European Journal of Cultural Studies
http://ecs.sagepub.com/

A different story of secularism: The censorship of religion in Turkish films of the 1960s and early 1970s

Dilek Kaya Mutlu and Zeynep Koçer

European Journal of Cultural Studies 2012 15: 70
DOI: 10.1177/1367549411424948

The online version of this article can be found at:
http://ecs.sagepub.com/content/15/1/70

Published by:
SAGE
http://www.sagepublications.com

Additional services and information for *European Journal of Cultural Studies* can be found at:

Email Alerts: http://ecs.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts

Subscriptions: http://ecs.sagepub.com/subscriptions

Reprints: http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav

Permissions: http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav

Citations: http://ecs.sagepub.com/content/15/1/70.refs.html

>> Version of Record - Feb 8, 2012

What is This?

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF Cultural Studies

Article

A different story of secularism: The censorship of religion in Turkish films of the 1960s and early 1970s

European Journal of Cultural Studies
15(1) 70–88
© The Author(s) 2012
Reprints and permissions: sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/1367549411424948
ecs.sagepub.com
SAGE

Dilek Kaya Mutlu and Zeynep Koçer
Bilkent University, Turkey

Abstract

This article extends the discussion of Turkish secularism from political history to cultural history. It examines censorship of religious elements in Turkish films of the 1960s and early 1970s based on the reports of the Central Film Control Commission in Ankara, responsible for inspecting domestic films from 1939 to 1977. The article argues that the censorship commission, as an extension of the state, functioned as a guard of Kemalist secularism and a 'true' Islam (a private, enlightened, apolitical, national and Sunni Islam). This ambivalent attitude towards religion underlines the complexity of Turkish secularism, which distinguish it from western models of secularism. The article concludes with a discussion of two inspection cases in 1970, which point to a significant shift in the commission's attitude towards religion in films and prove that the founding principle of secularism and its later politics in the 1960s did not distance the country from its Islamic heritage.

Keywords

film censorship, Islam, secularism, Turkey

Secularism, one of the founding principles of the Turkish Republic, has never been a *fait accompli* in Turkey but rather a site of continuous political and cultural struggle. Shifting the focus of attention from political history to cultural history, this article explores some practical applications of secularist ideology in the state's regulation of culture between two military interventions. Specifically, the article examines the censorship of religious elements in Turkish films of the 1960s and early 1970s based on the reports[1] of the Central Film Control Commission in Ankara, which was responsible for inspecting domestic films from 1939 to 1977.

Corresponding author:
Dilek Kaya Mutlu, Department of Graphic Design, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, Bilkent University, 06800 Bilkent, Ankara, Turkey.
Email: kdilek@bilkent.edu.tr

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

The 1960s constituted the golden years of Turkish cinema in terms of film production and movie attendance. Movie-going in those years was the principal family entertainment and leisure activity, mainly due to a lower cost than other social entertainment such as going to music halls. Supplying moviegoers with 200 to 300 films a year, ranging from melodramas to comedies, historical action and adventure to detective and gangster films, combined with the phenomenal popularity of its film stars (Mutlu, 2006), Turkish cinema constituted an important domain of identity formation and negotiation acknowledged by the very institution of censorship. How did censorship as an extension of the secular state attempt to regulate or transform the representation of religion in films, and thereby the subject positions available to viewers?

The article begins with an overview of the history and politics of Turkish secularism from the early republican period to the early 1970s. It then provides a brief history of film censorship in Turkey. This is followed, first, by an examination of the censorship of religious elements in secular films – that is, films (from any genre, be it melodrama, action adventure or comedy) that did not have a main religious topic – and, second, by a discussion of the censorship commission's attitude towards religion in historical religious films that peaked in Turkish cinema in 1965. The article later considers the censorship of folk Islam in both secular and religious films. The censorship commission's strict attitude towards the depiction of religion in secular films set in modern times, its tolerant but corrective attitude towards historical religious films and its rejection of folk Islam in both secular and religious films, suggest that commission members saw themselves not only as guards of Kemalist secularism (pushing Islam out of the public sphere), but also of a 'true' Islam (a personal, enlightened, apolitical, national and Sunni Islam). This ambivalent attitude underlines 'Turkish Islamic exceptionalism' – that is, the interpenetration of Islam and secularism in Turkey that distinguishes it from Arab Islam (Mardin, 2005: 148) as well as from western models of secularism. The article concludes with a discussion of two inspection cases in 1970, which point to a significant shift in the censorship's attitude towards religion in films and which prove that the founding principle of secularism and its later politics in the 1960s did not distance the country from its Islamic heritage.

Historical background: the politics of Turkish secularism, 1920s-1960s

The Turkish revolution of 1923, which marked a change from monarchy to republic, was 'primarily a revolution of values' (Mardin, 1971: 209) in that it attempted to change not just the social structure but the symbolic system of society: namely its culture, within which Islam played a fundamental role (Mardin, 1971). Viewing modernization and westernization as inseparable and inevitable, the founders of the Republic – led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*) – saw Islam as a sign of 'backward' oriental identity and as a 'reactionary' social force, and believed that in order to modernize and westernize they had to eliminate the influence of Islam from society (Sayyid, 1997). Assuming secularism (*lâiklik*, from the French *laïcité*) as one of its founding principles, the Republican People's Party government undertook many reforms in order to distance the country from its Ottoman/Islamic/

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

eastern past and bring it closer to contemporary western societies.[2] Reforms included the abolition of the caliphate (1924), the abolition of the religious courts (1924), the abolition of traditional religious schools and the establishment of a secular system of education (1924), the dissolution of religious orders and brotherhoods (1925), the proscription of the fez and other Islamic headgear and their substitution with the western hat (1925), the adoption of the Western calendar (1925) and the Latin alphabet (1928), the replacement of Shari'a law with civil, commercial and penal codes based on European models (1926), which also granted women the right to vote and legal equality with men, the abolition of the clause in the constitution that recognized Islam as the religion of the Turkish state (1928), and the proscription of the Arabic *ezan* (call to prayer) and its replacement with a Turkish translation (1932).

These modernizing and secularizing reforms, especially the replacement of the fez and other Islamic headgear with the western hat, and the replacement of the conventional Arabic call to prayer with the Turkish version, caused insurrections in Anatolia by Islamic groups, which were quickly repressed via physical violence and/or legal punishment. Consequently, religion came to be encoded not only as a popular reactionary force but also as a counter-ideology and source of political opposition (Brockett, 1998; Tapper, 1991; Tarhanlı, 1993; Toprak, 1981; Turan, 1991). Disapproving of Islam as a political ideology and as a source of collective identity and solidarity, the republicans attempted to relegate Islam to the private sphere and minimize its role in public arena by defining religion only as a matter of individual conscience, belief and worship (Tapper, 1991; Tarhanlı, 1993). This push was a part of the project of creating an identity for Turkey as Turkish rather than Muslim, as is also observed in Atatürk's description of the Turkish revolution: 'the nation has united as individuals instead of being united by religion and as adherents of sects [religious orders]; now they are held together only by the bond of Turkish nationality' (cited in Kili, 2003: 249).

