteria" instead of "Copenhagen Criteria" and continue on our way. ("Cumhurbaşkanı ve AK Parti Genel Başkanı Erdoğan", 2020)

With what has been discussed so forth in this chapter, it is not especially hard to understand why these comments may intimidate persons that employ different approaches to feminism from what Erdoğan deems acceptable or women who have different notions of "good life;" as well as just about anyone who does not share the "familiarchal" values which Erdoğan deems to be the original and legitimate value system of the nation. With the legitimizing support of frequent reference to tradition and Islam, JDP's moderate Islam discourse establishes these values as the unchanging norms of the nation. Through the discursive establishment of this cohesive nation, whose beliefs and values are already in line with JDP discourse, then a majoritarian democratic legitimation is devised, where JDP is conveyed as a discursive actor that represents the majority of the nation and any other discourse as innately alien and belligerent. The fact that any deviant discourse is deemed not only 'illegitimate' but also 'inhumane' is coercion enough, but the fact that such discursive statements can have actual regulatory and legal outcomes becomes especially threatening.

The discursive actors of JDP are open and proud in their insistence of putting the integrity of the family above the bodily autonomy of women — or the bodily autonomy of any individual in general. The issue here, is not that the discursive agents hold a certain ideological standpoint, it is that they delegitimize every other standpoint; likewise, it is also not necessarily that they utilize an Islamic discourse, it is that they dogmatize the norms and the traditions of Islam. As stand-alone ethical

and moral claims, the discursive claims of JDP actors may not pose any systemic threat to women. These claims may be deliberated and argued for and against just as any other moral claim. Such claims may also be argued for by a group of people who are represented by political actors within the structures of democracy; after all, democratic parties are for the representation and discussion of different values and views. However, when a governmental discourse not only heavily relies on moralizing assertions, but also discredits the representation and discussion of any other moral values or views, it creates a coercive hegemonic effect. JDP's position on the bodily autonomy of the women perfectly exemplifies how and why biased governmental discourses create such hegemony and it is mostly to do with the imbalance of power. What makes a moral claim propagandized through a governmental discourse especially threatening is the fact that governments hold to authority to regulate society in accordance to what is deemed right and true by them. JDP's discourse on such matters regarding the women's bodily autonomy and sexuality was poignant because it showed just why the governmental discourses held such coercive social power, and that was because JDP could create social truths and realities not just by the power of speech but also by the governmental authority it held.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Despite the several theoretical arguments for the eminence and expediency of a democratic regime as given above, the questions as to what a perfect democracy may consist of and to what degree such a regime may be achievable obscures the definition and development of democracy in practice. As mentioned, this is in most part related to the fact that a democratic regime draws its legitimacy and authority from the consent of the governed which is minimally determined through popular electoral voting. It is argued however, that popular elections may not be enough for the legitimation of a democratic authority; indeed, if the definition and the moral value of democracy is bound with the consent of the governed, the structures of democracy would need to include spheres where the legitimate authority of the government and the consent of the governed could be deliberated and negotiated regularly. This requires democracy to have certain social – and thus discursive – checks and balances to be considered wholly legitimate. As observed, democracies that adhere merely to the principle of popular sovereignty without being tempered by administrative and social constraints which ensure stability and order, may ultimately bring on the governance of populist demagogues and the supremacy of majority; which then would entail the degeneration of democracy and rise of despotism. Such forms of democracy, which are minimally defined by their adherence to the popular electoral processes run the risk of masking the discursive and institutional authoritarianism through the existence of the minimal democratic structures and processes.

The literature on democratic backsliding assures that democratic progress is not unidirectional, which means that regimes may also lose their democratic characteristic in time. As argued, the core value of a democratic system lies in its ability to ensure freedom and equality to its citizens; for this, democratic systems are structured in political mechanisms that ensure consent through governmental power being distributed among the citizens or their elected representatives. As their legitimacy is based on this notion of democratic consent, it is crucial that democratic governments do not assume superiority over the citizens and remain receptive and open to their demands. Ensuring that the democratic systems preserve their flexibility and integrity, thus requires social checks and balances and curbing of governmental power through the participation of the citizens in deliberative politics. Considering the ability of the discourses to shape and create social meanings, this necessity of social checks and balances is where the importance of discourse truly manifests. An existence of a discursive hegemony, an imbalance of power within the deliberative spheres causes the deterioration of the necessary social checks and balances. That is precisely why democratic backsliding begins with words.

The path of Islamic (de-)moderation and the democratic evolution that Turkey had gone through under the JDP regime is, likewise, closely connected with the party's use of governmental discourse. As a charismatic outsider in the stoutly secular democracy of Turkey, Erdoğan's JDP had undoubtedly started its political journey with a discourse that foregrounded the party's adherence to the democratic principles. This was, in a way, a survival instinct for JDP whose political legitimacy was constantly threatened by the existing governmental structures mainly due to party's Islamist background.

