

The Violence against Women Policy of the AKP Government and the Diyanet

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Abbreviations

AKP = Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi / the Justice and Development Party (Conservative Democracy, Economic Liberalism)

ANAP= Anavatan Partisi/ Motherland Party (Neo-Liberalism, Liberal Conservatism)

AP= Adalet Partisi / Justice Party (Kemalism, Liberalism, Conservatism)

CEDAW= Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CHP= Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / Republican People's Party (Social democracy, Kemalism)

CUP= İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti / Committee of Union and Progress

DP = Demokrat Partisi (Democratic Party)

DSP= Demokratik Sol Parti / Democratic Left Party (Democratic Socialism, Kemalism)

DYP = Doğru Yol Partisi / True Path Party (Economic Liberalism, Conservatism)

EU= European Union

GGG= Global Gap Gender

İş-Kur= Türkiye İş Kurumu Genel Müdürlüğü (Turkish Employment Organization)

KOSGEB= Küçük ve Orta Ölçekli İşletmeleri Geliştirme ve Destekleme İdaresi Başkanlığı (Department to Develop and Support Small and Medium Enterprises)

KSGM= Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü / Directorate General on the Status of Women

MHP = Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi/ Nationalist Movement Party (Turkish Nationalism, Cultural Conservatism)

Ministry of FSP = Ministry of Family and Social Policies (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı)

RP= Refah Partisi / Welfare party (Sunni Islamism, Conservatism)

TÜİK/ TurkStat= Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu/ Turkish Statistical Institute

ŞÖNİM= Şiddet Önleme ve İzleme Merkezi (Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centre)

1. Introduction

In march 2010 the protocol named “Ailenin Korunması ve Kadına Yönelik Şiddetin Önlenmesinde Din Görevlilerinin Katkısının Sağlanması İşbirliği Protokolü” (the Prevention of Violence Against Women Ensuring the Protection of the Family and Contribution of Religious Officials Cooperation Protocol) has been signed between the Ministry of Family and Social Policies (hereafter the Ministry of FSP) and *the Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* (Presidency of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, hereafter Diyanet). Within this project *Imams*¹, *Vaize* (Preachers) and *Aile İrşat ve Rehberlik Bürosu* (the Family and Enlightenment Guidance Bureau) are given trainings about honour killings, sexual abuse of children and women, gender equality, and (domestic) violence in 81 provinces where the expectation is that the information given during the trainings in return will be applied for examples in *khutbas* (public sermons) like after the Friday sermons or during information hours for women and in this way to prevent violence against women and inform women and men about violence. With this cooperation the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (the Justice and Development Party, hereafter AKP) who is in power since 2002, wants to combat the protracted problem of violence against women. That violence is tried to be combatted through Islam becomes an interesting case when one knows that Turkey is a constitutionally a secular state. Islam was in the early stages of the Republic seen as a hindrance to progress and modernization of the state and put under state control due to its importance in the cultural and social life of the population. Islam, once seen as the cause for backwardness and a hindrance for modernization, takes an important role in the development of women and thereby the country, especially the development of women.²

¹ “Imam: in Arabic: leader, guide, a person to be imitated). Imam is a term that has several meanings in Islamic belief and practices. Its basic meaning for the Sunnis is “leader of group prayer (*Salat*), literally the one “in front of” the congregation, standing, before the Mihrab (the niche indicating the Qibla, direction of the prayer facing the *Kaaba* in Mecca). A leader of prayer can be any qualified adult. Although “prayer leader” is the basic meaning of the term imam, in practice an imam’s function also includes giving the sermon (*Kuthba*) from the pulpit (*Minbar*) as part of Friday noon prayer, relating interpretation of Islamic religious and legal texts to current events and issues in the local Muslim community”. Campo, Juan E., *Encyclopedia of Islam* (New York: Fact on File Inc., 2009). p.. 347-348.

² Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddetle Mücadele Ulusal Eylem Planı 2007-2010”, *T.C. Başkanlık Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü, MFİB, Birleşmiş Milletler Nüfus Fonu*, last modified 29 September 2014. Tahaoğlu, Çiçek, “Kadına Yönelik Şiddetle Mucadele: Aile Bakanlığı ve Diyanet El Ele”, *Bianet*, 27 October 2011.

1.1. The Statistics of Violence Against Women

In the last decade Turkey, where 49.82% of the total population (of 77. 695.904 people) is female, has been struggling with a huge increase in violence against women.³ Taking the month June 2015 alone, 21 women were murdered by men, 9 children and women were raped and 25 women were injured. This is according to the recent (unofficial) numbers by Bianet, an online independent Turkish news and advocacy website which dedicates a part of its website to violence against women in Turkey, and the *Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu* (We Will Stop Femicide Platform), established in 2010 to stop the increasing murders of women, which became widely known after the protest about the cruel murder of the 20-year-old Turkish college student Özgecan Aslan. According to statistics released by the Ministry of Justice in 2011, violence against women appears to have increased by 1400% between 2002 and 2009.⁴ Unfortunately, the numbers above are not official. The most recent numbers date from 2009, at which point there is a disagreement between the Ministry of Justice and the Interior Ministry. While the Ministry of Justice said that in the first seven months of 2009 953 women died from violence, according to the Interior Ministry the number for 2009 was 324. The high numbers of murder and violence against women, as well as the disagreement between the two ministries, led to harsh criticism of the policy of the AKP-majority government under whose administration (domestic) violence against women is put on the government's agenda.⁵

1.2. AKP and the Fear of an 'Islamic Agenda'

After the AKP came to power in the general election of 3rd November 2002, a new period began in which the visibility and influence of Islam in the secularist Republic has been strengthened. The AKP ruled from 2002 until 2014 with a majority in the Parliament. The party presents itself on the centre-right side of the political spectrum, claims to be at the forefront of social justice and reform, and identifies itself with liberal conservatism. The history of the party founders' involvement the *Milli Görüş* (National Vision, 1969) movement of Necmettin Erbakan (1926-2011), who opposed globalization and the Western orientation of

Zürcher, Erik J., *Turkey: A Modern History*, (Michigan: Tauris, 2004), p. 186-192.

³ "Türkiye Nüfusu", *Nufusu.*, last accessed 4 June 2014. <http://www.nufusu.com/>

⁴ Tahaoğlu, Çiçek, "Erkekler Haziran'da 21 Kadın Öldürdü", *Bianet*, 2 July 2015.

"Number of Women Murders Increased by 1400 Percent", *Bianet*, 16 September 2011.

⁵ Tahaoğlu, Çiçek, "Erkek Şiddeti Verilerinde Bakanlar Birbirlerinin Yalancısı", *Bianet*, 22 May 2013.

Turkey, stressed the roots of Ottoman Turkey and advocated a modernization process in which Turkey would integrate further into the Middle East and play a hegemonic role in the Islamic world, led to the fear of the opposition that the AKP has a hidden 'Islamic' agenda. This fear was fuelled when the AKP-led government lifted the ban on the veil in public buildings in 2010, and the change in the education system whereby children could previously only enrol in Imam Hatip Schools after completing eight years of primary school education can now enrol after four years.⁶ Besides some laws which loosened the restrictions on Islam in public life, different statements made by AKP members on public morality (*genel ahlak*) and private life have contributed to the idea that the AKP is trying to create a conservative population, or even wants to take it further and aim for an Islamic state.⁷

Another point which has led to fears that Turkey is losing its secular vision is the revival of Ottoman history in the recent years, with which the Republic had broken after its establishment. The AKP has brought the Ottoman glory back, which is not only reflected in Turkish society, but also in the politics of the current government. The Turkish foreign policy has shifted from a Kemalist policy, which was focused on the West and whereby it had alienated itself from its neighbours in the region, to a "zero-problems policy" where it aims to create stronger links with its immediate neighbours without alienating itself from the majority (which it has not successfully accomplished). Domestic and economic policies have undergone a similar shift. For years, Turkey followed a secularist domestic policy combined with a protectionist economic policy. This policy changed during the governance of AKP into a *neo-conservative* domestic policy and a *neo-liberal* economy by opening up its economy to foreign markets, on which I will elaborate further in the last part of this thesis. These changes are part of the ambitions of the AKP government, changing Turkey into a political and

⁶ Imam Hatip schools: Religious vocational schools where students are educated to become imams or preachers. Cengiz, Orhan Kemal, "Erdogan's reforms meant to educate 'pious generation'", *al-Monitor*, 26 June 2014.

⁷ Gürsel, Kadri, "Erdogan's 'Three Children' Campaign Alienates Women", *al-Monitor*, 25 June 2013. Mezzofiore, Gianluca, "Turkey's Government Prepares Bill to Ban Abortion after PM Erdogan Calls it 'Murder'", *International Business Times*, 31 May 2012.

Tremblay, Pinar, "Headscarf protests resume in Turkey", *al-Monitor*, 16 September 2014.

Tremblay, Pinar, "Erdogan declares birth control treason", *al-Monitor*, 23 December 2014.

Tremblay, Pinar, "AKP's views on sexuality create uproar", *al-Monitor*, 9 February 2015.

Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*. p 270-278.

economic superpower by 2023. This plan will continue to be implemented, depending on the re-elections on November 1st, 2015.⁸

1.3. Diyanet and Discourse Change

In the same period the relationship between the Diyanet and the state has also changed. The Diyanet was founded in 1924 as an administrative unit to administer and regulate the Sunni Islamic religion in the country; to keep religion under control, and administer the rapid transformation towards a modern society based on rationalism and science in order to become a secular state. This led to the replacement of the Ottoman institution for religious affairs, the Şeyhülislâmlık. The Şeyhülislâmlık was replaced by the Diyanet, which took on the task of helping to transform society into a modern one, where the influence of Islam was reduced to the greatest possible extent. In recent years the scope of the male-dominated Diyanet and Islam in general has been increased in the public sphere, and there is a movement taking place promoting female integration which we will discuss more deeply in chapter 4. The changes in the relationship between the government and the Diyanet, and projects (not only violence against women) which include the Diyanet in recent years, involved the Diyanet in such a way that for the first time a split between the government and the established state ideology on the understandings of religion has emerged.⁹

1.4. Research Question

In this thesis I will study these different dynamics and their interrelationship. I will investigate the relationship between the project of the Ministry of FSP and the Diyanet, in which religious officials will help to reduce violence against women, and the future ambitions of the AKP government. I will discuss the way in which the government's attempts to combat violence against women form part of a larger project of neo-liberal politics. I chose to study the government's attempts to combat violence against women and the role of the Diyanet within this endeavour because of my interest in social policies and the role of women within

⁸ "2023 Political Vision", *AKP website*, last accessed 5 October 2015.

Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*. p.176-206.

⁹ The office of the *Şeyhülislam*, the chief religious official in the Ottoman Empire.

Gözyaydın, Iştar, *Diyanet: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Dinin Tanzimi*, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2012). p.13-16.

Gözyaydın, Iştar and Öztürk, Ahmet Erdi, "The Management of Religion in Turkey", *Turkey Institute*, November 2014. p. 5-11

these policies, and also in the relationship between a “secularist” state and Islam, and the position of women in Islam and the state. The changing sphere within the secular Republic of Turkey, in which Islam gets more “freedom” and visibility, is most noticeable through its effects on women. In Turkey, political discussions, especially about secularism and Islam, are generally held through the bodies of women. Therefore, analysing the policy of the government on violence against women, and the role of the Diyanet within this policy, will give new insights into how the government uses women and religion to further its own ideals. All in all, this thesis seeks to provide answers to the following research question: “*What is the role of the Diyanet within the policy of the AKP government to combat violence against women, and to what extent is the cooperation between the AKP government and the Diyanet in this endeavour a part of the neo-liberal politics of the AKP?*”

1.5. Sources

This research question was investigated with the help of both primary sources, such as interviews, news items, reports, protocols and announcements made by the Diyanet or the Ministry of FSP, and secondary sources, such as available academic literature on the topic. As the events under discussion are very recent, this research question has not yet been thoroughly investigated by others. This also means that there are many more primary sources than secondary sources.

For primary sources, the initial aim was to interview a spokesperson of the Diyanet or the Ministry of FSP. However, due to the political situation in Turkey based on the general elections in June 2015 and the re-elections of November 2015, when the June election resulted in a hung parliament and coalition negotiations broke down, my contacts within the Diyanet were not giving interviews despite weeks of preparations, and only provided me with existing information. Those whom I contacted at the Ministry of FSP also did not wish to speak with me. Besides the elections, both the Diyanet and the Ministry of FSP were coping with harsh critics during this period. Diyanet was accused of making other purchases with the private donations made by citizens to the *Diyanet Foundation* (Diyanet Vakfi)¹⁰, while the Ministry of FSP was dealing with criticism as to why the statistics of murder and violence

¹⁰The Diyanet Foundation (founded 1975) is a juristic entity under the supervision of the General Directorate of Foundations and aims to help and support the Presidency of Religious Affairs.

Kurt Nurettin, “Luxury car purchased for Turkey's top cleric”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 13 December 2014.

“Turkey's top cleric returns luxury car after strong criticism”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 5 May 2015.

against women had not decreased.¹¹ Therefore, I was restricted to analysing interviews carried out by others, and the announcements made by both the Diyanet and Social Affairs. Due to the scarcity of relevant literature, I have chosen to get my information from different Turkish online news agencies (some of them also have English editions) with different political alignments. Generally, the most important are: the pro-AKP *Akşam*, the independent Turkish press agencies *Bianet* and *T24*, the mainstream *Milliyet*, the mainstream secular *Hürriyet*, and *Zaman* which is known as the newspaper of the Gülen movement. The Gülen movement or also called Hizmet (the Service) or Cemaat (the community) is a transnational religious and social movement led by the Turkish Islamic scholar and preacher Fethullah Gülen, who used to enjoy a friendly relationship with the AKP. This friendly relationship came to a definitive end after the corruption scandal surrounding the AKP on 17th December 2013, when rumours spread that the scandal was set up by the Gülen movement which has followers in the Turkish police force and the judiciary. The actual reason given as to why this relationship ended was the disagreements which emerged between the AKP and the Gülen movement after the defeat of the protector of the Kemalist legacy, the army. It is said that the AKP came to power in 2002 with the support of its Gülenist brothers, who protected them against the secular guard.