Although the state rejected religion as a national marker, it was also aware that Islam, which had provided both the governing and living principles in the country for centuries, could not be eradicated completely from social life. Therefore, rather than excluding Islam altogether, the state put it under its control and incorporated it into state ideology by discursively constructing an official version of Islam (a personal, enlightened, apolitical and national Islam) that would be compatible with a modern secular worldview and implant the modern ideas and ideals of the republic (Çınar, 2005; Dumont, 1987; Göle, 1997; Kaplan, 2005). Through the Directorate of Religious Affairs, established in 1924, the state regulated the training and appointment of religious officials and administered mosques, even supplying imams (prayer leaders) with sermons giving civic messages conforming to republican ideals (Ayata, 1996; Mardin, 1977; Turan, 1991). Moreover, in an attempt to minimize the influence of Islam in public life, religion was defined only as a matter of private belief and conscience (Tarhanlı, 1993) and 'the public sphere [was] institutionalized and imagined as a site for the implementation of a secular and progressive way of life', leading to the silencing of any religious signs and practices (Göle, 2002: 176–177). Consequently, Turkish secularism differed from Anglo-American models of secularism, in that rather than fully separating the state and religion, the state posited itself as the only authority able to determine the legitimate expression of religion in the public arena.

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

A radical secularism continued until the mid-1940s. The transition to a multiparty system in 1945 and the victory of the Centre-Right Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*) in the 1950 elections marked a turning point in the official understanding of secularism. Identifying itself with the rural population, peasantry and small-town people, the Democrat Party underplayed cultural modernization, emphasized economic development and believed in a less repressive secularism (Sunar, 2004; Toprak, 1981). Revoking the 1932 ban on performing the call to prayer in Arabic, allowing recitation of the Qur'an on state radio, incorporating optional religious courses into school curricula and opening *İmam-Hatip* (prayer leader and preacher) schools to train mosque personnel were among the Democrat Party's attempts to appeal to the masses through the religion issue (Tarhanlı, 1993; Toprak, 1981). In addition, the Party encouraged the construction of mosques and establishment of Qur'anic schools. They allowed religious orders (outlawed in 1925) to openly practice their activities (Toprak, 1981). Eroğul (1970), the author of the first monograph in Turkish on the Democrat Party, remarks that its leaders never supported a theocratic system of governance, but used religion for political ends by tolerating reactionary attitudes as long as they did not threaten the state. On the other hand, Ahmad notes that although the early Democrat Party liberalized religion without sacrificing Kemalist reforms, it 'began to exploit Islam more explicitly' (1977: 370–371) when it began to lose public support due to the worsening economic situation. Overall, the Party's liberal policy towards religion and religious groups was perceived anxiously by its opponents as undermining the modern secular legacy of the republic (Dumont, 1987). Beginning in 1958, religious activity and reactionary manifestations increased. In May 1960, the Democrat government was overthrown by the military and the officers eventually defined military intervention as a 'continuation and reassertion of secularism' (Karpat, 1970: 1671).

After a period of coalition governments supervised by the strictly secularist military, in 1965 electoral politics resumed and the Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*) came to power. The Justice Party was a continuation of the Democrat Party in terms of its liberal and populist attitude towards religion (Sunar and Sayari, 1986), and it remained in power until 12 March 1971, when the military intervened once again.

Film censorship in Turkey

There was no law regulating film censorship until 1932, however the city governors of the Ministry of the Interior were authorized to censor films. Prior to public exhibition, each film was examined by two police officers in the cinema where it would be exhibited. In 1932, film censorship was centralized and put under the supervision of two film control commissions established in Istanbul and Ankara. Moreover, censorship was extended to cover the control of screenplays prior to shooting. In 1939, the Regulations on the Control of Films and Film Screenplays was formulated based on the 1934 Police Duty and Authorization Law and executed with only minor revisions until 1977. According to these new regulations, foreign films were controlled by the Film Control Commission in Ankara or Istanbul, depending on the customs office to which they were submitted, whereas domestic films and screenplays were controlled by the Central Film Control Commission in Ankara, which was superior to both city control commissions. In the case of any objection to the decision of the city control commission, or if no decision

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

was reached, foreign films could be submitted for re-examination to the Central Film Control Commission, whose decision was final. However, the importer of the film could apply to the Supreme Council finally for a revision (Anonymous, 1939; Onaran, 1968; Özgüç, 1976; Tikveş, 1974).

The Central Film Control Commission, whose reports constitute the primary source material in this article, comprised five members from the Ministry of the Interior (head), the police, general staff of the army, Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Education. Depending on the film's subject matter, additional temporary members representing, for example, the Ministry of Commerce, Directorate of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Health and so forth may have joined the Commission. The identities of the Commission members imply that films in Turkey were censored mainly by the government, police and military. Censorship commissions[3] functioned as guardians of the official national and cultural identity constructed by the state and projected on its citizens. Therefore, censorship reports provide useful and completely unexplored sources for examining the state's attitude towards various issues in practice, including the issue of religious expression.

The process unfolded as follows. First, the censorship commissions inspected a screenplay and later, if the film were allowed to be shot, the final product. In order to gain the Commission's approval for production and exhibition, a film should avoid:

1. political propaganda related to a state;
2. degrading an ethnic community or race;
3. hurting the sentiments of fellow states and nations;
4. propagating religion;
5. propagating political, economic and social ideologies that contradict the national regime;
6. contradicting public decency, morality and national sentiments;
7. reducing the dignity and honour of the military and propagating against the military;
8. being harmful to the order and security of the country;
9. provoking crime; and
10. including scenes that may be used to propagate against Turkey.

Based on these 10 criteria, which were also known as the 'Ten Commandments' of Turkish film censorship, the Commission, via majority voting, might accept or reject a film or ask for some revisions, sometimes describing specifically how a scene should be shot, what the characters should or should not say, how the film should end, and so forth. The criteria were not only very nationalistic but also so vague and paranoid that almost any film could be rejected if a commission desired. Yet despite all efforts, the commissions' control over films was not absolute, because sometimes the inspection copy of a film could be different from the one screened to the public. Since there was no regular inspection mechanism to control the films exhibited in cinemas, filmmakers were able to alter their films once they passed censorship. In Behiç Ak's documentary, *Siyahperde: Türk Sinemasında Sansürün Tarihi* (*The Black Curtain: The History of Censorship in Turkish Cinema,* 1993) Feriha Sanerk, who served as a female member of the censorship commissions in the 1960s, explains:

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

> I knew that my work was in vain. I did my job but it was rather a joke. They [filmmakers] were adding scenes later, so you were unable to control them. They were omitting some scenes before submitting. So you do not see those scenes and you cannot cut something you cannot see … Therefore, in my view, it [censorship] was totally unnecessary. (authors' translation)

Arguably, film censorship had been one of the major obstacles to the development of a strong social and political critique in Turkish cinema. In addition, it had been the target of harsh criticism among filmmakers and critics. In 1963, the Turkish Workers' Party went to the Constitutional Court, claiming that the censorship regulations contradicted the main principles of the 1961 constitution, particularly the 21st article which guaranteed the freedom of science, art and information. However, the Constitutional Court decided the opposite (Özek, 1967; Tikveş, 1966). Two new regulations came into force in 1977 and 1983 respectively, but they did not bring more freedom to filmmakers (Çimen, 1977; Dönmez, 1986; Tatar, 1979). In 1986, the introduction of the Law of Cinema, Video and Music Works of Art and the Regulation on the Control of Cinema, Video and Music Works of Art, which amended the 1939 regulation, marked a major turning point in film censorship in Turkey. For the first time, regulation of film censorship was transferred from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Moreover, the Control Commission included a representative from the Professional Union of Film Producers, Importers and Cinema-owners and an artist from the cinema industry, in addition to representatives from the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports, the General Secretariat of the National Security Council and Ministry of the Interior (Anonymous, 1989; Onaran, 1992–1993).

