

Revival of Islam in Turkey and Its Current Political Status

Tayyaba Malik¹, Dr. Abdul Qader Odeh Haroon Shalaby²

^{1,2} Social Sciences Religious Study; International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan

Abstract: This article explores the experience of Islamic restoration in Turkey through the analysis of Islamic movement of Erdogan and Islamic reforms initiated by Justice and Development Party. The article also investigates current position of Islam in Turkey's politics. The key principle of Islamic revivalism is to return to Islamic origins, values and fundamentals of the faith described in the Holy Qur'an as well as the Sunnah. Restoration of Islam in Turkey has its roots in Muslim responses to Kamalists secularization and nationalization process. The time period of article covers the era when Turkey emerged as republic to the year 2015. The article argues that the Islamic movement of Erdogan played a crucial role in the revival process and contributed a lot. It was due to the efforts of Islamic people that in the last few decades there have been a considerable increase in Islamic perception in Turkey. As well as the role of Erdogan's Justice and Development Party cannot be ignored in this regard as it forms a major example of the "moderation" of political Islam by embracing democracy and modernity.

Keywords: Turkey, Islam, Secularization, Islamic Parties, Political Struggle, Erdogan, Islamic Movement, Politics, Erdogan, Refah (Refah) Party, Justice & Development Party, reforms.

1. INTRODUCTION

Geographically, Turkey forms a bridge between the old world continents of Asia, Africa and Europe. So Turkey operates as a natural connection between the Christian and the Islamic world. Turkey's importance, in shaping the security conditions of Middle East, to US strategy can never be neglected. Though it's a country with majority of Muslims, at the same time it's a secular democracy. A member of NATO and a continuing ally of U.S. The strength of Islam is increased in Turkey during last several years.

Turkey has old heritage of the history. It was in the sixth century that Mongols came here and settled down and almost in the eighth century Islam was introduced. After the downfall of Abbasids the era of Seljuk's was started which also lasted for more than a century. The decline of the Ottoman dynasty paved ways of secularization in Turkey. The whole process was multifaceted. Initially, the downfall of the dynasty took place with the development of civilization and intellectual activity was shortened or almost absent. The decline of the Islamic thought started when the caliphate failed to fulfill the needs of the developing civilization. It was basically the decline of the Islamic thought that was perceived as inability of Islam to satisfy the needs of the time. In such circumstances, secularism got an edge. It was Sultan Salem-III who made the first move to introduced Westernization during his period. Furthermore it was supported by Sultan Mahmud II and his successors during the Tanzimat period (1839-1876).

Midhat Pasha was the most vocal supporter of Western thoughts. Subsequently establishment of numerous Western Institutions like creation of new Courts of Law and modern educational setup etc. took place. Furthermore, administration and the defense services structure were also revamped. A conflicting mix of the old and the new institutions was quite evident in the beginning of 19th century. Despite all the hard work to create harmony and uniformity, it remained fruitless due to a wide gap between the two entirely different civilizations. Ottoman failed to create a nation of heterogeneous elements. The dawn of the 20th millennium brought countless miseries and in humiliation for the traditionally proud

Turkish national. The Young Turk revolution of 1908, the growth of Turkish nationalism and the establishment of the Turkish Republic were express outcome of these frustrations.

Though the Constitution of 1921 was simplest document but it was the first to announce that “sovereignty is entirely and totally vested in the people.” This declaration symbolized a strong exit from the previous theocratic system, where sovereignty was entrusted to Allah and hand over to the Sultans. After declaring this, the Constitution documented that the Turkey would be a democratic state, where the willpower of the people, instead of Allah’, would decide the laws and policies. With the declaration of the Republic in October 1923 and it was announced that sovereignty is unconditionally owned by the nation. The prohibition of religious institutions of the Ottoman society, the law of educational unification and the outlawing of the Caliphate were all realized in 1924. In the newly adopted constitution, still Islam was accepted as the official religion in Turkey. The situation remained unchanged till April 1928. “Laic” feature of the state was made lawful in the constitution in February 1937. By the omitting of the article regarding Islam as the official religion in Turkey from the 1924 Constitution, the constitution gained a secular feature.