Turkish Republic's complex relation with religious political identities and discourses have a history preceding JDP's political existence. The acuteness of the debate regarding politics and religion is reflected in the Republic's constitution which, dissimilar to other Muslim majority countries, specifically attests to the secular nature of the Republic. The necessity to curb religious discourses in political spheres to avoid a hegemony of religious dogma and a fear of resurgence of reactionary Islamic movements is therefore foundational in the Republic. In that sense, as mentioned earlier, the foundational father Atatürk's reforms have not just been institutional but instead much deeper, whereby the state's and state officials' legitimate authority were no longer grounded in religious validation. Not just the Caesar and God was separated but it was also constitutionally assured that the religious discourses would not employ for the establishment of authority and political manipulation.

The fear of a religious discourse taking over legitimate authority within the Republic has haunted the Turkish governments for years to come. Partly as a manifestation of this fear, political parties that have Islamic background were met with severe institutional backlash from the rooted secular and nationalist authorities. This was one of the main strategic reasons as to why JDP needed to make sure to demonstrate that its political legitimacy was not established on the moral authority endowed by the party's Islamic nature, but to the fact that the party represented the will and the authority of a certain unit within the society. The party carefully described itself as a conservative democratic party and tried to avoid excessive direct association to Islamic religion.

This feeling of segregation and alienation launched JDP and its leaders into a somewhat constant search for political legitimacy and safety. This had contributed in

party's initial discourse being formed around liberal democracy and human rights, as it aimed to garner popular support and establish its political legitimacy against military and secular elite. Apart from such internal support JDP, in the first few years of its government showed a solid commitment to EU progression, realizing that the human rights, rule of law and values of democracy as conceptualized by the Western world would bolster their political ground against the Kemalist secular political center. This has stripped Islamist discourse employed by the JDP from its anti-Western properties and once again displayed a much moderate discourse which emphasized modernity, rule of law and human right in an exceptionally Turkish blend.

Various intra-party reasons as well as reasons concerning domestic and international occurrences could be given as to why the JDP regime started to go down a more authoritarian route around 2010 onwards. With the rewriting of the constitution, and the institutional change towards a presidential system in 2017, it is no doubt JDP's authoritarian turn had legislative and institutional effects. Yet, as established before, despite the fact that a government of people may adhere to the minimal requirements of a democratic regime such as holding out popular elections, it may still lack the checks and balances that is necessary for a truly pluralistic and democratic governance. Deliberation, free speech and equal discursive spheres for all citizens are important social checks and balances as they give areas for the governed to communicate with the government and hold them accountable for their decisions and actions. After all, citizens are what really make up a democracy. And since, as mentioned, the social truths and realities are part made up by the discourses of the agents, it can be posited that the citizens exist as much as they claim their existence and construct it through the social power of the discourse. Going back to the JDP

example, one sees that this censorship - and consequent self-censorship - of the discourse and thus the erasure of the citizens from the equation is what truly disrupted the democratic balance in Turkey.

What is even more curious about the case of JDP however, is that while the disruption of democratic balance is almost universally acknowledged in the last decade of Turkish politics, with regards to religious moderation and demoderation, the party did not follow an expected route. Despite assuming a much more patriarchal and morally supercilious discourse, the Islamic allusions in the discourse employed by the JDP authorities did not increase all that much. Whatsmore the Islamization that could have been said to have been promoted by the government was almost never, if not at all, governmental; it was rather social. There were no real institutional or legislative arrangements that were particularly Islamic; and the arrangements that had posed a threat to secular democracy were often not done under a solely and overtly Islamic pretext. What was apparent instead was a moral high ground occupied by these authorities and the governing officials' adherent supposition that their governed was in agreement with their moral stances reflected in their discourses.

It was true that the moral stances reflected in the governmental discourse of JDP had Islamic undertones. Although the secularism was not blatantly threatened in legislative and institutional sense, JDP frequently used its moderate Islam discourse to garner legitimacy. Such legitimation of authority through religious zeal did not necessarily threaten the secular institutional and legislative reforms introduced by the founding fathers and defended by the Kemalist elite themselves; but rather, they imperiled the deeper notion that the government’s authority is not legitimized on religious grounds but is solely legitimized through the consent of the governed.

This is not to say that JDP's legitimizing moderate Islam discourse disregarded the consent of the governed. On the contrary our cases illustrate that JDP's discourse often relied on the assumption that the deeds and declarations of the party reflects the common traditional Turkish and Islamic values shared by the majority of the nation. However, this assumption not only gave ground for the governmental disregard of the minority demands but created imaginary identities of "the people" and "the others." As the moralizing discourse redefined the limits of free and equal citizenship, it consequently both conceived and concealed the democratic backsliding.