A gradual relaxation throughout the 1990s culminated with a new cinema law and regulation in 2005, which totally eliminated film censorship and replaced it with a classification system.

The history of censorship in Turkey is a very old one, which extends beyond the censorship of films. However, film censorship, which is discussed in this article only with respect to the censorship of religion, occupies a large but underexplored place in this history.[4] The censorship reports are full of interesting, sometimes tragi-comic, instances of censorship ranging from the censorship of nudity and sex to that of 'communist propaganda'. Since one of the principal aims of this article is to extend state-centred research on Turkish secularism from political history to cultural history, in what follows we consider only the censorship of religion and focus on the censorship of direct references to Islam, such as portrayals of religious officials, rules and rituals in both secular and religious films.[5] Yet the reader will still have an idea about the general mentality and motivations of the now-outdated film censorship in Turkey.

Secular films set in modern times: clearing religion off the public sphere

Throughout the 1960s, censorship reports exhibited a strict reaction towards depicting religious elements in secular films set in modern times. For example, the commissions disapproved of showing *namaz* (ritual prayer), the sound of *ezan* and showing or mentioning the Qur'an in modern daily life. Scenes involving such religious elements were rejected on the grounds that they exploited religion and religious feelings.[6]

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

It would seem that this situation contrasts with the abundance of religious elements in the films of the 1950s, during the administration of the Democrat Party, which had a liberal and populist attitude towards religious expression. For example, the *ezan* was a common aural element in 1950s village melodramas – also known in critical discourse as 'belly [dancing], cemetery, *ezan* films' (Şener, 1976: 65; Atay, 1990; Özön, 1995). In the 1950s, the *ezan*, which the Democrat Party proudly restored to its original Arabic version as soon as it came to power, signified more than a call to prayer. It was a political symbol marking the end of the 'tyranny' of the strictly secular Republican People's Party and was highly welcomed by the people.[7] The *ezan*, mosques and ritual prayer were among the most repeated elements in films of the 1950s. Moreover, in some extreme cases, the cinema could turn into a place of religious ritual. For example, Anatolian audiences were reportedly invited to watch *Hac Yolu* (*Road to Hajj*, 1953), a highly popular local appropriation of the Egyptian film *El-Hac*, seven times in order to become a *hajji* without going to Mecca. It was also reported that audiences performed ablution and walked around the cinema seven times before watching the film and that they were served rose-water (sometimes used for religious purposes in Islam) during the *entr'actes* (Anonymous, 1954; Özön, 1995; Sırmalı, 1953;).

Film critics and intellectuals of the 1950s perceived the use or 'abuse' of religion in films as cinematic expression of the religious revival incited by the Democrat Party government, and ironically criticized the 'looseness' of censorship that was supposed to prohibit religious propaganda (Anonymous, 1960). Against this background, the 1960s censorship commissions' reactions towards *ezan*, ritual prayer and the Qur'an in films could be read as an attempt to reassert Kemalist secularism that was supposedly violated by the Democrat Party government. However, an examination of the censorship reports of the 1950s suggests that this period was also strict about portraying religion in films. Ritual prayer, *ezan*, the Qur'an, the imam, Muslim hymns and any kind of superstitious beliefs and practices were disapproved of in 1950s films as well.[8] This understanding invalidates the common supposition that the censorship commissions under the influence of the government were more tolerant towards religion in films. The abundance of religious elements in the films of the 1950s rather suggests that filmmakers and exhibitors did not always obey the revisions required by the censorship commissions during exhibition.

In the 1960s, the censorship commissions were resistant towards showing an imam or *hoca* (cleric or the preacher of a mosque) as well as showing an *imam nikâhı* (religious marriage ceremony) in secular films set in modern times.[9] However, portrayal of the *hoca* was tolerated as long as it served to affirm republican ideology and discourse, which encoded his religion as an obscurantist and reactionary force and thus an obstacle to modernization and progress. The *hoca* had been a negative stereotype in Turkish cinema since the early years (the 1920s).[10] The supreme example of this negative stereotype is found in *Vurun Kahpeye* (*Beat the Bitch*), which is based on the novel of the same title by the female republican writer Halide Edip Adıvar. Set during the Turkish War of Independence, the story is about Aliye, an idealist female teacher (one of the symbols of modern, enlightened, republican Turkey) who is appointed to an Anatolian village where she endures the negative reactions of conservative villagers, especially those of Hajji Fettah, an obscurantist, pro-sultan and pro-Greek *hoca*. Provoked by Hajji Fettah who,

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

because Aliye is unveiled, sees her as immoral, the villagers stone her to death at the end. When inspecting the 1964 version of the film,[11] the censorship commission stayed silent about the portrayal of the *hoca* (which confirmed the republican discourse) and accepted the film on the condition that its Muslim hymns either be removed or replaced with a march expressing the nationalist feelings of the time. The commission also decreed that the cries of '*Allah u Akbar*' ('God is Great') should be removed. Apparently, the commission did not care about the fact that the film was set in a period before the existence of the republic. The commission's 'corrections' mainly conformed to the ideology of the Kemalist state, which hailed its citizens as nationalist Turks before being Muslims. Overall, censoring the ritual prayer, *ezan*, the Qur'an, the imam, the *imam nikahı* and the *hoca* in secular films set in modern times (and sometimes even in those set before the republic came into existence), could be seen as the secular state's insistence on negating the function of religion in organizing social life.

The censorship reports are not without contradictions. For example, while the censorship commissions were resistant towards references to religion in secular films, they disapproved of rebelling against Allah or slighting his greatness and respectability. Dialogue such as 'What kind of Allah is this?', 'I like my daughter more than I like Allah', 'Damn God', 'We come before Allah' and 'I begged not Allah but man' were rejected on the grounds that they contradicted 'our national and moral values'.[12] The commissions' reservations about Allah indicated that despite its strict stand on the secularization of social life, the state did not promote irreligion; rather, it attempted to redefine the place of religion in modern Turkish society. Accordingly, as explored above, while religion was negated as part and principle of modern public life, it was affirmed as long as it stayed as a private belief in and respect for Allah.

Historical religious films: pushing religion to a mythical past

A more positive attitude towards religion is observed in the control of historical religious films that depicted the lives of Muslim saints and prophets (i.e. Job, Joseph, Ali, Abraham, John the Baptist and Solomon). These films constitute a popular trend that peaked in Turkish cinema in 1965, the year when the Justice Party came to power. Among the 17 historical religious films examined by the censorship commission, nine were immediately accepted without any reservations directly relating to religion,[13] despite the abundance of elements such as the ritual prayer, *ezan* and the Qur'an, which were prohibited in secular films.[14] The nine films are *Hazreti Eyyubun Sabrı* (*The Endurance of Job*), *Hazreti Yusuf'un Hayatı* (*The Life of Joseph*), *Veysel Karani* (*Veysel Karani*), *Hazreti Ali ve Cennet Fedaileri* (*Ali and the Guards of Heaven*), *Hazreti İbrahim* (*Abraham*), *Yahya Peygamber* (*John the Baptist*), *Hazreti Yahya* (*John the Baptist*), *Hazreti Süleyman ve Saba Melikesi Belkıs* (*Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*) and *Anadolu Evliyaları* (*The Saints of Anatolia*).[15] At first look, the acceptance of historical religious films beginning in 1965 implies a shift in the state's and, consequently, in the censorship commissions' attitude towards religion under the influence of the new Justice Party government. However, we would argue that this attitude still parallels Kemalist secularism because it mainly confines religion to a mythical past. As the earlier discussion of the censorship of religion in secular films suggests, religion was still seen

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

as a problem in this period if it attempted to intervene in modern public life. It could be argued that censorship commissions did not have an issue with Islam *per se*, but with its placement. Sometimes the commissions made this understanding of religion explicit. For example, when inspecting *İmam'ın Gazabı* (*The Wrath of the Imam*),[16] the commission demanded that the film should begin with on-screen text that read: 'The events in this film took place before the republic.' Similarly, in the case of *Ali ile Gül – Hak Aşıkları* (*Ali and Gül – Lovers of God*), the commission demanded that the film should begin with on-screen text that read: 'The story is not based on truth, but on legend.'