The rule of secularism was the characteristic of the phase when Kamal Ataturk directed the nation. It proved to be the fundamental pillars of Ataturk’s uprising. Secularism was taken as a mean by Ataturk to eliminate the predominant religious pressure from public life also it meant dishearten private religious devotion as well. The most significant element of Kamalist secularization is the objective to take Islam under state control and to cease the influence of religion in political, social and cultural spheres. With laicism as the ideology of the state, a secular culture and a secular lifestyle was aimed to be developed by the republican elite.

For the period of the single party rule (1923-1950) of the Ataturk’s Republican Peoples Party, the Party was inclined toward aggressive secularism by persuading the locking up of religion in individual’s conscience as a personal matter. When Turkey joined the United Nations in 1945, creation of a resistant party was permitted to demonstrate to the western powers the good intentions of Republican regime for the preservation of democratic Institutions. The Democratic Party remained successful in 1950 elections and the uninterrupted rule of the RPP came to end. The democrats were liberal secularists who agreed in general with the basic policy of Ataturk on westernization and secularism. They differed from the principles of Kamalist on certain points, such as religious affairs and estimate. The multiparty elections of 1950 initiated an argument on secularism. The new government formed by, Democrat Party (DP), assured more religious liberty to society.

2. RENAISSANCE OF ISLAM

A proposal was presented by a Deputy from Konya before the Grand National Assembly in 1959 seeking an amendment in the Turkish constitution to declare the Islam as a State Religion. However the same could not succeed. Again similar motions came up before the Grand National Assembly from time to time up to 1960. The developments so made during the rule of the Democratic Party were clear demonstration that the renaissance of Islam was evident in the Political and social life of the Turkish people. The policy of the DP was conducive in application of Islam to the daily life of People of Turkey. It led to appearance of a new generation of young people including men and women taking keen interest in Islam, and very much proud of their being Muslim. Such resurgence of Islam became alarming for the secularists. Increased religious activity of the Muslim groups and the *Tarikats* led to outbursts of anti-secularist demonstration and the destruction of Ataturk’s statues in various places. Secularists accused the Democratic rule of manipulating and exploiting religion for political purpose. Another important development was the emergence of the influence of Islam in Turkish politics. The secularist policy of the state began to be criticized openly at the meetings of political parties.

The differing views of the pro-Islamic groups on secularism from the 1950s to the 1990s can be summarized as under:-

A - Tolerant view:

The followers of this view tried to liberalize practices of the secular Turkish state. Their aim was to replace the assertive secularism with a more passive secularism. The central right parties, including the DP, the Justice Party (JP), the Motherland Party (MP) and the True Path Party (TPP) generally adopted this position.

B - Austere view:

A few Islamic movements and communities generally tended to focus on Islamic tenants and preferred to keep silent about secularism, such as teaching the Qur’an to the youth and opening dormitories for students. Among these groups Nur movement founded by Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, was the most prominent school of thought.

Initially Bediüzzaman Said Nursi supported Ataturk in his movement of strengthening the state. Later when Ataturk declared his real objectives toward secularization Nursi left him and said "I seek shelter in God from Satan and politics." The followers of this view believe that ninety-nine percent of Islam is about ethics, worship, the hereafter, and virtue. Only one percent is about politics so it should be left to the rulers.

C - Islamic view:

Najmuddin Erbakan is considered originator of this view. He founded the National Order Party in 1970 and the National Salvation Party in 1972. Both parties were accused of being anti-secular and disbanded following the military coup d'états of 1971 and 1980. In 1983, Erbakan founded the Refah Party (WP). In the 1995 national elections, the WP received 21.4 percent of the votes and became the leading party. Erbakan became the prime minister in 1996 in the WP-TPP coalition. His followers are known to be hardliner and staunch believers of Islam but despite all they generally avoided direct criticism of secularism.