As well as news items from different news agencies and interviews, I analysed action plans and reports on gender equality and domestic violence from both the government and the EU. These helped me to analyse the current gender policy of the government and its general stance, regarding the European Union accession and global changes in the position of women. Another important report is the research carried out by the Project Office IRP (Islam Research Program) on behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which explored the policies, agendas and activities of the Diyanet in the AKP- period.¹² This helped me to analyse what kind of changes within the Diyanet are apparent. The research carried out by the Ministry of FSP and Hacetepe University has helped me to analyse to what extent the government's policy of combating violence is effective.¹³ Furthermore, the announcements and information shared by the Ministry of FSP and the Diyanet on their websites have served as primary

¹¹ "Kadına şiddet sıkıntı uygulamada", *Hürriyet*, 08 May 2015.

"Aile Bakanı İslam: Kadın cinayetlerinde düşüş yok", *Evrensel*, 17 May 2015.

¹² Sunier, Thijl, et al., Report: "Diyanet: The Turkish Directorate for Religious Affairs in a changing environment", *VU University Amsterdam and Utrecht University*, Utrecht, 28 March 2012.

¹³ "Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddet Araştırması", *T.C. Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı, Hacetepe Üniversitesi and Nüfus Etütleri Enstitüsü*, Ankara 2015

sources for my research.¹⁴ Due to the fact that Turkey is a dynamic country and the topic of my research is related to the current developments, I had to draw a line in my fieldwork. I ended my fieldwork in October.

1.6. State of the Art

Specific research into the relationship between the policy of the government on violence against women, the role of the Diyanet within this policy, and their role within general gender policy as part of neo-liberal political goals has not been carried out until today. Various research and literature has helped me to make connections between these three aspects.

One of the important and recent pieces of research carried out regarding the relationship between religion, state and society is *Diyanet: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Dinin Tanzimi*¹⁵ by the Professor of Law and Politics at Boğaziçi University, Iştar Gözaydın. In this research, Professor Iştar Gözaydın, a leading expert on the issue, analyses the history of the Diyanet, the legal order, the institution itself with its budget and staff, and its relationship with the government beginning from its establishment. Her report, “The Management of Religion in Turkey”¹⁶, published in 2014 and written with Ahmet Erdi Öztürk, Research Fellow for the London-based *Turkey Institute*, complements her book by its focus on the ruling AKP and the

¹⁴ Akyol, Mustafa, “What you should know about Turkey’s AKP-Gülen conflict, *Al-Monitor*, 3 January 2014.

“Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Ulusal Eylem Planı 2008-2013”, *T.C.Başbakanlık Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü*, Ankara, 2008.

“Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Ulusal Eylem Planı 2008-2013”, *T.C.Başbakanlık Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü*, Ankara, 2008.

“Gender Equality in Turkey” *Policy Department C: Citizens' rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate – General Internal Policies*, Brussels, 2012.

Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddetle Mücadele Ulusal Eylem Planı 2007-2010”, *T.C. Başkanlık Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü, MFIB, Birleşmiş Milletler Nüfus Fonu*, last modified 29 September 2014.

Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddetle Mücadele Ulusal Eylem Planı 2007-2010”, *T.C. Başkanlık Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü, MFIB, Birleşmiş Milletler Nüfus Fonu*, last modified 29 September 2014.

“Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Ulusal Eylem Planı 2008-2013”, *T.C.Başbakanlık Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü*, Ankara, 2008.

<http://www.aile.gov.tr/>

<http://www.diyanet.gov.tr/>

¹⁵Gözaydın, Iştar, *Diyanet: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Dinin Tanzimi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2012).

¹⁶ Gözaydın, Iştar and Öztürk, Ahmet Erdi, “The Management of Religion in Turkey”, *Turkey Institute*, London, November 2014.

triangle of state, society and religion in the recent situation. This research provided me with many insights into the changes in the relationship between the Diyanet and the state.

Much research is carried out on violence against women in Turkey, and much is written on social media and through blogs, where different political opinions conflict with each other. The research done on this subject is often focused on which factors affect domestic violence; the reasons as to why there is so much violence against women in Turkey which is related to socio-economic status or the traditional and cultural background of the victims and perpetrators. An accurate (policy) analysis on what the government does and why has not been carried out until the present day.

For the analysis of the neo-liberal approach of the government and its conservative social policy, I relied on the lectures of Michel Foucault about the rationalities of governments, which also helped me to understand the conservative approach of the AKP government.¹⁷ *Gender and Society in Turkey: The Impact of Neoliberal Policies, Political Islam and EU Accession* by Saniye Dedeoğlu and Adem Y. Elveren investigates the political and economic policies of the AKP from the perspective of gender by bringing different research together, and gives a holistic image. It reconfigures gender relations in Turkey through the intersection of neo-liberal social policies, political Islam and the EU accession of Turkey. It gives many insights into the different paradoxes of legal, economic and political changes that promote (formal) equality between women and men, and how this equality actually has not brought about a transformation in gender relations in their everyday life.¹⁸

The role of the Diyanet within social policy is an area of research which is very new. Research on the Diyanet and women is based on the relationship between the state, women and Islam, whereby the most frequently discussed subjects are Islam and the role of women within Islam, suppression of women by Islam, the veil or headscarf, women between Islam and secularism, the politicization of women and Islam, and Islamist women in politics. Remarkably, in the last decade we see a revival in these subjects with a shift in the interest of scholars towards female authority in Islam. The gendered aspects of religious revival are not addressed in early scholarship but currently attract much attention due to Muslim women claiming recognition and authority within the public area of Islam, and the louder demand of women for long-awaited equal rights in the globalizing world. Discussions about female

¹⁷ Foucault, Michel, *Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France (1978-1979)*, edit. By Michel Senellart, English edit. By Arnold I. Davidson, transl. Graham Burchell, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

¹⁸ Dedeoğlu, Saniye and Elveren, Adem Y., *Gender and Society in Turkey: The Impact of Neoliberal Policies, Political Islam and EU Accession*, (New York: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010).

authority and gender equality within Islam take place in many Muslim societies. Turkey and the changing discourse and perspective of the Diyanet are a case in point. This change is thus a fairly new phenomenon, and therefore not much research has been carried out in this field. The existing research gives us an insight into the female employees within the Diyanet, their tasks and their background, but are very much focused on the relationship between the sovereignty of the state and Islam, and who these women are and how they have become preachers. One of the earliest investigations was done by Fatma Tütüncü, “The women Preachers of the Secular State: The Politics of Preaching at the Intersection of Gender, Ethnicity and Sovereignty in Turkey”.¹⁹ This research focuses on the position between Islamist religiosity and politics, and the sovereignty of the secular state and the role of the women preachers. In this research she not only outlines how Islamist women, who emerged in the 1980s as voluntary preachers, became state preachers, but also examines the preachers in terms of their piety, femininity and religious discourses to show how the discourse of the women preachers is imprinted with sovereign power. She has given her research an interesting angle by investigating another subject that concerns the sovereignty of the Turkish state in its own eyes: the Kurdish question. She investigates how the preachers are connected to this subject when they preach. Another researcher who is interested in female preachers is Mona Hassan, Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies and History & Religious Studies at Duke University. She investigates the shifting socio-political and cultural contexts in which Muslim female scholarship has been articulated. She has two recent works on this theme, in which she reinterprets how the history of Turkish secularism continues to affect the spatial mapping and contestation of gendered religious domains in Turkey. In her research “Women at the intersection of Turkish Politics, Religion, and Education: The Unexpected Path to Becoming a State-Sponsored Female Preacher”²⁰ she investigates how increased educational opportunities for girls over the past few decades has fostered the development of (as she calls it) state-sponsored female preachers. She argues that contemporary Turkish politics and the continuous contestation about the appropriate place of religion, its instruction and social visibility under the secular state system has opened professional opportunities for Turkey's state-sponsored female preachers. In her later research, again on the female preachers in

¹⁹ Tütüncü, Fatma, “The Women Preachers of the Secular State: The Politics of Preaching at the Intersection of Gender, Ethnicity and Sovereignty in Turkey,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, (2010) 46:4. p. 595-614.

²⁰ Hassan, Mona, “Women preaching for the Secular State: Official Female Preachers (Bayan Vaizler) in Contemporary Turkey”, *International Journal Middle East Studies*. 43, 2011. p. 451–473.

Turkey employed by the state, “Women Preaching for the secular State: Official Female Preachers (Bayan Vaizler) in Contemporary Turkey”²¹, she emphasizes the complicated relationship between the politics of religion, gender and secularism in contemporary Turkish society and argues that the activities of the state-sponsored female preachers are intertwined with the contestation of religious domains and authority in the secular Republic of Turkey. These studies have helped me to form an idea about the changing discourse of the Diyanet.

1.7. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of four chapters organized as follows. Chapter 2, entitled ‘The Role of the Diyanet within the Republic’, will help us to understand the relationship between the Diyanet and the state through the history of the Republic, which in some periods is closer than in other periods, due to political changes and the degree of importance of secularism to the different regimes. This chapter will also give us the background to understanding the role of the Diyanet in the governmental policy of stopping violence against women. In Chapter 3, entitled ‘The Policy of the Government: Violence against Women’, we will look at how this policy was established, what it contains and what the aim of the policy is. In Chapter 4, the changing perspective of the Diyanet on women will be studied as well as the discourse of the Diyanet. In Chapter 5, entitled ‘The Theory behind the Approach of the Government towards Violence against Women and the Cooperation with the Diyanet’, we will dive more into the theoretical material and look at responses to the policy of the government. Finally, the conclusion of the study will answer the research questions.

²¹ Hassan, Mona, “Reshaping Religious Authority in Contemporary Turkey: State- Sponsored Female Preachers”, in *Women, Leadership, and Mosques: Changes in Contemporary Islamic Authority*, (Leiden (Netherlands): Koninklijke Brill NV, 2012).

2. The Role of the Diyanet within the Republic

As mentioned in the introduction, in order to understand the role of the Diyanet in the project of the government to combat violence against women, we have to look at the relationship between the Diyanet and the state. In this chapter we will investigate to what extent the state and society determine and shape the position, aim, discourse and activities of the Diyanet. For this purpose, we will show how the Diyanet was established, discuss the political history of Turkey, and the most important events which have affected the relationship between the two. We will thereby look at to what extent the position of the Diyanet has changed, and to what extent the government has an influence on the Diyanet and vice versa.

2.1. The establishment of the Diyanet

The Diyanet is an administrative unit, founded in 1924 after the abolition of the Ottoman institution for religious affairs; the *Şeyhülislâmlık*. The *Şeyhülislâmlık* of the Ottomans was a political unit, namely a ministry. Hierarchically, a ministry is the highest position in the central administration. In the Ottoman Empire, religion was incorporated into the state structure. The majority of the population was Muslim and the official religion was Sunni Islam where the Sultan was regarded as “the protector of Islam”. The members of other *millets* (religious communities) had to abide by the religious authorities of their own religious community and enjoyed a large degree of autonomy in personal matters, but on legal matters the supremacy of Sunni Islam had to be acknowledged.²²

Arisen from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, in 1923 the Republic of Turkey was established. The founders of the Republic, the *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Committee of Union and Progress, hereinafter CUP), saw Islam as one of the reasons why the Ottoman Empire had collapsed. Therefore, they wished to establish a secular state where religion had to play only a limited social role, and to transform society rapidly into a modern society based on rationalism and science. In accordance with these ideals, the caliphate system was abolished, the alphabet was changed from Arabic into Latin and Islam was relegated to the private sphere. However, the founders of the Republic were aware of the importance of Islam in the lives of its people, of whom the majority were Sunni Muslims. The CUP members knew that they could not ban Islam totally from the lives of the Turkish population, who were reigned for so long by a Muslim empire. Therefore, instead of banning the religious

²² Gözaydın, *Diyanet: Dinin Tanzimi*. p.13-16.

institution, it was replaced by an administrative unit, the Diyanet, which was not a political body. It was separated from other state domains such as education and law. By assigning religious affairs to an administrative unit, religion was not banished from the lives of the population and became controllable by the state rulers. Religion became a public service given by the Diyanet (1924), who were responsible for the management of places of prayer and providing correct publications of the Koran. This categorization of religion as a public service legitimized the intervention by the state. According to Gözaydın and Öztürk, the state in the early Republic used Islam as an administrative tool to indoctrinate and propagate the “official” ideology of the ruling elite (secularism, positivism, and modernism) while duties like ‘enlightening society about religion’ and ‘religious education’ were fulfilled.²³

2.2. Diyanet Under Different Regimes

Through the years, with the changing democratic system in Turkey, the growing visibility of the religious lifestyle of the population resulted in a change in the tasks and power of the Diyanet. After World War II, Turkey became a multi-party democracy (1946). In this period 75% of the population still lived in the rural areas and led a more conservative, strongly religious lifestyle. The Kemalist reforms had not reached these areas yet. In the following decades, the multi-party democracy, in addition to the attention given to the conservative rural part of the population who formed the majority, led to a softening of the secularist limitations and affected the relationship between the state and Islam.²⁴

Under the *Democrat Party* (1946-1961, hereinafter the DP) some of the reforms made in the Kemalist period were reversed. The *ezan* (the call to prayer), which was performed in Turkish from 1931 on, was allowed to be performed in Arabic again in 1950. In the same period, new religious schools were opened. These were the Imam-Hatip schools opened in the big cities; Ankara, Adana, Istanbul, Isparta, Konya and Kayseri. Besides religious schools, the number of mosques where Quranic courses were given also increased. The sale of religious literature was allowed again, and religious movements were supported. All these changes, in combination with the urbanisation of the 1950s, expanded the influence of religion within the state. This did not mean a relaxation of state control on religion or Islam.