The tendency of JDP government to use Islam as a sententious tool may be argued with the paternal notion of "guiding the people to the right path." Such governmental discourses then, may be posited as moderate discourses formed by moderate actors which are actively involved in the calling of others to more ethical practices as well as adhering to an Islamic code of ethics personally. This consideration brings about interesting points of discussion regarding Islam and moral authority of a democratic government. If indeed, being a Muslim endows one with the moral task of guiding the others on a rightful path, then what would that mean about neutrality of a governmental discourse? Under such a moral task then, the possibility of the government to discursively behave as "a high-minded parliamentarian" diminishes. Considering this, it could be argued that JDP's Islamic governmental discourse hinders the ideal speech and communicative competence. Yet, when one historically considers Turkish democracy throughout its different governments, one would see that this implementation and promotion of an ideal of good life is not particular to Islamic - or religious - political actors. The same arguments could be made for the JDP's predecessor Kemalist regimes and its elites

who were much more disposed to secular ideals. Similar to the JDP's discourse of moderate Islam, the secular regime did not only have a moralizing impact over its citizens but also used the attribute of being secular as a legitimizing tool to validate the discourse and the governance it employed. As a result, Turkish politics before JDP regime likewise created an atmosphere where civilian political activity was often perceived as a threat and military interventions became recurrent. The deliberative democracy was likewise encumbered by a hegemonic governmental discourse with a distinct notion of the good life and an ideology. The distrust towards the citizens by the Kemalist regime carried rather infantilizing attitudes where the public was deemed unable to choose what was right and was in dire and constant need of tutelage by the elite group. Whereas in the JDP regime the distrust often takes a rather antagonizing tone where the dissenting citizens are deemed to be separate from "the people"; while "the people" are deemed to share and comply with governmental discourse. Both situations create the illusions of a "perfect citizen" and refuse to get in discursive relations with those that are not the perfect citizens, creating a governmental discourse that is prone to propaganda and censorship.

In that regard, while the Islamic proponents of JDP's moralizing and legitimizing discourse are self-evident, it would not be wholly appropriate to base the moralizing and legitimizing nature of the discourse solely on the fact that it contains religious claims. A governmental discourse that nurtures deliberative democracy necessitates a doctrine of political neutrality which essentially requires the governments to refrain from implementing and promoting their own ideals of the good life. It is true that the religious tradition of Islam provides the governmental discourse of JDP with a certain legitimacy since it refers to a moral code that is adhered to and even advocated by a great number of people through the history.

However, the Turkish political history shows that a patriarchal and oppressive government discourse may be legitimized through a variety of imagined moral codes which may as well have secular backgrounds.

The discourses we had analyzed in the hereby thesis all coincide with the notion of state's discursive authority over individuals' autonomy – particularly over their physical body. In line with the above argument, in these three topics we are able to observe that JDP's moderate Islam produces three distinct discursive approaches.

Discourse becomes a significant moralizing tool in the control over the individuals' capacity to govern their own bodies and lives freely due to and in the unduly censorship of opposition discourses and performances. It may be argued that on such aspects governmental discourse gains the utmost significance, perhaps surpassing the state policies and legislature in their importance. That is because, the effect that our discourses have on the citizens occupying and sharing the space with us, is often gas-like; in that, it may be fleeting when it is not coercive enough, yet with enough exposure it can also create radical and long-lasting impact which would be diffused and often untraceable. Two concepts are deliberately used here, namely the coerciveness of and the exposure to a certain discourse; since these are especially crucial when trying to concoct the extent of the disparity between the discursive impact of the individual and the state. The state's capacities surmount the capacities of an ordinary citizen in both regards. When the governmental speech is used profusely for its moralizing effect and claims a certain authority over the citizen body through pedagogic discursive practices, the democratic space provided for the public to construct counter-speech and counter-performance may be lacking due to the disparities between the state and the citizen body. The spirality of the moralizing impact of governmental speech comes into play at this last point especially, whereby

a small increase in the space that the governmental speech occupies, or the small increase in its didactive force tips the balance exponentially in favour of itself as the space occupied by the individuals' counter-speech and its efficacy correlatively shrinks before it.

APPENDIX:

ORIGINAL PASSAGES OF TRANSLATED LONG QUOTES

Below is the long quotes used in the thesis, in their original non-translated versions as reference. The quotes are ordered by page number and the relevant chapters are given for further clarification.