The major focus of this article is to analyze the Islamic movement of Erbakan particularly as an active factor that contributed much in revival process.

3. NARRATION OF ISLAMIC REVIVAL AND ERBAKAN' ISLAMIC POLITICAL STRUGGLE

For many the account of Turkish religious politics is one and the same to the story of Erbakan in politics. Najmuddin Erbakan was undoubtedly one of the leading names in Turkish politics. The revival of Islam in Turkey is perhaps the most astonishing incident that happened in 20th century and role of Erbakan in this regard is highly commendable. Life and political career of Erbakan are closely connected to the most popular pro-Islamic political struggle in Turkey.

Erbakan entered the politics as an independent candidate from Konya in 1969. He received the victory and become MP. The political vision of Erbakan was thoroughly against Westernization and secularization, he asked for depose of secular Kamalist regime all through his political career. The economic crisis of the late 1960's had changed the existing balance of class forces. Big business interests, based mostly in Istanbul and organized into large holding companies, clash begins with small and medium provincial assets. The Justice Party steadily gained popularity among big business and as a result lost the support and favor of remaining population. This resulted to the formation of many small political parties. Among them, the National Order Party of Erbakan was the very first Islamic party to emerge and distinctly promoted the philosophy of political Islam. The party's electoral support was mainly based on craftsmen, under sized merchants and other low income middle classes within country. In the meantime Erbakan presented his viewpoint as a program, known as "National Vision" (Milli Gorus) which carries out the schedule of modifying Turkey into an Islamic state. Erbakan' ideology was published in manifesto in 1969. Milli Gorus concerns about the basic religious education, Islamic moral along with devoting a lot concentration to rapid industrial development and independence of Turkey economically.

The "National View" was the focus of the NOP program; the program asserted that it's the need of the time to adapt the Islamic values in order to make progress. Thus mutual aid with Islamic countries along with rapid Industrialization was given importance. Furthermore, formation of Islamic World Union was suggested and promoted to replace the European Economic Community. As the party was in favor of Islamic values and the corporation between Islamic countries so secular authorizes considered it a threat and ultimately was banned by the military in 1971. Soon after, he reformed the party below the title of National Salvation party. Supporters' of the party were those social groups such as minor tradesman and artisans which had been hardest hit by economic policy and were least able to defend themselves through existing political institutions. The National Salvation Party's stress on moral virtues attracted those people who felt their traditional institutions and values to be under attack. The National Salvation Party was comparatively successful in 1970 elections. NSP remained the coalition partner in many governments formed during its period. The success of the party was mainly due to its recognition that the prior cause leads to electoral success is to satisfy the basic needs of the voting public. Rapid industrialization was the focus of the party. For this, the party requested to the Anatolian entrepreneurs with traditional and regional backgrounds, together with requesting the poor and promising them increase in goods prices will be controlled and minimized along with other social Refah reforms. Economic growth was the declared goal of the party and was given more importance.

In 1980, the military interrupted again and NSP was closed down. Shortly, the successor of NSP, the Welfare (Refah), was established in 1983 when the government was handed over to civilians by military generals. The Refah Party and the

National Salvation party both shared the common strategy of answering the needs of public to increase party acceptance among masses. With the exception that the Refah party was more active at the masses level. To help the poor people, widespread community services were offered by the party activists. The party also became a channel for social mobility. This resulted in marvelous victory of the party in 1994 municipal election; as Refah won 28 municipalities. After a year in 1995 elections, the Refah Party remained so successful that it was able to form a coalition government. The task of configuring the government was given to Erbakan; the Refah leader, as the party had received the maximum percentage of votes. So, in 1996 Erbakan became the Prime Minister. During 1980s and 1990, RP was successfully spreading its vision, objective to all from rural to urban middle classes.