²³ Gözaydın, and Öztürk, “The Management of Religion in Turkey”. p.5-11.

Gözaydın, *Diyanet: Dinin Tanzimi*. p.13-16.

Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*. p. 166- 173.

²⁴*Ibid.* p. 206- 230.

Yet the DP was accused of exploiting religious issues and threatening the secularist legacy of Atatürk by the strict secularists and on May 27 1960 was overthrown by the guardian of this secularist legacy, the military junta.²⁵

The period after the coup d'état is seen as a new period and is called the second Turkish Republic. In this period the moderate right-wing *Adalet Partisi* (1961-1981, Justice Party, hereinafter the AP) came to power through its policies in relation to Islam, which attracted the former supporters of the DP. With the Cold War playing a huge role in Turkish politics, Islamic values in combination with Kemalist nationalism were seen as a counterweight to the threats of socialism and communism. At the same time, with the new 1961 Constitution, the political rights given to Islamic groups gave them more freedom of expression and helped them to rise. One of these Islamic groups was the *Millî Görüş* (National Vision, 1969) movement of Necmettin Erbakan, which was active under different parties during its existence (*Millî Nizam Partisi - National Order Party, Millî Selamet Partisi - National Salvation Party, Refah Partisi - Welfare Party, Saadet Partisi - Felicity Party*). During the 1970s, Turkey was in state of anarchy when different political ideologies (mainly left and right) clashed with each other, and many people were assassinated. On 12th March 1971 the military junta forced the government to resign and demanded a new government which was strong and capable of addressing the anarchical situation in the country.²⁶

The coup of 1980 marks the beginning of the third phase in the development of the relationship between religion and the Turkish state. In this period religiously oriented parties, who were part of the rightist groups, were banned due to the fact that they threatened the Kemalist legacy. The military, which was in control until a new parliament was established, started to propagate a state-Islam with a strong nationalist foundation, which emphasised the link between state and nation, national unity and social harmony and glorified military and authoritarian values. Islam was presented as an 'enlightened' religion, open to science and technology. The goal of the military in utilising this ideological propaganda was to protect the Turkish youth from the radical Islamic movements that were not controlled by the state and socialist propaganda. This 'state-Islam' was mainly spread through education and state-controlled media. In the same period, the position and tasks of Diyanet were substantiated through the constitution. The main duty of Diyanet was to "protect the Turkish national

²⁵Ibid. p. 221-241.

²⁶Ibid. p. 241-278.

identity". Its duty, and the urge to spread state-Islam, made its staff membership grow by more than 50% within ten years, and started even to deliver service to the Turks in Europe.²⁷

Meanwhile, the Milli Görüş movement of Necmettin Erbakan reorganised in the late 1980s through the *Refah Partisi* (Welfare Party, hereinafter RP) and took part in political life between 1983 and 1998. After the abolition of the RP, the Milli Görüş movement split up into two groups: the traditionalists and the reformists. The last group founded the Justice and Development Party in August 2001. The reformists, with the current Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as a prominent member, were of the opinion that the ideas of Erbakan were outdated and not suited to the experiences and outlooks of the newly emerging Islamic middle class, which was the result of the economic reforms and policies of the 1980s and 1990s. Within a short time these so-called reformists, strongly supported by the new emerging middle class, managed to turn the AKP into the biggest political movement in Turkey's history. The party presented itself on the centre-right of the political spectrum and claimed to be at the forefront of social justice and reform. By defining the party ideology as a 'conservative democratic' party, it reached a wider spectrum of people across the Sunni majority regardless of ethnicity, and at the expense of Alevis and non-Muslims. While the AKP paved the way for renewed negotiations with the European Union in October 2005, on the other hand it tried to become a source of inspiration for regional countries and become the "historical big brother" of the region. Meanwhile, with this shift to the Middle East, tensions in society started to increase. Many feared that the AKP had a hidden 'Islamic' agenda, and this feeling was strengthened in 2013 when the ban on the veil in public buildings was lifted, and with the elimination of the military which was seen as the guardian of the Kemalist legacy.²⁸

2.3.Tasks of the Diyanet

To come back to the Diyanet, the three initial tasks of the Diyanet were to administer the affairs of the Islamic faith and the principles of its worship and morality, to illuminate the public about religion, and to administer places of worship. The transfer of the management and personnel of the Mosques to the *Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü* (Directorate General for

²⁷Ibid. p. 278- 290.

²⁸Ibid.

"2023 Political Vision", *AKP website*, last accessed 5 October 2015. Sunier, et al. "Diyanet: The Turkish Directorate for Religious Affairs...". p. 12 -22.

Religious Foundations) in 1931 weakened the position of the Diyanet until this power was restored again to the Diyanet in the 1950s. The constitution of 1982 (before in 1924 and 1961), drawn up right after the coup, states that the Diyanet is part of the General Administration, which functions in accordance with the principle of secularism; staying out of all political ideas and opinions, and identifying national solidarity and unity as its primary aim. Until the Diyanet bill of 2010, the President of Diyanet was directly appointed by the President of the Republic upon the proposal of the Prime Minister. The “soft coup” of February 1997 was followed by legislation that broadened the authority and responsibilities of the Diyanet over the mosques. This regulation proclaimed that mosques could only be opened for worship with the permission of Diyanet. This regulation also applied to mosques which were already established and opened for worship by volunteers. The management of these mosques, which had been opened before the implementation of the regulation, was transferred to the Diyanet and the Diyanet provided them with the necessary cadres in proportion. Mosques were “public property”, and therefore mosques in the hands of private religious organizations were made illegal.²⁹

As I mentioned earlier, before the Diyanet bill of 2010, the President of Diyanet was directly appointed by the Prime Minister. This made his main purpose, as other civil servants, to apply the policies of the government. Due to many critics, this changed with the second period of the AKP, when in 2010 the Diyanet Bill was put into effect. From then on, the President of Diyanet had to be chosen by the *Din Üst Kurulu* (Religious Supreme Council). This Council, consisting of a group of 120 individuals, selects three candidates for the Presidency, and the Council of Ministers chooses one of these nominees, proposing the appointment of the chosen one to the President of the Republic. This bill re-organised the Diyanet and its duties. The Diyanet bill limited the term of office of the President of Diyanet to five years (before the bill there were no restraints about the term), and the same official could not be appointed more than twice. This new procedure is claimed to be an attempt to enhance the administrative autonomy of Diyanet. Measures were also taken to raise the academic level of the religious officials within the Diyanet. To achieve an appropriate academic level exams are taken, and upper cadres of Diyanet require at least ten years of experience as a university lecturer. In appendix table 1 we can see the educational status of the personnel of the Diyanet in the years 2010 and 2014. Another remarkable detail of the bill

²⁹ Sunier, et al. “Diyanet: The Turkish Directorate for Religious Affairs...”. p. 5-11 and 31-34.

Gözaydın and Öztürk “The Management of Religion in Turkey”. p. 10-16.

concerns the religious identity of Diyanet officials. Under the former law, all employees were expected to be ‘religious’ (in Turkish: *dindar*, which also can be translated as ‘pious’). The requirement with the new law is that of ‘being pious’ applies only to those teaching religion or providing religious services. So Diyanet officials in other departments of the institution are no longer expected to be pious since the acceptance of the bill.³⁰

2.4. Discussion

2.4.1. Independency of Diyanet

Although the previous president of Diyanet, Prof. dr. Bardakoğlu, claims that the Diyanet is an independent organization established by the state to administer religious affairs, there are indications which show the rate of dependency of the Diyanet on the state. This is especially the case after the responsibility of the Diyanet was given to the Prime Minister by the Council of Ministers, or the Cabinet, in 2014. This is the body that exercises supreme executive authority in Turkey. It is composed of the heads of the major ministries who are appointed by the president on the advice of the prime minister. Government spokesman and Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç explained this change as a desire of the Prime Minister to represent the Diyanet himself.

Another indicator of the dependency of the Diyanet on the state is the budget, which is provided by the state. The budget of the Diyanet has increased in the last few years. With a budget of 5.4 billion lira in 2014, the budget of the Diyanet is more than the Interior Ministry’s, and equal to those of the Foreign, Energy, and Culture and Tourism ministries combined. According to the most recent news on the budget of the Diyanet in 2015, the Diyanet has foreseen that it will spend more than the budget of 5.7 billion liras and has asked for an increase of 700 million liras from the Ministry of Finance, which regulates the budget of the state.³¹

³⁰Sunier, et al. “Diyanet: The Turkish Directorate for Religious Affairs...”. p. 48-50.

“İstatistiksel Tablolar/ Öğrenim durumlarına göre personel sayısı (Statistical Tables/ The number of staff according to education level)”, *Website Diyanet*, last modified 31 December 2010.

³¹“Diyanet İşleri yedek ödenek isteyecek”, *Hürriyet*, 17 August 2015.

“Genel Bütçe Kapsamındaki Kamu Idareleri (1 Sayılı Cetvel) 2015, 2016, 2017 Ödenek Teklif Tavanları.” / “Public Administration within the Scope of the General Budget (number 1), Budget Appropriation Proposal ceilings of the Years 2015, 2016, 2017 (First Schedule.” Numbers from *the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Turkey*.

Other examples which raise questions about the independency of the Diyanet are the project of a huge mosque on top of Çamlıca, a hill on the Asian side of Istanbul overlooking the Bosphorus, and a tweet from the social media account of Diyanet last year, just after the government shut down Twitter. The Diyanet reminded its followers on its social media account about the Friday sermon with the tweet, “freedom requires responsibility,” which is interpreted by many as a religious stamp of approval on the Twitter ban.³²

2.4.2. Other Religions, Different Practices

Another point of discussion is that the State and Diyanet are focused on regulating and providing services related to Sunni Islam. In the cases of people and services related to other religions, these are provided by the respective communities according to the provisions of the Lausanne Treaty³³. But there are also non-Muslim groups that are not recognized by the Lausanne Treaty, like Protestants, Jehovah's Witnesses, Yazidis or Assyrians or Syriacs, and other Islamic understandings with different practices, like Alevism. In case of Alevism, according to Gözaydın and Öztürk in *The Management of Religion*, the Diyanet claims that there are no differences between the two interpretations of the Islam (Sunni and Alevi) regarding basic religious issues, except for certain local customs and beliefs. Gözaydın and Öztürk comment on the claim of the Diyanet; that the fact that there is a Sunni majority within the Republic justified the previous denial of Alevi rights as the disregard of other sects, and still does. The Alevis are regularly denounced as devil worshippers and classified as “sects,” so that they are deprived of state subsidies. As Sunni Islam is the state religion, the Turkish state promotes Sunni Islam from the Turkish budget via the Diyanet. Gözaydın and Öztürk give the example of mosques built in villages where an Alevi majority lives, or religious education at schools which are compulsory, taught from a Sunni interpretation of the Islamic faith and tradition, and denying Alevi practice within the Islam. In his latest statement, Erdogan persistently denied their existence with the words: “If being an Alevi means loving

³²Karip, Mesut, “2014 Yıl bütçesinin ayrıntıları belli oldu”, Milliyet Blog, 13 December 2013.

“Diyanet Başbakan'da, medya Akdoğan'da”, *Al-Jazeera Türk*, 1 September 2014. Lepeska, David, “Turkey Casts the Diyanet: Ankara's Religious Directorate Takes Off”, *Foreign Affairs*, 17 May 2015.

³³ Lausanne Treaty is a peace treaty signed in Lausanne, Switzerland on 24 July 1923, concluding World War I and defined the borders of the modern Turkish Republic.

Ali, no one can be more Alevi than me. But if Alevism is a religion then Erdogan is not there”.³⁴

So, the Diyanet and its responsibilities and remit have changed during the different regimes, and due to the priorities of the different regimes. What we have seen in this chapter is that in recent years, the tasks and area of influence of the Diyanet has been enlarged, and that the content of the tasks of the Diyanet also have changed. The Diyanet, as an institution which delivers sound knowledge to the people and enlightens them, initially had the administrative task to 'regulate' Islam which had been put under state control to protect the Kemalist legacy. However, it has now become a tool to impose a strong Sunni Islamic ideology of the current leading elite.

³⁴Gözüaydın, and Öztürk, “The Management of Religion in Turkey”. p.16-18.

“Erdogan: Alevilik Hz. Ali'yi sevmekse ben dört dörtlük bir Alevi'yim”, *Milliyet*, 17 June 2013.

“Alevilik bir dinse Tayyip Erdoğan orada yok”, *Radikal*, 10 May 2015.

3. Governmental Policy on Violence against Women

Although Turkey's social transformation on gender equality and legal rights dates back to 1934, when Turkish women received their fundamental rights to vote and be elected, until the AKP there was no accurate policy to combat violence against women, or even a gender policy. Back in the early Republican period, women were already important in the national progress of the state. Emancipation of women was seen as a prior condition of civilization, and was developed in relation to the development and progress of the nation. Women were not only wives, but also mothers who could educate the next generations and contribute to the development of the nation. The emphasis in this period was laid on the education, visibility in the public sphere and the political rights of women. After this period, the attention paid to the rights of women diminished. For a long time, the general opinion in Turkey was that Turkish women were emancipated because the Turkish woman had received rights at a much earlier stage than many of the women in the world. Turkish women could vote, work and go to school equally with men. However, different reports have shown that Turkey is not as emancipated as it thought it was through the years. The recent government is taking action to change this, but despite the many conventions and legal reforms, Turkey is still ranked at the bottom in the case of women's rights, especially on violence against women. In the following section we will look into the policy of the government on how it is trying to combat violence against women. We will look at some numbers to see what we are talking about, and look at what the profile of women in Turkey is. Then we will switch over to how and when the policy is conducted, what it contains, and its aims through an analysis of the policy reports and action plans of the *Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü* (Directorate General on the Status of Women, hereafter KSGM) supervised by the Ministry of FSP headed by the former Minister Ayşenur İslam (2013-2015).³⁵

³⁵Hatem, Mervat, "Modernization, the State and the Family in the Middle East Women's Studies," in *A Social History of Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East*, M. L. Meriwether & J. Tucker (eds.), Westview, 1999. p. 63-85.