From Chapter 5, “Headscarf: Liberal Discourse for a Conservative Demand”:

> Haberleri sevmez. O Ti-Vi eğlence programına bakar. ... Kitap okumaz. ... Gazete bilmez. ... Liderlerle ilgili en kapsamlı düşüncesi "Müslüman adam", demokrasi ile ilgili tek fikri ise "Çalsın ama iş yapsın"dır. Sonra göbeğini kaşır... demokrasi, bilinçte aşağı-yukarı eşit insanların rejimidir. Bir toplumun çoğunluğu "göbeğini kaşıyan adam" ise, orada demokrasi olmaz, olamaz. Tayyip Erdoğan işte ona güvenir: Göbeğini kaşıyan adama. ("Göbeğini kaşıyan adam", 2007)

> Şimdi “Başörtü meselesini ben hallederim” diyor. İnandınız mı? ... “Efendim tasarımcıya göndeririz.” Şimdi olgunlaştırma enstitüsünde çalışmalar yapılıyor. Acaba bu başörtüsünün rengi nasıl olsun, renkleri nasıl olsun, alttan mı bağlansın, bone türü mü olsun, şöyle mi böyle mi olsun. Bu nasıl özgürlük? Sen bunu diğer kızlarımız için de aynı şekilde belirliyor musun? Onlar için de streç pantolon mu olsun, şalvar mı olsun, askılı mı askısız mı olsun, bu tür şeyler de söylüyor musun? Onun da siparişini verdin mi? Yani seninle eğitim, inanç özgürlüğünü konuşuyoruz. ("Erdoğan: Türban sorununu şimdi çözsün", 2010)

> Çifte standarda siyasilerin karşı çıkması lazım. Bizim istediğimiz bu. Bunu ister türban bağlamında ister başka bir bağlamda ele alın, özgürlükse özgürlük, haklarsa haklar. Ancak, benim algıladığım şu; ‘İktidar kanadı sadece kendi karşılaştığı sorunları masaya getiriyor, getirilmesini istiyor, diğer siyasi partilerin görüşleri varsa, bunları getirmeye gerek yok’ diyor. Bu uzlaşma değil, dayatma mantığıdır. ("Demokrasilerde dayatma olmaz", 2010)

> Devlet dediğiniz, bir kurumlar ve kurallar rejimidir, herkes uyacaktır. Buna uyulduğu zaman devlet dediğimiz kurum güçlü olur, saygınlık kazanır. Özgürlük bir kişinin, “Ben istediğim her şeyi yaparım” demesi anlamına gelmez. Özgürlük, devletin koyduğu kurallar, yasalar çerçevesinde insanlara tanınan hak ve yetkilerin kullanılmasıdır. ("Demokrasilerde dayatma olmaz", 2010)

> Millette lisan bağı kuramayanlar, AK Parti'nin mücadelesini anlayamazlar. Bize farklı etiketler yapıştıranlar hep utandılar. … Niyet okuyuculuğu yapanlar gizli gündem verenler her seferinde yanıldılar. Biz tüm renkleri,

sesleri ve zılgıtlarıyla Türkiye'yiz. Susmanın ve susturulmanın acısını biliriz. ... Cumhuriyetimiz halkı bütün renkleriyle kucaklar. ... Bu Cumhuriyet hepimizin Cumhuriyetidir. Yani millettir. Sadece Cumhur'a ait olan hiç bir yer Cumhura yasaklanamaz ... Bunu anlamalılar. Böyle bir yaklaşım insanlığa aykırıdır. ... Kendisini Cumhuriyet'in asil ve tek sahibi olarak görenler, durumdan vazife çıkaranlar Cumhuriyete de en büyük zararı verdiler. ("Başbakan'dan türban hamlesi", 2010)

Zamana bıraktığımız, Türkiye'nin demokratikleşmesiyle anlamsız hale geleceğini ve kendiliğinden çözüleceğine inandığımız bu konuyu Sayın Kılıçdaroğlu gündeme getirdi. … Ama eğer CHP Genel Başkanı, bu konuda samimiyse işte o zaman meydanlarda böyle bir vaatte bulunurken CHP zihniyetini, dikkate almadığı açıktır. … Sayın Kılıçdaroğlu hiçbir hazırlık, hiçbir istişare yapmadan, CHP'nin kadim geleneklerini, ideolojik kodlarını hiç hesaba katmadan bir vaatte bulunmuştur. Bugün de bu vaadinin altında ezilmiştir. Süreç, CHP tarafından başörtülü kızların umudunun istismar edildiği, aynı zamanda provokasyona açık bir süreç haline getirilmiştir. "CHP sonunda demokratikleşiyor mi?" diye heyecanlanan CHP'lilerin dahi hevesleri kursağında kalmıştır. CHP makus talihine uygun bir şekilde demokrasinin ve milletin gerisine düşmüş, cumhuriyeti bir adım ileri taşıma onuruna kavuşamamıştır. ("Hakem millettir", 2010)