Erbakan argued that the resurgence of Islam in the twentieth century has followed a four-phase course in the relationship between Muslim countries and the West. The first phase was one of wars between Western countries and the Islamic world at the beginning of the century which was followed by Western domination. The third was independence, and finally there was a period of development as the Muslim countries entered into a close interrelationship based on brotherhood and mutual aid. In Erbakan view, this last phase will ultimately lead to the creation of a United Muslim Nations (as an alternative to the UN); a Muslim Economic Community, with an Islamic Dinar as common unit of currency, and a Muslim version of NATO.

The reason behind the success of the Refah party was that it had learned the first lesson of democracy; to respond to the interests and demands of the people entitled to vote. On the other hand, with this all the party strongly stood against the issue of secularism and was advocating Islam. Erbakan took strong action in opposition to Kamalism and promoted an Islamic currency, Islamic NATO, Islamic UN, and an Islamic version of European Union. During this Refah Party gets the support from Islamic Intellectuals who were struggling for religious freedom, from Sunni Kurds looking for state identification and from the urban poor masses that were in quest of social integrity. Gulalp illustrates the social base of the movement as: “A vertical bloc comprising segments of different socio-economic classes, united in their common opposition to Kamalism and their expression of political will through the assertion of an Islamic identity”

Soon Erbakan was forced to accept 18 recommendations reaffirming that Turkey is a secular state. Among them more highlighted are:

- Prohibit any calls for the implementation of Islamic law.
- Impose censorship on Islamic radio and television
- Prohibit the wearing of any outfit that disregards state law, meaning a ban on the veil.
- Revive article 163 of the penal code that criminalizes any religiously motivated political activity.
- Implementation of the article 174 of the constitution, which upholds the sanctity of reforms in place, from the time when Turkish republic was established in 1923.
- Make education compulsory for eight years, which, in effect, meant the closure of schools for imams and preachers.
- Close Qur’anic schools run by Religious people.
- Ban the establishment of a new mosque in Taksim square in Istanbul
- Dismiss some provincial governors due to their membership in the Islamic movement.
- Hold heads of parties responsible for statements and declarations made by mayors belonging to their parties.

The Military briefed governmental and judicial institution about “Islamic threat” present in Turkey. Due to this pressure from National Security Council, on June 18, 1997 Erbakan had to resign. Refah was banned and Erbakan was expelled from parliament by the Turkish Constitutional court for 5 years. Challenging the official ban, the Refah was reemerged as the Virtue (Fazelit) party but it was banned in 2001 and was accused of a center for anti-secular activities. As soon as the ban on political activities had ended, Erbakan initiated the Felicity Party, and remained its leader in 2003–2004 also in 2010 and onwards.

The parties led by the Erbakan were the very first Turkish parties that were real Islamic parties, that is why Erbakan’ political parties were largely faced confrontation from secular administrative powers of the State and from civil society

groups and were ultimately banned one after another. However, he continued his efforts playing a vital role in Turkish politics and for renaissance of Islam in Turkey.

4. VIEWS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

(I) Foreign policy:

Erbakan condemned secularism as National Order party; the first party established by Erbakan, was accused of acting against the secular nature of the state and was ultimately banned. When repeatedly bans were put on Islamic party initiated by him, many of his followers and companion were fed up with defeat. They argued him to admit the reality that Turkish society is dominated by secular authorizes and survival is almost impossible without accepting the Secularism with US etc. Erbakan refused to do so as he believed that it's more important to work in right direction than success. He rejected the notion of "superior west" and asserted the superiority of Islamic civilization and its compatibility with science. He was in an open opposition to Turkey's membership to the EU; to him EU was a "Christian club." Following his Islamic foreign policy agenda, Erbakan gave his first visits to countries such as Iran and Libya.