Toprak, Zafer, "The Family, Feminism and the State during the Young Turk Period, 1908-1918", in *Premiere Rencontre Internationale sur l'Empire Ottoman et la Turquie Moderne* (Istanbul-Paris: Editions ISIS, 1991). "Misyon ve Vizyon", *Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü*, last accessed 1 September 2015.

3.1. Gender Equality Policy

The policy to combat violence against women in Turkey is part of a much more general policy, which is the gender equality policy. According to the Global Gender Gap (hereafter GGG) Report, Turkey ranked 120th in 2013 and dropped in 2014 to 125th.³⁶ The GGG report indicates that Turkey struggles in achieving gender equality in economy, health, education and politics. Although wage equality in Turkey is not bad, it lacks in economic and labour force participation and opportunities, and fails in political empowerment, while in other areas such as education and health it is doing much better. According to the research done under the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2008-2013), the low rate of female employment in Turkey³⁷ is related to traditional ideas about women's proper roles in society, the low educational level of women, inadequacy of childcare, disabled and elderly care facilities, and the low wages that are paid for low-level jobs.³⁸

Different Turkish organizations like the Small and Medium Industry Development Organization (KOSGEB), labour force programs by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (İŞ-KUR), vocational training activities, and activities by trade unions try to encourage women to establish their own businesses and aim to improve the working conditions of employed women. Care services are provided free of charge for the children of families who have economic hardship. The target in the employment of women was to reach 29.6% by the end of 2013. A new report has not been published yet but, according to the *Türkiye İstatistikler Kurumu* (hereafter TÜİK, Turkish Statistical Institute); the employment rate of women for 2014 is 25.4% and their labour force participation 28.7%. The priorities of the government are mother and child health issues and family planning services. Various policy programs have been implemented and are addressing the more underdeveloped provinces, slums in metropolitan cities, rural areas and specific risk groups. In education, different programs like “Haydi Kızlar Okula” (Hey Girls, Let's go to School) cover the whole

³⁶ The gender gap report is an index that measures national gender gaps on economic, political, education and health-based criteria. The goal of the project is to find whether women are presented with equal opportunities as men, regardless of whether they are in rich countries or poor ones. “Rankings Global Gender Gap Index 2014”, *World Economic Forum*, last accessed 12 September 2015. ”Rankings Global Gender Gap index 2013”, *World Economic Forum*, last accessed 12 September 2015.

³⁷ The labour force participation rate was 24.9 per cent and their employment rate was 22.3 in 2006.

³⁸ “Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Ulusal Eylem Planı 2008-2013”. p.35-43

of Turkey, and Campaigns who bring girls to school with their mothers in order to reduce the illiteracy rate in Turkey.³⁹

The national action plan on gender equality shows that the government is trying to include women in its plans with educative programs for women, the creation of a legal basis for gender equality in the workplace, and making women's access to decision making and political representation easier. These are making progress, although it has not reached its targets. Unemployed, low skilled or undereducated women are seen as the most vulnerable and easy targets of domestic violence, although the evidence for this is weak. Therefore, gender equality has an important place in the action plans of the government to combat violence against women. Conversely, violence has an impact on the gender equality within the state. Gender-based violence is a form of discrimination and a violation of the victim's fundamental rights, which are a cause and a consequence of inequalities between women and men. It not only affects women's health and well-being, but it hampers women's access to employment, thereby negatively affecting their financial independence and the economy and development of Turkey in general.⁴⁰

3.2. Statistics of the Government

According to the online counter *Anıtsayaç*⁴¹, a digital monument for women who are killed by violence, the number of deceased women reached 180 in only the first 8 months of 2015.⁴² In the appendix under table 1 we can find the infographics drafted by *Bianet*, which tries to form statistics from the numbers and news compiled from the press. If we compare 2013 and 2014, more women were murdered in 2014 (2013: 214, 2014: 281) and fewer women are subjected to violence for seeking a divorce or a breakup (2013: 15%, 2014: 13%).⁴³ It is difficult to find accurate numbers and statistics, due to the fact that there are no official numbers on violence against women. For a long time, the most recent numbers of violence against women in

³⁹“Household Labour Force”, *Turkish Statistical Institute*, 15 May 2014.

“Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Ulusal Eylem Planı 2008-2013”. p. 27-43, 55-61.

⁴⁰ Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Ulusal Eylem Planı 2008-2013”. p. 25-68.

⁴¹ “Şiddetten Ölen Kadınlar İçin Dijital Anıt”, *Anıt Sayaç*, last accessed 24 August 2015.<http://www.anitsayac.com>

⁴² “Şiddetten Ölen Kadınlar İçin Dijital Anıt”, *Anıt Sayaç*, years: 2009, 2012, 2014, 2015. last accessed 24 August 2015.

⁴³Tahaoğlu, Çiçek, “Infographic of Male Violence 2013”, *Bianet News Desk*, 10 January 2014.

Tahaoğlu, Çiçek, “Male Violence 2014 Infographic”, *Bianet News Desk*, 20 January 2015.

Turkey were those of the research done by KSGM in 2008⁴⁴, which is also used by TÜİK. In an interview in 2014 when the press asked about the numbers of female victims of violence, Minister of Family and Social Policies Islam replied that the Ministry did not have the numbers, but that the Ministries of the Interior and of Justice have the numbers. The two Ministries do not give the numbers or publish them either.⁴⁵ In order to create a clear image, I made a table (see appendix table 2). Due to a lack of official numbers, the numbers in the table are based on the numbers put together by Bianet on murder, rape, abuse and harassment over the last five years.

In this table we can see that, although the campaigns to combat violence against women and to create public awareness have increased in the past few years in Turkey, violence against women is still increasing and this violence is frequently committed by an intimate partner like husbands, ex-husbands or lovers. Violence is not only a problem in Turkey but across the whole world. While throughout Turkey 4 out of every 10 women has been subjected to physical violence by their husbands or intimate partners, according to the global prevalence figures of the World Health Organization 35% of women worldwide have experienced either intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.⁴⁶

3.3. Violence Against Women Policy

Although the statistics of earlier periods are not known, violence against women has been one of the biggest social problems in Turkey that attracted attention after the 1980s, when women's organizations started to actively organize and draw attention to the position of women in Turkey. In their campaigns, the emphasis was laid on the fact that violence against women was not only the problem of the woman herself, but a societal problem. The attention which was drawn to violence against women by women's organizations resulted in the integration of the issue into the governmental agenda. The first campaign of the women's organization "Dayağa Hayır" (No against beating) started in 1987 in Istanbul and later spread to other cities in Turkey. The most important result of this campaign was the establishment of women's shelters and solidarity centres. The first step at state level was the ratification of the

⁴⁴ "Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddet", *ICON, Hacettepe Üniversitesi Nüfus Etütleri Enstitüsü, T.C. Başbakanlık Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü*, 2009 (Ankara).

⁴⁵ "Şiddet yüzünden hayatını kaybeden kadınlar Aile Bakanlığı'nı ilgilendirmiyormuş!", *T24*, 18 November 2014. Nazlıaka, Aylin, "Kadın, şiddet sarmalında kayboluyor", *Kazete*, 01 July 2015.

⁴⁶ "Media Centre: Violence against Women fact sheet", *World Health Organization*, updated November 2014. Report: "Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddet", 2009. p. 45-65.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1986.⁴⁷

After the ratification of CEDAW in Turkey in 1987, a separate unit for gender equality was created in the Turkish public sector for the first time, the ‘Advisory Board for Policies with Regards to Women’. Representatives from public agencies, non-governmental organizations and universities participated to increase gender awareness in public policies. In 1990, the KSGM was established to promote gender equality in Turkey by developing programs and policies to strengthen the position of women in all spheres of social life, to develop policies for the prevention of all forms of discrimination against women, and to develop strategies to ensure coordination and collaboration with all its stakeholders. The KSGM makes reports on gender policy including the periodic reports for CEDAW, runs the training programs for public institutions, and has projects with Ministries on gender-related issues such as violence against women.⁴⁸

The regulations on combating domestic violence gained momentum in Turkey with the accession negotiations with the European Union started in 2005, six years after the confirmation of its official candidate status, by the AKP government. The adoption of CEDAW as a condition of the accession process of the EU in 2000 forced Turkey to amend the Civil Code and the Penal Code by applying CEDAW. The changes were the elimination of discrimination toward women (family, labour, marriage and divorce), criminalization of marital rape, elimination of the patriarchal and gender-biased language in the Penal Code. A number of measures were also taken to prevent sentence reductions for perpetrators of honour crimes, and possibilities for protection and care for the victims of violence, such as accepting the amendment which obliges municipalities with more than 50.000 inhabitants to open women's shelters. So in 2003 the Family Courts were established. In 2005, research was carried out by a commission established by the Turkish assembly to examine the causes of honour crime, murder and violence against women and children in order to determine measures to be taken and, in 2006; a report based on this research was issued. This led in 2007 to the revision of the law on the Protection of the Family (4320), which came into force in 1998 and was the first law with the aim to protect women from violence and allowed for a restraining order. This was an important turning point in the protection of women subjected to

⁴⁷ Report: “Türkiye’de Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddet Araştırması”, 2015. p. 34-38.

⁴⁸“Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Ulusal Eylem Planı 2008-2013”. p.13-14 and 16-17.

domestic violence; measures which can be taken by the Family Court to protect individuals exposed to violence are arranged under this law.⁴⁹

In 2007, the first national action plans for gender equality were set up in Turkey. One was the ‘National Action Plan for Societal Gender Equality for 2008-2013’, which focuses on the elimination of gender-based inequality in the areas of education, economy, poverty, power and decision-making, health, media, and environment, and integrates a gender perspective into the management of everyday affairs and the activities carried out by political decision-makers. Another action plan was the “National Action Plan for Combatting Violence against Women (2007-2010)”, which was intended to improve the situation of gender inequality and violence against women and children through measures and changes in legal regulations, creating public awareness and mental transformation, strengthening of the socio-economic position of women, preventive services and treatment and rehabilitation services.⁵⁰

During this period, in 2011, a convention was prepared and signed in Istanbul by the Council of Europe on violence against women, “the convention of the European council to prevent and combat Violence against women and domestic violence”, which is also referred to as the Istanbul convention. This convention considers violence against women as a form of discrimination against women and a violation of human rights. The convention has expanded the scope of domestic violence by referring not only to the violence which occurs within the contract family, but also to cases in which victims and offenders of violence share the same home, or share a home with an old spouse or partner. In addition, the persistent pursuit of such violence and forced marriage are rendered in detail in the Istanbul convention. Based on this convention, on 8th March 2012, law 6284 “the Protections of the Family and the Prevention of Violence against Women” (wherein the definitions of the convention are adopted) was prepared and came into force from August 2012 on.⁵¹

⁴⁹ “Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Ulusal Eylem Planı 2008-2013”. p.12.

EU-report: “Gender Equality in Turkey”, 2012. p.8- 11.

Dedeoğlu, Saniye and Elveren, Adem Y., *Gender and Society in Turkey: The Impact of Neoliberal Policies, Political Islam and EU Accession*, chapter 8 Gender equality Policies and Female Employment: The Reforms in the EU Accession Process, (New York: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010). p.125-140.

⁵⁰ “Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Ulusal Eylem Planı 2008-2013”. p.13-14 and 16-17. “Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddetle Mücadele Ulusal Eylem Planı 2007-2010”, last modified 29 September 2014. p. 6-7.

⁵¹Report: “Türkiye’de Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddet Araştırması”, 2015. p. 31-33.

Law 6284 replaced Law 4320 on the Protection of the Family due to the problems arising from shortcomings in law and practice, and the increase in the violence against women. Law 6284 is more comprehensive; it covers what had been missing or inadequate in the previous law. The biggest problem in 4320 was the use of the terms “married women” and “unmarried women”. These have been eliminated. The new law also made clear the legal definitions of “domestic violence,” “violence against women” and “violence” itself. The law provides protection for those not only exposed to violence but also for those who are in danger of being exposed to violence. The protection of the victim by a court order is granted more rapidly, to avoid delays that may lead to violence. Before the new law, protection for the victim was provided after evidence was found that the claim was true. This law provides shelter in case of domestic violence was to the person who made the request and, if necessary, to the person's children in the same district or in some other location; provides financial aid without prejudice regarding assistance provided under the scope of other laws; to provide psychological, professional, legal and social guidance and counselling services; and provides temporary protection upon the request of the relevant person in case of life-threatening danger.⁵²

Under the scope of this law in March 2012, and as part of the National Action Plan 2012-2015, the first Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres (ŞÖNİM) in the province of Bursa were established by the Family and Social Policy Ministry to more effectively provide support services to women suffering from violence in Turkey. In 2014, they were opened in 14 of the 82 provinces. The centres, which will be open at all hours, aim to prevent domestic violence, and efficiently implement protective and preventive measures. These centres provide psychological support to abused woman, girls and also to the perpetrators of violence.⁵³

While this law was prepared, due to the expiration of the implementation period of the national action plan to combat violence 2007-2010, a new plan was started in the same period: the “National Action Plan 2012-2015 to Combat Violence against Women”. The main subjects of the action plan of 2012-2015 were, for the most part, the same as the ones of 2007-2010. Additional subjects include education about violence against women, the protection of

⁵²“Ailenin Korunması ve Kadına Karşı Şiddetin Önlenmesine Dair Kanun”, *Resmî Gazete*, 20 March 2012.

“Yasal Düzenlemeler”, *Sığınaksız bir Dünya*, 3 October 2015.

⁵³Değerlendirme notu: 1.6284 Sayılı Ailenin Korunması ve Kadına Yönelik Şiddetin Önlenmesine Dair Kanun Ne Getiriyor, *TEPAV (Türkiye Ekonomi Politikaları Araştırma Vakfı)*, March 2012.