Cumhuriyetin kuruluşundan nice zaman sonra ortaya çıkan, tarihine ve coğrafyasına yabancılaşmış zümrenin tamamen aksine Cumhuriyet, sözde elitler tarafından, yani seçkinlikleri kendilerinden menkul belli bir zümre tarafından değil bizzat bu millet tarafından, bu milletin tüm unsurları tarafından kurulmuştur. Cumhuriyeti korumak adına, bir korku cumhuriyeti oluşturdular. … Pompalanan korkuların boş olduğunu milletçe hep beraber gördük. Bu Cumhuriyet, çıtkırıldım bir cumhuriyet değildir. … Bu Cumhuriyet kökü derinlerde olan, büyük ve güçlü bir milletin kurduğu ve yaşattığı bir cumhuriyettir. Statükoyu muhafaza etmek, değişime direnmek, yasaklarda ısrar etmek, Cumhuriyetimize de bu aziz milletimize de yapılabilecek en büyük haksızlıktır. ("Hakem millettir", 2010)

Evet, bir başörtüsü sorunu var. Bu soruna karşı biz ilgisiz kalabilir miyiz? Hayır. Sen siyasetçisin, varsa bir sorun çözeceksin. Onun için diyoruz ki 'Biz bu sorunu çözeceğiz.' Bizim AK Parti ile aramızdaki fark şu: AK Parti olayı siyasallaştırdı ve siyasallaştırdığı için de çözemiyor. Oysa biz siyasallaştırmıyoruz, farklı bir anlamda bakıyoruz. … Yasalarla kılık kıyafeti düzenleyemezsiniz. … bunları toplum aşar. Ama biz olaya siyasi açıdan bakmıyoruz, hak ve özgürlükler açısından bakıyoruz. ("Kılıçdaroğlu 'türban sorununu çözecekleri' iddiasından vazgeçmiyor", 2010)

İşte son hafta içinde bakıyorsunuz bir grup çıkıyor hemen pat bir tane önerge sunuyor. Öyle bir derdi yok. Öyle bir derdi olsa zaten olması gereken neyse yapar buna mani bir hal de yok madem öyle bir şey istiyorsun yola çık yap. Benim başörtülü kardeşlerimi niye istismar ediyorsun. Yapacaksan yap. Gelsin girsinler senin böyle bir derdin yok ki. Dini Zerdüştlük olan bir anlayışın böyle bir derdi olabilir mi? Derdi istismar. … Siz kimi köşeye

sıkıştırıyorsunuz? ("Dini Zerdüştlük olanın böyle bir derdi olabilir mi?", 2011)

Türkiye'nin tarihine ayrımcılık lekesi olarak geçmiş kara bir gölgeyi kaldırıyor, sadece başörtülülerin değil, 76 milyonunun tamamının ufkunu bugün daha da genişletiyor, daha da aydınlatıyoruz. Bu kısıtlamanın kalkması sadece ve sadece bir normalleşmedir. ("Gözyaşlarına boğuldular", 2013)

Biz kefenimizi giyerek yola çıktık. Allah'tan başka kimseye verilecek hesabımız yoktur. Bize marjinal gruplar değil, millet hesap sorar. Milletin hesap yeri sandıktır. Bizi millet getirdi, millet götürür. … Yaptıkları iş sadece vurup kırma. Kamunun binalarına saldırma, kamunun binalarını yakıp yıkma. … Bununla kalmadılar; benim başörtülü kızlarıma, başörtülü bacılarıma saldırdılar. Bununla da kalmadılar. Dolmabahçe Camii'ne maalesef bira şişeleriyle girmek suretiyle, ayakkabıyla onu da yaptılar. Yıllarca parya muamelesi gören başörtülü kızlar bunların yaptıklarını yapmadı, sabretti. ("Erdoğan: Başörtülülere saldırdılar", 2013)

From Chapter 6, "LGBTI+ - Antagonistic Silence":

Hükümet tarafından toplumun her kesimini kapsayacağı ilan edilen sivil anayasa sürecinde, aynı toplumun bir parçası olan eşcinselleri baştan dışlayarak ayrımcılık yapıyorsunuz. Hükümet sözcüleri önce, "istiyor olabilirler ama eşcinsellere eşitlik vermeyeceğiz" diyerek 22. yüzyılı beklememizi önerdiler. Şimdi de siz, anayasa ve yasalarda eşcinsellere yönelik "ayrımcılık" olmadığını söylüyor ve "Onların dedikleri başka. Onlar aynı cinsle evlenebilmek için düzenleme istiyorlar" diyerek eşitlik ve özgürlük taleplerimizi çarpıtmakta sakınca görmüyorsunuz. … Sürekli "onlar" diye ötekileştirdiğiniz insanlar, bu ülkenin vatandaşları, bu toplumun üyeleridir. … Sivil Anayasa'da, "eşitlik"i düzenleyen maddeye, "cinsiyet"in ardından "cinsel yönelim" ve "cinsiyet kimliği" ibareleri eklenmelidir. … Anayasa LGBTT Komisyonu olarak, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin anayasasının tüm vatandaşlarının insan haklarını koruyan ve tüm ayrımcılıkları önleyen maddeleri içerecek şekilde düzenlenmesini önemsediğimizi ve talep ettiğimizi bir kez daha hatırlatırız. (quoted in LGBTT Hakları Platformu, 2009, p. 81-83)