(II) Formation of D-8:

He is also the inventor of the organization connecting eight Muslim countries internationally, well-known as Developing Eight (D-8). Six star flag of D-8 symbolizes the six basic principles or targets of forming the organization;

- Strategy of No war, efforts for peace.
- Dialogue will be the preferred way in case of disputes
- No double standards of justice
- Equality among all, supremacy belongs to God.
- Cooperation with Islamic world
- Democracy, freedom for all and protection of human rights

His movements shielded the national and spiritual values of Turkish people. Due to all his efforts Turkey to some extent returned to its historic role. Due to all the efforts of Erbakan today's Turkey that is a lot more at ease with itself and its place along with Middle East and Europe than it was before. Even though almost all Turkish governments didn't paid attention to his warnings to resist ties to Israel and to stay away from Europe, but Turkey's role in the region has been significantly improved with time. To be sure, Turkey's better relation with its neighboring countries especially with Muslim countries clearly illustrate the Erbakan' original "national view," but the policies behind these foreign associations are much more pragmatic and less ideological than Erbakan' visualization. Still Turkey has improved its position of perceived inferiority with Europe and got recognition of its particular potencies, which have to a large extent, increased its pressure influence in the region.

Apparently Erbakan emphasized the internal danger facing the Islamic world in the twentieth century. This danger comes from Muslim public figures and movements which have wittingly allowed them to be enchanted by Western ideas of nationalism, socialism, liberalism, economic development and democracy. Those fallen in love for the West, are Muslims in appearance only. A necessary result of all this is intellectual slavery of the Muslim world.

In contrast to secularist intellectuals, who see conservative Islam as a state of inertia and the reason for the decline of the Ottoman Empire, Erbakan interprets the decline as a consequence of the Ottomans' acceptance of the influence of foreign culture. The increase of western influence in Ottoman intellectual thoughts resulted in decrease of Islamic philosophy and traditions. According to Erbakan it was the superiority of Islamic philosophy that had been the key factor behind the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, to recapture its magnificence and world prominence, Turkey would have to return to its past as a Muslim society. Erbakan also advocate that to recover peace order and social justice, the renovation of Islamic moral qualities in the Turkish society is important. Erbakan rejected Western cultural influences and emphasized the exercise of a national moral consciousness. He believed that Turkey could catch up with Western technology only if its superior culture and morality can be revived. Erbakan believed that the country's problems can be solved through the material or technical and the spiritual development plans. He also criticized the unjustified circulation

of wealth and the dependence of the Turkish economy on foreign markets. He also condemned the weak economical situation, which result in Turkey' dependence on foreign aid and accordingly has lost its dominion in foreign policy. He also believes that the development of local technology along with rapid industrialization would place Turkey among the materially developed countries.

Keeping in view the parties led by Erdogan it can be observed that, determination, consistency, firmness, and never acceptance of impossibility are the unique features that mark the political career of Erdogan. This also is an evidence of his agitation for renaissance of Islam in Turkey. The Turkish case briefly explains the frustration and hardships associated with the process of revolution and conversion to real democracy and modernity. Turkey has been struggling to blend itself with the modern world for two centuries. It has accomplished much in the process. Yet there is still a long way to go.

5. CURRENT POLITICAL STATUS OF ISLAM IN TURKEY

After decades of decline (1923-1950) Islam underwent revival in Turkey (1950-1980) and has now appeared as the dominant political force in the country. The republic continues to have a secular constitution, and religion is still denied complete access to the governing body, but religious forces have gained such importance institutionally and in terms of their impact on the masses. The strength of Islam is increased in Turkey during last several years. Previously, religion and religious rights were just a division randomly talked by the parties of mainstream center-right. While in 1970s, it appeared as a separate political struggle under the guidance of Najmuddin Erdogan. Strong critics and analysis of secular authorities was faced by the Islamic parties and many times they were banned ultimately. Still, they managed to step forward in different disguises demonstrating their strength and stability also their capability to catch the attention of an important part of the Turkish electorates. Still, they remained generally a trimming movement. Usually, it has been considered that most Turks prefer their affiliation with the Republic of Turkey over being Muslim. Conversely, a survey performed in more than 20 cities of Turkey and funded by the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV), showed a significant increase in the Turks preference of Muslim identity.