“New centers to be established to combat violence against women”, *Today's Zaman*, 30 July 2012.

victims and the strengthening of the cooperation between the agencies. Under the idea of strengthening inter-agency cooperation, communication and coordination in the area of violence against women, the Ministry of Health, Interior Ministry, Diyanet, Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Justice signed a protocol.⁵⁴

Besides strengthening cooperation, head of KSGM Gülser Ustaoglu has stated that training is being given to 71.000 police, 65.000 health care employees, 33.248 clergy and 326 family court judges and public prosecutors to raise awareness about violence against women. In this context the Interior Ministry, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice and the Diyanet have signed protocols.⁵⁵

Now Action Plan 2012-2015 is almost coming to an end, the Minister of SFP has announced that they have come together to prepare a new action plan that has a higher sanctioning power than the previous ones. This new action plan will also last for three years (2016-2019), and has the same aims as the two previous action plans, namely to raise awareness about violence and gender equality, as well as a mental transformation, the empowerment of women, the improvement of healthcare and the provision of preventive services and better inter-agency cooperation. One of the points announced about the plan is to open more Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres and to change the pilot electronic tracking system via mobile called “*the panic button*” of the Interior Ministry, Justice and FSP, into the *electronic bracelet*.⁵⁶

The Ministry is also getting people’s attention by campaigning on social media and via public service announcements. A recent campaign is the “Kadına Yönelik Şiddete Birlikte #DurDiyelim” (Let’s say together stop to violence against women) which is launched in 2015. Under the website and hash tag *Dur Diyelim* numerous short videos are posted from different ministers, celebrities and people who want to share a message about stopping violence against women.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Report: “Türkiye’de Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddet Araştırması”, 2015. p. 7-8, 34- 36.

⁵⁵“Türkiye’de kadına cinsel şiddet oranı yüzde 12“, *T24*, 29 January 2015.

⁵⁶“Bakan İslam: Kadınlarımızın tüm hak ve fırsatlardan eşit şekilde yararlanmasını sağlayana kadar çalışmaya devam edeceğiz”, *T.C. Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı*, 12 September 2015.

⁵⁷ <http://www.durdiyelim.com/kategori/dur-diyenler/>

3.4. Results of Policy

So far we have seen the policy. If we look at the effects of governmental policy we can see that there is a minimum change in the number of victims as well as how many women seek for help, talk about the violence that they have been through and with whom. According to the research on violence against women in Turkey carried out by the Ministry of FSP, 44% of the 7462 women had never told someone about the violence (during this research is the first time they talked about it), 56% had told it to their close circle and only 11% applied to official institutions and civil society organizations. The institutions applied to were police (or ALO 155), gendarmerie (ALO 156), help line for women (ALO183 Kadın), Woman, Child and Social Services Advisory Line (Çocuk ve Sosyal Hizmet Danışma Hattı), Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres (Şiddet Önleme ve İzleme Merkezleri, ŞÖNİM), the Family Courts, women's shelters, the public prosecutor, the governor or the district governor, bar associations, the Directorate of Family and Social Policies, hospitals or health organizations, women organizations and the women's support centres of the municipality.⁵⁸ Compared to the research done in 2008 (see appendix table 3), violence within the family and from intimate partners is still high, and although the percentage sharing the violence with institutional organizations is still low, there is a slight increase in comparison with 2008.⁵⁹

The reason why women do not want to share their experiences with official institutions is that, according to the research conducted in 2013, some of the women forgive their abusive partner rather than seek legal protection. They frequently say they do it to protect their children. Another point is that women do not believe that they will receive help or that the prosecutor will be punished enough that the violence will not be repeated. There are many examples in Turkey of women calling the police or gendarmerie for help, but receiving no help. A recent case is that of a young woman, a victim of violence and not taken seriously by the state when she asked for help. This young woman opened a blog and asked for help via social media. Violent acts also occur in families where both the husband and wife are educated and wealthy.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Report: "Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddet Araştırması", 2015. p. 66-75, 162-174

⁵⁹Ibid.

Report: "Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddet", 2009. p. 89-92.

⁶⁰ Report: "Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddet Araştırması", 2015.

Activists and critics of the AKP government claim that the approach of the government in combating violence is important in terms of subordination of women, but it still falls short of addressing gender-based inequality and is not sufficiently determined to actually do something against the problem of violence. The overall criticism is the emphasis on family instead of women. This is especially apparent in the names of laws, as can be seen in the change in the name of the Ministry which in 2011 changed from *Kadından Sorumlu Devlet Bakanlığı* (Ministry for Women's Affairs) into *Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı* (Ministry of Family and Social Policies). In every speech of former Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the prime minister Davutoğlu and the minister of FSP, the importance of family was emphasized and this led to the critique that women were being erased from social affairs and the state responsibility. Another statement of the activists was that violence against women cannot be combated with only protection and providing shelters, but with effective state policy. In 2014 the number of shelters was 116, and they admitted 17.792 women. The effective protection of victims, the punishment of the perpetrators of violence, rehabilitation and full support is essential for the elimination of the threat of violence; they say that it is important to find a solution as a whole. In the practice of the existing laws, women who want protection go to police stations, courts, or shelters several times, and have to tell their problems numerous times to different people and organizations. Also, although it is clear that they often committed acts of violence, the perpetrators are often released after receipt of statement. The activists say that, due to the lack of these supportive acts from the side of the government, "the job has been left half" which encourages the angry perpetrator to repeat his actions.⁶¹

Although the new action plan and law have brought many changes, the changes and policy fall short in addressing gender-based inequality. The policy against violence refers to physical violence, and is expected to be controlled through penal law, where the use of it

"Devletin korumadığı kadın, şiddeti sosyal medyadan anlattı: 'Beni öldüren katilimi bilin'", *sendika.org*, 02 September 2015.

Aydoğdu, Bülent, "İhbara rağmen olay yerine gitmediler", *Vatan*, 11 December 2011.

⁶¹"Kadına yönelik şiddet sadece koruma kararı ile engelenemez", *KADEM*, (*Kadın ve Demokrasi Derneği*), 3 October 2015.

"Kadının Adı Devletten Siliniyor", *Bianet*, 30 November 2013.
Cengiz Aldemir, "Sığınma evi yerine İRŞAT bürosu", *Sözcü.com.tr*, 1 February 2014.

"Turkish Civil Penal Code Reforms from a Gender Perspective: The succes of Two Nationwide Campaigns", *Women for Women's Human Rights – New Ways (WWHR) 2005*.

cannot be controlled. The policy views women as victims in need of protection and violence against them is perceived as a threat to the family institution, which also has a negative impact on children's welfare. What we can see in this chapter is how there is a policy on paper, by which the government is focused on the protection and development of women and a fight against violence, but in practice how this policy fails to make effective changes to the increasing number of victims. Although the mistakes are seen and attempts are made to counteract them, still there are no exact or official numbers of victims. Besides this fight, there is an obvious emphasis on the protection of the family, implying that the woman is not an individual but a subject of the family.

4. The Changing Attitude of the Diyanet

As we have seen in Chapter 1, besides the legal changes in the last few years, the social and political visibility of Islam have had an influence on the broadening of the authority, responsibilities and tasks of the Diyanet. Besides this broadening, we can also see a change in the attitude and perspective of the male-dominated Diyanet towards women keeping pace with the government. The global attention paid to gender equality, women's rights and violence against women has also touched Islam. As part of the General Administration, the Diyanet follows the agenda of the state which, in the last few decades, has changed to become more woman-friendly, supportive of women's rights and to create the opportunity to emancipate them. After the many reports which showed that Turkey is behind on many areas, especially on the rights of women, the emancipation of women has become one of the most important subjects in Turkish politics and is seen as part of the national progress. In this chapter, we will look at how the Diyanet has been involved in the policy of the government to eliminate violence against women. Thereby we will look at what kind of role the Diyanet has in this policy, what the aim is of including the Diyanet, and investigate a project between the government and the Diyanet to combat violence against women. In the meantime, we will look at the changes that the male-dominated Diyanet has undergone which indicate a new gender perspective.

4.1. Changing Profile of Diyanet Employees

One of the indicators of the broadening and changing gender perspective is the increase in employees. Since 2004, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of employees of the Diyanet, especially in the appointment of female employees as religious experts and service providers, which includes *the kadın vaiz* (the female preacher, the *murshida* in Arabic). While in 2005 15 of the 82 provinces had no female preachers, in ten years the number of employees has increased by 69, 95%, and in 2013 16.373 employees were hired according to the statistics given by the Diyanet.⁶²

In table 4 in the appendix, we can see how gender is divided within the Diyanet.

⁶² "İstatistiksel Tablolar/ Öğrenim durumlarına göre personel sayısı (Statistical Tables/ The number of staff according to education level)", *Website Diyanet*, last modified 31 December 2014. Tüba Kabacaoğlu "Kadınlar cami ile barışıyor", *Aksiyon*, 15 August 2005.

"Number of female officials increased in guidance services", *Official website of Diyanet*, 16 October 2012.

Here we can see an increase in the number of employees. If we look at the gender division within the Diyanet and its employees, we see a great increase in the number of female employees. This increase becomes outstanding when you realize that the public religious leadership and authority belong to men in Islam and the Diyanet. This does not mean, however, that in Islamic history no female religious authorities have appeared and that women were excluded from application and transmission of Islamic knowledge. But this was done in the private sphere until the last decade, when women started to participate actively in speaking about Islam publicly and claiming an authority to do this.

The discussions on this subject take place in many Muslim societies. In certain Islamic societies, Muslim women are trying to show and get recognition for their authority in Islam by educating themselves in understanding and interpreting the Qur'an in order to do research on the authority of women in Islam. In places where the state itself regulates religion we can also see this shift in the "gender" of Islam, such as the volunteer female preachers hired by the Endowment Ministry of Egypt (2015)⁶³ and the *Murshida* (female religious guides) of Morocco (2006)⁶⁴. The aim of this step made by these governments is to encourage a more tolerant Islam, in attempt to counter Islamist radicalism and politically-motivated sermons in mosques, and to improve the position of women in society. The Diyanet as part of the General Administration underwent a similar kind of process, only the women are not volunteers in this case, but state employees.⁶⁵

4.2. Reasons for the Increase in Female Preachers

The increase in female employees has been fuelled by the reopening of the Imam Hatip schools in 2012, and the unforeseen feminization of higher religious education supported by the government. According to the numbers given by the Ministry of National Education, in the period of 2002-2003 there were 450 lycees and 71.100 students, and in 2014-2015 this number reached the 1017 lycees and 546.434 students, of which almost 53% were girls (see table 5). The reforms in education in 2012 extended compulsory education to 12 years, and the new education system of 4+4+4 made it possible for parents to send their children to an

⁶³ "Egypt's Endowments Ministry Welcomes Women Preachers," *Ahram online*, January 21st 2015.

⁶⁴ "Morocco's Islamic Women Preachers lead Social Revolution," *Reuters*, May 19th 2015.

"Morocco Women Preachers appointed," *BBC News*, May 4th 2006.

⁶⁵ "İstatistiksel Tablolar / Personel Sayısı" (Statistical Tables / Number of Personnel), *Website Diyanet*, last modified 31 December 2010.

Imam Hatip (middle) school after four years of primary school. Even if the intention is not for their child to become an imam, many pious conservative parents prefer these schools for a sound religious education, which has resulted in the opening of more Imam Hatip (middle) schools. Another reason which makes choosing Imam Hatip schools an option again is that since 2011, they can enter a section outside their areas and are not committed to studying theology with a reduction of the coefficient difference. In this way, the substructure for the Diyanet was also created. The students whose first choice is not to become an imam, or for the girls who want to work in this area, there are many opportunities within the Diyanet. The Diyanet can grow and increase its number of employees in this way.⁶⁶

Creating employment for women comes from a growing demand and interest in women as female teachers. The Diyanet recruited 4.500 between 2005 and 2007, and in 2008 2.500 – in total, 7000 female Qur'an teaching staff. While the number of preachers in 1991 was 34, in 2001 this number had increased to 57, and in 2009 to 221.⁶⁷ In the 1990s the number of female preachers was low due to the patriarchal interpretations of Islam, which assumed that women are incapable of making good decisions due to the pressure of menstruation periodically affecting their judgement. This also limits their public abilities which, according to this interpretation, come from their biological difference. In an interview in 2005, Bardakoğlu explained that religious guidance and delivering fatwas are not a matter of gender but a matter of knowledge, and showed by this interview the opinion of the Diyanet on the matter of female preachers. Until today, the highest function for female employees in Turkey had been the deputy mufti⁶⁸. For the first time in 2006, 5 female deputy muftis were appointed, one of them being Kadriye Avcı Erdemli. Although the Diyanet looks positive towards women holding positions of religious authority, Kadriye Erdemli suggests that

⁶⁶“4+4+4 eğitim sistemi başlıyor”, *Sabah*, 16 September 2012.

“İmam hatip liseleri rekora koşuyor”, *Habertürk*, 13 January 2014.

“Milli Eğitim İstatistikleri: Örgün Eğitim 2014/’15” (National Education Statistics: Formal Education 2014/’15), *T.C. Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı Strateji Geliştirme Başkanlığı*, last accessed 3 September 2015.

⁶⁷ “Kadın vaiz sayısında patlama”, *Akşam*, 18 February 2011.

Özvarış, Hazal, “Diyanet'in başına ne zaman bir kadın geçebilir?”, *T24*, 12 December 2011.