If a historical religious film was rejected, this was because the film included 'misinformation' or 'mistakes' about the history, principles and rules of Islam and/or about the identity and life of the religious figure being portrayed. The corrective attitudes of the commissions suggest that besides supporting pushing Islam out of the public arena, the commissions saw themselves as guards of a 'correct' Islam. For example, *Mevlûd* (*Mawlid*) *Süleyman Çelebi*[17]was examined by a commission that included two representatives of the Directorate of Religious Affairs and rejected on the grounds that *Mawlid* (poems praising the birth of Muhammad, his life and his virtues, written by Süleyman Çelebi around AD 1400)[18] was not recited in the right melodic and rhythmic pattern and that the pronunciation of some Qur'anic verses (*ayet*) were wrong. The commission also demanded the omission of the lines 'the Qur'an should be translated into the language of Turkish Islamic people' and 'our book should be translated into the language spoken by our people', and their replacement with 'our book should be explained very well in Turkish'. This intervention suggests that the commission insisted on the old and, to some extent, non-Kemalist idea that that the Qur'an could not be translated, only interpreted. Translating the Qur'an into Turkish had been a controversial issue since the late 19th century. A traditional belief was that since the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic, its divine qualities would disappear if it were translated into any other language (Wilson, 2009). The debate over whether translation was possible or desirable became hotter in the republican era, especially after 1924 when the first Turkish translations appeared. Despite all the Kemalists' efforts to legitimize the value of worshipping in Turkish, including a failed state-sponsored project of translating the Qur'an, beginning in the 1930s Qur'an translation projects could only take the form of exegeses (*meâl*) and commentaries (*tefsir*) (Azak, 2008a; Wilson, 2009).

Remarkably, the majority of historical religious films rejected were those portraying historical and religious figures revered strongly especially by the Anatolian Alevis, which constitutes a large sect within Islam and Turkey and whose saints, beliefs and practices are different from those of the Sunni orthodoxy.[19] It must be noted that these films were not about Alevism *per se*. As Odabaş (2004) remarks, besides avoiding the term 'Alevi' and ignoring the essentials of Alevism, the films represented the leading figures of Alevism from a Sunni viewpoint by focusing on the miraculous aspects of these figures and their lives. The 'misinformation' or 'mistakes' identified in those films by censorship commissions further reflected Sunni interpretations of Islam (the institutionalized and officially recognized version of Islam), disregarding the Alevis' different interpretation of the fundamentals of Islam as well as their 'more liberal understanding of religious matters' (Vorhoff, 1998: 228, 230). For example, in *Anadolu'yu Türkleştirenler* (*Turkifiers of Anatolia*), a film about *Hacı Bektaş Veli*, one of the central figures of

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

Anotalian Alevism, the censorship commission identified the following 'mistakes': reciting the *ezan* after sunrise, talking during recitation of the *ezan*, reading the Qur'an without reciting '*Bismillah*' (in the name of Allah), performing ablution while standing, and incorrectly pronouncing *shahadah* (Arabic recitation of 'I testify that there is no God but Allah and I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah'). *Allahın Arslanı Hz. Ali* (*Ali, Allah's Lion*), a film about the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law Ali, one of the most important figures in Alevi Islam, was rejected on the grounds that it included many mistakes regarding the history and principles of Islam. In addition to showing bare-headed praying and violations of the rules regarding collective prayer, the commission argued that the film misrepresented 'our religion' and Ali. It was noted that Ali was a 'true hero' but the film portrayed him as a 'miserable lazy poor person'. The commission also felt uncomfortable with the violence and hate-related dialogue in fight scenes. Therefore, discoursing on Muslim morality, the commission argued that 'Islam forbids Muslim people to kill each other', and 'it is inappropriate for a Muslim to say to an infidel "I will send you to hell"'. Similarly, *Eba Müslümi Horasani*, another central figure to Alevi Islam, was rejected on the grounds that it included misinformation about the lives of Muslim prophets and that lines such as 'in the name of God, in the name of Muhammad, in the name of Ali', 'let's fight for Ali' and 'we will avenge the bloodshed at Kerbela' in fight scenes could generate 'conflict and chaos'.[20]

Violent content in those films must be related to the fact that for many Alevis, the Alevi history is a chain of 'tragedies' or of 'collectively suffered injustices' beginning with the battle of Kerbela (Vorhoff, 1998: 227). However, the censorship commissions had always been sensitive about the depiction of violence in films that figured Alevi saints. Several films in the 1950s and 1970s were rejected on the grounds that they could lead to clashes between different religious sects, namely between Sunnis and Alevis.[21] In order to avoid such clashes, the censorship commissions attempted to guarantee that the films would not offend Sunni sensitivities by cleaning them of any sectarian connotations and making the religious content compatible with the religious norms of Sunni Islam.

Rejection of folk Islam: where the religious and secular meet

The only theme that the commissions were consistently against both in secular and historical religious films, including films representing Alevi figures, was the depiction of folk or unofficial Islam: a set of popular, mystical beliefs, rituals and activities that were categorized by the secular state and the Islamic orthodoxy as superstition and rejected for the sake of a modern society and a 'true' Islam. The censorship commissions rejected filmic depictions of folk Islamic practices, such as veneration of saints and pilgrimages to and devotional activities in their shrines or graves (*turbes* or *yatırs*), on the grounds that they exploited religious feelings.[22] Additionally, depictions of elements of folk religion such as rain prayer, amulets, spells (*büyü*) and miracles and especially their association with religious figures such as clerics, prophets or saints were socially harmful because, the commissions argued, they transgressed reason and blurred the distinction between religion and superstition.[23] The censorship commissions were against the filmic depictions of folk Islam not only to protect modern, secular, positivist society but also to

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

protect a 'true' Islam. Besides folk Islamic practices, filmic references to religious orders and brotherhoods, known as *tarikats* ('way' or 'path') and outlawed in 1925, also were rejected.[24]

As Lewis remarks, folk Islam found its chief expression in *tarikats*, to which 'the common people turned for help and guidance where orthodox Islam was lacking or deficient' (1968: 404–405). For years, as opposed to official Islam, *tarikats* represented peripheral and mystical Islam and were dismissed by the secular state for propagating 'incorrect' and 'ignorant superstitions' (Tapper and Tapper, 1987). For the Kemalists, *tarikats* were an 'evil legacy from the past' (Lewis, 1968: 412) and the common people's, especially peasants', investments in them and in superstitions was a sign of their 'primitiveness' and 'backwardness', which could be eliminated by education and modernization resting on positive science (Tapper, 1991). This perception also marks the quotation below from a speech delivered by Atatürk:

> I flatly refuse to believe that today, in the luminous presence of science, knowledge and civilization in all its aspects, there exist, in the civilized community of Turkey, men so primitive as to seek their material and moral well-being from the guidance of one or other *şeyh* [*tarikat* leader]. Gentlemen, you and the whole nation must know and know very well, that the Republic of Turkey cannot be the land of *şeyhs*, dervishes, disciples and lay brothers. The straightest, truest Way (*tarikat*) is the way of civilization. (cited in Lewis, 1968: 410–411)

Arguably, the resentment towards *tarikats* and their folk Islam was not simply a matter of rejecting them because they represented primitiveness. It also stemmed from the fact that they functioned as a rival source of legitimacy and thus were seen as reactionary and subversive. As Zürcher notes, besides providing a 'mystical, emotional dimension' that was lacking in orthodox Islam, *tarikats* also had a vital social function in that they served 'as networks offering cohesion, protection and social mobility' (2007: 191–192). Considering the fact that major revolts against modernizing reforms in the early 1920s and 1930s were led by various *tarikat* circles, it was vital for the modern secular state to keep these 'reactionary' and 'subversive' forces under control and to prevent their influence over the common people. One way to achieve this was to produce an official discourse that framed the *tarikats*' Islam as fake or false. In parallel with this official discourse, the censorship commissions rejected filmic depictions of *tarikats* and their folk Islam under the disguise of protecting a 'true' enlightened Islam compatible with modern ideals.

From the 1960s to the 1970s: shifting perceptions of religion

It is observed that throughout the 1960s the censorship commissions generally conformed to Kemalist secularism: they accepted Islam as a private abstract belief in Allah and a set of rules to be followed in worship, but negated Islam's social function as part and principle of modern public life. As mentioned previously, the secularist project suppressed public display of religiosity in order to establish a modern way of life and the censorship commissions insisted on removing any religious symbols and practice from public life depicted in films. When religion was allowed to be portrayed in films, it was

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

either as a sign of obscurantism and reactionism (i.e. as in *Vurun Kahpeye* discussed above) or as a cultural and traditional element that symbolized a mythic past (i.e. as in historical religious films) that should be remembered 'correctly'. Interestingly, in their attempt to correct religious 'mistakes' in historical religious films, the commission members often used such expressions as 'our Prophet' or 'our religion', contradicting the fact that the secular state is not supposed to possess such a characteristic. Yet as Turan remarks, such terms, which also are used by Turkish political leaders, imply 'no religiosity and possibly not even belief, but the possession of what we may call "Islamic credentials"' (1991: 39). For the censorship commissions, Islam, when cleared of superstition and separated from politics and modern public life, still constituted an essential element of collective identity, tradition and memory. However, it must be noted that what the censorship commission called 'our religion' was predominantly a Sunni version of Islam. Overall, the censorship reports relating to the issue of religion constitute an opportunity to understand the particularity and complexity of Turkish secularism, which is still a debated issue in Turkey and beyond.

We would like to complete this article by discussing two inspection cases that point to a significant shift in the censorship commissions' attitude towards religion in the 1970s. Yılmaz Güney's *Umut* (*Hope*) occupies a special place among the secular films rejected for their depiction of religion. The film tells the story of Cabbar (Yılmaz Güney), a poor cart driver who struggles to make a living to support his large family. When his horse, his only means of earning a living, is hit by a car, Cabbar follows the advice of a friend and begins to search for a buried treasure under the guidance of a local *hoca*. He becomes increasingly dependent on the *hoca*'s visions and directions, which do not bring the treasure but more misery. The film encodes Cabbar's decision to follow the *hoca* to improve his life instead of taking social and political action (for example, he rejects participating in a cart driver's strike) as false consciousness and disempowerment. It also criticizes a system that victimizes and pushes the poor and naive into the hands of *hocas* and leads them to seek salvation in superstition and false hopes. However, the censorship commission decoded the film in a different way, rejecting it on the grounds that it propagated religion and political, economic and social ideologies that contradicted the national regime, that it was harmful to the order and security of the country, it provoked crime and included scenes that might be used to propagate against Turkey.[25]

The commission believed that the film discriminated between the rich and poor, promoted superstitious beliefs and 'ridiculed' religious worship and religious functionaries. For example, the film showed the *hoca* praying during sunrise: the commission stated that 'according to our religion, one does not pray during sunrise'. As discussed previously, similar corrections were made to other films, but for the first time the commission interpreted this not as a religious mistake but as ridiculing religion. Similarly, the image of the *hoca* in *Umut,* who was more human and not as evil as the 'deceiving' *hocas* in other films that passed the commissions' examinations, was seen as an attempt to ridicule religious functionaries. Arguably, the commission's stricter and inconsistent reaction to *Umut* was actually a reaction to Yılmaz Güney's Marxist identity and to the Marxist messages in the film, based on the supposition that Marxists are atheists or irreligious.[26] When faced with the 'threat' of communism, Islam was perceived as a counterforce that should be protected and defended.

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

The same year *Umut* was banned, the censorship commission accepted Yücel Çakmaklı's *Birleşen Yollar* (*Uniting Roads*) despite the opposition of the police representative, who rejected the film on the grounds that it propagated religion. Different from historical religious films, *Birleşen Yollar* was set in the present and told the story of Feyza, an upper-class rich, modern, westernized, degenerate girl who is influenced by a lower-class pious university boy, Bilal, to happily adopt the Islamic way of life and wear the *hijab*. The film criticized the Turkish modernization project as cosmetic westernization and promoted the Islamic way of life in modern Turkey as the only means to 'true' happiness. It also became the pioneer of the *İslami Milli Sinema* (Islamic National Cinema) movement of the 1970s, which introduced Islamic thought to Turkish cinema.[27] The commission's intolerant attitude towards *Umut* and tolerant attitude towards *Birleşen Yollar* (as well as to the latter's knock-offs that followed) seems to be related to anxieties over the rise of the radical Left that was beginning in the late 1960s, and to the mobilization of Islam as a remedy of social chaos. This shifting attitude towards depicting religion in films can be considered an early sign of the important social, cultural and political developments in Turkey that would gain momentum in the aftermath of the 1980 military intervention.

Until the 1980s, the military, the major protector of secularism in Turkey, had perceived public Islam as a threat to the modern secular legacy of the country. The 1980 military intervention and its aftermath signalled a shift in this perception. In an attempt to stop the ideological division between right-wing and left-wing groups, political violence in the streets and social chaos, the generals sought to 'reinvent a more politically docile Turkish youth' (Kaplan, 2005: 666) by mobilizing religion as a remedy for ideological polarization, especially communism. They drew on an intellectual movement called Turkish-Islamic synthesis, which merged Sunni Islam with Turkish nationalism. After a three-year military administration, with the new civil government led by Prime Minister Turgut Özal, Turkey entered a new era characterized by economic, social and cultural liberalization. Özal also saw Islam as a unifying element in society. Moreover, he sought to achieve 'real' social change, 'a change from below', by engaging all sections of society, including Islamic circles, in the modernization process (Robins, 1996: 73, 74). To this end, he encouraged the greater participation of Islamic capital and Islamic circles in the economy and the public sphere. Combined with a phenomenal emigration from rural areas to the cities, which brought Islamic culture to the cities together with the Anatolian people, these developments paved the way for the revitalization of Islam in Turkey during the 1980s and 1990s that would culminate first with the rise of the Islamist Welfare Party, and later with the still-continuing government of the Islamist Justice and Development Party.