Turks' Identity:

Primary Identity	Percentage of Respondents
Turk	19.4
Muslim	44.6
Citizen of Turkish Republic	29.9
Kurd	2.7
Alvis	1.1
Other	1.3
No reply	1.0

The data clearly shows that religious association of Turkish people is almost twice the affiliation of Turks with Republic. Chairman of TESEV Can Paker believes that if we divide Turks into two categories then one-third of them are secular, and two-thirds are religious.

5.1 JDP- the Current Ruling Party:

The success of the Islamic rooted Justice and Development Party, in the three consecutive national elections, surely shows that political Islam is becoming stronger in Turkey' politics. The JDP was able to won 34% of votes in elections of 2002 which granted the opportunity for party to govern on its own. The performance of party in the July 2007 election was even better, as party managed to receive 46.6 %of the votes, while the party representing the Ataturk secular tradition, CHP, received 20.9 % of the votes and stood second. This was an unexpected accomplishment for a party like JDP that was new in politics as it was not present before August 2001, and it also shows the speedy change in perception of Turkish people regarding political Islam that has moved out political Islam from political gloom to become an active participant of Turkish politics.

Though JDP never interpreted itself as an Islamic party but constantly asserted that it's a "conservative democratic party" but is always blamed by the many Kamalists that it has a secret Islamic agenda to overthrow the secular regime so it's a threat for the secular Turkish state.

Performance of the JDP forms a major example of the “moderation” of political Islam by embracing democracy, modernity, and liberal global Economy. The party claim to follow conservative democracy in its programs and its performance, since 2002, in government has been noticeably even-tempered. The JDP adopted a new strategy in contrast to Erbakan ideology although both struggle to same. The JDP has opened up to the west but it maintains close ties to the Islamic world and has shown the way for the Islam further integration into Turkish society. The success of the JDP attributed to the number of factors:-

- Positive economic developments
- Support by Kurds and Member of non-Islamic Minorities who hope for greater security and right as a result of EU demand.
- Backing from a new post Kamalists generation that is frustrated and on the lookout for new alternatives.
- JDP has achieved tremendous reforms regarding constant economic strength and growth. Turkey’s EU succession talks were managed to start in 2005. Another factor that highlight the JDP from others is its courage to stand up to military’ involvement in democratic process. It became the first ruling party since 1960, which has publicly objected to the military’s participation and criticism of the government.

5.2 Achievements of JDP:

Justice and Development Party is always been accused of having some hidden Islamic agenda. This belief is prevailing among secularists, who feel endangered by Turkey’s ruling Justice and Development party, which has links to political Islam in past. The real jolt for such people was the announcement by the Prime Minister Erdogan that his goal was to raise a “Religious Youth”. In this regard a school reform has been approved which lifts the ban on Madrasas and Religious schools. It includes measures that will allow schools specializing in religious education along with the modern sciences to take boys and girls from the age of 11 instead of 15. Also there will be optional classes of Quran Studies and the life of Holy Prophet (SAW) in other schools. The reform faced critics of many who argue that quality of education will suffer. Critics also blamed the JDP for promoting Islamic agenda which can be a threat to secular nature of country.

Another project that sparked the anger among secular authority was to redevelop Istanbul’s Gezi Park in to a complex with new mosque and shopping centre. The project intended as the Muslims living in the region of Taksim demanded for praying places. Before, in 1997 Refah party insisted on the same and strongly argued that for 600,000 Muslims living in this area there are only 3 undersized mosques and circulating population in these mosques is about 2 million. While for minority having population of 23000, there are 14 churches. Refah party also supported the project of mosque by claiming that they want to “rebuild” the mosque actually. This is also revealed by many Islamic dailies and magazines that before 55 years there was a mosque in Taksim. The mosque was built during the era of the Ottoman Empire within the limits of headquarters of military at Taksim. The military headquarter along with the historical mosque was cleaned out together in 1940by order of Ismet Inonu; the second president of Turkish Republic.