Tedavi edilmesi gereken bir şey bence. Dolayısıyla eşcinsel evliliklere de olumlu bakmıyorum. Bakanlığımızda onlarla ilgili bir çalışma yok. Zaten bize iletilmiş bir talep de yok. Türkiye'de eşcinseller yok demiyoruz, bu vaka var. ("Eşcinsellik hastalık, tedavi edilmeli", 2010)

Ben sayın bakanın hangi şartlarda … cevap verdiğini bilmiyorum. Ancak şu da bir gerçek. Türkiye'de eşcinsellik, bunu yaşayan kişiler açısından zor bir şeydir. … Bu tartışmalarla beraber eşcinsel evliliklerin yapılabileceğine ilişkin hususlar okudum, mesela bu da bizim toplumumuzun kabul edebileceği bir durum değil. Bunları kişisel özgürlükler tarafına bırakmak lazım. Çocuklarımızın da cinsel kimliklerinin oluşması ve cinsel eğitimlerinin doğru gelişmesi açısından gerekenleri yapmalıyız. En sağlıklı cinsel yaşamın,

tek eşlilik şeklinde gerçekleşen kadın ve erkek ilişkisi olduğu herhalde açıktır. ("15 eşcinseli güçlendirdik", 2010)

Muhafazakâr ve demokrat bir partinin aileden sorumlu bakanı olarak aileyi koruyucu, tedbirleri önemsediğim için bu tür şeylerin toplum açısından zor ve sıkıntılı olduğunu düşünüyorum. Fakat sonuçta böyle bir gerçek var ve ben bu ülkenin bakanı olarak da onların ötekileştirmeden yaşam haklarını koruyacak, yaşamlarını kolaylaştıracak tedbirlerin alınması noktasında da yardımcı olmam gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Bunun ince bir denge etrafında gitmesi gerekiyor. (KaosGL, 2011)

Birbirimizi dinledik, sohbet ettik. LGBT bireyler olarak orada yarattığımız sempati önemliydi. … "Devrim", illa siyasal iktidarı devirmek değildir. Siyasal iktidarı uyandırmak da bir devrimdir aslında. Bizim yapmaya çalıştığımız da buydu. Söylemeye çalıştığımız şey çok basitti: "Lütfen sadece kulaklarını aç ve bizi de dinle! Bizi duy, varlığımızı kabul et. Politikalarınla bizi sürekli öteliyorsun, eziyorsun. Artık buna son ver!" ("Lütfen kulaklarını aç ve bizi dinle", 2013)

Barışın, huzurun ve kurtuluşun gerçekleşmesi insanoğlunun kendisinden istenen ahlaki ilkelere uyması … ile mümkündür. İslam iyi olan ve iyiliğe götüren madde ve davranışlara helal, kötü olan ve kötülüğe götüren madde ve davranışlara da haram ismini vermiştir. Bir diğer ifadesiyle temiz ve faydalı olanlar helal, pis ve zararlı olanlar haram kılınmıştır. (Diyanet TV, 2020)

İslam zinayı en büyük haramlardan kabul ediyor, Lutiliği, eşcinselliği lanetliyor. Nedir bunun hikmeti? Hastalıkları beraberinde getirmesi ve nesli çürümesidir bunun hikmeti. Yılda yüz binlerce insan gayri meşru ve nikahsız hayatın İslami literatürdeki ismi zina olan bu büyük haramın sebep olduğu HIV virüsüne maruz kalıyor. Geliniz bu tür kötülüklerden insanları korumak için birlikte mücadele edelim. (Diyanet TV, 2020)

... Ankara ve İzmir Barolarının açıklamaları ve ardından Diyanet İşleri Başkanına yapmış oldukları suç duyuruları nasıl insan hakları savunuculuğuyla bağdaşabilir? Diyanet İşleri Başkanı insan haklarını mı ihlal etti? Diyanet İşleri Başkanı kendi görevini yerine getirdi. Dedi ki: İslam hükümleri budur, Kur'an hükümleri budur, sünnet hükümleri budur. ... ama Ankara ve İzmir Baroları sanki Diyanet İşleri Başkanı burada bir insan hakkı ihlali yapıyormuş gibi gerçekten milletin büyük çoğunluğunun iradesine aykırı bir açıklama yaptı. Bunun savunulacak bir tarafı yok. Siz, ifade özgürlüğü deyince, Ankara ve İzmir Barolarının açıklaması deyince bunu demokratik bir olgunluk olarak değerlendiriyorsunuz ama karşı tarafta biz, sizin bu demokratik olgunluk olarak değerlendirdiğiniz açıklamanın aleyhine bir açıklama yaptığımız zaman ... bunu da siyasi iktidarın baskısı olarak nitelendiriyorsunuz. AK Parti bugün Türkiye'nin en çok oy almış partisidir ve Mecliste en büyük çoğunluğa sahip partidir. (TBMM, 2020)