Secularism in Turkey has never been simply the repression of religion, but rather a struggle over drawing and policing the boundaries of religion. The inconsistent, contradictory and shifting censorship of religion in films provide a historical and more complex insight into this continuing struggle in Turkey. The censorship reports of *Umut* and *Birleşen Yollar* show how the censorship of religion changed with changing political priorities, and how the officially secular state eventually came to rely upon religion by formally incorporating it into its ideology in order to endorse its power and legitimacy. Therefore, these reports also point forward to more recent developments, tensions and struggles in Turkish politics and culture.

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Umut Azak for her insightful comments on an earlier draft of the article; Serhat Dalgıç and Sabri Karayel from the Turkish Ministry of Culture, Directorate General of Cinema and Copyright for their kind help during the archival research; and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions.

Notes

1. These reports are currently held in paper format by the Turkish Ministry of Culture, Directorate General of Cinema and Copyrights in Ankara. They are not accessible to the general public. Researchers who want to browse this material should apply to the Directorate in writing.
2. Although they were targeted to break with the past and create a new modern Turkey, the republican reforms did not mean an absolutely novel change, rather a continuation of the 19th-century Tanzimat reforms (1839–1876), which attempted to secularize and modernize administrative, judicial and educational institutions (Mardin, 1991). In her discussion of the similarities between Ottoman and republican reforms, Bottoni (2007) aptly remarks that what most distinguish the republican reforms from the Ottoman ones are the explicit adoption of the principle of secularism as the official ideology, and the fast pace of the preparation and implementation of the reforms.
3. Since the individual members of the censorship commission changed over time, we prefer to use the term 'censorship commissions' in the plural.
4. For an overview of the history of film censorship in Turkey, which extends beyond the censorship of religion, see Behiç Ak's documentary (1993) *Siyahperde: Türk Sinemasında Sansürün Tarihi* (*The Black Curtain: The History of Censorship in Turkish Cinema*). The documentary includes many interviews with directors and producers as well as with some of the members of the censorship commissions. It shows how arbitrary and paranoid film censorship was in Turkey, and how censorship mechanisms changed with the changing political priorities of different periods.
5. Although issues such as censoring nudity and sex are relevant to the issue of religion as well, we do not cover these in this article because they were censored in all kinds of films in all periods under the general principle of preserving public decency and morality.
6. See, for example, the reports of *Haçlılara Karşı Yıldırım Beyazıt* (inspection date: 18 June 1960, decision No. 89), *Namusum İçin* (inspection date: 25 February 1966, decision no. 23, file no. 91122/821), *Yiğit Kanı* (inspection date: 2 August 1966, decision no. 119, file no. 91122/3542), *Bombacı Emine* (inspection date: 2 September 1966, decision no. 139, file no. 91122/3558), *Gecelerin Kıralı* (inspection date: 15 August 1967, decision no. 130, file no. 91122/3948), *Ölüler Konuşmazki* (inspection date: 7 May 1970, decision no. 115, file no. 91122/4757) and *Keloğlan ve Yedi Cüceler* (inspection date: 31 August 1971, decision no. 971/204, file no. 91122/5218).
7. For a discussion of the Republican People's Party government's ban on the *ezan* and the controversy it generated, see Azak (2008a, 2008b).
8. See, for example, the reports of *Boş Beşik* (inspection date: 21 October 1952, decision no. 167), *Yürük Emine* (inspection date: 24 December 1952, decision no. 210), *Esen Tepe* (inspection date: 10 August 1953, decision no. 149), *Karagöz ile Hacivat ve Kanlı Nigar* (inspection date: 23 December 1954, decision no. 282), *Alevden Gömlek – Ezo Gelin* (inspection date:

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

21 June 1955, decision no. 52), *Yusuf ile Zeliha* (inspection date: 17 August 1955, decision no. 109), *Korkusuz Yürük Ali* (inspection date: 21 October 1955, decision no. 76), *Habil ile Kabil* (inspection date: 17 October 1956, decision no. 105), *Ağlayan Gelin* (inspection date: 20 November 1957, decision no. 64), *Kanlı Pınar* (inspection date: 22 November 1957, decision no. 66), *Yaşıyan Ölüler - Kara Günlerim* (inspection date: 23 December 1957, decision no. 84), *Güllü Fatma* (inspection date: 26 December 1957, decision no. 87), *Yaşamak Hakkımdır – İdam Mahkumu* (inspection date: 28 December 1957, decision no. 91) and *Dokuz Dağın Efesi Çakıcı Geliyor* (inspection date: 26 November 1958, decision no. 95).

9. See, for example, the reports of *Yiğit Kanı* (inspection date: 2 August 1966, decision no. 119, file no. 91122/3542), *Yiğitlerin Türküsü* (inspection date: 17 June 1970, decision no. 143, file no. 91122/4609), *Amber* (inspection date: 5 January 1971, decision no. 2, file no. 91122/4795) and *Telli Turnam* (inspection date: 19 January 1972, decision no. 972/19, file no. 91122/4723).
10. This also applies to early republican novels published in the 1920s, especially to village novels and Turkish War of Independence novels. For a discussion of the representations of religion and religious functionaries in Turkish literature, see Gülendam (2002).
11. Inspection date: 21 August 1964, decision no. 89, file no. 91122/163. There are two other versions of the film; one in 1949 by Lütfi Ö. Akad and the other in 1973 by Halit Refiğ. The 1964 version examined here was made by Orhan Aksoy.
12. See for example the reports of *Beyaz Güvercin* (inspection date: 1 October 1963, decision no. 105, file no. 91122/2502), *Bir Garip Adam* (inspection date: 28 June 1966, decision no. 90, file no. 91122/3352), *Namus Borcu* (inspection date: 8 November 1966, decision no. 202, file no. 91122/3662), *Meydan Köpeği* (inspection date: 28 December 1966, decision no. 253, file no. 91122/3629) and *Yavrum* (inspection date: 9 December 1970, decision no. 271, file no. 91122/4854).
13. The commissions asked for revisions only if the films included nudity, sex or sexually offensive dialogues, as they did with any other non-religious film.
14. As for censoring foreign films in a similar category, one observes contradictions. For example, *The Ten Commandments* (inspection date: 17 January 1964, decision no. 5, file no. 91123/921) was rejected on the grounds of propagating religion despite the opposition of the representative of the Ministry of Education, who argued that the film was not in the least a propaganda film but a 'realization of historical and mythical events'. On the other hand, *Ben-Hur* (inspection date: 30 July 1963, decision no. 64, file no. 91123/913) was accepted because the commission did not see in the film 'any evidence of representing Christianity as superior to Islam' and 'propaganda of religion'. Although not a religious but a historical film, *El Cid* (inspection date: 4 June 1966, decision no. 82, file no. 91123/938) was first accepted on the condition that the scene where the Spanish Army before striking the Arabs was blessed with a cross and the scene where King Ferdinand died in the church be omitted. Since the importing company made it clear that it could not fulfil the commission's demands, the film was rejected on the grounds of hurting the sentiments of fellow states and nations (Arabs) and propagating religion.
15. *Hazreti Eyyubun Sabrı* (*The Endurance of Job*, inspection date: 14 July 1965, decision no. 87, file no. 91122/3098), *Hazreti Yusuf'un Hayatı* (*The Life of Joseph*, inspection date: 15 September 1965, decision no. 121, file no. 91122/2495), *Veysel Karani* (*Veysel Karani*, inspection date: 7 October 1965, decision no. 138, file no. 91122/3204), *Hazreti Ali ve Cennet Fedaileri* (*Ali and the Guards of Heaven*, inspection date: 9 November 1965, decision no. 167, file no. 91122/2901), *Hazreti İbrahim* (*Abraham*, inspection date: 30 November 1965, decision no. 182, file no. 91122/3278), *Yahya Peygamber* (*John the Baptist*, inspection date: 16 December 1965, decision no. 196, file no. 91122/3301), *Hazreti Yahya* (*John the Baptist*,

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

inspection date: 17 December 1965, decision no. 198, file no. 91122/3312), *Hazreti Süleyman ve Saba Melikesi Belkıs* (*Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*, inspection date: 12 August 1966, decision no. 126, file no. 91122/3353) and *Anadolu Evliyaları* (*The Saints of Anatolia*, inspection date: 24 July 1969, decision no. 154, file no. 91122/4324).