⁶⁸ The Diyanet has an extensive network of regional offices covering all the Turkish provinces and subprovinces (il and ilçe). The regional offices are led by a mufti. Although the meaning of muftu is a person who is entitled to issue fatwa's, or Islamic legal advice, in the Turkish context, the mufti is the highest official in one of the Diyanet districts. The regional mufti supervises the work of preachers, imams, teachers of Quran courses, and other local Diyanet officials.

tradition stands in the way. A more pressing question is that of whether or not women can become imams. In Turkey, this is still an issue that is very often discussed. To end this discussion, the Diyanet made an announcement in 2005 after a discussion about a woman who led the prayer, or salat, in front of a mixed group of men and women. The Diyanet announced that it is impermissible for women to lead the prayer (salat) in front of a mixed group.⁶⁹

The reasons as to why the Diyanet instantly started to employ more women can be explained as an effort to teach Islam correctly to women through female preachers. Related to this, in 2004 the Diyanet announced that they would hire more female preachers to reach women who are not well educated in Islam, and teach them Islam from the “right” source purified from superstition. Although Diyanet has monopolized preaching activities, Turkey is a country with different Islamic sects and movements. Unlike in the Diyanet, in these sects women are accepted, have a certain authority and take on preaching activities according to the philosophy of their sect. Dr. Izzet Er (Vice-Director of Diyanet) explains in an interview the importance of women to the Diyanet; that women have better communicative skills than men. According to Dr. Izzet Er, the fact that they form larger networks and pass the information that they hear more easily to their neighbours, children, and relatives, was not really noticed until recently. This made it important for the Diyanet to inform Muslim women, especially with regard to informing the representatives of the future: the children.

Another factor in the increase of female preachers is that the Diyanet wants to provide solutions to the problems of one of the cornerstones of the society – “the family” – and lay the foundations of a healthy family structure and thus of society. The idea behind this project is that the preachers will not only give advice on religious issues, but also work as a family counsellor so that they also deal with community issues, health issues, or with the education of the children depending on the problems of the women, which changes from province to province. The Diyanet sees the mother as the primary educator of the family. Therefore women and their education are a priority for the Diyanet, especially unemployed women.

The employment of female preachers is not only a service towards the Muslim community, but also a way to increase the number of women who come to the mosques. The former president of Diyanet, Ali Bardakoğlu, under whose authority the first and biggest changes were made, supports the statement of Kadriye Erdemli in his interview which was also given in 2005. Ali Bardakoğlu states that the integration of women in the Diyanet and

⁶⁹Ibid.

“Diyanet’ten ‘Kadın imam’ açıklaması...”, *Haber Vitrini*, 26 March 2005.

Tütüncü, , “The Women Preachers of the Secular State”, 2010. p.608.

mosques, and the emphasis of their place in Islam, are neither something new, nor radical changes. A report by the Religious Service Department on their work for women and family gives as a reason for training women and hiring women employees that women cope with different problems in their participation in Turkish social life, culture and education. To contribute to the solution of this problem, and to provide women with the right information through religious points of clarification, the Diyanet says that women clergy are needed within the organization. Ali Bardakoğlu adds in his interview that more than half of society is female and has the right to receive services and treatment in an equal manner as the male half.

Furthermore, the dominance and perspective of the male perspective within the Islam has, according to Ali Bardakoğlu, led to many misinterpretations within Islam. The Diyanet plans to remove these misinterpretations by including women in the process of interpretation of different Islamic sources. In this context, an interesting project has been started in 2011 by the Diyanet, where 204.000 hadith are reinterpreted to correct misinterpretations and to spread them within the Islamic tradition. These reinterpretations are published and are distributed during Ramadan. This reinterpretation is not welcomed by everyone, and is interpreted as a way to justify the power and vision of the Diyanet and the state.⁷⁰

To be able to fulfil the demand for Islamic female authorities within society, the Diyanet adopts positive discrimination within its institution, especially in times when there is need for female religious officers abroad. Here, due to not enough applicants, the female preachers who had applied were excused from the written exam and were only examined orally.⁷¹

4.3.Changing Discourse

In an earlier stage, in 2003, the Diyanet underwent an institutional reorganization which we can see as part of the changing perspective. It has created the *Aile Irşat ve Rehberlik Büroları*

⁷⁰Akman, Nuriye, “[Ali Bardakoglu 3] – Diyanet’te kadınlara pozitif ayrimcilik yapıyoruz”, *Nuriye Akman*, 20 September 2005.

“Kadınlara ve Aileye Yönelik Çalışmaları: 2007-2009”, *Din Hizmetleri Dairesi Başkanlığı* (Ankara), 2010. p.57.

“204 bin hadis ayıklandı, *Milliyet*, 4 January 2011. Hassan, Mona, “Reshaping Religious Authority in Contemporary Turkey: State- Sponsored Female Preachers”, in *Women, Leadership, and Mosques: Changes in Contemporary Islamic Authority*, Koninklijke Brill NV Leiden the Netherlands, 2012. p. 97-

Özvarış, Hazal, “Diyanet’in başına ne zaman bir kadın geçebilir?”, *T24*, 12 December 2011.

⁷¹Ark, Devlet, “Kadin Vaizler ABD Yolcusu”, *IHA News Agency*, 23 February 2009.

(Directorate of Family Consulting Offices), which gives advice according to the requirements of Sunni Islam in cases concerning family, women's rights, marriage and divorce, child education and sexual issues.⁷²

Besides the institutional changes, the Diyanet is also part of projects which support the emancipation of women, like Public Health Education for Women at Qur'an Schools (*Halk Sağlığı Eğitimi Projesi*, 2008), workshops about domestic violence against women (*Aile İçinde Kadına Yönelik Şiddet Atölyesi*), women's meetings (*Kadın Buluşmaları*, since 2003) where the women's agenda of both Turkey and countries or regions of different parts of the world are discussed with representatives of civil society organizations. This is in addition to Diyanet's own campaign, "Girls should not be left without a School" (*Kız Çocukları Okulsuz Kalmasın Kampanyası*), in which they try to support the literacy and education of girls and support projects of international non-governmental organizations such as UNICEF ("Girls to school"), in collaboration with the Turkish Ministry of Education, to raise further public awareness of the education of girls.⁷³

The emphasis on women and the improvement of their place in society is not only placed through the projects of Diyanet itself or those that it supports, but also through the messages that it promotes via its books and fatwas⁷⁴, for example at the Friday Sermons. The Friday Sermons are visited by men and are given immediately after the Friday Prayer, for the guidance of society. The Friday prayers have played and still play an important role in the lives of traditional Turkish Muslims. Before the Diyanet paid special attention to women, the Friday sermon was the only way men and women (through men) could become informed and educated about Islam. The sermons were not, and are not now, limited to religious matters; current issues are also discussed. In Turkey the sermons (Khutbas) are prepared in advance by the Diyanet, and all the mosques in Turkey (and mosques outside Turkey which are under the

⁷²“Aile ve Din Rehberlik Büroları”, *Website Diyanet*, last accessed 25 September 2015.

““Din hizmetine kadın eli değişsin””, *on5yirmi5*, 8 December 2012.

⁷³ “Aile İrsat ve Rehberlik Büroları Çalışma Yönergesi”, *Diyanet İşleri Bakanlığı*, 2015.

“Kadınlara ve Aileye Yönelik Çalışmaları: 2007-2009”, *Din Hizmetleri Dairesi Başkanlığı* (Ankara), 2010. p. 33-56.

⁷⁴ Fatwa: an opinion based on knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunna of Muhammed (record of the teachings, deeds and sayings of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, a source of Islamic law) It is given orally or in writing in response to a question asked by a man or woman. P.233. Campo, Juan E., *Encyclopedia of Islam* (fact on file Inc., New York, 2009).

“Diyanet, "kadına yönelik şiddet"e karşı çalışmalarını kitaplaştırdı”, *Official Website of Diyanet*, 6 July 2015.

supervision of the Diyanet Vakfı) have to abide to them. In these sermons, over the last few years, violence against women, equality within the family and the rights of women are much talked-about subjects. Congregations throughout Turkey are being enlightened and warned about violence, with the emphasis on the fact that it is not part of the religion and the Prophet never hurt a woman, a child, an elderly person or any human being. In general a language purified from gender is used since the project of the reinterpretation of hadith (in 2009).⁷⁵

4.4. Diyanet and Violence Against Women

So, with the increase of employees, and the change in gender perspective of the Diyanet influenced by the focus of the government on emancipation of women and gender equality, the Diyanet has started to focus more on women and especially violence against women. A notable project is the “*Kadına Karşı Şiddetin Önlenmesinde Din Görevlilerinin Katkısının Sağlanması Projesi*” (Ensuring Contribution of Religious Officials by the Prevention of Violence against Women project). This project has been prepared by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies in cooperation with the KSGM, the Diyanet and the UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) in 2010 as a pilot. It is a project whereby religious officials receive a two-week training period, after which they give a four-day training session to their own staff (consisting of imams, Qur'an teachers and preachers) on (domestic) violence against women in the district to which they belong. These seminars will be the same in every province, and issues including family protection and the role of religious staff in the prevention of violence against women, the religious basis for the protection of the family and the protection of women from violence, general information about domestic violence, information about laws to prevent domestic violence against women and children, how to guide the female victims of violence, and what to consider in talks with the women are all covered in the training. During the pilot 17.000 religious officials will be trained. The project was designed to last until the year 2015, whereby the intended target was to have trained around 100.000 religious officials. The reason for choosing religious officials is that they are the most important pioneers of the

⁷⁵“Do not raise your hand against women’, stressed at Friday Khutbahs...”, T.C. *Diyanet İşleri Bakanlığı*, 20 February 2015.

“204 bin hadis ayıklandı, *Milliyet*, 4 January 2011.

Demir, Zekiye, “Diyanet Hutbelerinde Kadın Söylemi (2001-2011)”, *Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi*, July 7 (14), 2013. p.95-118.

“Diyanet İşleri Başkanı Prof. Dr. Mehmet Görmez’in imza töreninde yaptığı konuşmanın tam metni”, *Website Diyanet*, 23 August 2013.

community; they have a very close relationship with the community and face many questions from the community. Within the scope of the project, these officials make house visits where necessary, or could be sent to different public service institutions like hospitals, nursery homes, women's shelters and prisons.⁷⁶

Regarding why the Diyanet is the institution which needs to help the Ministry of FSP in its combat against violence, Yahya Ömer, a religious official and trainer in this project, says that religious officials have an important role in preventing violence against women. According to Yahya Ömer the imams, the leaders of the community, have played their part in mosques, neighbourhoods and villages regarding violence against women, and it is therefore time that this issue will be approached by more professionally trained (religious) officials who will take part in protecting the family and preventing violence.⁷⁷

According to the research into violence against women of 2009, violence against women comes not only from intimate partners, but also from male acquaintances, like the father, mother or brothers. The findings indicate that violence is handed down from generation to generation and is part of the socialization of the younger generation. In this process of socialization, violence against women becomes accepted by both boys and girls as part of life and becomes ordinary for men, while for girls, it leads to easy acceptance. The reason that women do not share their experiences or access support after being exposed to violence is because they do not believe that they will receive support, they have already been exposed many times to violence, and they think of their children and the fact that violence within society is interpreted as "a private family matter". Besides this, the fact that violence is considered to be normal in social interactions, to which view the media also contributes, and the fact that women feel increasingly insecure and helpless as a result of the violence, results in their not sharing it. From this report we can see that women share the violence they have experienced only with people close to them, who have dealt with similar problems.⁷⁸ So by increasing the number of employees and creating a more women-friendly (!) environment in the mosques, the Diyanet is trying to boost the number of women who visit the mosques, to

⁷⁶ Tatlioglu, Kasim, "Kadına Yönelik Sıddetle Mücadele Ulusal Eylem Planı 2012-2015'in Genel Bir Değerlendirilmesi", *KMÜ Sosyal ve Ekonomik Araştırmalar Dergisi 16 (Özel Sayı 1): 115-122, 2014.*

"Din Görevlilerine Ailenin Korunması Eđitimi", *Haberler.com, 20 October 2014.*

"Diyanet İşleri Başkanı Prof. Dr. Mehmet Görmez'in imza töreninde yaptığı konuşmanın tam metni", *Website Diyanet, 23 August 2013*

⁷⁷ "Din Görevlilerine Ailenin Korunması Eđitimi", *Haberler.com, 20 October 2014.*

⁷⁸ Lees verder ksgm 2009 185-190

educate men and women within the religious realm about the rights of women, and to address misinterpretations of religion and misguided traditions through its approach to gender equality. In table 2 (appendix) we have seen that, although the subject of violence does attract attention in Turkey, women prefer not to speak about it outside the circle of their close relations. Even though the percentage of women who speak with an official about the subject this percentage is still very low (11%) the Ministry of FSP and the Diyanet can boost this number with their project. The goal of the Diyanet is to integrate female preachers into the family or make them become a confidante of the family. The preachers could either inform these women without knowing about their experience with violence, or they could become the one to whom these women could tell their experiences with violence.

5. The Underlying Reasons for the Government's Attitude Towards Violence Against Women

In the previous chapters we looked at the policy of the government towards violence against women, and the Diyanet has been included in this policy. In this chapter, we will look at why the prevention of violence against women is important for the government, and how this issue, as well as the cooperation between the government and the Diyanet, is part of a larger picture of neo-liberal politics. As was mentioned in the introduction, there are many discussions and case studies in which the biopolitics concept of Foucault is discussed. In his *Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault does not give a definition of biopolitics, but concentrates on how it emerged. This approach will help us to understand the emergence and the use of biopolitics in the case of Turkey and the policy of the AKP government to combat violence against women. I will not go into the discussions about his concept within this thesis, but concentrate on how the Turkish government executes this concept in the case of its own policy to combat violence against women with its *neo-liberal* and *neo-conservative* policies. Before examining the theory behind the approach of the government towards violence against women, we will look at neo-liberalism, which forms the foundation for biopolitics, and look at how it emerged in order to understand the bigger picture behind the policy of combating violence against women of the AKP government.