From Chapter 7**, "**Women's Bodily Autonomy: Conservative Moral Regulation":

… Zina konusunun da yeniden ele alınmasının çok çok isabetli olacağı düşüncesindeyim. Çünkü bu toplumun manevi değerler noktasında farklı bir konumu var. Biz AB sürecinde, bu bir özeleştiridir, onu söylemek zorundayım. Bu konuda bir yanlışımız oldu ki, zina ile ilgili düzenlemeyi de yapmak suretiyle bu tacizler vesaire, bunları belki de aynı kapsam içerisinde değerlendirmemiz lazım. ("Erdoğan'dan 'zina' açıklaması", 2018)

Adalet herkese hakkını vermektir. Dikkat ederseniz herkese hakkını vermek demek bir şeyi herkese eşit şekilde dağıtmak veya herkese aynı şekilde davranmak anlamına gelmiyor. … Güçlü ile zayıfı aynı yarışa sokamazsınız. Bazıları eşit eşit diyor da… Hadi eşitiz. Erkek ile bayan 100 metreyi koşsunlar, bu adalet olur mu? Olmaz. Olması gereken nedir? Kadın kadınla koşar, erkek erkekle koşar. ("Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, 3. Uluslararası Kadın ve Adalet Zirvesinde konuşuyor", 2018)

Çocuk, doğumu öncesinden başlayarak, hayata gözlerini açtığı andan itibaren uzunca bir süre, her şeyi annesinden öğrenir. Onun için benim gözümde kadınlar, insanlığın öğretmenidir. … İşin ilahi boyutu budur. … Kadınlarda zaten Allah vergisi bir kabiliyet olan güçlü bir sezgi var. Öğretmenlik yetenekleriyle birleştiğinde ortaya elleri ayakları öpülesi analar, ömür boyu sırtımızı yasladığımız eşlerimiz, gözümüzün nuru kızlarımız çıkıyor. ("Kadın, tüm insanlığın ilk öğretmenidir", 2018)

Zaman zaman, kadın meselesi konuşulurken anne vurgusu yapmamızdan rahatsız olanların bulunduğunu biliyorum. … Halbuki Allah'ın kadınlara verdiği en büyük ayrıcalık, işte bu annelik vasfıdır. … Kadını annelik vasfından ayırmak demek, onun en büyük ayrıcalığını elinden almak … demektir. … Zaman zaman söylüyorum "en az üç çocuk" diyorum. … Rahatsız olanlar niye rahatsız oluyor biliyor musunuz? Bu millete düşman oldukları için rahatsız oluyorlar. Çünkü bir milleti millet yapan nedir? Ailedir. Aile nereden oluşuyor? Tabii ki anne-baba. ("Kadın, tüm insanlığın ilk öğretmenidir", 2018)

Kürtajı bir cinayet olarak görüyorum. Bu ifademe karşı çıkan bazı çevrelere, medya mensuplarına da sesleniyorum. … Anne karnında bir yavruyu öldürmenin doğumdan sonra öldürmeden ne farkı var soruyorum sizlere. Bunun mücadelesini hep birlikte vermeye mecburuz. Bu milleti dünya sahnesinden silmek için sinsice bir plan olduğunu bilmek durumundayız, asla bu oyunlara prim vermemeliyiz. ("Her kürtaj bir cinayettir", 2012)

Kürtajla ilgili yasayı hazırlıyoruz ve bu yasayı çıkartacağız. Şimdi bazıları çıkıyor, 'Kürtaj yaptırmak bir haktır' diyor. Kadın diyor, 'İsterse kürtajı yaptırır. O onun kendi hakkıdır. Siz onun vücudunda müdahalede bulunamazsınız.' İntihar edene de müsaade et. … Böyle saçmalık olur mu? Burada iki cefa var. Bir ana karnındaki ceninin öldürülmesi olayı var. İki kendine zarar var. Biz bunları konuşurken bilimsel konuşuyoruz. Ve ana karnındaki ceninin öldürülmesi ile doğumdan sonra öldürülmüş insanın arasında hiçbir fark yok…. Ve bu konuda ben hanım kardeşlerimizin çok hassas olmasını, başbakanları olarak kendilerinden rica ediyorum. Bu bir

cinayettir. … Batı'nın birçok toplumunda aynı şekilde çıkarılmış yasalar var. Biz de bunu çalışıyoruz. Bunun bizim değerlerimizde bir yeri var. Buna müsaade edilmez. … Aynı şeyi sezaryen için söylüyorum. … sezaryen olayı aynı zamanda bu milletin nüfusunu dengeleme, engelleme operasyonundan başka bir şey değildir. ("Kürtaj Yasası çıkartacağız", 2012)