16. *İmam'ın Gazabı* (*The Wrath of the Imam*, inspection date: 27 July 1967, decision no. 113, file no. 91122/3798); *Ali ile Gül – Hak Aşıkları* (*Ali and Gül – Lovers of God*, inspection date: 17 May 1968, decision no. 95, file no. 91122/4079.
17. *Mevlûd* (*Mawlid*) *Süleyman Çelebi*, inspection date: 4 February 1963, decision no. 10, file no. 91122/971.
18. Although *Mawlid* is mostly associated with celebrations of the Prophet's birthday, as Tapper and Tapper (1987) remark, it also may be associated with the death of a Muslim, the return of pilgrims from Mecca, circumcision or marriage. On such occasions, *Mawlid* may be held at home or at the mosque. During important Islamic days, *Mawlid* are also broadcast on TV.
19. For more information on the Alevis, see Erol (2009), Karolewski (2008), Vorhoff (1998).
20. *Anadolu'yu Türkleştirenler* (*Turkifiers of Anatolia*, inspection date: 26 September 1967, decision no. 156, file no. 91122/3939); *Allahın Arslanı Hz. Ali* (*Ali, Allah's Lion*, inspection date: 12 February 1970, decision no. 43, file no. 91122/4303); *Eba Müslümi Horasani* (inspection date: 13 January 1970, decision no. 11, file no. 91122/4574).
21. See, for example, the reports of *Kerbela Vakası* (inspection date: 26 February 1952, decision no. 25), *Kerbela Şehidi İmam Hüseyin* (inspection date: 31 July 1957, decision no. 116), *Kerbela* (inspection date: 29 December 1958, decision no. 247), *Mukaddes Çöl* (inspection date: 8 August 1973, decision no. 973/209, file no. 91122/6132), *Pir Sultan Abdal* (inspection date: 10 September 1973, decision no. 973/225, file no. 91122/3509), *Peygamberin Torunu Hazreti Hasan* (inspection date: 17 October 1973, decision no. 973/271, file no. 91122/6193), *Kanatsız Melaikeler* (inspection date: 24 April 1974, decision no. 974/88, file no. 91122/6314).
22. See for example the reports of *Yusuf ile Zeliha* (inspection date: 31 March 1962, decision no. 66 , file no. 91122/2038), *Erenlerin Düğünü* (inspection date: 21 September 1967, decision no. 153, file no. 91122/3921), *Sen Benimsin* (inspection date: 26 September 1967, decision no. 157, file no. 91122/3968).
23. See for example the reports of *Allahın Dediği Olur* (inspection date: 27 October 1960, decision no. 88), *Ali İle Gül - Hak Aşıkları* (inspection date: 17 May 1968, decision no. 95, file no. 91122/4079), *Anadoluyu Türkleştirenler – Hacı Bektaş Veli* (inspection date: 26 September 1967, decision no. 156, file no. 91122/3939), *Darıldın mı Cicim Bana* (inspection date: 5 March 1970, decision no. 56, file no. 91122/4741) and *Umut* (inspection date: 24 September 970, decision no. 211, file no. 91122/4905).
24. See the report of *Bir Şarkısın Sen* (inspection date: 4 November 1969, decision no. 235, file no. 91122/4464).
25. Later, upon the application of the filmmakers to the Supreme Council, *Umut* was allowed to be screened in Turkey. Film critics praised the film's realistic depiction of problems with the socio-economic system of the time. *Umut* also won many awards at the Adana Golden Boll Film Festival in 1970, one of the major domestic film festivals (Güney, 1975).
26. Inspection date: 24 September 1970, decision no. 211, file no. 91122/4905. For a discussion of the censorship commissions' sensitivity to the 'propaganda of communism', see Erdoğan and Kaya (2002: 55). It is also known that some directors and screenwriters who were known to be 'leftist' had difficulty in having their films pass the censors, and therefore some of them wrote their screenplays under pseudonyms (Özgüç, 1976).
27. Inspection date: 29 December 1970, decision no. 292, file no. 91122/4818. For a detailed discussion of *Milli Sinema*, see Uçakan (1977: 162–83) and Lüleci (2009: 85–133).

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

References

Ahmad F (1977) *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy, 1950–1975*. London: C. Hurst & Company.

Anonymous (1939) Filmlerin ve Film Senaryolarının Kontrolüne Dair Nizamname [Regulations on the control of films and film screenplays]. *Resmi Gazete* 4272: 12375–12377.

Anonymous (1954) Sansür sistemi değişmelidir [The system of censorship must change]. *Akis* 6: 31–32.

Anonymous (1960) Sinemaya da hürriyet [Freedom also to cinema]. *Akis* 304: 34.

Anonymous (1989) *Sinema, Video ve Müzik Eserleri Kanunu ile Yönetmelikler*. Ankara: Kültür ve Turzim Bakanlığı.

Atay SR (1990) Türk Film Eleştirisinde Yaklaşım Biçimleri [Approaches in Turkish film criticism]. PhD thesis, Dokuzeylül Üniversitesi.

Ayata S (1996) Patronage, party and state: The politicization of Islam in Turkey. *Middle East Journal* 50(1): 40–56.

Azak U (2008a) Secularism in Turkey as a nationalist search for vernacular Islam: The ban on the call to prayer in Arabic (1932–1950). *REMM: La Revue des Mondes Muslumans et de la Méditerranée* 124: 161–179.

Azak U (2008b) Ezan, Türban ve Vicdan Özgürlüğü [The freedom of azan, the veil and conscience]. *Birikim* 227: 83–96.

Bottoni R (2007) The origins of secularism in Turkey. *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 9(2): 175–186.

Brockett GD (1998) Collective action and the Turkish revolution: Towards a framework for social history of the Atatürk era, 1923–38. *Middle Eastern Studies* 34(4): 44–66.

Çimen M (1977) İflasın Eşiğindeki Yeşilçam ve Sansür [Yesilcam's drift towards bankruptcy and censorship]. *Pınar* 71(34): 33–40.

Çınar A (2005) *Modernity, Islam and Secularism in Turkey*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Dole C (2006) Mass media and the repulsive allure of religious healing: The *Cinci Hoca* in Turkish modernity. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 38(1): 31–54.

Dönmez O (1986) Türkiyede Film Sansürü ve Yeni Sansür Tüzüğü [Film censorship in Turkey and the new censorship regulation]. *İzmir Barosu Dergisi* 5(1): 24–36.