Among the most remarkable achievement of the government is that Turkey has paid its final loan payment to the IMF and admirably, Erdogan is the only Prime Minister who went on tour to United States without having any IMF debit. The very first IMF loan was taken in 1961 by the Cemal Gürsel government under a stand-by agreement. From 1961 till today, Turkey has taken debt of 56.5 billion U.S dollars. When JDP has taken control of the Turkey’ government, the debts to IMF was exceeding the limits and IMF representatives were visiting Turkey every month for investigations. Before JDP, almost all the governments were asking for the concession in loan recovery and promising the improvements in internal policy to get more loans from the IMF. A new chapter begins with the victory of JDP in national elections with Erdogan as a prime minister. On prior basis, the newly elected government privatized the complete state sector and initiatives were taken to control and resolve corruption issues in newly privatized plan.

Through this privatization of the state sector, Prime Minister Erdogan launched a total new economic model in which the recently produced private sector would not be a burden on the state and the state would not excessively burden the private sector with rules and regulations in return. Government has also taken initiative of interest free banking i.e. Islamic banking. According to a survey, Islamic banking, which favors an interest free system and follows the requirements of Shaira (Islamic law), has emerged as an outstanding system, the Islamic banks have expanded at an average of 19 percent every year, and their market volume reached \$1.3 billion in 2011.

Prime Minister Erdogan faced critic of secular authorities on ending the headscarf ban too. Erdogan said to his party's policymaker in a parliamentary speech:

"We have now abolished obsolete provision which was against the spirit of the republic. It's a step toward normalization... A dark time finally comes to an end...Headscarf-wearing women are full part of the republic, as well as those who do not wear it."

Secular critics of Erdogan see removal of headscarf ban as yet another move by Turkey's government to impose an Islamic agenda along with the partial restriction on sale and advertisement of alcohol. Between 10 pm and 6 am, traders will not be permitted to sell alcohol while the sale of alcohol near worship places and schools will also be not allowed.

Erdogan party has already successfully completed three tenures, and in recent elections of November 2015 it again managed to succeed. Their continuing victory demonstrates the gradual increase in acceptance of Islam and specially the political Islam by Turkish public. Whereas Economy remained the main focus of the party, and possibly this is the chief reason behind the success of the Justice and development party.

6. CONCLUSION

The history of Islamic struggle in Turkey, especially political struggle, shows that democracy is best for the organization of the anti-system parties. Turkey's experience confirms that democratic system works best if the Islamic movements are given chances to work freely. Moreover if we talk Specifically about JDP than its experience reveals that harmony between Islam and democracy can only be accomplished through the moderate politics. This is the most important lesson of Turkish experience, and it has role model for other Muslim countries in region.

Keeping in view the history of Islamic movements and Islamic political struggle in Turkey in the Republican period, it can be summarized that they were officially banned until 1950s. The situation was improved soon after the introduction of multiparty system, there started to appear conservative voice in Turkish political system. These conservative gathered under Democratic Party which was the first to successfully challenge the single party rule of RPP. After the formation of NOP, Erbakan became the leader of Muslim voices in Turkey. From that time, Erbakan has directed five Islamic parties, four of which were closed down by the military as they were accused of having anti secular agenda. Erbakan's struggle was not against the modernization of Turkey, rather he was in opposition to western influence. He rejected the superiority of west and asserted the superiority of Islamic civilization and its compatibility with modern sciences and progress. He always emphasized on Turkey's strong relation with Muslim countries, instead of West.

Though the achievements of Erbakan's Islamic movement are limited however Erbakan's contribution could never be ignored as he directed way of Islamic movements toward democracy, in a Muslim country with secular constitution.

After struggling for so many years, political Islam in Turkey found its bold demonstration through the establishment of the Justice and Development Party. The party appears to be the most firm and influential party of Turkish democratic history. The party's leadership asserted that JDP supports democracy, and party will struggle for a democratic secular state. They also declared that the party is strongly against the exploitation of religion; secularism can restricts the state regarding religion not the individuals. So everyone is free to follow and practice the religion he is inclined to.

Surely the victory of JDP in four continues elections and success of Erdogan in Presidential election demonstrates the growing strength of political Islam in Turkey.

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