5.1. Michel Foucault and Biopolitics

Michel Foucault developed a new concept of social power, in the meaning of strategies formed to embody the intentions above the individuals who are involved in these strategies. He explained this concept for the first time in 1979, during the lectures he gave at the College de France. In these lectures Foucault construes the “genealogy of the modern state”, and explains how biopolitics has arisen. With the growth of the population, higher life expectancy due to developments in health and food, the terms of power of the sovereign has changed. Power is no longer having the death of people in one's hands, but the responsibility to preserve and regulate life. Foucault describes three forms of governmental practice, which he calls governmentality (art of government or governmental rationality): the police state, political liberalism and neo-liberalism. The police state attempts to regulate society to the fullest extent and was a form of governmentality in the eighteenth century. In reaction to the failures of this governmental regulation, political liberalism came about. The idea behind this

governmentality is that society should regulate itself naturally when the power of police is diminished. The last governmentality, which has lasted up to the present day, is neo-liberalism. Neo-liberalism is described as a subtle intertwining of freedom of the individual and regulation of the population. In this last type of governmentality, politics and economy are inseparable from each other, and politics becomes subordinated to economy. The economic market becomes the new “truth” for evaluating the failure or success of the performance of the government. This performance constitutes dealing with the management of freedom, and the balance between freedom and security. In this balancing act, little involvement from the government can endanger the security of the state and too much involvement can harm individual freedom. This neo-liberal governmentality forms the base for biopolitics. However, Foucault does not describe how neo-liberalism can form the base for biopolitics, and I would therefore like to sketch the biopolitical approach of the AKP government in the case of violence against women in this chapter.⁷⁹

5.2. Neo-liberalism and economic development of Turkey

As a result of the global economic crisis, liberalism lost traction in the mid-1960s when governments started to intervene and tried to protect their economies. Liberalism re-emerged in the 1980s when the United States and the United Kingdom developed their neo-liberal policies, which were based on a laissez-faire approach. The idea of the free market economy spread with the failure of communism, which had been seen as the alternative to capitalism. The direct integration of emerging countries with world capitalism, and the emergence of globalization, lead to the adaptation of neo-liberal and open economy policies by these emerging countries. As a result of the effects of global political and economic developments, Turkey was one of these emerging countries who, in 1983 after the coup d'état, under the rule of the 8th President Turgut Özal (1989-1993), started to follow a neo-liberal policy which was inspired by the IMF (International Monetary Fund). These steps towards liberalism were not taken from a democratic perspective, but from an economic perspective looking towards prosperity. Not being able to let the statist tradition go and apply a laissez-faire approach, the result was an intertwining of state control and the laissez-faire approach. This combination of

⁷⁹ Foucault, Michel, *Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France (1978-1979)*, edit. By Michel Senellart, English edit. By Arnold I. Davidson, transl. Graham Burchell, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). p. 22-23, 215-286, 292-313, 317- 324.

Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans by Robert Hurley, (New York: Vintage Books, 1990). p. 135-159.

state intervention in the economy and neo-liberal policies has led to a stronger authoritarian state in the political field in 1990s. The impoverishment of Turkey, the increase in illegal activities (corruption), and political instability led to a loss of confidence in the regimes in the 1990s. Neo-liberalism, which lost its effect in this period, re-emerged in the 2000s when the AKP, risen from the ashes of RP, came into power. The AKP started with restructuring its foreign and economic policy by privatizing welfare and public services and switching from a protectionist economy to an economy based on the free market concept. These reforms were made to close the account deficit, catch the developed economies, democratize, and become a country which will form an example for other countries and will make a political and economic great power of Turkey. This will be the “New Turkey”, mentioned by President Erdoğan and Prime Minister Davutoğlu. This ambitious plan is aimed to be achieved by 2023, the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Turkey (1923). This plan shows us that the AKP plans to stay in power until 2027.⁸⁰

5.3. Neo-conservatism and AKP

Economic development and growth are not enough in order to become an economic political power; social stability is also important. The AKP government is attempting to reach this social stability through a neo-conservative policy, which we can understand as a moral-political rationality. The two ideologies, neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism, which are in theory very different policies, are made complementary in practice by the AKP. Whereas neo-liberalism requires less involvement by the government in certain areas, like the provision of welfare services such as health care, education and social services, neo-conservatism re-affirms the existence of the state in the political order by giving it a moral mission. The AKP government tries to follow a policy by which it can increase efficiency and profitability by restructuring its economy, transforming the social security and health care systems and privatize welfare and public services. On the other hand, the neo-conservative rationale conceives the family as the core of social order. The family, and holding it together, is important because the family institution is viewed as the effective remedy for economic crises and other problems of modern societies, such as domestic violence, unemployment, child poverty and divorce. These occur in relation to the decline of the community and the family,

⁸⁰ Cizreliogulları, Mehmet Necati, “Türkiye’de Liberalizm (1980-1999): Neo-Liberal Politikaların Türk Politik-Ekonomisine Etkileri, *Msc thesis*, T.C. Atılım Üniversitesi, Ankara, 2013. p.68-70, 75-80, 82.

Zürcher, *A Modern History*. p.388-402.

“2023 Political Vision”, *AKP website*, last accessed 5 October 2015.

due to increasing individuality. Through the family, the social order and behaviour can be influenced, which we call *social engineering*. We can define social engineering as arranging and channelling environmental and social forces to create a high probability that effective social action will occur. This process has a negative connotation; it is seen as a conscious actor exerting socially coercive manipulation, but manipulation occurs in every society. Social engineering was implemented by the rise of nation-states, where the nation-state later changed to become the maker of social policy and a guarantor of individuals' health. In this role, it could make major interventions in the name of national interest and strategy, but also in the name of social order and morality. The Young-Turks also employed social engineering with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, in order to reform a society penetrated by Islam (seen as the reason for the "backwardness" of the Ottoman Empire) into a secular, modern and western society through the nuclear family which symbolizes the bigger family, Turkish society. The big family means solidarity, reciprocity and togetherness. In the AKP era, the family is used again as a tool to transform society in line with neo-conservative principles, in order to achieve its goal to stay in power until 2027 and make Turkey one of the economic political powers.⁸¹

5.4. Biopolitics and the Patriarchal Family

The family is culturally very important for the Turkish population, but even more important for the AKP government in achieving its goals. In every way it tries to promote the idea of having a family and the enlargement of this family. It tries to stimulate marriages by giving newlyweds bonuses, or arranging mass weddings for those who cannot afford a wedding. In its latest election campaign, the AKP even claims that they will help to find a partner for young people who are finding it difficult to find a partner although they are ready for a marriage (they have access to work and food). The government would be ready (if they were elected) to help young people find a partner, if their parents could not find someone for them. This promise is a symbol of the state that is like a parent and will take care of the youth.⁸²

⁸¹ Podgórecki, Adam; Alexander, Jon; Shields, Rob, *Social Engineering*, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1996). p. 1-22

Memiş, Emel, Umut Öneş and Burça Kızıllırmak, : Housewifisation of Women: Contextualising Gendered Patterns of Paid and Unpaid Work", in *Gender and Society in Turkey: The Impact of Neoliberal Policies, Political Islam and EU Accession*, ed. by Dedeoğlu, Saniye and Elveren, Adem Y., (New York: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010).

⁸² "Başbakan Davutoğlu'ndan eş vaadi", *CNN TÜRK*, 23 October 2015.

In this family the woman, or more specifically the mother, holds an important role in representing the policy of the AKP government, just as in the early Republican era. The mother is the educator, the caregiver and the honour of the family. The man is the breadwinner. It is interesting to see how the government thinks it knows what is best for women, and shows that it is trying to help emancipate women, yet also undermines this and confines women to the house. An interesting case in which the patriarchal approach of the government restricts women is the 'İstihdam Paketi' (Women's Employment Package) of 2013. This package created disagreement between women's organizations and the government. The idea behind the package was to create the opportunity for women to work from home, the possibility for women who had recently given birth to work part-time, and an extension of maternity leave. This constituted positive discrimination towards women, and those disagreeing claimed that this package made them dependent on their fathers or husbands who could work full-time. These women wanted the rights given to them to also be given to the men, so as to have equality. By means of this package, women are pushed into the caregiving role. Statements like, "women and men are equal, it is against their nature," made by President Erdoğan on the *First International Women's and Justice Summit of Kadın ve Demokrasi Derneği* (KADEM, Women and Democracy Association), and later adjusted as "men and women cannot be equivalent," or "women need to put motherhood in the centre of their career," as the minister of Health said, contribute to the patriarchal attitude of the government. 83

The woman as a mother is also the mother of the big family. From the attitude and

⁸³Acar, Feride and Altunok, Gülbanu, "The 'politics of intimate' at the intersection of neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism in contemporary Turkey", *Women's Studies International Forum*, volume 41 (2013). p. 14-23.

Buğra, Ayşe, "The Changing Welfare Regime of Turkey: Neoliberalism, Cultural Conservatism and Social Solidarity Redefined", in *Gender and Society in Turkey: The Impact of Neoliberal Policies, Political Islam and EU Accession*, ed. by Dedeoğlu, Saniye and Elveren, Adem Y., (New York: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010).

Kılıç, Azer, "The Gender Dimension of Social Policy Reform in Turkey: Towards Equal Citizenship?", *Social Policy & Administration*, Volume 42, Issue 5, October 2008. P. 487-503.

Kural, Beyza, "İstihdam Paketi Kadınlara Müjde Değil", *Bianet*, 1 November 2013.

Yılmaz, Zafer, "'Strengthening the Family' Policies in Turkey : Managing the Social Question and Armoring Conservative-Neoliberal Populism", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 2015. p. 371-390.

"Kadın ile erkeği eşit konuma getiremezsiniz, fitratına aykırı", *Cumhuriyet*, 24 November 2014.

"Erdoğan: Kadın ve erkek eşit değil dedim diye...", *Posta*, 26 November 2014.

"Sağlık Bakanı Müezzinoğlu: Annelik bir kariyeridir", *Hürriyet*, 2 January 2015.

"Fatma Şahin: Hem İstihdam Hem Aile Uyumu", *Bianet*, 20 September 2013.

the policy of the government, we can see that a woman has to fulfil a certain image that is created by the government, based on moral values. From the statements made by government officials, especially AKP members, we see the profile emerging of how a “good” woman should be and act. This profile is based on what is morally good and what is morally wrong. Women are not only the pride and honour of the family, but of the whole state. If a woman is not married (yet) her virginity is important; she needs to take care of her family, she has to be pious (which does not mean that she has to wear a headscarf), and has to prepare herself for marriage. If she is married it is important that she bears children, takes care of the children, is a good wife to her husband and is obedient to him; she is the key feature who holds the family together, and to be able to do this all she needs to stay at home.⁸⁴

As we can see, gay marriage is totally excluded from this image of the family. It is not only excluded but totally abominated. An AKP deputy and doctor Türkan Dağoğlu said the following in 2013, when the opposition party CHP requested a parliamentary commission for research to be set up on LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) rights: “As a doctor, I consider the condition defined as LGBT as an abnormal behaviour. Marriage of a woman with a woman and of a man with a man is not a right; on the contrary it is a practice that paves the way for a social subversion by showing as an accomplishment the reversal of sexual orientation.” So becoming a “traditional” family is important, which is not only related to moral values, but also has a social or demographic importance behind it. In the last few years population growth and a decline in fertility rates have become a cause for concern.⁸⁵ A decline in population growth means ageing of the population. This can create economic and social problems, like less economic activity and/or labour, and higher social costs. Therefore, gay marriages are threat to future plans in the eyes of the government. Reproduction means new young generations, who can keep the economy rolling, expand the economy, and

⁸⁴ “Kız mı kadın mı? diyen Erdoğan'a büyük tepki”, *T24*, 4 June 2011.

“Erdoğan'dan şoke eden 'Münevver' yorumu!”, *Milliyet*, 20 July 2009.

“Bakan Eroğlu kadınlarla dalga geçti”, *T24*, 13 March 2009.

“Hüseyin Çelik'ten televizyon sunucusuna dekolte tepkisi: Böyle kıyafet olmaz”, *T24*, 7 October 2013.

“Bir ev süsü: Türk kadını!”, *Radikal*, 27 March 2005.

“Erdoğan: 'Benim bedenim' diyenler feminist”, *NTV*, 2 June 2012

Arınç: Kadınlar herkesin içersinde kahkaha atmayacak”, *Hürriyet*, 29 July 2014.

Toprak, Zafer, “The Family, Feminism and the State during the Young Turk Period, 1908-1918”, in *Premiere Recontre International sur l'Empire Ottoman et la Turquie Moderne* (Istanbul-Paris: Editions ISIS, 1991).

⁸⁵ “World Population Day, 2013: Adolescent Fertility Rate by Provinces, 2012”, *Turkstat*, last Modified 11 July 2013.

(importantly for the AKP), will conform to the ideology of the government and can support their power. A threat to this reproductive ambition is the population in the east of Turkey growing much faster than in the West, and abortion rates in the West are higher.⁸⁶ The East of Turkey is populated by a Kurdish and Alevite majority, and may become the majority in Turkey in the long term if we look at the fertility rates. The growth of these two ethnic minorities is seen as a threat to the domination and power of the nationalistic, Sunni Islam-oriented AKP. Therefore, to create a growing majority-Sunni population, the government is intervening and regulating the private lives of its population through its policies and statements, which Foucault calls biopolitics. Biopolitics is a way for governments to control the entire population, through controlling the reproductive capacities of individuals in the interests of the state. The AKP government is trying to control, intervene and influence the private lives of its population by sponsoring “traditional” marriages, trying to create a good environment for having a family, encouraging families to have more children openly in their statements, trying to reduce divorces and abortions through public advertisement, policies, grants and own statements.⁸⁷

This controversy advertisement of the Ministry of FSP about singles (see figure 4) shows why individuality is a problem for the AKP government from an economic perspective. This image tries to explain how individuals consume more than families who live together in one house, and use, for example, less electricity or water. However, it is not only a case of consumption. As mentioned earlier, the neo-conservative policies complement the neo-liberal policies. The neo-conservative approach and policy wherein the family is put in the centre is also a social safety net. As mentioned earlier, where the neo-liberal policies generate less

⁸⁶ Gosh, Palash, “Turkey: High Kurdish Birth Rate Raises Questions About Future”, *International Business Times*, 16 May 2012.