Dumont P (1987) Islam as a factor of change and revival in modern Turkey. In Akural SM (ed.) *Turkish Culture: Continuity and Change*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1–15.

Erdoğan N and Kaya D (2002) Institutional intervention in the distribution and exhibition of Hollywood Films in Turkey. *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 22(1): 47–59.

Eroğul C (1970) *Demokrat Parti* [*Democrat Party*]. Ankara: Sevinç Matbaası.

Erol A (2009) Marketing the Alevi musical revival. In Pink J (ed.) *Muslim Societies in the Age of Mass Consumption: Politics, Religion and Identity between the Local and the Global*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 157–175.

Göle N (1997) The gendered nature of the public sphere. *Public Culture* 10(1): 61–81.

Göle N (2002) Islam in public: New visibilities and new ımaginaries. *Public Culture* 14(1): 173–190.

Gülendam R (2002) Türk Romanında Dine ve Din Adamına Bakış [A look at religion and religious functionaries in the Turkish novel]. *Hece* 65–67: 303–312.

Güney Y (1975) *Umut* [*Hope*]. Istanbul: Güney Fimcilik Sanayi ve Ticaret A.Ş. Yayınları.

Kaplan S (2005) 'Religious nationalism': A textbook case from Turkey. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 25(3): 665–676.

Karolewski J (2008) What is heterodox about Alevism? The development of anti-Alevi discrimination and resentment. *Die Welt des Islams* 48: 434–456.

Karpat K (1970) The military and politics in Turkey, 1960–64: A socio-cultural analysis of a revolution. *American Historical Review* 75(6): 1654–1683.

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

Kili S (2003) *The Atatürk Revolution: A Paradigm of Modernization* (trans. Zeybekoğlu S). Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.
Lewis B (1968) *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Lüleci Y (2009) *Türk Sineması ve Din* [*Turkish Cinema and Religion*]. Istanbul: Es Yayınları.
Mardin ŞA (1971) Ideology and religion in the Turkish revolution. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2(3): 197–211.
Mardin Ş (1977) Religion in modern Turkey. *International Social Science Journal* 29(2): 279–299.
Mardin Ş (1991) The just and the unjust. *Daedalus* 120(3): 113–129.
Mardin Ş (2005) Turkish Islamic exceptionalism yesterday and today: Continuity, rupture and reconstruction in operational codes. *Turkish Studies* 6(2): 145–165.
Mutlu DK (2006) Turkey. In: Grant BK (ed.) *Schirmer Encyclopedia of Film*. New York: Schirmer Reference, 263–266.
Odabaş B (2004) Alevi Sineması [Alevi cinema]. In: Engin I and Engin H (eds) *Alevilik*. Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 545–567.
Onaran AŞ (1968) *Sinematoğrafik Hürriyet* [*Cinematographic Freedom*]. Ankara: İçişleri Bakanlığı.
Onaran AŞ (1992–1993) Yeni Film Sansür Düzeni [The new film censorship]. *Istanbul Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Dergisi*: 139–46.
Özek Ç (1967) Filimcilikte Sansür ve Anayasa Mahkemesinin Konuyla İlgili Bir Kararı [Film censorship and a decision of the Constitutional Court]. *Istanbul Ünivesitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Mecmuası* 32: 954–979.
Özgüç A (1976) *Türk Sineması Sansür Dosyası* [*Turkish Cinema Censorship Files*]. Istanbul: Koza Yayınları.
Özgüç A (1990) *Başlangıcından Bugüne Türk Sinemasında İlkler* [*Firsts in Turkish Cinema from the Beginning to the Present*]. Istanbul: Yılmaz Yayınları.
Özön N (1995) Sinemamızda Din Ticareti [The commerce of religion in our cinema]. In: *Karagözden Sinemaya: Türk Sineması ve Sorunları* vol. 2, Ankara: Kitle, 230–233.
Robins K (1996) Interrupting identities: Turkey/Europe. In: Hall S and Du Gay P (eds) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage, 61–86.
Sayyid BS (1997) *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*. London: Zed Books.
Şener E (1976) *Sinema Seyircisinin El Kitabı*[*The Cinema-goer's Handbook*]. Istanbul: Koza Yayınları.
Sırmalı Ş (1953) Bu Nasıl Sansür? [What kind of censorship is this?] *Yeditepe* 44: 5.
Sunar İ (2004) Populism and patronage: The Demokrat Party and its legacy in Turkey. In: *State, Society and Democracy in Turkey*. Istanbul: Bahçeşehir University Press, 121–131.
Sunar İ and Sayari S (1986) Democracy in Turkey: Problems and prospects. In: O'Donnell G, Schmitter PC and Whitehead L (eds) *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Southern Europe*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 165–186.
Tapper R (1991) Introduction. In: Tapper R (ed.) *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics and Literature in a Secular State*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1–27.
Tapper N and Tapper R (1987) The birth of the Prophet: Ritual and gender in Turkish Islam. *Man: New Series* 22(1): 69–92.
Tarhanlı İB (1993) *Müslüman Toplum Laik Devlet: Türkiyede Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* [*Muslim Society, 'Secular' State: The Directorate of Religious Affairs in Turkey*]. Istanbul: AFA.
Tatar M (1979) Türkiyede Film ve Film Senaryoları Sansürü [The censorship of films and screnplays in Turkey]. Master's thesis, Türkiye ve Orta Doğu Amme İdaresi Enstitüsü.
Tikveş Ö (1966) Film Sansürü ve 1961 Anayasası [Film censorship and the 1961 constitution]. *Istanbul Ünivesitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Mecmuası* 32: 305–20.

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013

Tikveş Ö (1974) 22 Yıl özgürlükten sonra Türkiyede sansürü ilk kez İngilizler 1919da 'Mürebbiye' filmine uyguladılar [After 22 years of freedom, film censorship was first executed by the British in 1919 to 'Mürebbiye']. *Milliyet Sanat* 65: 3–4.

Toprak B (1981) *Islam and Political Development in Turkey*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Turan İ (1991) Religion and political culture in Turkey. In Tapper R (ed.) *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics and Literature in a Secular State*. London: I.B. Tauris, 31–55.

Uçakan M (1977) *Türk Sinemasında İdeoloji* [I*deology in Turkish Cinema*]. Istanbul: Düşünce Yayınları.

Vorhoff K (1998) 'Let's reclaim our history and culture!' Imagining Alevi community in contemporary Turkey. *Die Welt des Islams: New Series* 38(2): 220–252.

Wilson MB (2009) The first translations of the Quran in modern Turkey (1924–38). *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41(3): 419–435.

Zürcher EJ (2007) *Turkey: A Modern History*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Biographical notes

Dilek Kaya Mutlu is an assistant professor in the Department of Graphic Design, Bilkent University, teaching popular culture and media reception. She has published research on the history of Turkish cinema, Turkish Yeşilçam stars and their audiences, the exhibition and censorship of American films in Turkey, the Turkish and European reception of the film *Valley of the Wolves: Iraq* and Islamic consumption patterns in Turkey. She is the author of *The Midnight Express Phenomenon: The International Reception of the Film 'Midnight Express'* (Isis Press, 2005).

Zeynep Koçer is a PhD candidate in the Department of Graphic Design, Bilkent University. Currently she is working on her PhD dissertation on the representations of modernity and masculinity in Yılmaz Güney's films and star image.

Downloaded from ecs.sagepub.com at Bilkent University on December 3, 2013