Asli amacımızı asla unutmadan … yolumuza devam etmeliyiz. Zürriyetimizi artıracağız. Neslimizi çoğaltacağız nüfus planlamasıymış, doğum kontrolüymüş hiçbir Müslüman aile böyle bir anlayış içinde olamaz. Rabbim ne diyorsa, sevgili Peygamberimiz ne diyorsa biz o yolda gideceğiz. ("Erdoğan: Müslüman aile doğum kontrolü yapmaz", 2016)

Anası olacak kişinin hatasından dolayı çocuk niye suçu çekiyor? Anası çeksin, anası kendisi öldürsün. Acılar bu işi meşru hale getirmez. … Korunmanın birçok yolu var. Beden sana ait, can Allah'a ait. Sen kalkıp kürtaj yaparsan bunun adı cinayet olur. Sağlık Bakanlığı geçen günlerde bir açıklama yaptı; yılda 100 bin kürtaj yapıldığını söyledi. Bu ne demek? Yılda 100 bin cinayet işleniyor. Tecavüz edeni getir, cezasını ver. Ama karındaki çocuğun suçu ne? Onu da devlet alır, büyütür. Çocuğun haberi bile olmaz. ("Çocuğun ne suçu var, anası kendisini öldürsün", 2012)

Son zamanlardaki başlık, kürtaj ve sezaryen olayı. Burada iki yaklaşım tarzı var. Diyorlar ki, bu vücut benimdir, tercih hakkımı kullanırım. Bunun daha çok feminist kesim propagandasını yapıyor. Bunun yanında yaşam hakkı var. Biz yaşam hakkından hareket ediyoruz. … Bunu [fetüsü] öldürme hakkına kimse sahip değil. ("Erdoğan: 'Benim bedenim' diyenler feminist", 2012)

Ben kalkıyorum kadının Allah'ın erkeklere bir emaneti olduğunu söylüyorum. Bu feministler filan var ya… "Ne demek diyor kadın emanetmiş, bu hakarettir" diyor. Ya senin bizim dinimizle medeniyetimizle ilgin yok ki. Biz sevgililer sevgilisinin hitabına bakıyoruz. "Allah'ın bir emanetidir. O emanete sahip çıkın" diyor. ("Erdoğan: Bu feministler filan var ya", 2015)

Kadının birey olmasına tahammül edemeyen, onu ailenin korunması için hayatını bile feda etmesi gereken bakire parçası gibi gören bir zihniyetin ifadesidir bu sözler. Kadının kendi yaşamını aileden daha üstün tutmasında ayıplanacak birşey yoktur. ("Diyanet, feministleri kızdırdı", 2008)

… yasalar, otorite tarafından yapılır; ama adalet, hakikat duygusundan yola çıkar ve vicdanlar tarafından yapılır. … Eşitlik kavramını, hukuk kavramını, adaletin ve vicdanın üzerine inşa etmek zorundayız. … Kadın ile erkeği eşit konuma getiremezsiniz. Çünkü fıtratları farklıdır, tabiatları farklıdır, bünyeleri farklıdır. … Bugün bir çok gelişmiş ülkede, kadınların hak mücadelesinin belli kalıplara, belli kavram ve söylemlere hapsolduğunu görüyoruz. En başta, kadınların hak mücadelesinin, eşitlik kavramına takılıp kaldığını, ama adalet duygusunu ıskaladığını gözlemliyoruz. … Turkey may bring about different practices and discourses with different perspectives …

İthal kavram ve eylemlerin yerine, Türkiye, kendi özgün mücadele biçimini inşa edebilir. (Uluslararası Kadın ve Adalet Zirvesi, 2014)

… kadınlarımıza sahip çıkmada geri duracak olursak hiçbir zaman … Rabb'imize hesabını veremeyiz. Hal böyleyken inancımızda ve değerlerimizde olmadığı halde zamanla toplumsal yapıya sirayet eden çarpık anlayışların ortadan kaldırılmasının da AK Parti olarak en önemli meselelerimizden biri olmuştur. … Biz inancımızın ve kültürümüzün temelinde yer alan aile kurumunu zayıflatacak hiçbir işin içinde yer almayız. Bilhassa kendi dünyamızda aile hassasiyetimizi kimsenin tartısına sunacak da değiliz. … Ne kadına şiddetle mücadelemizin zafiyete uğratılmasına ne de bir avuç marjinalin aile değerlerimizi zedelemesine izin veririz. … "Kopenhag kriterleri" diyeceğimize "Ankara kriterleri" der ve yolumuza devam ederiz. ("Cumhurbaşkanı ve AK Parti Genel Başkanı Erdoğan", 2020)

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