“World Population Day, 2013: Adolescent Fertility Rate, 2001-2012”, *Turkstat*, last Modified 11 July 2013.

⁸⁷ White, Jenny, *Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks*, Princeton University press (United Kingdom, 2013), p. 1-23.

“Main opposition urges protection of LGBT's, ruling party calls them 'immoral'”, *Hurriyet Daily News*, 29 May 2013.

Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*. p. 135-159.

Çetingüleç, Tülay, “Turkish government aims to save marriages”, *Al-Monitor*, 26 October 2014.

“Erdoğan: Sezaryene karşıyım, kürtaj cinayettir”, *Radikal*, 25 May 2012.

involvement by the government in the provision of welfare services, such as health care and social service, neo-conservatism puts the responsibility of social care on the family.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Yildirim, Kansu, “Neo-Liberal Hegemony ve Patriyarkal veliahtlar, *Birikim*, 22 October 2013. Acar, Feride and Altunok, Gülbanu, “The ‘politics of intimate’ at the intersection of neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism in contemporary Turkey”, *Women's Studies International Forum*, volume 41 (2013). p. 14-23. Çetingüleç, Tülay, “Turkey's Family Ministry shames singles in new ad”, *Al-Monitor*, 19 September 2014.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have tried to answer the question “*What is the role of the Diyanet within the policy of the AKP government to combat violence against women and to what extent is the cooperation between the AKP government and the Diyanet in this endeavour a part of the neo-liberal politics of the AKP?*” by doing research into the relationship between the government and the Diyanet, the violence against women policy, the changing attitude of the Diyanet against women and the underlying reason for the government to combat violence.

During the rule of the AKP government, which has been in power since 2002, violence against women did get much attention. Related to the global attention on violence against women and gender equality and the high number of victims, a huge effort is being made to stop violence against women. But the attention paid to violence against women in Turkey is not simply a result of the extensive violation of women’s rights within Turkey, or foreign pressures to combat this violation. This endeavour is related to the ambitions of the AKP, being the desire to make Turkey a political economic global power by 2023 and to stay in power. These two are related to each other through the fact that violence against women is a threat to social stability. Social stability, as explained in chapter 5, is important for economic stability and growth and, consequently, the AKP sees violence against women as a threat to the foundations of Turkish society. Violence against women has significant economic costs in terms of expenditures on service provision, lost income for women and their families, decreased productivity, and negative impacts on future human capital formation. The government, which follows a neo-liberal economic policy, is trying to overcome its social problems through a neo-conservative approach. With this approach, the government takes on a moral mission wherein it reaffirms its existence. In this policy there is an important role for the family, which culturally already has an important position in Turkey, and this is emphasized by the AKP. The family is being transformed into a caring institution by the AKP government, which wants to reduce and cut expenses on different issues like violence. As part of its policy, the government has opened a few shelters throughout Turkey, but the maintenance of these shelters and the care of the women are costing a lot of money. The government sees the solution of this issue in the family, where the patriarchal construction of the family is contributing to gender inequality and to more violence, which is the true problem. This is why the laws fall short.

External pressures also play an important role in the way the government approaches the social problem of violence against women and gender inequality. As a result of the pressure from the EU accession process, for which gender equality is one of the conditions, the government is being pushed to improve the position of women. A more important point is the economic pressure. The government, understanding the economic importance of women, provides the opportunity for women to educate themselves and to work through positive discrimination. At the same time this positive discrimination, which only applies to women, supports the patriarchal ideology and puts women in an unequal position. On the one hand, the government is showing that it is working hard to improve the position of women by implementing new laws and policies, but on the other hand, by taking a patriarchal attitude and imposing this, the implemented laws and policies make no difference to gender inequality.

The Diyanet contributes directly to the “empowerment” of women by providing jobs for women who previously could not find a job and did not fit into the general picture of the secular state (female preachers), and indirectly through trying to attract women through whom the moral message is applied to mosques. The government sees Islam as a part of the solution to its efforts against violence against women and inequality. In the Friday sermons, violence against women is an issue and its place within Islam is discussed. Through the joint project “The Ensuring Contribution of Religious Officials by the Prevention of Violence against Women” between the Diyanet and the Ministry of FSP, the government also wants to reach women. Employees of the Diyanet are trained on issues like family protection and the role of religious staff in the prevention of violence against women, the religious basis for the protection of the family and the protection of women from violence, general information about domestic violence, information about laws to prevent domestic violence against women and children, how to guide the female victims of violence and what to consider in talks with the women. In a country where 99% of the population is Muslim (no divide in Sunni or Shia), not all in praxis, but traditionally and through cultural association, the spread of a moral message by an institution which has an important role in the production and transmission of religious knowledge, and has a unique network all over Turkey and abroad, makes the reach of the message of violence and equality greater. The Diyanet does not only reach pious or devout people, but also the secularists who are remain attached to the Muslim tradition.

I would like to conclude that the Diyanet plays a huge role in the neo-liberal politics of the AKP. With the changing economy, a revitalization of Islam is underway within Turkey. The expansion of the Diyanet through more employees, increasing tasks and responsibilities,

and its involvement in government policies show us that it has become an instrument which spreads the moral message and ideology of the current government. This moral message creates a nationalist conservative population, whereof the intention is to gain a loyal supporter group in order to stay in power and to reach the state of social stability under this ideology which is an important factor for economic and political growth.

Appendix

Table 1: Number of Personnel by Educational Status of the year 2010 and 2014.⁸⁹

Educational status	Number of Personnel 2010	Percentage (%) 2010	Number of Personnel 2014	Percentage (%) 2014
Total	121.845	100%	119.743	100%
Bachelor's Degree (Religious Higher education)	15.831	13%	17.813	14,9%
Bachelor's Degree	9.125	7,5%	8.979	7,5%
Associate Degree (Religious Higher Education)	52.799	43,3%	54.118	45,2%
Associate Degree	10.247	8,4%	9.358	7,8%
High school for Imams and Preachers	30.658	25,2%	26.601	22,2%
High school and equivalent	1.513	1,2%	1.322	1,1%
Junior High school and Equivalent	1.087	0,9%	1.010	0,8%
Primary School	585	0,5%	515	0,4%

⁸⁹ "İstatistiksel Tablolar/ Öğrenim durumlarına göre personel sayısı (Statistical Tables/ The number of staff according to education level)", *Website Diyanet*, last modified 31 December 2014.

Table 2: Numbers of violence against women over the last 5 years.

Year	Women deceased by male violence (at least) / by intimate partner	Women raped (at least) / by intimate partner	Women battered/ abuse by male (at least)/ by intimate partner	Women harassed by male
2014 ⁹⁰	281 / 169	109 / 13	560 / 375	140
2013 ⁹¹	214 / 141	167 / 87	241 / 125	161
2012 ⁹²	165 / 121	150 / 91	210 / 139	135
2011 ⁹³	257 / 155	102 / 45	220 / 177	167
2010 ⁹⁴	217 / 154	207 / 2	164 / 102	381

⁹⁰Tahaoğlu, Çiçek, "Male Violence 2014 Infographic", *Bianet News Desk*, 20 January 2015.

⁹¹ "Infographic of Male Violence 2013", *Bianet News Desk*, 10 January 2014.

⁹²Tahaoğlu, Çiçek, "Men Killed 165 Women and Raped to 150 Women in 2012", *Bianet News Desk*, 11 January 2013.

⁹³Tahaoğlu, Çiçek, "Erkekler 257 Kadın Öldürdü", *Bianet*, 13 January 2012.

⁹⁴Belge, Burçin, "Erkekler 2010'da 217 Kadın Öldürdü", *Bianet*, 24 January 2011.

Table 3: numbers of women who talk about their violence experience.

	2008 % from 24.048 women between the age of 15-59 ⁹⁵	2014 % from 7462 women between the age of 15-59 ⁹⁶
Married	75,5%	80,00%
Talk with someone	52,00%	56,00%
Apply official institution	8,00%	11,00%

Table 4: Number of Employees Diyanet and the Gender Division within the Diyanet.

Year	Employees	Female	%	Male	%
2004	71.690	-	-	-	-
2008	83.033	3.720	4.48%	79.313	95.52%
2013	121845	18.474	15.16%	103.371	84.84%

⁹⁵Ibid. p. 13-14

⁹⁶Report: "Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddet Araştırması", 2015.

Table 5: Number of Imam Hatip Lycees and students (1979-2015).

Year	Number of Imam Hatip Lycee	Total students	Boys	Girls	Regime
1979-1980 ⁹⁷	249	47.941			AP (central right)
1995-1996 ⁹⁸	394	184.371	-	-	Coalition: CHP, DYP (central left + central right)
1996 - 1997 ⁹⁹	464	185.126			1 st Coalition: AP, DYP (central right) 2 nd Coalition: RP, DYP (right)
2002-2003 ¹⁰⁰	450	71.000	-	-	Coalition: DSP, MHP, ANAP (central right + central left)
2007-2008 ¹⁰¹	456	129.274	60.356	68.918	AKP (central right)
2008-2009 ¹⁰²	458	143.637	65.916	77.721	AKP
2009-2010 ¹⁰³	465	198.581	94.242	104.339	AKP
2010-2011 ¹⁰⁴	493	235639	112.608	123.031	AKP
2011-2012 ¹⁰⁵	537	268.245	126.429	141.816	AKP
2012-2013 ¹⁰⁶	708	380.771	180.240	200.531	AKP
2013-2014 ¹⁰⁷	854	474.135	-	-	AKP
2014-2015 ¹⁰⁸	1017	546434	258 397	288 046	AKP

⁹⁷ “Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Genel Kurul Tutanağı 21. Dönem 2. Yasama Yılı”, *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*, 14 December 1999. Last accessed 3 September 2015. https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/tutanak_b_sd.birlesim_baslangic_yazici?P4=2345&P5=B&page1=113&page2=113

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ “İmam Hatip Okullarına büyük talep”, *Sabah*, 13 January 2014.

¹⁰¹ National Education Statistics 2007/'08, Published 19 February 2008. p. 73.

¹⁰² National Education Statistics 2008/'09 . p. 73.

¹⁰³ National Education Statistics 2009/'10 . p. 73.

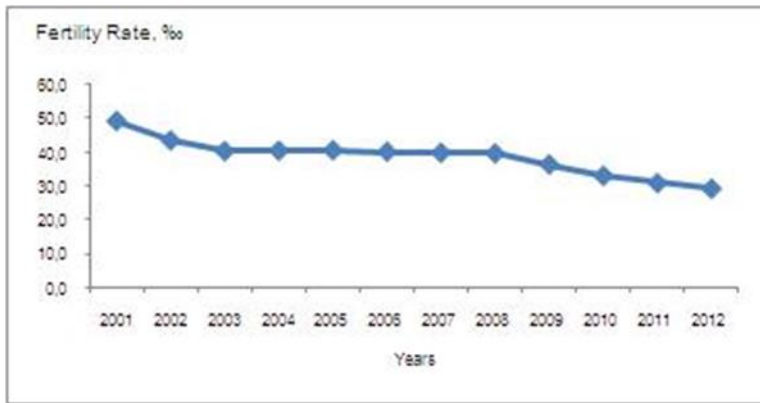
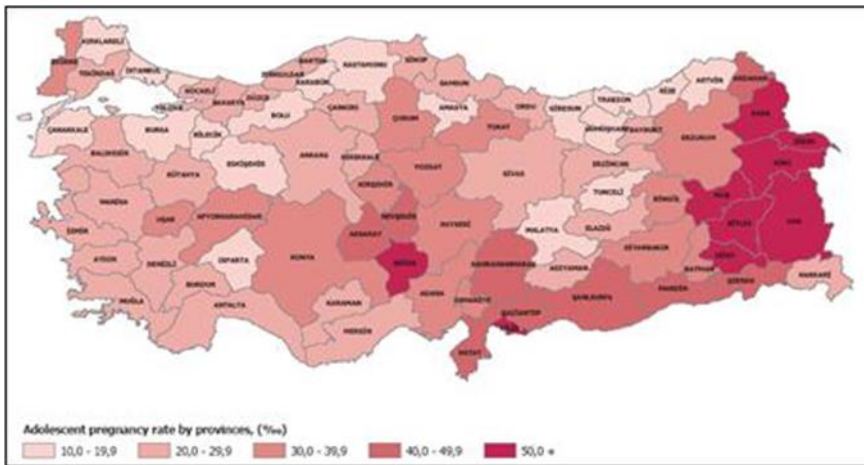
¹⁰⁴ National Education Statistics 2010/'11. p. 91.

¹⁰⁵ National Education Statistics 2011/'12. p. 94.

¹⁰⁶ National Education Statistics 2012/'13. p.121.

¹⁰⁷ “İmam Hatip Okullarına büyük talep”, *Sabah*, 13 January 2014.

¹⁰⁸ “2014-2015 Eğitim Öğretim Yılı Değerlendirme Raporu”, *Eğitim*, 11 June 2015. p.50.

Figure 1: Fertility Rate Turkey 2001-2012.¹⁰⁹Figure 2: Pregnancy Rate by Provinces 2012.¹¹⁰Figure 3: Add of Ministry of FSP: “Those who consume get consumed. People who live alone.”¹¹¹

Aile Bakanlığı @ailebakanligi · 15 dk.
Yalnız yaşayan... pic.twitter.com/evjBu63qW

Yanıtla Retweetle Favorilere ekle

Medya İşaretle

Translation: The one who consumes will be consumed. ...
The lonely living human
38% more products
42 % more packages
55% more electricity
61% more fuel is consumed

¹⁰⁹ “World Population Day, 2013: Adolescent Fertility Rate by Provinces, 2012”, *Turkstat*, last Modified 11 July 2013.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

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